

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 four years for 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.

In the Autumn the Village Health & Social Worker Volunteers students together with the 2 German volunteers went on a field trip to visit a Leprosy Village at Anandawan, a twelve hundred acre site. There they were able to see the different sectors of the leprosy department set up by Dr. Babe Amte located in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra state. The

project was opened by Dr. Amte and his wife in 1950. They mainly established the Ashram and local community rehabilitation centre for leprosy patients but the institution's working field now extends far beyond the original purpose. Next to improving the lives of those people affected by leprosy, its principal activities include conducting health camps, helping people affected by any disability and social awareness programmes. The centre now has two hospitals, a college, an orphanage, schools for the blind and deaf and a technical wing. The VHSW students left the Leprosy village with a broader understanding of leprosy and the ways it affects people's lives.

During the first three months of the year Diagnostic Health Camps were held in different villages under the Lions Club programme, Germany. These Camps were held in Sawangi, Shedeswar and Borkedi villages and a total of 276 patients benefitted from the Camps. General Health check-ups and eye checks were undertaken by Doctors from the Primary Healthcare Centres of Bamhani and Sawangi Sub-Centres. Spectacles and medicine were distributed to the patients by the Health workers and the Auxiliary Nurse Midwives of the Ecumenical Sangam.

In January the Second Annual Gathering of Kindergarten Students was held at Bamhani Base Centre. All eight of the Kindergarten Classes from Bamhani and the three Sub-Centres were present and participated with dances and costumes that were sown by the Sewing class teachers. As well as the dance performances by the children, the Sangam's staff made several contributions. Certificates were awarded to the best students by the Sangam for their achievements in several different categories and after the programme had finished the children and parents stayed to talk to the teachers and enjoy some refreshments. The 2nd Annual Gathering of Kindergarten children was felt to have been a great success with the children, their parents and the Sangam's teaching staff very happy with the day.

On the 26th January the Republic Day was remembered to celebrate the day in 1950 when the Indian Constitution was signed and India became an independent nation. The Ecumenical Sangam's staff, TBA's and David, a visitor from DIZ team were present in the Rainbow Guesthouse garden when the Indian flag was hoisted by Naresh Kohle (Slum Co-ordinator) and the national anthem was sung.

On the 8th March - International Women's Day was celebrated with 'the Empowerment of Women' being organised by the Counselling Cell in the Community Hall at Bamhani Base Centre. Proceedings began with the Lighting of the Traditional Lamp by the five main guests . With Ms. Mamta Bhandark(Counsellor) welcoming everyone and telling the history of this day which stretches back 200 years, crediting an American lady as the original founder.

The **Organic Farm** harvest in Bamhani is increasing year on year with the three main fields providing rice, chickpeas, lentils and papayas, with the kitchen garden providing fresh vegetables like spinach and brinjals (aubergine) for the kindergarten classes lunches. In November 2017 the rice fields were harvested and the entire crop was sold for a premium price in Nagpur, with chickpeas then planted on the same land. The lentil harvest took place in January and was sold in the surrounding villages with some being distributed to the Sub-Centres. Last July over 800 papaya plants were planted in one of the plots and they were ready for harvesting at the end of February.

Following the receipt of a grant from October 2017 until the end of 2020 from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) alongside our German partners DIZ, the Ecumenical Sangam have expanded their Leprosy Awareness programme to include Tuberculosis diagnosis. Despite considerable socio-economic growth in India both Leprosy and Tuberculosis are still an ongoing widespread problem among the rural and slum populations. This is due to the fact that they are generally excluded from a good healthcare, hygienic sanitation and education systems. Both Leprosy and Tuberculosis can be transmitted by a lack of knowledge made worse by superstitions. Our project partners the Ecumenical Sangam use a wide information campaign to explain how these serious diseases can be tackled in both the Slums and village population. The Village Health & Social Workers and the Slum Nurses when on home visits explain about diagnosis and treatment and if they suspect that anyone is suffering from either of these diseases are able to refer them to the appropriate medical centre. In a similar way general awareness is raised regularly both in village meetings and school visits by Naresh Kolhe (Leprosy Coordinator).

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



Annual Gathering for Awards of Kindergarten Children in Bamhani Community Hall

Spring 2018

Newsletter prepared by Bruce Williamson
Hon. Secretary of Partnership-in-Action
e.mail: Bruce58@btinternet.com

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



Rudolf Dohrmann deceased

Rudolf Dohrmann, co-founder of our partner organisation Deutsch Indische Zusammenarbeit (DIZ) in Germany died in his sleep on the 24th March 2018 at the age of 86 in Nagpur and was buried in the cemetery of All Saints' Cathedral, Nagpur. There was a moving ceremony held in the Rainbow Guest House with many of his numerous Indian friends and companions speaking about their common experiences and memories. Rudolf worked from 1971 to 1977 in Nagpur as a development worker with his wife Rita, alongside her brother Dr. Rulu Mukerjee in what would later become the Ecumenical Sangam. Upon returning to Germany he encouraged for two decades the support of the Indian commitment while working as pastor in Trinity Church Ev, Frankfurt and founded with the support of a group of like minded individuals the DIZ organisation. A Memorial Service to celebrate Rudolf Dohrmann's life has been organised in Frankfurt for Saturday 25th August 2018.

On a more personal note having spent many happy hours with Rudolph and family in Germany and India, we will really miss this amazing man. We plan to attend his Memorial Service in Frankfurt.

Judy and Bruce Williamson