

THE BLACKSMITH INSTITUTE

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SUMMER 2003
NEWSLETTER

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

Several people have inquired as to why I started the Blacksmith Institute and wonder if there is anything that I reap personally from the organization. The benefit is certainly not financial – every year I spend approximately \$100,000 of my own money on Blacksmith.

It is a moral issue for me. I feel that it is simply wrong that people should be harmed or killed by pollution. Having traveled through much of the developing world, I have witnessed sick children everywhere. It is irresponsible for us as a global nation to not attend to this problem.



We have an obligation to give these children a chance at life and, furthermore, a chance to participate in a global environment.

My passion about pollution issues comes as a result of my travel experiences and exposure to critical global issues. This problem is one that receives such little attention, yet affects so many people.

I welcome at any time the opportunity to speak with anyone about the work we do at the Blacksmith Institute and the goals we are trying to accomplish.

Richard Fuller

Polluted Places: Blacksmith's Newest Initiative

Blacksmith is embarking on a new project – Polluted Places. This effort will identify the 40 most polluted places in the developing world and initiate projects to clean them up.

The locations we'll identify are those where hundreds of thousands of people are affected, and perhaps thousands die each year from pollution. They might be contaminated with mercury or lead, or perhaps toxic waste from the Cold War. They might also be places with no sewage treatment, and no plans to install such systems.

Our experience tells us that there are locations across the globe with these kinds of extreme pollution problems, and that they are generally unknown to the rest of the world. We will seek out these places first, then develop strategies to fix them up. We'll do this by supporting local organizations, probably governmental, to design and implement realistic solutions.

Polluted Places will work in coordination with NGO networks, public health institutions, local governments, and private sector organizations with clean-up experience to

create a multi-organizational network. These organizations will enable Polluted Places to efficiently identify and assist in the design and implementation of clean-up strategies.

With Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and USAID, Polluted Places has already begun the process of identifying and verifying locations in the developing world. We have over 300 nominations to date, and are in the process of establishing a simple methodology to verify those locations where human health is most affected.

Local organizations are usually faced with the challenge of convincing multilateral banks of their credibility and investment worthiness. Polluted Places will assist our partner groups into developing the capacity to garner the international support needed to see their solution to fruition. We already have some experience in this area – through our efforts, the World Bank recently approved a \$39 million grant/loan package to clean up Kabwe, a city in Zambia

Continued on Page 2...

Polluted Places (continued from page 1)

whose soil and water have been contaminated with lead for a century. The Bank is very supportive of this initiative, and welcomes our involvement in other projects.

By developing the Polluted Places network, Blacksmith hopes to establish long-term relationships with local organizations in developing countries. For each local initiative, once the

remediation project is verified, the local agency will be eligible for an updated package of focused support by Polluted Places and technical and financial partners, as needed.

Explore the Polluted Places website for more information on how to get involved with this promising project:
www.pollutedplaces.org

Local Groups in Russia Combat Toxic Waste

Blacksmith is now working on three projects in Russia. Chelyabinsk and Magadan are two large cities plagued with radioactive waste. Dzerzhinsk, a once-secret Russian city, contains high levels of toxins in its drinking water as a result of nerve gas production during the Cold War.

Blacksmith visited Chelyabinsk (east of the Ural mountains) in late 2002. The nuclear treatment plant to the north of Chelyabinsk is known as one of the most polluted places on earth. Production Association Mayak, an atomic weapons complex, has been the major source of plutonium for the Russian nuclear industry. Blacksmith is currently supporting the Chelyabinsk House Scientists (CHS) which aims to assist cooperation between government and NGO organizations by building a consensus on the environmental health priorities for the region. Blacksmith has also provided technical assistance by donating geiger counters and portable analytical devices to various agencies in the region.

A non-governmental organization, Sodeistvie (Teamwork), in Magadan (in far eastern Russia), recently drafted a project plan intended to remediate a problem spot visited by thousands of local residents – their local beach. To help eliminate nuclear waste, Sodeistvie will remove radioactive soil at the site, and develop terraces to reinforce the slope through planting grasses and bushes. The organization intends to pinpoint the source of the nuclear waste, pathways, and level of human exposure to potential radioactive contamination. Blacksmith will coordinate a press release to facilitate public

awareness of the issue and will also provide some technical assistance to help identify toxic areas within each region.

While radioactive contamination is a serious problem plaguing cities in the Russian region, there are other harmful environmental issues affecting its inhabitants, such as contaminated drinking water. In Dzerzhinsk, (240 miles east of Moscow) the aquifer that supplies the town with water is severely contaminated with chemicals left over from the production of nerve gas during the Cold War. The contaminated aquifer also channels into the water supply for large cities in western Russia, including St. Petersburg. Recently, the Dzerzhinsk Committee of Environmental Control (DCEC) deemed groundwater in Dzerzhinsk to be unsafe for drink-



Scientists from the Mayak Calibration project compare results

ing.

With Blacksmith's support, the DCEC will lead a plan of action to improve drinking water. Other parties involved in the project are the US Environmental Lead Proficiency Accreditation Testing organization and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

In each of these projects, Blacksmith will facilitate local efforts and give support to the Chelyabinsk House Scientists, Sodeistvie and the Dzerzhinsk Committee of Environmental Control by funding technical costs for analysis and clean up strategies. Blacksmith will continue to support each of these three Russian partners and will benchmark their progress in the coming months.

For updated information on all of our projects, visit www.blacksmithinstitute.org

Blacksmith Expansion Plan in 2003

Blacksmith has gone through tremendous expansion this year by beginning serious efforts to promote the Polluted Places initiative. Chairman Richard Fuller traveled to the UK earlier this summer to meet with possible partners there. This fall, Mr. Fuller and Executive Director Sara Kate Gillingham will travel to Guinea and Senegal to expand Blacksmith's reach in Africa.

New projects, in countries where Blacksmith partners already exist, are also being pursued. By the end of this year, Blacksmith plans to have initiated a new project in Cambodia that will examine Phnom Penh's serious lack of proper sewerage systems. In Thailand, Blacksmith hopes to expand on the success of the EnLAW project with more community-based initiatives.

Finally, there will be a trip to India to explore the pilot pro-

ject being initiated for Polluted Places. Blacksmith has been looking at several sites nominated for Polluted Places in India and will work with a representative from the NGO, Toxics Link, in order to develop a sample Polluted Places project.

On the funding side, Blacksmith is working with a fundraising consultant, Robert Zuber, who is helping us identify possible new sources of support in this most challenging time for raising funds. The Founders' Network was set up earlier this year to encourage individuals to donate on a monthly basis, through automatic debits from a bank account. We hope to have at least 100 people signed up by the end of this year. Perhaps our next donor will be you!

Check our website for further developments throughout the rest of the year.

Projects in Asia Advance to the Next Level

Blacksmith continues to move forward in China and has started new projects in Thailand and Cambodia. In China, the flooding of the Three Gorges Dam is a potentially serious environmental health problem. Over 16 million tons of various wastes have been dumped into the Yangtze River annually. As a result, thousands of sites have been identified as toxic waste dumps that, when submerged, will continue to pollute the waters of the dam for centuries to come. The Chinese government has committed funds to clean up these sites. To verify that this is being done properly, Blacksmith is supporting a local NGO, the China Chongqing Green Volunteers' Union. They will use a team of volunteers to monitor the government's progress and verify the clean-up.

In Cambodia, the Hazardous Waste Environmental Law is nearing completion. With the assistance of Richard Stewart, director of NYU School of Law's Center of Environment and Land Use, Blacksmith's group in Cambodia has drafted a comprehensive law that covers all issues of hazardous materials, including importation, transportation, storage, workers' safety, right-to-



Every child born in Klity Creek is affected by lead poisoning

know, and disposal. Once passed, this will be the most important piece of legislation in Cambodia on pollution related matters ever approved.

In Thailand, EnLAW, Blacksmith's legal advocacy partner, continues to represent several cases where villages have been seriously affected by pollution. One of the long term cases, addressing lead poisoning in Klity Creek, will go to court looking for compensation for thousands of villagers that live downstream from a lead processing plant. EnLAW's other cases are progressing smoothly.

Blacksmith's other projects in Southeast Asia include supporting advocacy work in Inner Mongolia, Southwest China, addressing medical waste disposal problems in Cambodia and sewage issues in Phnom Penh and are all progressing well. Please feel free to contact Peter Hosking the Southeast Asia Coordinator for more details(peter.hosking@greatforest.com.au).

In our next newsletter we will feature an in-depth summary on the progress of Blacksmith's initiatives in Africa.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.BLACKSMITHINSTITUTE.ORG
 AND COMING SOON... WWW.POLLUTEDPLACES.ORG

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There are several ways to donate to Blacksmith...

Credit Card: visit www.blacksmithinstitute.org

Check: send to 2 Park Avenue 29th Floor NYC, NY 10016

Donation of stock/Automatic monthly bank debits:

Call Sara Kate Gillingham (646) 742-0200 x.201

Thank you for your support!

THE BLACKSMITH INSTITUTE

TWO PARK AVENUE
29TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10016

Get Involved With the Founders' Network!

As a participant of the Blacksmith Institute's Founders' Network, you will be part of a network of philanthropists helping to solve pollution-related environmental problems all over the planet. The Founders' Network is a new and simple way to donate to the Blacksmith Institute. Through an arrangement with a local bank, we are able to accept regular monthly donations by direct-debit from your account in any amount. Please take a moment right now to fill out the information below and send it to the Blacksmith Institute at Two Park Avenue, 29th floor, NYC, NY 10016. If you have any questions, please contact Candice Madison, (646) 742-0200 x.204.

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