



Celebrating 10 Years in India

Ten Years - Ten Stories





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About the Institute of International Education

The Institute of International Education (IIE) is among the world's largest and most experienced international education organizations. As an independent not-for-profit organization founded in 1919, IIE delivers program excellence to a diverse range of participants, sponsors and donors.

Through more than 200 programs, IIE promotes educational exchange around the world. Foremost among these is the world-renowned Fulbright Program, which IIE has administered on behalf of the U.S. Department of State since the Program's inception in 1946. IIE partners with foundations, corporations, governments, and individuals to provide scholarship and fellowship administration, testing and advising services, research and information on opportunities for international study, and emergency assistance to students and scholars.

About the IIE India Office

IIE has been engaged with higher education in India for over 60 years and has had an office in New Delhi, India since 2005. Central to our work is the administration of many key programs that promote mutual understanding between the people of India and the United States.

Working closely with corporate foundations, governments and non-governmental organizations in the region, IIE has developed and implemented a strong set of activities in higher education scholarship administration, leadership development and critical development fields such as energy and health.

IIE is also a leader in research on higher education in India and U.S.-India exchange, as well as in promoting partnerships between U.S. institutions of higher education and their counterparts in India. To learn more about IIE and our work in India, please visit www.iie.org.

Foreword

As Institute of International Education's (IIE) New Delhi office completes 10 years in India this year, here is an attempt to share 10 stories of IIE's fellows and participants. Representing the length and breadth of India, these stories highlight sheer determination, passion and an extraordinary desire of ordinary individuals to be the change that they wish to see in the world. This is inspirational for us, as it is about how our programs are transforming their lives and the lives of others.

We share these stories as a resource to our fellow colleagues, friends and well-wishers who are also trying to bring changes in the society through various innovative programs.

We would like to thank all the 10 individuals featured in this series for sharing their stories, to all our sponsors for having trust in our vision and finally, to all our program participants for constantly inspiring us and being agents of change wherever they are in the world today.

Best wishes,

Namrata Jha

Director

Institute of International Education/New Delhi



From Winning the GE Foundation Scholarship to Winning Hearts

Kanika Bansal

GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Program

World over, the infection rate among patients is high, with a large number of infected cases resulting in deaths. This issue is directly linked to the ever increasing burden on health care staff, further aggravated by an existing lack of innovations in the medical field. In 2012, Kanika Bansal, whose entrepreneurial ideas were inspired by innovation and leadership skills she honed in the **GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Program** as an undergraduate student in 2007, started a new company with the multi-pronged aim of combating patient mortality and reducing the existing burden on healthcare staff.

Since then, through constantly introducing new devices in the medical field, her company is attempting to ease the pain of patients the world over. The company's first product is IV Prev, a catheter auxiliary, which prevents biofilm formation and keeps wounds sterilized at all times by the application of an automatic antiseptic. Through MediCen Devise, Kanika intends to continue bringing innovative medical products to the market. She hopes that her company will be integral to providing doctors with the tools to treat patients effectively in the future.

While pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Technology in Medical Engineering at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Technology in New Delhi, Kanika was one of the fourteen students in India selected for the GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Award in the year 2007. One of IIE's longest running programs in India, this GE Foundation initiative supports outstanding students in higher education in 10 countries around the world. Since it started in 1987 in Mexico, the program has supported 2,200 students globally, and in India, has supported 647 students to date.

As part of her award, Kanika, along with her fellow winners, attended the "Energize to Innovate" workshop organized at GE's R&D Centre in Bangalore, and credits her experience in the workshop as one which inspired her to hone her leadership skills and encouraged her to strengthen her business ideas and one which took her confidence to even greater heights.

Kanika commented that she "loved the versatility factor of GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Program", which always motivated her to "be a versatile person and be confident about it." It was no surprise that Kanika kept pursuing her entrepreneurial spirit and took the big leap towards materializing her dreams.

Kanika's story demonstrates the immense impact that IIE-managed programs are creating, not only in the short term but also in the long run. Scholarships like this one and simultaneously building their leadership capacities is of utmost importance in today's world. It is these young leaders who will lead from the front in the times to come, irrespective of the fields in which they choose to chart their careers.



Together We Learn, Together We Achieve

Lipika Sahu

India Support for Teacher Education
Program (In-STEP)

Passionate about teacher education and improving the quality of teaching at the elementary school level in India, Lipika Sahu was one of the 53 teacher educators selected from varied states across India to participate in the first cohort of the India Support for Teacher Education Program (In-STEP) at Arizona State University, U.S.A. in 2013. A partnership between the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Arizona State University (ASU) and Institute of International Education (IIE), In-STEP aimed to build capacity of 110 teacher educators from India.

Lipika, now a senior teacher educator working in Khurda, Odisha, credits this life-defining experience with helping her to become a change agent in her professional community. She sums up her transformative experience by sharing that she is now a stronger and confident person who is enthusiastic about bringing about changes in the school education system by contributing her best within her community.

With the goals of advancing the quality of education at the elementary school level in India, Lipika along with the other teacher educators from select states of India participated in an intense, three month immersion, world-class teacher training program. As one of the integral components of the program, Lipika worked on developing a reform proposal at ASU, which is now in the implementation phase.

Lipika says that the three months residency experience was "extremely exhilarating and enriching". Impressed with the collaborative work culture and professional ethics, Lipika's experience reinforced her belief that she was not the "dictator", but the "co-constructor of knowledge". After returning from ASU, Lipika decided to integrate technology in her teaching-learning process and requested her colleagues to observe her classes and provide feedback to her. Lipika also points out that as she shared her learnings with colleagues, their style of teaching also changed from being a monologue to a dialogue, making classrooms conducive to free flowing discussions, and hence increased mutual learning.

Wearing multiple hats, Lipika is a textbook writer for elementary classes and D.El.Ed (Diploma in Elementary Education) course of the state; member of State Resource Group; is actively involved in teacher training module development; is imparting training at state level; and is also conducting a small scale research at DIET (District Institute of Education and Training).

Her collaborative learning experience has been instrumental in achieving her dream that, "*every child must learn and every teacher must teach*".



Changing Lives in Jharkhand

Akay J. Minz

Leadership Development for Mobilizing Reproductive Health (LDM) Program

Stories about leadership and of people as change-makers often stem from a deep rooted passion and commitment, and the story we are sharing here with our readers is no different. With a vision to see women leading a dignified life and to empower them, Ms. Akay J. Minz is steadily paving the way for a better life for women and indigenous communities in Jharkhand, India, the turning point being 2004-05, when she was selected to participate in the The David and Lucile Packard Foundation supported Visionary Leadership Program. Having a rich, tribal background herself, Akay was born in the city of Ranchi, Jharkhand, having been brought up with a passion to work for the betterment of the community around her, especially tribals and women.

Akay shares that participation in the Visionary Leadership Program was an eye-opener, which not only enhanced her knowledge in reproductive and child health (RCH), but also made her realize that women and indigenous communities should learn to practice a healthy living. Akay shared that her association with IIE's LDM (Leadership Development for Mobilizing Reproductive Health) program for 10 years, further strengthened her network with fellow trainers from Bihar and Jharkhand. Supported by the Packard Foundation, LDM program was implemented by IIE for 10 years in five countries, including India, to build capacities of emerging leaders in the field of reproductive health.

Akay's motivation further got a boost when she got an opportunity to work in her state at a larger scale by leading the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA and known as *Sahiya* in Jharkhand) program and community process under National Health Mission, Jharkhand. Through leading the program, Akay also found a meaningful approach to implement her learnings. Presently as the State Program Coordinator, she is leading a team that includes 24 District Coordinators, more than 800 ASHA trainers, a huge force of 40,964 ASHAs (locally known as Sahiyas) and 30,012 VHSNC (Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee) to empower them with a shared vision to access health rights for women in their communities.

Akay has been working with a rights based health intervention in the state. Her efforts have pushed 500 Sahiyas to be elected as PRI members. Having become more than just health functionaries, the Sahiyas have become a voice in the community to advocate for rights, thus turning this into a rights' based movement.

Having received several accolades for her contribution to the community, Akay is a member of State Supervisory Board of PCPNDT (Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques) Act, National ASHA mentoring group (an advisory committee of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of India for Community Process under National Health Mission), and ASHA Mentoring Group, in Uttar Pradesh. She is also a visiting faculty for State Institute of Rural Development, Jharkhand; Nehru Yuva Kendra (NYK) and National Social Service (NSS) for health, gender and leadership.

Dreaming of an organized forum of ASHAs, which may also have representation in the state's cabinet, Akay is working with the motto, "*let women and the deprived enjoy equal rights*". Hopefully, Akay's vision will come true for her one day, and that more voices like hers will rise from the community.



Mission with a Purpose: Advocating Maternal Health Rights

Neha Rathi

Maternal Health Young Champions (MHYC) Program

It is very often said that human rights and maternal health of women go hand-in-hand, and that choices that a woman makes in relation to her own reproductive health are her basic human rights. World over women have been denied these basic rights. With a zest to change these very attitudes and to gain a deeper understanding of reproductive health issues, Neha Rathi, a graduate of London School of Economics and Political Science, participated in IIE's Maternal Health Young Champions Program (MHYC) in the year 2013.

Armed with a background in law, as well as journalism, Neha was already familiar with legal issues and cases of violation of reproductive rights issues in India, having published articles on the same. At the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), she came across an opportunity to work with the Reproductive Rights Initiative that works to advance women's reproductive rights. During her field visits she came across issues concerning sex selection, unsafe abortions, maternal deaths and lack of options that women have, inculcating in her a keen desire to build a strong foundation in research, which in turn, prompted her to participate in the MHYC Program.

As a Young Champion, Neha was mentored by Ms. Sushma Shende from the Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA) in Mumbai. At SNEHA, Neha led a study on barriers to safe abortion and unsafe abortion practices among vulnerable women in Dharavi and Govandi slums in Mumbai as well as in rural Jalgaon in Maharashtra. Neha's field work in Maharashtra led her to work as a researcher on issues like sex selective abortions, child marriage and violence against children. Selected as a youth advocate with Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) in 2013-14, Neha is now a recipient of Child Survival Media Award, a fellowship hosted by Save the Children and National Foundation for India (NFI) under which she is writing on issues concerning child survival.

Since having participated in MHYC, Neha has presented the findings of her research on reproductive rights, safe abortion practices and sex selective abortion at conferences throughout India and Asia. Additionally, she has also published articles on reproductive rights in leading newspapers, magazines and web portals. She has now fully dedicated herself to litigation as well as field-based research on various human rights issues including women's rights and reproductive freedom.

Talking about her experience as an MHYC fellow, Neha shares, *“right from attending the Global Maternal Health Conference, 2013 in Tanzania to my poster presentation in Philippines at the 7th APCRSR Conference, where I presented my research findings on unsafe abortions, MHYC and IIE have been instrumental in my professional growth. While initially I was not very well-versed with the field of qualitative research I have now led research projects on various issues concerning women and child health and presented the same at various law schools in India, with a view to create more awareness and sensitization.”*

With a burning passion, Neha steadfastly carries the torch of advocacy for some of the basic rights of women in today's day and age.



Head for Technology, Heart for the World

Nishita Tanwar

Cargill Global Scholars Program

Around the world, girls have traditionally been under-enrolled in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs. Similarly, the number of women working in technology fields has been dismal. Only recently have women started breaking into these predominantly male-dominated domains, and the Institute of International Education (IIE) is proud to be supporting these ambitious young women with the tools and support to succeed. One such young woman is Nishita Tanwar, a 2013 recipient of the Cargill Global Scholarship.

Nishita entered school during the decade in which the 'personal computer revolution' began in India. Technology fascinated Nishita from her childhood-whether mobile phones or her father's desktop. Her interest in Computers further developed during the final years of senior secondary school. Having grown up with computers and fascinated by technology in general, it was no surprise that Nishita eventually opted to pursue a Bachelor's of Technology with a specialization in Information Technology at the Delhi Technological University (DTU), one of the foremost engineering colleges in India.

In her second year of college, Nishita was chosen as one of ten recipients of the IIE-managed Cargill Global Scholars Program as a result of her academic achievements and leadership potential. Through this program, IIE provides financial support and leadership development opportunities to undergraduate students around the world. Participation in the Cargill Global Scholars Program exposed Nishita to like-minded students from other parts of the world and broadened her worldview. Nishita believes that being mentored by a Cargill leader during the program contributed significantly to her realization that she needed to look at her future from a broader perspective.

Reflecting on her own experience of being self-taught in the technology domain at a young age, and then eventually being mentored by a Cargill leader in her college years, Nishita became passionate about mentoring girls like her, who needed adequate support to break into the technology fields. In 2014, she became a Grace Hopper Women in Computing Scholar (GHC). The Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing is the world's largest gathering of women technologists. Nishita eventually joined the Anita Borg Institute (ABI) for Summer of Code 2015 as a mentor for young girls from different countries pursuing technology-related studies. ABI is a social enterprise founded on the belief that women are vital to building technology that the world needs.

Nishita also has been a Microsoft Student Partner at Microsoft, a Google Developers Group Organiser in her college, as well as member of the National Cadet Corps (NCC). She is also a technology blogger, and likes to call herself an "amateur astronomer". Crediting IIE's implementation of the Cargill Global Scholars Program for providing her with the opportunity to explore her own leadership potential, Nishita is now a much more confident person. With a clear vision of her future path and an entrepreneurial mindset, Nishita sees herself leading breakthrough innovations in technology in 10-15 years, as well as sharing her technological expertise with university students. Nishita believes that young girls need to be constantly guided and motivated to enter technology fields, and that mentoring them from a young age is the best way to do just that. With her zeal to make a difference, Nishita truly has a "*head for technology, and heart for the world.*"



Beating the Odds

Rangaraj Mageswaran

GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Program

Sometimes the biggest inspiration is derived from stories of common individuals beating all odds to achieve something. This story is about one such individual who not only beat the odds with his single-minded determination but also set an example for others to follow. Born and raised in one of the most backward districts of India, Dharmapuri in the Tamil Nadu state, Rangaraj Mageswaran completed his schooling there and moved to Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu, to pursue his Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering. As a result of his consistent hard work and overall performance, Rangaraj went on to pursue a Masters in Product Design and Commerce at the PSG College of Technology in the city of Coimbatore. In 2012, he was selected as one of twelve recipients of the prestigious GE Foundation Scholar-Leaders Program (GEFSLP).

GEFSLP, which began in 1987 in Mexico, supports outstanding students from under-represented backgrounds and communities in several countries around the world, including India. With a strong focus on building leadership and critical thinking skills, peer learning and community development work, the program incorporates valuable opportunities for students to engage with GE experts and managers, as well as program alumni. The Institute of International Education (IIE) is honored to manage the implementation of GEFSLP for the GE Foundation.

Rangaraj says that his "*technical and leadership skills got sharpened*" while participating in the 'Energize to Innovate' workshop held at the GE – John F. Welch Technology Centre in Bangalore, propelling him to move to greater heights. After receiving the GEFSLP Award, there was no looking back for Rangaraj. His new found confidence led him to a Post-Graduate Internship with GE, Power & Water, Bangalore, and, eventually, an employment offer. Thus, Rangaraj became a technologist with GE Oil and Gas. Today, he is working with cutting-edge steam turbine technologies used to power many rural parts of the world. With a clear objective of creating an energetic workplace, conducive to constant innovation, Rangaraj continues to embrace the same passion that brought him here in the first place.

Rangaraj's enthusiasm extends beyond his workspace. A critical aspect of GEFSLP is a focus on community development, and Rangaraj is actively engaged in the GE volunteering programs. With a strong belief in the idea that "*an ignited mind is the most powerful resource on the earth, above the earth and under the earth*", he is giving back to the community by counseling school children. He believes that if young students are encouraged to work hard, they too can achieve their goals in life. Rangaraj believes that his inspiration came from the energy, passion and vision of GEFSLP in supporting young students' education. Rangaraj also volunteers time with the age group at the other end of the spectrum – the elderly.

Reflecting on GEFSLP, Rangaraj says, "*the scholarship represents much more than just a monetary gift; it represents a belief in the promise of equal opportunity. By providing resources to students who need and deserve it most, GE-Foundation is helping to ensure that one's economic situation is not a barrier to their intellectual growth.*"

IIE is proud to be a partner of the GE Foundation in providing a stepping stone to students who are in dire need of support and have limited means. Hopefully, Rangaraj's story will inspire many more such students to believe in the power of their dreams.



Making of a Leader: Tanzila Mukhtar

Tanzila Mukhtar

Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Program

Access to education is often a significant challenge in under-developed regions. Despite this, determined individuals can still navigate these challenges and succeed. This is the story of one such individual - Tanzila Mukhtar, a 2009 recipient of the Goldman Sachs-funded, Institute of International Education (IIE)-managed Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Program (GSGLP). Between 2001 to 2009, the Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Program provided the next generation of leaders with the skills and networks they would need to thrive in the 21st century.

A self-described “*born rebel*,” Tanzila Mukhtar was brought up in Kashmir, an economically and politically challenged state that she describes as being at the “*crossroads of civilizations*.” Tanzila also noted that “*in Kashmir, to avail opportunities, one had to out-compete one’s peers*,” which inspired her to become a “*calculated planner*.” Tanzila’s urge to excel and her strategic planning acumen helped her to succeed academically in school and college. As a result, she was admitted to a Bachelor’s in Biotechnology Program - her chosen field of study, in a good college in Bangalore. Living and studying outside of Kashmir for the first time challenged her to work even harder to excel, and her drive was rewarded. For Tanzila, participation in the GSGLP was the start of an exciting journey that would provide her with the confidence she required to compete at the national and global levels.

Soon after receiving the GSGLP award, Tanzila was awarded a HSBC-Chevening Scholarship and enrolled for a Master’s in Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine at the University of Sheffield. Currently, she is pursuing a PhD in Neurobiology at the University of Basel, and is being sponsored by the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships (2013-16) program. Passionate about her field, Tanzila is researching brain development in mammals. She notes that brain is the most complicated organ and each day of her PhD so far has been intriguing to learn the amazing complicity of this organ. Tanzila shares that “*it is called as the final frontier of science, and rightly so*”. Tanzila sees herself engaged in scientific research for years to come.

Reflecting back on her journey, Tanzila sees winning the GSGLP as the most critical landmark of her career. The confidence she developed through the program remains steadfastly with her to date and guides her to work towards her dream of being a “*leader in science*.” Tanzila wants to be an inspiration to the many students who believe that conflicts in their regions could “*endanger their goals and clip their wings*.” Being a strong believer of social equality, she also wants to be a guide for those women who are underprivileged, infusing them with a strong sense of individuality and self-reliance. Summing up her core belief, Tanzila shares the following Vincent Van Gogh quote with us, “*If you hear a voice within you say ‘you cannot paint,’ then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced*.”

The Institute of International Education (IIE) is proud to have been a partner of Goldman Sachs in the implementation of the Goldman Sachs Global Leaders Program, supporting the development of tomorrow’s leaders like Tanzila Mukhtar.



Leaving No Stone Unturned

Sanju Singh

Leadership Development for Mobilizing
Reproductive Health (LDM) Program

For Sanju Singh from Patna, Bihar State, advocating for women's rights came naturally after an incident in her student days, when one of her seniors faced domestic charges for an insufficient dowry. Sanju rallied 500 students and faculty to protest the charges. This marked the start of her lifelong commitment to championing women's basic human rights.

Sanju was selected in 2004 for the David and Lucile Packard Foundation-funded, Institute of International Education (IIE)-implemented Leadership Development Mechanism (LDM) program, which ran from 2001-2011. During this period, the program supported more than 1,300 emerging and established leaders who had the vision and commitment to improve family planning and reproductive health (RH) services in Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines. During her interview for the LDM program, Sanju was asked how she would identify with the program, given she was a lawyer and the initiative was intended for health leaders. Sanju argued that, as a lawyer, she delivered training on rights-based approaches in several fields, including health, and the LDM selection panel found the argument convincing.

As an LDM Fellow, Sanju learned about rights-based approaches to reproductive health through a course on "The Role of Gender in Reproductive Health and Rights" at the CAFS (Centre for African Family Studies) institution in Nairobi, Kenya and through frequent discussions with her international peers. Eventually, she came to view the reproductive rights of women as a legal issue as well as a social one. Sanju also became an active member of the 166 Reproductive Health Fellow's Network in Bihar and Jharkhand.

A defining moment came for Sanju when she joined hands with 30 lawyers to start the Lawyers' Network to advocate for securing women's rights by law. Sanju was soon nominated as a panel lawyer for the Women's Helpline, an initiative of the Government of India for women in distress. Shortly after, she started working as a freelance consultant for socio-legal issues in the development sector. Her efforts were recognized when she was appointed as a member of the state Child Welfare Committee, with the rights of a first class judicial magistrate under the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act for Children. Sanju continues to wear many hats at present. She is a visiting faculty at the Bihar Judicial Academy, a training and advocacy specialist for Justice Ventures International, and a member of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of several organizations in India (the ICCs are committees required as part of India's Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act).

Sanju notes that her participation in the LDM Program helped her realize her leadership potential and equipped her with the network and skills to advocate effectively for the reproductive rights of women in India. Dreaming of a violence free home for every woman and child, Sanju realizes she faces many challenges in working towards her vision. This has not, however, diminished her passion and commitment. IIE is proud to have played a small role in facilitating Sanju's leadership journey, and hope that many more leaders join hands with Sanju in ensuring women's rights.



Building Bridges

Subramani Sangeetha

Verizon Innovative Learning Program (VILP)

Fourteen year-old Subramani Sangeetha was brought up in the small neighborhood of Mylapore in Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu. In 2014, Sangeetha was one of 20 students of a class of 123 students, who had the opportunity to participate in the Verizon-funded, Institute of International Education (IIE)-implemented Verizon Innovative Learning Program (VILP).

Launched in 2013, VILP leverages education technology to provide better access to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education for 500 girls in India and the Philippines. IIE's VILP team works with teachers to integrate sound pedagogy and enriching content through the creative use of education technology and a process-oriented approach to teaching. VILP also provides participating students with access to female mentors working in STEM fields, exposure visits to STEM-related industries, and leadership workshops.

VILP's interventions helped Sangeetha and her fellow peers grow their interest and aptitude in science, mathematics and technology while also building their leadership skills. Through experiential learning workshops, Sangeetha learned the importance of concentration, alertness and innovativeness, thus paving the road to her future successes.

2015 was a milestone year for this student of Lady Sivaswami Ayyar Girls Higher Secondary School in Mylapore. Sangeetha was selected for a fully-funded residential science program in the United States at the University of Rhode Island, Kingston. The 'Building International (Cultural) Bridges' Program brings together students from different countries for cross cultural exchange and engineering education. For Sangeetha, interacting with students from around the world was exciting and inspiring. Sangeetha also stunned her peers with her Silambam (a weapon-based Indian martial art from the state of Tamil Nadu) performance during the program. She happens to be a national level Silambam player.

Sangeetha's achievements at such a young age defy her humble background. The younger of two siblings, her father is an auto-rickshaw driver and her mother is a housewife. Despite limited resources, Sangeetha's parents have steadfastly supported her dreams. A role model for many girls of her age, Sangeetha has been appointed the brand ambassador of the IPPODHU: Act Now community information app on social awareness for Chennai.

Crediting her VILP mentors and school teachers, as well as the IIE team, Sangeetha believes that doors have been opened for her to become a mechanical engineer. At the top of her goals in life is to design a solar-operated auto-rickshaw for her father—an apt tribute to her highly supportive parents.

Through programs like VILP, IIE is proud to be continuing to support Indian girls in attaining their educational goals.



Pebbles in Water

Farrukh Saleem Khan

India Support for Teacher Education
(In-STEP) Program

Teachers and teacher educators play a crucial role in the education system of any country. Educating, enabling and constantly providing educational professionals with ongoing support is of vital importance. The Institute of International Education (IIE) is contributing to this important sector through a partnership with Arizona State University (ASU) on the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded India Support for Teacher Education Program (In-STEP). Through In-STEP, IIE and ASU are building the capacity of 110 teacher educators from throughout India. This is the story of one In-STEP participant Dr. Farrukh Saleem Khan.

Born in the small, nondescript town of Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. Khan hails from a family of teachers. Farrukh was one the privileged few in a minority community. His parents provided him with an elite education and motivated him to continue to higher education. After receiving a Bachelors' degree in Science and Mathematics, he went on to pursue Master's degrees in English Literature and Education. He wrote his first Ph.D. thesis in English Literature in 1992 and then authored another in Education in 2014. Farrukh also taught English to 11th and 12th graders.

In 2014, Farrukh and his wife were accepted into the IIE administrated In-STEP Program. Even before he began his journey to ASU in the United States, Farrukh was entrusted with the responsibility of becoming the "Group Buddy" for Madhya Pradesh, responsible for reporting back key findings and challenges. According to Farrukh, that additional responsibility made him more sensitive to his fellow participants.

On reaching ASU, Farrukh immediately noticed the punctuality and professionalism of the ASU teachers. He observed that the lessons not only started on time but also finished on time. Farrukh also observed the ASU teachers' sincerity in handling assignments. Farrukh also learned about Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where the focus was on collaborative learning and sharing resources. Farrukh also simultaneously sent weekly reports to his home state. It was no surprise that when he returned home, the PLC model was being talked about in the Madhya Pradesh Government schools.

Farrukh was also deeply influenced by the program's emphasis on diversity and equity. Farrukh shared that the teacher educators group was sensitized to the previously unseen equity issues prevailing all around. He came to realize that *"inequity is not based merely on broad terms like gender and caste, and that it is more subtle than that"*. He came to realize that *"we do not offer equal chances to all because we know that some of the children cannot learn"* and so, *"we do not waste our time and resources on them, and concentrate only on those we know can learn."* Thus, the realization dawned that there are children who are left behind, because of the "knowledge" of their teacher. For Farrukh, this sensitization was the biggest change he experienced in himself. Farrukh shares that he now knows that *"every child can learn"* and that that there is no stupid question and not only one correct answer.

After his participation in In-STEP, Farrukh today believes that with a little effort, teacher educators can radically change the status of equity in India. He says, *"after all, we teach 300 teachers in a year, who in turn teach about a hundred students each"*. Farrukh concludes by saying that, *"we have started throwing pebbles in the water. We have started making tiny wavelets that may become waves, and who knows, a tsunami."*

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