



Our Community

Mission

Our Community

Resources

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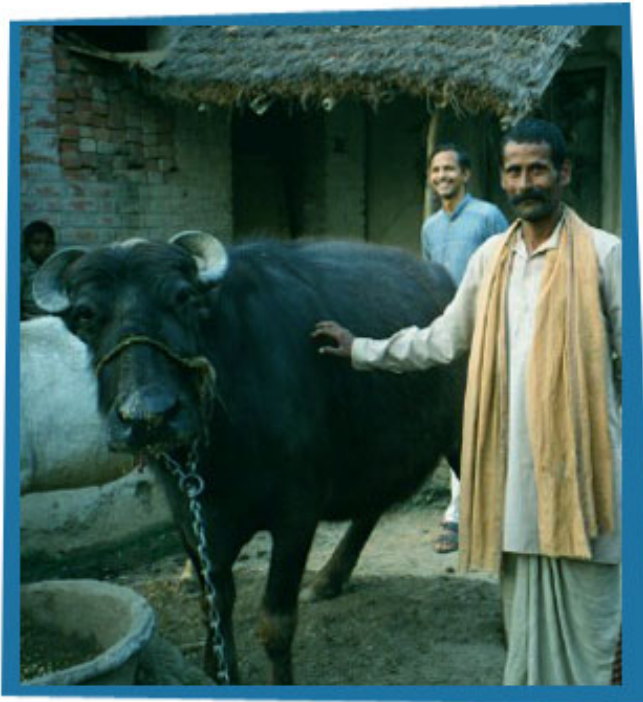
Manavodaya Institute of Participatory Development

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PROGRESS YOU CAN BANK ON

Suppose you are a small farmer in a remote area of India. In a good year you manage to grow just enough to feed your family. If the weather failed you one year, you became indebted to the village money-lenders. Being illiterate, you unknowingly signed up to extortionist rates, which your family won't pay off even after multiple generations. You have no cash savings or bank account. How will you ever purchase a bullock or other livestock to better your life? How will your village ever get a new water well, an irrigation pump, or other improvements if all the other villagers are like you?



This is the unfortunate situation in much of the world, and it has been for centuries. But it does not have to remain that way. With personal initiative, group effort, patience, and a little practical help, the lives of thousands of villagers are experiencing genuine and lasting improvement.

The Manavodaya Institute of Participatory Development has created an entirely new paradigm based on participatory intervention. Their programs send trained and inspired teams of change agents into the countryside to provide practical advice and hands-on instruction to help some of the nation's most impoverished rural villagers. For example, they teach that it is possible to raise small amounts of capital simply by saving a handful of rice at each meal to eventually sell for small amounts of money. Family members and friends can pool their resources, which can then be put together with others in larger villages groups. The result has been villages and groups of villages not only meeting their own needs, but also being able to lend money to other rural communities for capital improvements.

Manavodaya (Human Awakening) was established in 1985 in Lucknow by two highly educated individuals, Varun, an engineer and MBA, and Amla, a Ph.D. in biochemistry, who gave up fast-track commercial careers. Their vision of grassroots intervention in villages began with the goal of establishing sustainable self-help institutions in rural areas based on the micro-financing model made famous by Gramin Bank. While direct empowerment of the villagers is primary to the organization's mission, it also involves training field workers and creating outreach programs to sensitize officials in government and banking to needs of the new village banking initiatives.

In 1996, capacity building programs began to be directed to large numbers of non-governmental executives and workers. By 2002, Manavodaya was invited to participate in policy dialogue for training government officers. Success is spreading from individual villagers, to entire villages, to districts, to banks, and to government agencies. Today, international programs are also taking hold and speakers are invited to World Bank conferences.

Today, Manavodaya is spread throughout India, with some 20,000 self-help groups comprised of about 200,000 individuals. Contributions to the organization are exempt from tax under Section 80-G. To learn more about the power of human resource development for alleviating rural poverty, visit: <http://www.manavodaya.org/>.