

AID in Northeast India: North East Network

In the Tezpur District of Assam, AID has partnered with the North East Network (NEN) to mobilize women on issues that are significant to them. NEN, which has offices in Shillong and Guwahati, was conceived with the conviction that women's collective and decisive action can pave the way for societal progress. It came into being during the mobilization for the Beijing Conference, which is when grassroots women of the northeast were mobilized on crucial issues for the first time.

AID supported setting up a health center in a remote area bordering Arunachal Pradesh, where the nearest community health center, though only 10 km away, is inaccessible because the roads are bad. Because the hamlets that the health center serves have no electricity and no sustainable means of employment, the health center also serves as a social gathering place. Besides stocking medicines from Guwahati and maintaining patient registers, the health center is also where women's sexual and reproductive health issues are discussed using handmade charts and models. Rumen, Mukta, Minali, Bharat, Goda Mili --- all health workers from the predominant Mishing tribal community -- were trained by Anurita Pathak (NEN) to perform simple health checkups and maintain health records. The health workers are also involved in spreading awareness to nearby villages and conducting surveys.

When I visited Tezpur in May 2002, I interacted with several members of the Mishing community. AID had provided funds for a sanitation project and the members of the



Construction of toilets in Dharikathi village, Assam.

community planned to build a toilet for each house. Eighty-eight toilets had already been constructed. AID-Maryland has recently extended our support to that sanitation project so that the rest of the toilets can be built.

The Mishing women weave their own garments. Their attire is resplendent in its patterns and color. There is a current plan to market the handloom products such as scarves, bags, tablemats etc. in an effort towards self-sustainability. Partaking of their food (ferns among others), beer (Apong, rice beer made of 19 herbs), dance and song was a unique and warm experience.

--- Kavita K. Meegama (AID-Maryland)



One for India
a campaign against poverty

Our second online fundraiser is underway!

- Donations to AID are 100% tax-free under section 501(c)(3) of IRS tax code.
- AID is fully volunteer-run with ultra-low overheads.
- AID evaluates projects thoroughly and supports the highest quality efforts.

Which One will it be for you?

- One percent of your earnings,
- One dollar a day,
- One day's salary per month, or
- One contribution that suits your pocket.

Make One contribution for India to wish her a happy and prosperous 2003. For details on the campaign and to contribute, please visit the campaign website at <http://www.OneForIndia.org>

"Changing Faces – Facing Changes"

The AID 2003 calendar
Featuring breath-taking pictures from P. Sainath's collection

The 2003 AID calendar features pictures from "Visible Work, Invisible Women", a photo-collection by India's leading journalist P. Sainath ! Dedicated to the extraordinary spirit and unflagging energy of village women, this must-have calendar is available now by making a donation of \$10 or more to AID. Over 2000 people who have bought these calendars have realized and recognized the contribution of rural Indian women. To order copies for you, friends and family, both in India and outside, please visit the web site:

<http://www.aidindia.org/calendar>

News and Notes

Computer Drive at AID College Park

Volunteers from AID-College Park joined volunteers from various other organizations including ASHA, ILP, World Computer Exchange (WCE) in organizing a computer collection drive on Oct 5th 2002 as part of National Gandhi Day Of Service (www.gandhiday.org). The computers are sent to many countries including India, to support computer literacy. On Oct 5th, we set up two collection points, one in Herndon Virginia and the other in College Park, Maryland. One of our high school volunteers set up a collection point in a local temple for three weekends leading to Oct 5th. A local hi-tech company donated several used computers. We collected around 75 computers during this drive. Several volunteers also helped in testing the computers.

If you are interested in organizing a computer collection drive or donating a used computer, please contact WCE (<http://www.worldcomputerexchange.org/>) or email Srinivas at srinivas@aidindia.org

--Srinivas Krowvidy (srinivas@aidindia.org)

Swaad - The Indian Experience, at TAMU

At Texas A&M University, 450 people attended the Indian event held on Nov 14. Tireless work by many AID TAMU volunteers helped raise over \$2000 for projects supported by the AID-Texas A&M university chapter.

■ *Prasenjit Sengupta (AID-TAMU)*

Cricket for India '02, at AID Atlanta

AID Atlanta and the Atlanta Cricket Club conducted a cricket tournament over two Sundays, on Oct 27th and Nov 3rd. It was a veritable Indian cricket mela, as over 500 people thronged Newtown Park in Alpharetta, GA. Volunteers from AID worked with members of the cricket club to make it a well organized tournament. Funds collected from the event will be used to support the Hundred Block Plan.

-- Radbika (AID-Atlanta)

Emergency Drought Relief in Rajasthan

The state of Rajasthan has received less than 30% of the normal rainfall this monsoon season. While the Gods forgot to send some rain, the Government of India and the Government of Rajasthan are involved in a game of passing the buck.

With reports of drought and death by starvation pouring in continuously, NGOs like Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS), People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), and Sankalp Sansthan have undertaken the enormous task of working at the grassroots level. Extensive surveys are being carried out to assess the needs of the people. Health camps are being conducted in the worst affected district of Baran, which has had several cases of acute malnutrition, tuberculosis and malaria among the Sahariya tribe.

AID has approved \$2100 (Rs one lakh) emergency funding. Visit <http://www.aidindia.org/rajasthan> for more information. Please contribute so that AID's active involvement may bring about further positive difference.

AID-India Conference Dec 27 -29, 2002, Bangalore

The AID-India conference will be held this year in Bangalore from December 27 to 29, 2002. Mark your calendars now to be part of this important landmark in the history of AID, as we set the agenda for our future activities.

Salient sessions at this conference include:

- AID-India Chapters, Roles and Administration
- AID-Science Movement Interaction - HBP - Health and MPI projects
- AID interaction with other groups - NAPM, NGOs, Dalit groups, etc.
- Interaction with AID *sathis* (fellows).
- General Educational Session for Volunteers
- AID-India Plan for the year
- Personal Development and Alternate Living.

For details on the agenda, and for logistics, please check the web-site <http://www.aidindia.org> for periodic updates.

Email: info@aidindia.org

Phone: 1-888-TALK-2-AID

Web: <http://www.aidindia.org>

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AID relies solely on your contributions to fund development projects in India. Donations to AID are tax exempt in the US (Tax ID - 52-1863480). All donors receive monthly updates of our projects and activities. To obtain a copy of the current financial statement, please write to AID. Documents and information pertaining to AID can be obtained from the Secretary of State for the cost of copies and postage.