

moksha

THE IMPACT INDIA NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2003



Impact's Thrust: Disability Reduction

Disability Reduction Project (DRP)

Impact India's latest initiative, the Disability Reduction Project (DRP), an innovative, challenging, replicable project to dramatically reduce by one-half the incidence of future disabilities and of existing disabilities, was set in motion with a Formulation Workshop held on 8 and 9 May in the targeted Bargarh District, Orissa State. The purpose of this Workshop, organised by Impact India Foundation (IIF) in association with the District Administration of Bargarh District, was to develop a concerted plan of action, considering the perspectives and needs of all relevant stake-holders involved with the DRP.

The Workshop, sponsored by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, was well attended by Block and District level Officers, Community Reproductive and Child-Health Workers and Education Officers in the district. V.V. Yadav, District Magistrate and Collector of Bargarh District, inaugurated the Workshop. In his opening address, he described the Workshop as the first step of the DRP, laying emphasis on it as a platform to propel the DRP forward. Commendable was his assertion that while IIF would provide support and guidance to the Government, the overall responsibility for making the DRP a success lay with the Government officials themselves.

Ashok Kumar and Janardhan Ram from IIF, along with Prof. S. Siva Raju from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (a premier research institute which conducted the Baseline Survey for the DRP) conducted the proceedings, introducing the association between the Orissa State Government and IIF and the significance of Bargarh district as the pilot to the DRP.



The DRP Formulation Workshop in progress and (inset) V.V. Yadav signs the Bargarh Declaration.

Alok Jain from IBM was also present at the Workshop and made a short presentation. The participants were extremely involved throughout the Workshop, sharing their experiences and opinions with a view to come to a consensus on how the DRP would be realised.

This Workshop was followed by another meeting on 30 May, attended by various block and district level officers who would play a key role in the success of the DRP. Activities like grassroots-level information dissemination and introduction of the DRP to villagers through audio and visual tools, staff training, transport needs and inter-departmental coordination were emphasised upon as part of the Plan of Action.

This is only the first of several more meetings to come; the DRP has begun, and with the energy and

abiding support of the Orissa Government, institutions and organisations involved, the road ahead will be full of promise for all the rural poor of Bargarh.



Lifeline Express makes a brand new record!

Where there is a will, there is a way indeed! It gives us great pleasure to announce that the Lifeline Express (LLE) surpassed all expectations at its 60th Project at Pendra Road, Chhattisgarh, by performing a record 6,303 Eye surgeries in four weeks alone – **and all, with complex Intra Ocular Lens implants!** Kudos to all the medical personnel and the Government of Chhattisgarh State for their grit, passion and sheer determination to having made this Project such an outstanding success!

The Lifeline Express is in the Limca Book of Records as well! Listed as a World Record (as the world's first Hospital Train), there is a brief mention of its activities as well!

From Italy, with Love!

In the twenty years of its existence, IIF has seen scores of visitors come and go as part of its many activities. 'Present' comfortably glides into 'History', and for the most part, all trace is lost of our erstwhile visitors.



"Lifeline Express: a moon which illuminates the faces of suffering persons" – one of the patchwork messages painted and stitched together with love by the students of the State School of Masera, Padova.

Every once in a while though, somebody turns around and goes that extra mile to let us know that we are remembered, fondly. We were pleasantly reminded of this when a few days ago, we received an email from Thomas K.J., an old friend and associate of IIF's. Forwarded was an email from the Principal of the State School of Masera, Padova, Italy whose children specially prepared a patchwork quilt and even donated their pocket money towards the cause of IIF's Cleft-Free Chhattisgarh Project.

Thomas had shown these children a short film made by the BBC on the Lifeline Express and spoken to them of his own experiences working with IIF. Enthused by his accounts of the work IIF does, the children instantly decided to paint a quilt for the LLE.

The students were free to design any message they wished; many had painted PACE – which means Peace, Peace in the World. Thomas even went so far as to send each of the student-artists a special 'Thank You' card, putting to pen and paper most poignantly all that IIF wanted to say:

"Every Art ...every person ...every idea and vision of the person is unique. Every idea, as every colour, has its own beauty. Creative expressions form a beautiful patchwork; this world is also formed of creative expressions of humanity. Creative ideas and visions grow as each person grows, leading to the progress of the Universe. Thank you..."

This has been one of the most touching instances of love and support for our work from across the globe. They say, "what goes around, comes around" – Thomas and the lovely students of State School of Masera are living proof of its truth. Thank You!

To kneel and bow our heads down in prayer, we have a Church, Mosque, Temple and a Gurudwara, which are basically one...yet there is caste and class difference in the world...may our country live in peace and beauty - this is my opinion.

...Extract from the essay written by Mallu Gopal Namle of Balgram School, Lonavla, Maharashtra. It was accompanied by his painting on Peace, which won third prize in the International drawing competition organised by Impact UK.

Our deepest thanks also go to...

Ev Luth Kirchenverband Goslar, Germany, for their generous donation to the Lifeline Express!



Lifeline Express Visitors' Book

*"A hurried visit to a most impressive achievement"
...Mark Tully, acclaimed journalist and political author, on a surprise visit to the Lifeline Express at Pendra Road, Chhattisgarh.*

Welcome, Ramesh Ajmera!



We are very happy to welcome Ramesh Ajmera as Impact India's Financial Advisor. An experienced Chartered Accountant, he is also Professor of Accountancy at Burhani College, Mumbai.

Welcome to the Impact family, Ramesh Ajmera! We look forward to a long and fruitful association with you!

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