

Sai100

THE SRI SATHYA SAI INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

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Invoking the Spirit of Volunteerism and Selfless Service

The Sri Sathya Sai International Organization (SSSIO) is a non-sectarian and non-governmental organization that exists in 114 countries. It is a Spiritual humanitarian organization dedicated to serving the sick, poor, and those in need. One of its core objectives is to instill and promote a spirit of volunteer service its members and within the larger society.

For over six decades, SSSIIO members have been encouraged to render at least 4 hours per week of selfless service to the community. There is increasing scientific evidence that an attitude of selfless service brings positive and mental benefits also to those who render service. There is a growing commitment even among corporations to make selfless service and volunteerism an integral part of life.

SAI 100

In November 2022, SSSIIO launched a seven-prong Social Action Initiative (SAI) - 100 program, to encourage everyone from all walks of society to engage in selfless service, and reap its many intangible benefits, physical, mental, and emotional. Here are brief descriptions of the seven SAI-100 projects.

Project 1

Workshops on 'Happiness Within Reach'

The stress of modern living has led to a rise in almost 900 million people suffering from mental health issues, as reported by the World Health Organization. The accompanying stigma and social exclusion, as well as the lack of supportive, affordable, and quality mental health care, have led to an urgent need to raise awareness about these mental health issues. There also is a need to expand and strengthen community-based solutions. 'Happiness Within Reach' consists of engaging interactive workshops by mental health experts to increase public awareness regarding the risk factors related to mental health, and strengthen public's commitment to improve mental health. Meditation, yoga, and counseling sessions by trained professionals will also be offered. We seek help in spreading public awareness of these programs that nurture body, mind, and spirit and help promote wellbeing for all.



Project 2

Expansion of Community Support Programs

SSSIO members, through the Community Adoption Programs initiated in November 2017, are making a significant difference in the lives of people in need by providing education, healthcare, food, shelter, drinking water, and other services in sustainable manner. By 2020, the SSSIO had adopted 157 communities in 47 countries and has now intensified its service efforts within these communities and beyond. Besides expanding its outreach to other communities, the SSSIO also aims to bring further improvements in other facets of the lives of those it already serves. An example is by offering free healthcare alongside existing free food services, tutoring programs, and refugee relief efforts. Long-term support of refugee communities and populations afflicted by natural disasters also provides excellent opportunities for sustainable programs which can leave a lasting impact.



Project 3

Expansion of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) Programs in the Community

The SSSIO, through its long-standing SSEHV program, has been actively promoting the practice of universal human values (truth, right action, peace, love and non-violence) in individuals, communities, and nations to peace and the wellbeing of all. Value-based education is currently being implemented by 27 Institutes of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (ISSE) across the world. The SAI-100 goal is to further intensify the dissemination of value-based programs to professions such as medicine, and other public spheres including the arts, drama, and music.

For example, human values have been integrated into choral music. Two concerts were held by the Interfaith Choir from Northern Europe Zone - one on January 20, 2023, in a modern church in Eisenhüttenstadt, and the second on January 21, 2023 in a beautiful Gothic church in Fürstenberg. Both concerts featured value-based songs drawn from different cultures and religions of the world, with each receiving great appreciation and standing ovation.

Project 4

Planting Millions of Trees Worldwide

Global climate change and pollution are threats to humanity, and the urgent need of the hour is to rally as many people as possible to be committed to saving the planet. Mass planting of trees is an immediate solution that brings many environmental benefits. We urgently seek members of the public to join us in this very critical mission. The SSSIO has already planted over 250,000 trees worldwide, including an unprecedented number in Africa.

The goal for SAI 100 is to plant 1 million trees in Africa and the Middle East by 2025 to restore freshwater flow, combat climate change, protect forest habitats, and improve food security for some of Africa's most vulnerable communities. Around a quarter million of the trees will be planted on farmland, common community land, homes, schools, and forest areas to provide food, stabilize resources and increase crop yields.



In **Kenya**, 105,000 trees were planted in 2022 with 20,00 bamboos and 20,000 other trees in nurseries.



In **Uganda**, about 15,000 of various types of trees such as the umbrella, mvule, mahogany, pine, eucalyptus and acacia trees were planted in 2022, and 5,000 more in nurseries.



In 2021, **Mauritius** planted 490 trees such as mulberries, acerola cherry, Jamaican roselle, alle, and duranta.



In 2021, **South Africa** planted about 2000 fruit trees of a wide variety.



SSSIO USA has started a national initiative to plant one million trees in the next three years. A series of tree-planting events were held in the South-Central Region in Austin, Dallas, and Houston, in 2022. SSSIO members, working closely with local community partners, planted about 100 trees at each event.





Project 5 Medical Camps

SSSIO has provided free healthcare for decades in marginalized and underserved communities with little or no access to medical services. SSSIO medical camps provide free medical screening, counsel, and referrals for a variety of health conditions, such as hypertension and diabetes. At-risk patients are referred to clinics or medical centers for follow-up care. The camps play a vital role in early detection, raising potential red flags, and averting possible danger.



A recent example is a medical camp held in Madagascar in November 2022, where free diabetes and blood pressure screening services were provided to 113 people in a community with no access to basic healthcare. Those with abnormal ECG were directed to local cardiologists for further follow-up and treatment. More than 250 people attended a medical camp held in Kajang, Selangor, and received free medical examination and eye screening. Medical personnel promoted mental and dental health awareness, as well as education on healthy lifestyles, including proper nutrition.



The SAI-100 initiative aims to conduct more than 1,000 free medical camps and bring greater focus to preventive healthcare and health education, in addition to screening, diagnosis, and treatment of disease. Free healthcare will be offered as part of community support programs; humanitarian relief for disaster-afflicted communities; and digital health webinars and telemedicine. We request the Health Ministries of countries to support SSSIO by identifying underserved communities that are in dire need of medical screening and other related medical support.

Project 6 Tutoring Program for Students

SSSIO members have been tutoring children in low-income and underserved neighborhoods through partnerships with schools, community agencies, churches, and

refugee relief programs. The programs not only support these children academically but also enrich their lives by providing opportunities to engage in various activities they would not otherwise have access to. This includes STEM-related activities such as coding and robotics.

Currently, in the U.S., over 150 SSSIO volunteers tutor over 400 children either in person, or virtually on a weekly basis, in English, math, science, and computer coding. In addition, in some schools, the partnership has led to ancillary programs such as robotics clubs, community gardening, and summer camps, as well as nutritious meals and groceries given to families with food-shortage. Backpacks, school supplies and other essential items also are provided.

SSSIO volunteers also celebrate 'Human Values Day' events which provide opportunities for children, their families, and SSSIO volunteers to come together to celebrate human values in a carnival-like atmosphere with games and activities. Sai tutoring is an effective vehicle for improving educational equity and opportunity in the community by emphasizing quality mentoring and modeling where these programs are currently operating.

Project 7

Public Meetings/Webinars

A society without values will cease to be human. Therefore, the more the human values of love, peace, truth, righteousness, and nonviolence are cherished, the better off society, the nation, and the entire world will be. **The SAI-100 initiative has a goal of organizing at least 100 public meetings in most major cities worldwide to spread greater awareness of the vital role that human values and selfless service play in creating a peaceful society that promotes the wellbeing of all its members.** These meetings will be conducted as free educational public seminars on general topics such as stress management, healthy living, secrets of a happy life, etc. Besides identifying eminent speakers who have a deep appreciation for value-based living, volunteers are needed to organize these public meetings and do public outreach. This will be accomplished by informing and inviting various segments of the broader community, such as NGOs, to these free educational seminars.

One example of public outreach is the 'Values Transform' webpage which aims to create an awareness of universal human values inherent in each of us and how to put them into practice in our daily lives. The website creates a dynamic space for all ages through songs, video clips, original compositions, stories, books, animations, and quotes!



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