

US-AEP Strengthens River Clean-Up Partnerships

Almost 400 million people directly or indirectly rely on the holy Ganges River for meeting their water needs. Unfortunately, the river's water quality is degrading due to the unplanned and unregulated dumping of municipal and industrial waste of over 100 cities along its nearly 2000 kilometer course from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal.

The Sankat Mochan Foundation (SMF), founded by scientist and religious leader Dr. Veer Bhadra Mishra, is an NGO based in the city of Varanasi committed to cleaning up this holy river.

SMF works closely with a number of donor agencies to fight its cause. Recently, SMF received a USAID grant through the Asia Foundation (TAF) to organize a number of civil society partnership workshops in major cities along the river. SMF asked US-AEP to help support a capacity building workshop in Calcutta, which is the largest city on the river.



Dr. Mishra prays for the welfare of the Ganges river.

In order to create stakeholder participation in the workshop, US-AEP recommended a cultural component to complement the workshop session. US-AEP also identified two local NGOs, the Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage and the People United for a Better Living in Calcutta, to work with SMF in a supporting capacity. US-AEP assisted these organizations in the planning and coordination of the Clean Ganga Day program, held in March 2003.

The day-long event consisted of a morning session attended by about 60 participants. Speakers included a representa-

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Jobs for the Community – Important Link in the Green Supply Chain

In Nasugbu, Philippines, a composting facility run by the Luntiang Nasugbu Multipurpose Cooperative is generating employment, developing skills, and producing income for the community. Sponsored by Central Azucarera Don Pedro (CADP), the largest producer of raw sugar in the country, the facility processes most of CADP's organic waste and will soon expand to accept segregated municipal waste.

"The benefits of good environmental management are enormous. You change the way you do things and along the way you change attitudes," Mr. Jeff Mijares, Department Head, CADP Environmental Management and Safety

In addition, the company is working with the cooperative to develop and market an organic fertilizer with chicken dung purchased from local poultry farms, that will benefit workers, farmers, and the company, while reducing waste.

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Before the Clouds Gather - Vietnam Air Pollution Report Fills Gap

Rapid growth in Vietnam's urban areas is outpacing its environmental controls and services, particularly in the area of air quality. For example, the country has seen motorcycle and other vehicular use increase 25 percent per year since 1980. Although the country has successfully phased out leaded gasoline and taken steps to institute air quality monitoring and climate change, air pollution is poised to become a serious problem.

Early this year, US-AEP published the first comprehensive review of air quality in Vietnam. The report originated as a compilation of donors and projects relating to Vietnam's air quality. As research continued, however, US-AEP discovered that a general report on air quality issues was not readily available. The resulting publication, Before the Clouds Gather: Protecting Clean Air in Vietnam, attempts to fill this gap.

In August 2002, US-AEP hosted a workshop in Hanoi to

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In the Spotlight

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The composting facility is an outgrowth of the US-AEP Greening the Supply Chain (GSC) program, pioneered by Nestle Philippines, Inc. As a Nestle GSC partner, CADP has embarked on a number of waste-management programs leading to significant reductions in solid waste, water consumption and wastewater.

Jeff Mijares, CADP Department Head, CADP Environmental Management and Safety, credits both US-AEP and USAID's Industrial Environmental Management Project for spearheading the company's initial efforts to minimize waste, beginning in 1993. Since that time CADP has invested over \$4 million in wastewater treatment, recycling and a host of environmental initiatives that Mijares expects to lead to "a full-blown EMS certification" in the near future.

Eighty-eight Nestle partners have participated in the GSC program, including environmental management seminars, Initial Environmental Reviews in all partner operation sites, and quarterly environmental forums for participating partners.

Through a grant with The Asia Foundation, US-AEP is now institutionalizing the GSC program with the Philippine Business for Social Progress. More than 160 Philippine companies will have access to PBSP's GSC training and mentoring program.

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tive of the American Consulate; the Environmental Secretary of the local Government; a retired Justice of Calcutta Green Bench; a representative of the urban planning body; the local NGO representative; and Dr. Mishra.

The afternoon session was held at an open-air auditorium on the riverfront in Calcutta. Local school children presented a poster and model display about river pollution and a brochure on the river's heritage and pollution issues was distributed. Evening activities included a fusion classical musical performance titled Rhythm of the River, a traditional fire dance performance, and a folk music concert.

The Clean Ganga Day campaign generated a great response in the city. The local media covered the event enthusiastically and published a number of press reports the following day.

US-AEP stitched together a large partnership for implementing this program. Apart from the coalition of the three leading NGOs, the local Rotary Club, Nature Club of local schools, the Public Affairs office of the American Consulate and the media all contributed to the program's success.

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discuss Vietnam's current air situation and to solicit comments, suggestions, and information from the participants about the report. Attending the workshop were representatives from the Hanoi Department of Science, Technology and Environment, The Asia Foundation, and the Asian Development Bank, among others. Their input was crucial to the final version of the publication.

US-AEP has distributed approximately 700 copies of the report to sixty-one provincial environmental authorities; the Department of Science, Technology, and the Environment; international donors, the environmental departments of various ministries, universities, research institutes; and other related agencies.

Over the years, US-AEP has been instrumental in the phase out of leaded gasoline and capacity development in air quality monitoring. US-AEP has also played an active role in supporting the country's participation in the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities, an organization established by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and several bilateral development organizations.

By proactively working to improve air quality, the people of Vietnam will experience fewer health issues, better working conditions, and improved quality of life.

Before the Clouds Gather is available through US-AEP's Vietnam office in Hanoi. An electronic version of the report can be downloaded at www.usaep.org.

Photography Credits

Many thanks to Jim Stein at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India for contributing the photograph of Dr. Mishra praying by the Ganga.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July	12-14 Coastal Zone 2003 International Workshop , Baltimore, MD; USA
	13-17 Coastal Zone 2003 Conference , Baltimore, MD; USA
	26-27 South Asia Mayor's Conference , Indore, India
	29-8/1 American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy's Sustainability and Industry Summer Study , Rye Brook, NY; USA

For a complete listing of upcoming events, please visit:
<http://www.usaep.org/calendar/index.htm>