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## Editorial

This edition of AID Delhi newsletter though coming towards the end of month has many things to look forward to. It features a new section of Volunteer profiles. Hopefully, it'll motivate the volunteers and other readers to contribute their bit to the society. Introduction to projects at AID Gurgaon and Khoj (one of our most recent projects in South Delhi) is also being carried out this month. As you might have already noticed, the look and feel of the newsletter has also changed considerably from the previous versions. We sincerely hope that our readers appreciate it.

As this editorial is being penned, the medicos are striking to achieve justice. It is one of the golden times for awakening of the Indian citizens with people movements questioning the government's decisions one after the other - Bhopal, Narmada and now the anti-reservation protests. The best part is the way the youth has participated in these protests - non-violently yet assertively. If the youth are awakened, we sure can hope for a better future.

But let's all ask ourselves a question - are we awakened too? Do we feel for the plight of our people living today and those who are still to come? If yes, have we contributed enough? Let's do it now as there is no better time to do the right thing

Contributed By: Riputapan

## Narmada Bachao Andolan

Narmada Bachao Aandolan (NBA) is one of the oldest struggles India has witnessed since Independence for social justice and dignity. It further came into limelight recently when the veteran activist Medha Patkar went for an indefinite hunger strike demanding the immediate suspension of Government's decision to increase the height of Sardar Sarovar Dam on Narmada River. What followed was a political melodrama with some senior ministers and Government officials taking a supercilious stance and some of them even resorting to ludicrous acts, just to defy the logic by any means. Seeing the ripples it has created across the Indian society and plethora of questions were raised against what is just, it is worthwhile to understand the whole issue and analyze our stance on such matters.

The history of NBA goes back to 1986 when the first resistance to the SSP (Sardar Sarovar Project) was organized. SSP was envisaged by the Government as a remedy to water-starved states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat. But a certain outcome of the project was the submergence of over 6000 hectares of land, leaving thousands of families getting displaced. Government promised to rehabilitate the displaced families and to compensate them with cultivable land at another location. But unfortunately the promise stayed in words and papers and never got realized on ground. Water flowed down and thousands of people witnessed their houses getting submerged in front of their eyes. Officials turned a blind eye and even today most of the families are living without basic amenities such as proper shelter, access to drinking water, and proper sanitation. People started protesting following the non-violent agitation. In early 90s, the leader Medha Patkar and many of its supporters undertook long hunger strikes to push their demands, but the Government of Gujarat took it as a prestige issue and continued to push ahead with the project. After long protests, In October 2000 Supreme Court ordered that no further construction could be undertaken at SSP without proper rehabilitation of already displaced families. The same judgment was reinstated by the apex court in March, 2005.

The problem resurfaced when the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) gave green signal to raise the height of Sardar Sarovar Dam from current 110.6 m to 121.9 m.

This was a clear violation of Supreme Court's earlier orders as the situation in Narmada valley was far away from complete rehabilitation. The people came down to streets in protests and staged dharna on March 18 in front of Shram shakti Bhawan New Delhi, the office of the Union Water Resource Ministry.

On March 28, NBA leader Medha Patkar, along with two other supporters, sat for an indefinite hunger strike in front of Jantar Mantar at New Delhi. Her strike continued for 19 days as Government continued raising the Dam's height paying no heeds to the prevailing pain and anguish of the protestors. Medha ji was later forcefully transferred to AIIMS as her health started deteriorating seriously. AID's (*Association for India's Development*) stance on the situation was to support the protest with full solidarity. Many events were organized in the capital, to spread the awareness about the movement and express support, where volunteers undertook active participation. In Delhi, an exhibition of children's paintings was installed where children sang group songs for social justice. Several singers, writers, photographers and filmmakers participated in the daylong program. 'Films for Freedom' issued a statement signed by 212 artists. A candle light vigil was later undertaken at Jantar Mantar to express solidarity for activists.

After a vigorous protest of over a month some favorable results showed up. On April 17 Supreme Court gave ruling in favor of NBA, clearly stating that the construction will be *have to be stopped* if the adequate measures of complete rehabilitation of displaced people are not taken by the responsible states. Medhaji and her colleagues called off the strikes as a positive decision was finally taken. But the euphoria died down as May 8 statement of Supreme Court allowed the construction of dam to continue while awaiting the report to be submitted by so-called Relief & Rehabilitation Oversight group. The fingers are still crossed and hope lingers. As Stephen King said, "*Hope is a good thing—maybe the best thing, and no good thing ever dies.*"

Contributed By: Peeyush

## Introduction: AID Gurgaon

What you are about to read is a story of an endeavor that has just seen the crack of dawn. Of course, as the endeavor has lasted because of persistent efforts, it is expected that it will go a long way, hopefully with many joining in.

The endeavor started around nine months back when a few working people of Gurgaon's Electonic City joined heads and hands with a wish to contribute to

the society. The introductory session to the AID activities in Delhi was conducted by Anirban and Somen and that was the first step to the group we have today.

After much deliberation, a day care center of Mobile crèches at Sohna Road was chosen. For some of us, it has been our first step toward volunteerism. Mobile Crèches are a good platform to interact with children of migrant construction workers. They have a large network of daycare centers in slums (more than 450, with 600,000 children) across the nation.

Deepak directed many towards the center, mostly his fellow workers at Evalueserve. As others joined in, things started to move in the group. Volunteering activities include teaching simple things, interacting, and spending time with children at Mobile crèches. The sheer enjoyment and enlightenment in such actions is increasingly becoming contagious and people are slowly joining in such visits with encouragement from some consistent visitors like Sapna, Saurabh, Chakshu, Prashant, Prafulla, Ruchi, and many others whose contributions have been much appreciated.



In the same spirit, another NGO called "Sankalp" was contacted and visited. With the same viewpoint on education for poor, Sankalp's system and structure was observed to be more formal than Mobile Crèches. And so we are now planning to assist some children of Mobile Crèches with potential to join Sankalp to further their learning.

During the visits, it was observed at Mobile crèches that children lack proper clothes. Keeping that in mind, we organized a clothes drive and as a bonus we got some toys too!

Parichay Products have also seen a presence in our group, with a stall being put up in G.E with Somen's worthy support. Major credit goes to Sapna who has taken an internal initiative to get this done.

In parallel, a google group was formally created -

aidgurgaon@googlegroups.com. Brainstorming within the group has helped us generate ideas, and these are shared and discussed among members, each formulating a direction path for the group in consent with all who are a part of it.

Soon, Prafulla took the initiative and created our first interactive networking tool, the BLOG called h2o-india.blogspot.com. H2O stands for Hands to Ours, providing a distinct identity and perspective to our volunteerism. You may visit the same to get a true picture of initiatives taken at AID-Gurgaon.

The potential and the desire to contribute to the society has been there for long but the opportunities and a right platform has been missing. We hope that AID-Gurgaon will take care of identifying the opportunities to volunteer and fuel the growth of such activities in coming times.

The first step has been taken and we hope to take this endeavor to as many people as we can, involve and encourage them to participate with meaningful and consistent results.

Contributed By: Neha/Deepak

## Introduction: Khoj (Steps for change)

*“Hazon khwahishen aisi,  
ki har khwahish pe dam nikle,  
bahut nikle mere armaan,  
mere armaan phir bhi kam nikle”*

Khoj started its journey on 26th Nov 2005. At present, there are 15 to 18 children (in the age group of 3-15 yrs) at Khoj. Some are school dropouts and most of them have never got an opportunity to go to a school. All of them are earning their livelihoods by boot-polishing and begging in Dilli-haat, Ansal plaza, and South extension market etc.

### Objectives:

- ❖ To empower the skills, abilities, and talents of marginalized and street children to support life in a better way.
- ❖ To inspire community members to share their resources, capacities, and knowledge with the children.
- ❖ To promote volunteerism among people

Learning activities include tree plantation, theatre, games, drawing, story-telling, marble painting, puppetry, clay modeling, origami, spray painting etc.

## Achievements (In the beginning children did not know how to hold a pencil):

- ❖ Regularity amongst children
- ❖ Increased hygiene awareness amongst children
- ❖ The children are able to recognize, decode, and construct words (both oral and written).
- ❖ The children have started developing a good learning and sharing relationship with the gardner of the park.
- ❖ Our work has been acknowledged by the residents around the park and as a result, their attitude has changed toward these children



## We Need Volunteers for:

- ❖ Conducting session with children
- ❖ Networking
- ❖ Programming
- ❖ Reporting
- ❖ Documenting
- ❖ Proposal making

## Resources: (Old or New as convenient and feasible)

- ❖ **Stationary:** Pencils, erasers, sharpeners and note books.
- ❖ **Colors:** Crayons, water colors, poster colors, enamel paints, pencil colors, sketch pens etc.
- ❖ **Books:** Text books upto class 5th, cursive writing books, story books, picture books, drawing books, practice books for language and maths.
- ❖ **Teaching aids** of all kinds up to class 5th.
- ❖ **Toys, Clothes and footwear**

Contributed By: Selva

## Project Updates: Parichay

### Highlights:

- ❖ Parichay has received sponsorship for all 13 kids
- ❖ A new volunteer, Neha has agreed to visit Parichay on Saturdays.
- ❖ Sapnil, an engineering student, is also enthusiastic about joining the team
- ❖ Swina left Delhi. She has joined a management school in Dehradun. Parichay team wishes her all the very best in life.

### Parichay needs funds for:

Embroidery machine:	Rs. 4500-5000
Harmonium:	Rs. 3500-4000
DVD Player:	Rs. 3000
Inverter:	Rs. 5000-8000
Printer:	Rs. 4500

Contributed By: Puneeta

We need volunteers to initiate the activity, preferably girls. The place remains the same.

This is a good opportunity for the new volunteers from Noida. To encourage punctuality, we would appreciate if students can come forward for this activity, as it might be difficult for the working people to be punctual owing to their hectic schedules.

An interactive session was held on May 24 for which Gunjan deserves special appreciation for his efforts to bring the team together. During the session, the ways to prevent malaria were discussed. The students were extremely excited to see the flipcharts and additional educational material on Malaria. We hope to conduct such sessions more frequently. The discussion lasted about 45 minutes but Somen's camera took away the cake as it had children's undivided attention.

After the class we had a brief meeting amongst ourselves to decide the further plan of action.

Contributed By: Gunjan, Somendra  
Compiled By: Puneeta

## Project Updates: Nai Disha

Contributors have shown enormous confidence in Nai Disha's efforts by contributing funds close to Rs.40k. The funds will go toward sponsoring the education of students of class VI and above. We wish to continue Computer education for Class IV. We will also focus on paying more attention on practicals.

We also wish to encourage students so that they can bring up their doubts in other subjects as well.

Recently, the school authorities have come up with a suggestion. They have suggested that we should take up some General Knowledge classes for the kids as they are totally unaware of even basic knowledge of PM, CM, President etc.

During the vacation, we will hold special sessions to cover up the foundation knowledge, so that the students are able to catch up with the curricular instructions.

Our volunteers are also helping the students of Class IV, VII, and X, who had previously studied at Nai Disha.

To add spice to summer vacation, a class was taken by Peeyush, which the students enjoyed a lot. We shall continue taking few more sessions on similar lines.

We wish to thank all the volunteers who have been extremely dedicated in supporting the efforts at Nai Disha. The volunteer strength at Nai Disha has started stabilizing with the same set of people visiting the center every weekend. It really makes things more convenient for both the students and the volunteers.

Contributed By: Shammi

## Project Updates: Prayas

Prayas will soon start evening classes for the ladies of community. The ladies themselves have requested for the same. Prayas team is extremely enthusiastic about this step. We all know that ladies are the foundation of a family and anything that goes to make them independent can bring a favorable change in the community.

Initially, we are planning to organize three classes a week. Timings can be from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM.



## Intro to new section: Volunteer Profiles

Volunteers are the life-blood of AID. We are a team of over 100 volunteers and most of us are contributing in more ways than one to bring about the change we aspire for.

From this newsletter on, we plan to introduce two volunteers every month from an active project. We hope that you would find this section informative and interesting.

The objective of this section is to get acquainted with volunteers across the projects and teams contributing to the AID Delhi chapter, as also to know the ones who have been dedicating efforts behind the scenes.

Every month, we would request a team coordinator to introduce two volunteers from their respective projects/teams. This will go in a round-robin fashion. We, thus, wish to connect our volunteers to ensure a well-knit structure, so that we can learn from each other, and share our experiences on the activities performed by each one of us.

We really hope that project coordinators will contribute to this interesting idea actively, to enable supportive relationships between various projects. We also understand that there is always a room for improvement, and we earnestly solicit any feedback you may have on this section.

Contributed By: Puneeta

Whenever she is called she always responds with enthusiasm and zeal. She remains an asset for AID Delhi and Parichay.

Contributed By: Somendra

## Volunteer Profiles: Aanchal Dhara

I still do not understand from where she derives such enthusiasm for social work. Her biggest achievement has remained the documentary film which she shot at Parichay. She is a fresh pass-out of Kalindi College. She actively participated in AID.

India conference and also played the lead role in the play 'Gaddha'. Fellow volunteers will never forget how she lent her support at the registration desk for two days at AID India Conference. She has also actively participated in the fund raising initiatives. She has made commendable efforts to bring dedicated volunteers like Ankita to the AID team. She remains a valuable asset for AID Delhi and Parichay.

It has been a wonderful experience to work with them. I have learnt a lot from them. We wish to have a long association. They remain indispensable to the society, wherever they are they will make a difference to the society.

Contributed By: Somendra

## Volunteer Profiles: Swati Sumbly

She is a second year student of Jesus and Mary College. She came to know about AID from Swina (another dedicated volunteer). She went to Parichay once and became a part of it.

She took up the responsibility of marketing spices. At times, she carries as much as 10 kgs of masala to Meerut! Also, she's always trying to sensitize her friends about the social responsibilities as a result of which Parichay has received financial support towards sponsored education program.

The list is endless. She actively participated in AID India conference. Her enactment in the play 'Gaddha' was marvelous. She participates in fund raising activities and has also circulated the eve teasing survey forms in her college. She is a devoted volunteer to AID.

And crawling on the planet's face  
Some insects called the human race  
Lost in time  
Lost in space  
And meaning

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