



Sopena Adivasis Deployment Association

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Dear Fr.

You probably know of the late Fr. Federico Sopena, a Jesuit who initiated a rural development programme for aiding, enabling and supporting on a self-sustaining basis the adivasis in over 20 districts of Maharashtra.

They lead lives of deprivation, untold hardship, generally ignored by society and even governments.

His work among them and his approach have resulted in a remarkable transformation of these tribal people, who now have acquired a confidence and a sense of self-worth and are today demonstrating their ability to help not just themselves but to contribute in their unique way to the environment and to society.

Today these people are sharing their priceless knowledge of forests and natural environments that is helping social workers, scientists, environmentalists and researchers to come up with ideas and even new products.



Women's Self-Help group meeting/training, Kolkhe.



The tribals themselves are a wonderful source of traditional medicine and herbal cosmetics. They also produce a range of handicrafts made from forest material, for which they need financial and marketing help.

A group of like-minded friends of Fr. Sopena in Spain had earlier got together and formed an association called ADA -- Adivasi Development Association. They collected money to fund Fr. Sopena's work.

After Fr. Sopena's demise in 2017, some of the volunteers in this programme, together with many who saw the achievements, felt that it would be indeed tragic to let the project die with its initiator. Thus SADA was born: *Sopena Adivasi Deployment Association*.

But SADA needs more to carry Fr. Sopena's legacy and is looking for people, young men and women and retirees, in all disciplines and in all fields of work: social workers, secretaries, journalists, writers, artists, teachers, communicators in all media, particularly social media, scientists, doctors, anthropologists and others who can form part of a think tank and come up with fresh ideas.

While the grass-roots work and the hardship of service may not be for everyone, we look forward to raising social awareness and support these and many other projects to provide opportunities to a forgotten people

The tribal habitats and the tribal people are an anthropological gold mine and can provide rare insights into tribal societies. It is indeed a programme for mutual benefit; a two-way give and take.



Rebuilding part of a school section that was burnt, Talasari



Handicrafts Training, Talasari

This is a request to you to read out at all your services the enclosed write-up or parts of this letter you think are suitable for your congregation and permit SADA volunteers to distribute membership and donation forms outside the church after services.

Thank you for your support.