

Partnership-in-Action was set up in April 1994, to work with (DIZ) our sister organization in Germany to support the work of the Ecumenical Sangam in Nagpur, Central India. The overall aim of the Sangam is to start and support a process of sustainable development in the rural villages and urban slums in such a way that the people do not become dependant upon the Sangam but are able to manage their own affairs. The Sangam is currently working in more than 50 villages supported from the Bamhani Base Centre and three Sub-Centres which are at Sawangi, Gondwananagar and Narayanpur. Bamhani is approx. 35 kms south of Nagpur on Highway 7 towards Chandrapur. The Sangam provides primary health-care and social development to all people when requested. At present the Sangam relies on funding from the German partners, Deutsch-Indische Zusammenarbeit (Indo-German Cooperation) and Partnership-in-Action. The building of the 'Rainbow Centre' in the Civil Lines area of Nagpur, which is a Guesthouse with a Conference Centre, has enabled the Sangam to generate funds locally. In the Rainbow Centre there is office space for the Ecumenical Sangam. Following conversion of the basement in 2006 there is dormitory accommodation, lecture and study rooms for the twelve month residential Trained Birth Attendants courses together with an office base for the Sangam's Slum and Leprosy Awareness Teams.

Partnership-in-Action has supported and funded for the past twenty two years three projects, a **Kindergarten Class** for up to thirty five 3 and 4 year old village children and a **Tailoring Class** for young women in Bamhani Base Centre plus the ongoing training programme to provide 'bare foot doctors' **Village Health and Social Workers (VHSWs)** for the rural villages and urban slums. The VHSWs training courses are run twice yearly for up to 15 young women with six weeks intensive training in Mamta cottage hospital in Bamhani, followed by 4½ months practical experience working in the rural villages. The trainee VHSWs work with the Sangam's Health Team from the Base Centre and three Sub-Centres at Narayanpur, Sawangi Burg and Gondwananagar. As well as making daily house to house visits in the villages with the Health Team, they assist in running weekly clinics with visiting doctors and in organising and running various Health Camps.

The Ecumenical Sangam runs **Tailoring Classes** for young women in the Base Centre and the three rural Sub-Centres in Gondwananagar, Narayanpur and Sawangi villages plus the two urban Slum Centres in Saraswati and Sewa Nagar slums of Nagpur. The young women are taught the skills of pattern making, cutting out, tacking, machining and

finishing a number of garments to the standards of the Government Examinations. The young women are also taught about personal hygiene, basic first aid and healthcare together with the basic skills



of setting up and running their own business. Many of them take up a microfinance loan from the Sangam to purchase a sewing machine and set up their own business working from home, repaying the loan from part of their earnings. Part of the course in the Base Centre also covers the skills needed to use the more expensive and complicated embroidery machines.

At the end of July, due to popular demand, a new training course was piloted at Gondwananagar Sub-Centre for the young women with the Beauty Parlour Programme. The young women from the villages are now becoming more conscious of developing their looks and a good personality so as to enhance their chances for better job opportunities, apart from gaining confidence and being on a par with the city youth. Hence the Sangam decided to pilot this course in Gondwananagar Sub-Centre and if it proved popular and successful



to extend to the Base Centre and other 2 Sub-Centres. The idea behind this course was that the girls would gain experience with cosmetics procedures and be able to either start something on their own or tie-up as support staff with other bigger salons either in Nagpur or Butibori. As this is a Certified Course, it will be registered under the Vocational Board of Maharashtra and be able to provide

better employment opportunities for the young women who successfully complete the six months training course. The Beauty Parlour was furnished and on the 24th July inaugurated by Mrs Meeta Raghtate, Principal of the Adivasi Ashramshala High School, Bhansuli. She was happy that the Sangam were doing such a wonderful job in encouraging the young women to stand on their own feet and commended the course to all the young women present. There are currently 10 students registered on this course with 5 from Gondwananagar village and the others from surrounding villages.

In September the Sangam staff from the village centres decided as another way of advertising the work of the Sangam to set up stalls in the local Saturday Bazaars in Takalghat village covered by Gondwananagar Sub-Centre and Khairi village covered by the Bamhani Base Centre. The items that they sold on the stalls were jars of Pickles and Papads which were prepared by the Sangam's staff from all the Sub-Centres. The staff used their Saturdays to prepare the jars of Pickle and Papads which they



labelled and packaged with the Sangam's emblem. It was the first time that the Sangam staff had planned and taken part in this sort of event and they used this opportunity to explain to the villagers about the development work undertaken by the Sangam team. The Sangam staff were very excited about this new venture and bought many of the products. The villagers appreciated the home made products

and the amount of work that had been put into preparing them. The Jars of Pickle proving especially popular with the majority sold and the balance being offered in other villages when the kindergarden children were dropped home by the jeep at the end of the school day.

The Sangam's Slum team besides running Sewing Classes in the Slum Centres in Sewa Nagar and Saraswati Nagar regularly organise Health and General Awareness Programmes for the Slum Dwellers. Whilst making visits to the slum dwellers homes the Slum Team take this opportunity to record the social, economic and geological backgrounds of the families. Whilst making home visits the opportunity is taken to inform and guide on the preparation of nutritious meals and ensure that the under 6 year olds receive routine vaccinations. Weight checks are made on the children, Ante Natal and Post Natal mothers along with guidance on their meals and they are encouraged to ensure personal cleanliness and hygiene for healthy living. General guidance is given to 10 to15 year old girls and boys about their health and education. During these home visits enquiries are made to ensure that patients are taking their prescribed medicines and pregnant women are informed about the various schemes which are provided by the Government during their period of pregnancy.

If you would like to make a donation or regular monthly contributions to the development work of the Ecumenical Sangam please e-mail: pina@sangamonline.org , ring 01323 731715 or write to 14, Luton Close, Eastbourne, East Sussex. BN21 1UX

Partnership in Action

Registered Charity No. 1036683



Health and Hygiene Awareness programme in Saraswati Nagar Slum centre

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See the Ecumenical Sangam Website: www.sangamonline.org
for more regular updates of the Sangam's activities click on 'News
Items' and see how individuals lives are being changed by the
various training programmes and initiatives run by the
Ecumenical Sangam