

ISSUE 2

Editorial

Dear Team,

It is a real pleasure for me to present the 2nd issue of the AeA e newsletter.

Some of you had doubts during the Reorientation Workshop whether the recommendations would get implemented. I was confident that we will do it! What we achieved since then is simply remarkable - Partners Meet, Sector Guidelines, Country Strategy Paper (final draft), and most important of all draft 2006 documents for all the partners in a time bound manner. **The entire team deserves congratulations !**

I welcome to our team 9 new members formally and wish them all the best. Mr. Upendranadh will join us as head – policy and education resource center.

September will be an exciting month – finalization of CoO documents, launching of Chennai and Indore **ILEAD (Institute for Livelihood Education and Development), Arumbu** in Chennai slums and Development Education in Chennai schools, special initiatives on inclusive education, AeA Education Resource Centre etc.

Happy reading!

Somesh Kumar

Partners Meet

The changing context of Aide et Action's (AeA) resulted in the evolution of a country strategy for AeA India and the emergence of new thrust areas. This change has a major impact on the process of Convention of Objectives (CoO) 2006 with our NGO partners in India. *Partners Meets* were organized in Chennai for the South Indian partners on the 3rd and 4th and in Bhopal for the North Indian partners on the 10th and 11th of August 2005 in this regard.

The specific objectives of the meets were:

- Deliberation on strategies and thrust areas
- Development of new approach to CoO 2006
- Finalization of guidelines and plan
- Consultation on internationalization processes

Strategies and Thrust Areas

The participants were divided into groups and discussions pertaining to AeA India's strategies and thrust areas were held. The framing of the following *charter for action* was agreed :

- All schools in the project area shall have basic amenities and be given a facelift to become the best place for children. This should be done by tapping government schemes and with community contributions
- All out of school children, particularly the girls in the school age should be mainstreamed through residential bridge schools established with funding by SSA (Sarva Siksha Abhiyan)
- All children with disability shall be targeted and supported through inclusive education. Funds to be tapped from SSA, DDRC District Disabled Rehabilitation Center etc., for aids, appliances and training
- All poor women who are left out from WSHGs (Womens Self Help Group) shall be networked in new WSHGs
- All WSHGs shall be strengthened and be linked to banks to avail loans for livelihood promotion
- All persons with disability shall form special SHGs
- All poor and drop out youth particularly girls shall be ensured livelihood education
- Community managed health care for all poor women and children
- All pre school children shall be covered for early childhood education under community managed ECE (Early Childhood Education) or Anganwadi centers

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New Approach to Convention of Objectives

The Regional Director explained the need for a new approach to Convention of Objectives, its salient features and introduced new thrust areas. The following are the outcomes of further discussions on this subject:

- There is tremendous scope for leveraging of government funds from various schemes and programmes like SSA (Sarva Siksha Abhiyan). AeA's funds should be used for filling critical gaps
- AeA should address strategic needs especially on issues where government does not work to ensure better use of scarce resources
- Government, NGO Partners and people should be converged for better impact. If Government and other agencies have funds, the projects should approach them
- Important questions to be taken into account during budgeting are :
 - What activities are to be carried out?
 - Are these activities justified and meaningful?
 - Is this the best use of money?
 - How can funds be raised from other sources?



Planning of Budget Norms

Interest groups on the thrust areas were formed with one member from each NGO partner and Direct Implementation Projects (DIP). The following two issues were taken into consideration for the exercise on preparation of budget norms: firstly, to analyze each activity on its appropriateness and secondly, to prepare unit cost norms for each activity.

Key outcomes of the discussions and presentation are as follows:

- Besides inclusive education, the formation of groups for disabled should be included
- Livelihood education and employability training should be carried out after analyzing the required kind of skill and job opportunities in those areas with clear focus on the dropouts, women, disabled and weaker sections
- WSHGs are promoted as means for women empowerment. In most cases, programs do not proceed further than formation of groups. There is no proper coordination and animation of these groups. The groups at the locality level can engage an animator and bookkeeper who should be a local person. The groups should be encouraged to take up livelihood programs and should make some minimum contribution during the first year
- It should be ensured that all SHGS are linked with banks and take part in social activities.
- The success of the program can be measured by the number of groups with bank linkages and amount of bank loans availed for productive purposes
- Sustainability of the programs is also important. It should be planned in such a way that the local groups are enabled to carry forward the programs
- The local communities shall be encouraged to run early childhood centres and bridge schools for out of school adolescents girls with cost shared by the community right from the beginning

This led to the preparation of a tentative budget by each NGO partner and DIP. The session ended with the presentation of the budget proposal format.

Convention of Objectives 2006 - Action Plan

The plan of action prepared for CoO 2006 with partners is as follows:

| S.No | Activity | Date |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1 | Data collection by NGO partners and DIPs | 15 th August |
| 2 | Analysis of plan and budget by AeA | 20 th August |
| 3 | Plan and budget meeting between partners and AeA with necessary modifications | 23 rd to 26 th August |
| 4 | Final draft of CoO | 30 th August |

Internationalization Process

A power point presentation on the internationalization processes in AeA was made and the reflections of the participants are as follows:

Formation of Regional board and its functions

AeA should have a regional board with the following functions:

- analyze the problems from time to time
- study the success of programmes
- provide support for policy advocacy, resource mobilization and image building
- provide regional orientation to the work
- represent the interest of the organization

Size and representation of the board

12-15 members to constitute the board comprising of persons from various segments - policy makers, NGO partners, government officials and representation from each South Asian country.

Frequency of meetings

The board should meet once in six months.

Involvement of Director General, Regional Director and partners

Director General should be a special invitee. The Regional Director should play the role of member secretary in the board. One or two partners should participate as special invitees.

Mutualization

Mutualization can be applied in the case of sponsorships and human resources. However it will be difficult to apply when there are tie up funds, government funds and specific funds allotted to projects.

Advantages of mutualization: helps needy people, promotes the feeling of solidarity and contributes to the image building of the organisation. *Disadvantages of mutualization:* no recognition for programs, those who raise more resources may feel demotivated. Mutualization can be done at regional level.



Partners Meet - Chennai

A Warm Welcome to our New Staff!

With its focus on the newly identified sectors such as Quality Education, Livelihood Education, Inclusive Education and Women's Empowerment and Education, AeA has recruited nine new staff who have a sound background in the various thrust areas. Given below is a brief note on each new staff member:



Avinav Kumar

Avinav Kumar joined AeA as Senior Coordinator - Operations in April 2005 and is based in Chennai. He is involved in Livelihood Education Programme and assistance to RD on strategic issues. His most recent position was as Programme Associate with Eklavya, an NGO working in Madhya Pradesh. He has experience in project management and implementation support to grassroots organizations. He has also been involved with direct implementation of projects in rural areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh on issues of natural resource management, livelihoods for forest dependent communities and education. His interests include participatory practices in project implementation and capacity building on participatory planning, monitoring and implementation of development projects. He has conducted various trainings and workshops on the issues of local self-governance and micro planning.

Avinav's education includes a Post Graduate Diploma in Forestry Management and a Bachelor's degree in Commerce. He likes reading and travelling in his spare time.



Sundar Raman

Sundar Raman joined AeA in April 2005 as Senior Coordinator Operations for Livelihood Education and is based in Chennai. His most recent position was as Research Associate / Consultant in Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai. He has experience in water management and has developed: 1) fertigation schedules for various crops with different fertilizer combinations 2) a software for water requirement of crops 3) a low cost drip system.

Sundar's education includes a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture and a Masters degree in Soil and Water Conservation Engineering. His hobbies are playing cricket and table tennis.



Biju George

Biju George joined AeA in May 2005 as Senior Coordinator for Tsunami Rehabilitation Projects in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry based at Nagapattinam. His most recent position was as district Tourism Officer of Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh. He has experience in developing new tourism projects in rural areas and identifying rural youth and training them as guides as part of the self-employment programme. He has experience in identifying, developing, implementing and managing new tourism projects in rural Andhra Pradesh.

Biju has done his graduation in Physics and his post graduation in Tourism Administration. His hobby is travelling, especially to rural areas and interacting with local communities.



Naveen Kumar

Naveen Kumar joined AeA in June 2005 as Senior Coordinator Operations for Quality Education and is based in Chennai. His most recent position was as District Programme Officer for Education with Naandi Foundation, Hyderabad. He has experience in designing 'innovative' and 'replicable' need based strategies and new programmes aimed at quality education and developing strategies and training modules for parents and community on 'building partnerships with community and school systems'.

Naveen's education includes a Bachelors degree in Commerce and a Post Graduate Diploma in Forestry Management.



Ranjan Mathur

Ranjan Mathur joined AeA in June 2005 as Coordinator Operations and is based in Bhopal. His last position was as Programme Associate with Eklavya an NGO working in Madhya Pradesh. He has experience in implementing community based health programmes and in developing a leadership academy for elected women panchayat representatives. He has conducted a study on Monitoring Shifts in Health Sector due to decentralization as part of the European Commission funded study in South Asia.

He holds a post graduate diploma in Forestry Management and a bachelors degree (honors) in Economics. He is a first rank holder in his graduation degree and has varied interests such as playing cricket and participating in quiz and cultural competitions.



K. Sivagami

Sivagami joined AeA as Head Inclusive Education in August 2005 and is based in Chennai. Sivagami brings with her experience in the field of disability in the areas of managing inclusive education projects and community based rehabilitation programmes. She is of the opinion that her best qualification is that she is a parent of a young lady with disability. She holds a post graduate diploma in special education and a certificate in rehabilitation counseling. She has a graduate degree in Chemistry and a masters degree in Psychology.

Her most recent position was as Manager Inclusive Education with Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu, Chennai. As a special educator, counselor, coordinator and trainer she has interacted with children, persons with disabilities, parents and professionals from health, welfare and education departments.



S Somarajswaran

Somarajswaran (Rajesh) joined AeA in August 2005 as Senior Coordinator, Livelihood Education and is based in Chennai. He has experience in Livelihood Development projects and Material Management. His most recent position was as Tamil Nadu State Coordinator with Dr. Reddys Foundation (DRF), Hyderabad, where his responsibilities included scanning markets to identify livelihood opportunities, counseling youth to identify their underlying potentials, preparing action plans to implement livelihood programs and training people to impart livelihood education. His interests are reading and listening to music.

Rajesh's education includes a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Post Graduate degree in Business Administration.



Yashu Chaudhary

Yashu joined AeA on 1st September 2005 as Senior Coordinator Fund Raising and is based in Chennai. Her most recent position was as Consultant – Fundraising with ActionAid. Her achievements includes raising resource from private funding and creating brand awareness and visibility through various strategic alliances and campaigns. She has an MCA degree from MIT, Manipal and is a graduate from St. Bede's College, Shimla and has recently joined an MBA course.

Her interests are photography, trekking, travelling, music, poetry, painting and sketching.



Rekha Ramesh

Rekha joined AeA on 1st September 2005 as Senior Accountant cum Internal Auditor and is based in Chennai. She has experience in working with Living Media India Ltd (Publishers of India Today) and her recent employment was with another international charitable organization, ActionAid as Admin.officer taking care of accounts and administrative functions in their Regional Office at Chennai. She has with her a post graduate in Commerce and has recently joined MBA in Finance.

You are welcome !!!