

Global Responsible Citizen Project supported by US Consulate
Activity Report - Aug 2013 to August 2014

Awareness Programs in Schools and Colleges

During the period from August 2013 to Aug 2014 COVA facilitated 60 Awareness Programs for students in 30 Member Schools and 10 Members Colleges and reached to nearly 12,000 children in schools and colleges. Resource Persons from AFS-Delhi, Jana Vigyana Vedika, Makro Foundation, Blue Cross, Nine is Mine, Pravah Pahal, IT Professionals from Corporates, Media Experts and Experts on Child Rights/Welfare and Juvenile Justice covered topics and interacted with students on Study Habits, Time management, Memory Management, Memory Skills, Stress Management, How to Overcome Fear, How To Face Exams Effectively, Personality Development, Leadership Skills, Communal Harmony, Career Counseling, Dream to be a Change Maker, Animal Welfare, Appreciating Skills, Gathering Youth into Politics, Unmanifesto Campaign (celebrating politics by participating in it every day - www.j.mp/unmanifesto), *AFS Awareness Sessions, John Kennedy & Lugar and Yes Exchange Program of Schools-U.S Scholarship for one year study in America*, Roots of Superstitions, Gender Justice, Child Rights and Juvenile Justice, Domestic Violence & Stress Management, RTE Act and Free Education for Poor Students in Private Schools, Civic Issues- Responsibility of Citizens and the Government, and Role of Media in Governance.

The Students of the Member Schools and Colleges were taken to participate in Competitions and Walks organized by other Resource Institutions. They also participated in “*Depression Walk for Awareness Not to Suicide*” on 6th September at HiTech City organized by MAKRO Foundation. 60 students from member schools and colleges participated in this Walk.

On 12th Dec 2013 conducted National Level Painting Competition on “*Save Fuel and Gas*” supported by Petroleum Conservation Research Association and Centre for Environment Education. 150 students participated in this competition. Participation Certificates were awarded to the students.

Sambandh-2013: Beyond War and Violence- Towards Just Peace

COVA has been involving students from member schools and colleges in commemoration of Hiroshima-Nagasaki Holocaust every year in August-September to sensitize them on nuclear disasters through variety of events like painting, poster preparation, debate, elocution, quiz, and theatre activities.

The year 2013 our team members worked all through in August in preparation, publicizing through display and distribution of IEC material in schools and colleges. This 11th Annual Event ‘Sambandh – 2013’ Inter School and Inter Collegiate Competitions was organized on 2nd September 2013 at Jawahar Bal Bhavan, Nampally, Hyderabad in association with Jawahar Bal Bhavan, ICAN, YouthTRAC, Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP) and Center for Peoples’ Foreign Policy in South Asia.

The Theme for the Event this year was “*Beyond war and Violence: Towards a Just World*”. Competitions were held in Quiz, Elocution, Poster making, Slogans Painting, Essay Writing and One Act Plays. 550 students from 41 Schools and 130 students from 12 Colleges participated in this event. 114 participants received prizes for outstanding performances and all the participants were awarded participation certificates At the Valedictory Session by Chief Guest and Guests of Honour.

Mr.Ramesh Datla, Executive Director Elico and Director, SBH was the Chief Guest, Ms. P.Sandhya, Director, Jawahar Bal Bhavan, Prof. Ramesh Reddy, Former Principal, College of Engineering & Dean Osmania University, Prof. G.Surender Reddy, President, Rotary Club of Hyderabad, Ms. Rekha Abel, Senior Consultant, KGBV Society and Mr. Salil Khader, Cultural Affairs Specialist, US Consulate were the Guests of Honour.

Little Citizens in Social Activism 2013 - Project Work on Social Issues:

COVA is involving school students in Project Work since four years with the objective of sensitizing them on different social issues, exposing them to Research Methodology; enabling them to produce a systematic research document and motivate them to consider the possibility of becoming social scientists and to emerge as Responsible Citizens.

At the outset three consultation meetings were held with children for identification of issues and problems. Students showed interest in doing study on the issues of:

1. Parks and Playgrounds;
2. Garbage Disposal;
3. Junk food;
4. Child Labour and
5. Government hospitals.

Two teachers’ orientations were conducted to equip them with skills and related knowledge to mentor the students in their project works. Students after their study, exposure and research submitted their Project works. A panel of judges comprising of doctors, lawyers, sociologists and psychologists spent several hours going through the projects and choosing the outstanding contributions.

Display cum Exhibition of Project Works on Social Activism by School Students was organized on 24 December 2013 at Sana Garden Function Hall, Charminar, Hyderabad. 130 projects were on display. About 250 students of classes 8th and 9th from 35 schools took part in this exhibition of Project Work Display. Students, other than those taking part, their parents and general public also visited, seen work of children and appreciated. Participants gave presentations of their Project Works on how they researched on it; methodologies used and what they would like to do for it in the future. Many visiting students were highly inspired by the whole exercise of this exhibition of the Project on Social Issue and expressed desire to become social scientists. Some students from Grace Model School collected 5000 rupees, purchased garbage separator bins and distributed in their neighbourhood. Students of Peace High School had succeeded in

motivating a 12 year old boy, engaged in Child Labour, to enroll for education and admitted him to a government school.

Sardar Nanak Singh Nishtar, President of COVA inaugurated the Project Works Display. He spoke of the importance for school children to create awareness on several issues among their neighbours and authorities.

Ms. Chitra Sood of Microsoft thanked the school children not only for their social engineering projects but also for their keen interest in bringing change in their environment and neighbourhood by being proactive. She said change should happen for the betterment of people.

Mr.K.Padmanabiah, IAS, Former Home Secretary, Government of India was the Chief Guest at the Valedictory Function. He complimented all the participants and said each one of them had put in enormous amounts of effort for their projects. He was extremely impressed with their confidence and stated that they would become not only good citizens but also responsible leaders in future.

Dr. Mazher Hussain, Executive Director of COVA congratulated the children for the tremendous effort they had put in for their social issue projects. He was impressed by the fact that many of the participants are now thinking of becoming social scientists and social activists and not just doctors and engineers. He also spoke of the children's magazine PEACE GONG edited by children. He appealed to the school children to contribute their articles, poems and drawings to the magazine.

Face 2 Face of Young Citizens with Officials and elected Representatives

COVA and ICAN organised a Face To Face Program with Little Citizens on 4th February 2014 from 10.00 am to 01.00 pm at Moghal Garden Function Hall, Engine Bowli, Jahanuma Road, Hyderabad.

50 Students from 20 schools of Hyderabad were trained rigorously on the issues of Child Labour, Junk Food and Garbage. In the past 3 weeks they undertook research work including field studies and interviews with different stakeholders to understand these three issues. They explored the strategies and options to redress the problems. These students of class 8th to 10th came in large number to participate in the face to face with local officials from GHMC and Labour Department.

Dr. Mazher Hussain, executive director COVA, gave a kick start to the proceedings by welcoming all the students, teachers and panelists and gave an overview of the program and its objectives.

The program began with opinions expressed on these issues by many students. This was followed by a few of them who spoke passionately about the importance of education of the girl child. Several teachers took part in this debate as well.

The panelists Ranjana Devi Goel, Corporator - Ghansi Bazaar answered very pertinent questions asked by students on garbage disposal and the innumerable problems to be resolved.

She said that the GHMC needs support from the public, from the schoolchildren as well as from their parents. The public has to cooperate and register complaints. The GHMC Corporator agreed that there should be many more awareness programs but the main obstacle was that most people did not follow the basic requirements for keeping the surroundings around a garbage dump neat and clean. However the students felt that there should be stricter rules, fines, punishments and legislations like in many countries across the globe for the staff and others responsible.

Dr. Gangadhar, Joint commissioner, Labour Department also participated in the program and answered all the questions of the students comprehensively and with clarity. He mentioned that labour enforcement department has inspectors who ensure that there is no child labour. It is because of this that the incidence of child labour has gone down considerably in Andhra Pradesh from 60,000 few years ago to 15000 currently.

He appealed to the participating students that both the children and their parents need to help reach the target of total elimination of child labour along with their friends and neighbours. He said he was ready to answer their queries anytime and gave his cell number to the students. The audience of more than 400 children enjoyed the lively debate tremendously.

Ms.Ranjana Devi Goel and Dr. Gangadhar felicitated the participating debaters with Mementos and Certificates of the occasion.

Summer Activism, FETE on Opportunities in Vocational Trainings and Employment & Theatre Training

Secondary School students from Member Schools participated in Summer Activism for Little Citizens in May-June; simultaneously Summer Training Workshop conducted in this period. AT the Valedictory Function on 21st June 2014 a FETE conducted on Opportunities in Vocational Trainings and Employment where guidance given to youth on livelihood skill training and employment opportunities available with different institutions. This event continued from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm at SANA GARDEN, Kotla Alijah Road, Charminar, Hyderabad. Magic Bus India Foundation also collaborated in this event.

ICICI Academy for Skills, Australian Retail College, GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, FM Tech Mahindra Foundation, Community Institute of Technology (CIT), Princess Esin Women's Educational Centre, H.E.H The Nizam & Alladin Technical Institute, Magic Bus India Foundation, SETWIN put up their stalls, gave information to the visiting people on their programs and counseled in training options and employment opportunities. Over 800 people visited the stalls.

The Chief Guest of the program Ms. April Wells, Public Affairs Officer, US Consulate Hyderabad gave valedictory address and appreciated the efforts of COVA and enthusiastic participation of children in Summer Activism as well as theatre training. She said that such programs should be emulated by all not only at local level but also at global level to make a change in the society.

Presentation on RTE Act was given by Mr. Rajendra Prasad, from M.V. Foundation and on Citizens Charter by Mr. Mohammed Turab. Dr. Mazher Hussain explained the objective of the programs. School children who participated in Summer Activism gave detailed presentation on Parks and Playgrounds and presented their demands to be taken up with the Government. Koshish Theatre Group performed a play on Right to Education.

Guest of Honour Mr. Arun Arvind from Magic Bus India Foundation gave a PowerPoint presentation on their activities. Certificates and mementos were given to guests and participants by the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour.

Sambandh-2014 –

Remembering Hiroshima-Nagasaki to Promote Good Relations Between Nations

In commemoration of Hiroshima Nagasaki holocaust COVA in association with Jawahar Bal Bhavan and Center for People's Foreign Policy in South Asia organized 12th Annual event Sambandh-2014, a variety program of competitions for students of schools and colleges on 6th August 2014 at Jawahar Bal Bhavan, Public Garden, Hyderabad to sensitise students on catastrophe of atomic and nuclear wars and benefits of peaceful co-existence. Under the theme of ***“Present Conflicts Around The World”*** children participated in Essay Writing, Elocution, One Act Plays, Slogan and Poster making and Quiz on the topics of: ***Effects of Conflicts on Common Man; Present Conflicts Around the World; Why there is a Conflict in Iraq? Should Countries Disband Their Armies? Who are Refugees? Situation of Refugees; What Problems Do the Refugees Face? A Day in The Life of A Refugee Family; How can they be helped? Incidence sparking Communal Violence and its effects on people of the locality; Impact of Communal Violence on People and Society;*** 1000 students from 60 schools and 20 colleges showed their enthusiasm in taking part in these competitions. This event was sponsored by ELICO Ltd.

The program concluded with valedictory function at Indira Priya Darshini Hall. 160 Participant received prizes and participation certificates in this function.

Chief Guest Mr. Murat Omeroglu, Consul General, Turkish Consulate observed the zeal of the participants in their work and addressing the students appreciated for their talents shown in competitions. He said such programs should be organized frequently wherever possible.

Mr. KVS N Raju, President, ELICO Ltd, Ms. Nalini Raghuraman, Political Economy Advisor, British High Commission, Mr. Prem Kumar from Doyen Constructions and Mr. B. Sudhakar, Director, Jawahar Bal Bhawan were the guests of honour and in their address they appreciated the work of organizers and encouraged students

Koshish Theater Group:

Mr. Gopi Krishna, Ph.D. in Theatre Arts is conducting training and rehearsals twice a week for members of Koshish Theatre Group comprising of 20 youth and school students. They have performed six street plays on National Integration on different street corners especially the Ganesh Pandals in city reaching out to nearly 500 people. They received invitations from two colleges where they performed Praja Nahin, Nagrik Hain Hum, Riksha Wale Ka Sapna and Save the Water. They participated in competitions at Indira Priya Darshini Auditorium, Public Garden on 1st and 7th September 2013 and received awards for Best Play, Best Actor and Production. These competitions were conducted by DRAMANON.

The Theatre Group also performed two commercial plays – Praja Nahin, Nagrik Hain Hum and Riksha Wale Ka Sapna on 27th December 2013 at Lamakaan. These shows received good number of audience and were successful.

Organized a theatre workshop in association with US based theatre *Arena Stage* on education with the support of US Consulate from 26th to 28th February 2014 at US Corner at St. Francis College, Begumpet, Hyderabad. Ten members of Koshish Theatre Group participated in this workshop.

Exchange Programs:

Misperceptions, misunderstandings and mistrust define general thinking of Indians and Pakistanis about each other because of a variety of factors- including absence of convenient channels of communications, difficulty in getting visas to gain first-hand experience of the other country and its people and prevalence of stereo types about each other that prevent recognition and appreciation of the very large commonalities that are shared in terms of cultures, traditions, lifestyles, issues and problems and even the general mindset and attitudes to life.

Despite these difficulties in connecting with each other and the consequent misperceptions and mistrust, there is still a very well defined undercurrent of goodwill and mutual positivity among large and diverse sections in both India and Pakistan that could be tapped and enhanced to foster better relations by initiatives that could facilitate

interactions between people and focus on dismantling the stereotypes about each other in both countries.

Under the Cultural Exchange Program Executive Director of COVA visited Pakistan in January 2014, held meetings with people of renowned organisations in Karachi and Lahore and invited performing artists and social activists to visit Hyderabad, India.

India Pakistan Culture Connect for Union of Heart Program aimed at facilitating interactions between people of India and Pakistan from different age groups and diverse sections of society to expose and break prevailing stereotypes about each other in both countries and promote better understanding and social cohesion to secure cooperation and peace in the region.

In February 2014, a group of 16 Pakistani Delegates comprising of 8 dancers, 3 actors and 5 activists visited Hyderabad and New Delhi from 10-21 February 2014 as part of India Pakistan Culture Connect for Union of Hearts Program. Their Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Oddisi dances on the poetry of Indian and Pakistani poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Amir Khusro, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Sarojini Naidu broke many stereo types about Pakistan and Pakistanis with over 5000 people enjoying the performances in 5 auditoriums – Hyderabad Central University, Osmania University and Ravindra Bharati- in Hyderabad and India Habitat Centre and JNU in New Delhi.

Koshish Theatre Group of COVA also staged Jung Chahiye Ya Aman in three auditoriums in Hyderabad.

The activists and performers also participated in Panel discussions and seminars to promote better understanding of outstanding issues and scope for collaboration between India and Pakistan. Over 1200 students, activists, academics, professionals, media persons and others participated in these deliberations that were organised by *Lions Club of Hyderabad Harmony*, National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR) University, *Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS)*, *FICCI Flow*, *AWAAZ*, *INSAAF*, *St. Paul's Alumni Association*, *Dalit Stree Shakti* and *Hyderabad-Secunderabad Sindhi Seva Trust* in Hyderabad and *Jamia Milia Islamia* in New Delhi.

All major TV channels of Andhra Pradesh covered the programs and print media gave unprecedented coverage with total space covered by all articles and features on the event spanning over 10 full size newspaper pages!! Admiral L. Ramdas, former Chief of Indian Navy, Kuldip Nayar, veteran journalist, Syeda Hameed, Member Planning Commission, Government of India; Lalita Ramdas, Former Chair, Greenpeace International; Prof. Ramakrishna Ramaswamy, Vice Chancellor, Hyderabad Central University; Prof. Vijender Kumar, Registrar, Nalsar University, Riyaz Punjabi, former Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University; Sanjoy Hazarika, Taj Hasan, IPS; Siddharth

Luthra Additional Solicitor General of India; Jayesh Ranjan, IAS, Chandravadan, IAS, Mahesh Bhagwat, IPS, Aziz Pasha, former Member of Parliament, B.V. Ragavulu, Member, National Polit Buro, CPI-M, Ram Narasimha Rao, MLA, Prof. K. Nageshwara Rao, MLC, Prof. Ramesh Reddy, Former Dean and Principal, O U College of Engineering, Lion K. Janardhan Reddy, m.j.f. District Governor (Guest of Honour) , Lion Ranjan Sood, President, Lion Dipender Singh, Secretary and Lion N. Sridhar Rao of Lions Club of Hyderabad Harmony, Jyotsna Angars, Chairperson, FICCI Flo, and others attended the performances and Panel Discussions in Hyderabad and New Delhi. Over 3500 people attended performances at JNU, New Delhi on 18th February 2014. *(Detailed report of India Pakistan Cultural Connect Program along with media coverage and illustrations is attached separately.)*

Visit of Koshish Theatre Group and social activists to neighbouring countries is under process. They applied for Passports; some have received and some waiting. It is proposed to take the delegation to Pakistan in June/July 2014.

Global Walks:

Guest Lectures on Life and History of Turkey:

On 29th October 2013, Mr.Osman Kayaoglu, Director “INDIALOGUE FOUNDATION” delivered a guest lecture on “*Live History of Turkey*” at St. Maaz High School, Sayeedabad, Hyderabad. The same day he delivered a lecture for the students of Kare School, Kurmaguda, Hyderabad on “*Life Style in Turkey*”

In his address in both the schools he narrated on Turkish life style, education systems, universities in turkey, food and Restaurants, and Sufism.

We have approached the Consulates and Cultural Centers of eight countries located in Hyderabad and have received good response from them. These foreign institutions have agreed to be Partners of the Global Walks under Responsible Global Citizenship Project. Experts from these institutions will deliver Extension Lectures designated as for school, college, university students as well as members of professional clubs like the Rotary, Lions and the Round Table etc.

Alliance Francaise, British Consulate, Iranian Consulate, Turkish Consulate have appreciated the concept and shown interest in participating in these activities.

Hangout South Asia

Work has also started on the Hangout South Asia Project to use Google Hangout Platform to facilitate monthly interactions between people of South Asian countries. COVA has contacted civil society organizations and educational institutions in all the seven SAARC countries to initiate networking to launch the program. There was some difficulty in locating a good social media organization to provide technical support. Finally, *Social Samosa*

(www.socialsamosa.com), a Hyderabad based organization has agreed to develop the required software and platform to facilitate the program. It is hoped to launch the program from September 2015.