

India Development Coalition of America (IDCA)

(www.idc-america.org, info@idc-america.org)

IDCA: Inform, Inspire, Empower, Impact

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Press release

IDCA Conference Inspires Many Projects on Poverty Eradication in India

India Development Coalition of America organized its Ninth International Conference—on “*Working Together to Eradicate Poverty and Mitigate Climate Change in India*” on October 15 and 16, 2011, at IIT-Rice Campus, Wheaton, IL.

The conference was attended by more than 70 people over the two days. We had more than 25 students and faculty from De Paul University, Chicago. We had 5 speakers from India, 2 from Indiana, one from Michigan, and one from Boston. Other delegates came from Minnesota and Chicago area. We also had Rural art exhibit by artist and curator Ms. Manvee Vaid, Naperville, IL.

Following the registration and breakfast the conference was started around 9:30 AM. Mr. Dileep Thatte, president of IDCA began with an invocation and welcomed all and made a presentation about the IDCA Vision, Mission, and Activities over the last 8 years. He invited all to join IDCA as a member. He thanked the cosponsor of the conference, India Development and Relief Fund (www.idrf.org) of North Bethesda, MD.

Following this he introduced the first keynote speaker, 2011 Ramon Magsaysay Award Winner, Ms. Nileema Mishra, Bhagini Nivedita Gramin Vigyan Niketan, Bhadarpur, Jalgaon District, Maharashtra state.



He said Nileema is an inspiring young woman, who had guided and nurtured a movement to enable the women in the villages in India to empower themselves through self-help groups (SHG). She made the following points in her presentation:

- Every person is willing to work to improve his/her economic status
- The corrupt bureaucracy and the greedy private money lenders were exploiting ignorant farmers and laborers
- The women may be illiterate, but they were intelligent. Their potential had never been tapped till now.

- People were in need of training and necessary skills for production and marketing

She Organized...

- More than 2000 Self Help Groups (SHGs)
- Vocational training programs to enhance the skills of the local people in various trades ideally suitable to their capabilities
- Microfinance at affordable interest rates
- Programs to invoke the inborn strength of women that lay dormant for years.

She Sensitized people...

- To organize village assemblies (Gram Sabha)
- To create village fund (Gram Nidhi)
- To develop a model village (Adarsh Gaon)

And People learned ...

- Designer export quality Quilt making
- Cooperative business ventures in Dhule, Nashik, Jalgaon and Amalner
- Marketing skills by forming 20 outlets to sell their products

You can learn more about her work at: www.bngvn.org



The second keynote speaker was Dr. Anant Pandhare, Cofounder *and* Medical Director at Dr. Hedgewar Hospital, Aurangabad, India. He spoke in the afternoon about his Hospital which was founded with 10 beds in 1989 by 7 young doctors each contributing about \$1500 and inspired by the ideology of service to the poor. The hospital currently has 150 beds and runs medical services in many specialties including AIDS. There are 42 doctors in all specialties to serve the poor at 1/4th cost of other hospitals in the area.

Apart from providing highest level healthcare at lowest cost the hospital is engaged in overall human development work in 37 slums of Aurangabad and in 45 villages surrounding it. They have 36 different activities. They are adding a new 200 bed hospital at a cost of \$10 Million. They are using water harvesting, solar energy and energy efficient to make it more sustainable. It is more than a hospital. It is center for transformation of the community. You can learn more at: www.hedgewar.org

We had 5 sessions covering, Rural Development, Water, and Healthcare in India, Education, Sustainable Livelihoods, and climate Change mitigation using solar energy. The speakers in the First Session included: Dr. Jane Schukoske, CEO of IRRAD, Gurgaon (www.irrad.org), who spoke about the approach and various programs undertaken by the Institute to help eradicate poverty. This includes, income generation, governance, policy development, and natural resources management. They are now using rights based approach to bring benefits of the government programs to eradicate poverty. They are currently working in 20 villages of South Haryana in one of the most backward district of Mewat. They have built more than 40 check dams to solve the water problem and taught farmers better farming techniques. They also are promoting health and life skills education, sanitation and livelihood training programs. The second speaker was Mr. Jeffrey Klein, president of Global FoodBanking Network, Chicago. He said about 1.3 Billion people in the world do not have food available to them. There is enough food in the world but it is not at the right place. They are working in many countries and planning to start food banks in New Delhi and Ahmedabad in 2012. You can learn more at:

<http://www.foodbanking.org/site/PageServer?pagename=deploymenthome>

The third speaker in this session was Prof. Chandrakala Bhargaw, president of Adarsh Mahila Griha Udyog, Latur, Maharashtra. She has been involved in community development work for more than 30 years. They have an integrated development program providing, healthcare education, livelihood training and water supply program.

Specific projects include the following:

Vocational training for women, 'Sadbhavana' family counseling center, 'Jidnyasa' – teaching life-skills to adolescent girls & boys, Environmental Awareness Actions, Village Planning Follow-up Process, Self-help groups, Save Our Sisters; Innovative ways of conserving and using water, Educating women about laws for empowerment, Gender Sensitization, Organic Farming, HIV/AIDS Awareness, Nutritional Awareness, and Training women for Gram Panchayat leadership.

The second session was about Livelihoods Program. We had three speakers: Professor Prodig Dutta, India Studies program, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana, spoke about the microfinance program established by his Bengal group with Ramakrishna Mission in Kolkatta to

help eradicate poverty. Second Speaker was Mr. Jiwan Sondhi, a member of IDCA and volunteer of Deendayal Research Institute, Chitrakoot, MP (www.chitrakoot.org), spoke about the Solar Lantern project he did in 44 villages in partnership with IDCA, IDSUSA, Rotary Clubs of Naperville, IL, and Satna, Madhya Pradesh, India, Rotary International Foundation, The Energy Resources Institute, New Delhi (www.teriindia.org) and DRI-Chitrakoot. It is providing livelihoods to 88 women and creating other opportunities to enhance their income by additional training and production in the evening. It is also having positive impact on education and health of children. The last speaker in this session was Dr. Anil Sarkar, an 83 year old philanthropist and activist from Terre Haute, Indiana. He shared his ideas about poverty eradication and gave a booklet he has written on this subject. He then shared about the work he did in his village to improve the life of poor.

The Third session on Saturday afternoon was on Education and the speakers included Professor Ronald Fernandes of De Paul University, and Dr. Ratnam Chitturi, Founder and president of North South Foundation (www.northsouth.org). Over the last 20 years they have given more than 1200 scholarships to worthy poor students in various parts of India. They raise funds by organizing spelling bee and geography bee competition for the American Indian students. Mr. Timothy Somers made a brief presentation about Pratham USA (www.prathamusa.org), which is helping to improve basic education of slum and rural people in India.

The evening was concluded with a delicious Indian dinner and lots of networking to develop deeper friendships.

On Sunday October 16 we started around 9:30 AM with another keynote speaker who spoke on 16th morning was Ms. Madhu Sridhar, president of Akshaya Patra Foundation, Boston, MA. They are serving 1.3 million children hot lunch in several states and cities. A typical system serving 100,000 costs \$2 Million. The food is cooked in a fully mechanized kitchen using steam. The cost of meals for a child is \$31 a year including government subsidies. They raise 80% funds in India. You can learn more about their work at: www.foodforeducation.org

Following this we had two sessions. The first session was on climate Change Mitigation. Speakers included, Mr. John Paul Kusz, president of J P Kusz Ltd., Park Ridge, IL, Professor Robert F Anderson, Illinois Institute of Technology, and Mr. Prem Mehrotra, president of General Energy Corporation, Oak Park, IL. They all agreed that climate change is real and here, to be on safe side it is important we all take actions to mitigate and adapt to this change. Mr. Mehrotra said most businesses are accepting this view point and taking necessary steps to conserve energy and use renewable energy systems.

In the last session we had 5 speakers. The first was Mr. Andrew Fernandes, Development Consultant (Coritas, WOTR) Mumbai, India. He talked about the water harvesting program of Water organization Trust. Dr. Munish Raizada, president of Mission India Foundation (www.mifusa.org), Chicago spoke about the vaccination program his organization has started in the villages of Haryana state as government is not able to provide many new vaccines. Over the last more than 1 year they have served more than 5500 children in 69 remote villages. Three graduate students from School of Public Service, De Paul, University, Chicago, shared their experiences in India. This included: Ms. Lordes Ortega, Mr. Wilmar Molina and Mr. Shawn Janzen. They have been to India for a month and worked with NGO WOTR and others.

In concluding session we agreed to pursue 20 projects in collaboration with each other. One of the projects is to organize a spring conference for the University student programs in India. Dr. Nila Vora of IDSUSA agreed to lead this project. Another project is that Mr. Jiwan Sondhi will help Prof. Chandrakala Bhargaw to develop a solar Lantern project in villages surrounding Latur. Ms. Manvee Vaid, (www.manvee.com) an artist and a curator of Rural art from India will help Dr. Pandhare, and Hedgewar Hospital to paint walls with the help of local artists in Aurangabad or her friends from Mumbai to improve the aesthetics of the hospital. She exhibited her collection during the conference. Mr. Manoj Bhargaw of Microsoft, Gurnee, IL, will help develop fundraising

program for IDCA and its members. IDCA will help Professor Bhargaw to submit an application for Magsaysay award in 2012 with the help of Ms. Nileema Mishra and other members. Mr. Porus Dadabhoy agreed to work with De Paul University and Hedgewar Hospital to develop a 4 year nursing program in Aurangabad with the hospital. Mr. Thatte appealed for donations from all to defray the cost of conference. Dr. Asok Ray and orthopedic surgeon practicing at Mac Neal Hospital, Berwyn, Illinois, graciously volunteered for a donation of \$3000. He also agreed to work with the 4 NGOs from India and support them. Dr. Mohan Jain will work with Mr. Manoj Bhargaw to invite donors to our next conference.

Finally, Dr. Mohan Jain, the founder president and trustee of IDCA thanked all speakers, delegates, cosponsors IDRF and Dr. Asok Ray, and organizers Dr. Prakasam Tata, president of Bharathi Theertha and past president of IDCA for food arrangements and Mr. Porus Dadabhoy, past president for hosting Nileema Mishra, and Mr. Prasad Garkhedkar for hosting Dr. Pandhare and taking photographs. He also thanked members of Media for their help in publicity for the conference, including Ms. Vandana Jingan of TV Asia, Mr. Jitendra Bedi of Indian reporter, Mr. Laxaman Rao of India Tribune, Mr. Ramesh Soparwala of India Post, Ms. Sunita Shorabhji of India West, Mr. Bhailal Patel, vice president of Parikh media Corporation, and Mr. Kiran Kumar of Hi India. He also thanked three caterers, India Harvest, Big Suchir and Krishna Catering for providing delicious food. He appealed everyone to join IDCA by becoming active members.

All the presentations, photos, and videos will be posted on the IDCA website website in 1-2 weeks. Please check for these and many useful resources we have.

Upcoming Events: www.idc-america.org/upcoming.htm

We invite you to join us on November 19--Second West Regional Conference in Milpitas, CA. Please Register NOW at: and SAVE!!

We also invite you on January 11-12, 2012 for the Eighth International Conference in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Register NOW.

Next, we invite you on February 4-5, 2012—First South India Regional Conference in Hyderabad—Register NOW and SAVE!!!

IDCA is a 501©(3) not for profit organization registered in the state of Illinois since 2004. It was conceived and formed after a conference of 15 Not for profit organization and their supporters in October 2003 in the Chicago area. Since 2004 it has organized eight conferences in the Chicago area, one in Terre Haute, Indiana, 3 in DC area, one each in Milpitas and Houston, and Detroit. It has also organized 8 conferences in India. 4 in New Delhi, 2 in Gurgaon, and one each in Jaipur and Hyderabad. It has organized several forums in Chicago and organized seminars for visiting NGO leaders from India. We have been promoting networking, collaboration, learning, giving, and volunteering in US and India. Our Mission is to inform, inspire and empower nonprofits and individuals to help eradicate poverty and promote prosperity for all citizens of India. We invite you to join us as a member and help us to realize our Vision and Mission to serve the less fortunate in India and elsewhere in the world. More information and membership form available at: www.idc-america.org/membership.htm. We thank you all who have supported us so far and we urge you to renew your commitment if you have not done this year (August 2011-July 2012).

For more information call Mr. Dileep Thatte at: 240-316-9044, Porus Dadabhoy at: 630-960-2425 or 630-303-9592 or write to: info@idc-america.org



Group Photo of Speakers, organizers, delegates and De Paul University Students.
 Sitting on Floor: L-R: Porus Dadabhoj, Manvee Vaid, Dr. Nila Vora, IDS; Usha Shegde; Sitting: L-R: Dr. Asok Ray, Oak Brook, IL; Jatinder Bedi, Hello NRI; Nileema Mishra, India; Dr. Anant Pandhare, India; Dileep Thatte, IDCA, Gaithersburg, MD; Dr. Jane Schukoske, IRRAD Gurgaon; Prof. Chandrakala Bhargaw, Latur, India; Ms. Vandana Jingan, TV Asia; Prof. Deep Shikha, MN; Mr. Jeffery Klein, Chicago; Others not identified below are: Dr. Ratnam Chitturi, president and founder North South Foundation, Burr Ridge, IL; Mr. Manoj Bhargaw, Microsoft, Gurnee, IL; Next row, L-R: Mr. Vivek Vaid, Naperville, IL; Ramesh Dorairajan, Consultant, Chicago; G. Rao Kodali, Oak Brook; Last row: Students of De Paul University; Mr. Andrew Fernandes, Consultant, Mumbai; Mr. Atul B. Mamotra, Architect, Aurora, IL; Mr. Jagjit Jain, president, IDS-USA, Oak Park, IL; Prof. Ronald Fernandes, De Paul University, Chicago; Faculty De Paul University. (Regret for missing some names out)



Speakers and organizers: From L-R Sitting: Porus Dadabhoy, IDCA, Jiwan Sondhi, MI, IDCA, Prof. Prodip Dutta, Terre Haute, IN, Nileelma Mishra, Keynote Speaker, India; Dr. Jane Schukoske, CEO, IRRAD, Gurgaon, Mr. Dileep Thatte, IDCA, president; Prof. Chandrakala, president, Adarsh Mahila Griha udyog, Bhargaw, Latur, MS; Prof. Deep Shikha, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, MN; Ms. Madhu Sridhar, president, Akshaya Patra, Boston, MA; Dr. J S S Lakshminarayana, Toronto, Canada; Standing: Mr. Kapoor, New Delhi; Dr. Mohan Jain, IDCA Founder president and Trustee; Dr. Prakasam Tata, president Bharathi Theertha, Naperville, IL; Mr. Jeffery Klein, president, Global FoodBanking Network, Chicago; keynote speaker Dr. Anant Pandhare, Director Hedgewar Hospital, Aurangabad, Mr. Andrew Fernandes, development Cosultant, Mumbai; Dr. Anil Sarkar, Activist and Philanthropist, Terre haute, India,; Professor Ronald Fernandes, De Paul University, Chicago.



Speakers and Moderators: Top Line L-R: Dileep Thatte, Dr. Anant Pandhare, Timothy Somers, Andrew Fernandes,. Second row; Nileema Mishra, Prof. Prodip Dutta, Ms. Madhu Sridhar, Dr. Munish Raizada, Third from TOP, L-R: Dr. Jane Schukoske, Jiwan Sondhi, Mr John Paul Kusz, Ms. Lordes Ortega, Fourth row: Mr. Jeffrey Klein, Dr. Anil Sarkar, Prof. Robert F. Anderson, Wilmar Molina, Fifth row: Prof. Chandrakala Bhargaw, Dr. Ratnam chitturi, Mr. Prem Mehrotra; Shawn Janzen Sixth pictures in column 2 and 4: Prof. Ronald Fernandes, Prof. Deep Shikha.