

# ASSOCIATION FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT BLACKSBURG CHAPTER



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### • MAHEK LUNCHEON,

Virginia Tech Campus,  
Sunday, October 30

#### • KAVITA RAMDAS,

Large Speaker Event  
Virginia Tech Campus,  
Saturday, November 12th

**Keep a look-out for  
Spring Semester  
Events including a  
Spring Concert,  
International Street  
Fair and Spring  
Speaker Series!**

AID-Blacksburg Community Meetings are held alternate Friday and Saturday evenings at 6:00pm on Virginia Tech's campus. All meetings are open to the public. Please email:

**aidblackburg  
@gmail.com**

for more information, to join the AID listserv and to receive periodic updates.

Or visit the AID-Blacksburg website:

<http://www.aid.org.vt.edu>

2011 - 2012

## 2010-2011 Year In Review

Dear AID Family,

Warm greetings and heartfelt thanks to our committed donors and volunteers who have helped sustain a continued and critical support for on-the-ground development work in India!

In the past year, thanks to our generous donors, our chapter has been pleased to fund projects committed to working on sustainable development and local empowerment issues on the subcontinent. As we look to a new year of activity, we hope to continue a legacy of strong support for NGOs in India.

Thank you for being part of the movement for change!

Sincerely,

Your AID Blacksburg  
Volunteers

\* \* \* \*

### ERDS-Vikahar

ERDS (Economic Rural Development Society) was established in 1982 with the aim of



**Blacksburg volunteer Sunny visits with Shono Basil and her family, the new owners of a bhuti-bhuti business that they started with seed money from ERDS.**

raising the status of underprivileged living in villages located in West Bengal. ERDS empowers those in need through socio-economic development, literacy programs and public awareness campaigns of citizen rights and responsibilities.

In 2010, AID-Blacksburg sponsored a microcredit project which provided loans for 40 people in the village of Vikahar to begin self-sustaining local businesses. As of July 2011, the first group of village entrepreneurs has successfully returned the initial loan along with interest. Many have made significant progress in implementing and in some cases expanding their respective businesses. AID-Blacksburg volunteer Mohammed

Rabius Sunny made a recent trip to visit the NGO in July 2011 and shared several success stories of flourishing local businesses. In order to serve as a sustainable funding source for this successful project, we will be funding the ERDS-Vikahar project for an additional year.

### AID in Numbers...

**20** – number of active AID-Blacksburg Donors/Donor Families

**6179** - \$\$ Fundraising Total AID- Blacksburg 2010- 2011 Cycle

**38**— Total number of AID chapters in North America-

**1**—ranking of AID as a global organization according to *Times of India* Social Impact Award

## Food, Fun, & Festival



▲ Twice a year, AID Blacksburg volunteers cook enticing home-cooked dishes for its most successful fundraisers—the annual Fall Mahek Luncheon and the Virginia Tech International Street Fair (above).

▲ AID, in collaboration with Virginia Tech, organized two speaker events in the Spring of 2011, including the thought-provoking lecture by Professor Dr. Bidyut Chakrabarty (Mahatma Gandhi Visiting Chair at James Madison University), entitled “Relevance of Gandhi in Present Time,” and an urgent appeal to action from Jeevansathi Mr. Jayaram Venkateshan, working with AID-Tamil Nadu on education access through the Eureka SuperKidz program (above).

▲ AID & VT’s ISA co-sponsored a magical night of classical music and odissi dance. Dancer Sonali Mishra, Sarod-player Soumya Chakraverty and tabla artist Debu Nayak held the audience captive throughout the performance.

**“In the fight of 20% rich and the 80% poor, the poor are likely to lose...our work is to strengthen democracy at its roots.”**

- Gandhian activist and AID National Keynote Speaker **Himanshu Kumar** on the urgency to address economic inequality in India

## Blacksburg Makes Strong Showing at National AID Conference

Sleeping bags, snacks and music playlists in tow, seven AID-Blacksburg volunteers took a 12 hour road trip to Boston to attend the 2011 AID National Conference. The 3 day event was hosted at MIT during the last weekend of May and featured a series of workshops, guest speakers and community-building events.

AID volunteers from across the country and India rallied to hear from activists in the field describing successes and challenges in dealing with criti-



cal issues in India including literacy, sustainable agriculture, recovery of Bhopal victims, peace efforts and state-sponsored brutality against adivasis in Chattisgarh.

In addition, volunteers shared best practices to establish effective and wide-

spread donor base, improve fundraising strategies and increase efficiency of resource transfer to Indian NGOs. Volunteer Abhranil Maiti claimed,

“It was an amazing experience in the conference to know so many projects with such diverse nature focusing on critical problems.” AID-Blacksburg participants left the conference recharged and looking forward to translating new ideas for fundraising, political awareness and project evaluation into action.

# Current Projects Under Review...

This school-year AID-Blacksburg will be looking into funding **three new projects** which are undergoing our consensus-based review process. Each organization truly epitomizes AID's core values of supporting work that is **sustainable & empowering**.

## JANPATH

Janpath is a solidarity organization based in Gujarat, committed to working for poor & oppressed throughout the state. AID-Blacksburg along with several other regional chapters are looking to support a particular campaign for salt-workers in the Little Rann of Kutch. 'Agariyas' (salt-worker community) migrate across the sea coast with their families in order to produce some of the finest-quality salt through a traditional process dating back hundreds of years. With the advent of corporate salt production, the socio-economic condition of these traditional salt-workers has



weakened as their labor and product is marginalized in the marketplace.

In addition, a migratory lifestyle has increased the great needs of this community including lack of access to water, health services, education, and electricity. This salt-worker-led campaign is working to provide some of these basic human needs while also advocating for labor rights and enti-

tlements to government services. AID-Blacksburg volunteer Abhranil Maiti visited the organization in December 2010 observed, "**Janpath is an organization which has significant contribution in solving problems of the salt-pan workers in the little Rann of Kutch.** My visit to Janpath's office in Ah-

medabad and interaction with the members of Janpath helped me to get an idea about its focused effort. My experience says Janpath not only have a clearly defined goal but also have significant credentials in terms of their effort in the field."

We look forward to learning more about salt-making and the promising work of Janpath organizations.

## IAPA

(Indian Association for Promotion of Adoption & Child Welfare)

IAPA is an NGO based in Mumbai and committed to protection and care of vulnerable and/or abandoned children. IAPA has various programs for adoption, foster care, social work and education sponsorship for underprivileged children and youth. AID-Blacksburg is looking to support a project called Asmita for children from underprivileged families (children of prostitutes, mother headed households

and daily wage laborers) which provides students with supplemental meal, before school programs, work development classes and scholarships. AID-Blacksburg volunteer Manjushree Palit visited the program in July 2011 and commented,

**"Asmita is truly geared towards the all around development of children."**



**Volunteer Manjushree Palit makes friends during a visit to an after-school program sponsored by IAPA.**



Association for India's Development

## Interested in donating?

### You can mail a check to:

Association for India's Development  
Squires Student Center  
Mailcode: 0546  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Or visit

<http://www.aidindia.org>

Click on "Donate Now" and select "Blacksburg"  
under "specific chapter"

*Thank you for your support!*

**join the movement.**

The Association for India's Development is a grassroots organization dedicated to **equitable and sustainable social change & anti-poverty work...**

20 years ago, community-members, activists and students from India and the U.S. joined together to support the on-the-ground efforts of NGOs creating real change on the subcontinent. Today, AID has grown into a movement, including numerous partner NGOs based in India and 36 chapters throughout the U.S...

**GET INVOLVED!**  
Become part of the movement by joining the dynamic AID-Blacksburg chapter!  
<http://www.aid.org.vt.edu/>

AID has supported critical work related to:

- \* health access
- \* education access
- \* anti-poverty efforts
- \* economic freedom
- \* human rights
- \* agriculture
- \* water & energy

...or make a sustainable monthly donation at  
<https://secure.aidindia.org/aidadmin/donate/current/Donate.jsp>

<http://www.aidindia.org/>

## Eureka SuperKidz



Eureka SuperKidz is an AID INDIA education initiative based in Tamil Nadu with the aim of providing quality and accessible education programs for all youth while promoting local employment in villages. Eureka SuperKidz has a dedicated research team which

seeks to provide fundamental education that is relevant and skills-based as well as engaging and creative for youth in underserved areas. The effectiveness and popularity of the program has allowed the program to expand from a couple pilot villages to hundreds across the state.

This past May, Jeevansathi (activist) Jayaram Venkatesan, visited Virginia Tech to share innovational educational materials and stories from the field in an AID-Blacksburg sponsored speaker event. Eureka SuperKidz aims to reach **1000 villages** this year and AID-Blacksburg hopes to be part of this effort.



**140 million primary school kids in India...**

**Less than 50% of them can read or do math at an age appropriate level.**

**We are committed to changing this.**

**Join hands with Eureka Child. So the next generation is not left behind.**