

REPORT ON AMDAANA's AMRITSAR PROJECT

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AMDAANA created a Task Force in October 2003 to develop liaison With Medical and Dental Colleges, Amritsar with a view to contribute to education and patient care there. The Task Force II has dubbed it as the AMRITSAR PROJECT.

After due consultations with Amrisar institutions and a site visit, the Task Force II has recommended that AMDAANA undertake the following tasks at Medical College, Amritsar.

- I. CME Meeting
- II. Providing Visiting Professors
- III. Renovation of Lecture Theaters
- IV. Quick, and Effective Electronic Communication through a dedicated computer

DENTAL COLLEGE HAD NOT SHARED ANY PROPOSAL WITH THE TASK FORCE BEFORE I LEFT FOR INDIA. THEY GAVE ME THEIR PROPOSAL DURING MY VISIT TO ASR. THE TASK FORCE IS CONSIDERING IT AND WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS SOON. HENCE THE LACK OF MENTION OF DENTAL COLLEGE IN THIS MESSAGE IS DUE ENTIRELY TO THE DELAY ON THEIR PART.

The Task Force views a dual role for alumni in the execution of this project:

- I. Equipment/improvements by and from alumni - AMDAANA and local (Amritsar and rest of India)
- II. Ensuring that the College gets what is its due from the Government. This is much bigger and a lot more difficult than #I.

For Amritsar Project to succeed, all stakeholders have to come together and do their share. The stakeholders are:

1. Faculty of Medical (and Dental) College
2. Students of Medical (and Dental) College
3. AMDAANA and similar bodies i.e. ADA
4. Non-faculty alumni in India
5. Local Community
6. Punjab Government

The Amritsar Medical College has formed an alumni association named Amritsar Medical College Alumni Assoc (AMCAA). It has been duly registered as an NGO - nonprofit. AMDAANA will work through this body. Their Governing Body consists of faculty and non-faculty alumni. I urged them to include a student member or two. I also urged open democracy and total transparency with internal and external audits.

Here is a run down of the commitment/role of each stakeholder:

The Task Force and the Executive council had authorized me to commit the following if I was satisfied with Amritsar's commitment and sincerity.

I. CME Meeting: Hold an annual one-day CME meeting (Seminars) in Amritsar. AMDAANA members shall travel at their own expense and will provide the service free of charge. For those AMDAANians who have no family in Amritsar, Medical College faculty shall provide board and lodging.

Eventual goal is to expand it to 2-3 days event and possibly hold it every 6 months.

II. Visiting Professors: Provide Visiting Professors from USA for 1-3 days, on year around basis. They shall teach undergraduate (M.B., B.S.) and postgraduate (MD, MS) students and interact with the local faculty and support staff. They shall also act as mentors for undergraduate and postgraduate students. They shall also train support staff in use of the equipment they bring with them.

AMDAANA members shall travel at their own expense and will provide the service free of charge. For those AMDAANians who have no family in Amritsar, Medical College faculty shall provide board and lodging.

Eventual goal is for Visiting Professors to spend much longer stints i.e. 1-4 weeks.

III. Renovation of Lecture Theaters: Equip lecture theaters with modern learning aids --- computers and LCD/DLP projectors for power point presentations, sound systems, proper lighting and comfortable environment i.e. air-conditioning.

IV. Quick, and Effective Communication: Provide a dedicated cell for quick and effective communication between Medical College, Amritsar and AMDAANA -- provide a computer with high-speed Internet connection, and a printer and a scanner.

By the end of the trip, I was convinced that Amritsar is ready to move. Therefore I committed above on behalf of AMDAANA. I have donated a laptop and a DLP multimedia projector to Medical College on behalf of AMDAANA. I trained them how to use it. I just got an e-mail from a student that it is being used for their lectures and how excited they are about it! I also gave them a lot of educational CDs, including current subscription to "Up-to-Date" for internal medicine and all subspecialties.

I also drew the following commitment from other stakeholders:

Medical College - work on increasing AMCAA membership. Their goal is Rs. 3,00,000 by the yearend. They will also work with the Government to make computer facility in the library free of charge for the students; target - December 2004 or sooner. They shall also work on getting Amritsar designated as a "connectivity center" - Government has a plan to create designated internet-based learning centers.

Medical Students Association: Will clean up the campus in co-operation with the Rotary Club and then maintain grounds. They will also develop a code of conduct for the students -- equivalent of honor code in USA.

Punjab Government: It will obtain a certificate for exemption from customs duty for equipment we send. I have also written to them to help with air conditioning lecture theaters (we will do it anyway, but if we can get them to do some thing, why not?), provide dedicated and uninterrupted power supply to lecture theaters to ensure smooth operation of electronic equipment, and to ensure that the fee collected (from patients and students) at Medical College get spent there; right now, bulk of it remains in Chandigarh!!

I hope that I have furnished enough positive information to convince the skeptics that it is a worthwhile deed that can be accomplished with perseverance and sincerity.

Finally, money is the necessary evil to execute this project. I opened an account for the project before leaving for India. It already has \$24,000. The Task Force II has taken the lead in the matter and all members have committed to donate \$1000 each towards the Amritsar project. We urge the membership to follow suit and donate liberally to this project. All contributions are tax deductible, making a \$1000 contribution cost you only \$650! That is a good discount on a good deed to boot. Please make checks to AMDAANA, write 'Amritsar Project' in the memo section and mail your check to:

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Thanks in anticipation of your help, encouragement and support.