



AMICI NEWS

Amici di Raoul Follereau

For Private Circulation

Dr. V. Ekambaram

26.12.1917 – 01.03.2003

After completion of his MBBS he went on to serve the Indian Army for five years. It was after this brief stint with the army, that he got involved in the field of leprosy work in India. In July 1950, he was posted to the Leprosy Department in Stanley



THE HUMBLE FIELD WORKER

Medical College, Madras. From that day onwards, he dedicated his life to the elimination of leprosy in India. In the early fifties, leprosy relief was carried out by few missionaries and there was no National Programme. It was no wonder that his contemporaries offered him condolences when he began his work in the field of leprosy.

He went on to become an eminent leprologist and the First State Leprosy Officer in Tamil Nadu. At Karigiri, he was considered as the "Teacher of Teachers" in the field of leprosy. Dr. Ekambaram Endowment Prize has been constituted for the best outgoing NMS student at SLR&TC at Karigiri

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Activities Unlimited

Dear Friends,

This month has been a huge roller coaster ride for us at AMICI. The month began by the sad news about the death of our beloved Dr. Ekambaram.

This issue contains an article about the life and work of Dr. Ekambaram. There is no doubt that he was a great leprologist and a great human being. He will always be remembered.

After a condolence meeting, we plunged into a week long intensive training course on CBR and Leprosy Issues for the project staff from Karnataka and Andhra.

The Bangalore Urban MDT Workshop followed immediately. This pioneering effort was a 2 day workshop including the representatives from the public sector units in Bangalore.

We understand that capacity building of the staff is crucial for success of our programs. We continue to provide the necessary inputs with the hope of achieving the desired results.

We thank our project holders for sending us articles about the progress of the work. We recognise that without your contributions, this newsletter cannot continue.

This issue brings you reports of the training programs and news which you can use.

Hope you enjoy this issue.

With regards,

Asha Zechariah



From Page 1 . . .

Over the decades, he witnessed every stage of the strategy and implementation of leprosy control work in India. From the rudimentary stage of selective isolation of infective patients to the advanced stage of Multi-Drug therapy, he has seen it all.

Before his association with AIFO, he held the post of Secretary, Damien Foundation India Trust. With extra ordinary commitment and dedication he joined AIFO as the Representative in 1979. It was under his guidance, that AIFO was able to expand the quantity and quality of work done in India. He was instrumental in initiating the projects associated with NGO's as well as the Government programmes. This was indeed a unique effort and one of its kinds in India.

In the year 1983 he spearheaded the MDT program in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh, financial and technical assistance was provided to the district. He went on to build the Bangalore Urban and Mandya District Programs in the year 1992. These were pioneering efforts in areas of collaboration between Government and NGO's.

He conceived the present concept of District Technical Support Teams. Apart from support the District Teams in Karnataka, he was the driving force behind projects like Sumanahalli, Shantha Jeeva Jyothi, Arogya Matha Seva Kendra in Bhalki, MOB in Mandya and many other projects.

Until his last breath he continued to serve as the Special Representative of Amici Di Raoul Follereau and Chairman of the AMICI Trust, Bangalore.

He was the recipient of the prestigious *INTERNATIONAL GANDHI MEMORIAL AWARD*. In November 2002, he was the recipient of *LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT LEPROLOGIST* award presented by the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh

A man of great commitment, endurance and vision – he will always be remembered and cherished.

... had Dr. Ekambaram been a Catholic, he would have been canonised and declared a saint by the Vatican.

Mr. Alexander, MLA and Member of AMICI Trust

WORKSHOP on Community Based Rehabilitation and Leprosy for middle level functionaries in AIFO supported projects

A week-long intensive training was organized in order to enable the participants to analyse the changing scenario of leprosy elimination programme in the light of NLEP.



Preparing the ACTION PLAN for the final presentation

This workshop also enabled the projects to create and action plan for the future role of NGOs working for leprosy elimination programme in the context of developing integrated-inclusive approach (CBR) in their existing projects.

All the participants were exposed to different community settings during the field work. This not only helped them to learn through the experience, but also to implement similar strategies in their own projects. This kind of a learning experience was greatly appreciated by all the participants.

Activity based sessions, presentations, awareness songs and jokes made this workshop an excellent learning experience.

The participants returned to their projects equipped with new found knowledge and action plans to implement what they learned.



BANGALORE URBAN LEPROSY WORKSHOP

The Bangalore Urban Leprosy Workshop was held at National Tuberculosis Institute, Bangalore on March 20-21st, 2003. Dr. Taranekar, Assistant, Director General (leprosy), Government of India, graced the occasion by his presence and his presentation which focussed on the current leprosy situation in India.

This workshop was indeed a unique meeting ground for representatives of Government, NGO's as well as the Public Sector. This was an effort to strengthen the General Health system in the Integration process and to sensitize all the health providers to participate in the NLEP.

The public sector representatives from HAL, ITI and HMT were inducted into the NLEP by presenting an MDT kit. The success of this workshop was the fact that these representatives were able to confidently speak about the immediate availability of MDT in their centres.

Scientific sessions on Leprosy, the complications and management, Integration issues were held. In addition extensive group work led to the development of an action plan. The NGO's, public sector representatives and the District leprosy Officer presented their respective action plans.

Dr. Subbiah, the Regional Director, Health and Family Welfare Department, concluded the workshop with his special remarks. He appreciated the workshop and urged the participants to focus on the coordination of all existing health sectors/resources into the National Leprosy Eradication Programme.

HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

The Alternative Law Forum (ALF) in co-operation with the Commissioner for Disabilities, a State Government department, offers free legal aid to the disabled persons.

Anroopa, incharge of this wing of the ALF says, "Our main objective is to provide a platform for the disabled with legal encumbrances to make out-of-court settlements. All kinds of disputes, property, recovery of debts and so on involving the disabled are handled by us."

Thanks to the ALF and the Commissioner for Disabilities, for many people with disabilities, there is now hope that tomorrow will be a better day . . .

Mr. Pradeep Kumar, Assistant Commissioner for disabilities explains, "Our department primarily deals with the general grievances of the disabled. We often find that there are legal entanglements involved in solving

some issues. We found it increasingly difficult to handle these cases. We needed the services of legal professionals. When we heard about ALF, and asked their help to sort out the legal issues of our clients, they agreed and have been doing a wonderful job."

The ALF meets its clients to redress their legal grievances at the Office of the Commissioner for Disabilities every Wednesday. The ALF, therefore functions almost like the legal cell of the department.



The ALF can be contacted on 080 - 2865757

An excerpt from the article by Ravindra G Rao, Deccan Herald, Bangalore. March 27, 2003



Arogya Matha Seva Kendra, Bhalki received the award for the best NGO, working in the field of leprosy. Bhalki stand first in the leprosy control work in the entire Bidar District.

Mr. Unnikrishnan and Mr. Pascal received a recognition and an award for the best worker.

CONGRATULATIONS AND KEEP IT UP !!!!

Responding to the huge AIDS pandemic in our country, the Gudivada Project have started a care and support unit for people with HIV-AIDS. This has been done in collaboration with the Andhra Pradesh Aids Control Society. The centre started functioning in June 2002. Within a very short period, over 260 patients have been registered for treatment.

Several of the patients have succumbed to this disease, but the encouraging aspect of the programme is that more than 60% of the patients are doing well, with the nutrition support, treatment, counselling and herbal medicines.

Awareness programmes within the community is another important aspect taken up by this special project.

LET US TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV-AIDS
AND MAKE OUR NATION AIDS FREE !!

Sr. Dr. Prashanti Mary
Assisi Dermatological Centre, Pedana,
Andhra Pradesh.

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useful WRITE TO US !

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Look forward to hear from you . . .

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