

ACTIVITY REPORT

OF

INSTITUTE OF
INTERNATIONAL
SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

April 2003 to March 2004

Complied by: Shomik Chaudhuri, U.N. Representative; Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General

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

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.

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 Bhitagarh village in Mecheda, West Bengal to earn money independently.

Observances and other Programs

WORLD HEALTH WEEK

07 April 2003

Description: Our Institute, in association with Bharat Relief Society, conducted a 7-day mass health check-up at rural and urban poverty stricken areas namely Sonagachi Red Light Zone, Bhitagarh village, Ruppur Block of Birbhum district, Goraipur village, Haral Daspur village, Keshtopur urban slum and Kabardanga Children's Home. More than 2000 indigenous people, senior citizens, children, women and disabled people received treatment. Allan Laboratories, Heinz India Private Limited, Smithkline Beecham Consumer Healthcare Ltd. supported the event. Polar Latex Co. Ltd also participated.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

05 June 2003

Description: Tulsi saplings were distributed to promote greening the environment in a seminar organized by the Institute at its registered office. More than 100 such saplings were distributed to tribal people, urban housewives and people from various walks of life.

WORLD DAY FOR PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE

26 June 2003

Description: A seminar was organized for redressing the problems of drug addicts and drug peddlers, woman and children traffickers at Sonagachi Red Light Zone. The program was graced by eminent film personality Mr. Chiranjeet Chakraborty. A skit was presented on drug abuse and condoms were distributed as our venture against HIV/AIDS. 'Complan' health drink packets were given to the children of sex workers.

WORLD POPULATION DAY

11 July 2003

Description: Our Institute organized a rally to promote safe sex, family planning, health care, education for all, poverty eradication for building a better population. The walk was graced by eminent film personality Ms. Satabdi Roy, Mr. Nesar Warris (Human Rights Commission), Mr. S.B. Roy (Eveready Industries). A street play was presented on the relevant themes and condoms and health care leaflets were distributed.

SEX WORKERS EYE-DONATION

27 July 2003

Description: Sex workers of Sonagachi signed up to donate their eyes after their death for giving sight to the blind. The program was graced by the Hon'ble Nagmani (Union Minister for Empowerment and Justice), Hon'ble Biswanath Chowdhury, Minister-in-Charge for Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal, Mr. Chitresh Das, eminent dancer, Ms. Debashree Roy, eminent film personality. Besides pledges for eye donation, condoms were distributed and health drinks were given to malnourished children.

FELICITATION OF MR. CHITRESH DAS

04 August 2003

Description: Eminent dancer Mr. Chitresh Das was felicitated by our Institute through presentation of silver items, embroidered shawls and auspicious items. This was followed by a dance recital by him. This was held in the Institute's Headquarters.

ANNUAL FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

23 August 2003

Description: Like every other year the Institute sponsored the Winner's Trophy for the annual football tournament organized by South Calcutta Amara Sabai Club. This was done to promote sports and health awareness among the youths.

VISIT OF MRS. NAJET KARABORNI

18 October 2003

Description: Ms. Najet Karaborni, Senior Interregional Adviser/OUSG/UNDESA, Project Coordinator UN-NGO-IRENE, visited the Institute's office at Kolkata, interacted with our tribal representatives and exchanged views about our technical expertise and finally campaigned at Sonagachi Red Light Zone against HIV/AIDS at a function organized by the Institute. Detailed report is separately available.

WORLD DAY FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

19 November 2003

Description: In pursuance of the Millennium Development Goal of Alleviating Poverty and Hunger and ensure Good Health, the Institute conducted a free herbal treatment health camp at Kolkata for 1000 children below 14 years of age. After the check-up they were provided with lunch by the Institute. All of the children were either street urchins, orphans, child laborers or disadvantaged children. All of them were living below the poverty line with no guardians to guide them on their betterment. The Institute pledged to run a weekly school with midday meals for these children.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

08 March 2004

Description: In this campaign at Sonagachi Red Light Zone, a Three-Point program was adopted by the sex-workers of Sonagachi under the Institute's banner. The program included mass signatures by sex-workers for legislation of condom usage to promote safe sex and prevent HIV/AIDS. A self-help group was formed to train in optional source of livelihood and become bankable. Also included was a training program in Kamasutra-based safe sex entertainment aimed to reduce repeated abortions or the choice of childbearing and prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs.

NEW YORK ACTIVITIES:

DPI/NGO Conference

56th Annual DPI/NGO Conference on "Human Security and Dignity: Fulfilling the promise of the United Nations"

The UN Representative Shomik Chaudhuri attended the Conference as an observer from September 8 to 10, 2003 at the UN Headquarters in New York.

****Forum in Preparation of the 2004 High Level Segment of ECOSOC****

Mr. Shomik Chaudhuri and Ms. Vaishali Chaudhuri, the UN and Additional UN Representatives respectively, attended the 'Forum in Preparation of the 2004 High Level Segment of ECOSOC' on the theme "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010" at the ECOSOC Chambers of the UN on March 18, 2004. Mr. Chaudhuri made recommendations at the forum (which was web cast all over the world) on behalf of the Institute, which were drafted as part of the final Report.

The Recommendations of the Institute were published as a part of the **Report of the Substantive Session of 2004** held in New York, from 28 June-23 July 2004, as part of Item 2 of the provisional agenda.