

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 one 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 run 8 **Kindergarten classes** in total with 2 classes in the Bamhani Base Centre and 2 in each of the three rural Sub-Centres at Narayanpur, Sawangi Burg and Gondwananagar providing more than 250 places for children from the local villages. There are **Tailoring Classes** run in the Base Centre and the three rural Sub-Centres

plus the three urban Slum Centres in Saraswati Nagar, Sewa Nagar and Gurjawadi slums of Nagpur catering for young women.

In May 2015 Claudia Brinkmann a professional gardener and horticultural engineer joined the Ecumenical Sangam for 6 months as a volunteer and started working on the **Model Kitchen Garden** as a new Organic Farming Project at Bamhani. The project is made up of three interconnected parts joining together in the Kitchen Garden. The first part is "Eco-farming" and "Agro-forestry" methods used to cultivate fruit and vegetables following the example of the different levels of a natural tropical rainforest. Fruit trees (high level), vegetable crops (middle level) and herbs (low level) create the three levels giving mutual protection and shadow from heavy rain or sun to each other. The result is a profitable sustainable system for plants, the soil and farmers. It works without a big input of manual work or fertiliser, prevents soil erosion, keeps the important soil micro-fauna (bacteria, worms) and produces a good yield for families and farmers. The second part is the production of compost which helps protect the soil from heavy rain and sun, sheltering important soil bacteria from heat and the heavy monsoon rains, keeping the moisture in the soil for plants and trees and giving nutrients in a constant flow to the crops. The third part is water for irrigation from a Sewage Treatment Plant as in Bamhani Base Centre. The Sangam Farming Team use the treated liquid sewage effluent that has been cleaned by the Phytoid Sewage Treatment Plant System designed by NEERI which already exists in Bamhani as a sustainable irrigation system. This sewage treatment system does not require a power supply, is simple to construct, low in maintenance costs, uses low cost technology, can be simply replicated and requires only about 35sq. metres of space. Local farmers, their families and interested visitors will be able to see how the sustainable horticultural cultivation systems like "Agro-forestry" and "Eco-farming" are working. They can see the excellent results of organic and sustainable farming with easy results on difficult soils (Vertisols) in monsoon regions. The kitchen at Bamhani will be provided with fresh fruit and vegetables from their own sustainable production. The model kitchen garden can be replicated by local farmers and interested women who care about organic and sustainable production in their own fields or kitchen gardens.

In Nagpur approximately 40% of the town's population live in Slums. The Sangam's **Slum Team** lead by the Slum Co-ordinator Ms.

Partnership in Action

Registered Charity No. 1036683



Nutritional Awareness programme in Gujarwadi Nagar Slum Centre

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Sandhya Wasnik, with three Health Workers assisted by three Sewing Class Teachers operate from the three Slum Centres in Saraswati Nagar, Sewa Nagar and Gujarwadi Slums. The 3 Sewing classes in these Slum Centres are currently providing tuition for 54 students, with a number of these young women being encouraged to learn how to make the cushion and pillow covers for the Sangam's Fair Trade programme, with the covers being sold through the Sangam's German partners. This Fair Trade programme enables the young women to supplement their income. The Slum Team activities besides making home visits to typically 150 dwellings a month also include the raising of general awareness on health, hygiene and sanitation issues. A programme was recently organised in Saraswati Nagar Centre to celebrate the Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan celebrating the love and duty of brothers and sisters. In this the Slum Team were assisted by teachers from the local 'Anganwadi' centre, a government sponsored mother and child development centre, part of the Government basic healthcare programme. Similarly to celebrate Breast Feeding week a programme was organised in Sewa Nagar Centre for 55 women with the help of the local Anganwadi staff to provide information on safe breast feeding and child health, growth and the prevention of malnutrition. A Nutritional Awareness programme was held in Gujarwadi Centre for 25 women and girls between 18 and 45 years of age with Ms. Kulkarni a counsellor from the Indian Food Nutrition Board giving information about the preparation of healthy nutritious food to 25 participants.

*On the 16th September 2015 the Sangam's **Leprosy** team led by Mr. Dilip Sathe (CME Co-ordinator) organised the 163rd Continuous Medical Education programme for medical staff, students and their lecturers in the Lecture theatre of the Rainbow Centre and celebrated the participation of the 7000th medical student. The CME programme has been running for 8 years with initially funding and technical support from Alert India and its local team members from 2007 to 2013 and subsequently funding and support from HDZ, Germany from 2013 to September 2015 and has helped to firmly establish this programme of Seminars in the Rainbow Conference Centre, Nagpur.*

If you would like to a donation or a regular monthly contribution 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

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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