

ACTIVITY REPORT

OF

**INSTITUTE OF
INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

For the period

April 2005 to March 2006

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PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

PROJECT SELF-HELP GROUP

Started in 2003. Presently ongoing

Objective: Our Institute has framed the following project to provide sustainable source of livelihood for the deprived people of West Bengal, India. We are experimenting with a permanent solution to revive the weak economy and save the future generations from extreme poverty. The program is run according to the MDGs, especially the first MDG "Reduction in extreme Poverty and Hunger" and the second MDG "Promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women".

Description: "Project SELF-HELP GROUP" is a long-term program initiated in the tribal-areas of West Bengal to train indigenous people in different sectors. Part of the program is the IPSCI (Indigenous People Micro Savings & Credit Initiative), where each self-help group opens a collective bank account for savings to gain more independence. The savings will be used to establish small businesses. Vocational training (i.e. handloom, kantha, medicinal plant cultivation) will be given to the members of the self-help groups for further income generation.

Achievements:

- 1) Formation of Self-Help Group members in 2003
- 2) Projected Savings of 2004 achieved
- 3) Formation of 24 SHGs with 500 Handicrafts Artisans of Bolpur Subdivision under Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hasta Shilpa Vikas Yojana of the Office of the Development Commissioner, Ministry of Textiles , Government of India.
- 4) Aikatan Self Help group achieves Self Reliance

PROJECT SUSHIKSHA

Started in 1996. Presently ongoing

Objective: Project SUSHIKSHA was launched after a survey by a team of experts who confirmed, "Education of women is the key to development". The program is run according to the second MDG "Achieve Universal Primary Education".

Description: SUSHIKSHA is an educational program, especially for Women from disadvantaged backgrounds with no accessibility for the light of knowledge and self-reliance. The curriculum includes basic reading and writing of the local vernacular and basic arithmetic for accounting. Besides, gradual awareness on environmental development for a sustainable better quality of life is also carried out. The project has effect on a population of at least 50,000 slum dwellers of Tollygunge slum in Kolkata followed by 1,000 people from the remote Bhitargarh village, Mecheda in Midnapore district of West Bengal, India.

Achievements: Intervention successfully completed in its initial site, a slum in Tollygunge, South Kolkata in 1997. Over 50 non-literate women and girls successfully completed literacy program in Bengali and Mathematics. Participants are trained to make handicrafts as a commercially applicable skill. Distribution of black boards and 500 slates to rural NGOs for the center in 1997 was done. Opening of a center for adult women of Bhitargarh village, Mecheda, Midnapore district in 2000. Twelve women received Pass Certificates from this center in 2001. Cultural and value-based orientation undertaken through this project.

PROJECT SUSWASTHYA

Started in 1997. Presently ongoing

Objective: The project SUSWASTHYA was launched after an initial survey of the adopted Tollygunge slum at South Kolkata. The program is run according to the fourth MDG "Reduce Child Mortality" and the fifth MDG "Improve Maternal Health".

Description: SUSWASTHYA is a health program, to fight against the greatest threat to the quality of life: unavailability of primary health care services to all the sections of the society. It is a primary health care facility for the rural/urban underprivileged families. The project has effect on a population of at least 50,000 people.

Achievements: Established a medical information center and a free monthly check-up facility for 500 families of the adopted Tollygunge slum in 1997. Research and documentation of the causes of diseases in the field area in was done in 1999. Setup of a subsidized clinic for blood testing and a subsidized immunization program against infectious diseases in 2000 Monthly health camps since 2001. Opening of a permanent free clinic in Ayurvedic treatment at Kala Bagan, Behala, Kolkata in 2001 for infected or vulnerable slum dwellers.

PROJECT HOPE

Started in 1998. Presently ongoing

Objective: PROJECT HOPE was inaugurated by the renowned actress of India Ms. Moon Moon Sen. The program is run according to the sixth MDG "Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria & other Diseases".

Description: Project HOPE started as 2-month long AIDS & HIV Positive Prevention Campaign at the red-light area of Sonagachi in Kolkata. Today the project consists of awareness raising, education, counseling and condom distribution amongst the sex-workers and is aimed at bringing primary healthcare facilities, functional literacy and awareness on social issues to this population. The project has effect on a population of at least 40,000 sex-workers and their families.

Achievements: Distribution of more than 1, 00,000 condoms amongst the sex-workers since 1998. More than 30 awareness campaigns between September 1998 and April 2003. Project HOPE II included routine health check-ups for around 100 women and children, and food packet distribution. Establishment of a permanent free clinic at Sonagachi in 1999. Research of types of diseases common to the locality with the record of suspected STD/HIV and AIDS cases from 1999. Initiation of a functional literacy program for the sex-workers in 1999. Initiation of a crèche-cum-primary education center for children of the sex-workers in 1999. Training in income-generating skills for alternative careers since 1999. Weekly Homeopathy Medical Clinic established in 2001. Kamasutra based training piloted. Regular Seminars were conducted at different vulnerable places targeted to the most risk prone group of people.

PROJECT SHRAMDAAN

Started in 1996. Presently ongoing.

Objective: The program is run according to the first MDG "Reduction in extreme Poverty and Hunger".

Description: SHRAMDAAN is an employment generation program, where the Institute referred jobless men and women in different companies for employment taking the full guarantee of the person in case of any mishap. The project has effect on a population of at least 50,000 people.

Achievements: Around 80% of all referred persons remain permanently employed from 1996 onwards. Training and provision of mixer-grinder machines to the village women of Bhitargarh village in Mecheda, West Bengal to earn money independently.

50 Cycle Vans were distributed to 50 male members of 50 below-poverty-line families of Birbhum District identified by 25 Self Help Groups. IIDS, Geneva, Naresh Gehi and others were the Donors for these Vans. The income of the families shot from an existing Rs. 500 to Rs. 3000 per month from the following month. The distribution of the Vans was done on 19th March, 2006.

Observances and other Programs

Observance of Earth Day “Wonders of the Earth”- Sabji Haat 22nd to 24th April 2005

Description: An exhibition cum sale of exotic organic vegetables of the newly formed Aikatan Self Help group supported by the Institute was carried out. Members of the public were made aware on the importance of green vegetables grown organically. In fact response was huge in buying the exotic items from this special display. The program was inaugurated by the local councilor Mr. Dibyendu Biwas who expressed that these eatables from the Earth truly the wonders of the soil enabling humanity to survive.

Indian Handicraft Exhibition at UN Plaza, New York, USA.

15th May, 2005- 31st July, 2005

Description: For the first time in the history of the UN and independent India, Indian Handicraft was showcased at the UN Head Quarters with the support of the Office of the Development Commissioner, Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and ECOSOC, Indigenous Forum of the UN. This was the first ever exposure of Indian Handicrafts in the diplomatic community for probing international market access. The Who's Who of world leaders and social players visited and applauded the venture and there is a noticed increase in the demand of Indian Handicraft.

Annual Football Tournament

20th & 21st August, 2005

Description: A 2-day Football tournament of street Youths was supported by the Institute organized by the local South Calcutta Amara Sabai Club. The silver Kishan Lal Winners Trophy is a rolling trophy and encourages sports activities for diverting vulnerable youths of high risk groups to safe and productively engaging life style.

UN Day in Paris

24th October, 2005

Description: The Secretary General of the Institute was invited to speak on Micro enterprises and Micro-credit system for sustainable development of beneficiaries and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. She represented the NGO sector of South Block Nations and declared the promotion of the MDGs as essential for fixing developmental activities adapting to local needs. The Round Table was organized by the ECOSOC for strategizing future promotional activities of the MDGs in various nations in partnership with Institutions and authorities. More than 100 Heads of organizations and Ambassadors were present for the conference. It was organized in the ECOSOC Chamber in Paris.

Peace Seminar

10th November, 2005

Description: Eminent speakers representing major Faiths of the World congregated to formulate a Peace Mission incorporating teachings from major religions. IISD being the supporting organization presented a Classical Dance program invoking Peace through a Sanskrit melody by its Director, Culture of New York, and USA Ms. Vaishali Chaudhuri. Speakers from Islam, Bahai, Methodist Church and other faiths expressed their respective religion's recommendations for bringing World Peace.

World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse

19th November, 2005

Description: A rally was taken out on this occasion to promote prevention of child abuse and child labor. The route was from the registered body of the Institute to Golpark and back. More than 200 children participated and created awareness on their Rights.

World AIDS Day

December 1, 2005

Description: More than 50,000 condoms were distributed and wide awareness campaign was conducted on the importance of Safe Lifestyle. The campaign was done in the Red Light Zone of Sonagachhi .More than 500 sex-workers and their clients participated in the program.

Human Rights Day

December 10, 2005

Description: 1000 walkers participated in an Awareness Rally followed by a seminar on Human Rights. Eminent Human Rights activists participated in the Seminar and elaborated on the rights of the Eunuchs, AIDS patients and physically challenged.

NEW YORK ACTIVITIES

Exhibition of handicrafts at the Onishi Gallery on January 7, 2006

An exhibition of Indian Handicrafts was on display on January 7, 2006 at the Onishi Gallery, a Japanese gallery in Chelsea in Manhattan, New York. It was organized by the Additional UN Representative, Sharon Hamilton in association with Nana Onishi, Director of the gallery.

Exhibition of pashmina shawls and silk scarves at the Sushiden Restaurant Storefront Window near Rockefeller Center in Manhattan, New York from February 17 to March 20, 2006

An exhibition was organized by Sharon Hamilton and Nana Onishi with sample sale at the famous Japanese restaurant Sushiden Restaurant in Manhattan from February 17 to March 20, 2006. The exhibition showcased hand-woven pashmina shawls and silk scarves from India. The exhibition received wide publicity among the Indian American and Japanese media.

Indian Classical Dance presented at ISKCON Temple at Second Avenue, Manhattan New York on March 3, 2006.

Vaishali Chaudhuri, the Additional UN Representative of IISD, and the Director, Arts & Culture of New York branch, presented Indian Classical Dance at the historic temple of ISKCON in Manhattan.

Flower Festival at the United Nations Secretariat South Lobby:

A Flower Festival was organized at the UN Secretariat South Lobby from March 20 to 23, 2006 by the U.N.S.R.C. Friendship Club with the support of Consulate General Japan in New York, Institute of International Social Development, Institute for the Development of Education, Arts & Leisure; United Nations Committee for Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns (Subcommittee Values & Business). While Sharon Hamilton coordinated the event, Shomik Chaudhuri, UN Representative, was the keynote speaker. His speech on the relation of flower to spirituality was acclaimed by the attending diplomats and members of the civil society.

Exhibition of Indian Handicrafts at the UN Secretariat (South) Lobby

The Institute organized an exhibition of Indian Handicrafts entitled 'Path to Attaining the MDG's through Handicraft' at the South Lobby of the UN Secretariat in association with UNSRC Friendship Club from March 27 to April 7, 2006. This showcased Indian Handicrafts among all the UN diplomats and eminent visitors to the UN during this period.