



Students in the Learning and Migration Program (LAMP) outside school in Buldhana District, Maharashtra. (Photograph © Prashant Panjiar)

INDIA GAINS IN SOCIAL PROGRESS

Much has been said about India's economic growth over the past decade, the remarkable change in the economy, and the country's rise as a global power. Much has also been said about the concurrent rise of income inequality in India during this time – as private enterprise has soared, millions have been left behind in lives of poverty, lacking relevant skillsets. India still suffers from widespread violence against women, child labor that causes entire generations to grow up uneducated, environmental pollution with daunting long-term consequences, and corruption strong enough to shake the global community's confidence and prevent foreign investment in Indian companies. India has established that it can compete as a powerful economic player in the international arena, but the status has so far come at the price of the livelihood and health of over half the population, according to the World Bank.¹

Recent trends of socially responsible leadership show that Indian citizens are increasingly mindful of the social effects of their actions and that the desire to improve society is stronger than

ever. Through increases in support for non-governmental organizations, corporate interest in making socially responsible business decisions, and the growing success of innovative models developed by social entrepreneurs to address social problems, India's leaders are beginning to demonstrate that ethical leadership can become the cornerstone of India's continued growth. The paradigm of development has evolved from basic charity to more sustainable models that empower individuals directly to create lasting and meaningful benefits. The larger shift to ethical leadership is, at its core, a broadening of responsibility for social wellness. The creation of a just and equitable society requires the participation of and partnership between all sectors of society, from government and non-profit endeavors to private enterprise, all of which have shown increasing commitment to ethical leadership in recent years.

With the passing of the Right to Education (RTE) Act in 2009 mandating free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 into the Indian constitution, India

joined over 135 countries in declaring education a human right. "We live in a world where there is a need for pluralistic institutions and for recognizing different types of freedom, economic, social, cultural, and political, which are interrelated," said Amartya Sen in an interview in *The Progressive*. The new Companies Bill, which includes a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy that Indian companies direct at

"The larger shift to ethical leadership is, at its core, a broadening of responsibility for social wellness."

least 2% of their profits to poverty alleviation, health services, education, or socially conscious businesses, is also in the process of being passed.

Mandating charitable giving may be politically controversial, but Indian corporations have independently demonstrated... (Continued on Page 3)

¹ According to the World Bank India Country Dashboard, 68.7% of the population lived on less than \$2 a day (2010)



AIF Board Member and Trustee Raj Sharma engages with trainees at AIF Partner Noida Deaf Society. (Photograph © Payal Rajpal)

AIF LEADERSHIP VISITS CENTER FOR HEARING IMPAIRED YOUTH

Each year, AIF's senior most leaders come together for a weeklong visit to view the impact of AIF programs on the ground, taking away a firsthand understanding of the issues so many underserved people face in India – and how AIF is making a difference in people's lives. This year's visit took supporters across the Golden Triangle of India – Delhi, Agra, and Jaipur – to experience AIF's work with underprivileged youth, rickshaw drivers, and emerging young leaders. Highlighting the visit was an afternoon spent with Noida Deaf Society (NDS), a partner working with AIF's livelihoods intervention focusing on creating employment opportunities for urban youth, the Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST).

According to the 2001 Census, there are over 20 million persons with disabilities living in India, of which only 34% are employed – mostly for below minimum wage salaries. Recognizing the need for employability skills among persons with disabilities, AIF partners with organizations working with disabled youth for vocational skills training. AIF's partnership with NDS helps build workplace readiness and industry specific skill sets for hearing impaired youth. To date, the partnership has enabled more than 400

hearing impaired youth to gain access to formal sector jobs in sectors including retail, IT, hospitality and Business Process Outsourcing with such leading companies as Costa Coffee, Taj Palace, Big Bazaar, Apollo Munich, Mphasis and Genpact. AIF has also helped the organization develop curriculum and conducted employer sensitivity trainings to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities.

During the visit, AIF leaders learned about the struggles that many hearing-impaired face in gaining employment – from gaps in their education to the stigma of disabilities at the workplace – from an eager group of 150 hearing impaired youth. As Ruma Roka, Founder of Noida Deaf Society, explained, “NDS students come from all over the country. They come here often without a formal language and no way of communicating with the outside world. NDS, with the help of AIF, nurtures these youth in every way, from teaching life skills and sign-language to computer and job readiness skills. We then work very hard with employers to get our kids jobs in reputable companies.”

Bijaya Ranjan Sahoo, an intelligent young man with unquenched hopes for what his life could be, had been stuck in a cycle of unemployment at home in Odisha until traveling to Delhi to participate in NDS training programs. Bijaya was visibly emotional when sharing his story with the group, who shared his

“There are over 20 million persons with disabilities living in India, of which only 34% are employed”

faith that he will one day reach a good job in the IT industry, enabling him to start a family with his wife.

Remarked AIF Trustee Reena Talwar, “Meeting Ruma and the many young people at NDS was inspirational. It reminds me that AIF's partners really want to change lives, and that without our support they wouldn't be able to scale-up their efforts. It makes me more committed to ensuring we help passionate people like Ruma effect change in India.” ■

FROM OUR BLOG



Village meeting with Self-Help Groups in Jharkhand.
(Photograph © Andrew Fertig)

BY ANDREW FERTIG
WILLIAM J. CLINTON FELLOW
CLASS OF 2012-13

I was asked to contribute to an evaluation assessing the impacts of a recent livelihoods project done in partnership with one of India's larger banks. We used women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to disseminate the information as well as distribute the materials for the project. Part of an SHG's existence is to serve the very practical purpose of circumventing traditional channels of money lending. But the SHGs we work with started lending to people

outside the group at the same predatory rates. This clearly goes against some of my more utopian aspirations for rural development. Shouldn't a village SHG loan to other community members at a rate that isn't too burdensome for the borrowers? Shouldn't the members, having created the SHG to alleviate some of their own financial burden, feel some sympathy for those who haven't? Shouldn't we as an organization mitigate this by placing restrictions on the SHGs by forcing them to only lend within the group or at reasonable rates?

It took some restraint, but in the end, SHGs operating with us will be allowed to run their course regardless of other practices. It might seem a bit callous not to intervene, but in the end what we're doing is promoting entre-

WHAT DO LOAN-SHARKING SELF-HELP GROUPS MEAN FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT?

preneurship and ownership of these programs, and to closely police them would undermine those goals. My feeling is that as long as we don't disallow others to start their own SHGs, we're doing no one a disservice.

Social enterprise was born out of this idea that alleviation of poverty needs to come from the ground up, that the market can dictate indicators of success—because in the end people will pay for what is useful and ignore what isn't. I don't believe that social enterprise is the only answer, but then again it's obvious that there isn't one. I'm happy to see our SHGs evolving organically as people become galvanized to build programs that lead to better lives in their communities.

This is an excerpt. To read the full version, visit the AIF Blog at <http://www.aif.org/blog/>

INDIA GAINS IN SOCIAL PROGRESS (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 1) ...a desire to implement socially conscious business practices. Leading the way in CSR initiatives are companies like Tata Group, the Aditya Birla Group, and the Indian Oil Corporation. The effort to legally mandate a percentage of profits to CSR will help better define an otherwise amorphous practice. "All of us believe this country is ours. So, the corporate sector, I hope in my heart and mind, is on the same page," explains Sachin Pilot, Minister of Corporate Affairs. "The idea is to have the consciousness to give something back to the community." While CSR activities range from local community building efforts to large scale environmental protection, businesses are starting to view CSR less as a philanthropic

act and more as a smart and thoughtful business practice aligned with – and beneficial to – their strategic interests.

In smaller markets in which the actions of governments and large corporations might not effect social progress quickly enough, India's entrepreneurial spirit steps up to fill in the gaps. Social entrepreneurs have been quick to address complex social issues with innovative solutions to market failures. Socially focused business enterprises work to empower communities to be able to participate in a globalized India, using a profit model instead of donation-based funding, also increasing the likelihood of sustainability. As the modern landscape of Indian development and social prog-

ress shifts, the rest of the world will find new reasons to invest in India. While the number of international educational and service exchange programs has grown in recent years, AIF has been a leader for more than ten years. For AIF Clinton Fellows, the experience on the ground is just the beginning of their contributions to holistic and sustainable movements toward equality. Many go on to further work in development, some even starting their own organizations. For these young entrepreneurs, India's story is far from over. To a highly interested world, India's social progress across a broad spectrum of societal influencers will be what determines if it is marching toward a larger and more influential global leadership role. ■

IN THE COMMUNITY

AIF AT WORK: EVENTS IN THE US AND INDIA



O³ ARTS FESTIVAL

Our Family, Our Neighborhood, Our World (O³), AIF's newest project fostering educational innovation, commemorated its one-year anniversary with a community celebration in Amritsar. On February 8, over 400 students came together to showcase their original works of art and social action through film, theatre, music, and dance, to an audience of over 600 community members.



HARVARD INDIA CONFERENCE

The Harvard India Conference, held on March 9 at Harvard University, discussed the challenges and opportunities of philanthropy in India. Panelists: Mark Sidel, Doyle-Bascom Professor of Law and Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin; Sushma Raman, President, Seachange Consulting; Raj Sharma, Managing Director, Investments and head of Sharma Group, Merrill Lynch Private Wealth Advisors; AIF Vice Chair Pradeep Kashyap.



ADOBE YOUTH VOICES LIVE!

In celebration of its partnership with Adobe Foundation and its global philanthropic initiative Adobe Youth Voices (AYV), AIF and Adobe presented "AYV Live!," a multimedia festival held in Delhi on February 5 and Bangalore on February 12. Youth from underserved communities showed over 25 films, animated videos, and video shorts addressing topics such as women's empowerment, education, and environmental protection.



FELLOWSHIP MIDPOINT

In late January, the AIF Clinton Fellowship class of 2012-13 attended their six-day Midpoint Retreat in Kumbhalgarh, Rajasthan. Fellows gave presentations on their projects, discussed successes and challenges, and learned from each other's experiences. Issues discussed included the value of good mentorship and adjusting to their NGOs. Fellows also shared stories with AIF leadership in Jaipur (above).

SPOTLIGHT

CALCUTTA KIDS

**PARTNER,
WILLIAM J. CLINTON FELLOWSHIP FOR SERVICE IN INDIA**



Calcutta Kids founder Noah Levinson.

In 1999, Noah Levinson came to Kolkata for the first time as a teenage volunteer working with Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying. Deeply moved by his experience, he came back year after year, first as a volunteer and later as a nonprofit leader. Today, he lives

in the city and leads Calcutta Kids, a not-for-profit public health organization that he founded in 2005, improving health and empowering women and children in the slum area of Kolkata's Fakir Bagan. Calcutta Kids' programming trains local community health workers to provide health and nutrition services to underserved communities.

AIF's partnership with Calcutta Kids began in 2011 through the William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India. The talented young Clinton Fellows who have served with the organization have worked on public health interventions ranging from baseline assessments and behavior change communication to expansion and replication studies. "The AIF - Calcutta Kids partnership encourages two interconnected goals toward improving development," explains Noah. "It encourages Calcutta Kids to put into practice our belief that we are a learning organization – to learn from and improve our programs through the leadership of the Clinton fellows. Secondly, through our role in mentoring the Clinton fellows, we can not only potentially encourage replication of some of [our] successful models, but more importantly, inspire these young people to take the lessons and values gleaned from Calcutta Kids into their future work."

Noah's mentorship and commitment to the Fellowship go beyond professional guidance; he, his family, and the staff at Calcutta Kids welcome Fellows into their homes and lives, creating a family dedicated to service in India. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

**AN EVENING WITH
GURCHARAN DAS**

MAY 30, 2013

Boston University, Boston, MA

**ANNUAL
CHICAGO GALA**

NOVEMBER 9, 2013

Union Station, Chicago, IL

**ANNUAL
NEW ENGLAND GALA**

NOVEMBER 23, 2013

Boston, MA

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for Rural Development?

FROM THE FIELD

Kamal Maity, an alumnus of the Market Aligned Skills Training (MAST) Program, stands outside his workplace, Aditya Birla Minacs Worldwide Ltd., with his coworkers. In partnership with Anudip Foundation, AIF's MAST program has trained over 100,444 individuals to work in the evolving job market. Located in West Bengal, Anudip's livelihoods programs have benefited close to 10,000 families through Information Technology, English and Workplace Readiness skill building and placement services.

(Photograph © Prashant Panjjar)

