

Info request on WID projects

Dear friends,

I received a copy of your publication, **Women in Development** (1984) and have found it to be very helpful. I am planning to travel to India and I hope to be involved in women's development work.

I am a crisis counselor for women in the emergency room and have also produced and directed a videotape on the healing process of sexual assault. In the past, I have done direct service work with crime victims in the court system as well as criminals in prisons. I am a competent photographer, having worked for publications as well as taught beginners about taking and processing pictures.

I would appreciate any information you might have on women's development projects in India, especially in Madras, as that is where I hope to find work. Any information on development in general as well as on your organization would also be helpful.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Lytton
70 High Street
New Haven, CT 06511 U.S.A.

Ed. note: We are sending you information about our organization and on some women in development projects. We hope this will be useful to you.

Home-based Women's Centre

Dear friends,

I visited Isis when you were still in Rome. Isis has provided me a lot of information which has helped me to write articles about women.

I am not a member of any women's organization but I have been doing work for the betterment of youth and women for the past twelve years. Now, I have started a centre in my own house which aims to solve women's problems. I am a lecturer of literature and a teacher in college. I have written some books, some of which have been published: **Unmesh (Seedling)** 1985, a collection of poems; **Prakashzor (Flashlight)** 1991, a collection of essays; and **Pandita Ramabai**, a biography, 1991. I have delivered nearly 250 speeches on social awareness and literature in many women and youth rallies.

I would like to keep in touch with your organization so that I could help my Indian sisters.

With love,

Prof. Cecilia Carvalho
Old Barampur, Munickpur
Vasai, District Thane
Bombay 401202 India

Ed. note: We support you in your endeavours and wish you every success in the centre that you have set up at your house. The initiative taken by every woman will make a difference in our continuing struggle.

Resource sharing with Isis

Dear friends,

We are sending you our monthly **FWRM** newsletter which covers many areas we hope will be of interest and of some help to women, particularly in the Pacific region. We would appreciate an exchange of information from your organization and welcome contributions to our newsletter.

Hope you enjoy the magazine and we look forward to keeping in touch.

Regards,

Peni Moore
Coordinator, Fiji Women's Rights Movement
G.P.O. Box 14194, Suva, Fiji

Dear friends,

Thank you very much for sending us the **Directory of Third World Women's Publications**. We believe that it is a very important reference tool for building networks, sharing ideas and experiences and strengthening our activities in our program.

We will send you all our publications and other materials and will be waiting for future publications from your office.

With best wishes,

Inviolata Ndimbo
Executive Secretary, Diocese of Ruvuma
P.O. Box 1, Liuli, Mbinga, Tanzania

Dear sisters,

We would like to request an exchange of publications from Isis International. These will be housed in a special collection of materials on women and gender issues, which we are beginning to build at the University of Natal. We believe such a collection will become a vital resource. We look forward to further communication and sharing of resources with you.

Best regards,

Shireen Hassim
Gender Research Group c/o CSDS
University of Natal, King George V Ave.
Durban 4001, South Africa

Dear sisters,

Greetings from the **Agenda** collective. **Agenda** is a women's journal which tries to reach women in all sectors of our country. We receive your journal regularly and advertise some of your campaigns and events in our journal. We are very excited about the future plans of the Isis International office in Manila and we hope to continue our exchange of information and materials.

Our warmth and good wishes are with you at this time and we wish you all the best.

Yours in sisterhood,

Sue Holland-Muter
(on behalf of the **Agenda** office)
P.O. Box 37432
Overport 4067
Tel. 305-4074
Fax 301-6611

Dear friends,

The Community Resource and Information Centre is a service organization which assists trade unions, civic associations and women, student and youth organizations of the mass democratic movement. Our main area of work is to provide research and information to these organizations. We also have a resource center which provides a wide range of reading material for both research and general reading purposes.

May we request that you place us on your mailing list so that we can include your publications in our resource collection.

Many thanks,

Sue Tilly
Resource Centre coordinator
6th flr., Hampstead House, Biccard St.
Braamfontein
P.O. Box 31621 Braamfontein 2017
Tel. 403-2340, 3587/9, Fax: 403-1836

Ed. note: Welcome to our network! We have included all of you in our publications exchange list. We will be sending you information and materials from our resource center.

Women's health project

Dear sisters,

Greetings to all of you at Isis from APDC.

We are happy to let you know that plans for setting up an independent Asian and Pacific Women's Resource and Action Centre are progressing. The first programme to be focused on will be women's health, and as the centre is not yet established, the programme will operate as part of the WID programme for the first year. APDC will collaborate in this with the Boston Women's Health Collective global project to set up Regional Women's Health Resource centres.

The main activities will be:

- o Documentation, information and communication -- Information resources from Asia and the Pacific and internationally will be classified and computerized for easy access by women's departments in government, health ministries, and women NGOs.
- o Mainstreaming women's perspectives on health into governmental policies and programmes through training, consultancy and guidelines, and publications.
- o Women's health research to generate/document information.

Participants in the program will thus be relevant government agencies, research organizations, and women's groups.

We envisage close collaboration with Isis International Manila in sharing information as well as knowledge on groups and invite you to the regional meeting in 1992-93.

Warm regards.

Yours sincerely,

Rashidah Abdullah
Programme Officer
Asian and Pacific Development Centre
Persiaran Duta, P.O. Box 12224
50770 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Ed note: We are very excited about working with you on the women's health programme. More power to you!

Gujarat readers of Isis

Dear friends,

I have been writing a weekly feminist column in a Bombay based newspaper since 1980. This was the first weekly column in Gujarati language which is spoken by people in Gujarat in Western India. Gujaratis are also the second largest linguistic group in Bombay. I have mentioned Isis International a few times before, but this is the first time I have written a full introductory article on it and I thought you would like a copy.

Let me explain its contents. The title welcomes the organization moving eastwards and the article begins with your decision to operate from Third World countries. Then it says how the Isis International team got involved in relief work after Mount Pinatubo erupted. After that almost the entire inside backcover information about Isis International is presented in translation.

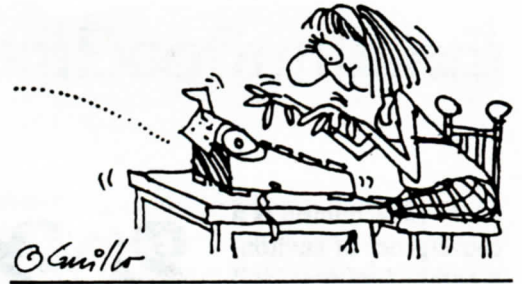
I have also written a bit on Isis the goddess which is why you see the picture. I have given out the appeal for more information about her, if any is available in this part of the world. The only comment I have made is what many women from Hindu families have experienced concerning appropriation of goddesses by patriarchy and the fact of female worship not necessarily leading to empowerment of women now in India. As you are aware, Hinduism is the only major established religion today with a continued though corrupted tradition of female worship.

All of us at Vacha find the Isis International journal very useful and interesting.

With best wishes and regards,

Sonal Shukla
Coordinator
Vacha Women's Library and Cultural Centre
5, Bhavana Apts., 185 S.V. Road, Vile Parle (W),
Bombay 400 056 India
Tel.: 636 3469

Ed. note: We are happy to know that information about Isis International has reached our readers in Gujarat through your column. We hope to continue sharing information with you.



In the foothills of the Himalayas

Dear friends,

It is a far cry from the Philippines to a small village in the foothills of the Himalayas where our institution, popularly known as Lakshmi Ashram, has been working for the past 45 years among women and girls of the region. Our founder was Sarala Behn, a London born follower of Mahatma Gandhi who came to India in the early 1930's to work in education in the Plains. She came to these hills around 1940, was very active in the Quit India movement and was later imprisoned by the British authorities. She began her activities in Lakshmi Ashram in 1946. The core activity from the beginning has been a residential school for local girls from primary age upwards, based on holistic ideals of Gandhi's principles of Basic Education. At present some fifty-five girls are here, along with some fifteen teachers.

In the rural areas our main activity in the past decade has been in pre-school education and care, a need the villagers urgently expressed. Women must work long hours in the fields and collect fuel while their young children are left unattended. Often there are cases of fire accidents; indeed two of our workers were disabled as children because of such accidents. In providing *balwaris* (pre-school centres) in the villages the mothers know that their children are in a safe environment for four hours, and also are stimulated and receiving basic education. Similar programmes have been initiated by other NGOs working in the hill areas of Uttar Pradesh. Now hundreds of *balwaris* are functioning in remote hill villages and, in an area where until this generation most girls never had the opportunity to be educated, almost all the teachers at the *balwaris* are young, educated women of the region.

Over the years our institution has also been actively involved in environmental issues as part

of the Chipko movement. The mother figure for the Chipko movement, Sarala Behn, wrote extensively in Hindi and English on environmental issues. Under the inspiration of her successor, Radha Bhatt, we have been working alongside local villagers in grassroots campaigns against indiscriminate and uncontrolled mining.

Another area of our direct action is that of alcohol awareness and control. As in many parts of the world the problem of alcoholism is rife here among the men folk, and it is the women who suffer. The problem is compounded because there is no social tradition of drinking in the local community: a conflict of old and new societies. Social factors of high unemployment and scarcity of opportunity have their part to play also. Prohibition brought in some years back only increased illicit stills and smuggling; in addition, there are "medicinal" tonics which are unregulated and readily available.

It was certainly a good decision for you to relocate in a 'Third World' nation - so many networking activities are centered in the Western countries. You are charting unknown waters and must be feeling very excited at what each new day brings. With kind regards.

Sincerely,

David Hopkins
Kasturba Mahila Utthan Mandal
Lakshmi Ashram
PO Kausani
District Almora
Uttar Pradesh
263-639 India

Ed. note: Thank you for sharing information about your organization. We are sure that our readers are interested in learning about your experiences in the villages. Your valuable work serves as an inspiration to all of us.