



Ananda Foundation

Field Notes: Overview

Transferring Experience into Action*

This trip to the field demonstrated the importance of a holistic approach to international grantmaking. I traveled thousands of miles around the world to hear personal stories and challenges, to witness strategies implemented by organizations, and to encourage staff members. I found myself contemplating my place within the larger context of the world. My trip started in Kenya and ended in Thailand. Each destination, village, and community taught me something. I believe that we are a product of our experience and that the world has much to teach us. The challenge is then to translate our experience into action.

The way in which our foundation operates could be considered unconventional. However, this mother and daughter team travel to corners of the world to meet with organizations that are not well known, operate on a shoestring, with big hearts, and a spirit of uncompromising commitment to the people that they help. That is part of the magic of Ananda Foundation.

Though our grants are considered small in the international world of grant making, we don't compromise on the quality of the organizations we decide to foster. We operate as nonprofit entity with formalities, accountability, and a board that must give approval of each and every grant we issue.

What distinguishes us is that we operate by intuition and common sense and we are led by our hearts. We are continuously learning from our experience in the field - - what to look for, what makes an organization strong or vulnerable. What determines need, and how those needs can be met

From the inspiration and insight we gain in the field, we discuss solutions with NGOs and a plan to help them help themselves. Lately, I have found myself as an NGO ally - - sharing with the

NGOs across country lines and regions how other NGOs faced with the same problem are coping. It's a enjoyable and challenging job-often we find ourselves contemplating the larger issues of society that are responsible for people's lives and well-being

**Notes by Levani April 2005
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