



# AMICI NEWS

Volume 3 Issue 1

For Private Circulation

Jan-Feb 2004

## Biennial meeting:

The Biennial meeting of AIFO projects in India was held at Mandya from November 27 to 29th, 2003.

The main thrust of the meeting was the changing scenario of leprosy work from the vertical to the horizontal.

Mr Sergio, board member of AIFO, Bologna who spoke on the all important theme of partnership said there is a need for partnership consultation, North-South funding and establishment of local offices.

Project manager of AIFO Bologna Dr Giovanni Gazzoli, chair person of AMICI Trust Dr Daisy Kandathil and other trust members were present at the all important meeting.

Among the various presentations by project partners, of particular interest is the statistics on leprosy in India at present.

Currently, the prevalence in leprosy has come down to 1.9 per 10,000 population compared to 80 per 10,000 in the year 1980.

In addition, not less than 16 states in the country have reached elimination targets while six are heading towards elimination.

*Contd. on Pg 2*



Happiness at last: Patients at the Nidadavole centre entertain guests during the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

## Silver Jubilee: Nidadavole and Sumanahalli

It is with great pleasure that we share the news of our Nidadavole and Sumanahalli projects completing 25 years of service to the 'unwanted' brothers and sisters, affected by Leprosy who found love and shelter under its umbrella. The Silver Jubilee year of both organisations was celebrated in 2003:

The St Joseph's Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre at Nidadavole sprang into existence in 1978 when the sight of these 'unwanted' brothers and sisters living without food, shelter, clothing and medical facilities, stirred the hearts of Rev Fr Jose Kaimlett and Fr K V Augustine.

Likewise, a request by the then chief minister of Kamataka D Devaraj Urs to the Archbishop of Bangalore His Grace Arokiaswamy, was the trigger for setting up Sumanahalli or the village of people with good heart' in 1977 to help people with Leprosy.

Since then, both have come a long way, with AIFO developing a partnership with the projects in 1985. For 25 years, the centres have touched the lives of this most stigmatised group of the society. Today, they have provided each person a home within the centre, enabling families to live independently co-existing within the centre.

Education, vocational training like tailoring and craft, footwear unit manufacturing special footwear for the patients, construction of new houses, a free hostel and a burial ground to give a decent farewell to the patients are the plethora of activities of this centre.

AIFO representatives from Italy and India visited the projects during the jubilee functions.

## Biennial meeting ( *contd.* )

(From Page-I)

Four states have high prevalence of leprosy.

Another interesting highlight was the innovation in CBR program,mes as adapted by IMA Cochin which has organised neighbourhood groups as an integral part of the programme.

Apart from this, the participants shared information on the problems and challenges faced in the various projects, and deliberated on the various factors like rehabilitation, research, capacity building and related subjects.

## **WORDS OF WISDOM**

The only way of  
procuring happiness  
for oneself is to think  
only of the happiness  
of others--- Raoul  
Follereau.

## **Third CBR and Leprosy Project planning meeting**

It is an undisputed fact that coordinated efforts can do much more than sporadic and isolated efforts can in any endeavour. The importance of this cannot be underestimated especially when we are talking about projects which have a high ideal like AIFO has.

What started when Journalist Raoul Follereau first met with persons afflicted with leprosy in 1958 is today a worldwide movement towards a totally leprosy free world. We at AMICI believe that this is an objective which will one day be a reality. And so we move one step at a time.

One such effort is the finalisation of action plans for integrated CBR and leprosy projects for the next three years. The third planning meeting in this effort was held on January 19. Aimed at consolidation of the entire project at state level, the meeting was attended by Professor Luigi Gravina, vice president of AIFO Bologna Italy and local partners at the AIFO regional office in Bangalore.

Apart from finalising the Integrated CBR and leprosy action plans submitted by ten local partners, a decision was taken to organise a local meeting with other NGOs working in Bangalore urban area to avoid duplication of work. In addition, this was seen as an opportunity to enable better understanding between organisations.

## **A WORD FROM THE AMICI NEWS DESK, BANGALORE**

Dear ones,

It is with great pleasure that we greet you after presenting our previous issue in July last year. A new year has arrived and with it new hopes and targets.

Maximum utilisation is the ultimate aim of this news letter and it can only happen with active contributions from all of you out there.

We are interested in highlighting unique case studies of success stories in our projects which can prove to be an inspiration to all others. We are also on the look out for innovations in the project work. In addition, we will be featuring moves of individuals in the various projects.

Please feel free to send us photographs and literature any time on our mail.

Regards,  
Friends from Bangalore.

## **PROJECT VISIT: ASSAM**

The green and lustrous state of Assam has beckoned our project team year after year. The AIFO CBR project has reached remote villages in the state, which are yet unconnected by road.

These villages have seen a lot of improvement in the recent years, thanks to the CBR projects of AIFO. A testimony to this is that today, the project villages have 120 CBR groups actively engaged in developmental activities.

Our representatives Mr.M.V.Jose and CBR coordinator Mr.Jayanth Kumar on their ten day visit to Assam CBR project between October 7 and 18,2003 covered Balipipla, Ballia, Nodigram, Konokpur and other villages.

At meetings which found enthusiastic participation in the members of the local Self Help Groups, prevalent problems were hammered out and viable solutions suggested.

Prominent among the decisions was the plan to stop preparation of alcohol by women in the villages.

### **Meetings/Events**

Board meeting: The fourth board meeting of AMICI Trust was held on August 4, 2003 at Bangalore. The highlight is that a decision was reached to create a Dr V Ekambaram Memorial Fund, in respect of our beloved chairman whose contributions and love will always be cherished.

### **Upcoming events**

March 13-15: A workshop for staff of MOB rural health care at Mandya.



Empowered: Women in Self Help Group meeting at Assam

A pointer to the impact of the SHGs is that the groups formed nearly two years ago at Konkpur village, evinced keen interest in developing the coaching centre which is functioning actively into a formal school.

Training programme for animators and Self Help Group leaders were made interesting with activities like social games, demonstrations, group work and presentation, role playing, story telling with live examples and stimulation exercises.

All this was accomplished notwithstanding continuous rains in the area, long treks to reach inaccessible villages and even a short stretch over a precarious bamboo bridge across the river Longai! And sure, the next visit will see more improvement and lots of sunshine! ! !

### **Partners' moves..**

Sr Fatima Jose has taken charge from Sr. Ananda at the St. Joseph's Leprosy Rehabilitation Centre, Thimmarajupalem, Nidadavole as of January 1, 2004. While heartily welcoming Sr Fatima Jose, we would like to acknowledge the great contribution made by Sr. Ananda in planning, setting and running the rehabilitation centre efficiently for many years.

## Making every contact matter

(Amici News will feature one organisation per month, among its project partners. The featured organisation this month is the Malavalli CBR project of Shree Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind--- *The news desk*)

Tackling economic, social and educational isolation of persons with disabilities through community approach is a target that the project, has been working effectively towards since its modest beginning in July 1997.

Starting with 80 villages in two hob lis (Blocks) of Malavalli taluk, it has now extended its operations to villages in Malavalli, Maddur, KR Pete of Mandya district and Channapatna and Ramanagaram of Bangalore rural district.

At present, the project reaches 11,745 persons with disabilities in 1,442 villages of five taluks in two districts.

In the past one year, apart from organising a one day seminar and rally to advocate rights of the PWD, the project has formed two taluk level co-ordination committees at Ramanagaram and Maddur and plans to form more this year in three other taluks.

The committee not only discusses problems, solutions and achievements but also ensures local administration participation. For, members of the committee include assistant commissioner, tahasildar, chief executive officer, taluk panchayat president, social welfare officer, representative from the local NGO, representative from the project and the president of taluk level federation and municipal president.

Workshops on human rights, needs of persons with disabilities, leprosy, had good participation, says the project report.

## *Chikkathayamma: Looking ahead*

Twenty six year old Chikkathayamma did not believe in surgery. She had spent over 20 years of her life suffering the agonies of club foot, after contracting Polio at the tender age of three. A failed surgery in the neighbouring village had set her dead against attempting to undergo one herself.

And so she decided she would rather live with the problem than undergo corrective surgery. And that was the way she was when the Malavalli project staff identified her in December 2000.

Despite several counselling sessions, Chikkathayamma was adamant about her decision. But the project staff would not give up. They then tried to change her mindset through the local Self Help Group. Discussions at the SHG and several stories of successful corrective surgeries later, Chikkathayamma finally consented to the surgery.

The surgery in January 2003 and regular physiotherapy sessions later, Chikkathayamma is today a happy woman. Her world has now extended to community level participation as well as helping the project work in her area.

Not only that, she has also participated in leadership training for SHG members. The future for Chikkathayamma is not so bleak after all...

## *Malavalli conld...*

Health and medical rehabilitation camps were also held at the five taluks.

Apart from this, school screening camps were held to facilitate early identification and intervention of PWD. Vocational training camps, self employment and social security programmes also helped in further rehabilitation of the target group.