



Assam Foundation of North America

48166 Inveraray Road, Canton, MI 48187, USA

A non-profit organization to encourage and facilitate cooperative efforts to increase mutual understanding between Assam and North America

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Assam Foundation of North America and its work

Executive Summary

In the year 1982, a handful of non-resident Assamese population working in the United States of America took upon themselves to set up a social organization called Assam Foundation of North America (AFNA), a publicly supported non-profit organization with foundation status under 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code with tax exemption under section 501(c)(3). The mission was to promote social, cultural, technical, medical and educational exchanges between Assam, India and North America. What started as a commitment steadily grew into a vociferous platform creating a strong movement of philanthropy, volunteerism and the spirit of giving back to one's community. Today, AFNA has witnessed a phenomenal expansion due to its intensified work, and it is to be noted that its strength has grown upto 44 number of volunteers earning it the reputation of being a frontrunner encouraging, facilitating, mobilizing support and funds for grassroots organizations, and needy individuals.

AFNA is driven by its dedication to promote socioeconomic development of women, children and poor people of Assam, whose welfare is often neglected. Apart from this, it encourages and recognizes contributions toward the betterment of Assam as well as the promotion of goodwill and friendship between Assam and North America.

Through a robust network of NGOs and community based organizations, AFNA mobilizes and implements projects that deal with promotion of education, child development and welfare, livelihood generation, and empowerment of disabled in the remotest and backward areas of Assam. It also channelizes humanitarian efforts at the time of natural disasters in Assam and North America.

AFNA has set comprehensive guidelines and compliance mechanisms for the selection of projects and initiatives as well as reporting and output documentation mechanisms. Since its inception, AFNA has touched upon the lives of thousands of people including the education of over 100 students from the bottom of the pyramid population.

Through the untiring efforts of its volunteers from United States and Canada, AFNA raised \$53,000 in 2012 through donations, matching programs and corporate asks and disbursed almost all of it. This is almost a 100% growth from the previous year, where the total and disbursed was \$27,000. For the year 2013-2014, it has set the task of raising \$65,000.

Out of the many programs that it supports, the flagship ones have been briefly outlined below.

- **Support a Child:** In its fourth year of implementation, this interactive program targeted at the underprivileged students in Assam provides scholarships covering their annual tuition fees. This has helped in retaining the students as well as sustaining schools. More than 100 children are benefiting from this project.
- **Support a Disabled Worker:** AFNA has been financially supporting Atma Nirbhar, which received the "Shell Helen Keller Award" in the year 2000, in its effort to provide economic rehabilitation and empowerment to the differently abled. The

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beneficiaries under this project are on their path to achieving financial independence.

- **Society for Social Transformation and Environmental Protection:** AFNA provided the platform for the establishment of this student led development organization. It works on both urban and rural poverty issues in Guwahati, Assam focusing on the rights of domestic workers who often work in exploitative conditions.
- **Rickshaw Bank:** AFNA continues to help the poor rickshaw pullers in Assam break the cycle of poverty with loans for technologically advanced rickshaws. This project has been recognition as a laureate of the Flextronics Economic Development Award in 2011.
- **Parijat Academy:** AFNA provides funds for books, teachers' salaries and other support to the 502 students studying in the school. Parijat Academy is bringing a social transformation in ten tribal villages by ensuring that every child in the villages goes to school. The journey of this school began with four students and from a cowshed which served as a classroom.
- **Society for Health and Educational Development (SHED):** AFNA is supporting the establishment of a residential rehabilitation center in Bhetapara, Guwahati for children with special needs. Through this new school building the children can have a nurturing environment to learn and grow and a permanent and long term shelter without any interference from the landlords.
- **Solar Light: Power to People:** AFNA created this campaign to address the need of electrification in the village Pamohi, Assam. It successfully raised \$ 6,931 through the Global Giving platform and the fund was disbursed to support the purchase of a solar charging station and solar panel, and and twenty solar lamps. Because of the solar lamps the children are getting an extra 3-4 hours for their studies in the evening. It is a step toward providing and promoting access to renewable energy as a solution to the issue rural electrification.
- **AFNA Annual Calendar:** Through this thematic calendar, AFNA raises awareness as well as funds. The volunteers bear all the costs of the calendar production as well as shipping and handling costs. The funds raised are disbursed to the projects at the grassroots level.
- **Where Brahmaputra meets Mississippi:** It is a fundraising initiative where the fund is allocated toward the income generations scheme for rural artisans. It builds the capacity and access to training and infrastructure to self help groups of weavers.
- Additionally, AFNA also supports projects run by NGOs like Tapoban, ADI and Sanjeevani in the area of rural education and rehabilitation program for physically and mentally disabled child.

Another project that is close to AFNA's heart is the quarterly newsletter and an e-magazine called FRIENDS. AFNA contributes articles as well as sponsors it in collaboration with Friends of Assam and Seven Sisters, the publisher. These two knowledge products accessed by more

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than 2000 AFNA supporters act as an information hub for AFNA's activities along with its partners, and is good documentation of the achievement and success of the Assamese diaspora who have made a mark for themselves.

AFNA strongly believes in joint collaboration while addressing the developmental issues and this philosophy is reflected in its active partnership with organizations such as Asha for Education, Association for India's Development, Foundation for Excellence, Red Cross and North South Foundation to name a few. It also reaches out to the larger community through participation in charity events, such a marathon and cross country biking, as well as cultural events held in Assam and North America.

AFNA strongly believes that it will achieve the task that it has set upon itself, which is to be a catalyst, the connecting dot and a strategic partner in the effort for bringing out a social, behavioral and developmental transformation of the marginalized and disadvantaged population in Assam.
