

Highlights of this Newsletter

(Oct – Dec, 2016)

- End Violence against Women and Girls campaign
- Workshop for the Police Dept. Chirang Dist. On Human Rights
- Orientation of newly appointed govt. officials on NGO sector
- Jindal School of International Affairs - Borderlands program

the ant news

Oct - Dec 2016

"No" to gender based violence

In our effort to stop domestic violence, campaigns is one of the most important methods we use every year. This year also we ran a campaign from 25th Nov to 10th Dec (as part of the *International Campaign to stop Violence Against women*). We are in the final phase of getting funding for working exclusively to stop domestic violence in 100 villages through self-help groups and changing the culture of violence.



*Street theatre on Domestic Violence (below)
discussion about gender with primary school teachers*



Training on Human Rights for Human Rights Defenders

Our district police, already impressed by our earlier training on Violence Against Women, requested us to help train all the police officers on Human Rights. 25 police officers attended the half-day workshop at the Ant Campus on 27 November 2016. The training covered basic aspects of human rights, when and where they were established, and their basic principles. We then moved on to discussing which human rights were particularly relevant for the police (such as the ones against torture, discrimination, etc), and for what reasons. We also had a lively debate between two groups about how human rights helps or hinders police work. Also, through short films, we helped seed ideas about effective community policing in other parts of the country.

We carried out a field study on Domestic Violence recently in our intervention areas of Chirang District in August 2016. It shows that 42% of women have experienced severe physical violence in the past 6 months. Out of these women, 24% say that they experience violence every second day. This finding shows the stark realities of women experiencing violence in their day to day lives and therefore it is important for us to stop it, because it's against the dignity of any human being and women *"should not accept violence and suffer in silence."*

Unlike other years this year's 16 days campaign and activism focussed on building dialogues with men and key community leaders, teachers, etc. 40 events were organised with women's groups and 4 big dialogues with Men. In this campaign, we were able to reach out to around 1500 women and 350 men including youth.

Key message of the campaign

- a. Domestic violence is no more a Private affair
- b. Domestic violence can be prevented
- c. Let us all Start from our 'Home' and make our society safe for WOMEN



An IDEa Partner Speaks Out

IDEa is a wing of the ant that is meant to support and further the voluntary sector in the region. Since its inception in 2007 it has been involved in capacity building for NGOs in the Northeast, Research, Networking with regional, national and international NGOs. With help from Caring Friends, IDEa is currently funding through small amounts the work of 11 NGOs in Assam, Meghalaya & Manipur through project funds & individual fellowships.

Purnima Boro

**Fellowship recipient 2014-16,
Mahila Shakti Kendra (MASK)
Balipara, Assam**



When I applied for the Caring Friend's fellowship from ant-IDEa, our organization's financial situation was not so good. New government regulations was making it difficult to carry out microfinance activities, the major source of income for the organization. The fellowship money thus was an unexpected boon for us and gave us the space and opportunity to think through further. It was great relief to receive this kind of a support and encouragement during that critical phase.

The support of the Fellowships even had an influence on our institutional practice. Apart from direct work with SHGs and micro-finance, we got a chance to establish partnerships with different NGOs and funders and now we have various national and international partnerships.



Work of IDEa partners on agriculture and education.



Studying Borders at the Bhutan Border

Students of International Relations, sociology etc. usually do not have any field component in their studies. What they study are from textbooks. In order to change this and give student a "real feel" of what they study, we collaborated with the Jindal Global University (Sonapat, Haryana) and designed and ran a 2 weeks course. Called Winter Institute in Development Planning for Borderland Regions (WIDPBR) program, 7 students took part along with their faculty.

The program provides an alternative pathway to studying and researching international relations through a structured and systematic immersion (and sensitization) in the form of field visits to the border district of Bhutan and Assam. We hope such programmes trains a new generation of scholars and policy analysts who are sensitised by providing opportunities to travel to border



Students of Jindal School of International Affairs celebrating Christmas with Aagor weavers in the ant campus

Other happenings& new projects

- **Caring for rights - one year project with UNICEF on child rights**
- **Training and orientation of 35 newly appointed govt. officers about the development programs, challenges faced by NGOs and the role of the govt.**
- **One day program was organized in collaboration with District Legal Service Authority on Learning about Bail provision, Law of Sureties, Non-Bailable warrant for the team, community groups and leaders such as the Sahayak Manch, SHGs, teachers**

(Donations to the ant are exempt from Income Tax as per rules under Sec 80G of the Income Tax Act)

We also welcome any feedback on the newsletter. Please do get in touch. Our contact is:

the ant, Rowmari, P.O Khagrabari, Dist Chirang via Bongaigaon, Assam – 783380; Ph: 9859978991
email: sunil@theant.org ; www.theant.org