

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 three 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.

The Ecumenical Sangam have 243 children of age 3 and 4 years old in the 8 **Kindergarten classes** with 2 classes in the Bamhani Base Centre and 2 classes at each of the Sub-Centres in Gondwananagar, Narayanpur and Sawangi Burg villages. The Kindergarten have proved very popular with families from the local villages with the school in Bamhani having a well

equipped playground with swings, a slide and a seesaw and the classrooms are provided with desks, coloured charts and a large chalkboard. The monthly fees cover transportation to and from school, a uniform and two daily good quality meals. The school



uniforms are made by the young ladies in the tailoring classes assisted by the staff and a second uniform may be purchased for 200 rupees. The Kindergarten classes are open from 9 am to 5 pm and the day starts with watering the plants in the gardens and beds surrounding the buildings.

After the plants have received their 'food and water', it is time for breakfast. After breakfast all attention and concentration is turned to learning. With the aid of brightly illustrated wall charts the children learn the names of animals, vegetables, fruits, trees and body parts as well as numbers and the alphabet. The children not only learn the Marathi words, but their English and Hindi counterparts.



Each child has their own desk and practices writing the words just learnt, often illustrating the words with a picture. Regular health statistics are maintained for each child including weight and height development monthly along with attendance and sickness records, any concerns are then discussed with the child's parents at the regular meetings.

The **Organic Farming and Water Management** in Bamhani has been developed to promote sustainable and eco-friendly agriculture on the farms and smallholdings in the 50 villages in which the Sangam operates. Organic Farming was introduced in an attempt to counteract the damage that was being done to the environment, soil and water courses by the 'Green Revolution, which was introduced by the Government and promoted by the fertiliser manufacturers and

Partnership in Action

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Kindergarten KG2 Class in Bamhani Base 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

seed suppliers. They encouraged the local farmers to utilise hybrid seeds and ever increasing amounts of chemical fertilisers, which resulted in them being heavily in debt with real problems when there was a crop failure due to adverse climatic condition. The Sangam used the model farm to demonstrate to local farmers and small holders, with the help of Organic Expert's how they could easily convert to Organic Farming methods and return to utilising retained seed from the previous year's harvest. Making their own organic fertilisers and insecticide sprays from natural organic resources while simultaneously improving the soil structure, reducing run-off of fertiliser during the wet season and commanding a premium price for their organic products. Making it possible for the farmers to regain control of their own futures.



Started in 2008, the **Fairtrade** project initially was part of the Slum Programme but it has found wings and has been extended to the Tailoring classes at Bamhani and the three Sub-centres at Gondwananagar, Narayanpur and Sawangi.



various Fairtrade outlets.

The aim is to promote self-employment and to empower the women in the slums and villages by producing Fairtrade items that can be sold through



The diagnosis of those affected with **Leprosy and Tuberculosis** in the Slums and Villages continues with the Sangam having received a valuable boost with a grant obtained by our German Partners DIZ to expand this activity, but more news of this project in the next Newsletter.

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