

AeA India e newsletter

Message from RD's Desk

The new year heralds new beginnings, resolutions, retrospection, hope and cheer to one and all. For us, at Aide et Action, the iLEAD Programme started off with a bang by venturing into a new country – Sri Lanka and spreading its wings in various parts of India. The concerted efforts of the entire team has produced tangible results: 7 new centers in the major cities and 3 centers in our existing projects in the immediate future. Aide et Action's first film on livelihood education and brochures on iLEAD were also prepared. All this has been accomplished within a matter of a few weeks. This only proves that we can achieve wonders if we set our minds to the task and work together as a team.

Congratulations and kudos to the entire team!

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1. iLEAD ventures into new territories

For Aide et Action (AeA), South Asia team, the year 2006 started off with a series of meetings and brainstorming sessions on iLEAD. The dreams and ideas of the team have crystallized into

- Concretizing plans to start 20 iLEAD centers in India and Sri Lanka within the next three months
- Employability potential assessment in January in seven cities all over India namely Trichy, Bhopal, Delhi, Pune, Mumbai, Ranchi and Patna
- Launch of iLEAD in existing NGO partners – RDO
- Making a film and brochures on iLEAD
- Raising funds for iLEAD through sponsorship



iLEAD goes international

After a month of planning and preparation at Boossa in Galle District, iLEAD Sri Lanka started off with a bang on 9th January 2006 with the lighting of a 6 foot high "Kuthuvillaku" by eminent personalities like Mr. Sunimal Fernando – Advisor to the His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, Mr. Siri Goonewardene - President of Galle District Tourist Hotel Association and Mr. Mendis – Regional Manager for Singer Home Appliances among others.

Candidates took part in an hour long cultural programme which included traditional dance songs and plays. Situated in a scenic spot embellished with burma teak columns the training center, the first of its kind in the district, offers courses in

- Hospitality services – Food & Beverage service, Basic Cookery – Western & Continental
- Automobile technician – 2 & 3 Wheeler mechanism

- IT enabled service – Hardware, Networking, MS Office, Internet, and DTP
- Industrial garment makers – 'JUKI' Machines and other supporting machines operation

Around 110 candidates in the age group of 18 to 24 years have joined these courses which will continue for the next four months.

2. Relief in times of distress – Sri Lanka

Aide et Action has been working in collaboration with Siyath Foundation to better the lives of 10,000 families in Galle district, Sri Lanka. The child care center for children, health check ups, provision of food materials and utensils, shelters for homeless and formation of women self help groups to promote income generation activities are some of the major activities implemented by Siyath Foundation.

During the recent floods in December 2005, Siyath swung into action immediately extending relief and rehabilitation services to the affected people in Moratuwa village. In order to carry forward the rehabilitation process Siyath held a meeting with other stakeholders on 26th January 2006. The participants included government representatives (deputy mayor, divisional secretary, the representatives from education department, health department, local administration and representatives of poverty eradication programme). The development initiatives of Siyath were well appreciated by the participants and they agreed to extend their fullest cooperation in carrying forward this initiative of Siyath.

3. Fighting against all odds - Ayyanar goes to school!



What is so special about Ayyanar going to school? Ayyanar is a nine year old boy living in Kombai, with mobility and speech problems. His parents were of the opinion that children like Ayyanar were destined to stay at home with no access to education. However, in spite of all his problems, Ayyanar could indicate through gestures and limited vocalization the names of vegetables and fruits, time and the names of motorbikes by their sounds. When asked whether he would like to go to school, he nodded in approval and expressed his happiness through gestures. The project staff of direct implementation programme of AeA in Kodaikanal - got him a wheelchair and admitted him in a nearby AeA school. He now attends school everyday and his friends treat him as their equal without any discrimination. Being with his peer group makes Ayyanar happy and hope can be seen shining on the faces of his parents. Lets make all attempts to ensure that more Ayyanars go to school in future!

4. An unforgettable experience – visit of a sponsor



Ms. Nelly Vivier who visited India for the first time was overjoyed when she met the children of the direct implementation programme of AeA in Sathyamangalam. She felt privileged by the warm welcome at the project and says, "I can never forget this visit - meeting with children in schools, with families and villagers. I shall inform AeA Paris about this visit."

During her brief stopover at AeA Chennai, she interacted with the sponsorship team, shared her experiences in the field and gained clarity on issues such as education programmes of AeA, roles of different stakeholders in the education programme, formation of community based organizations, empowerment of Women Self Help Groups and measures undertaken by AeA to integrate dropouts, bonded laborers, migrant children into school and the livelihood training programme to youth.