



MUKTI

NEWS LETTER

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THE PATH FORWARD

Mukti is moving ahead with its mission of uplifting the Sunderban underprivileged through education and awareness. The village sanitation project is on-going and we are in dialogue with organizations that are eager to provide funds as well as technical expertise for improving the design. Mukti's book distribution and scholarship program are well underway. Mukti also provided relief to the victims of last years flooding in the Sunderbans. These are described in detail below.

A site visits was conducted by one of our sponsors. We are also expecting visits from potential donors as they conduct their due diligence. We are encouraged by this support and hope that this helps to spread the word about our mission.

BOOK DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

In an additional effort to establish primary and secondary education among the poverty-stricken inhabitants of the Sunderbans, Mukti representatives distributed text books to 500 needy students from the two high schools in the Nagendrapur area. The book distribution was coupled with an education drive held at an assembly organized in June 2005. The assembly was attended by distinguished professor Tarun Kanti Naskar from Jadavpur University and writer and social activist Jyotirmoy Sardar, who professed their commitment to assisting and advising Mukti about education projects.

Six representatives of the local Panchayat were present at this assembly. They assured Mukti of their co-operation during implementation of local projects. At this assembly, Mukti representatives also listed other projects related to sanitation and education that are being undertaken for the benefit of the locals. This assembly was attended by a significant amount of the local *adivasi* population.



FLOOD VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Severe incessant rains, triggered by a deep depression in the Bay of Bengal wreaked havoc in the South 24 Parganas causing massive damage to crops and property and destroying thousands of homes. Such inclement weather often severely impacts the residents of the Sunderans, an area prone to cyclones and tropical storms.

Mukti volunteers raised funds and worked tirelessly to provide relief to the victims, who were left without food and shelter. Supplies provided included blankets for 450 needy recipients and canvas sheets (tripal) to 350 households. Mukti workers also cooked food and provided for the malnourished for three days at the temporary settlements.

TALENTED STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIP

Mukti has dedicated itself to changing the lives of the Sunderban inhabitants through education. The generations of tomorrow will require training in order to be prepared for an ever-changing world and to avail the opportunities that are now cropping up in India. The low literacy rate in the area is significantly affected by the lack of family income, which puts pressure on the children to work to provide for themselves and the family. Thus, Mukti has created a scholarship program through which individual students are provided with the support required to get access to a structured education

It has been assessed that Rs. 4,400 (\$100) is required on an annual basis for the sponsorship of a single student. This provides for textbooks, school supplies, uniform and applicable fees. A nominal sum (Rs. 100/mo) is given to the student to provide for basic necessities. The selection of students is based on both means and merit. Local knowledge and feedback is utilized to appraise a family's financial situation while past results and feedback from schoolteachers are indicators of the student's ability.

Mukti is tracking the program through a combination of feedback from both student and sponsor. Each student is expected to show an improvement in their performance and has to send their results to Mukti once every six months. Each student is also expected to communicate any other unexpected/unforeseen problems to Mukti.

Mukti will send the sponsor a performance summary and any other pertinent information. The sponsor is requested to monitor the performance, provide tips and suggestions. Mukti believes that inspiration and advice provides as much support as money, and strongly encourages the sponsor to communicate with the student. Mukti actively encourages the sponsor to visit the student and will facilitate such visits. The sponsor is requested to extend the support for several years, thus enabling the student to get established in his/her new life.

A recent site visit was conducted by a sponsor, Manas Chakroborty, who has provided valuable feedback to Mukti regarding ways in which the program can be improved. Mr. Chakroborty offers the following:

"I have visited Mukti's office/Key persons in Kolkata and was happy by their priceless initiative and vision about needy students. Had informal discussions with the student about their background and general issues. I feel strategic career guidance will be the key for their success apart from financial help."

This program has been applauded by various "Sponsor a Child Groups" in the US and is now under consideration for additional funding through these institutions.

Currently, Mukti has selected 23 students for the sponsorship program and 40 more are being evaluated for the list. Of these, 17 have scored in the top 10 of their respective class. We strongly request your patronage so that these students and many others can avail of this opportunity created by Mukti. For additional information, contact:

Madhusudan Bairagi, (Secretary of MUKTI)
CBI, Subhasgram Branch
3 KC Bose Road, Post Kodalia, Kolkata 700146, India
E-mail: madhusudan.bairagi@muktiweb.org

Shouvik Gangopadhyay
57 Harrington Avenue
Quincy, MA 02169
USA
E-mail: shouvikgee@gmail.com



MUKTI
PURBASRIDHARPUR, RAIDIGHI, 24 PARGANAS (SOUTH),
WEST BENGAL, INDIA.
PHONE - +91 33 2701 3229

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WWW.MUKTIWEB.ORG