In This Issue:
Page 1
Letter to Friends of Lend-a-Hand-India
An update of our recent accomplishments and future plans
Page 2
Measuring Our Impact, Moving in New Directions
Survey results of graduates of the vocational training program. LAHI’s project PLAN 100 is making great progress. What we learned and where that’s taking us.
Page 3
Q&A: Mr. Vik Atal, vice chairman of global Citi Cards and chairman of advisory board of LAHI, on the importance of vocational training and how we can continue to make a difference
Page 4
How You Can Get Involved:
Donate, volunteer or simply join the fun!

FRIENDS OF LEND-A-HAND-INDIA

We are delighted to release our first newsletter because exchanging news and views with you is very important to us. We’d like to continue a dialogue through our newsletters every quarter, and sincerely look forward to your response!

Small Steps, Big Strides

8,000 students benefit from vocational training

PLAN 100 is on a roll. The vocational training program now encompasses over 50 schools training more than 8,000 girls and boys in rural India. (To learn more about PLAN 100, watch our documentary at: http://www.vimeo.com/1257780.)

With Project Disha, students get new direction

We provided career counseling to more than 3,000 students through Project Disha. A recently completed survey of 400 participants reveals that almost three-quarters of students acted on the guidance they received and are happy with the outcomes.

Top US business schools become key partners

Stanford University and NYU’s Stern business schools continue to send their students to summer internships with LAHI, both in the US and in India. In 2008, under the GMIX program of Stanford Business School, Ratwatte Chari and Gayitri Budhraja visited several schools to learn about the expansion of PLAN 100 program. Priya Raman, Kara Mosher, and Hitu Malhotra of Stern Business School worked on the Run for a Dream Campaign.

In India, business and government get engaged

LAHI’s strategy of “scaling up” successful models is a well-thought-out response to India’s population challenge, and we want to spread the message beyond LAHI. We actively invite private and public sector entities to join this effort, and our advocacy is paying off. Three corporations, Suzlon, Bayer, and Praj, have joined the PLAN 100 program, sponsoring ten schools each. Even more rewarding is Maharashtra state government’s interest in introducing vocational training as core subjects in high school curriculum.

We are getting ready to extend PLAN 100 to multiple states. Our challenge is resource mobilization. We will keep you posted on our progress and exciting new developments. For now, turn the page to read more about our impact, hear from our students and advisers, and learn how you can get involved.

Best wishes,

Sunanda Mane
Co-founder & President
MEASURING OUR IMPACT

Moving in New Directions

The success of its alumni speaks volumes about the quality of an educational program. It is also a measurable outcome that allows Lend-a-Hand-India to make better choices and more informed decisions. Those who have been following our progress know that through PLAN 100, we are well on our way to imparting life and job skills to 20,000 girls and boys from 100 high schools in rural India. But as we move forward, we like to look back for this simple reason: we want to understand wins we can replicate and challenges we must overcome to ensure successful program expansion.

With that in mind, we conducted a survey of more than 70 graduates of our partner Vigyan Ashram’s Introduction to Basic Rural Technology (IBT) program, the model we are scaling up under PLAN 100. As shown below, we found that almost half of the graduates are working in the services sector, a little more than a third own small businesses, and around 15% are continuing their education.

Many students are thriving, and here we share just a few stories.

Vijay Surum, who trained in website development and computer hardware and software, works in the government forest department as a computer operator. He is happily married, taking home an annual salary of around Rs 48,000 ($1,200). Our girl graduates are overcoming social barriers and becoming financially independent. Savita is a staff member at a non-profit organization for destitute women, to which she had once belonged. She also makes and sells envelopes, greeting cards and other decorative items.

For some, the program’s impact has been profound in ways not quantifiable through any tangible measures. Raju has adopted a 3-month-old girl orphan in his village, providing a sibling to his biological daughter. In a traditional community, where a girl child is seen as an unwanted financial liability, this is a remarkable act. Raju says the IBT education was an important lesson in life that broadened his outlook.

We are proud of these achievements, and are digging deeper to see if IBT training is doing more than providing just the first job. Given that many of our students are aspiring entrepreneurs, we especially want to analyze problems they face in establishing their businesses. We met our survey participants in person and the interviews unearthed some of their major obstacles to success, such as absence of local economy to support their enterprise or lack of funds to facilitate migration to a nearby town.

Of all the challenges surfaced, the one we can directly address is the absence of networking, mentoring and coaching. As we expand through PLAN 100, we want to make sure that our graduates have help and support each step of the way—creating a business plan, doing feasibility studies, test marketing, developing a client base, purchasing equipment, leasing space, meeting bankers, overseeing the bank loan application process, and beyond.

That is why LAHI has launched “Bridge Loan Fund” to provide capital plus assistance and services to boys and girls who want to start their own business enterprises. Sundar’s success story (see facing page) is proof that young men and women can go very far with a small loan and a little bit of mentoring.
**AN INTERVIEW WITH MR VIK ATAL**

Vice Chairman of Global Citi Cards and Chairman of Advisory Board of Lend-A-Hand India

**What explains your interest and involvement in LAHI?**

I got involved with LAHI four years ago. I found the concept compelling and very much needed. Education is a critical component of driving success for individuals, and having grown up in India I felt that sometimes education can be delinked from the real world. This is a terrific concept because it is giving real education to children and young adults in rural India. They are learning not only skills but also the end-to-end process. For example, if you are studying chicken farming, they are also teaching you how to go to market and sell them. So you learn farming, but also project management, marketing, economics etc. I should add that along the way I have met teachers and students, which has reinforced the value of what LAHI is doing.

**What do you think of LAHI’s approach of scaling up existing models of development? Do you think it is particularly tailored to addressing India’s population challenge?**

In my view India has so many challenges that one can pick a battleground and tackle serious problems in any number of ways. But many agencies that are more diversified are sprinkling their resources around, for example, reacting to a flood or a riot. Those are necessary efforts but they tend to be tactical. In contrast, LAHI has taken an approach that is more strategic. What they have done over the last few years is really focus on deepening their programs. And that is also part of the challenge. Going forward, this concept must be made broader and deeper.

**So what do you see as LAHI’s biggest challenge?**

We have got to make this industrial scale. There comes a time when every entrepreneur faces this challenge—you have an idea, you foster it, but at some point you have to show really terrific management to expand it.

For example, how do you get a sponsor in India who would take this to the next level? How do you get a champion? Or actually several champions who are probably senior corporate executives because then they would bring their organizational capabilities to bear. Take another example. LAHI now has relationships with NYU and Stanford business schools who are sending student to the projects in India. You would think something like this, with such brand name recognition, would be plastered all over. But it is really not happening because of limited resources. The challenge is really in getting a much larger network of people involved in supporting LAHI.

**Where would you like to see LAHI 10 years from now?**

I would like to see it expanded much more broadly, touching many more individuals. I hope 10 years from now we would have built a compelling track record of people having been through this program who have established themselves as entrepreneurs in their own right.
HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Donate

A little bit of financial help goes a long way.

- $100 pays for the tuition fee of two boys or girls for a vocational training program
- $400 pays one-year salary of a trainer at the school
- $1,500 pays to purchase a PC and internet facility for a high school
- $4,000 pays for one year of operating costs of a batch of students for training programs OR meets the capital cost of launching a vocational training center at a high school

You can donate by going online [http://www.lend-a-hand-india.org/donate.php] or mail a check to: Lend-A-Hand-India, 784 Columbus Avenue, #10G, New York, NY 10025 USA

Volunteer Worldwide

We have come this far because of our volunteers. We want your continuing participation!

- In New York, join any one of our volunteer teams in the areas of event management, grant writing, donor communications, corporate donations, creative media, public relations, website development & maintenance. If you have something else in mind, write to us and we may develop a role for you!
- In India, work for 4-6 weeks with our grassroots partners. Or simply visit our projects and let us know how you think we are doing!
- Around the world, spread the word. Tell your friends and family about Lend-a-hand-India!

Write to us at lahi@lend-a-hand-india.org; call us at: +1.917.493.9000

Lend-A-Hand India is a non-profit organization whose mission is to make a difference in the lives of the poor through self help. Our current programs focus on issues related to youth unemployment and urban migration through vocational training, career development, and entrepreneurial opportunities. LAHI collaborates with local non-profit organizations to scale up successful and sustainable models created by them so as to reach large numbers with workable solutions. LAHI is a tax-exempt organization under Sec. 501(c)(3) in the US and under Sec. 80G in India.

FUN @ LAHI

We always have time to get together with friends, old and new, to celebrate our accomplishments, plan for the future....and just to have a good time!

Honorary guests Mr. Bob Simon, St. Foreign Correspondent for 60 Minutes, and Dr. Abhijit Banerjee, Director of Poverty Action Lab and Ford Professor of Economics at MIT, talked to us in lively Q&A sessions during our Annual Event.

For those of you who missed our Third Annual Gala this past September, here are some Highlights.

Tap dancers from C3 Tap Cooperative set the rhythm and performers from Bollywood Axion Dance Troupe gave us a healthy dose of desi entertainment. A live auction had guests competing over wine tastings, spa treatments, romantic cruises, dinners for two, and stunning designer outfits. Board member Mr Vik Atal thanked the attendees for their enthusiastic participation.

Don’t miss our forthcoming events like Run for a Dream, Happy Hours, Chocolate Tasting and more!