



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS

- Inspire
- Empower
- Connect

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES FROM THE ALUMNI COMMUNITY IN INDIA AND BHUTAN



Greetings! I have had the good fortune of working with the vibrant and multi-talented alumni of U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad for the last almost three years. Your accomplishments never fail to wow me. This newsletter highlights the myriad ways in which alumni are transforming India, playing an influential role in regional and international engagements. I am grateful for your resourcefulness and service in numerous programs facilitated by the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in India. During my tenure in Hyderabad, alumni from Hyderabad's expansive consular district have played a vital role in utilizing their American experiences to mentor young businesswomen, strengthen cybersecurity cooperation, and address challenges related to education and the environment. They have combated gender based violence, inculcated a spirit of volunteerism, and guided a large number of students who want to study in the U.S. The strong U.S.-India bilateral relationship is further strengthened through the passionate efforts of alumni in different fields. I cherish the opportunity to visit with Hyderabad alumni at our monthly meets and look forward to our continued close collaboration in the future.

Best, Gurdit Singh
Assistant Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad



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CHENNAI



Alumni Reunion in Chennai

Music, *masti*, memories (and a massage during the icebreaking session), great things happen when motivated people like our Exchange Visitors Alumni Association (EVAA) alumni come together.

South Indian alumni networked, renewed bonds, & showcased some awesome

talent at their reunion reception.

Watch the evening captured in a short [video](#). We have embarked on creating a series of short videos to showcase alumni accomplishments.

Here's a start:

- <http://youtu.be/SZLwtqIOUcw>
- <http://youtu.be/RtKdN7gKWYc>
- <http://youtu.be/RWVEJkIqHA4>



IVLP alumnus interviews Chennai Consul General Phillip Min on President Obama's visit to India

IVLP alumnus Mr. Saleem Shahul Ahmed, interviewed CG Phillip Min to air a special program, "India-America," and also featured the future of the U.S.-India relationship close on the heels of President Obama's visit to India. The program was aired on ThanthiTV in primetime on February 1.



From Alumni to Alumni – the logical approach to writing grant proposals



U.S. Consulate General in Chennai organized a grant-writing workshop for 19 alumni participants from various programs including SUSI, Fulbright, IVLP and Legislative Fellows. Ms. Madhuri Menon, a management consultant and Dr. Elizabeth Negi, a social scientist (both IVLP alumni) trained the group on the various elements of a grant proposal, intro-

duced Logical Framework Approach, and also gave them practical answers to their questions. The meeting gave an opportunity for alumni to network, talk about their projects and find team members. Through a Google+ hangout, the session was opened to online and outstation audiences.

Alumni join Consulate's efforts in synergizing social media for social good

PAS Chennai in collaboration with Samhita Social Ventures conducted TechCamp Chennai (TCC) for over 85 NGOs in Chennai. TCC was organized to help NGOs discover ways in which technology can help leverage their business and solve issues. Contact Program alum and Ashoka Fellow Sriram Ayer Founder, NalandaWay Foundation gave remarks on tech-



nology and nonprofits on the opening day. Recent IVLP alum and techpreneur Kiruba Sankar led a breakout session on "Who are you in the digital world". The goal of TCC was to provide a platform for NGOs to work with technical experts to improve their digital literacy and identify free online resources to support their ventures.



IVLP Alumnus Kiruba Sankar during the breakout session at the TechCamp.

In an entertaining speech, Sriram Ayer uses Kollywood graphics to reach his audience.

REWIND
CHENNAI



YES alumni hang out with ACAO

Six student alumni of the Kennedy Lugar – Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) Program visited the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai, on January 16 and interacted with ACAO Ms. Brittney Stewart. The alumni discussed their experiences as high school exchange students in the United States, and were eager to

learn about Brittney’s time as an exchange student in Delhi. The alumni – Ms. Manshi Gala, Ms. Nafisa Raniwala, Ms. Pooja Shah, Ms. Zarrin Ansari, Mr. David Kuruvilla and Mr. Rudra Chauhan – discussed ideas for future programs and were keen on having more alumni social gatherings.



ACAO meets with IVLP alumni

Ms. Brittney Stewart, the new Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer (ACAO) at the U.S. Consulate General Mumbai, met with six alumni of the International Visitors’ Leadership Program (IVLP) on Friday, January 2 in Mumbai. The networking lunch brought forward some creative ideas for future partnerships, and helped the ACAO get an idea

about the IVLP experience from the alumni. The alumni - Ms. Aarefa Johari, Ms. Ritika Sahni, Ms. Roshni Udyavar Yehuda, Mr. Harish Sadani, Mr. Jitendra Dixit and Mr. Zulfi-quar Memon - were from diverse fields including journalism, law, gender justice, environment architecture, and disabilities rights.



“The networking lunch brought forward some creative ideas for future partnerships, and helped the ACAO get an idea about the IVLP experience from the alumni.”

U.S. Speaker interacts with alumni IPR experts

U.S. speaker Mr. Gregory Maurer is a partner at Klarquist Sparkman, LLP, and an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Expert. Mr. Maurer’s intellectual property law firm in the U.S. represents a wide variety of clients including private enterprises, universities, research institutions, and governmental entities in both IP acquisition and litigation

matters. On January 16, Mr. Maurer interacted with IVLP alumni, Ms. NS Nappinai, Ms. Rani Boazz, Mr. Amit Jamsandekar, and Mr. Devdatta Malshe, all of whom are lawyers/ advocates specializing in IPR issues. The interaction facilitated a discussion on IPR related issues in India and the United States.

REWIND
MUMBAI





In recognition of Black History Month, the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai hosted an "Afternoon of Jazz and Blues" with OneBeat alumna Ms. Sanaya Ardeshir on February 17. Sanaya spoke about her musical journey and her experience in the OneBeat exchange program. She also performed for the audience and later engaged in a lively discussion with the 45 audience members.

On February 19, 2015, the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai conducted a grant writing workshop for alumni. Ms. Pushpa Aman Singh, CEO of GuideStar India, led the workshop and provided participants with guidance on how to draft a successful grant proposal. The ACAO Brittney Stewart and PAO Phillip Roskamp introduced participants to the annual AEIF 2015 competition and the upcoming Small Grants Competition. IVLP alumna Ms. Shriya Bhatia shared her experience as a small-grants winner to the participants. This was a full-day workshop that involved 39 participants and provided a platform to reconnect with alumni not only from Mumbai, but also from Ahmedabad, Aurangabad, Malegaon, and Pune.



REWIND MUMBAI



In recognition of Black History Month, The American Library invited English literature students from three Mumbai-based colleges for a screening of the film "The Help" on February 23. After the screening, ACAO Brittney Stewart and the students engaged in a lively discussion moderated by Fulbright-Nehru alumnus, Dr. Baliram Gaikwad. The wide-ranging discussion included cinematography, plot, scene settings, character portrayal, dialogue, and issues of slavery and racism as portrayed in the film.

The U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai, in partnership with the Don Bosco College, Goa, conducted a workshop on "Empowering Youth as Citizen Journalists", on February 27 in Panjim, Goa. The workshops were conducted in cooperation with Mr. K. Stalin, a prominent documentary filmmaker, and Fulbright-Nehru alumna, Ms. Gauri Gharpure. Workshop participants learned how to use online tools such as mobile phones, blogs, and Twitter to share their voices and make positive changes in their communities.



Minister Counselor for Public Affairs meets alumni in Nagaland

Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Mr. Walter Douglas, and Deputy Director of the American Center, Mr. Greg Pardo, met with a group of alumni representing civil society, political, business and youth leaders in the state of Nagaland. Alumni Theja Meru, Cressida Jamir, Khreibou Nakhro and Cressida Jamir attended the dinner hosted by alumna Jesmina Zeliang at the Heritage Hotel, Razhu

Pru. The meeting was an opportunity for the Deputy Director and Minister Counselor to meet with some of our alumni leaders in Nagaland and get from them a perspective about the state of affairs in this northeast state. As this was their first visit to the state, it provided an insight into the challenges faced and the political and socio-economic scenario in this part of the country.



REWIND
KOLKATA



Grant Writing Workshop DVC at Consulate Kolkata

Kolkata alumni participated in a DVC on grant writing at the American Center. PAS New Delhi organized the workshop with the admin team, the ACAO, legal experts and grant experts, and Consulate Kolkata tuned in via DVC. The activity was organized close on the heels of the AEIF competition, and provided useful information to our alumni in light of the various grant competitions we have for them. It was helpful for our alumni team to hear from the experts on the grants process, especially with regards to the FCRA compliance, which is now mandatory for grant applicants.



Patna Alumni Meet-Up

The U.S. Consulate, Kolkata, organized the first ever alumni meet-up in the city of Patna, Bihar. Alumni from various exchange programs met at the American Corner in Patna to learn more about each other's work. The meeting was set up to give the alumni an opportunity to network and build on their exchange experience. They were also familiarized with the resources available to them at the American Corner, as well as the

space available for future programming events. The meeting set the tone for future regularized meet-ups and provided a common platform to the alumni to ideate and collaborate on ideas going forward.

Patna alumni meet-up at the American Corner



Alumni browse the resources at the American Corner, Patna



Hyderabad Alumni Master Grant Writing Skills through U.S. Embassy Workshop

A diverse group of Hyderabad alumni, from different professional backgrounds, participated (via digital video conference) in a grant writing workshop organized by the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi on February 19, 2015.

The alumni who participated found the workshop very helpful, and look forward to applying their newly acquired grant writing skills to different grants competitions, that Mission India might announce in the future.



Alumni Discuss AEIF projects and Lima COP20

Alumni of Consulate Hyderabad's different exchange programs participated in a monthly meet-up at the American Corner. Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Gurdit Singh, welcomed the alumni and shared information about upcoming Consulate programs and opportunities for alumni participation. Alumni shared updates of their ongoing and upcoming initiatives and programs. Alumni Relations Coordinator, Neha Kanitkar, discussed the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2015 and the innovative ways in which alumni could participate. Fulbright-Nehru alumnus,

Ashutosh Richhariya, spoke about his experience as the local partner responsible for implementing the winning AEIF 2014 project, a mobile climate change app that encourages high school students to become citizen scientists. IVLP alumnus, N.S. Prasad, gave a presentation on COP20, the 12 day global conference on climate change in Lima, Peru in December 2014, in which he participated. The meet-up provided an excellent opportunity for alumni to network with each other and discuss ways in which to collaborate on projects that benefit the wider community.



Environmentalism Leads Conservation Workshop for School Teachers

Arun Krishnamurthy, founder of the Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI), led a workshop for school teachers on conserving the environment. The participants discussed strategies and formulated a plan to effectively integrate environmental conservation projects into mainstream curriculum at their schools. The workshop offered school teachers structured modules on how to enhance their stu-

dents' leadership and decision-making on projects that advance environmental conservation. EFI will continue partnering with school teachers and set up eco clubs at different schools to engage students in conservation efforts through hands on projects. Arun participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation in 2010.



REWIND
HYDERABAD



North India Coordinator Interacts with International Exchange Alumni in Chandigarh

During a recent visit to Chandigarh on February 13-14, Jonathan Kessler, North India Coordinator at the U.S. Embassy, and Kala Dutta, Director of the American Library, met with four alumni: Manju Jaidka, Chairperson, Chandigarh Sahita Akademi (IVLP 1999); Arshinder Kaur, Founder of Eco & Agro Resource Management (Fulbright-Nehru Envi-

ronment Leadership Program 2010); Sarabjit Pandher, Special Correspondent, *The Hindu* (IVLP 2002); and Mahesh Sharma, Reader, Panjab University (Fulbright). They had a spirited discussion on socio-economic condition of the state of Punjab, its business environment, health and the drug abuse issue, cost of living, and education.

Money Money Money! Alumni Grant-Writing Workshop



On February 19, the American Center conducted a grant-writing workshop for alumni to inform them of USG grant opportunities and to develop their capacities to write effective grant proposals and budgets. The day-long workshop included a session by the PAS Admin Team on budget-writing and U.S. registration procedures. IVLP alumnus Sanjay Patra spoke on Indian regulations, and fellow alumni Meenu Venkateshwaran and Kamini Prakash led a two-

part interactive session: first on deconstructing the various elements of an effective proposal, and the second where participants practiced writing proposals and received feedback from peers and facilitators. The workshop was attended by 13 alumni of the IVLP, Fulbright, SUSI for Student Leaders programs, offering a networking opportunity for them. Almost 20 alumni from Hyderabad and Kolkata also joined the workshop via video conference.

Minister Counsellor Speaks at Alumni-organised Event in Lucknow

Minister Counsellor for Public Affairs, Walter Douglas, visited the University of Lucknow on February 23-25 with Mandeep Kaur, All India Principal Program Advisor, where he spoke on the "U.S.-India Strategic Partnership: Possibilities Post the Obama Visit." The open lecture was organized by Nishi Pandey, Chairperson, University of Lucknow,

SUSI for Scholars (2005) and IVLP 2010 alumna. Mr. Douglas and Ms. Kaur also interacted with other alumni at the University, including Manuka Khanna, Reader (IVLP 1994); Ashutosh Mishra, Reader (IVLP 2010); and Arvind Mohan (Professor, Economics & Director, Institute of Management Science, IVLP 2000).



Far Right: Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Walter Douglas, speaking at University of Lucknow in February.

Right: International Exchange Alumni with Embassy Staff (R-L)- Manuka Khanna, Arvind Mohan, Walter Douglas, Nishi Pandey, Ashutosh Mishra, and Mandeep Kaur

Alumni at the grant-writing workshop held at American Center New Delhi

REWIND
NEW DELHI



Influential Speakers from Seven Countries Gathered at the American Center to Speak at TEDxJanpath

At TEDxJanpath held on February 28, the American Center witnessed the coming together of influencers from across the world, for a day of networking and dialogue around the theme of "Lotus: Journey to Enlightenment." The event saw a stellar line-up of speakers from all walks of life: from a 13-year-old American New York Fashion Week designer to a Chinese Martial Arts specialist; from an Indian *Padma Bhushan* recipient to a British BAFTA Award-winning director/producer. The event was organized in part-

nership with Stuti Jalan, Founder & Managing Director of Crosshairs Communication and an alumna of the FORUNTE program. The Fusion Arts Exchange (NuFAX 2007) alumnus Arjun Sagar Gupta and his trio, The Variety Hour, regaled the audience with swing jazz music at the end of the day. The audience consisted of executives, entrepreneurs, artists, academics, government, civil society leaders, and students along with students. For more information, visit www.tedxjanpath.com.



NuFAXalumnus Arjun Sagar Gupta (on piano) playing with his trio, The Variety Hour;



Far Left: Exchange alumna Stuti Jalan curating TEDxJanpath;



Left: Pakistani FORTUNE alumna Madiha Sultan Tai sharing the story of her business in Karachi;



Audience members meditating during Master Li's session.

REWIND NEW DELHI



Alumni at the Lit for Life Fest

Over the past five years, The Hindu's Lit for Life Fest has become Chennai's greatest celebration of literature and culture, and has left an indelible mark on its literary conscience. Every year, several of our alumni regularly feature as speakers, presenters and panelists. Below is a snapshot of the "Who's Who" among our alumni spotted at this year's Lit Fest:



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1. Ms. Ammu Joseph, Freelance Journalist and Visiting Faculty, Asian College of Journalism, Chennai – (3rd from L) was panelist at a discussion on "Feminine Form: Site of Violence"

2. Retired Judge K. Chandru (IVLP alumnus) (3rd from L) in a panel on "Free Speech in Peril: The Issues at Stake"

3. 1993 IVLP alumna Ms. Sushila Ravindranath (1st from L) in a panel on "Images and imagery on memory"

4. International Writing Program at Iowa alumnus and Dalit activist, Meena Kandasamy (2nd from L) in a panel on "Power to the people in our time"

5. IVLP alumnus Rm. Palaniappan (1st from L) was a panelist on "What colored the line: a discussion"



5

Pictures Courtesy: www.thehindu.com

IVLP Alumna spearheads cancer awareness

IVLP Alumna Neerja Malik, Consultant-Counselor, Apollo (Cancer) Specialty Hospital in Chennai says "cancer is just a word!" in an interview to Thanthi TV. A cancer survivor herself, she attended the first ever IVLP on Breast Cancer Awareness in 2008. The interviewer Peer Mohamed is a 2014 IVLP alumnus. Watch a recording [here](#).

Salzburg Seminar alumnus Dr. Vinod Surana, Partner, Surana & Surana International Attorneys, appeared alongside Consul General Phillip Min as a speaker at the third edition of the Hindustan Young Leaders' Conference (HYLC) organized by KCG College of Technology, a unit of the Hindustan Group of Institutions. The event was held in collaboration with EuroMUN, the largest MUN Conference in Europe and the United Nations Information Centre India and Bhutan. [In the news](#)

IVLP alumnus Dr. Sandeep Shastri is a political analyst and pro Vice-Chancellor of Jain University in Bangalore. He is also the national coordinator of **Lokniti** (a network of scholars on comparative democracy). His article on "[Using the power of the ballot](#)" appeared in the Times of India, January 26, 2015

Salzburg Seminar grantee trains India's first rural journalists

Salzburg Seminar grantee and media trainer Vasanthi Hariprakash recently trained rural journalists in Lucknow in television reporting and camera techniques. Vasanthi was invited by India's first rural newspaper "Gaon

Connection" managed by a team of young and passionate rural journalists. Though only two years old, the newspaper won the coveted Ramnath Goenka award for journalism, for its coverage of "invisible India".



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Erode Entrepreneur Alumnus heads business organization and launches community efforts

Congratulations to IVLP alumnus and businessman from Erode Mr. Ahamed Sheik Mohideen Rafiq of KSK International on being elected Chairman of the Confederation of Industry (CII) – Erode Zone. As trustee of the NGO "Olirum Erode Foundation" (Erode Shining), he also reaches out to the community on issues of urban physical infrastructure, affordable healthcare, good quality education and skill development, water resource management and solid waste management in an effort to convert his town into a world class city. Rafiq is a second-generation entrepreneur whose family enterprise KSK International has been in such diverse fields such as leather manufacture and export and wind energy. The family also runs schools for disadvantaged sections of society and is involved in many corporate social responsibility activities for the needy.





THROUGH the GRAPPEVITINE CHENNAI

EVAA gathers IVLP alumna for a story-telling session at Chennai High School, Kotturpuram

IVLP alumna Dr. V.R. Devika, and her team from Aseema Trust gave the students at Chennai High School, Kotturpuram, a different experience including a multimedia story presentation on Mahatma Gandhi. The session was organized jointly by Ms. Maheshwari Kalpana Kannan, Headmistress, Chennai High School (SUSI alum-

na), and Dr. V.R. Devika, Committee Member of Exchange Visitor Alumni Association (EVAA). The Aseema Trust works towards building bridges between traditional performing arts and education. The organization also promotes Mahatma Gandhi and his ideas of truth and non-violence inside and outside schools.



Bringing expertise to education

How does one bring expertise to education? On February 8, IVLP alumna Dr. Lalitha Balakrishnan, Principal, M.O.P. Vaishnav College of Women, invited company law expert and Salzburg alumnus Dr. Vinod Surana to talk to the college's students at the National Seminar on Mergers & Acquisitions in February.



We shall overcome!

A proud moment for SUSI alumnus Kalpana Kannan, Headmistress, Chennai High School, Kottur and her school children who were featured on Thanthi TV on February 6. See the [video here](#).

IVLP alumna Dr. Saundarya Rajesh shared the stage with ACYPL alumnus Sarath Elumalai and addressed about 250 students at Loyola College's National Entrepreneurship Meet on behalf of The Indus Entrepreneurs, Chennai.

Alumnus' organization holds youth event

MAVA has been working over the past 22 years amongst youth to prevent violence against women, and organized "Yuva Abhiviyakti 2015," a two-day intercollegiate cultural event on January 10-11. Students from over 24 colleges across Mumbai took part in six different competitions on the theme of "Say

NO, Accept NO." IVLP alumnus Harish Sadani, Founder-Member and Chief functionary of MAVA, aims at empowering girls to say 'No' to verbal abuse, unwelcomed hugs, forced marriage, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dowry, and simultaneously making boys understand how to accept the 'No' by a girl.



Alumna writes about her CONTACT experience

SIT Graduate Institute's CONTACT (Conflict Transformation Across Cultures) program alumna, Nidhi Shendurnikar, shares an article written by her on the CONTACT experience in Nepal.

www.thealternative.in/society/sit-contact-programme-where-south-asia-lives-and-learns-together



THROUGH the GRAP EVITINE MUMBAI

Hubert Humphrey Fellows' National Conference in Delhi

Delhi was abuzz with activity when 48 Hubert Humphrey Fellows from all over India gathered at the India International Center for their first Association of Indian Humphrey Fellows National Conference on February 21. The theme for the conference was "Perspectives about Emerging India with a special focus on Climate Change and Governance," where the Fellows had an opportunity to share their work on these issues. The con-

ference offered the Fellows a chance to hold a General Body Meeting and to catch up with old friends. Congratulations to the Association – especially Chairperson Rita Sharma, Co-Chair Usha Bhasin, Secretary Gopi Ghosh, Joint-Secretary Arun Sharma, and Treasurer Swayamprabha Das – for a great effort in reuniting the Fellows! For more information, visit: <http://www.usief.org.in/Alumni/Association-of-Indian-HumphreyFellows.aspx>



THROUGH the
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Alumna Adi Nakhro participates in regional Hydrodiplomacy Workshop



Alumna Adi Nakhro participated in the Fulbright Regional Workshop on Water-Energy-Food Nexus in Nepal from February 9-13. Adi was part of the Indian alumni delegation at the regional workshop, which had representatives from all of the South Asian countries. The workshop was a great opportunity to meet and hold discussions with other experts

in the region, all of whom share similar concerns. Adi is excited with the takeaways from this program, as she says the workshop gave her an opportunity to learn and brainstorm with experts who work in the water sector in the region and has found opportunities and models of replication in her home state of Nagaland.

Alumni Connections Help Establish CII "Young Indians" Meghalaya Chapter

As a direct result of the connection established between two IVLP alumni - DNV Kumara Guru and Hasina Kharbhih - at the PechaKucha Entrepreneurship Roadshow event in July 2014 at ISB-Mohali, the Meghalaya Chapter of "Young Indians" (Yi) was launched in Shillong on January 21. Yi was formed in 2002 as an integral part of the Con-

federation of Indian Industry (CII), and its membership includes young Indian entrepreneurs and professionals, who are contributing to the Indian growth story. The Meghalaya Yi chapter is the 35th chapter in the country and first in the state. Kumara Guru is the National Chairman of Yi and Hasina is the Founder and CEO of Impulse Social Enterprises.

Launch of Young Indians-Meghalaya Chapter with IVLP alumni Hasina Kharbhih and DNV Kumara Guru. The event was attended by the Chief Minister of Meghalaya and other prominent members of the Meghalaya Government.



Water, Energy, and Food Security Experts Participate in Nepal Conference Sponsored by the Fulbright Commission

In partnership with the World Bank, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, the Nepal Water Conservation Foundation, and the U.S. Embassy, Nepal, the Fulbright Commission in Nepal hosted regional workshop on the Nexus of Water, Energy, and Food in February 2015. Fulbright and IVLP alumni from Hyderabad who participated in this conference included: Dr. Prati-bha Moturi, Principal Scientist in Agronomy at the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture; Dr. Mohammed Mohibbe Azam, an Organic Chemist and Principal Scientist at the Directorate of Rice Research; Dr. Kota



Tirupataiah, Additional Director General at Dr. Marri Channa Reddy Human Resources Development Institute of Andhra Pradesh; Mr. Ramana Babu Killi, an innovative green agriculturalist, and Mr. Ranjan Panda, Convener of Water Initiatives, Odisha.

Hyderabad Poet Participates in the Karachi Literature Festival 2015

Accomplished Hyderabad poet, author, photographer, and film editor, Sridala Swami, participated in the Karachi Literature Festival (KLF) in February 2015. At KLF, Sridala gave readings, participated in writing workshops, and engaged in programs facilitated by Consulate Karachi's Public Affairs Section. Sridala conducted poetry and creative writing workshops for 100 students from Sindh Madressatul Islam University. She also led interactive classes with



young girls and boys from underprivileged backgrounds. Sridala was a Writer in Residence at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa in 2013. She recently unveiled her second volume of poetry, *Escape Artist* (New Delhi: Aleph, 2014). Sridala has also authored *Reluctant Survivor* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2007), her first collection of poems, and four books for young children, published by Pratham Books. (Photo credit: Greg Bal)

IVLP alumna Organizes International Conference on "Education For All"

Dwiti Vikramaditya ("Aditya") is a Senior Advisor and a Trustee at the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. KISS is one of the largest, free residential schools for tribal children in India. He recently organized a 3-day international conference titled "Education for All," under the auspices of the Center for American Studies at KISS. The conference focused on critical issues emerging from the nexus of education, poverty, culture, and health. Many renowned academics and scholars, education specialists, representatives of NGOs and policymakers participated in the conference, including twelve American Fulbright scholars and Piya Bahadur, the Regional Officer of United

States India Educational Foundation (USIEF) in Hyderabad. Aditya participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program on NGO Management in 2008.



THROUGH *the* GRAP EVENTINE HYDERABAD



On Wildlife Conservation: An Evening with Bagh and Darwin's Great-Great Granddaughter

Perna Singh Bindra (IVLP 2012) and her wildlife conservation trust, Bagh, organized a reading and discussion with award-winning poet, author, conservationist, and Charles Darwin's great-great-granddaughter, Ruth Padel, and author and conservationist, Valmik Thapar, on January 28 in New Delhi. Padel read from her books on tiger conserva-

tion, *Tigers in Red Weather*, her novel on wildlife crime, *Where the Serpent Lives*, as well as poems and prose on human and animal migration. This was followed by a discussion with Valmik Thapar on his new book, *Wildfire*, and his forthcoming work on sustainable ways in which Indians can continue to live alongside their magnificent wildlife.



Perna Singh Bindra at discussion with Ruth Padel in Delhi

Personal to Political: IVLP alumna recounts recent experience with Hillary Clinton

Ashima Kaul, Founder of Yakjah and IVLP (2008) alumna was in transit in Washington, DC on her way back to India after completing her Joan B. Kroc Women Peacemakers Fellowship (2014) at the Institute for Peace and Justice, University of San Diego, when she had the opportunity to hear Hilary Clinton speak at Georgetown University. She wrote to us recounting her recent experience. Read on to see what she has to say:

Emerging women's leadership across the world and in local communities ravaged and polarized by ethnic, religious, and political conflicts has a message for all of us. As I listened to Hillary Clinton speak at the beautiful and majestic Gaston Hall in Georgetown University on December 3, 2014, I was transported to the year 2008 when I had participated in an annual Colloquium by the Institute for Inclusive Security. The speech resonated and invoked thoughts as I traced my peace-building journey from the grassroots in Kashmir to an international women's network. It had given me confidence and leverage to push 'my politics' for peace in Kashmir. Powerful women like Hillary Clinton; Ambassador Swanee Hunt, the woman behind the Institute for Inclusive Security; Ambassador Melanne Verwee and scores of others are constantly pushing the agenda, giving so many of us strength to percolate and filter it through grassroots in our communities and regions.

I had the opportunity to take a picture with Ms. Clinton when the Colloquium participants were invited to a luncheon hosted by her during the Presidential Election in 2008. And as I heard her speak at the inaugural ceremony of the National Action Plan Academy in Georgetown, "Smart Power: Security Through Inclusive Leadership," saying, "When women participate in peace processes, often overlooked issues such as human rights, individual justice, national reconciliation, economic renewal are often brought to the forefront," I couldn't but think that sustained leadership does manifest change. Undoubtedly recognition of women's contribution to bringing peace and inclusive politics has the potential to transform the language and narratives of conflicts. Women need to be encouraged to build peace, since in doing so, they are naturally doing what they do best - include and empathize. To build the capacity and skills of women around the world, women like Hillary and Swanee have played exceptional roles. The 'inclusive' mantra coined by Swanee years ago is now reverberating globally and at policy levels. I feel so re-inspired and proud to be part of the Inclusive Security family and the Women Waging Peace Network.

I had a flight to catch later in the afternoon on December 3, but in no circumstances would I have missed meeting Hillary and Swanee!

Ashima Kaul, IVLP 2008 alumna



Lest We Forget – A Campaign towards Women’s Safety

Delhi-based NGO SLAP, in association with the American Center and Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ), took the ‘Lest We Forget’ campaign to Sheroes’ Hangout, Agra. The open workshop on ‘Women’s Safety & Street Survival’ was organized on Valentine’s Day to show solidarity towards the brave survivors of acid attack. Team SLAP presented Sheroes’ with ‘Women of Strength’ certificates and punching gloves as a mark of their respect for the women’s spirit to fight back. Participants were trained on combating as-

sault and on the usage of pepper spray for self-defense. A dance-drama was also organized on the theme of ‘raise your voice’ to encourage bystander intervention against gender-based violence. This Agra workshop was the second in a series of eight workshops to be held in North India, sponsored by the American Center, New Delhi. SLAP was founded by IVLP (2014) alumna, Mriganka.

IVLP alumna and SLAP Founder, Mriganka, with workshop participants at Sheroes’ Hangout, Agra



Water and Food Security Expert Alumni Participate in Kathmandu Regional Conference

Thirteen Indian alumni and one Bhutanese alumna, all experts on water, energy and food security from government and non-government sectors, participated in the Fulbright Regional Workshop on Water Energy Food Nexus in Kathmandu on February 9-13, where they interacted with their counterparts from the South Asian countries. In the words of IVLP alumnus and Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Dr. Shresth Tayal, “The two-way relationships between energy and water, water and climate change, and energy and climate change have also been studied to some extent. However, a study of the three-way dynamic relationship between all three issues is necessary to develop nation-

al policies which meet India’s development objectives in a sustainable manner.” The alumni who had participated from North India and Bhutan included: **Ravinder Kaur**, ICAR National Fellow & Senior Scientist, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) (Fulbright scholar 2010); **Suresh Kumar Rohilla**; Program Director, Centre for Science and Environment (Fulbright scholar 2012), **Shresth Tayal**, Fellow, TERI (IVLP 2013), **Aruna Tyagi**, Principal Scientist, IARI (Fulbright scholar 2010); **Hema Yadav**, Deputy Director, CCS National Institute of Agricultural Marketing (IVLP 2011), and **Kinlay Tshering**, Chief Horticulture Officer, Department of Agriculture, Government of Bhutan (IVLP 2013)

Then and Now: Continuing Connections

In October of 2008 Feza Sengel of Turkey, Biba Dodeva of Macedonia and Chennai-based Neerja Malik, Consultant Counsellor at a leading hospital, met for the first time in Washington, DC, as part of the first-ever IVLP on breast cancer.

In 2014, they united once more, in India this time, where Feza and Biba participated as faculty at the Apollo Cancer Conclave (on invitation by Neerja Malik).

Representing their countries, they shared their experiences on spreading awareness on breast cancer, its prevention, treatment and cure. Their presence was highly appreciated and the newer methods they spoke about were eye openers for the other participants. Shows how bonds made during IVLP experiences last and make a difference years after the program.



a. Neerja Malik with Feza Sengel at the exchange program;
 b. Exchange alumna Neerja Malik, Feza Sengel and Biba Dodeva in Chennai, India circa 2014
 c. Feza Sengel and Biba Dodeva speaking and sharing their insights on cancer awareness at the Apollo Cancer Conclave in 2014

KUDOS!

CHENNAI



Legislative Fellow, social entrepreneur, and soft skills trainer Sridevi Kannan was featured in a recent issue of the hugely popular Tamil weekly "Kumudam Snegidhi."



We congratulate IVLP alumna Bismi Gopalakrishnan's recent appointment as the Honorary Director of the Center for Human Rights and Social Justice at the University of Kerala.



SUSI alumna's small-grants project in the news

SUSI alumna Dr. Sanhita Athawale was one of three people to win the U.S. Consulate General Mumbai's small-grant competition last year for her peace-building project. The lecture mentioned in the article took place on January 24.

'Online terrorism gaining ground in India'

Experts stress on the need to educate youth on this issue

Sakal Times

SHIVANI SINGH

reporters@sakaaltimes.com

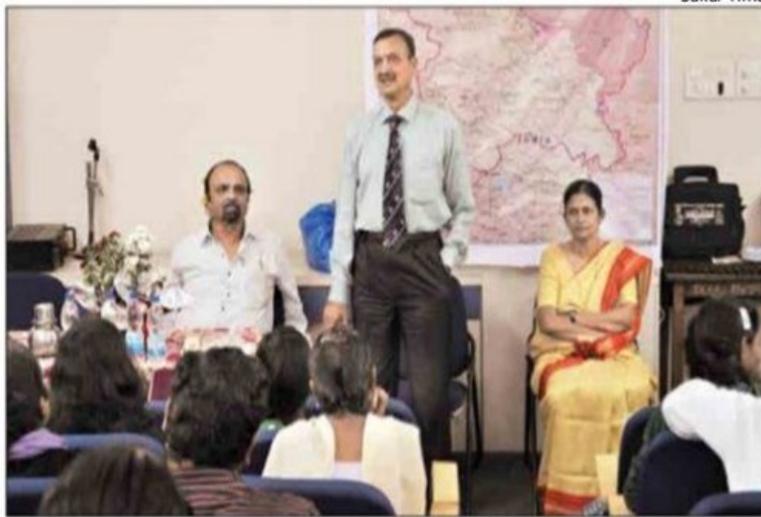
Khadki: Online terrorism is gaining ground in India and the youth should be able to recognise it, said Brig (Retd) Hemant Mahajan at a lecture organised by the National Social Service (NSS) and the Peace and Happy Club (PHC), TJ College, Khadki on Saturday.

The lecture was organised keeping in view recent incidents of online terrorism like ISIS recruiting Indian youth online and the spread of terror videos on social media.

Other speakers at the event included Col (Retd) PP Marathe and Dr Sanhita Athawale, Professor and Head of Department, Banking and Finance, TJ College.

"Social media has the ability to spread rumours in a matter of seconds. We should be alert and report objectionable content immediately," said Mahajan.

He added that in the JM Road blasts aftermath, many posts flooded the social media and in the race to get more likes/ shares.



EDUCATION: (L to R) Col (retd) PP Marathe, Brig (Retd) H Mahajan and Dr Sanhita Athawale, HoD, Banking, during the lecture in TJ College, Khadki, on Saturday.

Many youth exaggerated figures of the dead and injured. "This is a very dangerous trend and the youth should be educated about online terrorism," he stressed.

Citing the recent example of a Kalyan youth joining the ISIS, Mahajan stated that the youth are often attracted to this due to ease of accessibility, easy money.

Col (Retd) Marathe, too, advised the youth to filter their posts and refrain from sharing objectionable content which hurt religious or community sentiments.

The focus was to educate the youth about terrorism. "Usually dissatisfied youth who are unemployed turn to this route for fast money," added Col (Retd) Marathe.

A history and review of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir was also discussed along with what role the youth could play in shaping its future. The NSS and PHC clubs, which have got grants from the US government, were started by Dr Athawale in order to make the youth understand their role in peace building.

Article on alumnus created technology that won International Award

IVLP alumnus Biplab Paul's technology Bhungroo gets global recognition.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Gujarats-Bhungroo-gets-global-recognition/articleshow/45768141.cms>

KUDOS! MUMBAI





KUDOS! KOLKATA

Alumni competition winner successfully completes project on GBV

Sakira Sahin, winner of the grant competition at the Alumni Mentorship program organized by the U.S. Consulate, Kolkata, in Guwahati, 2013, and alumnus Dr. Syed Ahmed, visited the American Center Kolkata to discuss the progress of the project. Sakira was awarded a grant of \$2500 to work on a project on Countering Gender-Based Violence against Women in Kamrup

district of Assam State. Mentored by Dr. Ahmed, the project saw the establishment of a successful model that includes the wide dissemination of information, legal literacy campaigns and the training of legal and health personnel. The formation of community trained volunteers in each village has ensured the sustainability of the project well beyond its time period of a year.



A resource person conducts awareness training for the villagers



Volunteers and resource people at a GBV awareness meeting site

Alumnus Miguel Queah featured on print and electronic media for his work on child rights

Miguel Queah, two-time alumnus from Guwahati, has been featured in *The Times of India* newspaper as well as interviewed by T.V. channel, DY 365, for his work on promoting child rights. Miguel has been fighting a long battle for the recognition and implementation of child rights in the state of Assam, and he works with the marginalized and

underserved communities. Miguel spoke with the media about the incidence and level of child rights abuse in the state of Assam, the challenges and obstacles he faces in dealing with the situation, recommendations made to the Government and plans looking ahead. Congratulations Miguel on doing an incredible job!

KUDOS! KOLKATA



Below: Miguel being interviewed on DY 365

Left: Miguel's interview in The Times of India, Guwahati edition



IVLP Gold Star alumna Hasina Kharbhih to co-host The Wonders of India for BBC Natural UNIT

The BBC Natural History Unit (NHU) is producing a series call the Wonders of India, celebrating the spectacular wildlife and beautiful landscapes of the country. IVLP Gold Star alumna Hasina Kharbhih will be co-hosting the first episode of the series along with main presenter, Freida Pinto, at the Sacred Groves and Root Bridges Meghalaya. To

be telecast in September 2015, the series will cover the wonders of India's natural beauty and diversity, from the mighty Himalayas in the North to the Western Ghats in the South and criss-crossing all over the East and West. Great job kick-starting this initiative by getting the wonders of Meghalaya on to the world map, Hasina!

Alumna Hasina Kharbhih in conversation with presenter Frieda Pinto at the Mawphlong Sacred Groves



Investment Banker-Odia Village Chief Honored by Indian Student Parliament

Arati Devi, an investment banker from Odisha who became, perhaps, the youngest *sarpanch* (village chief) in India, was conferred the Model Young Village Chief Award by the 5th Indian Student Parliament on January 12, 2015 in Pune. Arati pioneered efforts to streamline the public distribution system, start

literacy campaigns for women, and help change the minds of villagers in Odisha in a concerted effort to make local government transparent and governance participatory and user-friendly. Arati participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program on State and Local Governments in 2013.



Environmental Scientist Recognized by the Indian Water Works Association

Dr. Syeda Azeem Unnisa, an environmental scientist, was honored by the Indian Water Works Association at its 47th Annual Convention on January 30, 2015. Syeda co-authored a case study titled "Water SCADA – Innovative IT Solution for Improving Urban Water Supply." The Minister of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Mr. Subhrotho Mukherjee, presented the award to Syeda. In December 2014, she was invited by Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Japan International Cooperation Agency to participate in a workshop on urban

environmental management in Tokyo, Japan. Syeda participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation in 2012.



KUDOS!
HYDERABAD



IVLP Alumna Introduces President Obama During his Delhi Visit

Neha Buch, IVLP (2014) alumna and CEO of the non-profit organization, Pravah, introduced U.S. President Barack Obama at the Town Hall Meeting at Siri Fort on January 27. Neha spoke passionately about her shared belief in empathy and the importance of encouraging youth to become agents of social

change. Neha's speech was widely covered by the national and international media, including in *The Wall Street Journal* (see [here](#)) and in *The Indian Express* (see article written by SUSI for Student Leaders alumna, Naveed Iqbal, [here](#)). Over thirty alumni from various exchange programs also attended the event.



L: IVLP alumna Neha Buch introducing President Obama before his speech at Siri Fort; R: alumni as part of the 1500-strong audience attending the event

KUDOS! NEW DELHI



Kashmiri IVLP Alumna Continues Efforts to Revitalise Livelihoods After Floods

While in Delhi recently, IVLP (2015) alumna Arifa Jan's efforts to promote sustainable rural livelihoods in Kashmir, especially for women, was highlighted in *The Times of India* newspaper. Arifa, Managing Partner of Incredible Kashmiri Crafts (IFC), actively works to revive traditional livelihoods based on crafts and textiles. She has recently launched a new project focusing on pashmina, whereby 25 men and women from the local community in and around Srinagar, have formed a self-help group to strengthen their market linkages and give a boost to their enterprises adversely affected by the floods last year.

Kashmiris stitch back their lives torn apart by floods

Hopes Stay Afloat Even As Means Of Livelihood Washed Away

Suhans.Manshi@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The devastating floods that struck the valley just before winters have given Kashmiris little choice but to begin rehabilitation work immediately. Artisans who've lost their stock and supply of raw materials are back in their shops helped by people like Shabir Lone, who's devised a portable loom for Karli shawl weaving, a major source of livelihood for Kashmiri craftspeople.

Lone's little invention has come just in time—not only to the traditional weavers, mostly men, who lost their looms after their houses were washed away but also as an encouragement and source of employment to women who spend most of their time at home and can't go out looking for jobs.

"There were about 10,000 Karli weavers in the valley once. Their numbers have fallen to fewer than 2,000 now because it is a male-dominated trade that requires two years of apprenticeship," Lone explains. His portable loom reduces the size of the device to that of a foot-powered sewing machine, which has provided employment to 25 women in his hometown of Baramullah who now earn Rs 1,200 a month. His plan is to improvise on the machine and help more women earn livelihoods independently.

Lone's instrument, along



FROM THE VALLEY: Karli weaver Arifa shows off her wares; (right) wazwan at Kashmir Festival at Andheria Mod



with handicrafts of 23 Kashmiri participants, most of who have stepped out of Kashmir for the first time since floods, are on display at the Kashmir Festival, Kisan Haat, Andheria Mod.

Lone developed his loom with financial aid by Commitment to Kashmir (CtoK) which is organizing the event with Dastkar. "We founded CtoK with 2011 after several craftspeople lost their livelihoods during disturbance in the state. Our aim was to mentor people, provide them with financial aid and help them find right markets," said Shirati Mittal, programme coordinator.

One of the artisans who found her market was Arifa, a Karli weaver from Kashmir, who's also come with her stock

for sale at the festival. Arifa, who lost a part of her stock in the recent floods, has found a market in Kyrgyzstan and was recently invited by the US to be part of their International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Similarly, Sajid Ahmad Dar, a wicker wood craftsman, lost his entire harvest of wicker in the flood, but he's now found work and is now trying to help bring the trade of wicker work to his fellow artisans in Genderbel in Kashmir.

The festival hasn't received tremendous response yet but all the participants are expecting the coming weekend to bring customers and revenues. A customer at Manooz's shawl shop (he started with an investment of Rs 2 lakh and is now handling

orders worth over Rs 50 lakh) finds the price of a shawl too much and tells Manooz as much, and just then the public address system announces customers to not engage in bargaining, causing both to break into laughter.

The mood isn't one of despondency; most of the artisans are full of hope. There's traditional Kashmiri wazwan, complete with *riates* (meatballs), *rogan josh* (meat in red curry) and *yakdhani* (meat with curd) and cups of *fahneh* to cheer people up. The festival, being held between the 11th and 22nd of this month, hosts some of the best chefs, artisans and performers of Kashmir who are working to get back on their feet after the crippling floods.

CCIP Alumnus becomes Ministry of Minority Affairs Scholar

Zulfiqar Sheth, 28, alumnus of CCIP 2011-12, was honored with the prestigious Maulana Azad National Fellowship Award by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, for the year 2014-15. The Maulana Azad National Fellowship for minority students awarded to research students pursuing regular and full time M. Phil and Ph.D. courses

on the basis of academic and research excellence. The fellowship holders under this Fellowship will be known as Ministry of Minority Affairs Scholars. Zulfiqar Sheth is a doctoral fellow at Department of Economics, Aligarh Muslim University, and currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Jerusalem, Israel.



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- SHANCHUI MARCHANG, NESA ALUMNA, DELHI



LOOK OUT FOR

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