



One eventful year of sharing the colours of joy ...

It has been heartening to note how involved our friends are with Rang De, and its progress, a fact endorsed by the mail we receive, once our newsletter reaches you. Please continue to do so, as this provides us with valuable feedback that helps us do better.

January is a particularly special month for us, as it has been almost a year since we started operations, and our first set of borrowers have almost completed their loan term. Many of them are ready to take a second loan, and the success stories we have seen, are inspirational to all of us.

Many of our first set of investors have shown an interest in reinvesting and we cannot thank them enough.

The festive season saw most of our team members in a frenzy of activity; while one had to rush off to Palakkad-Kerala, another was away at Chitradurga -Karnataka. Still others were in Bangalore and Mysore and Hyderabad. Finally it all culminated at Bangalore, with the team making a concerted pitch at HeadStart 2009.

We are confident that 2009 will be a promising year for us.

What's new at Rang De?

New partnerships in Puri and Pusad: Rang De is happy to have new partners on board - Pragati in Puri, Orissa and SAGRAS in Pusad, Maharashtra. Although they cater to very diverse areas of the country, they have the same mission -to alleviate poverty in rural India. Through them Rang De hopes to reach out to a wider section of the population.

We were at HeadStart 2009: January 9th and 10th saw our entire team heading off to Bangalore. Headstart 2009, held at the NIMHANS Convention centre, is an event that showcases innovation in India. It seemed the perfect place for Rang De to be at, and we were not disappointed. Our team was kept busy with several enquiries and a few instant investors. It certainly was a good beginning to the new year.

New team member: Archana has joined our team and will be operating out of Bangalore. She will be looking after the Rang De Schools initiative. Watch out for more details.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: First Anniversary Issue

We will soon be turning one and we would like our anniversary issue (due February 2009) to have some thoughts from you. So unleash the writer in you and send in a short write-up on 'Why I Lend On Rang De'. Any other feedback and write-ups are also welcome. Email to shirley@rangde.org.

Success Stories

Wholesome Twosome



A winning enterprise
Ranjana with her husband

Ranjana and her husband work hand in hand, and use their individual strengths to mould their business into a winning enterprise. They run a mess that caters to the college students in the area. They provide them with a nutritious home cooked breakfast and dinner at a nominal monthly charge. Two years in the business and they have been rewarded with a regular flow of homesick students looking for a home away from home.

Ranjana has also managed to see her daughter married and settled, and with her son now working, she can finally heave a sigh of relief. However they are in no hurry to hang up their boots and will continue to provide the students with a hot and wholesome meal.

Pretty Good Work



Gifted
Nita with her husband & their newbike

Nita pampers the vain streak in a woman, and why not. She used the loan to set up a beauty parlour and has been doing really well. And the profits from the business have not been allowed to sit idle. This smart woman has used it, to set up a small store alongside that stock among other things, several beauty products. This has doubled her income and enabled her to buy her husband a new bike.

Ask Nita why she chose to buy her husband a gift rather than for herself, and pat comes the answer- "Without his support I wouldn't have been able to set up business at all." Well-she sure knows how to pamper her husband as well.



The growth of Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) practices

By Ajith Shankar, Social Investor

Wikipedia defines Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) as "an investment strategy which seeks to maximize both financial return and social good". Investors who appreciate SRI spans through three basic categories - Investors who screen companies based on ethical/ objectionable practices, engaging companies to change behaviours towards global good behaviour through shareholder resolutions and community investing (like Rang De), which stands for investing in disadvantaged communities.

The SRI Trends Report in US, brought out by Social Invest tells, that about one out of every nine dollars under professional management in US is done through SRI principles. The report also indicates that in 2005-07, SRI assets increased by approximately 18% (growth of the total universe or managed assets was less than 3%).

What could be the reasons for this growth?

Religious institutions and their investments always preferred SRI principles by avoiding sin stocks (companies operating in defence, tobacco, alcohol, gambling, pornography sectors etc.). The release of the documentary "An Inconvenient Truth" in mid 2006 created groundswell, resulting in discussions related to climate change reaching the critical mass. A substantial number of people wanted to reduce their dependency on fossil fuels and started relying on renewable energy - resulting in a boom in renewable energy investments.

One of the apprehensions on SRI was that financial returns will take a hit if the investment is focused on social, environmental and governance aspects. However, recent studies involving sustainability and financial performance (<http://www.global100.org>) indicate that investing in companies focusing on social and environmental performance is a wiser decision.

People are gradually realising that exclusive focus on financial returns is detrimental to life on planet. The negative impact of our lifestyle is taking serious toll on the planet - we are consuming 1.25 times the bio-capacity of planet earth.

A recent article in The Hindu Business Line titled "Give Buddhist Economics a Try" states the following: "The World Watch Institute has calculated that if just the two countries, China and India, who are trying to raise the living standards of their people by building more malls, consumed as much per capita as the US, by the year 2030, those two countries alone would need the resources of one additional planet". Thus, with resources being finite and substantial amount of global population still affected by poverty, we are now in a situation where we need to rethink the earlier assumption, that increasing consumption will automatically lead to growth. Thus, there is increasing focus on sustainable lifestyle and sustainable products.

However, India lags behind in SRI. ABN Amro launched the first SRI fund in India in March 2007 - ABN Amro Sustainable Development Fund, and the response of people to this fund has been lukewarm (Remember, this was in March 2007, when it was all euphoria in Indian markets Nifty almost doubled in the next six months). We can wish that the next SRI fund launched in India will receive a warm welcome.!

Keep abreast of what is happening at Rang De!

Check our blogs, every Monday on our website or follow the link : www.rangde.org/blog.

Also look at the twitter updates and follow us closely at www.twitter.com/rangde.



Answering queries of want-to-be Social investors
Smita and Ram at the Rang De stall at HeadStart 2009



Evaluation of Borrowers
Rang De team with volunteers at Vandavasi, Tamilnadu

This newsletter is brought to you by RangDe team. More updates can be read on our blog at www.rangde.org/blog. If you have any queries, or would like to contact us, drop by an email to info@rangde.org.