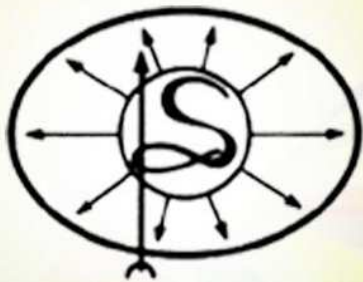


↑ Education
 Health Care
 Child Welfare
 Vocational Training
 Women Empowerment
 Promoting Volunteerism
 Relief and Rehabilitation
 for disaster victims

Summary of 2008 Activities

Sewa International USA

Service to Humanity is Service to God



SEWA
INTERNATIONAL



www.sewausea.org

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Bihar Flood Relief & Rehabilitation Seva Bharati, Bihar, India

On Aug. 18th, 2008, KUSAHA, located 12 KM from the Indian boarder in Nepal, is where the embankment broke, causing a tragic flood in state of Bihar, India.

Sewa International USA worked with local NGOs Sewa Bharati & Divya Yog Mandir to provide relief.

From Aug. 19th onwards, when Bihar was being severely flooded, seven Sewa centers were setup in the most affected districts to provide immediate relief. More than 3,500 dedicated volunteers were working round the clock rescuing victims, distributing relief materials, and providing food and health care to thousands. Volunteers worked tirelessly to bring trapped villagers to safety.

Relief materials were collected at centers and then distributed to the people in need often by head load by volunteers, or through boats. Total of 31 relief centers were setup at the height of the relief activities.

All seven major centers had set up community kitchens where over 4000 people were being fed daily. Apart from that 23 sub-centers were set up to reach to the people faster and provide them with much needed support like the packaged food, essential medications, water, mosquito nets, and household essentials like good clothes, polythene sheets, lanterns, candles and match boxes.

On the 7th of September, Baba Ramdeoji Maharaj, Acharya Balkrishanji and Shri R K Sinha visited a relief centre at The Zila School, Saharsa. Speaking at the occasion, Baba Ramdeoji praised the good work being done by volunteers, and went on to say that other organizations should also do similar things to serve the needy.

Sewa International USA has collected more than \$100,000 for Bihar flood relief and rehabilitation so far. Sewa International USA funded a mobile medical van serving the *Muzaffarpur* district and plans to fund a hostel for children affected by the flood so their education can continue.



Hurricane Ike Relief Sewa International USA, Houston, USA

As hurricane Ike passed through four southern states of the USA, it left devastating destruction in its wake. The storm left its mark from Louisiana to Texas. The hurricane killed 34 in the US and several thousands were evacuated.

Sewa International USA Houston chapter provided hot meals to university students and others in need. Volunteers also provided services to help victims fill out FEMA and other necessary forms.



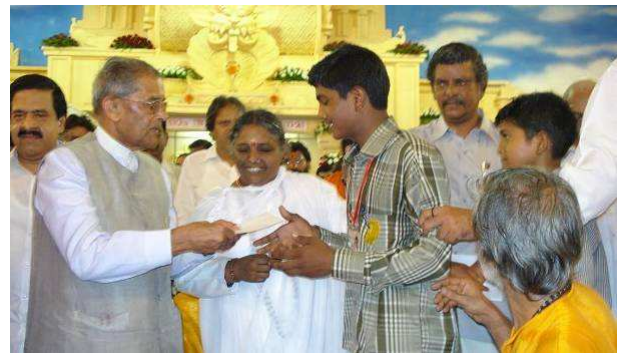
Sewa International volunteers also worked with various organizations and local & federal emergency agencies to provide service to people living in shelters. Sewa International's effort was applauded by the local administrator including Senator John Croys and Congressman Nick Lampson.



Deendayal Shetkari Vikas Prakalp Seva Vardhini, Maharashtra, India

Farmer suicide in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and other parts of India is a very grave and disturbing phenomenon being seen for the last 10 years. In the last 2-3 years though, the number of suicides has aggravated alarmingly. Deendayal Shetkari Vikas Prakalp is a project that provides agricultural resources and education to poor farmers, scholarship to children and financial help to widows of farmers that have committed suicide.

Seva Vardhini, partially with funds provided by Sewa International USA, has provided seeds to 900 farmers. Six training seminars, attended by 707 farmers, were conducted, scholarships to 25 children were provided and essential materials were provided to 40 widows.



A video and other material of the Bihar flood relief is available at <http://www.sewausa.org/video-bihar-rescue-amp-relief-work>.

The healthcare scenario in India is disturbing. Sadly, 8 children out of every 1000 born in the rural India do not live to see a single day. 30% of all infants born weigh less than 5.6 lbs. An alarming 58% of all death is due to medical conditions that could be easily prevented.

Arogya Rakshak **Assam & Maharashtra, India**

The war against disease requires community involvement. Our approach therefore is placing the community in the centre-stage, and building competencies and partnership within it for low-cost and affordable, people-centered, preventive and curative health services. From an approach of health for people, we move to a 'de-medicalised' model of **health by people**, involving them at all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation.



The Arogya Rakshak project is envisioned to be a strong vehicle for the “health by the people” paradigm in the health sector in India. Arogya Rakshak is a local person trained in preventive health care, early identification of major diseases, nutrition, and hygiene. This person carries basic medicines and apparatus. He visits each village that is assigned to him on a regular basis. Regular training and input by the district team guide the Arogya Rakshak in his work. The district team is made of able doctors and social workers. This team decides the focus area, e.g. they foresee an epidemic in a particular season and plan appropriate action. The network of Arogya Rakshaks works as an interactive medium of health: they take health-service to the people, and bring people’s feedback to the service-providers.

Sewa International funded forty Arogya Rakshaks in Assam and Maharashtra in 2008.

Medical Awareness Project **Dr. Ambedkar Trust - Surat, Gujarat**

Dr. Ambedkar Trust conducts various activities to benefit society. The trust runs medical awareness seminars in slums, free medical clinic, mobile medical van, hostel for tribal and the poor. Sewa International USA partially funded some of medical activities.



Primary Health Care Clinic **Seva Bharati - Pazhaverkadu, Tamilnadu**

Construction of this project was funded by AAPI.

Sewa International USA funded construction and maintenance of a primary health care center at a tsunami affected area, Pazhaverkadu in Tamilnadu, which serves poor. This health care center will have two beds with basic medical facilities and an ambulance/medical van with most medical facilities. Health care center construction is complete and is expected to begin functioning on Jan. 14th, 2009.



Construction Phase of Pazhaverkadu Medical Center

Manonetra, Seva Bharati Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Manonetra is a project for the welfare of the visually challenged and prevention of blindness. Manonetra helps visually challenged students by providing health care and educational assistance (tuition, arrangement of mobile laboratory and recorded study material).

Manonetra works towards prevention of blindness by conducting community eye screening and runs an eye donation center for cornea collection.



Community Pediatric Health Center Ekam - Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

EKAM is a Community Pediatric Project that provides complete and holistic health care to the underprivileged children in partnership with hospitals, social workers, Yoga instructors and NGOs. Ekam tries to ensure that no child is deprived of the best health care. Ekam provides medical care to orphans and differently-abled children and medical check up at public schools.



Ekam Children Health Checkup

Bio-Energy Project Sewa International, Tamilnadu, India

Energy crisis is a challenge the world over, especially in the developing and underdeveloped countries. While energy sources are drying up, humanity is looking for alternative and eco-friendly methods of generating energy.

Driven by their search for such alternative energy processes, Sewa International decided to direct efforts towards Biomass Gasifier. After an overwhelmingly successful project in Rajasthan in 2007, Sewa International USA funded a similar project in Tamilnadu in 2008.

The project targets adding a Biomass Gasifier based electrical power generating unit of more than 10 kW. An integrated biogas digester generating 50 Cubic meters of biogas per day, shall support partial cooking needs and also supplement gasifier power generator.

Along with helping the environment, this project benefits the village in their dire need of energy.



Biomass Gasifier installed at Karansinghji Ki Khedi

Video of Biomass Gasifier project in Rajasthan is available at www.sewausa.org/sewausa-activities-amp-projects/latest-sewa-videos

Education is a significant driver of economic as well as socio-cultural elevation of a people. Individuals as well as communities yearn for a better life and their ideas are largely shaped by the knowledge they acquire. With this in mind Sewa International USA supported various educational projects.

Slum Library Project

Akshar Bharati - Pune, Maharashtra

(www.aksharbharti.org)

Akshar Bharati makes a sincere effort to reach the children from rural and underprivileged areas who have the will to learn, to read books and to make a difference in their lives. Akshar Bharati has set up 31 small libraries for such children in their localities so that the books will be available for them when they need them the most. Akshar Bharati partners with other local NGOs to run the libraries. Sewa International USA funded \$35,000 in 2008 for this project.



Chitgopekar High School Maharashtra, India

In 2007-2008, Sewa International USA partially funded construction of High School by Chitgopekar Foundation. This 8th thru 10th grade school serves 120 rural boys and girls. Sewa International funded a multi-purpose room and teachers training workshop for elementary school teachers.



Construction of Chitgopekar School Project

Promoting Volunteerism

Yuva for Sewa (YFS) **Sewa International USA, USA**

Yuva for Sewa is a unique program designed by Sewa International USA to offer opportunities to youth to participate in service projects around the world! Through the Yuva for Sewa Fellowship one can participate at the grassroots level allowing direct contact with the project of involvement. Anyone between the ages of 18 and 30 who is committed to the value of service work may apply for the fellowship. Projects last from a few weeks up to six months, depending on the requirements of the volunteer and the project, and occur between the months of June and December. The fellowship is unique as it provides a variety of service projects to choose from in many different locations around the world including the U.S., the Caribbean (Suriname & Guyana), and India (Maharashtra, Karnataka & Gujarat).

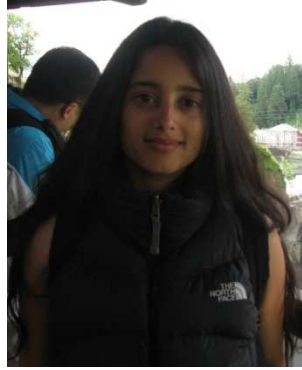
Shikta Sapkota, a 2008 fellow, has just returned after completing her fellowship at Nele, a shelter for street children in Bangalore. She says, 'Seeing life through the eyes of the less fortunate has definitely enriched my existence. It was a little shocking to know how happy people can be with so little. During the course of this month, I have met a lot of prominent personalities, who gave up their flourishing careers to become full time volunteers and live mediocre lives. I was perplexed to see why people would give up comfort to serve humanity; and the common answer to my query was that living for others fetches more satisfaction to the soul than living for oneself.'

Here is brief introduction of 2008 volunteers:



Rajiv Ramdeo

Rajiv is a student of Biological Science at UC Irvine. He volunteered at Children Cancer Hospital in Bangalore, Karnataka for more than 2 months.



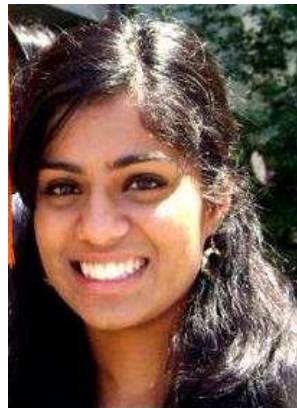
Shikta Sapkota

Shikta was a student of Florida State University majoring in International Affairs. She is originally from Nepal. For 2 ½ months, she volunteered at Nele (Children's Shelter) and other projects in Bangalore.



Katelyn Kerrigan

Katelyn graduated from Cal. Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo with a degree in Social Science. She is volunteering at Nele (Children's Shelter) and other projects in Bangalore.



Dwijavanthi Kumar

Dwijavanthi graduated from University of Iowa with a degree in Biomedical Engineering. She is volunteering at Kidwai Cancer Institute working with breast cancer patients and with the mobile medical clinic to help initiate health education program in Bangalore.

Video of 2007 Yuva for Sewa volunteers is available at www.sewausa.org/sewausa-activities-amp-projects/latest-sewa-videos. Applications for Yuva for Sewa are accepted starting February of each year.

Youth for Seva Hindu Sewa Pratishthana - Karnataka

There is a growing desire among the college students and young professionals in India to volunteer their time and talent for community development. But most of them don't because of three major reasons: Not knowing where to start, the fear that it may be too much of a responsibility and concern that it cannot be done with their limited resources.



"Youth for Seva" was formed to fill this gap so that youth can easily find meaningful opportunities to serve the community. Youth for Seva is working with over 30 NGOs and 60 corporations in Bangalore. Here are a few of the projects Youth for Seva volunteers work on:

- School Kit Sponsorship for needy students
- Providing tuition, organizing medical checkup and other help at orphanages and slums
- Volunteering at hospitals
- Charity sale in corporations of products made by NGOs and self help groups.



Community Support

Sewa International USA is grateful to many individuals and organizations that have supported us. Many have conducted fund raising events on our behalf. Here are a few examples.

- Little Rock Music Masti (LRMM) presented a successful musical evening to raise fund for 'Aruna Chetana'. The event had an audience of nearly 150 people, and raised a total of \$3801, in addition to elevating public awareness to this righteous cause.
- Indo-American Society of Bay Area organized a Ghazal program and raised \$5,000 for Bihar flood relief.
- Atlanta Cricket League held a cricket tournament to raise fund for various projects.
- Smt. Geetha Swamy of Bay Area organized a Violin concert of Smt. Lalgudi Brahmandam, Anuradha Sridhar & Shriram Brahmandam and raised almost \$4,000 for Bihar flood relief.

Youth for Seva aims to inspire youth to volunteer, connect them to the grass roots projects, and provide ongoing support and training to the volunteers and the NGOs.

Nele – Children Shelter Hindu Seva Pratisthana - Bangalore

NELE provides underprivileged children with shelter and nurtures each child while inculcating in them cultural and moral values. The prime focus of NELE is to help children help themselves. NELE's vision is to ensure physical, mental and moral soundness and well-being of homeless children. NELE is a hope to these children to join the main stream and contribute to the society and the nation. Sewa International USA supported two children in 2008.



Aruna Chetana – School for Disabled Hindu Seva Pratisthana - Bangalore

Aruna Chetana is a school for children with multiple disabilities, specifically those belonging to economically and socially backward sections of the society. Aruna Chetana provides education, support and vocational training to 180 children. Sewa International USA supported three children in 2008.



Children Hostel Seva Bharati, Dagshai, Himachal Pradesh

The serene, lush green and beautiful surroundings, together with the hill station climate (7100 ft altitude) make for an fantastic hostel at Dagshai. The 15 students accommodated in the hostel are drawn from distant villages and districts. Previously, one of them had to walk more than 20 miles to board a bus while some of them weren't aware of buses as means of transport. Now they are getting a good education through this project and show signs of improvement in health too.

Sewa International USA partially funded construction of the hostel.



Kan-Tan Educacional Finca Kus-Kurd, Costa Rica (www.kan-tan.org)

Kus Kura is an indigenous NGO in Costa Rica working on the promotion of Sustainable Development of the Indigenous children. Sustainable development has to go hand-by-hand with the strengthening of the cultural and spiritual values of the community, which has been a focus area for Kus-Kurd.

Sewa International USA provided fund to build showers & toilets and meditation space for children.

Bhutanese Refugee Empowerment Sewa International USA, USA

The population of Bhutan mainly consists of two communities: the Drukpas and the Lhotshampas. In 1985, conflict between these two communities resulted in an exodus of Lhotshampas to Nepal. Starting from then until 1994, more than 110,000 Lhotshampas took refuge in seven UN-administered camps in Nepal living in very poor conditions.

The United States eventually volunteered to resettle 60,000 of these refugees, with the remainder destined to go to other nations. In 2008, they began arriving in the United States in what the UN has described as one of the world's largest resettlement efforts ever. These refugees are given only a few months of support from the government and the resettlement agencies. After that, they are required to become self-sufficient. The most pressing needs are for financial assistance, employment, and basic material needs. They also require support to make the transition to this new land.

These are poor families who cannot afford to buy essentials such as blankets, winter jackets, and toys for their children. Many have no jobs or are students and have no income. Although the VolAgs (Voluntary Agencies), or resettlement agencies, provide some support for the first few months, it is not adequate.

Though many of the refugees are educated and can speak English, most of them have remained unemployed. And because agency support and government aid is not available to them for an extended period of time, the assistance of Sewa International is quickly becoming a lifeline for many of these families.



Sewa International USA has taken up a nationwide project to help these families. Currently, our chapters in Atlanta, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Cleveland, and Sacramento are working to fulfill the immediate and longer-term needs of these refugees with several more chapters gearing up to help. Sewa International USA is providing:

- Financial help
- Essential materials such as blankets, winter jackets, clothes, toys, etc.
- Employment assistance
- Driving lessons
- Medical & Eye checkup
- Help in transitioning to a new culture

We welcome any Bhutanese refugee who needs help to contact us.





Sewa International USA

*“Sewa hi Paramo Dharmah”
(Sewa is the supreme Dharma)*

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