

## Rebuilding Gujarat

The recent incidents of violence in Gujarat have been deeply distressing. AID clearly and unambiguously condemns what happened in Godhra and the communal carnage that has followed. Volunteers across the United States and in India have been extremely concerned by the loss of life, property and livelihoods. Within a few days of the onset of violence, we gave a public call for Fast for Peace and Communal Harmony. Hundreds of members of the public signed for the fast or lighting candles in solidarity from all over the world. (For more information, please visit [www.aidindia.org/fastforpeace](http://www.aidindia.org/fastforpeace))

The damage caused by the violence has been compounded by the fact that Gujarat was barely recovering from last year's earthquake. We had pledged to rebuild local communities in Gujarat that were devastated by the earthquake, and we realize that the recent incidents have shattered the very foundations of these communities. The need for funds and community mobilization is immense. We actively solicit your support to provide relief and rehabilitation to the affected people.

- AID volunteers

## Jagrutha Bharate Awareness Program - A Project Report

On December 12, 2001, my brother and I visited Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM), a non-profit organization for providing medical facilities to tribals, in Kenchanahalli, Karnataka. After switching three buses, we arrived at *Handpost*, a small village in Heggadadevanakote Taluk (HD Kote) in Mysore District. An hour's drive in the SVYM ambulance took us to the headquarters of SVYM, a well equipped, 10-bed hospital, right in the middle of tribal settlements (called *HaaDi*) in the midst of the Bandipur Sanctuary and Nagarahole National Park. Dr. R. Balasubramaniam (SVYM President) and Shiv Shankar, their lab technician, greeted us.



*From Left to Right: Dr. M.A. Balasubramanya (Secretary of SVYM), Mr. Shiv Shankar (Lab Technician), Maru (Driver), Raju Patil (AID Volunteer) and some kids.*

Gynecology and Pediatrics section. We were impressed to see sophisticated equipment such as "baby warming" machines. He explained to us that the hospital was visited by almost all the tribal people in the area and the token consultation fee of Rs. 2/-, which included general medication, had not deterred anybody. During the tour, we met Dr. (Flt. Lt.) M.A. Balasubramanya, Secretary, who showed us the mobile medical van retrofitted with TV/VCR and radio communications equipment powered through solar panels.

The *Jagrutha Bharatha* program of SVYM spreads awareness about various issues such as literacy, health care, undesirability of early marriage, problems caused by alcoholism, among the tribal communities of HD Kote. Enthusiastic volunteers of SVYM perform street plays and screen thought-provoking movies about these important issues to the tribal community.

Later, we discussed the effect of *Jagrutha Bharatha* with various village heads. They expressed great satisfaction and identified the following as the direct benefits of the program:

- Prevention of early marriage (child marriage).
- Reduced incidence of alcoholism.
- Increased awareness of the benefits of education.
- Increased confidence in facing the police and forest officers.
- Knowledge of better agricultural practices.

For more information on SVYM and *Jagrutha Bharata*, visit <http://www.vivekamysore.com/>

-Raju Patil, AID-Pittsburgh

## News and Notes

### 2002 Fundraisers Resounding Success!

February and March 2002 saw successful fundraisers by AID-San Diego and AID-Pittsburgh. AID-San Diego organized *India Beckons*, an evening of Indian Classical Music on March 23. "The concert, the chapter's annual fundraiser, was a roaring success with a collection of \$4200. For the first time in the history of the chapter, a *Carnatic* music concert has drawn an audience of over 250", says Padmapriya of that chapter. AID-Pittsburgh, on February 9, had more than 350 locals swaying to the music of *Karyshma*, a Boston troupe specializing in East-West fusion. Both these concerts helped spread awareness about AID, apart from raising *moolah* to support chapter projects.

### Forum on Communal Violence in Boston

Moved by the communal violence in Gujarat, more than 120 citizens of South Asian origin living in the Greater

Boston area participated in the Forum on Communal Violence which was organized jointly by AID-Boston, South Asian Center and Sangam-MIT. Held at MIT on March 30, the forum hosted a panel of distinguished speakers - Swami Tyagananda of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, Ms. Shukla-Bhatt from Harvard University, Dr. Asthana from the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America and Dr. Cader Asmal from the New England Islamic Center.

The outcome of the three hour-long session was a resolution that condemned the tragic events and their perpetrators. The participants urged the Central and State Governments to bring the criminals to justice and emphasized that every community should work towards spreading the message of communal harmony.

The forum was organized with the belief that the only way towards resolution of communal problems is through frank yet sensitive dialogue between people holding different points of view. This is one of a series of forums planned on the issue. -*Mokshay Madiman, AID-Boston*

## 'Consolidation and Introspection'

Conference  
2002

The Bay Area chapter will host the Annual AID Conference, during the Memorial Day weekend, from May 25 to 27. The event is being co-sponsored by the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Stanford University.

<b>Venue</b>	Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
<b>Dates</b>	25 - 27 May 2002
<b>Accommodation</b>	Provided upon request

For more details about the Conference and to register, please visit <http://www.aidsfbay.org/conf2002/>

### Conference Highlights

*Ravi Kuchimanchi*, one of the founding members of AID, will be participating. An excellent speaker and a highly motivating personality, Ravi's presence is pertinent to the conference theme - 'Consolidation and Introspection'. *Keynote speakers* Aruna Roy and Shankar Singh from MKSS (*Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan*), known for their 'Right to Information Campaign', a grassroots movement aimed at greater transparency and accountability in governance. Aruna Roy won the Magsaysay award in 2000.

- *Volunteers, AID-Bay Area*

## Recently Approved Projects

AID Bay Area approved US\$6000 to support SAKTI - a Non-Governmental Organization based in Andhra Pradesh. The project aims at complementing the native knowledge of the *Chenchu* tribes with skills required enabling them to participate in the management of forests and in the Eco-tourism programs initiated by the government.

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