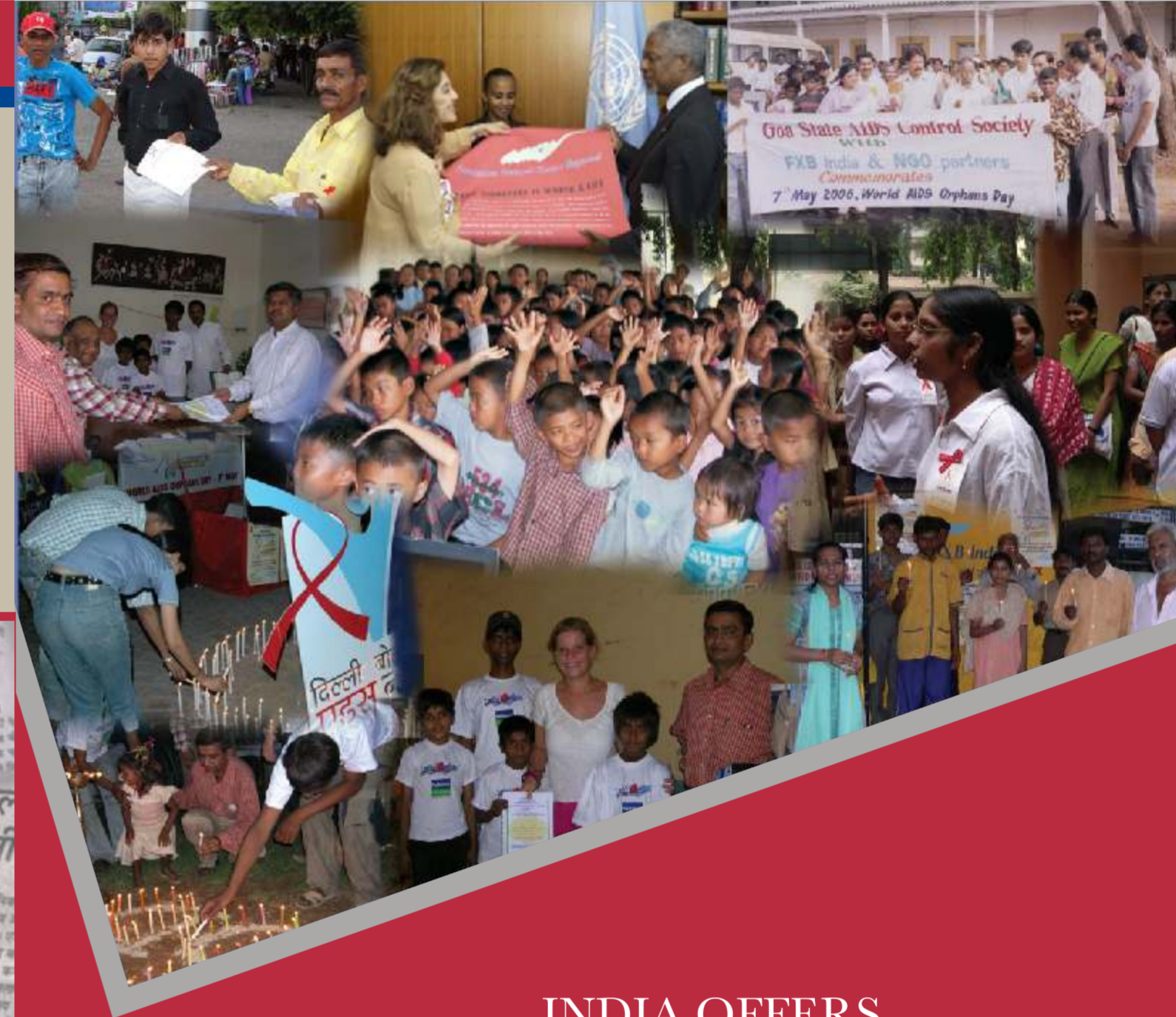




- ✦ Mizoram The Government of Mizoram has officially endorsed May 7 as the World AIDS Orphans Day. In Mizoram, FXB marks WAOD by mobilizing communities, and through candlelight vigils in Aizawl. In previous years, the event has drawn ordinary people, local celebrities and dignitaries such as the Project Director of the State AIDS Control Authority, MSACS, state health officials, representatives of the local women's association, president of village councils, and medical officers.
- ✦ Uttar Pradesh --- In the industrial town of Kanpur, WAOD has had the support of local health establishment, UN staff and local NGOs.
- ✦ Uttaranchal --- Last year on the occasion of WAOD, the Uttaranchal chapter of FXB organized a signature campaign, a drawing competition and awareness programme among high school students in Dehradun, the state capital. The theme of the contest was "Aids

Orphans". The event was supported by the mayor of Dehradun, the State Health Ministry, the State Education Ministry, the State Transport, Technical Education, Labour & Training ministry, the local network of HIV positive people, and local NGOs.

- ✦ Jammu & Kashmir ---- On May 7, 2006, the local FXB chapter organized sports and cultural events for vulnerable children in one of the camps in Akhnoor, Jammu, housing internally displaced people. Village leaders, camp inmates and NGOs were present on the occasion.
- ✦ Delhi --- The local chapter of FXB seizes the occasion of WAOD to advocate with politicians and policy makers at the highest level in the country about the pressing issues facing AIDS orphans in the country. In 2006, the Delhi State AIDS Control Society partnered FXB in organizing special events on WAOD.



"I call upon the people of Jharkhand to reach out to create a social security net for orphan and vulnerable children whose families are affected by AIDS," declared Governor of Jharkhand, Syed Sibtey Razi, on May 7, 2006. The WAOD campaign in this newly created state has been able to mobilise the Chief Minister, the Health Minister, the Speaker of the State Assembly and many others in giving voice to one of the most pressing concerns of our time. Local media has been supportive in taking the message of 'supporting AIDS Orphans' to ordinary people across the state.



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# INDIA OFFERS HOPE TO AIDS ORPHANS





Every year on **May 7 -- World AIDS Orphans Day** -- youth and adults from diverse walks of life in many countries come together to increase awareness about children orphaned by HIV/AIDS across the globe.

Some 15 million children below 18 have lost one or both parents to AIDS, according to UNAIDS. The vast majority are in sub-Saharan Africa. But though Africa is staggering under the load of AIDS orphans, it is not just an African problem.

On this day in 2007, several cities and states in India will be joining the worldwide solidarity coalition to support AIDS orphans.



#### Why AIDS Orphans?

"The crisis of AIDS orphans is a major humanitarian, economic, social and security challenge that our society must urgently address."

Countess Albina du Boisrouvray, President of the Association François-Xavier Bagnoud

Children who have lost one or both parents to HIV and AIDS are among the world's most vulnerable children. Unlike adults, they are unable to lobby for themselves or press home before policy makers their unique needs. Children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS are discriminated against in education and health services, denied care, and often tossed into the street and into the worst forms of child labor. Rampant gender discrimination makes girls more vulnerable to HIV transmission and makes it harder for them to get care.

#### World AIDS Orphans Day (WAOD) began as an idea, triggered a march and sparked a movement.

The year was 2002.

As part of its advocacy campaign for children affected and/or infected by HIV/AIDS, FXB established a Symbolic Global Safety Net to which more than two million people worldwide added their names, each name adding a stitch in the symbolic net to support AIDS orphans and vulnerable children.

François-Xavier Bagnoud International is named after François-Xavier Bagnoud, a young helicopter rescue pilot who died at the age of 24 during a mission in Mali, West Africa. The death of her only son proved to be the turning point in the life of his mother, Countess Albina du Boisrouvray, a well-known journalist and filmmaker. Selling three-quarters of her personal assets including her film-producing company, du Boisrouvray established the Foundation François-Xavier Bagnoud (FFXB) in 1989. Today, the NGO, François-Xavier Bagnoud International, runs 87 programmes across 18 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the United States, working in close collaboration with National AIDS Control Programmes. The non-profit organization, headquartered in Switzerland, reaches out to remote corners of the globe, supporting and empowering the most vulnerable children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS as well as those at risk of contracting the HIV virus.

Working tirelessly to spread awareness about the plight of AIDS orphans before the start of the UN Special Session on Children in New York in May 2002, Albina du Boisrouvray and 40 high school students took their campaign to Wall Street, where they lobbied investors, holding up placards that asked: "What is the value of an orphan on the NY Stock Exchange?" They reached out to young investors, explaining how poverty worldwide impacts on their investments and asking them to add their names to the global safety net.

Two days later, in an extraordinary action, the Speaker of the New York City, Gifford Miller, declared May 7, 2002, World AIDS Orphans' Day, and on the steps of City Hall presented Du Boisrouvray with a declaration praising FXB for its outstanding work in favour of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. The next day, Albina du Boisrouvray presented the then United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, with the Global Safety Net for AIDS Orphans, containing two million signatures. The Secretary-General was moved and added his signature to the Global Safety Net.



#### AIDS orphans don't vote. They don't have a voice, nor do they have anyone to represent them.

FXB came up with the concept of the World AIDS Orphans Day (WAOD) to draw the international communities' attention towards the plight of children orphaned by the HIV and AIDS epidemic as well as other children at risk. Today, more than 630 mayors and municipalities and elected political representatives across the globe are part of a solidarity coalition to highlight the plight of Orphans and Vulnerable Children by declaring 7 May as World AIDS Orphans' Day. WAOD has sparked a growing movement which aims at influencing governments, private corporations, humanitarian organizations, and individuals to respond to the plight of children orphaned by the HIV and AIDS pandemic. May 7 sounds the alert on the stigma and discrimination confronting AIDS orphans and on their pressing needs better access to antiretroviral treatment in developing countries to keep parents alive, better access to education that can help these vulnerable children to maximize their potential and contribute to society and above all, sustainable community development programs

designed to reinforce families' and communities' capacity to care for these orphans, raise them and reintegrate them into society.

"FXB's well-established model of poverty alleviation and supporting AIDS orphans in Rwanda and Uganda is a grassroots solution that turns despair into hope."

Stephen Lewis, UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa

#### AIDS Orphans in India

FXB India Suraksha is the Indian arm of FXB International. It is the only NGO working in the area of HIV and AIDS with a presence in all 28 States and 4 out of 7 Union Territories (UT) in the country. FXB India Suraksha's programmes are a mix of care and support initiatives for AIDS orphans, other vulnerable children and people living with HIV and AIDS.

#### What we do not know

There are no official or reliable statistics about AIDS orphans in India.

#### What we do know

Women and children are among the worst-affected by India's burgeoning HIV and AIDS epidemic as it spreads inexorably from 'high risk' populations to the general public. With the steady feminization of the epidemic, in many parts of the country, such as coastal Andhra and North East, grassroots workers are already grappling with the problem of children who have lost one or both parents and other vulnerable children. Though the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) does not have any estimates about the number of AIDS orphans in India, children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS is climbing up the policy agenda as demonstrated by the new national level initiative towards pediatric AIDS.

This is therefore an opportune moment to promote awareness about World AIDS Orphans Day in India at the national level and generate support from a wider constituency in different states. The task ahead is strengthened by the example of individual States and local authorities in India who have taken the lead in endorsing WAOD. Indian cities where officials and civil society have come together on May 7 at candle light vigils, town hall meetings, symposiums and other special events to pay homage and offer to AIDS orphans in the past include Bangalore, Calicut, Bhopal, Imphal, Dehradun, Jodhpur, Mumbai and Ranchi, Aizawl, Dharamshala and Delhi.

