

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CEREBRAL PALSY



IICP

Deepshikha

2022 - 2023



**Bridging the Gaps ...
Reaching the Unreached**

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From the Editor's Desk

THE YEAR THAT WAS

In a post Covid era, 2022 was an impactful year for IICP. We had to manage multiple challenges that had been amplified by the viral pandemic. Our team was determined to overcome these hurdles, and resume activities and events that had been kept in abeyance thus far.



Though direct services resumed in April, it was with just a trickle of vaccinated beneficiaries in attendance. Concerted efforts to mitigate parental anxieties were made by professionals from every department and gradually physical attendance gained momentum. Guardians were apprised of all the protocols and guidelines that had been implemented for the safety of their wards. Virtual pedagogy had changed perceptions in learning. After a prolonged absence from the Institute, students and trainees required time to readjust to class routines. Gaps in knowledge were seen in those who had been unable to access online classes and remedial steps were taken. Health remained a priority and medical camps were conducted for vision check, dental health, booster dose of the Covid vaccine, and inoculation against measles and rubella.

The stated priority for the year 2022-23 was to bridge the gaps through training, awareness programmes, and advocacy campaigns. This year's *Deepshikha* brings to its readers all such initiatives.

I end with the sad news of the demise of three stalwarts who will remain an inextricable part of IICP's history – Jayabrato Chatterjee, writer, filmmaker, and IICP's mentor for communications; Eva Dasgupta, former Head of Department of Education, Loreto College, and external faculty member at IICP for several years; and the legendary educationist, John Mason, an inspiring role model across generations.

Let us then honour their legacy by striving to promote access, equity, and inclusion for all.

– Sumita Roy

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and Basabi Ghatak*

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Editorial Advisors:

Subhra Chatterjee and Reena Sen



Jayabrato Chatterjee (1950-2022)

This tribute is on behalf of everyone at Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy – our Chairperson Rakhi Sarkar, Founder and Vice-Chairperson Sudha Kaul, the Governing Body and Advisors, and the IICP team led by Sonali Nandi, COO:

It is impossible to put dates to Jayabrato's association with IICP. He was an integral part of the organization, a stakeholder in the collective vision that led to the formation of the West Bengal Spastics Society. When the Centre for Special Education opened with the promise of schooling for Arjun Kaul, Mithu Kapur, and their friends with cerebral palsy, Jayabrato was a part of the dream makers who celebrated new beginnings. And Jayabrato, Subhra, and later Shahana remained and remain co-travellers in IICP's journey.

Jayabrato's role in our organization encompassed more than that of a committed friend and communications mentor, writer, and filmmaker in that he brought a far deeper dimension in his work combining knowledge and skills with the utmost compassion and sensitivity. It is this unique blend of aesthetics, empathetic perception, and a deep understanding of ability in disability that finds expression in the text he composed for 'Looking Through The Glass Darkly', our exhibition of photographs by Sunil Dutta, in the publicity panels that stand in IICP, in books and other written material, and in the many films he made for us. In these, he has portrayed such poignancy of feeling and exhilarating moments of self-expression in children and adults often described as having severe or profound disabilities that even dry technical subjects have become statements of humanity. These films are not just informative but transformative as powerful advocacy material. The phrase 'catalyst in the heartlands' coined by Jayabrato so artistically and effectively encapsulates in just four words IICP's expansive philosophy of facilitative partnerships. The implications of terms like image, brand, and visibility were introduced to IICP by none other than Jayabrato. On a lighter note – Tessa Hamblin wrote about long evenings spent in editing the films with Jayabrato and Subhra and their team. Ranu, Sudha, me, and other colleagues have vivid memories of this – it was laborious but did not feel like work, the humour was irreverent at times, there were arguments, sometimes fierce, but all in all it was jolly good fun!

Individuals with disabilities and families - their struggles, experiences, emotions, and unique talents - who he came across in real life found their place in Jayabrato's films, stories, and writings, but alongside he never failed to identify opportunities for persons with disability to speak up and be heard and seen for themselves. He was a committed ambassador for IICP and spoke about IICP to his vast and varied circles of friends and acquaintances. Thus we had visits, and at times a deeper involvement from reputed and respected members of the film industry, business heads, performing artistes, journalists, and media persons, too many to name. Very recently, a wonderful evening was held at the Taj Bengal organized by Subhra and Jayabrato for IICP with Shahana's mellifluous reading of Jayabrato's writings, Soumyojit and Sourendra's soul lifting music and our children singing the opening song. It was just another offering in a treasure trove of gifts to IICP from Jayabrato/Mr Chatterjee/Joyda/Mithu that will outlive the journey of his life, cut short with cruel suddenness, but so well lived.

Rest in Peace dear Jayabrato till we meet again, as the journey never ends... Shesh nahi je shesh katha ke bolbe...

– Reena Sen



Professor Eva Dasgupta – Evadi (1933-2023)

Always trim and elegant, draped in a saree that never went out of place, hair tied back neatly in a knot with a voice that was not strident but clearly audible, Professor Eva Dasgupta came into my life during my BEd studies in Loreto College, way back in 1976. She taught us History of Education and a seemingly dry paper came to life. She explained complex concepts with simplicity and clarity and the 'whys, whats, whens, and hows' were magically connected into a seamless whole.

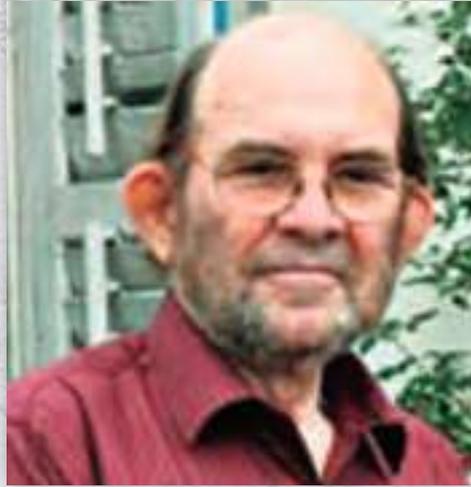
Fast forward to a good ten years or more later – if I recall clearly, I heard Evadi was retiring from her post in Loreto College and I jumped with joy, not wanting to miss the opportunity to invite her to the external faculty of IICP. She agreed to teach the General Education paper on our Jadavpur University BEd Course in Special Education. This was the start of a long and mutually valued relationship with IICP, lasting many years. Admired for her unobtrusive professionalism, punctuality, and a strong sense of commitment to the students, Evadi became a familiar figure in IICP and a role model. She would come in quietly, do her work, and leave with minimum fuss or bother. She acknowledged all our invitations, attended our functions whenever she could, and genuinely appreciated our work. Her sister, an artist, presented us with a most evocative painting of Freedom that hangs in our hall.

I write this tribute on behalf of Sudha, Madhuchhanda, Sonali and many others in IICP, and end with what Evadi wrote in a card for me when I retired from IICP in 2018:

‘May the sun always play on your window pane.
May a rainbow chase every spot of rain.
May the hand of a friend always be near you,
May God fill your heart with gladness and cheer you.’

These are good wishes for you too, Evadi, from - in your own words - your student, colleague, and a friend. May you rest in eternal peace in a wider, wiser, and kinder place with two of your most beloved people – your husband and Apu. I was privileged to have you in my life, Evadi. You have not only enriched my knowledge but made me a better human being because great teachers are so much more than just great teachers - they share their enlightened world view with you and through their lenses, your vision becomes deeper and multi-layered, and your life is never the same again.

– Reena Sen



John Mason (1945-2023)

Dr Reena Sen's message of condolence, on behalf of IICP, to the family of late John Mason, extending prayers for strength and deepest respect for a man who lived life large and did it 'his way':

When I think of John, I think of another John – John Keating, also a teacher of English – and the memorable words from the film 'Dead Poets Society', 'We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race. And the human race is filled with passion.' Your John brought in passion to our profession. He taught his students to question, to wander off the beaten track, and to be fearless in expressing themselves. He was himself fearless and frank in questioning age-old customs and beliefs about educational planning, provision, and delivery. I recall hearing him speak on several occasions with unbridled conviction and passion with the perfect choice of phrases and words.

John was and will remain a legend – a teacher, an educational thinker, a leader but most importantly a man who understood children – their strengths but also their vulnerabilities. He understood the tremendous potential in children with disabilities given the right opportunities and an education that dared to differ. He practiced inclusion in education much before it became a buzzword. It was to him Sudha reached out and he was the man who gave Jeeja Ghosh, who had severe physical difficulties but a bright and intelligent mind, her first opportunity and access to mainstream education. At that time, John was Principal of St James' and it was through his efforts that Jeeja appeared for the ICSE examinations as the only girl in a boy's school!

Yesterday I read a Facebook tribute from James Paul who spoke of John as a quintessential schoolmaster who had a transformative influence on schools and students. He will be remembered with respect and affection by all those lives he touched – children, parents, colleagues, and friends. He has left a legacy that prioritizes continuing aspiration for excellence in education and daring to dream. We in IICP and those of us who were fortunate, through the Kauls, to know him as a friend will always cherish the many memories of his warmth and deep-rooted knowledge shared with informality and ease. Most importantly, he wore his distinction and reputation lightly and that is the mark of a truly great man.

With affectionate regards and sympathy.

– Reena Sen

Bridging the Gaps: Moving Towards Greater Inclusion

A two-day international conference was organized in collaboration with the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University, Sweden, on 14th and 15th November 2022. The aim was to encourage collaboration, dissemination of knowledge, and sharing of experiences between educational research institutes in South Asia and the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University. The themes for discussion were Inclusive Environments, Intergenerational and Lifelong Learning, Social Justice, and Family Literacy.

The session was inaugurated by Dipak Ghosh, IT Trainer and Disability Rights Activist, who lit the ceremonial lamp to symbolize enlightenment. It was followed by a dance performance by the students of the Centre for Special Education based on a poem from Tagore's immortal collection of verse, Gitanjali, directed by Priti Patel, Manipuri exponent and IICP's Mentor for Fine Arts.

In her welcome address, IICP Chairperson, Mrs Rakhi Sarkar mentioned, 'The conference is a step up in a continuing process of social change. Bridging the gaps and moving towards inclusion is about active efforts to gain access to fundamental human and constitutional rights.' The keynote address on Inclusive Education in India – Perspectives and Challenges was given by educationists Dr Reena Sen, Hony Secretary, IICP, and Mrs Meenakshi Atal, former Headmistress, Heritage School. The other speakers were Prof Anupam Basu, Director, National Institute of Technology, Durgapur; Dr Jari Linikko, Director of Studies and Dr Elizabeth Lyngback, Assistant Lecturer from the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University. Online sessions were conducted by Prof Simo Vehmas from Sweden and Ms Priya Sen, filmmaker and artist.

The day ended with a panel discussion on Inclusion in Education moderated by Dr Arundhati Sarkar. Panelists included Mother Rishi Riddha Anahata, Secretary, Shamayita Math; Ms Chandana Baksi, Senior Consultant, Swayam; Ms Mamata Deb, Parent and Founder Asha Arko; and Prof Nihad Bunar, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University.

The informative sessions by the varied panel of erudite speakers on Day One set the tone for the second day. Day Two began with a keynote address by Prof Nihad Bunar on Migration and Education in the Age of Inclusion. This was followed by speakers Swami Pranananda of Sarisha Ramakrishna Mission; Mr Rajendra Kumar Nayak, Regional Director, National Institute of Open Schooling; Dr Mina Sedem, Director of Studies and Dr Helen Nyqvist, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University.

The post-lunch session had two eminent speakers. First, Prof Asoke Bhattacharya, Former Head, Dept of Adult Continuing Education, Jadavpur University and a key link for this conference. Second, discussing mental health issues faced by young adults and students was Dr Jai Ranjan Ram, Psychiatrist and Founder, Mental Health Foundation. The last session of the day was a panel discussion on Intergenerational and Lifelong Learning moderated by Dr Khaleda Gani Dutt, Assistant Lecturer, Dept of Special Education. The panelists were Mrs Indrani Basu, Director, Autism Society West Bengal; Ms Sneha Dasgupta, Disability Activist; Ms Priti Patel, Director, Anjika Centre for Manipuri Dance; and IICP's AAC advocate Ms Barsha Bhattacharya.

The valedictory address given by Mrs Aloka Guha, former Chairperson, Rehabilitation Council of India, was a reassuring statement about 'the glass being half full and getting fuller by the day'. Dr Reena Sen gave a brief summary of the conference proceedings and ended by reminding the Advocacy Group of their active responsibilities for social change and the role of protest.

Bringing the curtain down on the conference were members of the Ankur Advocacy Group who presented their ideas and dreams through a dance performance. The vote of thanks given by Sonali Nandi, Chief Operations Officer, IICP mentioned everyone who had contributed their views on how to bridge the gap in making the education system more inclusive.



The Inaugural Session: 14th November 2022



Rakhi Sarkar, Chairperson, IICP



Chief Guest Christabel Royan, Director, Nordic Centre in India



Guest of Honour, Dr Sangeeta Datta, Writer, Filmmaker, and Artistic Director of Baithak, UK

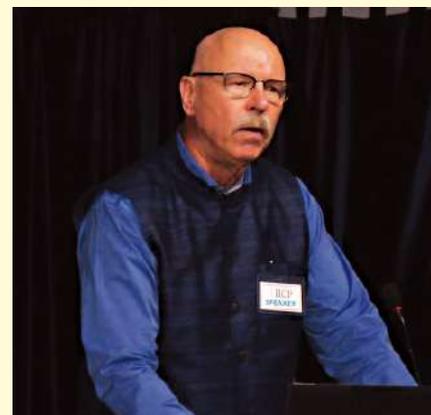
Meet Our Speakers



Dr Reena Sen, Honorary Secretary, IICP



Educationist Meenakshi Atal



Dr Jarilinikko, Director of Studies, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University

Meet Our Speakers



*Dr Elizabeth Lyngbak, Senior Lecturer,
Dept of Special Education,
Stockholm University*



*Professor Anupam Basu, Dept of
Computer & Engineering, IIT, Kharagpur*



*Professor Simo Vehmas,
Dept of Special Education,
Stockholm University*



Priya Sen, Filmmaker and Artist



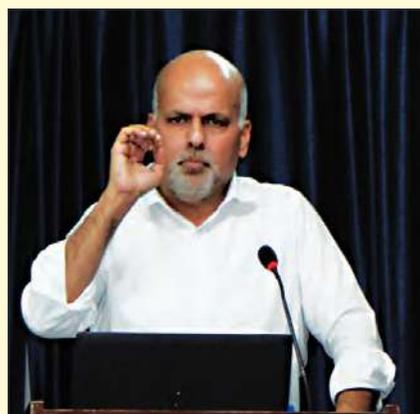
*Mamata Dev, Special Educator and
Founder Member, Asha Arko*



*Mother Rishi Riddha Anahata,
Secretary, Shamayita Math*



*Dr Arundhati Sarkar, Director, MARC, Manovikas Kendra and
Chandana Bakshi, Senior Mental Health Consultant, Swayam*



*Dr Jai Ranjan Ram, Writer, Psychiatrist, and
Co-Founder, Mental Health Foundation*

Meet Our Speakers



Professor Nihad Bunar, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University



Swami Prananda, Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Sarisha



Dr Mina Sedem, Director of Studies, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University



Dr Helen Nyqvist, Senior Lecturer, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University



Rajendra Kumar Nayak, Regional Director, NIOS, Government of India



Professor Asoke Bhattacharya, Writer & President, Reading Association of India



Sneha Dasgupta, Self Advocate, PhD student at Tata Institute of Social Sciences; Indrani Basu, Director, Autism Society, West Bengal; and Priti Patel, renowned Manipuri dance exponent and Founder, Anjika



Barsha Bhattacharya, Advocacy Trainer, IICP with mentor Swati Chakraborty, Deputy Director, IICP



Dr Khaleda Gani Dutt, Assistant Lecturer, Dept of Special Education, Stockholm University



Valedictory Address by Aloka Guha, Founder Member, Chairperson, National Trust and Rehabilitation Council of India



Vote of Thanks by Sonali Nandi, Chief Operations Officer, IICP



Dance performance choreographed by Priti Patel



All Smiles: a group picture at the end of a successful conference

Enabling Participation: My IICP Experience

Dr Marta Moretti, Project Coordinator, CORE Italy,
Zurich University of Teacher Education, Education Counsellor, Amici per il Centrafrica



Inclusive education is about ensuring that all children and youth learn to their fullest potential (UNICEF, 2014). A 'journey' in IICP will be the explicatory example on how to enable children, youth, and adults to achieve their full developmental potential.

Walking through the IICP building is quite an experience where the classrooms of Centre for Special Education occupy a huge area. In the afternoon, the same context becomes the Jugnu playschool, a great learning opportunity for children who live in the slums.



In IICP, you can experience a cooking laboratory with the catering team or you can attend a computer skills lesson in the Computer Lab. In the printing section of the Vocational Training Centre, you can hear the sound of wooden blocks and see some trainees preparing envelopes, gift bags, and other paper crafts. Life skills are a crucial part of education and young adults are taught to deal with important tasks related to transferable competencies.



The AAC team studies different strategies to improve communication skills. Inside the large colourfully decorated Family Services room, families and professionals work together in a cooperative atmosphere.



The work of IICP goes beyond its 'boundary'; Community-based Services prepare home assessment in slums or in remote villages, while the Advocacy Group spreads awareness about human rights. The top-most floor of the IICP building houses the residential unit, aptly named 'a home away from home'. It provides respite, care, and support for those in need. And for a brief period it was my home too.



IICP has the capability of creating enabling environments, in schools and in different life domains that are relevant for learning and participation. The different teams in IICP consider participation and participation restrictions as the starting point to understand disability in the context of inclusive education. Identifying participation gaps is an important pre-requisite to identify discrimination and lack of support (UNICEF, 2014). 'Promoting participation means minimising the impact of existing impairments on activities through changes in the context' (UNICEF, 2014).

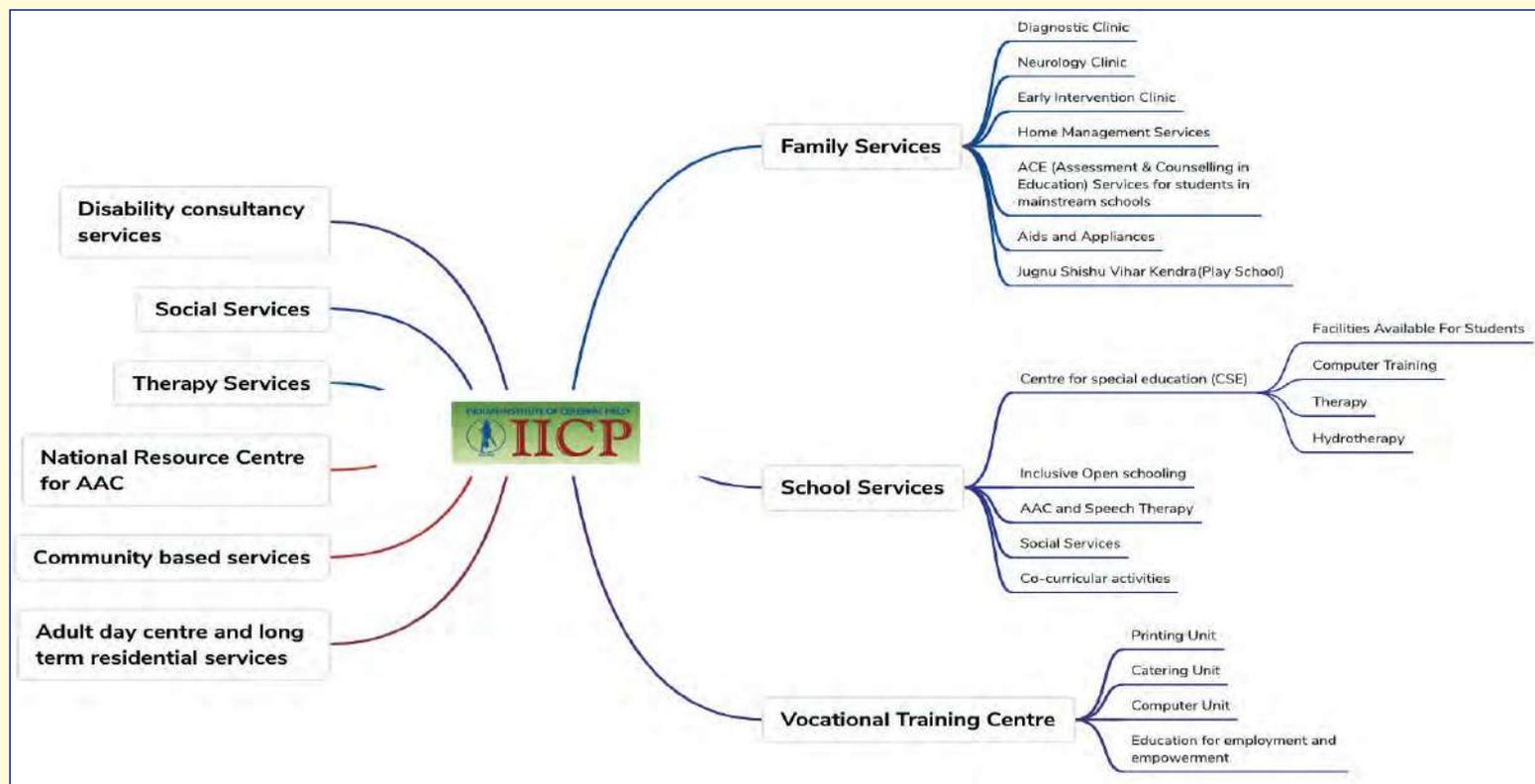
IICP therefore adopts a biopsychosocial model of disability, focusing on the impact of the environment and contextual factors on the functioning of the individual (WHO, 2007). Cerebral palsy as a health condition itself doesn't predict the functioning as contextual and personal factors play a major role in that. What does cerebral palsy tell about a person? 'Difference makes a difference' – what does this mean in IICP? Not the diagnosis, not the label, but rather the person within his or her context, and his or her unique identity and needs.

Enabling Participation: My IICP Experience...

IICP embraces inclusion across different levels and dimensions:

- Time: it covers the entire lifespan of a person, from childhood to adult life.
- Services: it facilitates needs of the individual through multiple services – schools, family, vocational, community etc.
- Target: it addresses the needs of children, youth, parents, family, and communities.
- Subjects: it integrates subject-specific competencies and transferable competencies.
- Professionals: professionals from different streams work together in a holistic way including social workers, special educators, therapists, and teachers.

A visual representation of the complexity of IICP and its different levels and dimensions



In such a huge and comprehensive Centre, the risk of fragmentation between different services and professionals is high. But this risk factor is fully overcome through a unifying framework based on a biopsychosocial approach and a learner-centred framework that link in a coherent way the work of different teams and services. The framework also represents a common language among the different professionals.

The focus on participation and the biopsychosocial approach goes hand in hand with IICP's person-centric and needs-oriented educational approach. The need of the student is the target point for organizing activities, lessons, therapies etc. 'Student-centred approach means that the focus of attention is on the learner's individuality, ie students are perceived as individuals with an independent personality.' (Helmke, 2012; FACE, 2015).



This means that interests, backgrounds, actual life situations, and specific needs of every learner are perceived and respected. All this has a positive impact on the self-esteem and learning motivation of students, and simultaneously on the learner-teacher relationship. Children, youth, and adults are perceived as actors and active subjects, and are stimulated in a holistic way to participate in every learning opportunity (FACE, 2015).

Given that general categories do not provide an adequate and consistent description of the person, on this occasion they might be useful to describe my actual emotional profile. I can therefore identify my ailment with a diagnosis of 'Kolkata and IICP sickness'!

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- World Health Organization (2007). *International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health: Children & Youth version (ICF-CY)*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Zurich University of Teacher Education, International Projects in Education (IPE). Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich (2015). *FACE. Improve your self-esteem and work together. Training booklet for teachers*. Zurich: Zurich University of Teacher Education, Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich.



Workshop on Movement and Dance

Pickle Factory Dance Foundation is a hub for the practice, presentation, and discourse of dance movement-based performances in India. Challenging perceptions and expectations of dancing bodies through performances, interactions, and discussions with artists from five countries, they held a series of workshops and performances in a range of educational institutions across Kolkata. Spearheaded by the dynamic and talented Vikram Iyengar, they kicked off their third season of Movement and Dance with an interactive workshop in IICP. The breathtakingly fluid performance by ballet dancer Eve Mutso from Estonia and wheelchair-bound Joel Brown from UK mesmerised the inclusive audience comprising our beneficiaries and students from Akshar School. Guided by the visiting team of dancers and choreographers, the students were inspired to compose and demonstrate through a short performance that creativity has no boundaries. A truly exhilarating and memorable experience for one and all.



Devangi Mahata partners with Kate



Ankur Roy with Eve Mutso, ballet dancer from Estonia



A synchronised performance by Eve Mutso and Joel Brown



Joel Brown with Ishaan Saxena



The IICP Shoky Award for Excellence

Theme: Only One Earth



Sourav Middey welcomes visitors

Coinciding with our 48th anniversary celebrations was the inaugural IICP Shoky Award instituted by Chairperson Mrs Rakhi Sarkar in memory of her grandson Shoky. The award entailed a competition for creative expression open to all students from the Jugnu play school and the Centre for Special Education.

Divided into age-appropriate groups, the children expressed their ideas of an inclusive environment through the medium of their choice, be it writing, drawing, art or craft. Attractive and innovative models were made using only eco-friendly and natural materials. Each had an

important message that promoted awareness on inclusive environments, reusing and recycling of natural resources, and safeguarding our eco-systems.

'Only One Earth' was the slogan of the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and as young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg aptly said, 'You are never too small to make a difference'. This was echoed by the four external judges who viewed the exhibits. Film critic Ujjal Chakraborty, Principal of the ASHA School Sudeshna Basu, contemporary author Smaranjit Chakraborty, and retired teacher Basabi Ghatak had a difficult task selecting a winner in each category. On 18th November, Mrs Sarkar presented medals and gift bags to all the participating students before cutting a large cake that everyone enjoyed.



Students working on their model



Rajbir Kewat explains the theme of the model to visitors
'Together we can make a difference'



'We want to play and grow together' – A message
from students of the Jugnu play school

Only One Earth...

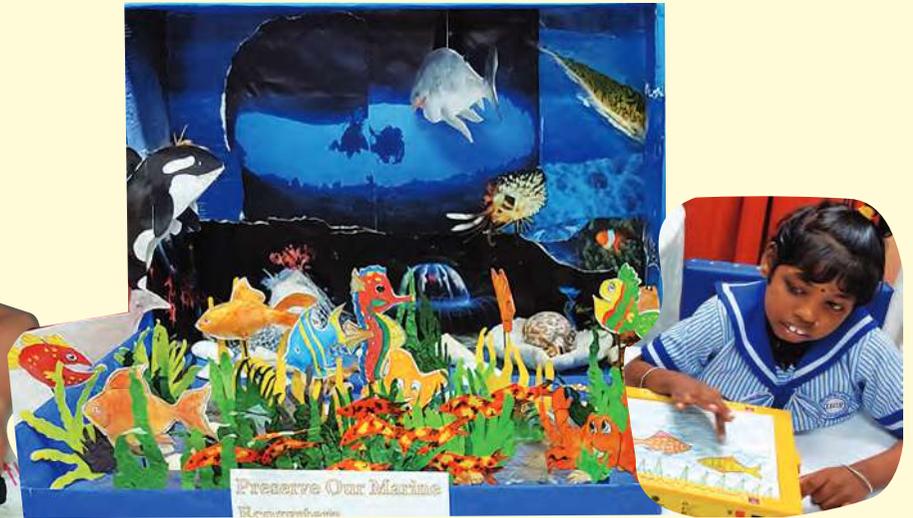


Radhika Das (Jugnu)

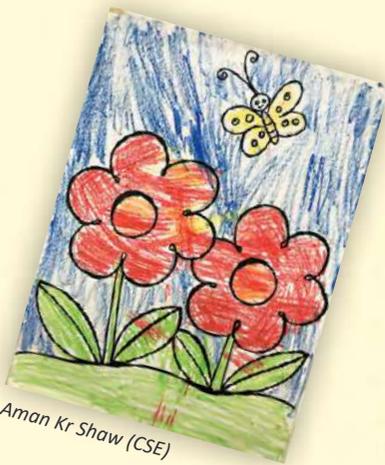
Rachit Das and Devangi Mohanta say: We want accessible playgrounds!



Arnav Mondal says: Water is important for all living beings!



Diya Naskar says: Let the fish swim in clean water!



Aman Kr Shaw (CSE)



Dipika Kewat explains the variety of homes – for people, birds, and animals.

48th Founders' Day Celebration 18th November, 2022

The celebration of Founders' Day on 18th November is always a very special day in the IICP calendar. For the past two years, due to the prevailing circumstances, the anniversary celebrations were muted. Especially since the heart and soul of the organisation – our children and adults were unable to be present. Therefore this year, the occasion was imbued with additional buoyancy and enthusiasm.

Following tradition, the event was inaugurated by the lighting of the lamp symbolising enlightenment with representation from across the spectrum of the IICP family both past and present. From our Chairperson Rakhi Sarkar; members of the Governing Body; founder parents Mr and Mrs RL Kapoor to Dipak Ghosh and Saswati Acharya Mahanti representing the Ankur Advocacy Group; Sujit Kar, a former student and trainee; Sushmita Chatterjee, our longest serving former teacher, and Janet Ahmed, our most beloved music teacher and volunteer for over forty years. They are all an integral part of our wonderful IICP family.



Aniket Mahato receives the Shoky Award medal from Rakhi Sarkar, Chairperson, IICP



Guest of Honour Kausheek Bhattacharya, cine artiste with members of the Media Lab



Kunal Dutta explains the versatility of a date palm to trainees from the Institute of Hotel Management, Kolkata

48th Founders' Day Celebration...



Ankush Munia uses his communication book to converse with visitor Maura Hurley



A young visitor watches with interest



Cine artiste Biswajit Chakraborty, Guest of Honour, congratulates Piu Halder for her recitation



Enactment of We Are All One Family



Students from Modern High School (MHS) for Girls enjoy the performance



Shradha Khator interacts with students from Sree Sambhu Sadan Vidyalaya



Students of Mahadevi Birla World Academy listen to Nman speak about ways to recycle water



Welcome to our classroom!



Performance by Ankur Advocacy Group



A riveted audience from MHS

48th Founders' Day Celebration...



Armitaa Sarkar is happy to show the craft work of the Life Skills Training Unit



Barsha Bhattacharya interacts with visitors



Sruti and Laxmi welcome visitors to their class



Sudipendu Dutta explains the role of computer literacy to students from Ramkrishna Mission, Narendrapur

Greeting cards and potted plants for sale



Hope Cup XII *27 – 28 January 2023*

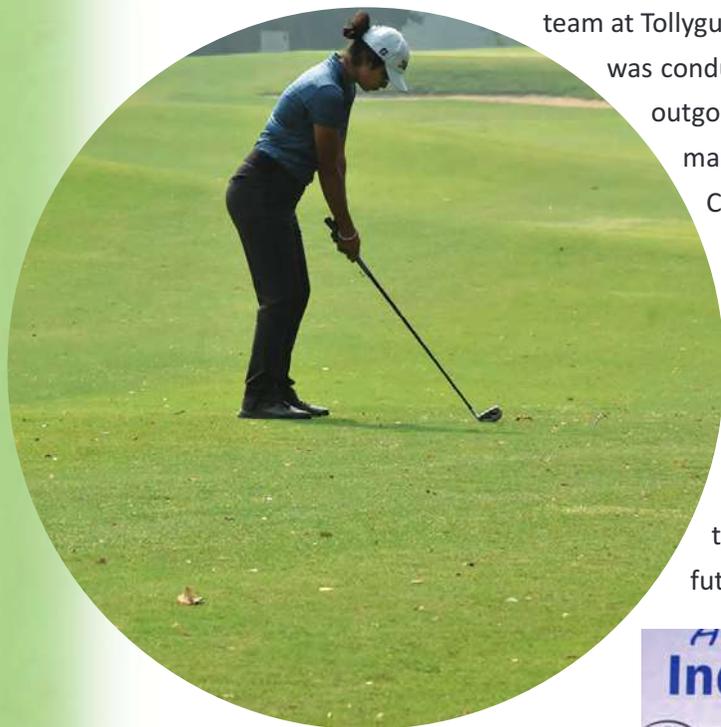
The panoramic greens of the Tollygunge Club provided the perfect setting for the Hope Cup golf tournament played on 27th and 28th January 2023. Over three hundred players of Kolkata's golfing fraternity came forward to extend their personal support for a worthwhile cause. The Chief Guest at the Prize Distribution ceremony was the Eastern Army Commander, Lt Gen RP Kalita, who reiterated his offer of assistance to the Institute and our beneficiaries.



IICP is truly grateful to the Club President Capt Sanjiv Dhir; Chairman, Hope Cup

Organizing Committee Mr Viren Sinha; Golf Captain Mr Deep Banerjee; and the entire team at Tollygunge Club for their efforts to ensure that the entire event was conducted seamlessly. An extra special vote of thanks to the outgoing CEO and Managing Member Anil Mukerji for his marvellous support over the years and promoting the Hope Cup event as an annual feature of Tollygunge Club. On behalf of IICP, Sayani Debnath thanked him and presented him with a painting by founder student, late Mithu Kapoor.

We also gratefully acknowledge all our donors, sponsors, and well-wishers for their contributions and gifts. We go forward with the conviction that where there are friends, there is Hope, the hope of a better future for persons with disabilities.



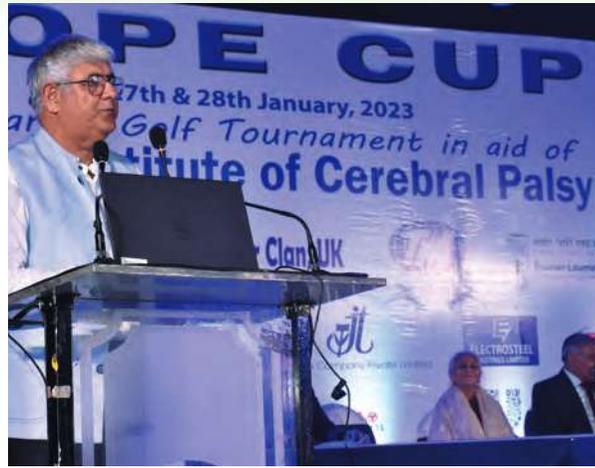
Lt Gen RP Kalita with the winners of the IICP Hope Cup 2023: Krishna Kant Shah, Amit K Saraogi, Col Shrikant Tiwari, and SK Rafick



Hope Cup XII...



Anil Mukerji, CEO, Tollygunge Club



Capt Sanjiv Dhir, President, Tollygunge Club



Chief Guest Gen RP Kalita's address at the Prize Distribution Ceremony



1st Runners-Up: Yalisai Verma, Anamika Chakravarty, Karishma Samaddar, and Ribhav Varma with Viren Sinha, Chairman, Hope Cup Organising Committee



2nd Runners-Up: Arnab Basu, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, N Sainathan and Subrata Roy with Viren Sinha



3rd Runners-Up: Lt Col Rajesh Kumar, Lt Col GP Bhandoria, Col Feroz Khan, and Brig Raja Chakravarty with Deep Banerjee, Golf Captain



Winning Team of 9 Holes with Capt S Dhir, President, Tollygunge Club: Asim Banerjee, Rathindranath Das, Mihir Sinha, and Bhaskar Chatterjee



'All Ladies Team' with Mrs Dhir, First Lady of Tollygunge Club: Sheena Rawla, Rasna Bhandari, Mamta Bhargava, and Swatanter Ratia



Sayani Debnath thanks Anil Mukerji for many years of unconditional support to IICP

The Senapati's Visit

Graciously keeping his commitment given at the Hope Cup prize distribution event, the highly decorated soldier and present Eastern Army Commander, Lt Gen RP Kalita took time out of his busy schedule and paid a visit to the Institute in May 2022. He was accorded a traditional welcome by the students and entertained by a performance of the IICP band. He interacted with members of the Media Lab and Ankur Advocacy Group. The General invited the students and staff to visit the iconic and heritage buildings at Fort William, which were now open for public viewing. Accepting the kind invitation, 15 students and trainees accompanied by their teachers enjoyed an informative and memorable visit the following month.



Welcome song by the IICP Band



Punam Bind receives the General with the traditional teeka



Sudipendu Dutta explains the mission of the ANKUR Advocacy Group



Signing the Visitors' Book



Shradha Khator interacts with the Army Commander

Visit to Fort William



Fascinated by the artefacts in the Display Room



At the Vijay Smarak, War Memorial



Outside the Eastern Command Museum

A Demand for Equal Rights and Access

Sudipendu Dutta, IT and Advocacy Trainer, IICP

Sudipendu is a writer, photographer, and orator who campaigns for the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Constitution of India secures to all citizens including persons with disabilities (PwDs) the fundamental rights of justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and equality of status and of opportunity. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 further upholds the right of PwDs to equal participation in all social processes and to live their lives with dignity. This means that persons with disabilities are as entitled to engage and participate in the political process like all other citizens of this country and to demand equal rights. The right to exercise one's franchise is a fundamental one and in a democracy every vote counts. The responsibility of party representatives and leaders is to introduce such policies and programmes that will benefit the citizens, and ensure legislation and implementation. Thus the vote of each eligible citizen plays a very vital role in our democratic structure.



From personal experience, casting one's vote remains an experience fraught with many challenges for persons with disabilities especially wheelchair users. Most polling booths are still not accessible; they do not have ramps and a barrier-free environment. Also, the names of many persons with disabilities remain missing from the voters' list. As a result of continuous awareness campaigns by disability activists, the Election Commission has listed several significant initiatives that will be implemented at all polling stations for the benefit of a voter with disability and help to bridge the gap of accessibility. There will be polling booths situated on the ground floor with availability of wheelchairs and ramps with proper gradient. A separate queue will be formed for persons with disabilities and free transport facility given. Braille features on EVMs and voter EPIC slips will be useful for persons with visual impairment. Lastly mapping of all PwDs, as per polling stations, will ensure better turnout of voters with disabilities.

Many of the infrastructural changes that have been introduced have made it easier for eligible adults with disabilities, limited mobility, and vision to access polling booths. These are all very encouraging steps to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities in the electoral process. However most of these initiatives are urban in location and the polling booths in different parts of India in remote rural areas still need to become accessible for all persons with disabilities.

Another step forward will be when persons with disabilities are motivated to join the political arena and work to implement much needed systemic changes in the election processes. The representation of persons with disabilities in the Indian political system is rarely seen. There is a need for disabled political representatives at district, state, and national levels. We need to seriously promote aspiring leaders to get the opportunity to be a part of the political system and raise their voices for equal rights for all citizens. They need to be change-makers who will lead our country towards making it truly inclusive and barrier-free for everyone. When disabled people enter the political system, we can create awareness in our own unique way. This will also demonstrate that persons with disabilities are an integral part of India, and can take up duties and responsibilities as well as any other citizen of this country.

Our dream that will hopefully become a reality one day is to create an inclusive, discrimination-free, barrier-free society where every citizen can enjoy life with dignity. I urge my fellow citizens to discover a more expansive meaning of life through inclusion. Let us work in harmony with each other, for each other.

Building Bridges: Forging Links with Schools

Madhumita Dasgupta, Deputy Head, Training, and Coordinator, IT, IICP

'Omoiyari' is a Japanese word that can be defined as empathy for others leading to thoughtful action. This principle of anticipating what another might need without verbal expression and the ability to provide for it is a fascinating one. Qualities of compassion, consideration, and an inclusive social structure are requirements for a society to be sustainable.

IICP's core philosophy is based on inclusion. Potent references to 'societal inclusion' were made by Professor Simo Vehmas of Stockholm University at the international conference hosted in November. The two-day conference aimed at bridging the gaps and moving towards greater inclusion.

IICP's outreach agenda is to foster and promote inclusion through activities with mainstream institutions. In celebration of World Disability Day, a cohort from IICP of students, trainees, and advocates were invited to engage with students and staff of the Indus Valley School. The dance and musical performances by our children were accorded thundering applause from a packed auditorium. The interactive session that followed with members of the Ankur Advocacy Group was informative and spontaneous. Punam Bind and Barsha Bhattacharya led by Sudipendu Dutta shared their personal stories, highlighting Ankur's mission and vision. Madhumita Dasgupta enumerated the collaborative programmes that could be initiated with the students and teachers citing the Pen Pals Programme with MHS, Writers Workshop, internships, and placements for training.



METRO

IICP kids visit Indus Valley school

JHINUK MAZUMDAR

■ An individual with cerebral palsy that has impacted her speech used a voice output device to communicate with an auditorium full of children in a city school.

■ A group of students danced not on their feet but on wheelchairs, making patterns on the stage.

Calcutta: Students and teachers of the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP) spent a couple of hours in a mainstream school and pupils of the two institutions had the opportunity to interact with each other.

If children without disability see, hear and observe those with disability doing something independently, it takes away the "pity" that is associated with disability and they are able to understand and give credit to their abilities, said an official of IICP.

The children of Indus Valley World School (IVWS) watched the children from IICP sing the same songs and dance to the same tunes.

Teachers of both schools hoped that it would help children understand that it is the same world that they all live in, their interests are the same and so are their little joys.

"Those with disabilities should not feel alienated," a teacher said.

The students of IICP took the stage and sang a popular Hindi film song, *Bum bum bole*, and the whole audience joined them in the chorus.

The dance performance had students who use wheelchairs wheeling around on the stage. But it was not fun and music alone. A girl from IICP recounted her story, her struggles and aspirations.

The girl, who wants to be a radio jockey, said that she did not want people to look at her with pity. "They should look at us as human beings, which many people don't," she said.

When Barsha Bhattacharya, a trainer at the advocacy group of IICP, went up on stage, the students at IVWS were amazed not at what she spoke but how she communicated using a voice output device through augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Their inquisitiveness did not end with her speech. Some of the students, keen to know how the machine worked, walked up to the stage to see the device that she used and the word board that she carried on her lap.

"Seeing for themselves takes away the concept of pity that is associated with disability. There are challenges for them but life does not stop there for them," said Madhumita Dasgupta, inclusion coordinator at IICP.

Inclusion does not happen by speaking about it but by providing infrastructure that can make an institution or a place accessible for people with disability. "Your school has ramps," a student of IICP told a teacher of Indus Valley.

Dasgupta said that for individuals with disability, such opportunities help put across their ideas. "Our students are very keen to mingle," she said.

Amita Prasad, director of IVWS, said that it is important that children interact and not only be lectured to be sensitive.

"Seeing evokes admiration. How the children overcome their challenges with their will and perseverance. It is an important life lesson for all our children. To learn and not give up," said Prasad.

For inclusion to be reality, there has to be regular interaction.

"Everything that fosters inclusivity is valuable. Interactions are like ice breakers and there should be dialogues on holding more programmes and long-term partnerships. A long-term partnership would have a more long-term impact," said Resma Sen, honorary secretary at IICP.

Students and teachers of IICP take the stage at Indus Valley World School



Children from our pre-primary class and school readiness programme DISHA were invited to participate in the Winter Carnival at the Bidya Bharati School for Girls, Mominpur. The Calcutta Cricket and Football Club (CC&FC) invited our children to participate in the Christmas cheer at their spacious grounds. Not only did the little ones have fun enjoying the music, games, and snacks but their mothers had a great time too.

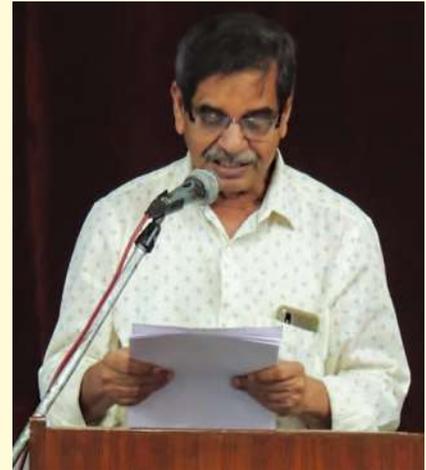


Patha Bhavan Montessori School and IICP have a very successful collaborative history and continue to maintain links. This year their celebration of Basanta Utsav included a dance performance by our students. Along with awareness come these acts of Omoiyari, which result in making inclusion possible and a seamless reality.



Let's Read: A Symposium in collaboration with Reading Association of India

In continuation of IICP's target to build bridges for inclusion, a symposium was organized in collaboration with the Reading Association of India (RAI). The event was spearheaded by the indomitable Professor Asoke Bhattacharya, President of RAI. Students from the Mominpur and New Alipore branches of Bidya Bharati School, Alphabet School, West Barisha Vidya Mandir, Sree Sambhu Sadan, and IICP came together to express their views on Reading The Word, Reading the World. Each student came forward to share their personal preferences, reading and thoughts on how words impacted impressions and actions.



The topics traversed a wide range from personal favourites of factual stories and fiction, connecting the self with defined words and exploring the whys, transposition of characters to the self, personifying stories of courage, and views on women empowerment. Queries from erudite members in the audience were met with honest and forthright responses eliciting appreciation. New contacts were made and the stage set for further such inclusive events.



Promoting Gender Equity

Artist Ritaban Ghosh conducted an insightful and introspective three-day workshop for 15 young teenagers and adults. Part of an Indo-Bangladesh pilot of the Goethe Institute, this project was titled M3 - Man, Male, Masculinity. The idea was to challenge and demystify the concepts of stereotypes and role models. The lectures and thought-provoking discussions aimed to promote gender-equitable practices and activities involving the creation of light boxes, collages, photographs, and videos.



Training and Capacity Building: IICP at Amalgamated Plantations Pvt Ltd. (APPL) – A Report

A field visit by the IICP team of Sonali Nandi, Asis Ghosh and Pankaj Sarkar was made to the APPL's tea estates in October 2022. An assessment of over 100 children and adults with disabilities was conducted by our professionals in the Hathiguli, Borjan, and Diffloo clusters. What emerged was a definite lack of skills and knowledge to assist persons with disabilities in each catchment area. Based on IICP's feedback report, the Managing Director Vikram Gulia took the initiative to send a team of 8 employees to IICP for training. The aim was to equip them with competencies and caregiving skills to assist persons with disabilities in the tea gardens.



The IICP team in Assam

Raj Sawra and **Sandip Gorh** are both Health Assistants at the APPL tea estate in the Kaziranga district of Assam. They were deputed by the management to attend a two-month course on Caregiving for Persons with Disabilities certified by Sister Nivedita University. At the certification ceremony, they shared their stay and training experience at IICP. Sumita Roy reports:



Raj: *I work at the Hathiguli Tea Estate and before I attended this course, I had no knowledge about disabilities. The training I have received at IICP has taught me a great deal. The faculty members demonstrated how we can help children and adults with disabilities with their different daily activities like dressing, mealtime, and toileting, and make life better for them. I have learnt that although they may have limited abilities and skills, they can do many tasks. All they need is some assistance. I enjoyed the art and craft classes where we were taught how to make paper gift bags and do block printing. In the advocacy class, I was made aware that all persons with disabilities want to be treated with respect and have access to equal rights. I offer my grateful thanks to all the staff and teachers in IICP for this wonderful experience.*



Sandip: *I work at the Diffloo Tea Estate and was sent for training to IICP so I can help the children and adults with disabilities who live in our village and work in the factory. I have learnt about the different kinds of disabilities and how we can use simple household items as teaching aids. We were made to do practical exercises which included mealtime management and wheelchair transfers. The hands-on training during the night stay in the residential unit was a unique experience. I am grateful to Sonali Ma'am and all the teachers for making the effort to explain all the topics in a simple manner. They even prepared the lectures in Hindi so we could follow the study material. I am grateful to our Managing Director, Mr Gulia, for having arranged this training.*



A Farewell Note: Asis Kumar Ghosh, Deputy Director, Therapy



I come to the end of my journey with the organization when I retire in a few short months. I vividly recall how it all started on 9th May 1985. I was to attend a formal interview for a post at the Ballygunge Military Camp with the Institute then called the Spastics Society of Eastern India. Like any first-time job seeker, I was quite nervous about the interview and that too by a British physiotherapist! I was not worried about the questions that I might be asked on cerebral palsy but I was extremely concerned I may not comprehend Miss Hamblin's British accent! I survived the ordeal and went on to become a member of staff for many years.

I was extremely fortunate to find an enriching learning environment, and a supportive and accessible atmosphere that steadfastly anchored me at my first workplace for a long time. A fine mix of observation, knowledge, and hands-on effort – daily reinforced by Mr Chhetri, Olidi, and Miss Hamblin – helped me realize the ever expanding scope for learning. Then came the opportunity for higher learning at Bobath Centre, UK, which further broadened my horizon of thinking and honed my skills. Subsequent deliberations on various development domains such as communication, cognition, and social participation through workshops and conferences added to my repository and impacted my management skills for children and their families. Mrs Ranu Banerjee, Swapna Mukherjee, and Iti Ganguly were among the many stalwarts whose methodologies in the learning domain gradually transformed my intervention strategies. It resulted in my incorporating an element of learning as part of a comprehensive approach of development for children with cerebral palsy. Mrs Sujata Parekh's 'interactive sessions' with parents helped me to modify my way of 'communicating' with children and families. Imbibing new knowledge on a daily basis and refining my skills for practical training culminated in me being known outside the ambit of IICP. Down the line, I found another space in paediatric practice in Government hospitals. Opportunities to absorb new knowledge in early interventions through developmentally supportive care in neonatal intensive care units threw open another horizon for me – adding diversity to my repertoire. I exchanged knowledge and skills with medical, nursing, and rehabilitation professionals through the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakrama scheme. I was assigned the task of capacity building of the existing medical and rehabilitation workforce through training workshops in various States. Many such assignments of training connected me to the health and education system in different parts of the country. Being the lead physiotherapist in LEAP-CP, a novel clinical trial supported by the University of Queensland, to assess 800 babies from low income families with birth risk factors was another great learning experience. Working on inclusion of children with cerebral palsy in the mainstream education system is my next goal of life. I aim to fulfill that goal in the future.

31st March 2023 marks the end of my journey of learning at IICP. I humbly acknowledge the wonderful support and cooperation of seniors and colleagues, in and outside the IICP premises, that has moulded me. It will be remiss if I do not mention the immense contributions of Dr Kaul and Dr Sen in my career graph – I remain indebted for the work ethos they inculcated in me and that I faithfully followed during my tenure at IICP. I leave with wonderful memories and wish the team success in all their future endeavours.

News, Events, Visitors

Rabindra Jayanti, 9th May 2022



Tasher Desh performed by the students of IICP

The 161st birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore was celebrated with a performance of his iconic dance drama, *Tasher Desh* (Land of Cards). It was filmed and uploaded on YouTube.

Independence Day



Saluting the tri-colour on 15th August 2022



Ankush Muniya, Piu Halder
(Junior Academics I)



A Tryst with Destiny: a tribute to our freedom fighters

Mr Rajeev Chalana, HR Director, FC & AR, South Asia and Ms Rajasree Das, Manager-CSR visited the classes supported by Vesuvius India Limited and interacted with the students.



Students and members of the Advocacy Group attended the book launch of *Munni Monster* by Dr Madhurima Vidyarthi (right) at the Kolkata Literary Meet held at the Victoria Memorial grounds. Dr Sudha Kaul, Founder and Vice-Chairperson, IICP, moderated the stimulating session with the author.



News, Events, Visitors...



A prestigious TED X event was held to mark the Memorial Day of Sushila Birla Girls School (SBGS) on 19th September 2022. Dr Reena Sen, Hony Secretary, IICP, was invited as a speaker and presented an impressive and thought-provoking talk on 'Ableism in the Indian Education System'.



Dr Reena Sen with Swati Gautam, entrepreneur; Kounteya Sinha, storyteller and photographer; and Sharmila Bose, Director, SBGS

Riddhi Adhikary wishes all her teachers a Happy Teachers' Day on 5th Sept 2022



An Awareness Programme by students on World Cerebral Palsy Day, October 2022

Judy Wine (extreme left in the picture), a Founder Member of the International Society of Augmentative & Alternative Communication (ISAAC) and Veronica Withers were warmly welcomed by Rishi Mondal and Parnasree Halder.



Meeting the adults



Visitors enjoy freshly baked cookies from the Catering Unit

It was a proud moment for us when Dr Sudha Kaul was felicitated as 'A Woman of Impact' by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) FLO.



t2

Sudha Kaul, founder, trustee and vice-chairperson of the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP), Calcutta, received the award under the category 'Women of Impact'. "The Power FLO Awards was, for me, an acknowledgement of the work that we at IICP have done for over five decades. It was wonderful to be with a group of inspirational young women who are doing such wonderful work. I look forward to the beginning of an ongoing relationship between FICCI FLO and IICP," said Kaul.

Congratulations!

Medical Camps



Blood Donation Camp



Eye Camp



Dental Camp



Rubella Camp



Booster Dose Camp



Vaccination Camp

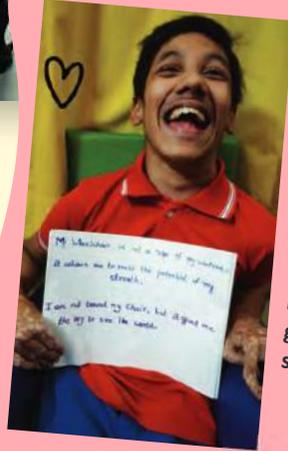
**1st March is International Wheelchair Day
and we have something to say:
'Thanks dear 'Wheelie' for being my legs every day.'**



Suchetana Mukherjee, Principal, CSE,
agrees with Aniket Mahato's statement,
'Hum Kisi Se Kam Nahin!'
(We are not less than anyone!)



Wheelchair আমার বন্ধু।
আমার পা। ছইলচেয়ার করে
আমি সব জায়গায় যেতে
পারি। আমার এটা চালাতে
খুব ভালো লাগে। বাবার
যেমন ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স
আছে, আমাকেও সায়ন
আফল সেরকম একটা
ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্স করে
দিয়েছে।
- অক্ষিত বসু



My wheelchair is
not a sign of my
weakness, it allows
me to reach the
potential of my
strength.
I am not bound to
my chair but it
gives me the key to
see the world.

- Deepanshu Paul



I am funny, intelligent, interesting, emotional,
inquisitive and more. I just happen to use a
wheelchair. I do wonders on my wheelchair. At
times I forget I cannot walk. My wheelchair
makes me forget that.

- Srista Sinha

मेरी प्यारी व्हीलचेयर,
तुम बिन मेरा जीवन बेकार।
तुम साथ मेरा देने से,
कभी ना करती इनकार।।
तुम ही हो सहारा मेरी,
तुम्हारे मुझ पर बहुत उपकार।
भटक रही थी मैं,
तुमने किया मेरा जीवन साकार।।

- Shreya Singh



Akshat Dhuria (CSE)

International Wheelchair Day...



Avideep Saha (CSE)



Wheelchair আমার সব থেকে প্রিয় বন্ধু। Wheel chair ছিল বলে আমি আন্দামানে বেড়াতে যেতে পেরেছি। সমুদ্র দেখার আনন্দটা অনুভব করতে পেরেছি। আমার নিত্যসাথীকে আমি ভুলবো না। I love you wheelchair.

- অভিদীপ সাহা



শীতের ছুটিতে মায়ের সঙ্গে চিড়িয়াখানা ঘুরতে গিয়েছিলাম। আগে যে সব গল্পপাখিদের (যেমন বাঘ, সিংহ, হাতি, সারস, উটপাখি, কুমীর ইত্যাদি) কথা গল্পে শুনেছি অথবা বইয়ে পড়েছি, তাদের নিজের চোখে দেখে খুব আনন্দ হয়েছিল। হুইলচেয়ার ছিল বলেই তা সম্ভব হয়েছিল।

শ্রুতি সিং



Debanjan Das (CSE)

আমি ও আমার সাথী

কয়েকদিন আগে আমরা সবাই মিলে ডুয়ার্স বেড়াতে গিয়েছিলাম। আমার হুইলচেয়ার না থাকলে এত সুন্দর করে ঘুরতে পারতাম না। কোচবিহার রাজবাড়ি, ভুটান এর ফুন্টশেলিং, পরুমারা জঙ্গল, মূর্তি নদী, তিস্তা ব্যারেজ সব আমি হুইলচেয়ার করে ঘুরেছি। আমার বাবা, মা ও দিদি হুইলচেয়ার চালাতে আমাকে সাহায্য করেছে, কখনো নিজেও হুইলচেয়ার চালিয়েছি। তোমাকে অশেষ ধন্যবাদ হুইলচেয়ার।

কুণাল দত্ত



Inspector Lama of Taratala Police Station presented the medals to participants of wheelchair games

Festivals and Special Days

Celebrating the Colours of Spring



Piu Halder



Basanta Utsav Festivities



Deepshikha Bera



Happy Holi!



Riddhima Sinha

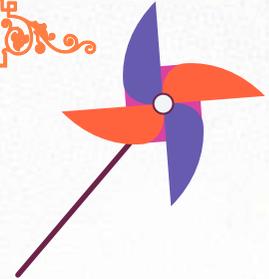


Festivals and Special Days

Biswakarma Puja: Worship of the Deity of Tools



Durga Puja: Worship of the Mother Goddess



Festivals and Special Days

Christmas Cheer!



Shaurya Mall



Shuvam Kar



Saraswati Puja: Worship of the Goddess of Knowledge



Guest of Honour Aditi Sengupta, Headmistress,
Saraswati Vidya Mandir



Saswati Mohanti conducts the prayers

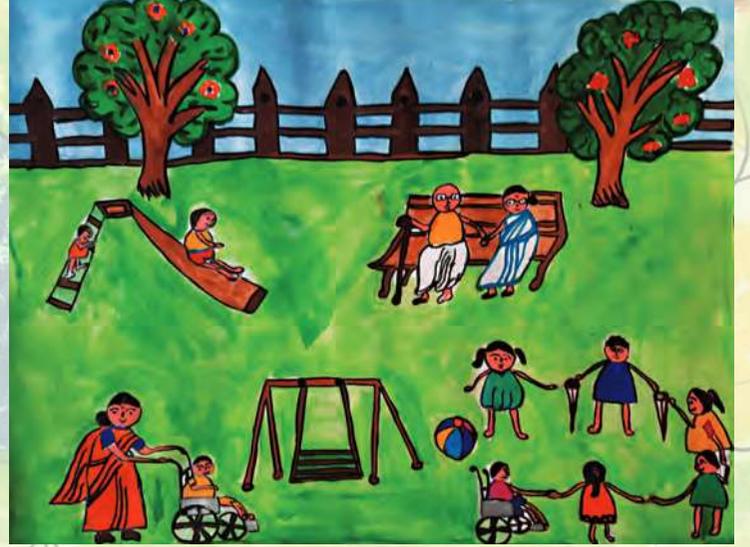
Expressions

প্রতিবন্ধকতা

আমি আজ প্রতিবন্ধী,
থাকব না তো চিরদিন বন্দী।
বেরিয়ে যাব দেওয়াল ভেঙে,
বাধাবিপদ সব ডিঙিয়ে।
দেখব এবার জগতটাকে,
কেমন করে মানুষ ঘোর
এই জগতের ঘুরিপাকে।

I may be a person with disabilities but I refuse to remain confined within four walls. I will break through them to overcome the challenges and prove to the world that I am no less than anyone else.

– Barsha Bhattacharya



Shreya Singh



आज की नारी (A Woman of Today)

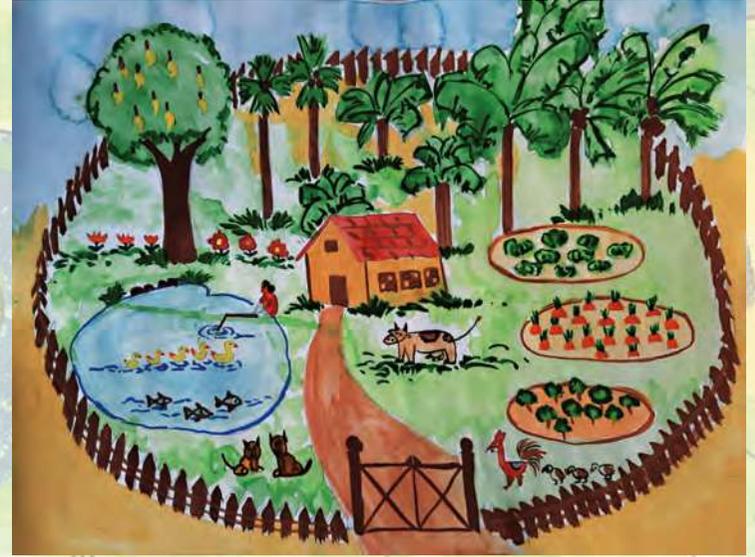
मैं हूँ एक नारी,
जिसके पीछे पड़ी दुनिया सारी।
इन सभी को डर है कि वो,
न पड़ जाए इस पुरुषप्रधान समाज पर भारी।।
संयुक्त औरसमावेशित समाज को-चाहिए,
मुझ जैसी सशक्त और निडर नारी।
जिसमें हों अपार संभावनाएँ
और मिले कामयाबी बहुत सारी।।
हर पल हर कदम है एक लड़ाई,
इसलिए मैंने है राह ठानी।
बनना है मुझे एक सम्पूर्ण नारी,
और अलग अपनी पहचान है बनानी।।

I am a woman of today challenging the biases of a patriarchal society. A courageous woman is the need of the hour for a strong and unified society. There may be struggles at every step but we will strive to move forward and create our own identity.

– Poonam Bind



Niloy Maity



Upasruti Jana

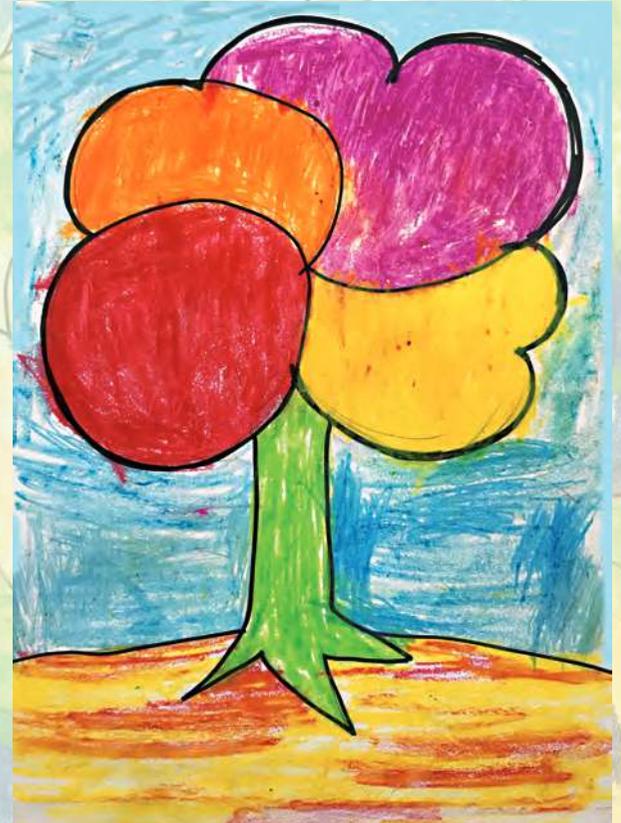
दृढ़ता की जीत (Victory of Tenacity)

श्याम बाबू को बहुत तेज बुखार था। उनका बेटा उन्हें डक्टर को दिरवाने के लिए महुआ क्लीनिक पर ले गया। पर वहां पहुँच कर उन्हें पता चला कि वहाँ लिफ्ट नहीं है। सीड़ियों भी बहुत संकरी थीं। श्याम बाबू के परिजन बड़ी भुरिकल से पहली मंजिल पर ले गये। श्याम बाबू सभी की परेशानी देखकर इस का हल निकालने का निश्चय किया।

उन्होंने क्लीनिकके उच्चाधिकारियों को इस समस्या से अवगत कशनेके लिखे रुक पत्रलिखते का निश्चय किया जिसमें सभी रोगियों के परिजनों के टस्ताक्षर हों। कुछ निराशावादी लोगों को यह सब निरर्थक लगा पर श्याम बाबू ने हार न मानी। उन्होंने पत्र लिखा और सभी समस्याओं का जिक्र किया। पहले तो अधिकारियों ने इस मामले पर विरोध ध्यान नहीं दिया। पर श्याम बाबू ने हिम्मत नहीं हारी और बार बार पत्र लिखने से विवश दो कर अधिकारियों को लिफ्ट लगाने का आदेश देना पड़ा और बहुत कम समय में लिफ्ट तैयार हो गयी। लिफ्ट के उदघाटन के लिख श्याम जी को आमंत्रित किया गया। श्याम बाबू ने साबित कर दिया कि सच्ची लगन से हर काम जरूर पूरा होता है।

Shyambabu needed to visit a doctor whose chamber had to be accessed by stairs. Each time he had to be carried up and he felt belittled. Since he was not alone in this predicament, he tried to rope in other patients to sign a letter asking the doctor to install a lift to overcome this problem. The other patients were reluctant to sign thinking that it would be of no use. Shyambabu persevered in his efforts till eventually a lift was installed.

– Shraddha Khator



Upasruti Jana



Agnideep Saha

তানি ও মুনির রূপকথা (Tale of Two Sisters)

তানি ও মুনি দুই বোনেরই নাচ খুব পছন্দের বিষয়। এই দুজনের মধ্যে তফাৎ শুধু একটাই— মুনি হাঁটতে পারে আর তানি পারে না। ছোটবেলা থেকেই তানি সব জায়গায় যেতো মায়ের কোলে চেপে। একটু বড় হতে বাবা, মা দুদিক থেকে হাত ধরে হাঁটিয়ে নিয়ে যেত। তারপরে তার সঙ্গী ছিল হুইলচেয়ার।

কদিন ধরেই মুনি খুব চুপচাপ। কারোর সাথেই কথা বলছে না। একদিন খাবার টেবিলে বসে গল্প করতে করতে জানা গেল আসল সত্য। স্কুলের লাস্ট দিন ঠিক হয়েছিল যে একটা ফেয়ারওয়েল পার্টি হবে মুনিদের জন্য। আর সেখানে দারুন দারুন অনুষ্ঠান হবে। তার মধ্যে একটা অনুষ্ঠান হচ্ছে কাপল ডান্স মানে, জোড়ায় নাচ। কিন্তু সেখানে বাড়ির কাউকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে মুনিকে নাচতে হবে। সে মা, বাবা, ভাই, বোন যে কেউ হতে পারে, কিন্তু মুনির মা-বাবা কোনমতেই নাচতে রাজি হবেন না, আর তানি তো পারবেই না, তাই মুনি এই কথাটা সবাইকে বলতে না পেরে, মনে মনে কষ্ট পাচ্ছে এতদিন।

কথাটা শোনা মাত্রই তানি খাবার টেবিলে হাততালি দিয়ে বলে উঠলো, এই তো সুবর্ণ সুযোগ - ‘আমার স্কুলের টিচাররা আমায় দিয়ে কত ডান্স করিয়েছে তুই জানিস না, সেটা জানে মা’। মুনি একটু অবাক - ‘হুইল চেয়ারে নাচ?’ সে একটু কিন্তু কিন্তু করছে। মুনি গিয়ে বন্ধুদের কথাটা বলে। তারা তো সবাই শুনে খুবই উত্তেজিত। তারা এমন প্রোগ্রাম কখনো দেখেনি, তাই তারাও

রাজি। তানি এদিকে মুনিকে নিয়ে নাচ প্র্যাকটিস শুরু করলো। তানি নিজেই করল কোরিয়াগ্রাফি, মুনি তো দেখে অবাক - তানি এত সুন্দর করে নাচটা ভাবলো কি করে! অনুষ্ঠানের দিন হল ভর্তি লোকজন। একের পর এক অনুষ্ঠান হচ্ছে আর হাততালিতে ফেটে উঠছে হল। সবাই বালমলে সেজে এসেছে, সুন্দর সুন্দর নাচছে। এবার এলো তানি-মুনির পালা। হল থেকে স্টেজে উঠতে ঠিক চারটে সিঁড়ি। মুনি কিছু বলার আগে তার বন্ধুরা হই হই করে এসে তানিকে চোখের পলকে স্টেজে তুলে দিল। হঠাৎ করে আলো জ্বলে উঠল। তানি আর মুনি দুজনেই ছিল সাদা পোশাকে, আর তাদের নাচটা ছিল ‘তাল সে তাল মিলা’। তানি যেন সারা স্টেজে ঢেউ খেলিয়ে বেড়াচ্ছে। মুনি শুধু তার সাথে জুড়ে আছে। তারা তখন এক আত্মা আর এক মন হয়ে উঠেছে। একসময় নাচ শেষ হল, দর্শকাসন ছেড়ে প্রত্যেকে উঠে করতালিতে ভরিয়ে দিল হল। মুনির টিচাররা সবাই ছুটে স্টেজে এসে জড়িয়ে ধরেছে তাদের। মুনির মনে হচ্ছে এ যেন তার জীবনের সবথেকে সেরা মুহূর্ত, এত অভিনন্দন, এত আনন্দ, এত উত্তেজনা তাকে ঘিরে, সে আগে কোনদিনও দেখেনি। স্টেজ থেকে নেমে এসে জড়িয়ে ধরল তার মা আর বোনকে।

Tani and Muni, two sisters, both loved to dance. Tani was very expressive but physically challenged. She used a wheelchair to move around. Muni was physically able but less expressive. The sisters put up a duet performance at a farewell party in school. Tani danced in her wheelchair while Muni accompanied her on stage. This unique performance was highly appreciated by the audience. Muni was happy that her sister's disability was not a hindrance to her creative expression.

– Sayani Debnath



Avnish Saha

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