

The Project Team

Mrs Alemla Twiss	Heading up Backstrap Weaving and Design Project
Mrs Chris King Mrs Alison Buike	Heading up Paper Craft and Card Making Project
Mrs Beryl Hoad	Heading up Embroidery, Crochet and Knitting Project
Mr Martin Tilbury Mr Simon Twiss	Heading up Carpentry and Bamboo/Cane work

In addition to the above team, we benefit from the expertise and material support of those involved with the 'Be Creative Project' run at Southwick Christian Community Church.



Nagaland 2008/9

Akumen Village Creative Skills Education and Training Project



1 - 5 Roman Crescent, Southwick, West Sussex, BN42 4TY
01273 870103, Email: scc-church@ntlworld.com
Web: www.southwick-ccc.org.uk
Registered Charity No.4292136

Background to Nagaland

Nagaland is a state in North East India, bordering on Burma to the East and Assam to the West. Although part of India since 1947, Nagaland is ethnically, culturally, economically and spiritually different from the rest of the country. The Naga people bear Mongolian features and are divided into 16 main tribal groups. Some live in the few main towns but the majority live in the 800+ small, isolated rural villages, surviving mainly on agriculture and animal rearing. In such places, the infrastructure is very inadequate and there is limited funding from the Government. There are poor roads, limited electricity and running water, poor telecommunications and lack of educational and medical facilities. Despite all this, the people are extremely warm, hospitable and generous with a deep Christian faith.



Akumen Village

What's it like?

Akumen village is a small, isolated village surrounded by beautiful jungle with 400 adults and 60 children close to the Assam border. The village has just received electricity but there is no running water and only a narrow dirt access road dug by the villagers. The nearest bus is 3 km away.



The village infrastructure is very simple but orderly overseen by the village chief and a council of 8 men. Akumen has a small school for the youngest children, a village hall and a church providing the focus of the community. The villagers live in simple cane, wood and bamboo houses. The level of Government funding to develop the infrastructure of the village has been pitifully small and this lack makes life in the village extremely limited. Thus we see it as an important part of our mission to begin the development of a range of small-scale building projects which will mean life for the villagers can be enhanced in a number of ways.

How can you be involved?

You may feel moved to join us in developing this creative arts project towards the establishment of a cottage industry by contributing to any of the above items needed. You are welcome to specify what you would like your gift to be used for. Cheques should be made payable to Southwick Christian Community Church marked on the back Nagaland Mission. For any who are U.K. tax payers you can Gift Aid your donation so that we can claim the tax back. Please ask for details should you need them.

Please send any donations to:

Revd Lynda Hulcoop
1-5 Roman Crescent
Southwick
West Sussex
BN42 4TY

If you have any queries, please phone 01903 522279 or e mail: lhulcoop@ntlworld.com

If you want to find out more about this and other aspects of the Nagaland Project, please visit our website southwick-ccc.org.uk and click on Missions.

Thank you so much for your interest.

The 2008 Year Of Craft Training and Production

In the first 8 months of 2008 villagers are being trained in a range of creative skills as follows:

1. Weaving

Villagers have already been trained in backstrap weaving skills. In January 2008 two Jacquard Looms were purchased for the village and training began in April 2008 using the skills of a professional trainer. This will enable villagers to weave to a high standard and produce large items such as shawls and blankets



2. Sewing

Training is being offered by a professional trainer in sewing, stitching, embroidery etc. to enable villagers to produce clothing items for both children and adults. Once training is complete, these items can be marketed locally and in neighbouring Assam



3. Papercraft and cardmaking

Villagers continue to be trained in a range of techniques for making greetings cards, bookmarks etc. e.g. parchment craft, embossing, rubber stamping, lace, quilling, decoupage and punching. There is a market for such goods locally in Assam.



Card making in progress during our November 2005 visit

4. Cane and bamboo training

Akumen is endowed with extensive supplies of bamboo, cane etc. A local villager is training others to use such resources to make items e.g. hats, bags, baskets, tableware, picture frames, furniture, etc for sale at market.



5. Woodwork and Carpentry

Using the extensive supplies of available wood in the jungle again a local villager is training other men in woodwork and carpentry skills. He is teaching them to make items of furniture, wooden toys and cooking utensils using a range of carpentry techniques. Again there is a good market for such items locally and further afield.



During the training period the villagers aim to set up some sale days inviting other villages to come to Akumen to see the project and buy some of the goods made. In addition a further team will be visiting the village in November 2008 to help the locals prepare to enter the goods they have made in the National Handicraft Exhibition in the main town of Dimapur in December 2008. Also during the visit some villagers will be trained in basic marketing, bookkeeping and accounting techniques to enable them to establish an effective cottage industry in creative work for the benefit of the community. After the next visit the aim is to establish more diverse marketing channels for the goods made possibly by setting up a website.

What have we achieved so far?

In 2005, a group of 12 from Southwick Christian Community Church visited Akumen village as a result of links with Alemla Twiss an Au Naga lady living in the UK. The aim was to work with the villagers in their poor, remote, jungle community on a range of projects: education of children/youth, training of teachers, setting up a basic medical station, a building project extending the village church. Our work with the villagers showed us their commitment to see the development of their community infrastructure. However, we were also aware of the lack of resources and stimulus from the outside to help them move from a subsistence mentality to one of production/growth. After our visit, the villagers proved their motivation and skills by completing the projects we began.

A second team visited Nagaland in November 2006 to develop a more extensive creative skills training project with a twofold aim: firstly to offer training in a range of skills and techniques, especially to older children and young people to develop their potential and utilise their creativity; secondly to start developing a cottage industry for the village where they can sell goods they make in local markets and potentially throughout India and overseas.

As a result of this visit the villagers built a craft training centre which was opened in April 2007



Future Needs

To develop this project towards being income generating within two years the following will be needed:

Money to buy an electric generator for the training centre	£600
Funds to furnish the carpentry area of the training centre (wood for the walls and a concrete floor)	£600
Money to buy bigger carpentry tools e.g. a lathe	£1000
Money for ongoing supplies of fabrics, card, paper, envelopes in year 1 while project is established.	£200
Money to purchase a small truck to take goods to market.	£3000
Further tools for bamboo work e.g. a bamboo splitter	£500

Once this project is income generating it will raise money to support the development of the various projects in the village and create funds for the benefit of all.



In January 2008 a third team visited Akumen village and thanks to a very generous donation from the Osborne Trust we were able to inaugurate **'The 2008 year of Craft Training and Production'**