

SIXTH INTAF GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT 2002-2005

INTAF – International Task Force for the Rural Poor – was born out of an international seminar held in Amarpurkashi in December 1988. One of the many recommendations of this seminar was that an international task force concerned with the rural poor be set up as a concrete and constructive outcome of the seminar. Its aims were to identify and publicize examples of integrating education and development for the rural poor, to strive to achieve recognition within the world community for the plight of the rural poor and to monitor the progress of the policies and programmes that benefit the rural poor most.

In 1988, INTAF-India was also launched and both national and state convenors appointed.

In April 1994, INTAF, with help and co-operation from the UK-based charity, IVCS (Indian Volunteers for Community Service), started a twice-yearly publication, the International Journal for Rural Studies or IJRS. The aim was to publicize the work being done by grass-root workers in developing countries and give them another forum to express their ideas, voice their concerns and describe their successes and failures. The journal is now in its eleventh successful year. The following are just a few examples of the many interesting articles and papers published in the journal:

- G M Foods: Locking Farmers into Dependency (April 2000)
- Twenty Questions about Poverty and Development (Oct. 2000)
- Performance and Governance – Where does IFAD stand? (Oct. 2000)
- Creating a conducive legal environment for the voluntary sector (Oct. 2000)
- Law and Order in Rural India (April 2001)
- The Role of the Internet in Development (April 2001)
- Starving the Poor (Oct. 2001)
- Energy, Gender and Poverty Reduction (Oct. 2001)
- Sustainable Livelihoods (April 2002)
- The Myth of Micro-Credit (April 2002)
- A Grass-root Perspective on Aid (Oct. 2002)
- The International Money Flow (Oct. 2002)
- Population and Development (April 2003)
- Mlup Baitong, Cambodia (April 2003)
- Rural Employment, Poverty and Human Development (April 2003)
- Education for the Rural Poor (Oct. 2003)
- Aid Effectiveness (Oct. 2003)
- Improving the Management of Sustainable Development – China, India and Indonesia (April 2004)
- Working with the Rural Poor (Oct. 2004)
- Cultural Revival (April 2005)
- Agrarian Change and Rural Poverty in Pakistan (April 2005)
- The Truth about Globalisation (April 2005)

One of the requirements of the INTAF constitution is that an international conference be convened every three years. The first conference was held in Amarpurkashi in 1988 and took the theme “Working with the Rural Poor”. The second, also held at Amarpurkashi, took place in 1992 and focused on the Earth summit which was due to be held in Rio de Janeiro later that year. The third conference in 1995 took place in London and discussed “Empowering the Rural Poor”. Chachikpur in Eastern UP, India was the venue for the fourth which investigated the possible decline in rural poverty during the UN decade for poverty eradication. In 2002, Konch in south-west UP, India hosted the fifth conference and discussed “Sustainable Livelihoods for the Rural Poor”. The Sixth INTAF conference was once again held in London, providing development workers with the opportunity to travel abroad, meet others working in the same field and exchange ideas, concerns and experiences with others of like mind.

One of the recommendations of the Fifth World Conference was that “aid workers and concerned members of civil society should highlight” concerns about the so-called pro-poor policies of the largest international agencies and from this came the choice of topic – “Investing in the Rural Poor”.

INTAF is not a registered body. It does not have any regular income and relies totally on voluntary help. However, IVCS in the UK donates the services of its office and The Society for Agro-Industrial Education in India provides a branch office in Amarpurkashi.

Apart from the journal, one of the most successful programmes to come out of an INTAF conference recommendation is the innovative one-year post-graduate diploma in Rural Resource Management which has just completed its third year. This groundbreaking course combines the theory and practice of rural development in a unique way. Students who graduated in the first two years of the course have all gone on to notable successes in their lives. From September 2006, the course will be open to international students to give them the exciting opportunity to study rural resource management at firsthand out in the field.