



Association for India's Development (AID) is a volunteer-based social movement promoting sustainable, equitable and development of human life in India. AID financially supports several grassroots organizations in India and accelerates advancement of various interconnected spheres such as education, livelihood, judicious use of natural resources agriculture, health, child welfare, women's empowerment and social justice. From its inception in 1991, AID has grown incredibly to currently supporting almost 120 socially relevant projects. Today, AID has over 5000 supporters and 1000 active volunteers. AID currently has 36 chapters across the USA and 45 worldwide.

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AID Cincinnati Projects

Mithila Vidyalayam

Mithila Vidyalayam is a private school in Andhra Pradesh, India, that provides free education up to 7th grade for economically disadvantaged children. Mithila Vidyalayam has 172 students who are supported by ten teachers and other volunteers. AID-Cincinnati volunteer, Sridi Annapantula, visited Mithila Vidyalayam on August 16, 2017 and shared the following report.



“Visiting Mithila Vidyalayam was an unforgettable experience. With the help of the experienced and kind-hearted teachers, kids are not only benefitting from the educational point of view but are also offered a chance to sculpt their personality and spiritual identity. In addition to this, the school provides other necessary

supplies like uniforms, pencils, etc., and ensures cleanliness of their facilities. Even though this program is run through voluntary service, they are not at all compromising the quality of education provided to the children. When asked about their future aspiration, kids enthusiastically responded and dream of becoming doctors, engineers, musicians, teachers and so on. These kids are no different than our kids. We sincerely wish their dreams would come true.”



AID-Cincinnati has supported Mithila Vidyalayam since 2012. In early 2017, AID-Cincinnati provided about \$5400 for support of ongoing school operations. AID-Cincinnati echoes what Sridi concluded in his report and also hopes that all Mithila students achieve much success in their spheres of interest.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”- Nelson Mandela

Mukti



Right to Information (RTI) Act empowers Indian citizens to become aware of government functioning matters. *MUKTI*, an NGO based in West Bengal, India, primarily works on the socio-economic development of landless farmers of the Sundarbans area and helps residents to use RTI as a tool for exercising their rights. *MUKTI* organizes street plays and workshops to educate local people about how government functions by collecting sales tax on commodities and how the public money is being spent by the government, which of course is supposed to spend on overall development. RTI camps help people filing applications for widow pension, old age pension etc. Villagers at “Gram Sabhas” arranged by *MUKTI* come together to discuss and identify critical

needs (such as roads, food rations and drinking water) that then is conveyed to and lobbied for with government officials via RTI application. Through years of work by *Mukti* in this poor area of Sundarbans - the land of farmers, honey collectors, fisherman and cattle herders - residents are now accessing various social security schemes of Government - e.g. **Antodaya Anna Yojana, Annapurna Yojana and ICDS, PDS, NREGA** other schemes.



AID-Cincinnati has provided initial funding of \$3000. The chapter volunteers had a video conference on November 12th with Mr. Sankar Halder (the inspiring founder of *MUKTI*) and learned lot about *MUKTI* and its amazing work.

“Freedom, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth” - George Washington

Mukti Success Story

Mr. Swarna Naskar from the village of Purba Sridharpur, West Bengal could not believe that he did not make it to the final list of the Regional School Service Examination in 2010 for Group D post, as he was confident of his performance. He approached *MUKTI* and with their assistance, filed an RTI application to access his Answer Sheets. He also accessed, through RTI, the marks obtained by the last candidate in the final list and found those to be lower than his own marks. Armed with this information, he sought legal redress and finally received a group D staff position after 6 long years of struggling and waiting!

AID Cincinnati Projects Not Featured in this Newsletter

- **Balya—An Orphanage and free School in Bangalore, Karnataka**
- **Kheti Virasat Mission (KVM) - An NGO that provides awareness about unchecked chemical-based farming and advocates sustainable agriculture based in Faridkot, Punjab**

Visit <https://cincinnati.aidindia.org> for more information on these projects

MOHAMMAD BAZAR BACKWARD CLASSES DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY (MBBCDS)

MBBCDS was created with the vision to improve the education and social rights of the marginalized in chosen villages of West Bengal and Jharkhand. MBBCDS is dedicated to the mission of alleviating poverty by exploring, organizing and enhancing livelihood upliftment opportunities through education, health, agriculture extension and women's group organization with local resource management to ensure food security.

One of the key programs of MBBCDS is to providing quality education to girls - Torunbhani, Self Help Group initiating their development. MBBCDS enhances awareness amongst the adolescent group, women and backward people on education, health, empowerment, envi-

ronment, agriculture-related issues.

AID-Cincinnati was privileged to host a seminar in June 2014 by Ms. Khatun and the audience was impressed and inspired by her indefatigable spirit and relentless work. Since then,

AID Cincinnati has supported MBBCDS with the "Education of Tribal Children" in Jambuni Village of Mohammad Bazar area, with a focus on creating options for improving education for poor children. In 2015-2106, AID-Cincinnati provided \$4320.



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" - Mahatma Gandhi

AID CINCINNATI EVENTS 2017**Indradhanush 2017**

AID-Cincinnati presented **Indradhanush 2017** on 29th July 2017. This was a **FREE ADMISSION music concert comprising classical, semi-classical and raga-based film songs** by Vidwans Balasubramanya Sharma, G. Gurumurthy and Nitish Ammanayya from Bengaluru, India. These artists are extremely well-renowned for their award-winning musical prowess. They were accompanied by our own, Sri Ramesh Iyer, on the tabla. The audience was enthralled by their mesmerizing performance and the evening was a soulful musical journey for all.

The event was a good way to create awareness about the revamped community-based AID-Cincinnati chapter. The chapter was also able to raise about \$1200 in donations.

Harmony 2017

Harmony events have been presented since 2002 by AID Cincinnati. Harmony 2017 organized on October 6, 2017, featured *Pancham Redefined*, an exciting tribute to Rahul Dev Burman (famously known as Pancham). The Kolkata-based musicians led by the Grammy-nominated Pandit Subhen Chatterjee, a world-class musician who is featured in the Guinness Book of World Records, regaled the audience with their retrospective about Pancham, even as they innovated with nuanced variations of his compositions.



The event was an enormous success and patrons highly appreciated the musical excellence of the maestro and the other artists. AID-Cincinnati raised about \$15,000 from the event. The music group had a successful tour and plans to revisit in Fall 2018.



One for India
Making every one count!

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Association for
India's Development
সংগঠন-সংগঠন-সংগঠন

AID believes *Interconnected Solutions* are needed for **INDIA's** *Interconnected Problems*. If we are not part of the *Solutions*, we are part of the *Problems*. Each **ONE** of us like the farmer, the educator, the health-worker, the activist, the donor and **YOU** can be part of the *Solutions*.

The **ONE for INDIA (OFI)** campaign is the annual year-end AID-wide campaign. The OFI 2016 goal was \$300,000 and we raised about \$270,000. We would like to raise \$300,000 for OFI 2017. Can you please be the **ONE** who makes the change in INDIA? Please donate generously at <https://aidindia.org/one-for-india/>.



Damodharan M

**Head, Eureka Superkids
and Eureka Homes**

AID Talks: Inspiring Talk by AID-India Veterans

In the summer of 2017, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Dhamodharan (Damu) and Ms. Gomathi Dhamodharan and talking to them about their ongoing projects in India. They are some of the most phenomenal people I have met. From the second we started talking, their positive energy and enthusiasm regarding their work was visible. Both of them had humble beginnings and had to deal with significant hardships in their life. In spite of not having much to begin with, they have dedicated themselves to helping others and have found a way to improve the lives of people, especially children all over India.

The day after we met, I attended their presentation that explained many of the projects they were a part of through AID. One of their main points was that even if children in India have access to education, it is not necessarily high quality education. Under the status-quo, the vast majority of children in developing communities attend Government Schools. Most students matriculate through grade levels very easily without actually showing evidence of learning anything along the way. There could be a class 5 student that cannot read Tamil (their mother tongue) at the level of a class 3 student. Their presentation highlighted a variety of different programs designed to bring quality education to students regardless of where they are located.

One such program is the "Eureka SuperKidz" program. This program takes a more interactive approach to primary education. There are multiple facets of the program that work together to make it successful. On one hand, there is more progress tracking, which ensures that students are performing on par with the goals of the program. Each month, learning goals are set and students undergo regular evaluation to track the individual student's progress. Another component of this program is teacher training. Rather than just giving teachers a syllabus and turning them loose, teachers undergo training to standardize teaching techniques, which in turn optimizes student performance. So far, there has been a significant improvement in the literacy levels of the target students, which shows that the efforts are working.



Gomathi Damodharan

**Head, Eureka Homes &
Eureka School**



I find it so incredible that one organization is able to touch the lives of so many deserving families. Educating people of all ages in the developing regions of India gives them the tools to make a living for themselves and become independent. Furthermore, literacy gives them the power to become more instrumental members of society so that they can help even more people!

Deepa Ananth, Freshman, NEO College of Medicine

The Eureka program has been a hallmark program of AID India. In 2017, 80430 children learned English, Tamil, Science, Mathematics and other skills in 1063 village centers and 800 government schools.

Recently, Sri Mirle visited six Eureka centers near Tiruvannamalai. He was very impressed with the eagerness of the children to learn and with the encouraging environment of the centers that enables the children to do so. According to him, "The magic of such transformative work is happening and the palpable changes are truly heart-warming!"

