

MATERNAL AND NEWBORN SURVIVAL INITIATIVE TO SCALE UP IN JHARKHAND BASED ON DRAMATIC REDUCTION IN NEONATAL MORTALITY

Globally, 6.9 million children die before reaching their fifth birthday; 2.9 million babies die during their first month of life and over one third die on the first day of life. The newborn health challenge faced by India is bigger than that experienced by any other country. An estimated 876,000 newborns die each year in India alone, accounting for an estimated 30% of the total global burden of neonatal deaths and a staggering 53% deaths under 5 years of age in India. Preventable newborn deaths account for 44% of all deaths among children under the age of five. Today, India accounts for the greatest burden of newborn deaths in the world. Additionally, nearly a quarter of all maternal deaths worldwide occur in India. Babies without mothers are far more likely to die before the age of two than babies whose mothers survive. For women in remote, isolated villages, access to healthcare and health knowledge can be a matter of survival. Now a member of the working advocacy group of the United Nations' Every Woman Every Child movement, AIF is expanding its efforts to reduce maternal and infant mortality

MANSI CREATES AND SUPPORTS POSITIVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS, EMPOWERS THE COMMUNITY WITH HEALTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ENSURES THAT BABIES ARE ABLE TO HAVE A SAFE START TO LIFE.



Sahiya (community health worker) Rupam Mahto with Tara Mahto and her twin children at their home. Rupam used the training she received under AIF's Maternal and Newborn Survival Initiative (MANSI) to save the life of the second twin at the time of birth at the home. (Photograph © Prashant Panjiar)

rates through the Maternal and Newborn Survival Initiative (MANSI). Every Woman Every Child aims to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015.

Since 2009, MANSI has been working to reduce maternal and infant mortality in rural and impoverished areas, in partnership with corporate and family foundations, State Health Departments (NRHM), and technical partners. MANSI also aims to influence the corporate sector to become a significant player in the field of improving maternal and newborn health. Currently, MANSI utilizes a public-private partnership model in partnership with the State government of Jharkhand, Tata Steel Rural Development Society (TSRDS), and technical support from Society for

Education and Research in Community (SEARCH), in the predominantly tribal Seraikela block of Seraikela Kharsawan district of Jharkhand. One of the poorest blocks in Jharkhand, Seraikela is home to a rural population of 83,000 people scattered across 167 villages, some of which are cut off from access to basic health care by the state's dense forests and landscape. Many villagers are faced with arduous distances of up to ten miles to travel to the nearest health-care facility, leading to a widespread practice of home deliveries that have many more health risks and deny basic, essential care needed to ensure a healthy start to life. MANSI builds the capacities of women and community groups to care for mothers and newborns through a home-based neonatal care (HBNC) model designed by SEARCH.

(Continued on Page 3)

ON THE GROUND



PIDGEONJI AND HIS COMPASS

EXPERIENCES FROM FELLOWSHIP ORIENTATION

BY ILANA MILLNER
AIF MEDIA FELLOW 2014-15

The AIF Clinton Fellowship class of 2014-2015 poses with students of Ashram Paryavaran Vidyalaya (APV) School in the Himalayan foothills of Uttarakhand. (Photo © Ilana Millner)

Andrew Jelinek arrived with a compass on his arm, inked in a deep blue hue. No other Fellow has a matching tattoo, but each has a similar compass—some internal, magnetic pull that led them to precisely the same spot on September 1st: Vishwa Yuva Kendra (VYK), where Orientation for AIF's William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India was just beginning.

AIF's William J. Clinton Fellowship for Service in India provides a select group of young professionals from the USA and India the opportunity to work with NGOs and social enterprises for ten months, in order to accelerate impact for marginalized and underprivileged communities in India. This year's class—with 29 American and 11 Indian Fellows—is the largest so far.

"Orientation" is often referred to as a program, but in my mind it is truly a process; on the cusp of embarking on a 10-month Fellowship, forty new Fellows from around the world paused to reflect, share, learn, and prepare.

From September 1-10, Fellows engaged in discussion with a wide variety of guest speakers and slowly began to build

the friendships that will support them throughout the year. Each Fellow and guest brought questions to the table, challenging those assembled to expand and examine notions of engagement, safety, identity, innovation, and interpretation.

The US Embassy in Delhi also continued its tradition of welcoming AIF Clinton Fellows by inviting them to meet with senior embassy officials. This year we gathered at the American Center, where we met with Walter T. Douglas, Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, and Kathleen Stephens, the United States' *chargé d'affaires* to India.

Fellows also met their host organization mentors for the first time during a one-day session that addressed the opportunities and challenges that both Fellows and host organizations may face. This time spent together served as a first step towards building strong professional relationships between Fellows and mentors.

While our days at VYK were challenging and meaningful, our trip to the Ashram Paryavaran Vidyalaya (APV) School was something magical. On September 5, we

boarded an early morning train, and a few hours later climbed into cars to begin a long trip up into the mountains. When we finally arrived at our destination the dark of the night was all encompassing; however, it took only a glimpse of the bright, smiling faces of our hosts to know that we were somewhere special.

SEVA [SELFLESS SERVICE]
IS A CONCEPT AT THE
HEART OF THE FELLOWSHIP

The APV School is located in Anjanisain, Tehri Garhwal, just north of where the Ghagirathi and Alaknanda Rivers merge to form the Ganges. The school has a unique educational environment; the community of teachers is dedicated to providing holistic and mindful education to the rural poor of Uttarakhand's Garhwal hills. APV has hosted a number of AIF Clinton Fellows in the past, and this year it welcomes a new Fellow: Charlotte Brown. Embraced by the APV community, the Fellowship class fell into a beautiful rhythm of football games, song, observation of classes, and long...

(Continued on Page 3)

ON THE GROUND

FELLOWSHIP ORIENTATION (CONT)

(Continued from Page 2)...discussions about what brought us all to this common ground.

During Orientation, we were not only tasked with locating our place in this new professional, linguistic, and cultural landscape, but also with understanding our place within AIF's growing network of Fellows, mentors, beneficiaries, partner organizations, and supporters. Alumni serve as particularly important links in this network, often acting as guides throughout the Fellowship journey.

Fellowship alumnus Khushi Malhotra, Class of 2012-13 recently returned to APV—her former placement—to continue teaching for another six months.

“The reason I came back is because my Fellowship experience was so profound,” she explained, “This school and community of teachers are about knowing oneself, and from that knowing comes this place of being

able to provide real service. This is what we've shared with the Fellows here. We've been overjoyed to have almost forty people here, about to embark on their journeys—a 10-month transformational journey where they learn *seva*, this sense of selfless service, and they've had the opportunity to experience this sense of *seva* at APV School.”

Seva is a concept at the heart of the Fellowship; at APV, we were gifted the opportunity to contemplate how we can serve the communities that will soon become our own.

Standing on the balcony outside APV's dining hall, gazing across a valley of shifting clouds and unpredictable peaks, it was easy to feel the world fall away. We paused in silence, alone and together, listening closely to all that was said, and to the internal compasses that will

guide each of us as we move through the next ten months. As the clouds rose to meet us, we finally felt prepared to find our way through them. ■



APV teachers Khushi Malhotra (left) and Mohan Panwar (right) marvel at the double rainbow that appeared at the end of our hike up Chandradani mountain. (Photo © Ilana Millner)

MANSI SCALE UP (CONTINUED)

(Continued from Page 1) The HBNC model has been demonstrated to reduce neonatal and infant mortality by nearly 62% among the malnourished, illiterate, rural population in the tribal belt of Maharashtra¹.

This year's impact evaluation of MANSI has demonstrated incredible success in improving the health indicators of in the Seraikela block of Jharkhand. As a result of training community health workers, *Sahiya*s, to manage newborn and child care in the home and interventions like increasing the number of medical checkups that pregnant women receive, MANSI has been able to lower Seraikela's neonatal mortality rate by 32.7%, and the infant mortality rate by 26.5%. The percentage of pregnant women receiving at least three antenatal medical checkups has increased from 41.3% to 91.3%. The percentage of newborns being weighed at birth has increased from 29.4% to 94.7%. And institutional deliveries (as opposed to home deliveries) have increased from 20.7% to 79.2%.

Based on MANSI's success in the Seraikela block, AIF has received support from the state government of Jharkhand to expand the program tenfold – providing training and health education to residents of ten blocks in two districts of the State. This includes setting up a Facilitation Center at the State level

to implement advocacy for system improvement, support state machinery to better plan the implementation of home-based maternal and neonatal child care, and improve the capacities of State trainers and program managers. Additionally, the initiative will adopt a combination of capacity building, demand generation and service provision strategies.

With a toolkit of indicators and robust data and analysis, strong monitoring and evaluation will help AIF and its partners determine MANSI's success in the coming expansion. Increasing services to eight blocks in the Seraikela Kharsawan district and two blocks in the West Singhbhum district, the initiative creates and supports positive health behaviors, empowers the community with health education and training, and ensures that babies are able to have a safe start to life. MANSI is also expected to expand to the states of Uttarakhand and Odisha in the near future, serving as an exemplar of the possibilities of the public-private partnership model, and encourage others in the corporate sector to implement similar initiatives, building India's infrastructure and capacity to provide care for its most vulnerable communities. ■

¹ Dr. Ajay and Rani Bang, Society for Education, Action, and Research in Community Health (SEARCH); Lancet 1999; 354: 1955–61

ON THE GROUND

AIF LAUNCHES YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Recently, the inaugural class of AIF's pilot Youth Ambassador Program (AYAP) returned from India, full of ideas and reflections into the dynamic and complex country. AYAP is a service-learning experience in India for US high school students, which fosters awareness of social development in India among its participants through visits with local communities, Indian peers and schools, leading NGOs, and the private sector. Students engage with a service-learning curriculum designed by AIF, and are exposed to issues of poverty and other challenges facing vulnerable communities. This year, the program focused on water.

Accompanied and guided by AIF Trustee Usha Nesamoney and Senior Supporter Purvi Kunwar through the range of experiences offered during the two-week trip, the 21 high school students were encouraged to view everything through the lens of water. On visits to rural villages where access to clean drinking water is a commodity, students experienced firsthand the time it took to obtain and purify water. Students also observed how cities treat water in private facilities, such as hotels. On a trip to the campus of tech and consulting giant Infosys, students learned how larger cor-

porations recycle water in their own water plants and provide it to the community, as well as what Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are doing to improve access to and quality of water.

panies and encouraging them to think critically about solutions to local problems. The US and Indian students worked together on a special project at a school site of AIF's Adobe Youth Voices India, a global philanthropic partnership between AIF and Adobe Foundation). AYV India encourages its students to use media and technology to express themselves and make sense of the social and economic issues affecting their communities. Students photo-documented issues related to water in their hometowns – where they get water, how they treat it, heat it, and use it, and explored the complex dynamics of water issues together through intercultural dialogue and critical thinking. The US students also visited the homes of their AYV peers, observing in person the struggles for water and building relationships with the communities.

“It was an amazing experience to collaborate with AYV school students and hear various stakeholder perspectives to understand issues around water and sanitation and to brainstorm solutions”. – Sophia N., 8th grade

AIF's Youth Ambassadors had several other interactions and discussions with Indian students at various schools and organizations, including a Digital Equalizer school – AIF's signature solution for educational reform

through technology, exposing them to a variety of discussion topics and communities during their stay. They also attended presentations by local experts on matters such as lake conservation, social enterprise's role in water recycling, and more. The program also included cultural experiences like visiting temples and eating traditional food.



AIF's Youth Ambassador group visiting Lal Bagh Botanical Gardens in Bangalore.

“It was an eye opening experience to collaborate with students that seemed to have such a different background. It was great to see that we thought similarly about water scarcity and purification.”
– Ellie K., 9th grade

After all of their experiences, the students participated in a three-day workshop brainstorming innovative solutions to some of the problems they had witnessed. The Ambassadors intend to continue their exploration of these solutions back in the US and to be mentors to the next batch of Ambassadors heading to India in the summer of 2015. The Youth Ambassador Program aims to create long-term leadership opportunities for continued collaboration with AIF, its programs, and the communities it serves.

“The AIF Youth Ambassador program is a unique global program that inspires high-schoolers to learn about social issues in rural India, collaborate with their peers in Indian schools and create innovative solutions to issues faced by the most underprivileged in India. AYAP is already off to a great start and we hope to involve thousands of high-schoolers in the coming years, sparking in them a desire to give back to their local and global communities.” – Diaz Nesamoney, AIF Board Member ■

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— Ellie K., 9th grade

porations recycle water in their own water plants and provide it to the community, as well as what Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives are doing to improve access to and quality of water.

The Youth Ambassadors also enjoyed interactions and discussions with peer students in India, exposing them to different educational, cultural, and social is-

SPOTLIGHT

SPOTLIGHT

AIF LAUNCHES A NEW CHAPTER IN RICHMOND, VA



Richmond Chapter Leadership Council with AIF Vice Chair Dr. Venkat Srinivasan and dignitaries.

The American India Foundation recently launched a new chapter in Richmond, VA – AIF’s 10th chapter in the United States. Chaired by AIF Supporters Sanjay Mittal and Sunita Gupta, the Richmond chapter will help to advance AIF’s support for its mission of catalyzing social and economic change in India by drawing on the Indian Diaspora as well as others interested in India’s incredible development and potential. At an inaugural event held at the Virginia BioTechnology Center, Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade Maurice Jones lit a ceremonial lamp to celebrate and initiate the new chapter.

“Virginia is [...] the home of the seventh largest population of Indian Americans in the country, and the growth rate has been phenomenal – over a hundred percent in the last decade. That’s what the promise of this enterprise is: the promise to bring together relationships that are transforming the lives of the young folks all throughout the country of India, one of the largest democracies in the world.”

– Maurice Jones
Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Trade

The event also included an address by special guest AIF Vice Chair Dr. Venkat Srinivasan, who spoke about AIF’s goals and the unique ideals that attracted him to support the organization.

“The first principle for us is secular ideals. We don’t discriminate on the basis of any caste, creed, sex, or religion.” Dr. Srinivasan also spoke about the “very, very high standards of integrity” of AIF’s leaders and supporters, and the organization’s focus on making real and lasting impact on India’s marginalized. Richmond guests and supporters were enthused to begin a new chapter of AIF’s work and support giving back to India. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

**ANNUAL
LOS ANGELES
GALA**

**SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 7, 2015**

THE HARYLNE J.
NORRIS PAVLION

PALOS VERDES, CA

**ANNUAL
ORANGE COUNTY
GALA**

**SATURDAY
MARCH 7, 2015**

FAIRMONT
NEWPORT BEACH

NEWPORT BEACH, CA

**ANNUAL
BAY AREA
GALA**

**SATURDAY
MARCH 21, 2015**

HILTON UNION
SQUARE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

**AIF
MANSI SUMMIT**

**SATURDAY
APRIL 18, 2015**

HARVARD MEDICAL
SCHOOL

BOSTON, MA

For more details, visit aif.org/events



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NEW YORK: 216 E. 45th Street, 7th Floor, New York NY 10017
CALIFORNIA: 901 Mission Street, Suite #105, San Francisco, CA 94103
INDIA: C-17 Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110016

www.AIF.org • info@AIF.org • 888 AIF 4IND



IN THIS ISSUE

MANSI
SCALES UP IN
JHARKHAND

FELLOWSHIP
ORIENTATION

AIF YOUTH
AMBASSADOR
PROGRAM LAUNCH

RICHMOND, VA
CHAPTER
LAUNCH

FROM THE FIELD



Students at Bhaludongri Government School in the Nuapada district of Odisha, engage in the Learning Enrichment Program (LEP) of AIF's Learning and Migration Program (LAMP). LAMP ensures that these children, often first-generation learners whose families come from generations of migrant laborers, receive the support and resources they need to access and continue quality education. This Fall, AIF's first-ever global crowdfunding campaign – Light a LAMP – is working to ensure 5,000 migrant children have the opportunity to break this cycle of poverty and unlock their dreams for the future. (Photograph © Prashanth Panjari)