

1. Atma Update :



Children of Nareshwai celebrate Holi Festival

The weather has changed here in Mumbai, and we are now in the clutch of summer. One of the favorite and most colorful Hindi festivals is celebrated in March. Holi is a festival which marks the beginning of spring and which is celebrated by playing with water balloons and colored powders and the like! Atma Mumbai spent this Holi with the children of Nareshwadi in a fun-filled weekend for all.

We are also pleased to announce the new Atma Mumbai website is finally uploaded. The new site is much more detailed, and offers a more in-depth and comprehensive view of Atma Mumbai's work. Please visit www.atmamumbai.org to see the new site!

The month of march see us say goodbye to volunteer Viren, who leaves us after 3 months with Mumbai Mobile Creches. We are please thought to welcome new volunteers Masjka (Holland) who will be working with Atma Mumbai in our office, and Ben (Ireland) who will be working with Arun in the computer classes at CHIP. You can read about the visit of Supervisory Board member Hans Valkenburg later in this newsletter.

*American Women's Club
May Day Ball 2008*

In May Atma Mumbai India will hold our first ever fundraising event in collaboration with the American Womens Club of Mumbai. The May Ball, will be held at the Hilton Towers on May 3rd 2008, tickets to this black tie event are selling fast. So to reserve your seat and support the AWC and Atma Mumbai please email Emma Sargeant on sargeant.emma@hotmail.co.uk

This month we had the Australian consul general – Mr. Peter Forby and the Dutch consul general – Mr. Hans Ramakar visit Atma Mumbai partner NGO Muktangan. Along with Atma Mumbai Trustee Mahesh Rathod.

Both the Australian and Dutch Consuls have been a wonderful support to Atma Mumbai, and it was a great opportunity for Atma Mumbai to share our work and the wonderful work of the Muktangan project.

I hope you enjoy this months newsletter,

Lee Bolding
Atma Mumbai - India



Dutch & Australian Consul Generals of Mumbai visit Atma Mumbai and Muktangan



2. From the board in the Netherlands.

Atma is driven almost solely by volunteers; giving us the passion and motivation to do what we do. Commitment is the most crucial aspect when working with volunteers and that this is one thing that Atma Mumbai does not lack.

Two weeks ago, on a random Saturday, six individuals gathered at Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands. All coming from different directions (varying from India to Rotterdam to Amsterdam) and a constructive financial meeting was held.

The reason for the location was that it was most suitable for the common good, everyone had to make some small sacrifice for Atma Mumbai and the whole was made most efficient.



Atma Boardmembers; Jaklien, Joop-Joost, Bart and Adrienne

Three days later these same individuals got together with the Supervisory board in Rotterdam to discuss the financial results of 2007, to demonstrate the budget for 2008 and to facilitate a fruitful discussion on certain legal aspects of our organization.



Boardmember Floor works with the team on the communication strategy

Another ten days from there the same people met once again in a different part of the Netherlands; the northern meadows and lakes were the setting for an amazing Board Weekend.

Fun, friendship and a passion for development were the key ingredients and the result is a solid base for our communication strategy, a Human Resources Matrix and a Funding strategy.

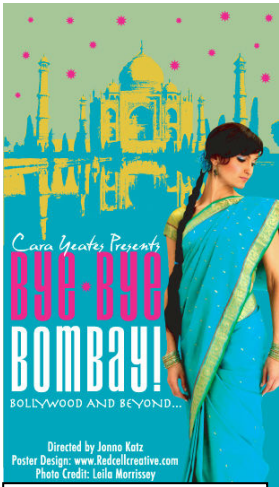
We also had a small celebration for the new Atma website and some other exiting developments and splendid achievements in India!

In other great news

Greetings from the Dutch board



3. NGO in Focus: Mumbai Mobile Creches Pilot Educational Program.



Cara's play in Canada raised funds for Atma.

In 2007, Atma Mumbai was approached by Canadian performing artist Cara Yeates. Having just spent time in India researching and gathering inspiration for a solo performance piece, Cara had gained great admiration and love for Indian culture and people, but also experienced first hand the poverty and enormous need.

Atma Mumbai suggested the best way to make an impact on educational development is through raising funds to support local projects working in this field. During her performance "Bye Bye Bombay" (www.carayeates.com) which toured across Canada, Cara took time at the end of each show to raise awareness and funds for Atma Mumbai.

In the end of the tour, Cara had not only received amazing review for her play but had raised a substantial donation for Atma Mumbai and our partner NGO – Mumbai Mobile Creches (MMC). Cara's donation helped to fund a pilot educational program for MMC, called 'The Balwadi's Educational Program pilot project', was conducted by Educationalist Pragna Maniar.

The pilot was designed to focus on the children of 3-5yrs who live on construction sites and attend the crèche provided by MMC. Pragna researched and designed a program curriculum and materials that could be used to as the foundation of a kindergarten style program for the children. The overall aim was to develop educational materials that cultivate the child's mind, most of the activities were fun and colorful and aimed at engaged the child's natural intellect. The activities also deepen their understanding of their own experiences and environment.

"An age-appropriate education program for young children fulfils the needs and requirements of growing children, physical, social, emotional and intellectual. They need to explore and interact with a lot of different materials and have various interesting experiences. Therefore there was a need to develop a program that would provide the children a lot of variety." Says Pragna, who after 3 months has completed the initial report on her findings and recommendations and learning for how this pilot can be incorporated into more MMC centers.



Concrete vs Classroom, children are able to learn at MMC Centers

Pragna went on to say that "at the end of two months, the children have learnt a lot of Hindi words and could also talk in sentences. The outcome is that the children enjoyed the whole experience and were happily involved."

It has been a wonderful outcome for Mumbai Mobile Creches, and Atma Mumbai hopes to continue such initiatives in the future. The success was made possible through Cara's determination to do something for the children of India, and reminds us all that we can really all make a difference.



Happy faces children love learning!



4. Volunteer in Focus: Atma Mumbai had the privilege of welcoming Hans Valkenburg, Atma Mumbai Supervisory board member, and financial analyst to Mumbai.



Atma Partner NGOs attend the workshop conducted by Hans

In January and February of this year I had the privilege to work as a financial consultant for Atma Mumbai in their actual working area: Mumbai. I have worked in Africa before, but this was an experience! Being in one of the biggest, and definitely the most crazy, city of the world is something one will remember.

It is a wonder that people survive in this melting pot of traffic, people, noise, smog, shops et cetera. But that's one side, Mumbai also represents

chance, dynamism, contact, communication and hope! And Atma Mumbai, amongst others, represents the latter.

My mission was to help Atma Mumbai entering the 2007 administrative data into the financial system, finalizing the Atma Mumbai budget format and the partner budget format, formalizing the mission, vision & strategy of the organization and doing a financial workshop with the local partners. Everything I did, I did together with Adrienne and Lee.

Besides my work I got to know Mumbai as a dynamic place to be. I met with the partners of Atma Mumbai and had some drinks and food with friends all around the city. According to Lee my land marks (orientation points) while traveling through the city always were Café Coffee Day's. Mumbai is full of the chain coffee Shop Cafe Coffee Day. And I must admit that she's right. India is great but I really prefer coffee above chai (tea). And given the amount we did in the month I was here, I really needed my coffee. So that explains my way of orientating.



Lee and Hans visiting Atma Projects

For at least four weeks the three of us worked like crazy to get the most out our time together in Mumbai. For this was the time and situation get the above mentioned things done. As Atma Mumbai is growing rapidly it needed some formalization to prepare itself for the future. Especially in the financial area.

Although it was intense, the thrill of getting this done gave us a lot of energy. And we can say that we have reached our goals during that time. So it was a satisfying trip!

Hans Valkenburg
Atma Mumbai Supervisory Board



5. NEEDS: LAPTOP COMPUTERS

Our loyal donor the Infotheek Groep from the Netherlands has donated another 4 laptops! Raising their grand total to 8! This is a large boost for the operations in India

If anyone has an old laptop that could be donated to Atma Mumbai we would be most grateful. Technology is a great gift for allowing offices and work to be carried out at our partner NGOs.

Laptops are an easy and portable donation that you can make today.

To ensure that this technology is able to be used to the best advantage here. Atma Mumbai requires laptop computers that are:

- In good working order, with adequate hard-drive space.
- Minimum Pentium 3.
- Equipped with Windows operating system.
- Working CD or DVD drive & USB port.

We frequently receive visitors from the Netherlands, Australia, and other parts of the world who can transport these computers. Please email contact@atmamumbai.org if you are able and willing to assist.



Volunteer Inka with a donated laptop

COMING UP

8th April: Visit to Nareshwadi

15th April: Board Meeting in NL

30th April: Atma Mumbai Workshop

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