

PEOPLE FIRST EDUCATIONAL CHARITABLE TRUST

MONSOON NEWSLETTER



As the first early monsoon rains fall bringing much needed water to the fields of Bihar, the summer holidays come to an end ,umbrellas and raincoats are coming out of cupboards, brown turns to green , the trees awaken and the skies darken with the welcome rumble of thunder. We also welcome you to our monsoon newsletter, and as always send our thanks to you for your help, support, and interest in our work. We hope you find it interesting and informative.

NEWS FROM OUR PROJECTS/GAYA RESCUE

ANJU GOES HOME



These pictures show some of the many missing children safely reunited with their parents during the past year alone from our Rescue Junction centre. Anju is the most recent child to go home. She is about 11 years old. On her way to see her sister, a short bus ride away from her home her travel money was stolen and she became lost. An auto rickshaw driver when he realised she had no money then dropped her by the side of the road. Found crying by local villagers she was brought before the village leader, (who happened to be a woman) who in turn took her to the local police station. As with all such children in Gaya District the police referred her to Rescue Junction who immediately began the process of locating her family. The process was made difficult by the fact Anju is a tribal girl and knew little Hindi, speaking the tribal dialect of Santhali. Nevertheless the counselors at Rescue Junction found her family within a few days and in the presence of the

referring police station office in charge, Anju and her family were reunited in an emotional and tearful reunion.

As many supporters of the trust will know due to financial constraints in the funding agency for Rescue Junction funding from them for the project has sadly not been renewed. However the good news is sufficient funds have been raised to keep the centre open at least until April 2009, and efforts are on to secure funds to safeguard the future of this important and very special project. *(Names have been changed in this article for child protection reasons)*

TRAINING FOR VILLAGE HEALTH WORKERS/THE HEALTH PROJECT



At our Gyan Vikas Centre Neelam the Health Project nurse teaches local government employed village health workers the IMNCHI protocol (INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NEO NATAL AND CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES) in cooperation with UNICEF. Two members of the project staff are approved state level trainers and People First is the only NGO in Bihar cooperating with UNICEF in helping to introduce IMNCHI in health service provision in Bihar.

The project itself has recently been expanded to incorporate more villages, close to the projects rural health centre at Kanjar. From the statistics the project gathers, we can demonstrate clearly the beneficial effect on health, and in particular children's health that the project brings to the local community.

EXAMS/VILLAGE EDUCATION



Students prepare at Khiryama and Dhobi Schools for examinations.

Summer time is exam time. The Trust has a policy of external marking of random examination papers, supervision of examinations by the core teacher's group and line managers, shaping the basic curriculum together with teacher's parents and students. The trust educational programme provides basic primary education, coaching centres for poor students and even a kindergarten. At Dhobi School classes go from nursery to class 10 and the school has over 350 students and 11 teachers.

Over the next year the trust will be for the first time publishing all examinations results in terms of pass percentage and is introducing other measures to measure the effectiveness of our village education programme. We already know from our children's personal academic scholarship programme (CAPS) that over 95% of these students achieve pass marks and go on to continue their studies in further education.

WORKCAMP/THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE



The pictures below from the previous work camp show volunteers at a wall mural project at Rescue Junction. Evaluations from volunteers who have taken part in the camp have been extremely positive, some talking in terms of one of the best experiences of their lives.



Offering a chance to help our staff in many of our projects and experience something of rural India, far away from the tourist trail the work camp currently runs from August 17th to August 27th. Please visit our website on www.peoplefirstindia.net and click on workcamp. The Trust is looking at changing the dates for the programme to late September and expanding it to 21 days.

If you have any suggestions regarding the timing of the camp (and yes we may change the name) or any other comments please let us know. And there is still time to apply for this year's camp. If you are interested or may know of someone who might like to join us please send an e-mail to india_peoplefirst@yahoo.com.

AND FINALLY

We hope to produce these newsletters regularly to supplement our website and to keep our supporters informed, and the next newsletter will contain stories from the villages, women who have used loans from our self help groups to obtain an independent source of income, contributions from children at our village schools, and from those whose lives have been touched and changed by the Health Project.

We also hope to update our website more frequently.

With warm best wishes and thanks again from all at People First, have a great summer.