



Building trust across the world's divides

Initiatives of Change

AP Newsletter - Nov 2015

**Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit
Where the mind is led forward by thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.
-Rabindranath Tagore**

Asia Plateau Newsletter

Editorial

“The disappointment caused by the West’s inaction created a fertile recruiting ground for extremists, who told those who had lost their loved ones that they were their only hope”, said a 26-year old civil society activist in Syria.

More than 2,50,000 Syrians have lost their lives in four-and-a-half years of armed conflict, which began with anti-government protests before escalating into a full-scale civil war. More than eleven million others have been forced from their homes as force loyal to President Bashar-al-Asad and those opposed to his rule battle each other.

A report published by the UN in March 2015 estimated the total economic loss since the start of the Syrian conflict was \$202 bn. and that four in every five Syrians are now living in poverty - 30 % of them in abject poverty. Syria’s education, health and social welfare systems are also in a state of collapse.

Violence escalates and the country descends into civil war impacting citizens beyond measure, the ripple effect of which is woefully spreading across the world.

Asia Plateau lately brought together 108 teachers from India, three of whom were Lebanese, namely, Roweida Saleh, Wadiaa Khoury and Roy Saab, for Education Today Society Tomorrow conference. Our three Lebanese guests conducted “Education for peace” session for Indian teachers in this conference, in which they shared that Lebanon is a country which has been witnessing civil

war since last 4000 years mostly because of the neighbouring countries of which Syria is also a part and now one of their biggest challenging situations is welcoming two million Syrian refugees, being themselves a nation of four million population. Many Lebanese are trying to rebuild the otherwise lost peace in the country and to rehabilitate the Syrian refugees, bringing hope in their lives, who once were one of the reasons of their hopelessness.

“Isolation is a kind of aggression done to a child, if we ignore a student. Ten years down the road; this child is going to be the one who will destroy peace of others because his own peace was disrupted. Don’t make any child feel aggressive, if you want to see peace in the world”, said Roy Saab.

What is crisis?

Liberal values in danger

Myths over religion

Extremism over moderation

Hate speech and bigotry

Minorities under threat

Climate change

Scholars silenced

Superstars humiliated

TV debating “Tolerance” everyday?

- Asma

Can we be the CHANGE we want to see in the world??

Asia Plateau Programmes

ELL for Industries:

Fourty Six Participants from 6 companies came to a four-day Effective Living and Leadership (ELL) program of which Neeru Gandhi was the course director. She led them ably in discussions for how to equip people to play their part in building a better society. A follow-up meeting for John Deere company was done by Mr.Kiran Gandhi, Sudhir Gogate and Emmanuel Braggs after the programme. The impact reported by the 16 participants one month after their return from Asia Plateau was commendable.

Personal change reported

- My mindset got cleared
- Some strained relationships have got stabilised
- Gave up chewing tobacco

To read the detailed report [click here](#)

ELL for Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication (SCMC)

Asia Plateau welcomed the 15th batch of SCMC comprising 131 students from 10 different nationalities, along with their four faculty members for 4-day Effecting Living and Leadership programme. “To make others feel special, you have to believe that you are special”, that was the spirit with which Mayur Shah, the Course director, led this 4-day programme sowing the seeds of ethics in the field of future media. Suresh Khatri, in his key-note address, left the students with a thought provocative question, “Am I the Indian, India needs today?” To read the detailed report [click here](#)

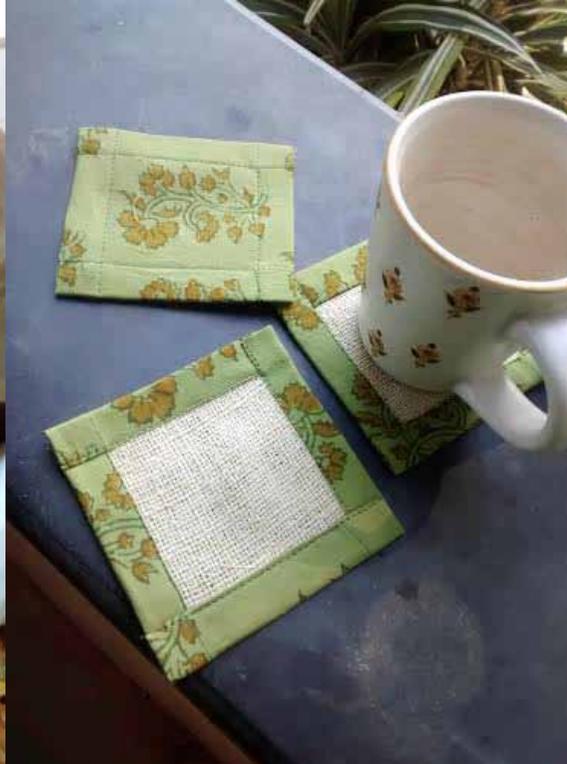
Education Today Society Tomorrow program for Educators:

Under the guidance of Asha varma, the Course director, this ETST programme brought together 108 teachers along with a team from Lebanon aiming at inculcating values and teaching ethics to the educators of our country through the process of self-rumination and assessment to look within ourselves to fix the true problem with our education system. This programme was fully sponsored by Transasia Bio-Medicals Ltd. Mr.Anupam Siddhartha, Director SCMC, was the guest speaker at the inaugural, in which he said, “When teachers practice the values they preach, world will witness a long lasting change.”

To read the detailed report [click here](#)



Vibrant Grampari



LIVELIHOODS

We had a 15 day residential programme for 20 girls of which 12 girls came from nomadic tribes. These girls were from an ashram in Satara. Apart from the usual training, English speaking (with a new teacher George Fitzherbert) Mobile Repairs, Sewing, we ran the first plumbing course for the girls. They thoroughly enjoyed it.

Chiguru: a more exclusive range of products with a real focus on quality and ethical sourced natural material was launched. We have taken efforts to ensure that the pricing of the products is entirely transparent. Products are: coasters, aprons, table mats and napkins, oven mitts. It's already generated a lot of orders.



School Handwashing Program (SHP)

14 of the teachers from schools that Grampari visits for the School Hand washing with Soap Programme attended the ETST programme. 6 schools were visited to follow up on the work conducted till date and the topic of absolute unselfishness was the focus of the Quiet Time in these schools.

GOVERNANCE

Follow up from the sarpanch meeting we had our first training meeting in which one of the lady sarpanches said that the understanding she gained from learning about the different schemes has inspired her to stop leaving all the decisions to her brother in law and husband to take decisions on her own. Governance meetings and shramadan work have been a regular feature in Dhanovli and Viver.



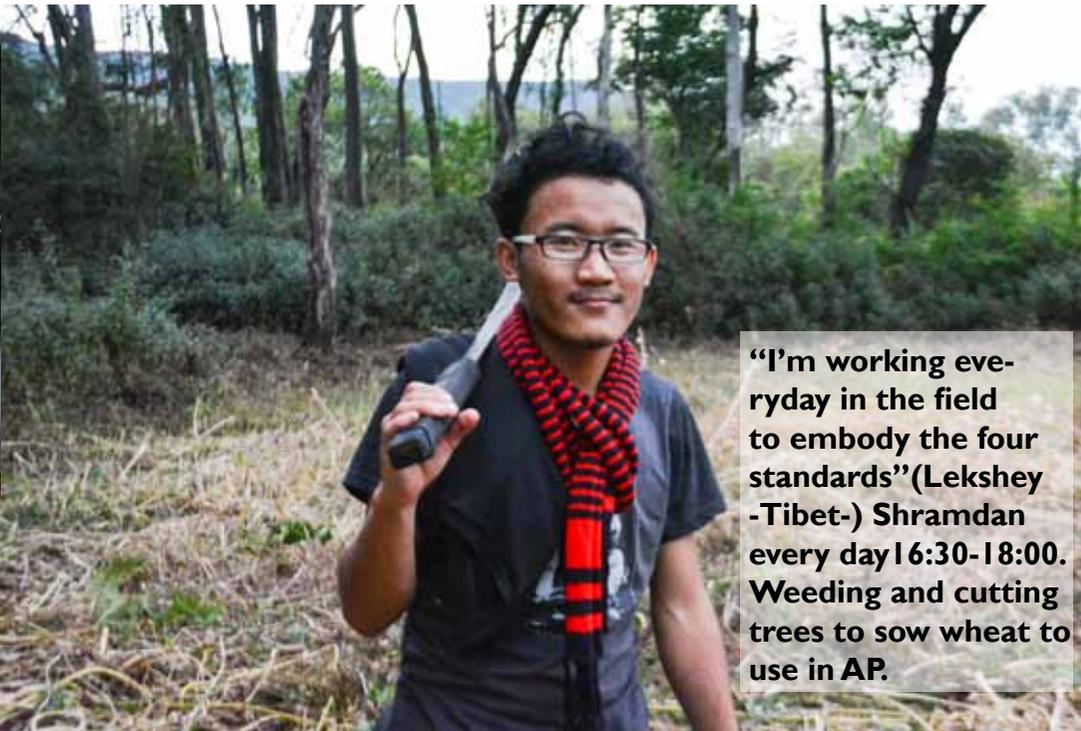
YOUTH

The Gram Vikas Yuva Manch meeting started with Goteghar Village which won the Second prize in the Eco Friendly Ganesh Festival Competition. We also visited Dhanovli this month and created a similar programme. We spoke about the problems the youth have today. Following the boys residential programme, the boys from Viver were keen to do something constructive. We worked with them to repair leaking taps in their village. The youth team are currently planning a college outreach programme in the area and so spent a large part of the month meeting principles of various colleges.

WATERSHED

Dhananjay Ambrale and Ankita Yadav attended and presented at a large meeting in Yashada in Pune talking about the importance of Participatory Ground water management and the importance of the Aquifer Committee that Grampari is setting up. Archana Rao attended and presented at an India Pakistan Dialogue on how to build community through the use of water. The importance of Aquifers in peace building, community building as well as ensuring the health of springs and rivers is becoming more and more apparent.

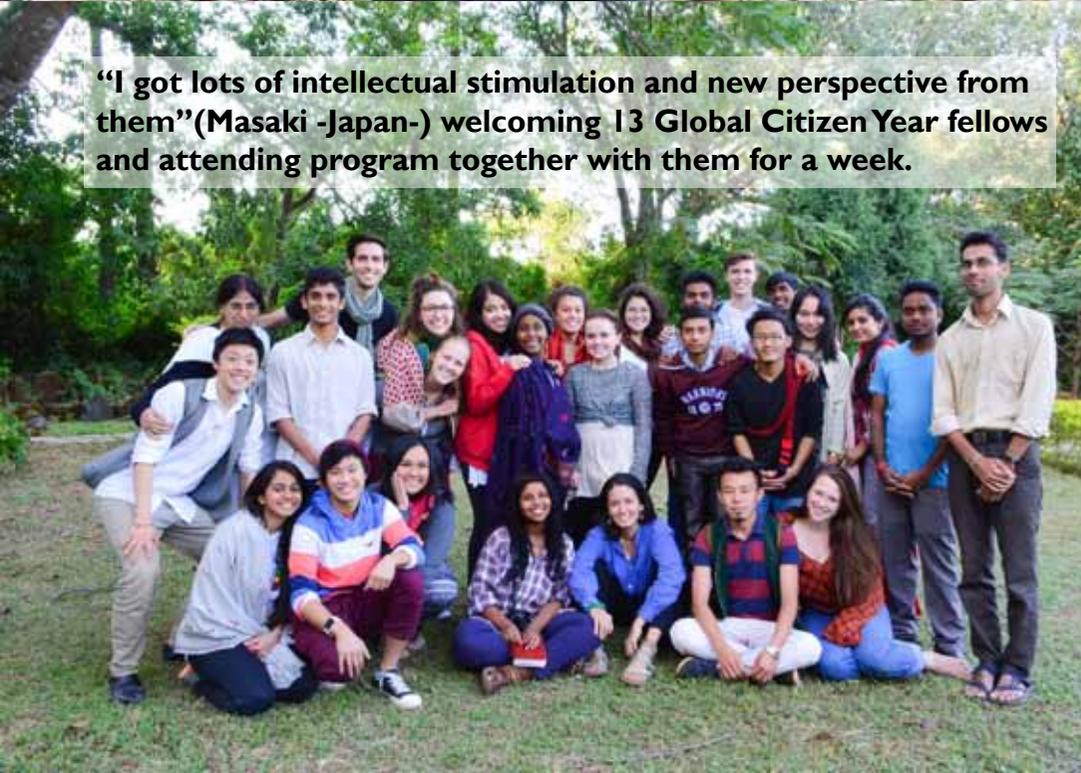
Interns Corner



“I’m working everyday in the field to embody the four standards”(Lekshey -Tibet-) Shramdan every day 6:30-18:00. Weeding and cutting trees to sow wheat to use in AP.



“I was very happy to share my story about establishing coaching NGO in my village because I found that many people were facing a similar issue that I faced”(Surjeet -India-) Conducting 2 sessions about life and four standards for the fellows of residential program in grampari.



“I got lots of intellectual stimulation and new perspective from them”(Masaki -Japan-) welcoming 13 Global Citizen Year fellows and attending program together with them for a week.



“They were very friendly and beautiful. I had different image about them before” (Kunchok-Tibet-)After making a big circle with 29 Nagaland students discussing about the feelings and treatment they are facing as Indian.

CIB Programs and Outreach in India - Nov. 16 to Dec. 2, 2015

1. CIB Round Table at Mumbai on Nov. 27, 2015:

Thirty nine persons, many of whom were senior business and industry leaders attended the lively Round Table titled “Is Business ready to Change itself, to Change India?”. The event which began at 9.30 am continued till 1 pm, followed by lunch. Neville Gandhi, VP (Compliance), Siemens Ltd., warmly welcomed the delegates at the company Convention Centre located at their Worli H.O. Sarosh Ghandy then briefly explained the history and programs of CIB which was followed with Vivek Asrani, MD, Kaymo Fasteners very effectively facilitating the Round Table. Starting with what are the challenges business face to change itself, he then steered the delegates to share on what steps individual business are already doing to change itself and India. He then ended the deliberations with, “what are my take-aways from this Round Table.” It was an inspiring and learning time for the many who attended. Many thanks to Siemens Ltd. for sponsoring the event. A full report will appear on “CIB on Wings - Dec. 2015 issue” which is made available on their website, <www.cibglobal.org>.



2. CIB Central Steering Council Meeting at Mumbai on Nov. 28, 2015:

Twelve persons from the CIB team met to discuss issues related to CIB, several travelling from as far as Germany, Jamshedpur, Bangalore, Goa, Panchgani and Pune, besides Mumbai. Thanks to the generosity of Vivek Asrani, the team met at ABACA, Mahalakshmi. Many matters were deliberated upon including strengthening City Chapters, planning for the CIB 2016 International Conference, etc. Skype meetings were also had with Japanese members and Trust and Integrity for a Global Economy (TIGE) team.



3. CIB Outreach:

Luis Gomes joined Folker Mittag from Germany to help support City Chapters in Pune and Mumbai and enlist delegates from business and industry for CIB's 6th Biennial International Conference at Panchgani on "Making Business an Engine for Sustainable Growth" from Jan. 22 to 26, 2016.

At Pune from Nov. 18 to 25, 2015, Sanjiv Mehta prepared the ground work and fixed various appointments from Nov. 18 to 25, 2015. Here they interacted with (a) Prashant Pansare, MD together with his senior team of Inteliment Technologies (India) Pvt. Ltd.; (b) Mohan Nair, Director, Prasad Rao, Head Operations, Ms. Fiona Coutinho, HR Manager and their team at Esquire Healthcare & Logistics Pvt. Ltd., (c) Sumedh Gurjar, Director, Centre for Research & Documentation, YASHADA, (d) Dr. Asmita Chitnis, Director and Dr. Prakash Rao, Dy. Director, Symbiosis Institute of International Business; (e) Farhad Forbes, Rati Forbes, Rhea Forbes, Darius and Marookh Forbes, Naushad Forbes, Hans; (f) Shishir Joshipura, MD, SKF India Ltd.; (g) Pradeep Bhargava, Director Cummins Diesel Ltd.; (h) Maj. Gen. Jatar (Retd), (i) Emmanuel David, Director and Lt. Col. M. Ravishankar (Retd.) of Tata Management Training Centre. In Pune, they also met Farida and Habil Poonawala, CIB Pune



Team members - Lt. Col. Allan Burby (Retd), Kiran Gandhi, Sudhir Gogate apart from Sanjiv; Prof. (Dr.) Mrs. Rajani Gupte, Vice Chancellor, Symbiosis International Institute and Mr. Rajiv Gupte, MD, Intech Solutions.

At Mumbai from Nov. 16 to 18 and again from Nov. 25 to Dec. 2, 2015, they met (j) R. Gopalakrishnan, Director, Tata Sons Ltd. Together with Anil Chopra, Convenor Mumbai Chapter and VP (Tech. Skills), Siemens Ltd., they met (k) Ramesh NGS, MD & CEO Stockholding Corporation of India Ltd.; (l) Ms. Anuradha Gandhi, Director, Vimal K. Ladha, CFO and their Head of HR, Property Solutions (India) Pvt. Ltd.

Folker Mittag also addressed Post-graduate Business Administration (MBA) students and faculty on "Business Ethics" and "International Business" at Pune : (m) Department of Management Sciences (PUMBA) of Savitribai Phule Pune



University where they were hosted by Dr. B.V. Sangvikar, Professor and Head of Department; (n) Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS), where they were hosted by Prof. Dr. Pravin Bhojar, Dy. Director and Prof. Ms. Ravinder Kaur; (o) Symbiosis Institute

of Computer Studies and Research (SICSR) where they were hosted by Lalit Kathpalia, Director.

In Mumbai, Folker also addressed MBA students and faculty of (p) K J Somaiya Institute of Management Studies & Research and here they were hosted by Dr. Monica Khanna, Acting Director and Prof. Ms. Mehta.

The above visit of Folker and Luis hoped to sow seeds in strengthening future activities of CIB Pune and Mumbai Chapters and enlisting a few business leaders from Pune and Mumbai for the CIB International Conference apart from encouraging all they interacted with in making this place a better world through the transparent quality of one's life.



News from Initiatives of Change for Life (IfL) Team

November was a month to come together - Come together as a team, in our thoughts, in spirit and being. The IfL team members who had gone to Sri Lanka returned to Asia Plateau to join the others. After the new IfLers - Anup, Stephania and Gaurav - joined in, this was the first time the whole team came together.

We brought back with us a lot of hope from and for Sri Lanka. Our time in the island made it clear for us that the doors and hearts of people there are open to change. We are in the process of creating a proposal to continue work in Sri Lanka. All of us feel very strongly that if we give our best to this neighbour of ours, we can see real change in a decade.

While at Asia Plateau, before we set out again, we have been using our time to brainstorm to create new sessions. We had a quiet day to allow ourselves to dive deeper and connect with ourselves and see our role in the bigger picture. Every evening we sat together to look deeply at the different issues in the



world and seek guidance on our role in bringing peace. Some evenings were used for reading and deepening our understanding of the life of Frank Buchman.

We took on to clear four of the agricultural plots on the AP campus with interns so that they can be used to grow crops. We were involved in some of the sessions of various AP programs: SIMC, Educators' program, and workshops with a group of international students who were here for a Global Citizen's Year program. Wangyal and Anup participated in a 2 day workshop done by the Institute of Cultural Af-

fairs on group facilitation, and did a few sessions for our team to pass on the knowledge gained.

It has been a month of reaching out in a different way.

"I shall pass through this life but once. Any good therefore that I can do, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it. For I shall never pass this way again"

– Etienne de Grellet

A Clean, Caring, Prosperous India for a Sustainable Future



Asia Plateau, IofC-MRA Centre,
Panchgani - 412805



www.in.iofc.org www.iofc.org



(02168) 240241/42



ap@in.iofc.org



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