

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 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, 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. The Technical College within Bamhani Base Centre provide vocational training courses in Two Wheeler Maintenance and Electrical Wiring Installation and Motor Rewinding with residential accommodation for remote villagers and the urban slum dwellers.

In October 2015 the Sangam's Organic Farming team organised a Mela gathering for all the farmers from the various villages that



come under the Bamhani Base Centre and three sub-Centres at Sawangi, Narayanpur and Gondwananagar. This Mela was designed to showcase useful farm machineries, the latest techniques for Organic Farming and demonstrate

how organic fertilisers and pesticides can be produced and best applied by the farmers. The Mela was hosted in Bamhani Base Centre utilising the Community Hall for lectures and the Model Farm for demonstrations. A number of Organic Farming experts were invited to give talks in an effort to encourage the local village farmers to convert to Organic Farming methods. Following registration by the Sangam's staff, all the farmers and guests were welcomed by Mr. Shailesh Garode (Sangam's Village Project Co-ordinator) and the programme was anchored by Mr. Awadhut Kukadkar (Sangam's Organic Farming and Water Management Co-ordinator).

This programme was inaugurated by the lighting of the traditional Lamp by a number of guests who were honoured by being presented with bouquets which was followed by a welcome song sung by the students on the current Village Health and Social Worker training course. A number of talks were given detailing information on the benefits of Organic Farming Methods together



with the ill effects of the ongoing application of chemical fertilisers both on the environment and human life. These talks were very informative and effective in explaining how farmers could readily switch to a lower cost method of Organic Farming. Following the lectures and discussions all the guests and farmers were invited onto the Model Farm to see live demonstrations of the latest attachments for tractors and available tools by a Lemken of India, a Nagpur based manufacturer of farm machinery. The opportunity was taken to demonstrate to the farmers, the village headmen and other visitors the various vocational training activities of the Sangam including Two Wheeler, Electrical and Tailoring classes and Fair Trade activities in the Urban Slum Centres.

In Nagpur approx. 40% of the population live in urban slums. There are 289 notified (legal) slums, where inhabitants pay taxes and 135 non-notified (illegal) slums. In the slums the inhabitants are mostly rickshaw pullers, seasonal small vendors and house maid servants with an income ranging from a meagre Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 (£15 to £30) per month. After a hard and low-earning working day, most of the men spend their daily earnings on home-made illicit liquor which is very harmful to the human body. Excessive alcohol consumption is the most common cause for an early death among the men in the slum areas. In addition, due to poor hygiene, poor sewage systems and irregular clearing of garbage, diseases including malaria, cholera and abdominal problems are wide spread among the slum dwellers. Since 2006, in an effort to address some of these issues the Sangam has initiated development work with a Slum Team working from 3 Slum Centres currently in Saraswati Nagar, Sewa Nagar and Gujawadi slums reaching out in 13 local slums. The Sangam's Slum Team operate with dedicated Sewing Class teachers in each of the Urban Slum Centres providing tuition for more than 54 students. With the help of Microfinance loans, from the Self Help groups which have been formed they encourage the women slum dwellers to develop various money generating programmes including detergent and disinfectant manufacture. Regular awareness sessions are also held on various health and hygiene subjects. On Saturday mornings there are 'Bal Sammelan' clubs run for the children to aid their education & development encouraging them to attend regularly local government run schools.

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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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