



# ASK UPDATE

Volume 1 Issue 1

April - June, 2007

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Association for Stimulating Know How (ASK) is a Capacity Building institution. Since its inception in 1992, ASK has been working with other NGOs, CBOs, Corporate Houses and Grassroots organizations to build their capacities by providing trainings, conducting evaluations, social auditing and also working closely with multilaterals in formulation of policies.

The core units of ASK-Capacity Building and Development Unit, Evaluation and Documentation Unit, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Unit, Corporate Social Accountability Unit and the Project Management Unit, consisting of a team of development professionals from diverse backgrounds work in tandem with the organizations mission which is “to be a capacity building institution and enable CBO, intermediary organizations and corporate to achieve and sustain a visible socio-economic development.” ASK has also ventured into demonstrative grassroots projects. “Sankalp”, based in Moradabad is a project aimed at eradicating the problem of child labour in the brass industry. “Unnati”, another project based in Moradabad, works towards developing entrepreneurship among the mothers of the working children. ASK also implemented a project in Chattisgarh aimed at bringing equality through sanitation.

The ASK Bulletin focuses on the ongoing activities of ASK providing updates on the present activities and upcoming schedules. It also throws light on the current issues and concerns of the development sector.

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## Training News

The training Unit of ASK in this quarter got involved with several organizations in providing training of trainers and also facilitated some major trainings on Results Based Management and Results Based Planning. Some of the major highlights are given below.

ASK conducted a training on Result Based Management for Commission on Peace and Justice, Netherlands and Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, Netherlands.

ASK was invited by Cordaid, Netherlands for discussing the role of Indian and International NGOs in transition economies like India and decide the strategic focus of Cordaid in India and partnership with ASK.

ASK got involved in disaster risk reduction trainings as a co-facilitator with experts from Philippines. Disaster risk reduction is an important issue in today's world and ASK plans to facilitate the implementing agencies to systematically work on disaster risk reduction rather than always on relief and rehabilitation.

The training Unit of ASK initiated the process of mainstreaming results based planning , monitoring and reporting in Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI). CMAI is an association of premiere mission hospitals and Individual health and healing professionals spread across the country. CMAI is over a 100 year old association.

A training on project planning and reporting was conducted by ASK for partners of SIDA. The organizations attending the training included major Indian NGOs such as Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), PRIA, MAMTA, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Human Rights Law Network, Lawyers' collective, Toxics Link, SPARC and others.

The training Unit of ASK worked to strengthen the people's organizations such as co-operatives and several groups and also facilitated the skill building of the staff with Tezpur Social Service Society in Tezpur, Assam.

A planning workshop was facilitated with Volunteers for Village Development (VVD) in Ukhrul district, Manipur. The workshop focused on developing plans for the people's organizations facilitated by VVD. This was a sequel to an earlier workshop which had focused on strategic planning for VVD itself.

ASK continued the intervention, as part of the projects on capacity building of partners of Cordaid, Netherlands and SKN, Netherlands.

The development of human resource development systems was facilitated with Jana Vikas Samiti in Orissa and Holy Cross Social Service Centre.

Training of Trainers was facilitated with member NGOs of North-East Development Social Forum.

Training was provided on managerial skills for Lok Jagriti Kendra.

The team of trainers at Chaitanya Pune was facilitated in finalizing their Organizational and Project PME Training modules which they will use in training their NGO partners in Maharashtra.



### Forthcoming Trainings

Training on Planning and Monitoring for the partners of IRDC, Canada in India and Sri Lanka.

Training of Trainers on gender for grassroots NGOs which are partners of UKSVK Northern Region.

## Evaluation and Documentation News

The evaluation and Documentation Unit carried out some major evaluations of Tsunami relief programs. A mid-term evaluation of the earthquake relief operation was also carried out in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

ASK carried out a mid-term evaluation of the Earthquake Rehabilitation Project in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, supported by CARITAS, India. The evaluation looked into results achieved, particularly keeping in mind the context of rough terrain, chilly weather through most of the year and the security concerns. The evaluation was carried out over a period of a week as the evaluators reached far flung villages. NGO activities are less in the region and suggestions were given to strengthen the NGO presence and build the capacity of local workers, among other things.

### Evaluation of Tsunami Relief Operations

Facilitated the participatory evaluation of the projects for Tsunami evaluation supported by Cordaid. The process and methodology was truly participatory with active engagement of the community. The participants belong to the community and NGO staffs are involved in the process of evaluation as evaluation team members after they are systematically trained. The objective, scope, methods and points of enquiry have been decided on workshop setting with NGO heads. Evaluation visit at each NGO ends with a de-briefing meeting with community participants before the findings are shared with the NGOs.

Evaluation of Tsunami rehabilitation project implemented by Kottar Social Service Society, funded by CARITAS Switzerland.

ASK carried out an evaluation of the usefulness of the involvement of expatriates in Tsunami relief and rehabilitation projects in Sri Lanka. The methods used in the evaluation were interviews, questionnaires, rating scales and group discussions. Recommendations were separately made to CARITAS Sri Lanka and the international network of CARITAS.

Ambuja Foundation hired ASK to carry out evaluation of its projects in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.



### Forthcoming Evaluations

Evaluation of the projects of the partners of SIMAVI, Netherlands.

Evaluation of a development project of CARITAS Cambodia.

### Forthcoming Study

Study on identifying and documenting coping strategies of the communities that face flood almost every year in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.

## Resettlement and Rehabilitation News

The Resettlement and Rehabilitation Unit of ASK is working closely with Asian Development Bank in developing Technical Assistance for several projects that are being funded by it. Some of the major highlights of the R&R Unit activities are as follows.

Dr. Aqueel Ahmed Khan and Bindiya Rawat from ASK have been engaged on an ADB TA to work on a National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation policy for Bangladesh. Bangladesh does not have a Resettlement and Rehabilitation policy. The Land Acquisition Act of Bangladesh provides compensation for the loss of assets. It does not help to mitigate the problems of the Affected Persons. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is in the process of providing Technical Assistance (TA) to the Government of Bangladesh. Dr. Khan and Ms. Rawat have been engaged as Institutional Specialist and Gender/Social Development Specialist in the policy group working on this draft policy formulation.



ASK is planning to organize more information dissemination workshops on Resettlement and Rehabilitation policies. ASK also invites other organizations to come forward and take partnership.

ASK being a Capacity Building Institution is planning to build capacities of other organizations on Resettlement and Rehabilitation. In spite of having a good framework for the Resettlement and Rehabilitation policy, the desired result is not always obtained. ASK is planning to provide training to the various stakeholders, for example, Government Rural Department, Revenue Department, Construction Companies, Engineers and NGOs so that the policies can be effectively implemented. Dr. Aqueel Ahmed Khan co facilitated training on Involuntary Resettlement Planning and Management in March-April, 2007 for ADB Officer. This workshop aimed at creating an understanding among the ADB staff on involuntary resettlement policy and how it needs to be applied to ADB projects.



Dr. Aqueel Ahmed Khan has been engaged as a Consultant by Asian Development Bank to work with the Learning and Development Unit to make the learning more effective based on adult learning principle.

Bindiya Rawat and Sanghamitra Dhar from ASK have been hired by TA of Asian Development Bank to work on Resettlement and Rehabilitation issues in the road development projects funded by it in State of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

## Corporate Social Accountability News

The Corporate Social Accountability Unit provided several trainings on the issue of social compliance. The IT project is also one of the major highlights of this quarter.

The Corporate Social Accountability Unit of ASK facilitated the Nautica VF India Suppliers Training Workshop. The Nautica Workshop was held from April 3 to 4, 2007 in Gurgaon, India. A total of 17 factories attended, represented by 30 middle managers and senior staff. Ms. Allison Kohll and Mr. K.S. Sampath Kumar of VF Asia attended and actively participated in the training. Ms Monica Ramesh of ASK India and Marcia Miranda of Verite designed and implemented the training course.

The main objectives of the training were for the participants to appreciate the global scenario towards achieving sustainable social compliance standards, understand different perspectives from the suppliers and VFC regarding the major social compliance problems and undertake Root cause analysis of key social compliance problems. The goal was for the suppliers to develop their facility specific action plan for strengthening social compliance in their facility.



A Managerial Action Plan (MAP) was formulated for EDUN, UK.

Monica Ramesh from ASK participated in the ISO Social Responsibility Conference, jointly organized by BIS and VOICE Society on 16th and 17th April, 2007. The main objectives of the conference were to generate awareness and develop understanding about various social issues amongst the different stakeholders, highlight the implications of these initiatives in India and to enhance effective communication in order to develop a consensus on the facilitation of true representation and participation of developing nations in this ISO initiative.

ASK facilitated the training of trainers for master trainers for the GE Life Skills Program. The GE Life Skills Program has been launched to develop and test a life skills for health and employability curriculum and implementation model that will have a positive impact on the lives of young (disadvantaged) people in India and eventually, in other countries as well. The program will produce a curriculum suitable for youth ages 14/15 to 17/18. The programme assumes basic levels of literacy and will be tested for efficacy through implementation with approximately 1,500 young people in Delhi and Bangalore during 2005 & 2006. A similar number of youth will be exposed to the program in and around Mexico City. Upon successful completion of the program it will be adapted for use across the globe in future.

Vidhi Aggarwal from ASK attended the ASrIA Forum meeting in Hong Kong. The meeting, in addition to discussions and debates featured presentations by some outside experts intended to give everyone a common framework for considering key factors which shape sustainable investment trends. Nial Gooding, an expert on Asian equity investment, talked to the group on the first day about market and investor trends globally and in Asia. Rebecca Mackinnon from Hong Kong University's Journalism and Media Studies Centre who was a leading foreign correspondent for CNN in Asia is an expert on emerging new media trends. She presented some unique insights on how new media, especially the growing use of bulletin boards and blogs, is reshaping global news flows. The final speaker was Jeremy Prepscius from Business for Social Responsibility. He was one of Nike's key staffers responsible for social and environmental performance.

Omega Designs Private Limited is one of the primary suppliers for Nordstrom in India; it is producing range of clothes for the buyer in India. Being a part of the global supply chain, Omega Design is preparing itself to meet the global competition by not only developing a high quality product, but also investing in improving the labor standards in their facilities. With this mission, the management along with Nordstrom decided to initiate a remediation program for creating a positive work environment at their Gurgaon facility. ASK, in consultation with Omega Management and Nordstrom had conducted a worker training at the facility with 150 workers. As a follow up of the issues raised in the worker training, training was facilitated for supervisors on Harassment and Abuse.

Toxics Link, an environmental NGO, dedicated to bringing toxics related information into the public domain, both relating to perspectives from the ground as well as exchanging global information conducted an awareness and knowledge-sharing workshop on “E-waste management”, on 17th of May in Chennai. The workshop aimed at bringing together various stakeholders, which includes Pollution control board, grassroots NGOs, IT industry, corporates and individuals to a common platform to discuss the issue and develop wider understanding of practices on E-waste management in the state of Tamil Nadu. Vidhi Aggarwal from ASK participated in the workshop.

ASK-Verité proposed to Nordstrom an assessment approach based on the human resources-based Social Compliance Management Systems framework defined in the Verité Vendor Guidebook. This framework benchmarks in detail each of the common Code of Conduct requirements and best practice guidelines for compliance management systems components and applications. These components and applications include written policies and procedures, implementing structures, communication and training and monitoring systems and evaluation. The MAP was formulated be based on these guidelines.

ASK–Verite is working in partnership for promoting CSR standards within the ICT sector in India. We are presently in the process of studying best practices in the IT electronics Industry. We aim towards developing and promoting collaborative approaches for implementation of CSR standards such as EICC in India. As a part of this attempt we are also circulating a quarterly newsletter to surface and bring to light the attempts being made by different companies in their efforts of external CSR (community based initiatives) and internal CSR (practices within the company towards the employees). The activities have been focussed on reaching out and disseminating information regarding the EICC to signatory and non-signatory companies. One of the means to understand the industry was by holding interactions with the Industry associations, trade unions, Govt. officials, and manufacturing companies.

## Forthcoming CSA Activities

Richa Global

Multi Stakeholder Audit.

Contract labour Training and MAP development

RAISE Training on Social Auditing at GAP headquarters in San Francisco



Verité, CREA (Center for Reflection, Education and Action), India-based ASK (Association for Stimulating Knowhow), and GMIES (Grupo de Monitoreo Independiente de El Salvador) have been pioneers in working with companies, factories, governments and fellow NGOs to raise the level and effectiveness of inquiry and response to supply chain labor problems. As long-time not-for-profit monitoring and capacity-building organizations, we have brought our collective experience to bear on developing:

- ☑ Common standards for social monitoring and guiding change
- ☑ Curriculum to build the knowledge and skills required to meet those standards
- ☑ Certification criteria and processes to measure and confirm level of learning

It is our expectation that RAISE will ultimately include a broad range of member organizations and others to provide both standardized and specialized training. Vidhi Aggarwal of ASK, attended a week long Training of Trainers on RAISE and the first level certification of RAISE 1000. She will now be one among a pool of 20 trainer's world over to conduct the first level skills training.

## Sankalp News

UNICEF in collaboration with IKEA has shown interest in the Sankalp Model and in working with ASK Sankalp to scale up the current Programme so as to reach out to a total of 50,000 children in Moradabad over the span of five years.

499 children have been successfully streamlined in education weaned away from hazardous work place. 44 children are being under higher education in different school

The project for advocacy for child rights has been extended by Cordaid, Netherlands.



## Action for Inclusion News

ASK has been providing technical assistance to a wide variety of projects and organizations. In the annual strategic thinking workshop, a major policy decision has been made to diversify the approach adopted by ASK and initiate "Action for Inclusion" on a proactive basis. This action for Inclusion will be carried out parallel to the "Technical Assistance" work being currently carried out.

The "Action for Inclusion" will include the following:

- ☞ Making in depth assessments of the status of the marginalized in relation to the policies of the government and the developmental trends in the country and in specific areas
- ☞ Disseminating the analysis and information to wide variety of stakeholders and facilitating them towards changes in perspectives and action in favor of those excluded – Various forms of dissemination will be used to spread the information and analysis
- ☞ Making direct interventions with identified groups and sections which are marginalized (Children in difficult circumstances, old age persons, workers in specific industrial sectors such as those in the construction industry)
- ☞ Any other ideas that emerge as the strategy unfolds