

## Editorial

Dear Team,

It is a pleasure to present to you the first issue of Aide et Action e newsletter. What is satisfying is that the idea struck us during the reorientation workshop and today it is a reality.

The challenge would be really to sustain it and make it a useful means of communication amongst us. So we expect everyone to contribute.

This issue is prepared by Viji and Esther. But we hope that the next issue will have others contributing. Send your contributions and suggestions to Viji.

The reorientation workshop 2005 was a unique learning experience. So much of fruitful work in so little time. Congratulations! Lets make it a watershed event in the history of AeA India.

Happy reading !

Somesh

## Reorientation Workshop

### Need for the Workshop

In the light of the recent changes brought about in Aide et Action (AeA) Paris with the adoption of the 2004 Etats Généraux (EtG) resolutions, the internationalization of the organization and the subsequent formation of the South Asia Region with Mr. Somesh Kumar as Regional Director, the need was felt to conduct a re-orientation workshop for all the members of AeA India. The workshop was dedicated to address the following issues:

- Preparation of the country strategy paper
- Identification of new thrust areas and delineate the process of implementation
- Improvement of departmental efficiency & innovations
- Preparation of guidelines for Convention of Objectives 2006 (Co06) in light of the new strategy and thrusts
- Preparation of action plan for departments and individuals

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### *Changing Context and Challenges*

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### Thrust Areas and Their Impact so Far

With its focus on education and development of community structures during the past 24 years, Aide et Action has created an impact in promoting universalization of education, providing access to education to marginalized groups, improving the quality of education and increasing the enrollment rate in its areas of intervention. However the impact was limited to a few pockets and AeA was seen largely as a donor agency projecting its NGO partners.

### Need for a Change

Changes in the policy orientation and the adoption of the new EtG resolutions called for an immediate re-assessment of the impacts created so far by AeA India. It was felt that the major gaps in the critical areas could be addressed by focussing on new thrust areas.

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## *Participants' Expectations*

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The workshop began on an expectant note with the participants eagerly voicing the following expectations. They expected to:

- understand AeA's strategy for the future
- be enlightened on the functioning of departments and to get clarity on roles of departments and individuals
- acquire knowledge on the new thrust areas and plan for effective implementation
- get clarity on the work culture
- understand the communication systems between bureaus and departments

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## *Brief Coverage of the Sessions*

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The participants were divided into groups for each session. The sessions were as follows :

- A. AeA Country Strategy Paper
- B. New Thrust Areas :
  1. Quality Education
  2. Livelihood Education
  3. Resource Mobilization
  4. Inclusive Education
- C. Convention of Objectives 2006 and its Preparation
- D. Improving Department Efficiency and Innovations



Each group was given the task of formulating strategies, objectives and action plans pertinent to the theme of the session. The groups selected a chairperson, a reporter and a facilitator. The slides prepared were presented to the other groups in the plenary session at the end of the day. The action plans thus presented provided the basis for the drafting of the final recommendations which will ultimately be adopted.

### **A. AeA Country Strategy Paper**

The groups prepared slides on the country strategy paper focussing on clearly identified thrust areas and strategies to address the core concerns. Several important decisions were taken and it was felt that the final draft of the country strategy paper would be prepared taking into account the following :

- Changing context and challenges
- Overview of ongoing interventions of AeA India
- Analysis of organizational strength and weaknesses
- Proposed interventions of AeA India (2006 – 2008)
- Proposed organizational structure
- Resource mobilization in the changing context.

ACTION PLAN	TIME FRAME
• Preparation of draft country strategy paper	29 <sup>th</sup> July
• Internal consultations for feedback and improvement	5 <sup>th</sup> Aug.
• Regional consultation meetings with partners and other stakeholders for feedback/ changes	15 <sup>th</sup> Aug.
• Finalization of country strategy paper	30 <sup>th</sup> Aug.

## B. New Thrust Areas

THRUST AREA	ACTION PLAN	TIME FRAME
Quality Education (QE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Costed Activity Sheet</li> <li>• Draft Strategy Paper</li> </ul>	19 <sup>th</sup> July 25 <sup>th</sup> July
Livelihood Education (LE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of formats for evaluating existing projects for dovetailing the sectors</li> </ul>	25 <sup>th</sup> July 29 <sup>th</sup> July
Inclusive Education (IE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from RD/other team members on strategy papers for sectors</li> <li>• Preparation of PoA and budget of sectors for CoO 2006</li> <li>• Orientation for AeA team members on new thrust areas</li> <li>• Identification of resource/technical agencies, govt. schemes with which we can tie up with details and explore possibilities of tie ups for sectors</li> <li>• Development of detailed monitoring mechanisms and formats for sectoral aspects in the projects</li> <li>• Identification of new partners and formulation of new projects for sectors to be initiated</li> </ul>	29 <sup>th</sup> July 29 <sup>th</sup> July 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept.
Resource Mobilization (RM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Strategy Paper</li> <li>• Feedback from RD/other team members on strategy papers for sectors</li> <li>• Preparation of PoA and budget of sectors for CoO 2006</li> <li>• Orientation for AeA team members on new thrust areas</li> <li>• Identification of resource/technical agencies, govt. schemes with which we can tie up with details and explore possibilities of tie ups for sectors</li> <li>• Development of detailed monitoring mechanisms and formats for sectoral aspects in the projects</li> <li>• Identification of new partners and formulation of new projects for sectors to be initiated</li> </ul>	25 <sup>th</sup> July 29 <sup>th</sup> July 29 <sup>th</sup> July 5 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept.

## B. Convention of Objectives 2006 and its Preparation

The present system of convention of objectives has been operational in India since 2000. However various factors such as achievement of the goals of the new EtG, the new thrust areas, AeA's regional presence and the need to maximize impacts created called for a reorientation of the Co 2006.

### Highlights of CoO 2006 Processes

On analysing the budget of AeA with respect to its NGO partners (NGOPs) regarding nutrition, material supply, deputation of teachers to government schools and salaries to teachers, the participants were made to realize that government and other resources could be tapped through empowering the communities and NGOPs. AeA's funds could thus be more usefully channelled for other interventions or fill in critical gaps

The criteria for continuing and strengthening partnership with the existing partners was listed. The two critical factors that were highlighted were: left over duration of the project and suitability of AeA's interventions. It was decided that for the CoO 2006, the projects would be reviewed in detail to finalize the strategy to be adopted by them.

ACTION PLAN	TIME FRAME
• Allocation of projects to team/ Circular to partners about orientation meeting	25 <sup>th</sup> July
• Finalization of guidelines (for CoO 2006 and for budget preparation during CoO 2006)	27 <sup>th</sup> July
• Finalization of guidelines for thrust areas – mainstreaming	28 <sup>th</sup> July
• Preparation of templates for basic information on thrust areas from partners	28 <sup>th</sup> July
• Departmental plans / Thrust area plans	29 <sup>th</sup> July
• Circular/templates to projects for collection of basic data on thrust areas	30 <sup>th</sup> July
• Orientation meeting with south Indian partners in Chennai	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Aug.
• Orientation meeting with north Indian partners in Bhopal	10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug.
• Initiation of CoO 2006 exercise with partners	7 <sup>th</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup> Aug
• Preparation of final action plan and budget for all partners for 2006	7 <sup>th</sup> Sept.

#### D. Improving Department Efficiency and Innovations

Each department prepared a brief outline of their major functions, monitoring systems and action plans. Though some headway was made on the topic of improving efficiency and innovations, the participants felt it needed further improvement especially with regard to chalking out detailed plans for the next three years. Due to paucity of time during the workshop, it was decided that each departmental team would discuss further on the topic and come out with a departmental action plan by 22<sup>nd</sup> July.



#### Work Culture

##### Check this Out !

6 monthly appraisal	The appraisal format to be revised taking into account the responsibilities of individuals in the light of the reorientation workshop.
Capacity building of staff	Understanding on the basic concepts of development could be attained by going through development dictionaries, manuals by NGOs and also by browsing the net.
Field work	Operations department to spend at least half of their working days in the field. Similar norms for other departmental staff to be fixed.
Internal Communications	Basic norms to be developed in order to ensure efficiency and uniformity within the organisation.
Systems and procedures	The heads to compile the daily log format and back to office report and send them to the RD on a monthly basis for all staff
Publications	AeA to bring out a significant number of publications by December 2005.

#### Evaluation Matrix

S.No	Item	😊	😐	😞
1.	Country Strategy	27	2	
2.	Thrust Area	25	4	
3.	CoO 2006	20	8	
4.	Departmental PoA	4	21	1
5.	Expectations met	21	6	1
6.	Methodology	28	1	
7.	Participation	17	11	
8.	Facilitation	26	2	
9.	Background material	24	2	
10.	Stay	26	3	
11.	Food	16	11	1
12.	Overall	28		

## FEEDBACK OF PARTICIPANTS

### What They Say...

"...workshop has given us clarity on the strategy of the organization and our roles in it..." - *Radhika Ramesh*

"...workshop has been a platform of sharing and learning..." - *Vauhini Swaminathan*

"...workshop has exposed areas that would require improvement both as a team and as individuals..." - *David Williams*

"...has made us realize that we need to improve our work culture and pace of work..." - *Sheela Williams*

"...workshop has made us realize that change is the most constant factor in the world and the new avenues we will be exploring in the near future are exciting..." - *Vijayalakshmi Prabhakar*

"...salute your leadership which is certainly inspiring and rekindles in us the desire to achieve greater levels of success..." - *Terence Pradhan*

"...it was a wonderful experience, a revealing exercise, great learning and a much awaited opportunity to trace the course for a strong AeA India organization..." - *Veena Jain*

"...realized the strengths and weaknesses of the organization and the department and realized the need for working at a greater pace to meet the objectives..." - *Esther John*

"...there would be many opportunities for creative work within the organization that are unfolding in the coming days..." - *Dr. Sabu*

**There is nothing more addictive than SUCCESS !**

- *Somesh Kumar*



**Aiming high with a shared vision!**