



VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR  
**VANI**

**Voluntary Action Network India**  
*an apex body of voluntary organisations*  
*celebrating 25 years...*

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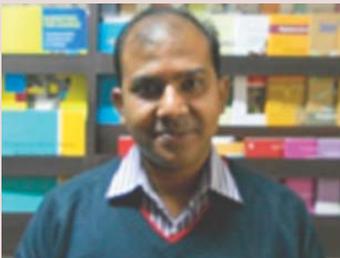
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## Editorial

### India's International Engagements: A new frontier for Voluntary Sector

*Dear Members, Associates and Friends of VANI,  
Greetings from VANI!*

In the last decade or so, India has emerged as an important player at the global arena. Not only it is putting forward its claim for better deal at UN system or redefining the global financial institutions, but has also become major partner in new international platforms like G20, BRICS or IBSA. The Indian government has worked very hard during this period to showcase its consistent economic growth and secure market. Along with this, India tried to become important donor as well as development player. Undoubtedly, India has long history of supporting other developing and under-developed countries. Since its independence India has formulated a programme to provide technical support and training interventions. The training inputs provided by India are quite popular. We all know that India has been providing training to experts, government officials and defence officials. India has also been providing financial aid to its neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. The economic liberalisation of private sector which started almost two decades ago has also resulted in rise of Indian investments in other countries. It is now largely believed that the story of Indian global footprints is collectively written by the government, private sector and voluntary organisations. But the important question to be addressed today is that, this story is being written collectively or by each player within its silo.



Let's take the case of Indian aid and technical support to the less developed countries. Very less consolidated information is available in the public domain on the amount or nature of such support. Operationally it was so much decentralised that one department had no idea what the other was doing. Even the CAG in its report raised the question of efficacy of public money spent and its impact. In the meantime certain quarters of civil society including VOs, media and think tanks demanded the need to have much structured approach. With the rise of new and emerging economies like South Africa, Brazil, China, South Korea, Indonesia, etc. the volume and importance of south-south cooperation was redefined. The debate also started about its effectiveness and its comparison with traditional donor countries. Ultimately in 2012, India officially declared the formation of Development Partnership Administration (DPA). An exclusive department under Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), to articulate, define, systematise, and prioritise India's global role as donor, development partner and supporter.

VANI has recently conducted a study on the global footprints of India. The report is available online as well in print. It raises a very important question about partnership of Indian voluntary sector in this new scenario. Our domestic laws like income tax and Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) does not permit Indian voluntary organisation to become international in true sense. That is precisely a reason that although India has seen the rise of Indian multi-

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## Current issue: Suspension of Registration under FCRA

Recently the issue of suspension of FCRA registration emerged as a big issue for the voluntary sector. This issue highlighted in media when the Delhi High Court quashed the INSAF FCRA suspension on 19th September. The High court ruled that the language of section 13(1) does not empower the FCRA department to suspend registration without providing opportunity of being heard or reasons in writing. Here we put the detail about the suspension of FCRA registration under FCRA 2010.

### Suspension of Registration Certificate

Under FCRA 2010 section 13 provides the power to the Central Government to suspend the registration pending cancellation of certificate, for a period up to 180 days. During suspension, the organisation cannot receive any foreign contribution without prior approval. The provision of section 13 on suspension of registration certificate is as under:

- (1) Where the Central Government, for reasons to be recorded in writing, is satisfied that pending consideration of the question of cancelling the certificate on any of the grounds mentioned in sub-section (1) of section 14, it is necessary so to do, it may, by order in writing, suspend the certificate for such period not exceeding one hundred and eighty days as may be specified in the order.
- (2) Every person whose certificate has been suspended shall —
  - (a) not receive any foreign contribution during the period of suspension of certificate:  
Provided that the Central Government, on an application made by such person, if it considers appropriate, allow receipt of any foreign contribution by such person on such terms and conditions as it may specify
  - (b) utilise, in the prescribed manner, the foreign contribution in his custody with the prior approval of the Central Government.

### Opportunity of being heard before suspension and reasons in writing

The FCRA 2010 does not specifically provide for any opportunity of being heard before affecting the suspension order. The section 13(1) also does not provide for reasons to be recorded in writing. However, the provision provides that the organisation shall be provided opportunity of being heard during the period of 180 days of suspension. After the completion of 180 days and depending on the findings, the registration will

either be cancelled or restored. The issue arising out of the provision is whether FCRA department can suspend registration without providing any opportunity of being heard or without giving any reasons in writing. Based on legal interpretation and judicial precedence, it seems that FCRA department cannot suspend registration without providing any opportunity of being heard or without giving any reasons in writing.

On plain reading of the provision, it can be seen that section 13 uses the word “**may**” as highlighted in the text of the section reproduced below:

**“13 Suspension of certificate.—**(1) Where the Central Government, for reasons to be recorded in writing, is satisfied that pending consideration of the question of cancelling the certificate on any of the grounds mentioned in sub-section (1) of section 14, it is necessary so to do, **it may**, by order in writing, suspend the certificate for such period not exceeding one hundred and eighty days as may be specified in the order.”

The use of word “**may**” implies that there is a discretion provided in the act which may or may not be exercised. If the FCRA department wants to exercise such discretion, then it has to provide opportunity of being heard as well as reasons in writing.

The ruling of Hon’ble Delhi High Court in INSAF case is that the **language of section 13(1) does not empower the FCRA department to suspend registration** without providing opportunity of being heard or reasons in writing. The relevant extract for Delhi High Court order is following:

The scheme of the Act, therefore, is that if the Central Government, after making such enquiry as it may deem appropriate in this regard, is of the opinion that it is necessary in the public interest to do so, it can cancel the certificate after giving a reasonable opportunity of hearing to the organization concerned. If, while considering the cancellation of registration in terms of Section 14 of the Act, the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary to suspend the certificate, during such consideration, it can suspend the certificate of the organization concerned for a period not exceeding 180 days provided reasons for such suspension are recorded by the Government.

Admittedly, by the time the suspension order dated 30.04.2013 was passed, the Central Government had neither issued any notice of hearing/show-cause notice in terms of sub-section (2) of Section 14 nor had it



initiated any enquiry in terms of the said Section. Therefore, there was no occasion to suspend the certificate of the petitioner in terms of sub-section (1) of Section 13 of the Act. The respondents wrote to the petitioner seeking certain information for the first time vide letter dated 02.05.2013, i.e., after the registration of the petitioner-society had already been suspended. The suspension, therefore, was contrary to the scheme of the Act which envisaged such suspension only when the issue of cancellation is already pending consideration of the Central Government. For this reason alone, the impugned order dated 30.04.2013 is liable to be quashed.

### Reasons for suspension

If the Central Government has any information/evidence about the following, then a cancellation proceeding may be initiated preceded by suspension:

- (a) the holder of the certificate has made a statement in, or in relation to, the application for the grant of registration or renewal thereof, which is incorrect or false; or
- (b) the holder of the certificate has violated any of the terms and conditions of the certificate or renewal thereof; or
- (c) in the opinion of the Central Government, it is necessary in the public interest to cancel the certificate; or
- (d) the holder of certificate has violated any of the provisions of this Act or rules or order made thereunder; or
- (e) if the holder of the certificate has not been engaged

in any reasonable activity in its chosen field for the benefit of the society for two consecutive years or has become defunct.

### Condition to be followed during suspension

- Every person whose certificate has been suspended shall not receive any foreign contribution during the period of suspension of certificate; such person can receive foreign contribution with prior permission only. The Central Government, on an application made by such person, if it considers appropriate, allow receipt of any foreign contribution by such person on such terms and conditions as it may specify;
- Every person whose certificate has been suspended shall not utilise the foreign contribution in his custody without the prior approval of the Central Government.
- In terms of Rule 14 of FCRR, 2011, in case the certificate of registration is suspended, then up to twenty-five per cent of the unutilised amount may be spent, with the prior approval of the Central Government, for the declared aims and objects for which the foreign contribution was received. The remaining seventy-five per cent of the unutilised foreign contribution shall be utilised only after revocation of suspension of the certificate of registration.

— ***This is an abstract taken from Standard and norm by Financial Management Service Foundation***

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#### Continued from page 1

national companies, but there has been not a single international Indian voluntary organisation. On the other hand innovations and experiences of Indian voluntary sector are in heavy demand globally, therefore either we work in partnership with our international counterparts or Indian government scales up in its international projects. The formation of DPA is seen as the ray of hope by the Indian voluntary sector, which will permit us in sharing our knowledge, learning with the global communities. The DPA has also shown its keenness to engage Indian voluntary sector in its projects. The first significant step towards this is developing a data base of Indian voluntary sector that have worked on global projects or have innovations to be shared at global level. The informal forum to dialogues and interact is also formed, under the name of Forum on International Development Cooperation of India (FIDC). The founding members include Research and Information Systems (RIS), VANI, PRIA, OXFAM, etc. The forum has recently produced first data bank of Indian Voluntary Organisations who have experience of working internationally or have innovations to share. You must have received the questionnaire few months back from VANI. In case you have not, please feel free to write to us so that we can forward the profile of your organisation to MEA.

Similarly, this recent study by VANI also throws the question of participation of Indian voluntary organisations to influence the agenda of newly formed international forums like G20, IBSA or BRICS. With each presidency the agenda of G20 gets its new look but the basic issues remain same. It is very important to make these forums accountable and effective, through the active participation of voluntary organisations that have tremendous amount of experience starting from the grass roots level to global level. We need to develop position papers reflecting the aspiration of the constituencies for whom we stand. There is also need to motivate the voluntary sector, so that one can demand accountability from various government and non-governmental engagement at newly created global platforms.

Harsh Jaitli  
Chief Executive Officer



# The Value of a Life: Peace and Human Security in a Post-2015 World

— *Paul Okumu*

**Is a life in one country worth less than a life in another? Paul Okumu poses this question as he explores why there are more than 190 conflicts endangering lives and affecting communities across the globe . . . and why there is not greater outrage.**

In the short travels that I have made to 'developed' countries across Europe, North America and some parts of Asia and Latin America, I have noticed one common denominator:

- People value life.
- Each life.
- Individual life.

People in these countries do not speak of numbers. They mention names and relationships for every life lost. I marvel at the value that is attached to life, how one lost life moves a country to tears and stirs up an entire chain of response from the community to the national level. And it does not end there. These search for answers costs as much, if not more. If 1.5 billion people don't matter, who does?

**The predominant form of violent conflict has evolved from national armies fighting each other to countless little wars with no front lines, no battlefields, no clear conflict zones, no distinctions between combatants and civilians.**

So why is it that the lives of billions of people affected by conflict -- fathers, mothers, wives, and children -- do not seem to matter to the world?

As you read this, women, men and children in 59 countries are unable to lead a normal life due to insecurity resulting from over 190 conflicts. Today, in Africa and Asia alone, 34 governments are torn between the need to focus attention on the well-being of their citizens or spend resources addressing conflicts, which are largely internal and almost always related to political or corporate greed.

The nature of violent conflicts has changed dramatically in recent decades. The predominant form of violent conflict has evolved from national armies fighting each other to countless little wars with no front lines, no battlefields, no clear conflict zones, no distinctions between combatants and civilians.

Sadly, nearly all countries affected by conflict also have one common denominator: vast natural resources. In fact, many could easily produce enough food to feed their entire population . . . and the rest of us as well. But they have resources they cannot enjoy and schools they cannot attend. Innocent citizens are caught in a web of corporate greed, politics, natural resource exploitation, ideological conflict and poor governance.

**Development is impossible without peace, just as peace is impossible without development.**

Simply ask a mother, who struggles to feed her children while wondering whether it is safe to allow them to go to school or even the hospital. Or ask a young man -- torn between looking for work in a conflict-prone city or staying in the impoverished countryside, where the government hasn't even given a thought to providing electricity.



The ability of society to live in peace, safety and security is not just a fundamental right; it is foundational to any development agenda. No society however advanced or endowed can develop in an environment of fear, insecurity and failed structures. And a single conflict can set a country back 15 - 20 years, as the World Bank reminds us in the 2011 Development Report.

Conflict deepens poverty. Rampant poverty and inequality increases bitterness and desperation. Human rights abuses perpetuate fear and hatred, endangering both peace and development. It's a vicious cycle we cannot allow to continue - for the sake of our society. Peace and development both require respect for human rights and the rule of law.

We need to sit and honestly reflect on what we are telling the children and mothers and fathers living in conflict-affected areas.

As civil society, we ask that the world reflect on the damage we are doing by believing that conflict is only something that happens to other people. Our elders know better: "an island of wealth amidst a sea of poverty soon pollutes the island," states a popular African proverb. Deficits in one country impact others, be it through economic and financial linkages, migration, refugees, displaced populations, terrorism, piracy, organized crime, narcotics, human trafficking or the arms trade. Progressive globalization increases the likelihood of these cross-border spillovers.

For all these reasons, it is imperative that the Post-2015 development agenda be centered on peace, human security and freedom from fear. We should aim to make justice and prosperity a reality for everyone, not because these are fundamental - they are - but because we respect life and decency.

Peace and security, development and human rights are the central pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being. So why should they not also be the central pillars of a UN-driven development agenda?



To this end, the Post 2015 agenda must foster:

- functioning institutions that respond to people's needs with dignity and social justice
- mechanisms to support countries facing struggles for resource control
- accountability by all development actors
- effective society participation in the affairs of the state
- job creation and economic justice
- systemic structures that enable human security and social cohesion
- inclusive state-society dialogue
- an environment in which people can live in freedom and enjoy ownership and control of their own resources

Peace and Security matters for a post 2015 agenda not because of 1.5 Billion people. It matters because every life is important. And if we miss this opportunity, we will reverse the gains of the past 20 years.

**— Paul Okumu leads the Secretariat of the Africa CSO Platform on Principled Partnership (ACP) and is a member of the Core Group of the Civil Society Platform on Peace building and State building. Learn more about how Peace and Human Security should be integrated into the Post-2015 agenda in this civil society document that Paul facilitated and submitted to the UN High Level Panel. You can also endorse the statement here.**



## Leaders Speak: Subrat Das

***Subrat Das is currently the Executive Director of Center for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), prior to which he worked as the Coordinator for two years. He had earlier been part of the research team at CBGA and worked on India's public policy towards natural disasters, public spending on social sectors, responsiveness of budgets to disadvantaged sections of population, and bottlenecks in budgetary processes in the country. He studied Economics at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.***

### 1. What is your personal experience about this sector?

I have been working in this sector for more than 11 years; I have worked only with the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA). I have been leading this organization since August 2010. My personal experience in this sector is quite motivating and inspiring; the sector does provide a lot of opportunities to individuals to contribute towards larger goals of the society through an individual effort. Now this kind of opportunity is rarely available. This sector provides greater opportunity than academia to make such contribution to the society and that is the best thing about this sector.

### 2. Why did you join this sector?

When I had joined this sector in 2002, I didn't know much about this sector, didn't have much clarity because CBGA was a very new entity. However, later when I continued with the organization I got that clarity. Gradually I discovered that I have an interest in simplifying technical concept and making those available to common audience or nontechnical audience. I realized that there is a huge demand for such skills especially with regard to budget and policy in this country and I was able to contribute well towards the efforts of this organization as well as those of the many other stakeholders of the CBGA. So these are some of the things that motivated me to continue with CBGA or with the sector.

### 3. What is your perception about this sector?

I have noticed a clear shift from a service delivery kind of orientation to policy advocacy and participatory democracy orientation in terms of the efforts. About 10 to 12 years ago, only few



organizations in this sector thought seriously about public policy, government finances, and governance issues. Now the scenario has changed significantly in many organizations, local NGOs, community-based organizations, and social movements are taking public policy, governance, and budget issues very seriously, which is a welcome shift.

There is a need for greater investment in enhancing the capacity of human resources in this sector. In the earlier approach when the organizations focused more on service delivery, they needed non-skilled human resources, but now with greater engagement on policy, governance issues, and government finances, organizations really need people who can understand these issues and write about it, discuss it, and advocate it. So the organizations in this sector need to invest a lot more towards enhancing the capacity of the human resources.

The other observation about this sector is that it also requires better coordination between the efforts of the social movements, community-based organizations, and local and international NGOs. Presently, there is not very good coordination



between them; sometimes this leads to duplication of efforts particularly in terms of advocacy efforts. Sometimes different sets of organizations, coalitions, and campaigns taking slightly heterogeneous or different position are very problematic for this sector. Therefore, it is very necessary to have a better coordination among the actors of the sector.

Organizations need to put stronger effort in generating relevant knowledge because a lot of emphasis is given on advocacy and campaign. Advocacy and campaign should be based on very sound knowledge and information. At that time, organizations expected knowledge or technical input to come mainly from other sectors like academia or media. Now the time has come for organizations to generate knowledge and information itself and not depend on other sectors.

Regarding funding dynamics, many organizations mainly depend on foreign funding, so there is a need for a stronger effort to get more Indian funds for this sector. The credibility of this sector is going high if we use Indian funds, but it is very difficult to get Indian funds for these issues, basically on policy advocacy. There are many organizations including CBGA that use foreign funding but they do not compromise with their politics, principles, and position on policy issues for foreign funding. Despite that, the public image of the sector is that it is driven by the foreign funding. So I think that the greater dependency on Indian funds could be a solution in this regard.

Finally I would say that over the last few years, the regulatory environment in this sector, mainly in terms of the income tax exemption and FCRA provisions, has been made very rigid unnecessarily. I think regulatory mechanism is necessary, but during the last few years, the government has made it very rigid without any strong base and that is something constraining the effort of this sector.

#### 4. What is your suggestion for the future of this sector?

My suggestions for this sector are the following.

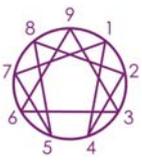
- **Advocacy for improving the regulatory environment:** - The sector collectively under the leadership of institutions like VANI and other

**Regarding funding dynamics, many organizations mainly depend on foreign funding, so there is a need for a stronger effort to get more Indian funds for this sector. The credibility of this sector is going high if we use Indian funds, but it is very difficult to get Indian funds for these issues, basically on policy advocacy.**

such platforms should do collective and strong advocacy for improving the regulatory environment for this sector. For example in FCRA, political activities are not clearly defined, so the government authority should learn to distinguish between any organization that is political in its views and an organization actively participating in electoral politics.

- **Need to increase the Indian funds:** - We need to make serious effort to increase the share of Indian funds in the total funds that are financing the activities of this sector.
- **Knowledge-based effort:** - My third suggestion is that our campaign and advocacy should be based on very strong knowledge and information, so they are more effective.
- **Better coordination:** - My final suggestion is that there is a need for better coordination among the social movements, community-based organizations, and the civil society organizations to avoid the duplication of efforts or more importantly to avoid any inconsistency in the policy advocacy messages. In our sector, individual organizations should be more democratic themselves.

— *Views expressed are personal;  
Interview taken by S. M. Zaki Ahmad,  
Research and Documentation officer VANI.*



## Organization profile: Child in Need Institute (CINI)

Child in Need Institute (CINI) is a non-profit social development institution of India. It reaches out to more than five million people with integrated and community based interventions weaving social safety nets around those communities who are most marginalised and yet largely unreached. Starting the journey in 1974, under the guidance of esteemed paediatrician and Founder Director Dr. Samir Chaudhuri, CINI has remained dedicated for almost 4 decades to ensure better and respectful survival of women, children and young people placed in diverse conditions of vulnerability. To achieve this CINI has evolved a holistic approach with the major commitments to contribute in strengthening the four key pillars of human development...Education, Protection, Health and Nutrition. Armed with a multidisciplinary workforce of over 1300 professionals, CINI has been constantly engaged in empowering the marginalised communities to voice for broader inclusion of their basic rights in the mainstream development.

In the course of its journey CINI has never been alone in

**The aim of universalizing quality education for all. Hence CINI strives to reach out to those children who are either not in mainstream education or who are in risk of leaving it due to adverse social and economic conditions. In this effort CINI has developed partnerships with several school authorities and teachers, school committees, families, children's groups and local elected representatives – rural Panchayat Institutions and Urban Local Bodies.**



**Mission**  
"Sustainable development in health, nutrition, education and protection of child, adolescent and woman in need"

its endeavor as the initiatives have been driven by the Vision and Values of working... "With self-help groups, communities, elected representatives, local service providers, government functionaries and all stake holders, to build and sustain Child and Woman Friendly Communities (CWFC)."

### **Thematic focus areas of CINI's work:**

Starting with its primary focus on addressing malnutrition, CINI's programmes have broadened its domains to respond to changing needs of communities and the evolving policy environment. The majority of programmes focus on four key priority themes, **a) Education, b) Protection c) Health & d) Nutrition. The recent inclusion of Environment and Climate Change** as a new area is envisaged as an important move towards strengthening commitments to millennium development goals.

**Education:** CINI has pledged its support to the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**, with the aim of universalizing quality education for all. Hence CINI strives to reach out to those children who are either not in mainstream education or who are in risk of leaving it due to adverse social and economic conditions. In this effort CINI has developed partnerships with several school authorities and teachers, school committees, families, children's groups and local elected representatives – rural Panchayat Institutions and Urban Local Bodies. CINI facilitates the joint efforts to map out-of-school children, motivate the school system and



families to get them back to school, and prevent dropping out. CINI also runs, remedial education centres that help the child to cope up with school studies effectively and strengthen his/her own skills. Child Friendly Schools (CFS) are promoted inspiring school education authorities to adopt specific measures for making the school infrastructure and the learning environment inclusive for children of all ages.

**Protection:** Since the late '80s, CINI has been working with children who are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation such as children living on the streets, railway stations, red light areas, who are run-away, missing, trafficked, kidnapped, sexually and physically abused or victims of other forms of violence. CINI extend protection interventions to over 5,000 children through institution based services and 21,500 children through community-based services. These services are concentrated in red light areas and around bus and train stations and slum and villages areas with hardly any basic service or facility. In such locations, CINI runs a number of temporary shelters, both on a drop in basis and as a short stay home, for children in trouble. It then helps them return to their families wherever possible (often counseling the respective families) and does its utmost to re-integrate them into mainstream society. CINI also coordinates Child line initiative through its five units deployed across the state of West Bengal offering a 24-hour toll free telephone helpline to extend emergency assistance to children in distress. Cases of child abuse, child labour and child trafficking can be reported on this hotline which offers to rescue the respective child and links her or him with other support services. CINI also operates a helpline for teens and persons affected by HIV & AIDS providing counseling and assistance.

**Health:** Despite India's impressive economic growth, access to quality and timely healthcare support for the communities placed in remote and other marginalized conditions is still a distant reality. The gap lies in the widening distance between the local communities with hardly any knowledge and voice about health entitlements and services and the service providers lacking the required understanding and skills to address the needs of the vulnerable communities. CINI works at

**The effective results from the low cost interventions have inspired a number of state governments in India to adopt the model within their interventions to reduce severe malnutrition under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), the national flagship programme for reaching the communities most unreached.**

the family, community, institutional and government levels to bridge this gap and promote increased and effective optimization of existing services. While at the community level it empowers deprived communities with information, knowledge and capacity to access healthcare services and entitlements, the organisation also works with systemic functionaries by helping them understand the community needs and develop effective approaches to address those needs through a range of capacity building initiatives. CINI trains functionaries working as health care agents at the grassroots level and guides them in their efforts towards securing the critical phases of life cycle (pregnancy & post natal, early childhood and adolescence) with basic health services. CINI also runs programmes for people living with and affected by HIV & AIDS extending services on prevention, care and support as part of its integrated health interventions.

**Nutrition:** From its very initiation CINI identified malnutrition as a major threat to child survival and growth. Hence the organization made prevention and elimination of malnutrition its primary motto. CINI strongly believes in prioritising the first 1000 critical days in the life cycle – the period spanning pregnancy and the two first years of a child's life and then the adolescence, another crucial period of rapid and significant growth. CINI's interventions in this context address a variety of determinants of malnutrition in children, adolescents and pregnant women such as healthcare, hygiene and



sanitation, appropriate feeding practices (including breastfeeding), growth monitoring and promotion, adoption of low-cost home available foods, promotion of gender equality, etc. Apart from community based interventions it also runs a day care Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) for severely malnourished children offering a learning site for families, practitioners and aspiring students of nutrition and public health courses. The effective results from the low cost interventions have inspired a number of state governments in India to adopt the model within their interventions to reduce severe malnutrition under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), the national flagship programme for reaching the communities most unreached.

**Where does CINI work:** CINI's major work spreads across three states of India, West Bengal, Jharkhand and

Chhattisgarh where community based programmes are directly implemented in partnership with key Government departments, NGOs and representatives of local self-governments. In West Bengal, CINI as a Regional Resource Centre covers all 19 districts supporting 16 Mother NGOs and 75 Field NGOs in effective implementation of outreach programme on reproductive and child health. In Jharkhand, CINI is primarily focused on four districts but also extends support to all 24 districts through initiatives on advocacy, public awareness, capacity building and networking. In Chhattisgarh CINI is working in 18 districts. Apart from these states CINI also plays a significant role as a technical support agency extending inputs in research, capacity building, networking, knowledge sharing and monitoring & evaluation to a number of other state governments like Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands as well as 7 North Eastern States of India.

### **Major recognition earned by CINI in the last 4 decades**

**2013: Harvard US – India (HUII) Award for NGO Excellence**

**2011: ICICI LOMBARD and CNBC TV18 presented- India Healthcare Award**

**2011: WHO award for excellence in Primary Health Care.**

**2008: Annual Rotary India Award (for making the most significant contribution in reducing child mortality)**

**2008: Ellis Island Medal of Honor, USA (to CINI's director and founder, Dr. Chaudhuri)**

**2007: World of Children Award (to CINI's director and founder, Dr. Chaudhuri)**

**2005: Parliament prize for infants from the Italian Parliament Commission for Infants (to CINI's director and founder, Dr. Chaudhuri)**

**2004: The National Award in the field of Child Welfare (CINI is the only NGO to have won this award twice)**

**1994: Allen Feinstein Hunger Award, Brown University, USA**

**1991: Jal Modi Grant, Rotary Club of Calcutta**

**1991: The "Liguria" prize from the International Centre for Development of Culture of People, Genoa, Italy**

**1985: The National Award in the field of Child Welfare**

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## Status of state: West Bengal

— Based on research study conducted by VANI on West Bengal

As per the West Bengal population Census data 2011 it is the fourth most populous state in India. In terms of area it holds the 13th position among the states in the country. Spread over 34,267 sq. mi (88,750 km<sup>2</sup>), it is bordered by the countries of Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, and the Indian states of Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam. West Bengal encompasses two broad natural regions: the Gangetic Plain in the south and the sub-Himalayan and Himalayan area in the north. West Bengal is only state in India where Himalayas are in the north and Sea is at the south, with both plains and plateaus covering the remaining region. West Bengal is predominantly an agriculture-driven state. The industries that flourished in West Bengal include the jute industry, the steel plant at Durgapur, and manufacturing industries of tea, sugar, chemicals and fertilizers. It is the second largest tea-growing state in India and accounts for 24% of the total tea production in India.



### The Current Status of Voluntary Organizations

The district-wise list of number of FCRA-aided agencies shows that the greatest number at 994 happens to be

29.92 percent of all at 24 Pargana District. Then, in Kolkata (846) and Midnapore (452) institutions are registered under the FCRA. The complete list of FCRA registered organizations are following:

#### District-wise Number of Voluntary Agencies registered under FCRA in West Bengal<sup>1</sup>

District	No. of NGO	District	No. of NGO
24 Pargana (S&N)	994	Jalpaiguri	58
Balurghat	01	Kolkata	846
Bankura	65	Malda	65
Birbhum	56	Midnapore	452
Burdwan	105	Murshidabad	91
Cooch Behar	20	Nadia	98
Dakshin Dinajpur	20	Purulia	44
Darjeeling	109	Sealdah	N/A
Durgapur	N/A	Siliguri	05
Hooghly	109	Uttar Dinajpur	25
Howrah	222	West Dinajpur	18

<sup>1</sup> [http://fcraonline.nic.in/fc8\\_statewise.aspx](http://fcraonline.nic.in/fc8_statewise.aspx)



The total number of the voluntary organization registered under FCRA is 3403. Voluntary organizations are working the various fields for empowering the people, number of organization working in the field of education is 3,679, organization working in the field of environment and forest is 2,642 while 2,371 organizations are working for the empowerment of women.

### Challenges faced by the voluntary organizations

1. **Delay in receiving funds:** The VOs in the state experience shortage of funds. Large and small organizations mentioned the delay in receiving funds from the government. There have been delays of almost six months to one year from the commencement of the project cycle. The delay is due to the process involved in releasing the grants.
2. **Harassment by the line departments:** The VOs are registered under the society's registration act 1961. The state government officials generally have a non-responsive and arrogant attitude towards VOs. They often have to face hostile behaviour at the hands of block and district officials. Thus, the interaction is not satisfactory.
3. **Identity crisis:** The voluntary organizations face identity crisis and the government officials do not appreciate the intelligence and credibility of the VOs in representing the community's issues and problems.
4. **Curtailment of funds:** There is curtailment of foreign funding for development activities and VOs are facing resource crunch. "According to the FCRA Annual Report 2010-11, during the year 2010-2011, 2015 associations received Rs. 651.71 crore. The amount received through foreign contribution was utilized for establishment expenses followed by rural development, welfare of children, construction and maintenance of schools/college and grant of stipend/scholarship/assistance in cash and kind to poor/deserving children.
5. **Decline in foreign funding volume:** Funding quantum has decreased considerably in the last five years in the state. The multilateral agencies have withdrawn from the country altogether and this is due to the change in their country's policy. They have diverted to tribal areas and are funding regions like Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Paucity of funding sources both in terms of number and volume has adversely impacted voluntary organizations' ability to engage with development issues.
6. **Credibility of the sector:** Due to misappropriation done by few VOs the credibility of the sector is affected. At present, there is no universally accepted credibility ranking mechanism in place, which can segregate the good ones from the bad ones. Few community based organizations work with passion and commitment felt that their credibility are at stake and become vulnerable to the government system.
7. **Organizations registered under FCRA:** There were 3087 organizations registered under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, while the number of reporting organizations was 1821 receiving 558.72 crore funding in 2009 as per FCRA Annual Report 2009-10. The data reflects that there were 1266 organizations that are not following the rules and filing the return. Hence due to this the sector's credibility is under question. There is serious criticism as those VOs are not reporting, filing their returns and following the legal compliances.
8. **Stringent laws by the government:** Funding compliances and scrutiny by government are getting stringent day by day. Government is tightening its control over grant making to VOs and is increasingly wielding its power over the way its grants are invested in projects. The procedures for seeking clearance and sanction at all levels have become cumbersome and lengthy. Amendments in FCRA have made voluntary organizations' access to foreign funds difficult. Very few donor agencies fund projects that target governance, rights access, government responsibilities and accountability issues etc. This is because of the FCRA 2010 that specifies any



organization found to be engaged in political activity such as undertaking campaigns, bandh, rasta roko, rail roko and jail bharo (strike, road blockade, railways and transportation strike and imprisonment) will be considered as organizations of political nature.

**9. Technical competencies of VOs, especially grass-root VOs in accessing funds:**

The current project-based funding access has become very competitive and technical in nature. Medium and grass-root voluntary organizations find skill gap in fund-raising capabilities, writing proposals on prescribed guidelines of donor agencies, media advocacy and project management skills.

**10. Paucity of information:** The information pertaining to the standard process that needs to be followed for VO is not readily available. Normally, new groups interested in registering take references and support from their contacts in the voluntary sector. This approach has its merits and demerits. The advantage is that the interested group can gain through experiences, but at the same time, the quality of information shared is questionable. Due to lack of information there is confusion and delay.

**11. Lengthy process and involves extensive paper work:** Government has made the whole process stringent in the context of grants. The paper works and verification of credentials are being scrutinized and the relevant VO groups make several rounds to the registrar's office to do follow-up.

**12. Identity of the sector:** The sector has contributed significantly in the socio-economic development of the community and society at large. They have been actively involved in sensitization and empowerment of the marginalized and the poor, in awareness generation activities of policies and schemes of the government.



In most of the cases the community and the local people recognize the activities undertaken by them as it has improved the health, literacy and livelihood means. But there is less visibility among the society at large.

**13. Ideological difference between the VOs:** Most of the VOs work in their own area of specialization, and there is little or no sharing amongst them. There is a lot of competition and lack of unity. On account of their lack of unity and fragmented nature, the state government and other stakeholders do not seriously take the issues raised by these organizations.

**14. Absence of collective voice and networking among VOs is there due to which no monitoring, communication and focused action is there.**





## Recommendations

1. **Funding:** It is recommended that VOs should generate internal resources, do resource mobilization and generate income through training programmes, vocational courses and implementation of government run national programmes and schemes since there has been a shift in the funding sources, and major donors have moved from the West Bengal State to tribal regions like Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand which are more backward and under developed.
2. **Capacity building:** The grassroot level organizations are doing commendable work but they face difficulties in reporting and documentation due to the skill gap. This in turn affects the timely release of funds/ grants as per the activities carried out by them. Therefore it is recommended that the large organizations that have the skilled professional human resources should support the grass root organizations.
3. **State level network:** The organizations interviewed urged the need to formulate a state level forum in West Bengal to make the sector strong and effective. Presently there is no networking among the organizations and most of them work in isolation. They recommended that VANI as an apex body should intervene and help to build the relationship and networking for West Bengal State.
4. **Interagency collaboration:** The VOs working in the remote areas, at block and village level addressed the fact that information regarding the policies and laws affecting the voluntary sector does not reach them. Therefore large organizations located in urban areas should build the capacity of organizations working at the field level. This will in turn enhance interagency collaboration in the state.
5. **Advocacy and lobbying:** Voluntary organizations working on rights based approach and gender issues face tremendous hardship to address the issues concerning drug addiction, alcoholism and violence against women. There is a strong attitudinal problem of law enforcement agencies and judiciaries to deal with cases on VAW which hinders the registration of case, trial process and get justice. Hence VOs should do advocacy and lobbying with the government officials to sensitize the law enforcement agencies and judiciary.
6. **Mutual sharing and learning:** The voluntary organizations should share achievements and respect each other to build a positive image of the sector. The strategy decided for VANI should be to regularly share and circulate the information and any other changes in the voluntary sector to its partners in simple language.
7. **Release of fund in timely manner:** Many grass root level voluntary organisations have a good rapport with the state government but due to the prevailing system of government procedure and process the approval of schemes and file work delays in the fund release. The first Installment is released after 5-6 months and it was categorically mentioned that they have an excellent track record for the past 10-12 years. The state government should release the first installment on the basis of their track record and subsequently release second and other installments on the basis of the activities and documents.
8. **Transparency and accountability:** The voluntary organizations should be transparent and accountable and not indulge in malpractices to get approval or release of funds. Because of the behaviour of few organizations, the image of the whole sector is under watch.
9. **Effective monitoring:** There are dedicated human resource employed in the government and it is there mandate to monitor the fund utilization by the VOs. Hence the genuine organizations will be benefitted.
10. **Formation of state policy:** The government and the VOs with their collaborative effort should frame state policy for the voluntary sector to create an enabling environment. Once a state policy is framed a coordination committee should be formed for the proper implementation of the policy.

— Based on research study conducted by VANI on West Bengal



# Research Study: 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4)

— VANI study

The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) took place in Busan, South Korea, from 29 November to 1 December 2011.

Busan has been a crucial point in multilateral negotiations on international aid and development cooperation which started at the first High Level Forum in



Rome back in 2003. It was a monumental event to take stock of the progress made in delivering aid and furthering development activities across the globe, and to make collective plans for the future of aid and development for all stakeholders.

For civil society organizations, HLF4 was a particularly significant milestone as it marked the first time that civil society participated as a full and equal stakeholder in aid effectiveness negotiations alongside governments and donors. CSO representatives put forward the conclusions of the BetterAid and Open Forum processes for endorsement. It was thus a unique opportunity to influence development cooperation from the point of view of people's organizations and further the shift from a technical aid effectiveness approach to development effectiveness based on long term sustainability, addressing the root causes of poverty and the realization of human rights.

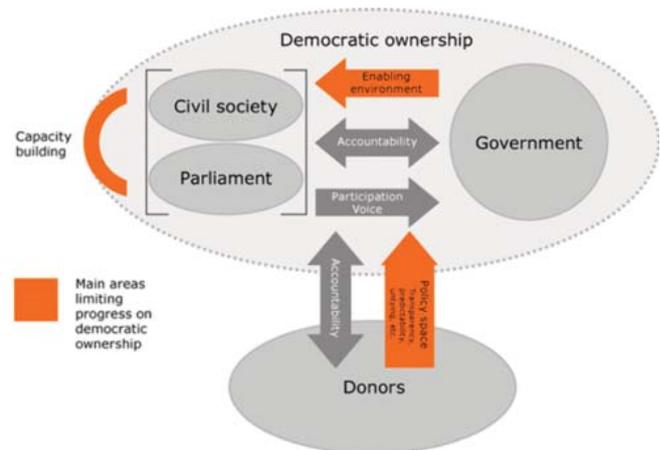
### HLF4 aimed to:

- Assess global progress in improving the quality of aid against the agreed commitments of Paris and Accra
- Share global experiences in delivering the best results

and

- Agree on a Busan Outcome Document to further enhance efforts globally and within countries to make aid more effective in reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals

### HLF4 Stakeholders and Democratic Ownership



Source: <http://cso-effectiveness.org/4th-high-level-forum-on-aid,080>

### For CSOs

- The Busan declaration took into consideration both Istanbul principle and the Siem Reap consensus.
- It has the mention of right based enabling environment for the CSOs but it's too generic in nature.
- Also, there is no explicit commitment for equal role and also BRICS contribution is voluntary

### Launch of CSO Development Effectiveness

**Partnership-CPDE:** Civil society organisations from across the world launched a new development effectiveness platform in Brussels on June 21, 2012 at an event organised by Concord and Civicus. The CSO



Source: <http://www.oecd.org/dev/devcom/45223738.pdf>

Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) is an open platform that brings together CSOs from all over the world. It is borne of civil society engagement in the aid and development effectiveness agenda. It is the product of two platforms, Better Aid (BA) and Open Forum (OF), both taking stock of the work they have done leading to the HLF-4 and reorganizing themselves in order to more effectively engage the new policy context. The CPDE is organized as a platform encompassing all levels from local to national to global; it is a coalition that does not require formal membership for a CSO to join except for agreement with the Key Asks paper.

**Need of CPDE:** The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation marked a shift from “aid effectiveness” to “development effectiveness” and reflected a new focus on addressing poverty reduction and factors affecting development, such as human rights, participatory democracy, social and environmental justice and sustainability, gender equality, decent work, sustainable change, and peace and security.

The changing nature of development also reinforced the need for non-aid-based development relationships. The CSO Partnership is an executive member of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and has structures in place to engage governments and donors, as well as other sectors, such as labour and faith-based organisations.

CPDE focusses on promoting development effectiveness,

especially in developing cooperation. Its intention is to mobilise the broadest possible scope and diversity of CSOs to meaningfully and critically engage in the Busan partnership. CPDE also endeavour to focus on delivering outcomes at the country level.

The CPDE works to achieve **human rights, social justice, equality (specifically gender equality) and sustainability in development** as a whole as well as in its own work as a platform of voluntary organizations.

The CPDE aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Maintain advocacy efforts in the spirit of the CSO Key Asks to Busan.** The Rights Based Approach to development and especially democratic ownership and the enabling environment for civil society remain at the heart of the CSO Partnership’s mission;
- **Strengthen the focus on development effectiveness in development cooperation.** This requires addressing the root causes, as well as the symptoms, of poverty, inequality (in particular, gender inequality and women’s rights), marginalization, injustice, and disability;
- **Hold new donors accountable to Paris, Accra and Busan** in their development cooperation. Advocate that emerging donors and governments engaged in South-South cooperation implement the principles of Paris, Accra and Busan, and do not undermine, but contribute to the human rights of all people;
- **Challenge the mainstream notion of economic growth and the private sector as the drivers** of development and articulate alternative approaches in keeping with the CSO Partnership’s vision and goals. The Busan Partnership Document retains economic growth as the framework for development while excluding a comprehensive human rights-based approach, vision and policy framework to hold business to account and to promote decent work for all;
- **Influence new areas of work as they arise through the Global Partnership,** in keeping with our vision, values and goals.
- **The CSO Partnership will continue to mobilise, outreach and advocate** around these key asks to influence the changing architecture and



understanding of aid and development effectiveness

### CPDE Policy Engagement and Action at all

**levels:** The CPDE consistently organize its work in a manner that is “country-focused” and ensures that structures and groups at sub-regional and regional levels enhance this focus.

### Constituencies of sectoral and major groups engaged at all levels –

The CPDE also fully acknowledge the importance of thematic and sector groups, whose expertise are valued at all levels. Sectors are key constituencies essential for effective reach especially at grassroots level and application of rights-based approaches in our work. There would be effective constituency building and participation in CPDE for major sectors and groups such as labor, women, youth, rural folk, indigenous, disabled, faith-based organizations and NGOs/INGOs at all levels of work. Marginalized grassroots groups will also be strongly represented in all governance and working group structures and be assured of resources allocated for their participation.

**National Level –** The CPDE will work in ways that promote the construction of democratic ownership, involving the creation or strengthening of multi – stakeholder country platforms that advocate CSO engagement in policy dialogue and monitoring and evaluation of development cooperation processes. It will

- Ensure development efforts are strategic, operational and effective and resources will be maximized.
- demand CSO participation in the planning, implementation, M & E
- broaden citizen participation and hold governments accountable by reporting on and raising these in venues where they can be addressed
- Push for/lobby to make aid information accessible

**Regional and Sub-Regional Levels –** The CPDE will work in a way that sub-regional frameworks will support the

*CPDE focus on CSO Roles: CPDE focusses the following roles of CSOs*

- *Community Organizations*
- *Monitoring & Evaluation*
- *Research and Policy Dialogue*
- *Platform and Network formulation*
  - *Service Delivery*
  - *Resource Mobilization*
  - *Information and Education*

country focus, the regional frameworks will ensure policy engagement with institutions and processes as well as operational coordination to support sub-regions and will orient countries on access to funding opportunities.

- Establish connection between the local and global
- Monitor of country/local level and raise critical issues at the global level
- Regional formations engage with state actors and interstate frameworks
- Members of regional formations are able to share goals and share resources

**Global Level –** The CPDE will

- (1) engage with the Post-Busan Interim Group (PBIG)/ Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF),
- (2) engage in long term governance mechanisms of the GPEDC,
- (3) respond to the monitoring needs of Paris, Accra and Busan implementation,
- (4) engage with the Building blocks such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI),
- (5) initiate CSO-led multi stakeholder initiatives and
- (6) Engage with the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) to strengthen CSO partnership .

With such development, the aid development is surely moving from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.concordeurope.org/250-launch-of-cso-development-effectiveness-partnership>



## News You Can Use

### **Invest in girls' education to break cycle of poverty: UNICEF**

**November 10, 2013**

NEW DELHI: Investing in education of girls, especially the most marginalized, is required to make progress on most social indicators in India, according to UNICEF.

Speaking at the event Urmila Sarkar, chief of education UNICEF, said, "Innovation in girl's education will be instrumental to female empowerment and breaking the cycle of poverty and deprivation."

<http://civilsocietynow4u.wordpress.com/2013/11/>

### **Billionaire NGO Invests In Human Misery**

**ENS - NEW DELHI 22nd Dec 2013**

US-based non-profit organisation Safe Horizon, which claims to have rescued Indian diplomat Devyani Khobragade's maid Sangeeta Richard from the clutches of misery and harassment, is known for its deep pocket, the fat pay checks of its senior executives and its zeal for scouting for "victims" who can be the faces on its posters during fund raisers.

Safe Horizon's financial statement for the year 2012 reveals that the NGO invested over \$10,500,000 (Over `65 Crore) in bonds, mutual funds and shares. The NGO which claims to work in areas like domestic violence, criminal justice and human trafficking is funded by big corporates like AGT International, AVON, US government agencies, Philips Van Heusen Corporation and Capital One Bank.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/Billionaire-NGO-Invests-In-Human-Misery/2013/12/22/article1958726.ece>

### **NGO urges improvements for 'Mahila' desks at police stations**

**Press Trust of India, Jaipur December 31, 2013**

Several police stations in the city lack the proper mechanism to handle cases involving women as complainants or accused, a group of law interns have pointed out in a study.

The study of 'Mahila' desks at 14 police stations in the Jaipur (East) area was carried out by students interning with NGO, People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL).

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/ngo-urges-improvements-for-mahila-desks-at-police-stations-113123100695\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/ngo-urges-improvements-for-mahila-desks-at-police-stations-113123100695_1.html)

### **Crime against women on a rise in Bihar, says NGO report**

**India today December 23, 2013**

Bihar has become more unsafe for women. This has been disclosed in a report prepared by NGO Equity Foundation-Action Aid which recently made public. The report suggests how Bihar continues to remain unsafe for women and how crime against women has risen by almost 65 per cent in the period 2008-11. The report has come as a rude shock for



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar who has been extensively publicizing how the state had become safer for the fairer sex during his tenure. The crime graph against women places Bihar at the top of all states.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/crime-against-women-in-bihar-ngo-equity-foundation-action-aid-nitish-kumar/1/332584.html>

## **Mumbai NGO roars against translocation of Gir lions from Gujarat to MP DNA, Dec 17, 2013**

Last month, Mumbai NGO Empower Foundation wrote to a panel created to study and chart out translocation of Asiatic lions from Gir sanctuary in Gujarat to Kuno Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, asking them to stay the translocation till various issues are not resolved.

The NGO has cited more than 29 violations of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines and other points why the trans-location plan might be a failure. They highlighted MP's gun culture and rampant poaching that makes conditions adverse for lions.

<http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/report-mumbai-ngo-roars-against-translocation-of-gir-lions-from-gujarat-to-mp-1936359>

## **Indian NGO's desert kit provides relief to shepherds in desert Press Trust of India, December 11, 2013**

A desert kit project launched by an Indian NGO is making a difference in the lives of shepherds who travel long distances in solitude in the deserts.

The desert kits include blankets and jackets to protect the shepherds from the harsh winter of Kuwait and food items which they do not have access to in their routine life.

[http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/indian-ngo-s-desert-kit-provides-relief-to-shepherds-in-desert-113121100431\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/indian-ngo-s-desert-kit-provides-relief-to-shepherds-in-desert-113121100431_1.html)

## **Global:**

### **2013 sustainable NGO of the year: Carbon Tracker December 27th, 2013 By Blue & Green Tomorrow**

The environmentalist Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, has used Carbon Tracker's maths during his global divestment tour in 2013. And there are a number of instances to suggest the mainstream investment world is taking it seriously.

Carbon Tracker's flagship study, Unburnable Carbon, adds that companies across the world spent over \$650 billion (£441 billion) in 2012 trying to find new sources of oil, gas and coal.

<http://blueandgreentomorrow.com/features/2013-sustainable-ngo-of-the-year-carbon-tracker/>

### **Climate change and slavery: the perfect storm?**

*Guardian Professional, 13 December 2013*

For years, researchers in a variety of sectors have known two key concepts about the intersection of poverty and the



environment. The first is that unsustainable use of natural resources can and does cause poverty. The second is that poverty can, and does, cause environmental degradation. But many anti-slavery activists and climate change researchers are making more connections.

Increasingly it seems that there's a link between a damaged environment and growth in modern-day slavery.

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/dec/13/slavery-climate-change-poverty>

## **Corporate Human Rights Abuses in ASEAN: Civil Society Calls for Corporate Accountability and Compliance with International Human Rights Law** *December 9, 2013*

Civil society groups called for greater corporate accountability in the region, which requires a regulatory framework based on international human rights norms and standards, to address the escalation of corporate human rights abuses in ASEAN, during the launch of a report, titled "Corporate Accountability in ASEAN: A Human Rights-Based Approach", in Jakarta. The report, published by regional human rights NGO Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), was officially presented to the Thai representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), Dr. Seree Nonthasoot, during the 6th Regional Consultation on ASEAN and Human Rights held in Jakarta on 1-3 October 2013.

<http://civilsocietynow.blogspot.in/2013/12/corporate-human-rights-abuses-in-asean.html>

## **VANI Activities: November 2013 - December 2013**

- **19, November 2013**, "Round Table Discussion on Foreign Funding of Indian Voluntary Sector" at India International Centre, New Delhi.
- **20, November 2013**, Meeting on Sub-Committee on Constitution Review/Building at VANI office.
- **21, November 2013**, Working Committee Meeting at VANI office.
- **6, December 2013**, G 20 Meeting at VANI office.
- **13, December 2013**, the communication workshop for VANI staff at Zorba the Buddha.
- **16th December 2013**, Round table discussion on Private sector and VOs.

### **Forthcoming Activities**

- **7-8 Jan 2014**, Regional Level Workshop on "Challenges of Voluntary Organizations in the Changing Scenario" at Nagpur, Maharashtra
- **13 January, 2014**, Round table meeting on "Strengthening the Role of Indian Voluntary Sector on the Global Platform" at National foundation of India, IHC, New Delhi.
- **3rd Week of January 2014**, State Meeting in Gujarat by VANI & Unnati.
- **Last week of January 2014**, State Meeting in Kerala by VANI & Sahayi.



## My Voice: Arlene Galvez

*Arlene Galvez is a “Volunteer Management Advisor” for the National Volunteering Programme of VSO India since September 2012. Aside from her main task as VMA, she’s also assisting the EU Aid Volunteers Building in Resilience (ECHO) Programme. ECHO project action aims at contributing to the EU Aid Volunteers (EUAV) initiative and the EC’s current work on preparing the ground for implementation of the EUAV regulation by providing evidence on how volunteering can add value and professionalism to the EU humanitarian aid and international cooperation sector, capacity development, and the value of partnerships.*



### 1. What is your opinion about voluntary sector?

Voluntary sector comprises different organizations working in various sectors like health, education, livelihood, and youth development to name a few. They work together as a volunteer or work with the volunteer to do advocacy and action initiatives focusing on development. It may be local or international. They not only focus on the development in India, but also foster the international and regional cooperation and understanding.

### 2. Please share your personal experience as a volunteer in India?

Being an International Volunteer in India is quite challenging. Challenging, because I have to adapt in a foreign country with different culture, religion, language, people, political structures, weather, sets of values, etc.

I came from a tropical country, where we only have two seasons, wet or dry. Here in India, I experienced extreme weather conditions; it is either too hot or too cold. I have to find ways to easily adapt in both conditions, also not to get sick so as to continue my work efficiently.

I’m still learning Hindi. I find it very difficult to converse with people in grassroots organization, people in the market or even with autowallas where Hindi is the main medium of communication. I’m

grateful to all my colleagues who patiently taught me basic conversational Hindi.

I have to be tolerant and patient in understanding how people react to certain things. I am in a country with a different culture and sets of values, and the approach in treating people and situations is also very different. I always have to bear in mind government restrictions and volunteering to protocols to remind myself that ‘I am just a transient here.’

Amidst all these challenges, I find volunteering in India a rewarding experience. It’s a learning experience; I came to know more about India and its people by meeting and working with other international and national volunteers in various international and national organizations, and travelling to rural India. Finishing my original placement and being extended was a fulfillment in itself.

### 3. What according to you, are the main challenges faced by voluntary sector?

The main challenges faced by the voluntary sectors are the following.

- **Limited and non-sustainable resources of funding:** Most of the voluntary sector mainly depends on foreign funding, but these funds are time bound so after that what should we do? Sometimes projects stop prematurely due to lack of funding.



**An Act that will not only tackle tax exemptions, partnership, training, accreditation (like what has been stipulated in National Policy on the Voluntary Sector 2007), but also fortify programmes that will provide volunteers recognition and incentive package i.e., allowance, insurance, training, and the grant of privileges and status to Indian volunteers working within and outside the country. It should also clearly define what volunteerism in India is and who are national volunteers?**

- **Distrust between corporate and voluntary sector:** I think that the distrust between the voluntary sector and corporate is due to different perspective of both sectors. There is a vast difference in size and resources that may lead to power dynamics and partnership imbalance. The corporate sector often sees the voluntary sector fostering dependency. On the other hand, NGOs often see corporations having distrust in their motives, view them only as check writers, and expect businesses to help further their social



missions without business benefits. As a result, there has been little interest or trust on either side.

- **Misconception about voluntary sector:** The voluntary sector is always seen as leftist. Others look at us as confrontational and highly political entities when we do advocacy or raise the issue of transparency and accountability. Another misconception is that people associated with the voluntary sector work free of cost. They see us having second-class career and that we do not have the skills to join the corporate sector.
- **Relationship between the government and voluntary sector:** The State should see us as a partner in the development programmes. We work in partnership in various sectors like, health, education, youth, and women. Steps to improve the quality of relationship will also, therefore, be sector-specific.

#### **4. How do you perceive the role of youth in voluntary sector for the empowerment of women?**

I see young volunteers as role models to women at large – support others to be active citizens, elicit sense of responsibilities, promote women participation and inclusion. Youth (especially women) as part of vulnerable sector in the community, with their experiences (of unequal gender roles at home, academe, public places), have considerable knowledge to share with the sector. VO should capitalize the enthusiasm, skills, and passion of these young volunteers and help them achieve their full potential. Their contribution to the larger agenda of nation building will help the people in position (or organization working with youth and women) to understand the dilemmas of the sector they're in.

#### **5. How would you want to see the voluntary sector in next 10 years?**

I want to see National Volunteering Policy (Volunteer Act) mandated by the government in place in India. An Act that will not only tackle tax exemptions, partnership, training, accreditation (like what has



been stipulated in National Policy on the Voluntary Sector 2007), but also fortify programmes that will provide volunteers recognition and incentive package i.e., allowance, insurance, training, and the grant of privileges and status to Indian volunteers working within and outside the country. It should also clearly define what volunteerism in India is and who are national volunteers? I want to see India having its national infrastructure (volunteering agency run by the government) and forum where all volunteers can register and VO sector can do networking to improve coordination of volunteers and volunteer service organizations to widen horizon for sharing and complementing information, experiences and resources.

I also envision the Indian VO sector having more visibility in all forms of media that will lead to greater awareness among people especially those who doubt our motives due to 'misconceptions'. This is also one way to address the growing complexity within and among corporate and VO sector. I hope that both sectors will create new paradigms that maximize core

competencies (i.e., resources, skills, and networks) of each sector to develop innovative and sustainable solutions.

I hope to see more and more national and/or Asia-to-Asia/South-South volunteers on the ground. This seems to be important for both the supply and demand sides of volunteering. On the supply side, it is more convenient due to systems and processes that allow for greater ease securing permits, police clearance, visas and other travel documents, especially within the country and ASEAN countries. On the demand side, similar cultures and commonalities in living conditions and shared cultures make placements easier to manage. Cultural practices often do not have to be explained to volunteers, consequently staff needs to spend less time orienting and training due to similar views and practices.

— *Views expressed are personal; Interview taken by S. M. Zaki Ahmad, Research and Documentation officer VANI.*

## SHOW YOUR SOLIDARITY WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR!

### "Become a VANI Member"

To know about VANI's membership process and criteria, log on to  
([www.vaniindia.org](http://www.vaniindia.org)) or write to:

**Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)  
First Floor, BB-5, Greater Kailash Enclave-II,  
New Delhi 110 048**

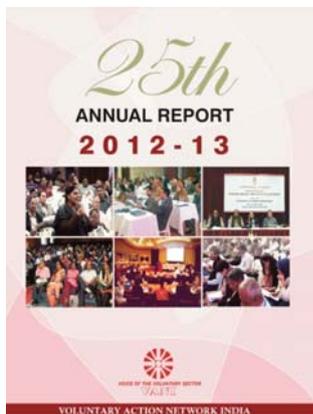
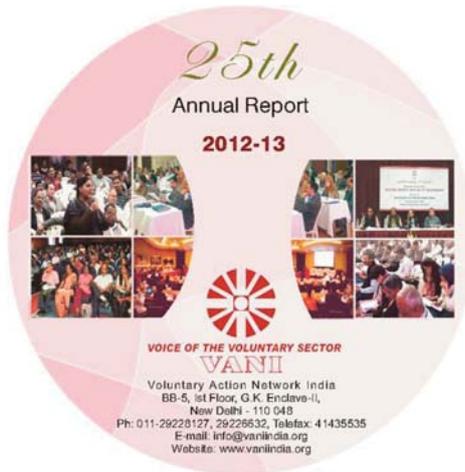
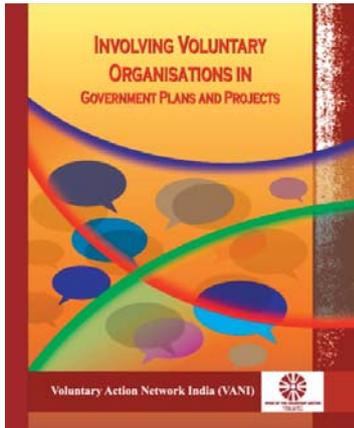
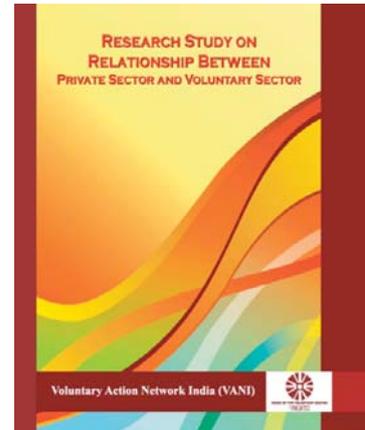
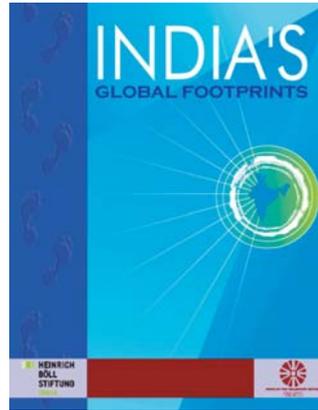
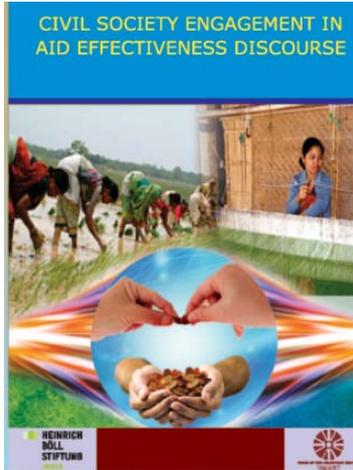
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