

**REPORT**

**OF**

**INSTITUTE OF**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**For the period April 2002 to March 2003**

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## INTRODUCTION

The **Institute of International Social Development** is registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1956, section 25 as a non-governmental, non-profit-making organization committed to fulfill the aims and ideals of the United Nations through all its activities and programs. It has received its ***Special Consultative Status with the ECOSOC of the United Nations in October 2000.*** The Institute undertakes programs in line with the recommendations of the United Nations System and organizes conferences, workshops, symposia, seminars and projects on social and developmental issues.

The main beneficiaries of the multi-dimensional programs of the Institute are the poor, deprived and disadvantaged women, children, senior citizens, marginalized groups and youths. A group of dedicated and experienced social workers and eminent experts constitute the Institute. We present here, a brief summary of our manifold activities during the period under review.

## PROJECTS AT A GLANCE

### **Project ‘Sushiksha’**

#### **Definition:**

It is a functional literacy center for the disadvantaged groups, primarily the adult women and children of the underprivileged families.

#### **Purpose:**

To bring about more independence in the lives of the deprived poor women with regard to reading, letter writing, doing signatures and maintaining accounts in their daily lives. Higher literacy levels would facilitate women to understand and utilize the various opportunities provided by the government and other sources. This would enable them to avail amenities provided by the government and other bodies to improve their quality of life and those of their families, since women play a pivotal role in the family that is the basic unit of a society. Hence the project would contribute towards a better world.

#### **Place:**

The project is being undertaken at Bhitargarh village, Mecheda, in Midnapore district of West Bengal, India.

#### **Population coverage:**

The population covered for this project is around 1,000 people from over 100 families.

#### **PHASE I:**

The yearly course of academic study at Bhitargarh village, Mecheda, in Midnapore district of West Bengal, for adult women is continuing since its inception from September 8, 2000. On ‘World Literacy Day’ students received Pass Certificates from the Institute and were advised to open income generation activities by the IISD representative as they were now familiar with the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. Besides the usual functional literacy course, a cultural and value-based orientation is also being carried out for the adult women students with a view that they may raise better children.

## **Project 'Hope' (Sonagachi Red Light Area)**

### **Definition:**

It is a comprehensive welfare program for the sex workers and their children.

### **Program:**

The project is aimed at bringing primary healthcare facilities, functional literacy and awareness on social issues in the lives of the sex workers and their children to improve their quality of life.

### **Place:**

In Sonagachi Red Light area in Calcutta, India.

### **Population:**

Around 40,000 sex workers and their children.

### **PHASE I:**

#### **Program:**

Free distribution of condoms encouraging safe sex, distribution of pictographic posters and leaflets on prevention of sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS. This phase is aimed at creating awareness on personal health care services and anti AIDS movement.

### **PHASE II:**

#### **Program:**

A permanent free clinic at Sonagachi has been established to draw an idea of the diseases that afflict the sex workers and their families and provide them with healthcare facilities.

### **PHASE III:**

#### **Program:**

A research team is preparing a record of types of diseases common to the locality along with the record of the suspected STD/HIV and AIDS cases in the locality for further study and treatment.

### **PHASE IV:**

#### **Program:**

Repeated awareness campaigns and public meetings on global issues afflicting human civilization is conducted there for their better understanding of the issues and improving their quality of life.

### **PHASE V:**

#### **Program:**

The weekly Homeopathy Medical Clinic at the red light area is running regularly. From time to time health and hygiene awareness campaigns are carried out. Sex workers and their children have developed a knack for consulting doctors for any ailment instead of neglecting it. Moreover, for throwing garbage they have brought dustbins instead of littering the area. They have developed awareness on safe sex for HIV/AIDS prevention. Use of condoms has increased in the area.

## **Project 'Shramdaan'**

### **Definition:**

It is an employment generation project for the rural and urban unemployed youths.

### **Population under consideration:**

More than 50,000 people directly or indirectly.

### **PHASE I:**

In the sphere of income generation the Institute is continuing the work started earlier where it donated mixer-grinder machines with the support of Inner Wheel Club of Central Calcutta for the village women of Bhitargarh village in Mecheda, West Bengal, to help grind spices, packet them, sell them and earn money for their livelihood. The institute also trained them for the purpose. Besides, a number of youths were recommended by the Institute to various companies for jobs.

## **Project 'Suswasthya'**

### **Definition:**

It is a primary health care facility for the rural/urban underprivileged families.

### **Population under consideration:**

50,000 plus people directly or indirectly.

### **PHASE I:**

#### **Program:**

Monthly free health check-up camps for pregnant women, lactating mothers, children and senior citizens.

#### **Place:**

In Kala Bagan, Behala area of Kolkata.

### **PHASE II:**

#### **Program:**

Conducting free medical consultations at a center and also providing common medicines at the weekly free clinics. This is aimed at improving the health conditions of the underprivileged families by providing free medical consultations.

### **PHASE III:**

#### **Program:**

Conducting research based on case studies on the plight of the slum dwellers or poor families under critical economic crisis and non-availability of health care facilities or limited health care facilities.

The project is aimed to improve the general health conditions of the underprivileged people. It is also aimed at documenting the causes of diseases common to the locality under consideration and making proper arrangements for its eradication.

#### **Phase IV:**

#### **Program:**

The permanent Free Clinic in Ayurvedic treatment, which was opened in October 2001 at Kala Bagan, Behala, in Calcutta, consisting of slum dwellers infected or vulnerable to Tuberculosis, Hepatitis-B and other infectious diseases due to their extreme poverty, is continuing with overwhelming response.

## **PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE**

#### **WORLD HEALTH WEEK**

To observe 'World Health Week', the Institute launched a 7-day Health Awareness program in Calcutta from April 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2002. While 7<sup>th</sup> April 2002 was observed by running our regular Ayurvedic Clinic at Kala Bagan slum, Behala, Calcutta, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2002 was observed by way of mass Hepatitis – B Vaccination camps at Nizam Palace and our registered office. The program was conducted by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

#### **EARTH WEEK**

Earth Week was observed in the Borough – 10 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation along with Nehru Yuva Kendra from 22<sup>nd</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> April 2002. A 7- day orientation camp on alternate living was conducted for youths with self-destructive tendencies. Leaflets on healthy lifestyles were distributed with the help of the Borough Chairman Mr. Aroop Biswas. The camp was attended by more than 500 youths. Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General presided over the sessions.

#### **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES**

In observance of the International Day of Families the Institute, in association with Nehru Yuva Kendra, South Kolkata, conducted a focus group meeting on HIV/AIDS/STD prevention and sex education to ensure a secure and safe life. Women below 35 years and males were invited to participate in this program held at our office premises on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2002. Ms Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General presided over the meeting.

#### **A FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

A focus group meeting on HIV/AIDS Prevention was held at Kalabagan Mahabirtala (Behala) jointly organized by the Institute and Nehru Yuva Kendra, South Kolkata on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2002. About 32 people participated and made their views clear regarding HIV/AIDS. It was decided that Kalabagan club would reorganize meetings with smaller clubs to participate in HIV/AIDS Prevention programs.

#### **POSTER COMPETITION AND QUIZ ON HIV/AIDS PREVENTION**

The Institute, in association with Tollygunj slum's Janakalyan Seva Samiti, organized a poster competition on HIV/AIDS Prevention on May 22, 2002. The competition received financial support from Nehru Yuva Kendra, South Kolkata and donation of paints from Arty Colour Company. More than 100 children participated.

#### **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2002 the Institute, in association with Sitala Sangha of Bhitagarh village of Midnapore (East), observed World Environment Day by way of a Rally on ecological balance preservation. People of the village painted numerous placards with messages on Environment and put them in every lane and by-lane of the village. Later, a workshop for reduction of production of polluting agents and increasing organic farming was held. Ladies of 'Sushiksha Center' sang self composed songs on Environment.

### **WORLD DAY FOR DRUG ABUSE, PREVENTION OF ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN AND VICTIMS OF TORTURE**

A Rally of 500 youngsters and activists was organized by the Institute on June 26 2002. The route covered a distance of 5 km and covered major streets, marketplaces and public transport stoppages. Slogans and placards displaying anti-drug peddling, illicit trafficking of girl children and morally supporting victims of torture were there. The Secretary General of the Institute conducted the Rally.

### **WORLD POPULATION DAY**

World Population Day was observed by the Institute by way of mass Health check up camps for sex workers and their children in the stream of Ayurvedic and Allopathic treatment in promotion of the slogan 'Health for All' at Abinash Kabiraji Street, Sonagachi Red Light Area, on July 11<sup>th</sup> 2002.

### **JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT 2002**

A one-member delegation from our Institute attended the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa from August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2002 to September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Articles and publicity materials on Sustainable Development was distributed at the Summit.

### **ANNUAL FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT**

To promote street football as a drive against drug abuse in slum adolescents, the Annual Kishan Lal Dalmia Trophy football tournament was held from August 31<sup>st</sup> 2002 to September 1<sup>st</sup> 2002. The trophy was presented to the winners by Mr. Kundanlal Dhall, eminent Advocate of the Kolkata High Court.

### **THE UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION 55<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DPI/NGO CONFERENCE**

A 3 - member delegation attended the DPI/NGO Conference held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from September 9<sup>th</sup> 2002 to September 11<sup>th</sup> 2002 and distributed articles and publicity on the related subject.

### **WORLD DAY FOR PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE**

The Institute, in association with West Bengal Prohibition Committee and Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Society, observed 'World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse' on November 19, 2002 by organizing a rally by 200 underprivileged children who are daily vulnerable to child abuse. The walk covered approximately 3 km in the Narkeldanga area of the city of Kolkata, West Bengal, India. The children were mostly laborers in tea-shops, garages, domestic help, garbage pickers, and urchins and were under 14 years of age. The Institute became a moral support for these children and the neighborhood became aware on the issue of child abuse. The Rally was conducted by the Secretary General of the Institute, Rajyashree Chaudhuri.

### **12 DAY 2- WHEELER AIDS AWARENESS INTERNATIONAL RALLY**

The Institute ventured on a 2 – Wheeler HIV/AIDS Prevention Awareness International Rally, which spanned 13 days, covering 3 major states of India and a few districts of Nepal and covered a distance of approximately 3000 km. This was the first time that an ECOSOC NGO of the Third World in Asia conducted an International Rally on HIV/AIDS with the help of vehicles as support for such a massive distance. The rallyists comprised of 12 motorbikers, 2 cameramen for documenting the journey, 1 doctor, 1 nurse, 2 luggage cars and pilot car drivers, 1 microphone and sound system operator, 1 security man, 1 finance manager, 1 porter, and 2 announcers. The reduction in the number of participants were done to enable our partner organizations to provide 50 to 100 participants at different places and also to help them in providing adequate shelter and food for the participants within their means. Moreover it was advised that since the Kingdom of Nepal was facing terrorism, a huge rally could be difficult.

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On December 1<sup>st</sup> 2002 'WORLD AIDS DAY' at 12 noon the rally was flagged off by 2 HIV positive children aged 12 years and 5 years along with other dignitaries.

Along the journey leaflets on AIDS prevention and awareness was distributed. The target group were truckers, floating sex workers and youth club members, some of them drug users, school students, migrant workers, health care workers, lawyers, laborers, bus drivers, roadside shop owners, petrol pump owners, villagers besides the normal population.

The Rally started from Kolkata and went through Kolaghat, Uluberia, Midnapore Town, Chichira, famous industrial town of Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Bodh Gaya, Gaya, Manpur, Wazirganj, Rajgir, Nalanda, Patna, Muzzaffarpur, all in India and then to Nepal in Birganj, Narayanganj, Mungling, Katmandu, Hetauda, Kakarbita, Lahan, Raj Biraj and Itahari. Then the Rally returned to India to Siliguri, Islampur, Raigunj, Malda, Behrampur, Palasi Para, Devagram, Krishnanagar, Dum Dum and back to Kolkata.

The Rally was supported by Nehru Yuva Kendra, Red Cross Society, Ministers of the West Bengal Government, West Bengal State AIDS Prevention & Control Society, Association of Ayurvedic Doctors in India, Consulate General of Nepal and other local NGOs.

The Rally received messages and best wishes from:

His Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of United Nations; His Excellency, Mr. Viren J. Shah, Governor, West Bengal; Hon'ble Mr. Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, Chief Minister, West Bengal; Hon'ble Dr. Surya Kanta Mishra, M.I.C Health, West Bengal.

#### **STREET & DISABLED CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL**

The Institute organized a 2-day Street and Disabled Children's Festival on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003, at Vivekananda Park, Kolkata. The festival was inaugurated by Guest – in – Chief Hon'ble Mr. Biswanath Chowdhury, Minister - in – Charge, Social Welfare and Jail, Government of West Bengal. The event was graced by other personalities like Mr. Anil Mukherjee, Chairman, Kolkata Municipal Corporation; Mr. Dibyendu Biswas, Chairman, Borough – VIII, KMC; Mr. Suresh Kumar, IAS, Project Director, West Bengal State AIDS Prevention & Control Society; Mr. Nesar Waris, Joint Secretary, Human Rights Commission. The inauguration was followed by a sit-n-draw contest, and cultural program by the disabled children.

On 24<sup>th</sup> there was a sports event for the street and mentally handicapped children followed by a fancy dress show by the children and prize distribution. The prize distribution ceremony was graced by Mr. S.B.Roy, Sr. Vice President, Eveready Industries and Rtn. Amitava Mookherjee, District Governor, Rotary International Dist –3290. It was conducted and presided by Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri, Secretary General.

#### **LANGUAGE DAY OBSERVANCE**

The Institute, in association with Disha – Youth forum of Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad, observed 'Language Day' on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2003 at Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Hall, Kolkata, by way of deliberations by expert linguists of ancient and modern languages on the topic of 'Language – Ushering Peace'.

#### **COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN - 47<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

A 2 – member delegation from our Institute attended the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Status of Women held at the UN Headquarters in New York, U.S.A., from March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003 to March 14<sup>th</sup> 2003.

#### **VISIT TO 'BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TOWARDS ACHIEVING DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN INDIA' – NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

The Secretary General, Ms. Rajyashree Chaudhuri attended a 3- day National Conference hosted by All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA) in New Delhi from March 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 to March 7<sup>th</sup> 2003. A UN Delegation led by Chief of DESA NGO (Dept of Economic & Social Affairs) Ms. Hanifa Mezoi was present.

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The topics that were discussed were;

1. Reduction of Poverty
  - a) Micro Credit
  - b) Economic Empowerment
2. Health and Nutrition
  - a) HIV/AIDS
  - b) Malaria
3. Sustainable Development

It was hoped that this Conference would help to build partnership between Government, Corporate, NGOs and Civil Society Sectors.

#### **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

The Institute observed International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2003 by organizing a WALK on Women's Rights, Demand for Legal Literacy and Fight Against Abuse of Women. It was coordinated by Ms. Michaela Buschi, International Volunteer for the Institute.