



Building trust across the world's divides

Initiatives of Change

AP Newsletter - January 2015



*Greetings
from
Asia Plateau !*

New Initiatives

IofC for Life (IFL)
Caux Scholars Program (CSP)

ASIA PLATEAU

Ethics in Public Governance
Let's make a difference
Effective Living and Leadership
Heart of Effective Leadership

Programmes

Volunteer Internship Programme
International Farmers Dialogue

more than **63** programs

over **3000** participants

Teachers
Families
University students
Industries
Children

Government
Indian Administrative Service
Indian army

Programmes



During the month of January the programs, such as Ethics in Public Governance with the officers of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, Odisha Tourism Department, Indian Railway Traffics and Signaling officers, Ethical Leadership in Public Governance with representatives of Power Grid Corporation and Heart of Effective Leadership with representatives of Siemens and Transasia Biomedical were implemented at Asia Plateau. Below is the feedback received from the participants.

IofC is commendable in its pursuit of initiating changes positively for peace, happiness and prosperity. The idea of creating awareness among people in a simple and natural way adopting it in our daily lives in words, deeds and thoughts will certainly go a long way in realizing its dream.

- Sujata, Odisha Tourism Department

To sum up, the course here is profound relevant and heartwarming and brings us closer to humility. IofC enriches us with wisdom and offers us a profound way to create a better and positive mindset.

- Rena, Odisha Tourism Department



The training at Asia Plateau is all about bringing a transformation, a sea-change in one's perception. It is about the quality of our lives and the necessity to change for the better. The course primarily attempts to sensitize people about the life we lead. The true stories that are read and films shown to us, stir our conscience and brings us closer to the inner voice within us. These and many more real life heroes presented portray the struggle over our innate incapability. It sets our thinking ablaze in re-looking at every action that we perform. Humanity comes first and the rest shall move on a pre-defined trajectory. All that we learnt here if practiced would be our greatest accomplishment.

- Debasis Sahoo, Odisha Tourism Department



Asia Plateau Volunteer Interns Programme



Hamid (Afghanistan)

Found answers to my questions. Leaving the place with no questions and one clear purpose, we need to be the change for better society and accept each other the way we are. Before I had dreams with no actions or actions without vision. Now I have clear vision and it is to change the world step by step.

The internship team of 12 people from 9 countries say good bye to each other after finishing their journey with Asia Plateau and starting a new journey in their respective countries. The interns have been a backbone at Asia Plateau through their songs, ice-breakers and sharing of their journey during the programs.

Wei (Taiwan)
I am grateful for all the love I have got here. I have learnt to accept and trust myself and others and “to put myself in others’ shoes”. Now I am ready to go back to my hometown and to my society.



Wangyal (Tibet)
I was lost. I came here to find myself and to find what I want to do with my life and I found.



Anvit (India)

I have got change in this place, friendship and great memories. One remarkable thing I have got was unconditional love.



Tu Anh (Vietnam)

This place has changed my perspective. Now I look at others with full respect and acceptance and try to keep myself available for others. I have learnt to know the line between self-respect and self-center.

Shu Fen (Taiwan)
I learnt to love myself.



Caux Scholars Programme



Twenty scholars from around the world were selected for this three-week course held in Panchgani, India, at Asia Plateau, an international conference centre of Initiatives of Change.

Since its creation in 1991, CSP has over 435 alumni from 105 countries; still connected to each other through a global network. They are active in international organizations, NGOs, politics, education, business and communications around the world.

The Caux Scholars Program-Asia Plateau taught students to analyze conflicts, to understand the factors that create and sustain conflicts, and provide practical understanding of approaches to resolving conflicts. Students further developed their skills by traveling into communities surrounding Panchgani where they observed, interacted and experienced peace and development work going on in the field. Through interaction with a diverse array of peacebuilders and practical experience in the field of sustainable development, scholars left better prepared to shape the conflicts that they face in their communities.



Chintan Modi (India)

As I sit down to write on the graduation day of our three-week Caux Scholars Program at Asia Plateau, the feeling that rises up in my heart is one of gratitude. Every day here has introduced me to something of value - be it a story, person, practice, or song. Asia Plateau

has been the perfect setting for the first Caux Scholars Program in India. It reminded us of the utter necessity to look at conflicts within before we set out to resolve or transform conflicts in the world around us.

Before we learnt the fundamentals of peacebuilding, and about concepts such as sustainable development, trauma healing and restorative justice, we were introduced to the practice of listening to the inner voice. The Caux Scholars were warmly welcomed by the Asia Plateau community. They became our friends, uncles and aunts. They made us feel comfortable, let us into their hearts, held us in difficult moments, lent us warm clothes, and taught us by example. I'd love to come back! I know I have a family here, ready to welcome me.



Tatevik Azizyan (Armenia)

The Caux Scholars Program - Asia Plateau (CSP - AP) brought together students from around the world who explore practical approaches to resolve conflicts, engage in peace building and bridge the gap between humanitarian and development fields to facilitate individual transformation and change in the world. We were privileged to have not only meaningful discussions, group works and simulation games in the classroom but also interactive and informative field visits in different villages in and around Panchgani. This was an excellent opportunity to get first-hand information and to learn about those countries directly from their

citizens.

The place and the environment are of grave importance for the program to be fully successful. We had our classes in an insightful and meaningful place, at Asia Plateau, which complemented the CSP in many ways to be really successful and productive. Many of us, for the first time in our lives, were introduced to concepts such as **"Quiet Time"** or **"Listening to the Inner Voice"** and we were surrounded by such spiritual people who made us grow in our way: listen to our inner voice and find our inner peace. Moreover, IofC's four absolute moral standards of **PHUL** - helped me to not only make corrections and changes but also helped me in finding a meaningful purpose in my life. For any specialist and especially for the peacebuilders who work in the field of conflict resolution it is very important to initiate a change within ourselves before expecting a change in our communities. As it is rightly said by Mahatma Gandhi, **"Be the change you want to see in the world."**

Guests



Alan and Lin Sensicle

Alan and Lin Sensicle, of IofC UK for 25 years paying their first visit to Asia Plateau. The purpose of the visit is to complete a long held desire to visit Asia Plateau. They have helped generally, and shared with various participants on programmes to give their experiences, to refresh their ongoing commitment, and to immerse themselves in Indian culture and ways of life. Additionally, are helping on the forthcoming "Just Governance Dialogue".

"We have been very much impressed by the cordiality of the warm welcome, and the friendliness and efficiency of the staff. The facilitators are considerate, skilled, and dedicated to what they do, and manage the courses in a challenging, but caring manner, showing acceptance and empathy to all. Asia Plateau is an oasis of calm in a busy India, in an inspirational setting. We are impressed at the commitment shown in caring for the environment and for others by the Grampari initiative, and have taken advantage of the kind offer of a school trip to see "Tippy Tap" being implemented and reviewed", said Alan.

The founding principles of IOFC are at the core of the programmes which are delivered with commitment, and all participants leave with a full understanding of these and the importance of Inner Governance on themselves, family relationships, and the wider community, and the transition between these elements.



Julie Tan

We were delighted to host Julie Tan, who spent 4 and half weeks at Asia Plateau (AP) after a 5 year absence. She was invited to be a senior presence for the interns. "The interns are very much the backbone of service at AP through their songs during the seminars, ice breakers as well as serving and washing up after meals. They do it with great spirit and energy. I was very impressed at the creative fresh ways of reaching and touching the hearts and minds of those who come for these sessions".

"Grampari and the work with villagers and youth is equally groundbreaking. I had heard of 'tippy-tap' and used it for the first time at a wedding reception in Grampari. Also the work with maintaining and preserving the source of water for the whole southern region is forward thinking - something AP has always been doing being in the forefront of development. After connecting again with AP I can only say shabash and keep up the good work. All power to the team on the ground and I pray for more to come and be part of the AP family".

IofC for Life

Asia Plateau, Mumbai, Akola, Lucknow and Gorakhpur - That is where IFL spent the month of January. Mumbai saw the beginning of our interaction with the students of Kamla High School and a follow up with Siemens. The highlight of our trip was the warmth we received from our hosts - Dr. and Mrs. Anand and Leslie and Mayuree. Akola was spent mainly interacting with the students of agriculture and the extra ordinary experience of village life. A few days in Panchgani helped us to gather our thoughts and support AP with its various programs.



In the last week, we divided ourselves into 2 groups and 3 of us went to Lucknow to meet and build the team with Himanshu and address a huge crowd in Gorakhpur on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary.



Grampari

Governance Programme: A sarpanch from Kaldhare a village that has become an ideal village was invited to speak to the villagers in Dhanavli, a village Grampari has decided to work with to make it into an ideal village. Inspired by this talk the villagers decided to clean up a long stretch of road that led to another village. A mock ladies' Gramsabha was conducted in Akhegani village with about 50 women.

The Grampari Team: We had a 2 hour quiet time focusing on jealousy and team work with some significant decisions. One member shared that he felt everyone was jealous of him but in his quiet time realized that he was jealous of everyone on the team. One other member shared that he was very upset with his brother for neglecting the responsibilities of home and then realized that for years he (the brother) had carried the responsibility and had also helped him with his studies and decided to appreciate and thank him and not be angry with him.

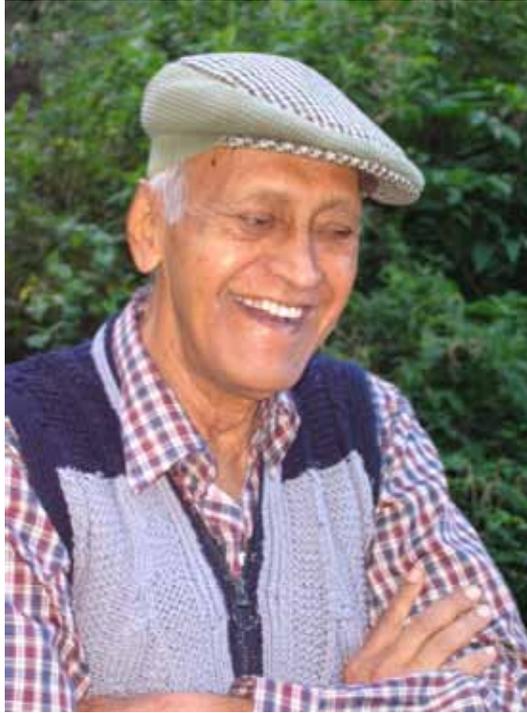
Livelihoods: We have made several new bags and have got the ladies to work in Grampari to improve quality and maintain good standards.

School Handwashing with Soap Programme: 11 schools had their 5th & 6th follow-up. Covering over 850 students.



Watershed Programme: A spring box was built in a village called Pirachiwadi. While the village started getting clean drinking water the ladies still had to collect water under hazardous conditions. Donations from a generous donor got them a pipe and they are now able to collect their water in the village itself.

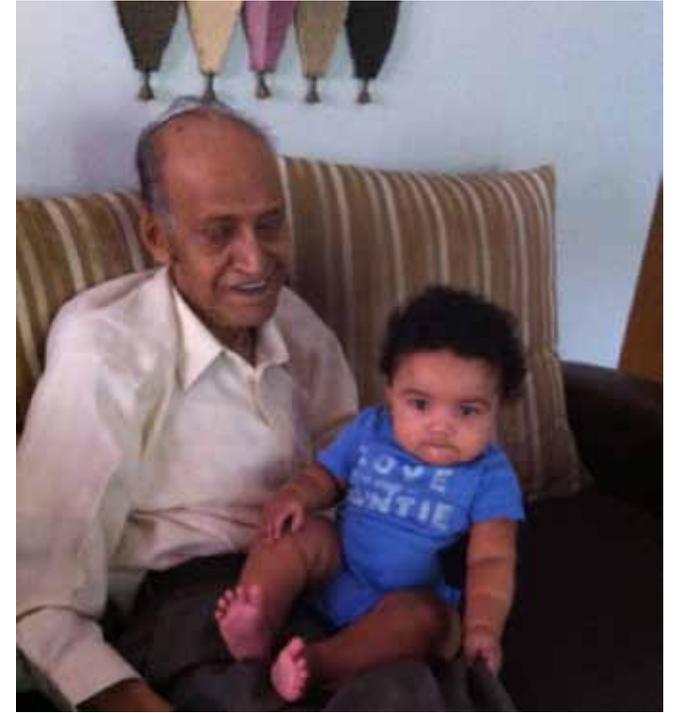




Lt.Col. (Retd) Ramkrishna Narayan REGE
8.10.1924 - 13.11.2014

He passed away peacefully on the morning of 13 November 2014 at 'Asia Plateau', Panchgani. His soul went on to join the loved ones who had gone before him on their respective journeys and whom he missed sorely deep down in his being. His loving wife Meera died nearly 10 years earlier and his much loved son Vijay went even earlier at the age of 46 in a car accident. His younger brother, also in the army, was killed in the 1965 war at the age of 25. Known as Ram or Ram Kaka or most recently to all at Asia Plateau where he spent the last years of his life, as Aba was ready to move on, at the age of 90.

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Asia Plateau, MRA Centre,
Panchgani - 412805, India



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



(02168) 240241/42



ap@in.iofc.org



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