

# **AID Conference 2004**

## ***Minutes for Session Named Local Outreach***

**Date:** 30 May, 2004

**Time From:** 9:00 AM

**To:** 10:00 AM

**Minutes Taken By:** Devashree Saha

**Number of attendees:** 50

**Audio/Visual Component? Presentation**

**Speaker/Panelist Names:**

1. Madhulika
2. Sharmila
- 3.
4. Mohit
5. Shrayas
6. Meera

**What they are speaking about:**

On Local outreach

**Main Presentation:**

Starts by talking about a documentary. Discuss why local outreach is important. Sharmila to talk about post collective and how to build organizational connectivity.

Most issues are global in nature. Some campaigns like Bhopal cannot be fought in a local context. As aiders we have opportunity to be associated with grassroots activities in India. Ideas to be taken to a much bigger level, we have to network with other organizations. Most chapter collaborate with other orgs but on an event basis, not on a sustained basis. Talked about capital food area, partnership with saheli.

To encourage chapters to build strong relationships. How many think we are not having hands-on experience? The learning is not being complemented with practical work. Talked about big brothers and big sisters group in the US.

Struggles cannot be seen in isolation. Struggles do not make sense if seen only in local context. Networking is important.

Sharmila –

Talked about post-collective, started last year in may. First project is rad—desi. Putting together a summer school program for high school students in Austin. Age group is 14-17 years of age. Work with college students quite a bit on activism and outreach. Now emphasis high students. Outreach work done: series of workshops with another org. body image sexuality. Immigration including questions of class and labor. raddesi.bloki.com. workshop series start from june 17-20. will have thatre workshops with silk mangoes.

Saheli talked about orgs like saheli such as Daya in Houston, maitre, among others.

Action items: letters of protest with narika about the trafficking of 14 year old girls from India in some restraint in CA. focus mainly on domestic violence. Asian victims of DV are less likely to report abuse or seek help from mainstream service agencies due to barriers such as language, lack of family or friends in the US. Gave some statistics such as number of people helped (96), clients located in Austin (53), clients of Indian ethnicity (65). No of helpline messages. Talked about who we help: a woman who has escaped her abusive husband with her baby, a woman who has lost her immigration status because the husband refuses to file her immigration papers.

Mohit - experience working with orgs in Albuquerque. Conc with Indian students and families. Then realization that didn't get a different audience. Should go and talk with other org. south west network – work on water issues. Suggested a panel discussion with rajendra singh. Lot of similarities with what RS was talking about. Proposed a database of orgs and share experiences. Each chapter looking out for more such groups and collaboration with them.

Meera – we have limited time. Work with diversity issues. Helps with TNSF. Went to madras and talked to people there. Writes articles for them, works on a magazine called jantar mantar. Works with Girl Start clubs: girlstart.org. to help girls succeed in math. Go to school about one hour a week. To teach low level math. Hold summer camps and Saturday camps. Focused around math and science. Focus on involvement of parents. Provides scholarship to students who do well. Like it coz gives me practical, hands-on training.

Shrayas – most people in aid come from a middle class background. Think about other Indian communities in the US who are not in the same position of privilege. Why local outreach coz most issues are global in nature. All the struggles are basically the same struggle such as water privatization. More important to work here, kind of belly of the beast. Talked about organizations that we can be working with. Sharing of strategies with org here. Sharing of info because we work with a lot of orgs in India. It's a two way process. Center for eco justice – world bank bond boycott program. Website: [www.econjustice.net](http://www.econjustice.net)

**Question/Answer Session:** what kind of skills would volunteer need to have to the saheli person? All kinds of skills such as translators, going to the courts, how can men stop violence, how they can help. Have had workshops with men on this.

What about similar orgs in other cities? Gave a website: [www.sawnet.org](http://www.sawnet.org). will give info and resources.

Possibility of collaboration with Indian movements? We can think about this, especially after RS talk and showing his video here.

**Additional Notes/ Observations:**