



BLACKSMITH INSTITUTE FALL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2005

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings! I have just returned from visiting our partners in West Africa, and no where is the link between health and the environment more tangible than in one of the poorest regions on earth. Water, air, land – these are core necessities of all people and the infrastructure of every community. I joyously roll up my sleeves and join the incredible team of NY based Blacksmith staff and our global partners as the new Executive Director to further our core mission of ending devastating pollution in the developing world.

In future newsletters, I will be introducing you to some of our heroic partners, so they can tell you their story, and you can be as moved, challenged, and inspired as I am. This is a human rights issue, a quality of life issue, and Blacksmith works to bring sustainable, holistic change that addresses the true priorities of these communities.

The Polluted Places Program is moving into new areas as we continue to build on our successes. Our partners are committed. Together we have a great and expanding team. Blacksmith's five years of work have built a solid foundation and we continue to look to the work ahead. Our global world is connected – our natural resources, our hopes for family – no matter the language – no matter the place, this is our common ground.

SOME NEW PROJECTS INITIATED IN THIS QUARTER

BRYANSK, RUSSIA: IN THE TOWN OF BRYANSK, THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER HAS LEFT THE POPULATION EXPOSED TO RADIATION THROUGH THE BIOACCUMULATION OF FALL-OUT IN ITS DAIRY COWS. BLACKSMITH IS PARTNERING WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO REMOVE HARMFUL RADIATION FROM MILK AND BEEF PRODUCTS.

KRASNOUFIMSK, RUSSIA: IMPROPER STORAGE OF MONAZITE CONCENTRATE HAS PUT THE RESIDENTS OF KRASNOUFIMSK AT SERIOUS RISK OF EXPOSURE TO RADIOACTIVE WASTE. BLACKSMITH IS PARTNERING WITH A LOCAL AGENCY TO WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO SAFELY REMOVE THIS HARMFUL SUBSTANCE.

MARILAO RIVER, PHILIPPINES: HEAVY METALS FROM INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION ALONG THE MARILAO RIVER HAVE PUT ENTIRE COMMUNITIES AT RISK BY CONTAMINATING THE MAIN WATER SOURCE. BLACKSMITH IS ENABLING LOCAL AGENCIES TO REMEDIATE THE LEAD, MERCURY AND CHROMIUM CONTAMINATION.

FEATURED INSIDE :: MORE NEW PROJECTS IN KANPUR, INDIA AND POPOV ISLAND, RUSSIA



INDIA: PILOT GROUNDWATER REMEDIATION PROJECT

In the heavily industrialized state of Uttar Pradesh, pollutants from a cluster of approximately 350 tanneries has contaminated the primary water supply of Kanpur, a city of 3 million people. In 2003, the local Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) discovered a plume of hexavalent chromium in the groundwater of the Noraiakheda neighborhood, extending from an old chemical manufacturing facility site where toxic sludge was dumped over a decade ago. However, until a solution is implemented, local residents continue to drink and bathe in water from poisoned wells. As a result, Polluted Places is on the threshold of launching a pilot groundwater remediation project in Kanpur. It will be the first of its kind in India in which bioremediation technology will be utilized to remove hexavalent chromium from the groundwater. Successful implementation of this technology could hold the key to solving a major environmental problem that has plagued India for decades.



Skin lesions resulting from Kanpur tannery pollution

POLLUTED PLACES IS GROWING!

POLLUTED PLACES SITE NOMINATIONS HAVE BEEN COMING IN DROVES, AND OUR STAFF IS WORKING HARD TO KEEP UP. WE ARE CONSTANTLY ADDING NEW SITES TO OUR ONLINE LIST, SO CHECK FREQUENTLY AND WATCH US GROW!

- 248 SITES HAVE BEEN NOMINATED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE POLLUTED PLACES INITIATIVE.
- 94 SITES HAVE BEEN REVIEWED BY OUR TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD.
- 61 SITES HAVE BEEN VISITED AND ASSESSED BY POLLUTED PLACES STAFF.
- 26 ACTIVE PROJECTS ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY
- 64 SITES ARE CURRENTLY POSTED ONLINE AT WWW.POLLUTEDPLACES.ORG.

THE MAJORITY OF THESE NEW SITES HAVE COME FROM OUR NOMINATION FORM, FOUND ONLINE AT: WWW.POLLUTEDPLACES.ORG/NOMINATE/FORM.SHTML.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK APPROVES \$250,000 FOR INDIA PROJECTS

The Asian Development Bank's Poverty and Environment Program has approved a \$250,000 Polluted Places project to remediate industrial pollution throughout India. In May, this funding enabled initial site assessments by Polluted Places staff in the states of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Rapid industrialization in the state of Gujarat has resulted in severe environmental damage. Thousands of factories are scattered across this region with inadequate or non-existent waste management practices. As a result of widespread contamination, industrial laborers as well as the people living downstream of effluent discharges, are exposed to serious health risks. One of the most alarming sites visited was Hema Chemicals where 77,000 tons of toxic chromium waste has been disposed of in and around the factory, infiltrating the surrounding community. This site is currently the subject of the largest public interest litigation filed in Indian history.



Chromium pollution, Gujarat

MOZAMBIQUE: BLACKSMITH TEAMS UP WITH UNIDO TO REDUCE MERCURY EMISSIONS



Marcello Veiga showing the retort to miners in Munhena

Our mercury mining project in Mozambique illustrates perfectly why Blacksmith Institute stands apart. Families – women and children – are inhaling mercury, a harmful toxin – directly into their lungs, and it is wafting into the environment. Fish cannot be eaten. People are sick. The cycle of poverty continues. Creative problem solving, hands on knowledge transfer – these changes are not one shot deals. We know the consequences, we have the tools, and, most significantly, we have the team.

Our successful pilot project to reduce mercury use in artisanal mining in Mozambique has been featured in a series of lectures given by Professor Marcello Veiga of the University of British Columbia. Professor Veiga, who works with UNIDO as Chief Technical Advisor for their Global Mercury Project, was sent by Blacksmith to the Manica District of Mozambique to train miners to use retorts that significantly reduce mercury emissions, protecting both their health and the environment. The lectures given in Washington DC and Brazil will help build coalitions to spread these

RUSSIA: DZERZHINSK CLEAN WATER

Within the city of Dzerzhinsk, once one of the main centers of the Soviet chemical industry, drinking water sources in Pyra, a village of 4,000 people, are polluted with various chemical substances. Groundwater, the principal source of water for the area, has dangerously high levels of iron and various organic compounds, making it unsuitable for use in cooking or drinking. Blacksmith Institute partnered with a local organization, DRONT to provide a drinking water filtration system to Pyra. Funding, as well as programmatic support enabled the construction of a water filtration plant for the village. The water services not only the 4,000 residents, but the school system and hospital as well.



Russian press on opening day at Pyra Water Filtration Plant

POPOV ISLAND PROJECT WORK COMPLETE

The work to remove mercury saturated sludge from the drinking water pipes at Popov Island has been a great success. Located in far eastern Russia near Vladivostok, Popov Island has been plagued by mercury contamination in its public water supply as a result of unauthorized dumping of hundreds of broken thermometers. Despite the municipality having replaced 80% of the piping, tests have revealed 8 times the maximum permissible concentrations of elemental mercury in the drinking water. Polluted Places has supported project work to replace the remaining 20% of the drinking water pipes on Popov Island. The final reports have been submitted and show that there is no longer contamination in the drinking water source.

BLACKSMITH'S CHINA PARTNERS PUT POLLUTERS ON GOVERNMENT NOTICE

After several years of sustained effort, Greener Beijing has succeeded in getting illegal mining and industrial pollution in Inner Mongolia onto the national agenda. In an announcement on May 10, China's State Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) named nine major environmental cases that they will closely supervise this year, one of which concerns pollution from illegally established mining, smelting, and paper manufacturing industries that Greener Beijing has been monitoring and reporting on since 2002. SEPA has warned local authorities of imminent punishment for failing to take action against these polluters. Blacksmith Institute has been supporting Greener Beijing since 2002 in their work on this problem and assist the local communities affected by pollution to gain compensation.

VISIT WWW.BLACKSMITHINSTITUTE.ORG AND LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE.

- DONATE ONLINE
- DONATE USING A CHECK OR A CREDIT CARD
- GIVE A STOCK DONATION

THE BLACKSMITH INSTITUTE
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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 MEREDITH BLOCK (646) 742-0200 x 201.

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PLEDGE AMOUNT/MONTH \$20 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other Amount \$ _____