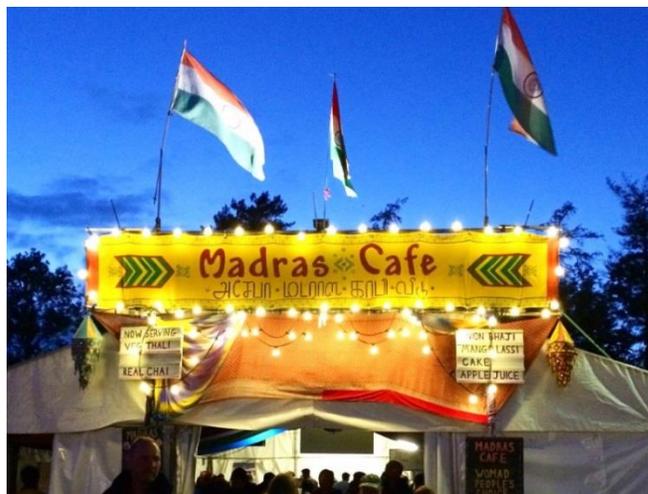


VILLAGE MATTERS



Welcome to the Action Village India Spring 2018 Newsletter. The AVI team of staff, trustees and partners are fresh from the Partners' Forum and full of renewed energy for our projects and fundraising. We're excited to share our stories and insights from the Forum and to invite you to join AVI's latest fundraising events.

Upcoming Events - Save the date!



- [Walk for Women](#) - 7th July [Join us](#) for a walk around beautiful Virginia Water. One lap of the lake is approximately 5 miles, but you may make your walk as long as you wish. Food and refreshments will be provided free all day and first-aid will be available too. All you need to do is turn up in comfortable clothing and footwear to suit the weather.
- [WOMAD](#) - 25-28th July Madras Cafe has been appearing at world music festival WOMAD since 1992. What started as a chai stall has now become something of a festival institution serving delicious Indian food to over 3,500 people during the three days. Staffed entirely by willing volunteers, all the profits from Madras Cafe go back to Action Village India to support rural initiatives and help to combat poverty and social injustice across India. We need volunteers to man the AVI information stand, and help promote our work, and to sell scarves and other products made by our Indian partners. Please [drop us a line](#) if you are interested in volunteering.
- 2-12 October - Events in India: JANANDOLAN 2018, campaign for securing land & livelihood rights of the marginalised community in India.
* Ekta Parishad is looking for a photographer to document the march. If you want to know more, please get in [touch with us](#).

- 30 years of AVI - Watch this space for a date to celebrate 30 years of AVIs work in India.

Fundraise for AVI



There are many different ways to raise money for Action Village India so if you're feeling energetic then here are a few options to get your trainers on and fundraise at the same time. It doesn't matter if you consider yourself to be a serious athlete or if you're a novice who's looking for an interesting goal; please [get in touch](#) if you'd like to take part in one of these events in support of AVI!

- [Great Team Relay](#) 4th July 2018 – This is an exciting chance for a team of 4 runners to run in London's world-class Olympic Stadium. 4 runners take part in a relay running 5k each. This looks like it will be a once in a lifetime opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Usain Bolt!
- [Rough Runners](#) 8th and 9th September 2018 – If you're looking for a challenge that's a bit out of the ordinary, and you don't mind getting mucky in the process, this could be just the thing. A 5k obstacle course that will take bags of energy and a sense of humour!
- [Big Fun Run](#) 28th October 2018 – This family-friendly event is for all ages and fitness levels. You can run, walk and even take your kids in their prams on this easy 5k in one of London's most beautiful parks.

Partners Forum and Spring News from AVI



8th Partners' Forum – AVI

In the beginning of March 2018, all AVIs partners and 10 UK participants, including staff, trustees and supporters came together for the 8th Partners' Forum in Jharkhand, India. This forum also provided an opportunity for all our partners to say goodbye to Ivan who will be retiring this year.

The Partners Forums have developed from AVI Coordinator's experience of visiting the partners and realising that they could all benefit from seeing each other work. AVI's partners host the Forums in rotation and organise field visits and discussions on issues arising from the work that AVI is funding. The previous Forum at ASSEFA in 2015 focused on its programme to increase incomes from agriculture and the women and children's health project.

The 2018 Partners Forum, hosted by Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) formed part of AVI/NBJK's Big Lottery Fund funded Disability Rights project which covers 3 districts Jharkhand and 2 in Bihar. As with all previous Forums, the main aim was to introduce AVI's partners to the project and the issues it is tackling and so encourage them to be more aware of disability issues in their work and, where possible, promote the inclusion of people living with disabilities.

Besides focussing on Disability Rights, the forum held field visits to the Girls' Education project, Agriculture projects, Vocational Training Centres and to the Child centred community development project. Sessions were held on disability rights, AVI's strategy, the new funding landscape in India, safeguarding, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, social media and case-studies and we held a gender panel discussion on international women's day.

The feedback we received was great and this is some of them said about the forum:

“I am participating the first time and I got the opportunity to interact with various partners and their work and I was able to understand the policies and programmes of AVI. The forum was well organised by NBJK and AVI” - Rakesh Nair, KGSN

“The Partners’ Forum fulfilled my goals of connecting in person with the people behind the organisation names that we as AVI co-operate with in some locations where they work, of getting to know them personally and of our partners having the opportunity to share with us what they do, what they want to do, and how that is working out for them. I heard, learned and experienced about as much I possibly could do in the time we had. I now have many facts and practical awareness that I was lacking. In addition, there were other things I gained which I had not been looking for; I understood a lot more about the value of the way AVI works in developing its relationships, I made friends, I got to know and appreciate my fellow AVI members better, and I very much liked what I saw of the way NBJK manages its operations. The partners also seemed to gain a lot from hearing each others experiences and views, having the opportunity to ask each other questions and sharing solidarity on common challenges. There were great positive vibes coming out of some of these discussions. I also hope that having a number of AVI members going out to meet and talk with our partners reinforced a message that we are here to help as much as we can, not only financially, but also on a more personally relatable level. I also understood much better how much we owe to Ivan for his lifelong work in developing trust, respect and understanding. I wish I could have recorded more, in notes and visually, and I would like to return to do that sometime” – Ellie Kellet, Trustee



Flood Relief

We would like to thank you for all your contributions towards the Bihar Flood Relief towards the end of 2017.

Floods in Bihar are a recurring disaster which on an annual basis destroys thousands of human lives apart from livestock and assets worth millions. The 2017 Bihar Floods affected 17 million people in 19 districts of North Bihar and caused 514 deaths and over 850,000 people lost their homes.

Thanks to AVIs donations, NBJK was able to provide support to 146 families and 200 children. NBJK selected families from the districts West Champaran and East Champaran, living in remote villages, often Dalits, who didn't receive support from the government and whose condition was very vulnerable. Together with beneficiaries, it was decided which help was needed the most.

Canopies to protect from rain, mosquito nets to protect from water borne diseases, and food grains like pulses were provided to 85 families. A relief kit, containing a pressure cooker, kitchen utensils, a folding bed, a box, mosquito net, clothes and a torch were provided to 61 families. 200 children were provided with new school bags as these were lost in the flood.



Case Study Crusade: Nagalakshmi - threading the pieces of her life together

Nagalakshmi looks at the sewing machine with gratitude. For her, it's not just a sewing machine. "It's my savior", says the 30-year old Nagalakshmi who has crossed many painful paths in her life. Her marriage to someone against the wish of her parents led her to leave her village to another state – Tamil Nadu. Also, her husband was out of a job and taking care of her two children aged 10 and 8 became taxing on her.

Desperate for a way out of their seemingly hopeless situation, Nagalakshmi moved to Chennai in Tamil Nadu. Her neighbours, seeing her condition, mentioned CRUSADE and its support to the poor. The field worker from CRUSADE spoke to Nagalakshmi about tailoring training and how it has transformed many women in the village.

Nagalakshmi began to study sewing for a period of six months from August 2015 to January 2016. CRUSADE provides a certificate at the end of the training, an essential document if the women seek employment at any garment factory. Nagalakshmi worked hard, and finished

her course of tailoring. Through the VPRC – Village Poverty Reduction Committee, she availed a loan of Rs16,000 and bought a sewing machine. She pays a monthly installment of Rs500. Earning on average Rs3000 per month through tailoring orders from her neighbourhood, Nagalakshmi says, "I use this for any emergencies and daily petrol expenses for my husband's bike." With her children attending school regularly and leading content and happy lives, Nagalakshmi is an example to others in the village and she steps forward to motivate other women as well.



Welcome to our new Office and Communications Assistant

We are delighted to welcome Aneeta Patel to our team as our new Office and Communications Assistant. You can reach her on aneeta@actionvillageindia.org.uk or info@actionvillageindia.org.uk



Hello to all! I'm Aneeta and I've just joined the team at the Action Village India office in London as Office and Communications Assistant. I'm delighted to be working with Anna, Esther and the AVI extended family, and hope to do my small part for all the excellent work happening in India. My background is a jumbled mixture of knitting, legal support and babies so I'm finding AVI a huge challenge and a breath of fresh air! I'm so excited about the work we do and hope that my enthusiasm, organisational skills and random life experience will be a benefit to everyone working with AVI and all the people we are working for. I'm a great believer in making a difference on a personal level and that's one of the things that most attracted me to AVI's work. I'd love to hear from anyone interested in or involved with AVI so feel free to drop me a line to say [hello](#) :)