

At Praxis we see a world in which every woman and man has the right to participate in decision-making processes, and to a life with dignity and choices. Our mission is to strive for the democratisation of development processes and institutions to ensure that the voices of poor women, men, girls and boys are heard and acted upon.

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From the CEO

Dear Friends,

Printing an Annual Report is always an exercise in reluctant candidness; not because there are things to hide but because the process involves a degree of introspection and acknowledgement that can be both, unsettling as well as motivating.

In telling the world what we have been doing, we ourselves get to see what we have not done. Mapping out the distances covered, gives us a clear view of the miles left to travel before we can stop awhile and claim to have kept our promises.

When we started out in 1997, we did promise ourselves, both as an organisation as well as individuals, to do everything possible to include the poor in the process of development. We were unanimous in our belief that participatory development was the only way to mainstream the poor and the marginalised.

In the decade that has gone by we have tried hard to keep our promises. I may even add that we have had some measure of success. Be it consultancies, trainings or even internal initiatives, we have been able to maintain an unequivocally pro-poor, pro-inclusion stand.

A large part of this has been possible because we have been financially self-sufficient. Our consultancies have paid for the organisation as well as supported its various activist roles. Not being dependent on external funds has given us the luxury of not having to compromise on our beliefs and the freedom to work on a broad spectrum of issues.

While this continues to be the case we realise that it is time to ask ourselves a few questions.

Participatory development is no longer a buzzword. It has been co-opted as another 'must use' jargon. This co-optation means that as an organisation, which spearheaded the concept a decade back, it is now time for us to liberate it from its rhetorical glory and deepen and widen its practice.

This requires partnerships and linkages. We have recently opened an office in the UK as a part of our expansion blueprint. We hope to take the Southern perspective North and attempt to influence their policies. An office in Chennai, India has been set up to enable Praxis to continue building a strong network in the South as well. In the year to come, we hope to build associations with like-minded organisations who will see our expansion for what it actually is: the expansion of participatory democracy.

My colleagues at Praxis and I share a common vision for the way forward.

We would like to see a social order, without margins, one that accords every individual no matter who, the right to have an active and influential say in the way the world around her or him is shaped.

At Praxis we keep striving to do our bit - both professionally and personally.

I am sure you would too.

Thank You.

Tom Thomas

Taking stock: how, why and what now

All journeys involve a degree of course alteration. It is a good idea therefore, to take stock once in a while and see if where one is going is in sync with where one wanted to go in the first place.

When Praxis was established in 1997, as a subsidiary of ActionAid (India) it was for a clear reason: to promote participatory development in all spheres of human development. As the years passed by, it evolved into an autonomous organisation with a cutting-edge knowledge of participatory tools and an equally sharp understanding of poverty and social development related issues.

But dynamics of the development sector, as of any other, change with time. Participatory development may have been a novel concept at the turn of the century but today, it has been confined to the realm of rhetorics. Breaking the shackles of rhetorics demands that participation be asserted as a non-negotiable right of every citizen, particularly those who are left out.

The poor and the marginalised must be included at all forums of development not as a matter of policy but because as members of a democracy they have a right to be consulted on decisions that affect their lives and the world around them. It was to further this belief that Praxis created an internal initiatives division, which works with like-minded partners in helping communities assert this right.

Over the last year much has changed logistically at Praxis. We are a larger organisation with offices not only in Delhi and Patna but Chennai as well. Despite the expansion, what has not changed is

our focus on reaching the voices of the poor and the marginalised to relevant forums. Besides this, our geographical expansion has included setting up Praxis UK in London. The purpose of Praxis UK is to bring a Southern perspective on development policy and practice to the North.

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2007-2008 : A year of and for the people

We were engaged in several projects, sometimes professionally, sometimes wearing our activist hats. Here is an update on the major projects that defined 2007 for us.

Land mapping in Bihar :

Land has been at the crux of inequity ever since man started equating it with power. Bihar, with its semi feudal make up, is an unfortunate example of severe land-based disparity. Upto 70% of the rural poor in several districts are landless, working on leased land and handing over more than half their gross output almost double of what is normally paid elsewhere.

There is little scope to question the system. Most of the land records date back to before independence, the bureaucracy consists of land

owning gentry and the system itself is informal. There is therefore, very little scope for the tenant to get legal protection. Centuries of exploitation have left the landless poor too weighed down by debts and poverty to have the strength to change their circumstances.



The state is in urgent need of political will to make the land reforms that exist on paper, account for something. Despite the Bhoodan Yagna Committee, the Bihar Zamindari Abolition Act and the Land Ceiling Act, Bihar stands as a caricature of democracy, where the lives of the landless majority depend on the whims of the few who own land.

Since landlessness and its related effects on the lives of the poor and the marginalised has always been an issue that Praxis feels strongly about, it undertook a land mapping exercise, along with Ekta Parishad, in the districts of Western Chamaparan, Gaya, Nawada, Jamui and Patna . This was done to identify specific issues relating to land distribution and prospects relating to allotment of land to the huge number of landless households in the state. Outcomes of the exercise are expected to help in effective campaigning for land rights of the poor with the backing of hard data relating to availability of distributable land in areas selected for mapping.

The exercise has so far been undertaken across over thirty five panchayats drawn from five districts of Bihar - Gaya, Jamui, Nawada, Patna and West Champaran, and includes the following steps:

1. Identification and training of a village level team of cartographers, mostly agricultural labourers or sharecroppers familiar with the distribution of land in their village.
2. Mapping of land holdings in terms of location and boundaries, legal ownership, actual control, nature of disputes, type of land, duration of control, productivity and plot no. as per government record (“Register 2”) etc.
3. Verification of the contents of the map in a public forum, whereby about fifty adult villagers endorse the veracity of the map by formally approving it.
4. Digitisation of land records, giving each recorded plot a unique number and entering corresponding records in an electronic database, along with digital copy of the map.



Specific insights that the process of land mapping seeks to capture are the following:

Identification of villagers owning more land than permitted by the amended version of Bihar Land Reforms (Ceiling, Land Allocation and Surplus Land Acquisition) Act 1961.

Identification of Bhoodan / Gair Majarua / other forms of government land that can be made available for distribution to landless households

Identification of homeless persons for pursuing their legal

entitlement to homestead land.

Identification of villagers whose long-standing occupancy of disputed land holdings calls for formalisation of the holdings in their name.

Praxis will soon publish the experience of undertaking land mapping in Bihar and organise debates around issues and prospects identified through the exercise in the days to come.

Dalit Watch :

The year 2007 was a particularly bad one for rural Bihar. The dams around several rivers broke, pushing 10,000 villages across twenty two districts into a quagmire of ruined livelihoods and consequent debts. Yet another episode, to be borne stoically, in the lives of the millions that are indescribably poor and powerless.



In the aftermath of the floods emerged a forum that can be described only as a welcome life jacket: Dalit Watch. The mandate of this forum is to fight against the deliberate exclusion of dalits from relief and rehabilitation processes. In a larger context it is a fight to give dalits their right to participate in the process of development.

Several organisations like National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), Bachchan Bachchao Andolan, Dalit Samanvay, Nari Gunjan and Lok Shakti are a part of this forum.

One of the initiatives that this forum has taken is to produce a critical

mass of 10,000 dalit leaders. These individuals will be picked from various grassroots level organisations and contexts and empowered to act as opinion makers and influencers of their community.

Praxis has been a part of this forum as a facilitator, assisting with capacity building programmes and strategy formulation and helping the forum in the all-important task of taking into account the community perspective.

Debating the Budget in Bihar :

Praxis, in partnership with Vidyasagar Samajik Suraksha Seva Sodh Sansthan (VSSSSS), organized a pre-budget discussion in the Legislative Council Auditorium of Bihar on February 8, 2007. The discussion was attended by distinguished Members of Legislative Council of Bihar, the Auditor General of the State, reputed academicians, scientists and representatives of prominent civil society organizations and networks. During the discussion, issues regarding budgetary outlays and utilizations relating to important social sector areas were examined, and recommendations were made towards revival of SC Sub-plan, devolution of finances favouring Panchayati Raj Institutions and increase of allocations and utilizations favouring critical sectors like primary education, primary health care and agriculture.

Initiative for development of model republics :

Praxis has entered into a partnership with a select number of gram panchayats in Bihar, with the objective of establishing or strengthening inclusive processes at the level of panchayats. To this effect, Praxis is working towards emergence of representative groups of citizens to (1) monitor delivery of basic services, (2) act as a channel for exchange of vital information between people and panchayats and (3) feed into the

planning and budgeting processes of the panchayat by acting as conveyers of priorities and aspirations of citizens based in different development wards. Elected members of the panchayats, who are divided across different thematic standing committees, are expected to work closely with nominated citizen-representatives in various panchayat processes and in preparation of development plans and budgets.

Training of NREGA functionaries in Bihar :

In November 2007, Praxis facilitated an orientation of a select group of Block Development Officers, NGO representatives and nominated functionaries of relevant government agencies, vis-à-vis issues of exclusion and issues in planning of shelf of projects for implementation of NREGA in Bihar. The training was organized by the National Institute of Rural Development in Patna in collaboration with the Government of Bihar.



Engagement with prominent development support agencies in India :

In 2007, Praxis worked with several prominent development support agencies in India in processes involving a large number of civil society organizations. In May 2007, it supported Aga Khan Foundation in undertaking a Scoping Mission in Bihar for starting an area-based programme in the state. In August 2007, Praxis facilitated a workshop on Micro Level Planning with focus on Child Centered

Community Development for partners of Plan International in India. Between November 2007 – March 2008, it facilitated a comprehensive assessment of systems of accountability in interventions supported by CRY all over India.



Mid-Term Review Report on Southern Collective for New Initiatives on Childhood (SCNIC) :

Southern Collective for New Initiatives on Childhood [SCNIC] is a consortium of three NGOs namely Victory Trust, Navajeevan Educational and Welfare Society (NEWS) and Centre for Education, Development Action and Research (CEDAR). Formed in 2001, SCNIC operates in Virudhunagar, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts of Tamil Nadu, South India. This network is co-ordinated by CEDAR.

SCNIC has now partnered with ActionAid India on long-term development initiatives that centre around mobilising communities, civil society organisations, NGOs and state bodies to work in tandem, in order to make childhood a joyful experience for children.

Over the last six years SCNIC has been able to address the issue of child rights through several micro and macro initiatives. In 2005 for example, an education campaign on prevention of child labour was carried out in 240 villages by building alliance with 12 local NGOs.

These initiatives have also been accompanied by introspection to keep the projects in perspective.

Praxis was called upon to conduct a mid term review to analyse and assess the efforts made, and share the findings and learning to enable planning for the future and to review the direction, strategies and activities of the organisation to make the interventions effective and relevant.

The areas reviewed were programmes and performance, human resources and organisational development and finally partnership relationships.

Community-Led Action Research on the issue of Animal Welfare :

This project undertaken on behalf of the University of Bristol, involved training community facilitators. The project served to bring an interesting shift in the focus of communities from the well-being of the animal to that of the keeper. Several factors that determine the welfare of the keeper become indirect factors that dictate the well-being of the animal. This one workshop has had a ripple effect and led to a series of other workshops including one in the UK.

Dalit Mannurimai Kootamaippu Mid-Term Review :

Dalit Mannurimai Koottamaippu was established in 2001 by 16 NGOs and Community Based Organisations in six northern districts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry. The broad objectives of the network are –

- Proper implementation of Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
- To get the due share to the Dalits in the Common Property Resources.
- Reclamation of Panchami land and other accessible landed resources, which are under the control of the upper caste Hindus.

ActionAidIndia's partnership with Dalit Mannurimai Koottamaippu

–DMK, was initiated in March 2001. It has been supported since June 2001 through a start-up initiative under the National Fund, focussing on reclaiming the Panchami land, Common Property Resources and social discrimination/untouchability practices. In order to address the structural issues, the Regional office of AAI made it a long-term development initiative in January 2003. IRDS is the lead agency for the network.

The various initiatives undertaken by the network appear to have made a positive impact on the Dalits. But DMK and AAI were keen to assess and understand the impact of their initiatives so as to inform further decisions. It for this reason that Praxis was called in to conduct



a mid term review. The purpose of this review was:

- To analyse and assess the efforts made
- To prepare future plan in line with the findings and learnings.
- To review the direction, strategies and activities of the organisation to make the interventions effective and relevant.
- To show how each programme will achieve its own goals and contribute to the relevant country strategy.

The areas reviewed were:

1. Programmes and performance
2. Human Resources / Organisational Development
3. Partnership relationship (AA and Partner organisations)

Meeting science and technology information needs in the policy community of developing countries :

Sci.Dev.Net a web-based organisation which aims at providing reliable and authoritative information about science and technology for the developing world, commissioned a short research project to ODI in order to collate inputs for the implementation of its next Strategic Plan (covering the period 2008-2012) on how its website can respond most effectively to the information needs of its users/ stakeholders in the policy community.

ODI structured the research study on 7 developing countries, one of which was India. Praxis was contacted by ODI as local partner. Praxis selected potential key informants and conducted interviews and FGDs to feed into its findings. This was followed by another project International Survey on the Science Development Policy Interface.

Carried out in Delhi, this project was a continuation of the previous survey and involved meeting policy makers as well as policy advisors at the state and local level, directly or indirectly connected to science & technology.

Review of interim outputs of strengthening rural decentralisation programme :

The government of West Bangal has been working with DFID since 2006 on the Strengthening of Rural Decentralisation Program.

This programme aims at devolving power to the Panchayat level and empowering them to become both sensitive as well as responsible bodies of self-governance. The programme involved capacity building of panchayats at one level and the mobilisation of community opinion on the other, focussing on people's participation in the process of

self-governance.

Praxis, because of its wide and varied experience in the field of participatory development was called upon by DFID to conduct an interim review of the programme.



The purpose was to evaluate the initiatives from a people's perspective and gauge if the programme was delivering what it sought to. Praxis was able to add new perspectives to the programme and further enrich its content.

A Participatory Vulnerability Assessment Study for The Aga Khan Development Network, Jammu & Kashmir :

On the 8th of October, 2005, a massive earthquake shook the valley of Kashmir to its core. Lives were lost as were sources of livelihood. Uri and Karna tehsils in Baramulla and Kupwara district respectively, were almost razed to the ground. (In Karna tehsil alone, 60,000 people were rendered homeless)

After the media coverage and the consequent empathy died out, it was left to the people and a few agencies to rebuild the destroyed villages from scratch. Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), Jammu and Kashmir, is one such organisation that is involved in the long-term rehabilitation of the people of the region.

AKDN asked Praxis to conduct a Participatory Vulnerability Assessment Study to understand how well prepared the communities and the service providers were, in terms of responses and management, to handle a disaster. Understanding the degree of preparedness would help to identify and fill in the gaps.

A participatory vulnerability assessment is based on the premise that the people involved in the disasters can best articulate and analyse their problems and thereby also suggest relevant solutions that are also most likely to be followed.

The study was carried out across seven of the seventeen AKDN programme villages: Dulanja, Jabra, Bashigran, Chapra, Dardkote, Jabla and Sultan Daki. It was an intensive project that involved mapping the history of disasters in the region, studying past response, assessing the vulnerability of each habitation, understanding the traditional methods of coping with disasters, evaluating the existing infrastructure and finally studying the health and hygiene practices of the communities.

The AKDN consultancy unearthed/reiterated the vital fact that while sound management and supervision are the backbone of any disaster management programme, the participation of the people in the assessment, evaluation and monitoring of responses is vital. This is particularly true for the marginalised communities.

Every disaster management team should have cross sectional representation and there must be frequent information sharing amongst all members. Unless lessons from the past are learnt, we shall continue to be helpless in the face of disasters, no matter what strides we make as a civilisation.

A Story of Participatory Community Development in the Bugoye Region of Western Uganda :

Bugoye region is located at the foothills of the magnificent Rwenzori Mountains in Kasese district of Western Uganda. Kasese district is mostly agricultural with over 85 percent of the population being peasant farmers.

Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soil, regular rainfall, and sizable mineral deposits of copper and cobalt. The country has largely untapped reserves of both crude oil and natural gas. Coffee accounts for the bulk of export revenues. Despite all this Uganda is one of the poorest countries in world. In the Bugoye region, communities are poverty stricken and facing multiple problems like lack of livelihood alternatives, crime, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Most of the population is lackadaisical and are waiting for someone from the outside to solve their problems.

In December 2007, a local people's initiative called the Community Development Through Sports (CDTS) decided to hold a workshop on participatory community planning and development. Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices, New Delhi was invited to support and facilitate a 6-day Workshop with various representatives from the communities of the Bugoye region. The training had participation of public representatives, civil society, the Church, theatre artists, sports persons, drug addicts, farmers, and artisans. During this 6-day participatory workshop, people identified various problems they face, looked into its reasons, and brainstormed over the possible solutions. As part of the workshop they went to their respective communities and facilitated Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) processes, in order to collectively identify problems and work out a

solution, a solution which comes from the community and is driven by them, not by an external fund or an outsider. According to one of the older participants of the Workshop, “This is the first time in my life of 65 years, people in this region have come together, and thought about doing something about the problems we face”.

Since then the group that came together during the Praxis led workshop has been working on several local issues like water pollution in the nearby river, HIV/AIDS awareness, and drug de-addiction without any external help. The group meets once a month to plan on community-based initiatives, and work through responsibilities involved for the upcoming activities.

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Praxis UK: Taking the Southern perspective to the North.

Everyone seems to be on a mission to end world poverty. But *how* is a question that seems to need thinking, because there are no simple answers.

The truth is, each region in the global South has its own realities that makes it impossible for any generalisations to be made.

In South Asia for instance, while some parts of Maldives, Sri Lanka and Indian states have “eliminated” abject poverty (poverty rates below 10 percent), other parts such as Afghanistan or Northern Sri Lanka are so entrenched in violent and escalating conflicts that bringing in peace is a much more important exercise than ending

poverty. Thriving economies in some of these countries end up creating large sections of rich middle classes but this does nothing to change the lives of the illiterate, poor and ill of health, population that continue to exist at the periphery.

The South therefore cannot be considered as a homogenous entity and one needs to acknowledge the disparities within each individual country.

It is to bring these realities into the larger frame of development in the North that Praxis was set up in the UK. Praxis UK reverses the usual development norm by directing a Southern presence to the North. It will draw upon Praxis India's relevant experiences and contextualise it in contemporary policy debates and discussions on global social development in the North. The aspiration is to change the practice of the North 'talking on behalf of the South' to the South engaging directly in debates and policies.

Praxis UK will also act as a platform for grassroots NGOs, CBOs and people's movements from the South to express their voices in the North. It seeks to be active in international development by furthering Praxis India's work. This is mainly through research, programme support, capacity building initiatives and community led advocacy in partnership with NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), governments, academic and research institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, aid agencies and the media

While the offices in India focus on expanding longer-term engagement in the Asia region, the UK office will represent Praxis in the UK, expanding its remit to Africa, Middle East, Latin America, Eastern Europe and transition countries.

End-Project Evaluation of Essential Advocacy Project, undertaken by Praxis UK for Constella Futures :

Avahan is the AIDS Initiative of Bill and Melinda Gates in India. Constella Futures initiated the Essential Advocacy Project to build the capacities of Avahan. The purpose of EAP, a three-year project which began in 2005, was to create an enabling environment for the key populations as well as enhance, strengthen advocacy and help the stakeholders deal with the biases against HIV/AIDS.

An end-of-term evaluation of EAP was commissioned by Constella Futures to Praxis UK. The aim was to assess the impact of the project's initiatives and identify the critical elements of the project's transition plan. The evaluation team studied the achievements of the project and made recommendations for a future course of action, informed by the findings. The team interacted with the various stakeholders in the six states where the project was being implemented to understand their perspective about the benefits and shortcomings of the project and the cause and effect relationship between EAPs advocacy efforts and outcomes.

This was done to determine whether the work contributed towards its over arching goal of creating an enabling environment for key populations. The two month long evaluation focused on three critical areas related to the project – the quality of inputs, the outcome of these inputs and the quality of the process.



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Raising the decibels: New films and books from Praxis

Waters of Despair-a film on the floods of Darbhanga :

One dark, sultry night in the month of July, circa 2007, the embankments around the river Kamalabalan in Darbhanga district of Bihar, crumbled. Yet again. In a span of a few hours, lives, livelihoods, hopes and aspirations were washed away, leaving the villages in a quagmire of debts, diseases and migration.

For the last 60 years, this once beautiful district of Bihar has been violated again and again by both greed and indifference. Those with power, play their might against the might of nature, changing the course of rivers, leaving the poor and the marginalised to face the consequences.

The authorities of course refuse to play referee. Following the floods a team from Praxis waded deep into the lives of people here, in a bid to capture the reality and poke those who refuse to see in the eye.

The result was *Waters of Despair*, a 30-minute documentary that brings alive on screen the distress that has come to typify the lives of those who stay in the flood prone areas of Darbhanga.

We also published a book *Dateline Ghanshyampur* on the same issue.

Bolangir Revisited-Updates from the study of 2006 :

We revisited Bolangir in the summer of 2006 to take stock of changes in the conditions surrounding some of the poorest communities that we had spent time with on an earlier study done in 1998. The study of '98 was to inform the Western Orissa Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. What our team found in terms of changes, for the better or worse, have been published in this book.

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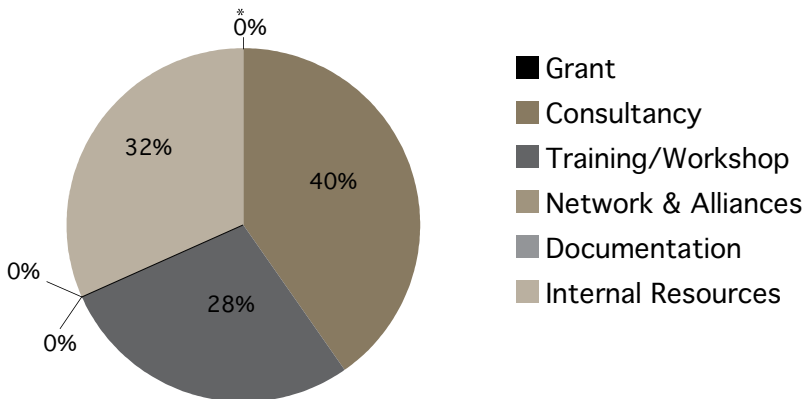
2007 : The financial picture

Income & Expenditure Account as on 31st March 2008 (Unaudited)

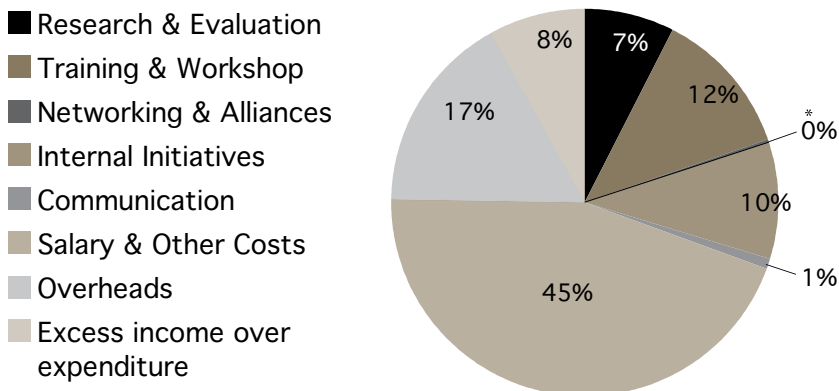
A. Expenditure	as on 31.03.08	as on 31.03.07
1. Research & Evaluation	1365706.81	1864688.47
2. Training & Workshop	2252397.38	2843383.50
3. Networking & Alliances	63380.00	258813.00
4. Internal Initiatives	1820372.16	277432.00
5. Communication	111991.00	36545.00
6. Salary & Other Costs	8287530.00	6100862.00
7. Overheads	3048217.83	3241569.70
8. Excess income over expenditure	(1504283.05)	8636694.58
Total	15445312.13	23259988.25

B. Income	as on 31.03.08	as at 31.03.07
1. Grant	0.00	2493972.00
2. Consultancy	6207291.92	10043810.60
3. Training/Workshop	4336083.01	4786300.82
4. Network & Alliances	25834.00	267311.00
5. Documentation	0.00	80382.75
6. Internal Resources	4876103.20	5588211.08
Total	15445312.13	23259988.25

Income as on 31st March 2008 (Unaudited)



Expenditure as on 31st March 2008 (Unaudited)



* Any figure below 0.5% has been shown as 0%

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Managing Committee

Ms Gouthami (Member):

Gouthami heads “Travel Another India”, a consulting group for Responsible Rural Tourism. She has 17 years of work experience with international and national development agencies such as ActionAid, Concern Worldwide, Christian Aid, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan and the UNDP.

Mr Babu Mathew (Member):

Mr Mathew is presently the Country Director of ActionAid International India. He is a development thinker and has been a trade unionist for over 3 decades. Previously Mr Mathews was registrar at the National Law School, Bangalore.

Mr Tomy Mathew (President):

Tomy Mathew heads Elements, a business endeavour committed to ‘organic’ and ‘fair’ trade. He is also the Chairperson of the International

Nut Co-operative, an international fair trade alliance. Tomy was previously the Vice President, Corporate Communications, Alacrity Group of Companies, Chennai.

Mr V. S. Thyagrajan (Treasurer):

Mr Thyagrajan is a Chartered Accountant by profession and has over 3 decades of corporate and development experience. His specialisation is in Governance and Accountability in the NGO sector and he has a vast experience in developing financial systems and procedures for NGOs. He has worked as the Director of Finance and Administration for the ActionAid (UK) for its India Programme (for 8 years) and also in the same capacity for AMREF, an international Health NGO with its headquarters based in Nairobi, Kenya (for 6 years). Currently, in addition to his responsibilities as a board member of PRAXIS, he is also on the board of Richmond Fellowship Society, an NGO working in the area of psycho-social rehabilitation who have their headquarters in Bangalore.

Mr Shankar Venkateswaran(Member):

Mr Venkateswaran is an advisor to SustainAbility, an organisation that advises companies on how to manage environmental, social and economic risks and opportunities and, to develop solutions that will protect and create future value. He has previously been associated with organisations such as American India Foundation, Partners in Change and ActionAid. Shankar is an alumni of IIT (Chennai) and IIM (Calcutta) and has also worked in the corporate sector with blue chip companies like Brooke Bond and A.F. Ferguson.

Mr Tom Thomas (Secretary) :

Tom has been in the development sector for the past 20 years. His association with Praxis began in 2000, when he took over as CEO.

Prior to joining Praxis, he held senior positions with ActionAid in India, Bangladesh and the UK He has led Praxis on several important assignments, both nationally and internationally

Members of the Board:

Members of the Managing Committee are also on the Praxis Board. Additionally, the Board also has the following distinguished members: Prof Dr Arif Hassan, Dr Robert Chambers, Mr Ravi Narayanan, Mr Arjun Rajagopal and Mr N. Satish Chandra.



Benji

Pradeep

Raffaella

Ranjit

Sabu



Shahana

Sharmistha

Srijan

Tom

Vinita

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Benji John (Admin Officer)

Benji has sound experience in administration and data processing. He has previously worked with national and international NGOs. Benji is fluent in English, Hindi and Malayalam.

Pradeep Kumar (Communication Assistant)

Pradeep holds a Post Graduate Diploma in TV Production from Notre Dame Communication Centre, Patna and a Certificate Course in photography from Ravi Bharti Institute of Communication Arts, Patna. Pradeep is Praxis's in-house cinematographer, film editor and photographer. In fact, he was a freelance photographer for seven years before joining Praxis.

Raffaella Catani (Senior Programme Officer)

Raffaella has over 7 years of field experience in the development sector, mainly in social and community-based programmes in Africa.

She is well acquainted with REFLECT, which is a participatory methodology to empower communities through literacy. Currently, she is responsible for the management of Praxis immersion programme, called Insight. Raffaella is fluent in Italian, English, French, Portuguese and has a working knowledge of Arabic.

Ranjit Kumar Jha (Accounts Officer)

Ranjit has over 13 years of experience in Finance and Administration in a non-profit and corporate organizational setting operating in multiple locations.

Sabu Varghese V (Driver-cum-Office Asst.)

Sabu Varghese is PDC in Automobile Engineering (ITI) from Central Technical College, Kerala. Sabu has more than 15 years of driving experience. Other than driving the office vehicle, he also assists in the day-to-day activities like photocopying, filing, stores and office maintenance.

Shahana Chaudhury (Manager Communications)

Shahana Chaudhury has over a 12 years of experience in the field of brand communications and advertising. She made a switch to development communications two years ago in a bid to round off her communication experience.

Sharmistha Sarkar (Programme Officer)

Sharmistha Sarkar has 9 years of experience in planning and management of nutrition, child survival, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS programmes, along with Participatory Planning and Monitoring, Advocacy, Strengthening Local Governance, Institutional Strengthening, with diverse target groups. She has been involved in various participatory and policy research projects in areas around community mobilization, social exclusion, corporate social responsibility, decentralisation, nutrition and food security.

Srijan (Programme Officer)

Srijan has more than five years of work experience in the development field. He has worked on issues of child rights, livelihood, Tribal rights, Disaster relief and mitigation and corporate social responsibilities. His interest areas are participatory research, training, and filmmaking.

Tom Thomas (CEO)

Tom has been in the development sector for the past 20 years .His association with Praxis began in 2000, when he took over as CEO. Prior to joining Praxis, he held senior positions with ActionAid in India, Bangladesh and the UK He has led Praxis on several important assignments, both nationally and internationally. He is fluent in English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada with working knowledge of Bengali and Marathi. Tom is also a member of the Praxis Board.

Dr. Vinita Yadav (Manager Consultancies)

She has over eight years of experience in urban development and expertise across various sectors. After graduation, she completed two masters: in Geography from M. D. University and Urban Planning from School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi and Ph.D. in Institutional Capacity Building and Governance from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has worked on projects related to institutional capacity building, governance, urban poverty analysis, monitoring and evaluation, financial management etc. She has experience of managing projects which included interface with multi and bi-lateral donors, govt. officials, NGOs and community members. Currently, she is responsible for managing all the externally funded projects.



Ajai

Joseph

Mary

Sundar

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Praxis Chennai

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Ajai (Fellow)

Ajai Kuruvila Jacob has been a consultant to various agencies such as ActionAid International, Red Cross, CARITAS, CASA, DFID, Govts of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, ILO, UNIDO, etc. Ajai has worked on projects relating to Child Rights and Education, Displacement and Urban Poverty thematic areas of ActionAid International India. He led the Community Facilitation Unit of the NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (A UNDP supported process in Nagapattinam) in the post tsunami context and has been involved in facilitating work among the pavement dwellers in Chennai over the last few years.

M. J. Joseph (Head - South India Operations)

Joseph has over 20 years of experience in the development sector. An experienced facilitator, and a practitioner of participatory

approaches, he has also been extensively involved in various capacity building exercises. He has worked on participatory action researches in the area of micro credit, agrarian issues, drinking water, watershed development, democratic decentralisation and local governance. Joseph has also lent his knowledge to several participatory assessments and evaluations. He is fluent in English and Malayalam with working knowledge in Tamil and Hindi.

Mary George (Programmer Officer)

Mary has spent over 10 years working at the grass root level in the development sector. She has been involved mainly with issues such as empowerment of women, and community based programmes in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Prior to joining Praxis she worked for two years on post Tsunami rehabilitation, housing, livelihood and community-based disaster preparedness, for Caritas India in six coastal district of Andhra Pradesh.

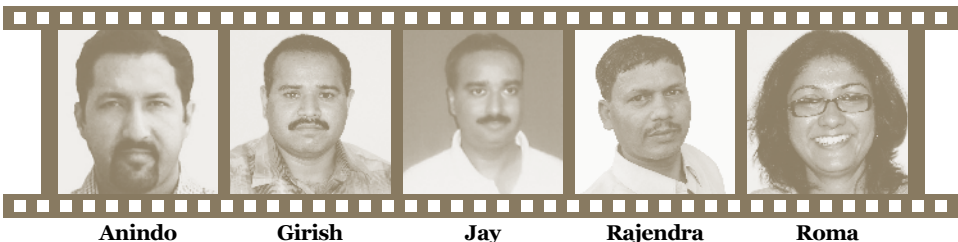
Bala Sundar B, (Programme Assistant)

Sundar has 14 years of experience in the development sector. He is well versed with the application of participatory methods and tools for data collection, analysis and community organization. He has wide experience in conducting urban poverty assessment, process documentation, and participatory need assessment of Dalit communities in Tamil Nadu. He has also been actively involved in the field research and documentation process related to Tsunami rehabilitation interventions across Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh coasts. He is fluent in Tamil, Hindi and English.

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Anindo

Girish

Jay

Rajendra

Roma

Anindo Banerjee (Head Internal Programme Initiatives)

Anindo is an expert in Multivariate Statistical Analysis. An experienced trainer and researcher, he has been involved in policy research study (Vietnam/Helpage International) participatory assessment of Government of Orissa's delivery of Service (for DFID), participatory poverty assessment in MP, Assam, Sikkim and Chhattisgarh (ADB Bolangir Poverty Profiling Study for DFID India) WDR Study for the World Bank, HP Rural Profile Study and AP Urban PPA for DFID India. He has worked on assignments commissioned by Swiss Development Corporation, Ford Foundation

and NIPRANET (Nigeria). He is fluent in English, Hindi Bengali and has working knowledge of Oriya.

Girish Chandra Mishra (Manager Finance and Admin)

Girish has nine years of experience handling finance and administration in non-profit, multi-locational settings. He has an in-depth understanding of various statutory provisions and compliance management issues pertaining to governance of societies, FCRA, income tax, provident fund and gratuity. Before joining Praxis, he worked with several public and private agencies.

Jay Verma (Programme Officer)

Jay has facilitated partnerships and dialogues amongst various development agencies. He has been involved in the appraisal and capacity building of NGOs, participatory poverty assessment (Chhattisgarh) besides managing research on issues relating to youth reproductive health in Bihar and Jharkhand. Additionally, he has worked extensively in Western Rajasthan in areas of health advocacy, livestock development and community based rehabilitation programmes. Jay is fluent in Hindi and English.

Rajendra Ram (Driver-cum-Office Asst.)

Rajendra Ram has more than 10 years of driving experience. Other than driving the office vehicle, he also assists in day-to-day activities like photocopying, filing, stores and office maintenance.

Roma Dey (Development Trainee)

Roma has been involved in a land mapping exercise by local villagers in selected villages of Bihar. She has worked with children in need of care and protection in a government children's home based on SOS pattern and in the A&W unit of a Navratna as part of her master's course. She is fluent in English, Bengali and Hindi.

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Josh

Sowmyaa

Josh Levene (Country Head)

Josh Levene has over twelve years of experience of working in the area of civil society participation and capacity building. Josh has worked extensively on projects with special focus on capacity building of civil society, communities, strategies for inclusion of vulnerable populations, country needs assessments, advocacy, monitoring & evaluation, HIV/AIDS and post-conflict countries. He has worked in Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, India, South East Asia & Pacific.

Sowmyaa Bharadwaj (Programme Officer)

Sowmyaa's involvement in the development sector began as a volunteer ten years ago. Her areas of expertise and interest include poverty, water, sanitation and hygiene, urban development and rights. She has a keen interest in gender issues, which has resulted in some pioneering work on menstrual hygiene.



Madhura Pandit
1975 - 2008

On the 1st of May, 2008, the Praxis family lost a much valued member : Madhura Pandit. An intelligent, articulate and sincere development worker, Madhura remained to the end a firm believer in the virtues of participation.

