

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CEREBRAL PALSY



IICP

Deepshikha

2021 - 2022



New Beginnings - Faith • Optimism • Joy

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From the Editor

It has been a year replete with its fair quota of ups and downs, and challenges galore. In the midst of this turbulence, IICP has been a steadfast anchor providing support to all its service users and their families. In turn, we have been generously aided in our efforts by individuals and organisations through sponsorship and funding. We are truly thankful for their assistance.

Health was a top priority and several medical camps were organised to inoculate our adult trainees, eligible students, staff, and families with both doses of the Covid vaccine at the Institute. Activities, training, and participation in various events were conducted in a hybrid mode. With adherence to safety protocols, we welcomed visitors from the Kalpataru Trust, Mumbai; Jan Vikas Samiti, Varanasi; Samir Ghosh and his team from Water Aid; and Dr Khaleda Gani Dutt from Stockholm University, among others.

Change is inevitable. Several colleagues across departments, having reached retirement age, had to bid adieu. We gratefully acknowledge the long years of sterling service rendered by Dr Madhuchhanda Kundu, N K Banerjee, Parboti Chakraborty, Gita Basu, Shefali Mukherjee, Susmita Chatterji and Pronoti Das. They may have left active service but will always remain connected to the IICP family. We are saddened to announce the untimely demise of Raja Sen, former student and then colleague, on 16 January. He will be greatly missed by all of us.

Spring brought forth a profusion of colours but more importantly an air of optimism and joy. Holi, Baisakhi, Easter, and Bengali New Year celebrations marked new beginnings amidst food, colour, music, and the hope of future prosperity. As Alfred Tennyson had said, 'Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, it will be happier.'

The editorial team wishes our readers happy times in the days to come.

Sumita Roy

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*Madhumita Dasgupta,
Susrita Pradhan, and Madhu Dar*

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Subhra Chatterjee and Reena Sen

National Affiliates Meet

15 – 16 March 2022



Susrita Pradhan, Deputy Director, Education and Training, who coordinated the event reports:

After a hiatus of some years, IICP's partner organisations met in March 2022 to reconnect and exchange news on the common goal of empowering persons with disabilities to live with dignity. In a first however, the affiliates meeting had to be conducted on a virtual platform as it was not deemed safe for delegates to travel. During the two-day event, representatives shared reports of activities and how they coped with disruptions caused by Covid-19.

The world has witnessed unprecedented changes and drastic economic downturn in the past two years. A primary concern for all non- government organisations is how to survive the challenge of constant increase in expenses with limited financial resources. All partners agreed that specialised inputs on understanding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the need of the hour.

A workshop was conducted by Sarfaraz Syed, a social development expert with 21 years of experience in managing CSR and sustainable programmes for international non-government organisations. It was informative with inputs ranging from eligibility of grants, formats for proposals, access to digital marketing and crowd funding to future trends and challenges of mobilising CSR.



Challenges in Mobilising CSR Funding

- Misalignment of Vision
- Lack of Internal Clarity among CSR Teams
- Rapidly Changing Focus to Respond to National Calls to Action
- Geography Based Misalignments
- Uncertainty with the Duration of Funding
- Hierarchical relationships between Donor and Implementing Partner

From our Affiliates

DEEPSHIKHA – RANCHI, JHARKHAND



Deepshikha was started 34 years ago to train and empower people with disabilities with special emphasis on children with mental retardation. With IICP's mentoring and guidance, we commenced services for children with cerebral palsy and ran early intervention clinics in our Centre and in the community. We are a SAIED Centre and our special school follows the NIOS curriculum. We now partner with organisations to include services for children with visual and hearing impairments. Deepshikha also runs training courses in Special Education.

Sudha Lhila
Executive Director

RAKSHA – KOCHI, KERALA

Raksha Society founded in 1985 works to promote the rehabilitation and employment of challenged citizens, and ensures that they receive the best possible assistance. In the initial years of operation, we were fortunate to have received undivided attention and guidance from IICP, in particular Dr Reena Sen. In 1993, we set up the Raksha Institute of Special Education (RISE) to train teachers and conduct research in Special Education. In 37 years, since we started working for children and young adults with



disabilities, we have grown from just a Special School to a multifaceted, multidisciplinary organisation. In recent years, new ideas and techniques, both homegrown and imported, have made significant contributions to the attitudes and methods we adopt in our work. With our group of committed staff, supportive parents, and a community that understands the work we are doing, we hope Raksha will, in future, be able to play a progressively larger role in the disability sector.

Ragini Menon
Hon Secretary

DWAR JINGKYRMEN – SHILLONG, MEGHALAYA

Having a disabled daughter and travelling into an unknown arena brought us to the doors of the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy. Nothing more wonderful could have happened to us as a family and to many other parents like us in Shillong. Our journey with IICP began with affiliation in 1986. Regular monitoring visits and staff training by IICP meant better services. IICP gave us a platform to grow with confidence. Though our organisation was small, we were never made to feel small. Everything was about partnership, doing things together through many avenues. Thank you for 36 wonderful years.

Zeenat A Ali
Director



SPASTIC SOCIETY OF MIZORAM – AIZAWL, MIZORAM



Spastic Society of Mizoram, established in 1989, was founded by parents of children with disabilities. IICP was instrumental in helping us initiate services by organising free clinics. When the Gilead Special School was established on land allotted by the Government of Mizoram and with construction funded by the North East Council, IICP deputed two special educators and sponsored trainees. The School now functions with 30 staff and 100 persons with varied disabilities. We thank IICP for all the support they have rendered through the years.

Mrs Neihluangi
Secretary

AMBIKA SISHU KENDRA – KURNOOL, ANDHRA PRADESH



Ambika Sishu Kendra's main focus is on early intervention, rehabilitation, training in independent living, and, ultimately, skills development towards economic empowerment for adult students.

Awareness and training programmes for parents of children with disabilities are a priority. We provide them with information on government schemes (like Aadhaar and UDID) and National Trust schemes (like Niramaya Health Insurance and Legal Guardianship). We regularly provide in-service training to our staff; they attend many online workshops and share their knowledge.

We are planning to start RCI-certified training courses at our Centre to enable more people to become professionals in the service of differently-abled persons. We hope that our efforts bear fruit in the near future.

Bindu Shah
Hon Director

GOODRICKE SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION – SILIGURI, WEST BENGAL



Therapy Sessions in Progress

KIRAN SOCIETY – VARANASI, UTTAR PRADESH

KIRAN (meaning 'ray of light') Society is a non-profit organisation working since 1990. The Society is known for its commitment to working with children and youth with disabilities as well as other marginalised sections of the community, empowering them to lead a dignified quality of life. The organisation's bottom-up approach of inclusive development has changed the lives of many through sustainable development. Education, rehabilitation, and vocational training programmes cover around 450 children and adults (3-25 years old) per day from different communities. The Community-Based Rehabilitation Project has impacted the lives of approximately 1400 persons with disabilities, 2200 women, 1000 mothers and children through our Health Awareness and Livelihood projects. Apart from this, KIRAN has a full-fledged Vocational and Skills Development Programme that has assisted young adults to grow into productive members of society.

Our 26 years of collaborative partnership with IICP has facilitated many innovative approaches in our service delivery to children with disabilities. Through this partnership, our staff trained by IICP have become an asset to our organisation.

Satish Kumar Mishra
Head, Human Resource and Training Centre

PRERONA PRATIBANDHI SISHU BIKASH KENDRA – JORHAT, ASSAM



SHISHU SAROTHI – GUWAHATI, ASSAM



Human Resource Development Programmes

*T*raining plays a vital role in the building of Human Resources in the disability and development sectors. During the year, professionals across IICP services conducted several online and offline training programmes and refresher modules in order to transfer skills and knowledge to students, teachers, professionals, and the community.

Training Rehabilitation Professionals in Bihar

A Report by Asis Kumar Ghosh, Deputy Director, Therapy Services

The Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), an initiative of the Union Health Ministry, focuses on the improvement of child health. In 2013, the Department of Health, Government of India included developmental delay and disabilities, and integrated this much needed component of child health with 44 other conditions such as birth defects, diseases, and deficiencies. Implementation of this scheme in several States has contributed to the overall improvement in the health of infants and children.

In Bihar, District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) under the RBSK scheme cater to children with developmental delay and disabilities up to the age of six. Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) established in the districts are fully functional and incorporate mandatory follow-ups to record the developmental trajectory of every infant. This is to ensure 'healthy survival' rather than 'just survival' of infants who have been in the NICU.



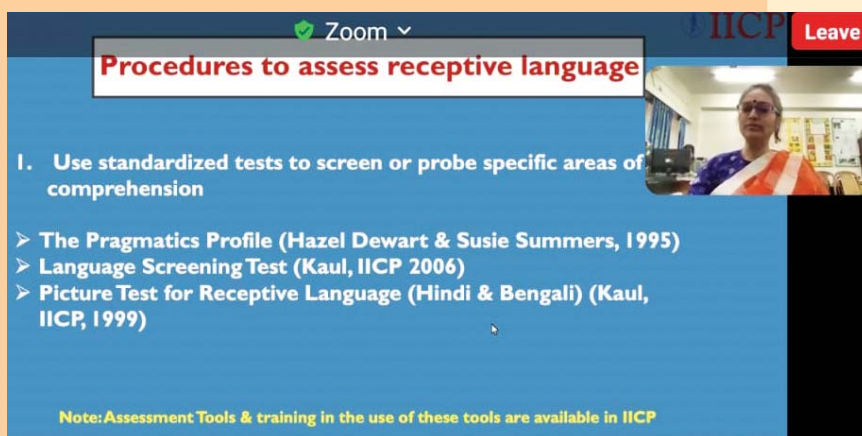
The State Health Department of Bihar organised a week-long training (23-29 March 2022) for rehabilitation professionals employed under the RBSK. A team of 14 health care professionals was recruited to implement early intervention for children with developmental delay and disabilities in various district hospitals. My colleague Tanusree Das, a special educator, and I were invited as resource persons by the State Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Patna.

The group of 32 rehabilitation professional trainees included physiotherapists, speech and language pathologists, audiologists, optometrists, and special educators. This state-level training focussed on typical development of infants vis a vis atypical development, detection of early features of developmental divergence, and immediate intervention. Information on associated problems of cortical visual impairment (CVI), mealtime difficulties, and complex communication needs was shared through audio-visuals and case narrations. Practical demonstrations were conducted on assessment and goal planning strategies for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities, cerebral palsy and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Participants also observed methods used to establish rapport with parents and family members of children with special needs.

The post-training test scores showed a dramatic improvement as compared to the the pre-training assessment. This outcome at the end of the week-long training was gratifying as was the visible, wholehearted participation to absorb information on early intervention assessments and procedures. Satisfaction was writ large on most faces at the end of each session and that alone was a rewarding experience.

'If there had been such a well-documented and intensive training five years ago, it would have made a huge difference to our work with children.' This feedback was echoed by several participants. A therapist who was initially sceptical of the training honestly submitted, 'Our therapeutic sessions are currently restricted to doing some passive movements.' This is a validation of the fact that all professionals need to update their skills and knowledge at regular intervals to remain relevant and in sync with the changing needs of the times. IICP's strength lies in providing training in the area of capacity building for professionals in the disability and development sectors.

Shashwat Jigyasa is a Lucknow-based non-government organisation working for the upliftment and welfare of children and adults with disabilities, and from marginalised communities. As a specialist resource training centre, IICP was approached by Dr Sitanshu Kumar, Founder and Director of Shashwat Jigyasa, to conduct a series of online webinars with a focus on identification and interventions for persons with disabilities and cerebral palsy. Over a period of ten days, professionals across IICP services held informative sessions for a target audience of special educators, trainers, parents, and students from India and abroad. The topics ranged from early intervention, mealtime management, therapy, and advocacy to augmentative and alternative communication, vocational training, and skills development for persons with disabilities.



Training programmes by the National Resource Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication were successfully conducted for Swabhimani, the State Disability Information and Resource Centre, Odisha; the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD), Chennai; and the National Institute of Speech and Hearing (NISH), Thiruvananthapuram. These programmes were tailored to meet the training needs of the organisational target groups that included professionals, special educators, field workers, and parents. Beginning with an introduction to the history of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) as an ideology and practice, and moving on to the theory and pedagogy of the Right to Communicate, each session was informative and well-illustrated. Topics addressed also covered the identification of potential AAC users (persons with complex communication needs), assessment protocols, the role of a communication partner, and communication support systems ranging from no tech to high tech. Case studies showing evidence-based practices with our beneficiaries were appreciated. Guidance was also given on assessment systems to measure the academic progress of students with special needs.

Training for Care Staff for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens

In 2021, a new collaboration was initiated with Sister Nivedita University (SNU) in Kolkata to run short certificate courses on 'Caregiving for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities'. There is a great need for competent and qualified caregivers to provide home support for elderly people as well as persons with disabilities and special needs who require assistance in activities of daily living.

IICP was approached by Apratim Chattopadhyay, Founder, MD & CEO of Support Elders Private Ltd (SEPL), an

organisation that provides comprehensive care solutions for the elderly, to provide training for their caregivers. In November 2021, after many months of virtual work, a three-month training course commenced in physical mode with ten trainees from SEPL. This took place with generous support from the Army Welfare Placement Organisation, Kolkata.

Prof (Dr) Dhruvajyoti Chattopadhyay, Vice-Chancellor, SNU, presented certificates to the first batch of successful trainees at an event on 14 March 2022.



Retd Col Shankar Kallat at the inauguration of the course



Apratim Chattopadhyay, SEPL



Ina Basu, Sister Nivedita University



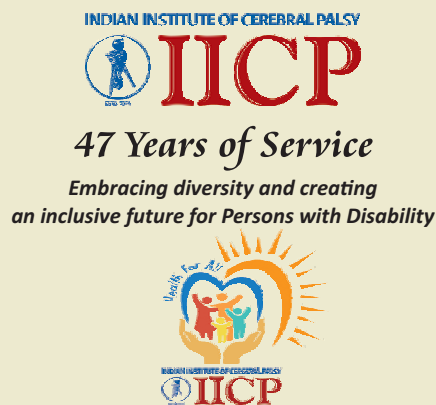
Trainees demonstrate wheelchair transference and feeding



Presentation of Certificates by the Vice-Chancellor of Sister Nivedita University



Trainees with Faculty Members



47th Founders' Day Celebrations at IICP

The 47th Anniversary celebrations were held at IICP on 18 November 2021. With adherence to safety norms, members and guests gathered to enjoy the special occasion, albeit the absence of our children and adults was keenly felt. In her address, Sonali Nandi, Chief Operations Officer, stated that IICP, as an organisation, had overcome various difficulties in the past, was currently coping with an unprecedented situation and would, in future, no doubt face other challenges. However, any kind of hurdle has always been successfully surmounted with teamwork, courage, resolve, and resilience. She credited the deep-rooted commitment of the Founders and the Governing Body as the inspiring force that continues to motivate the team to forge ahead with compassion and determination.

The theme for this year's exhibition focussed on the different dimensions of health and the impact of wellness on our lives. Although our children and adults have been secluded at home for several months, it has neither dampened their spirits nor clipped their wings of creativity. They sent in messages and performances recorded by their families that were uploaded on YouTube.



The traditional Lamp is lit



Guest of Honour Dr Neena Ghosh

We share with you some pictures of the cultural performance by the hugely talented staff of IICP.



*Inaugural song: A soulful rendition of Tagore's
'Prano Bhoriye, Trisha Horiye, Morey Aro Aro Aro Dao Pran...'*



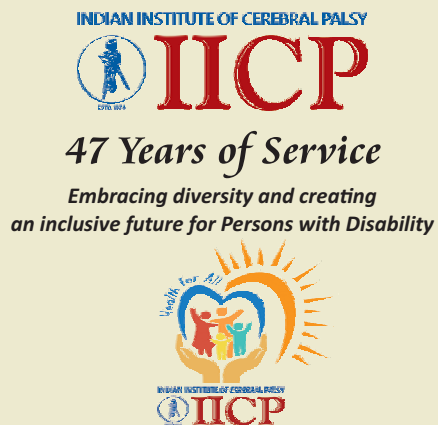
*Guest performance by talented
accordionist Shanoli Sen*



*Group dance by
teachers*



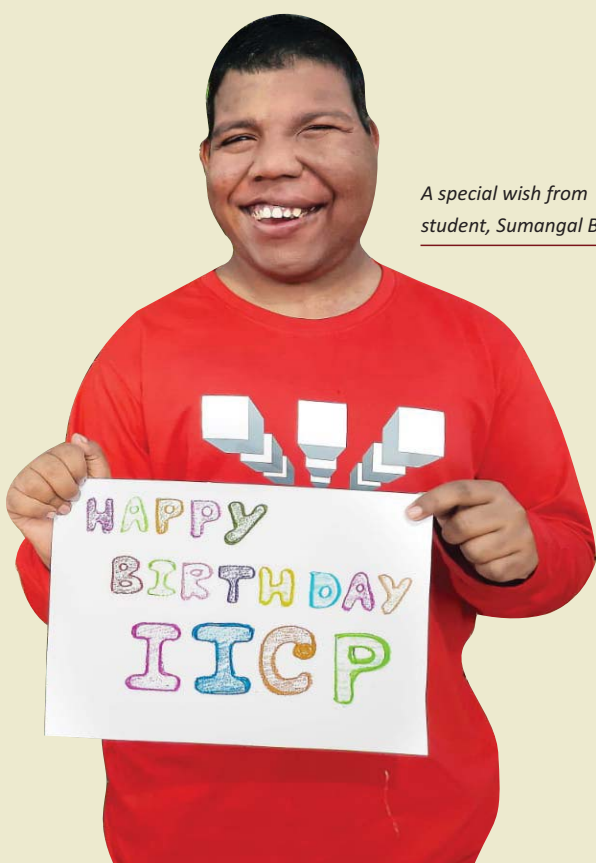
*Signing off with a
resounding cheer of
'We love IICP'*



Dipak K Banerjee, Financial Advisor, IICP with Dr Ghosh at the unveiling of the plaque in memory of his sister and brother in law, Mr and Mrs Manindranath Ganguli



Sonali Nandi welcomes Mr and Mrs R L Kapoor, founder members of IICP



*A special wish from
 student, Sumangal Banerjee*



Staff enjoy a lunch hosted by the Governing Body



Hope Cup XI 25 – 26 February 2022

Notwithstanding a rescheduling of dates leading to a delay caused by a sudden upsurge in the pandemic, the eleventh Hope Cup was held at the Tollygunge Club on 25 and 26 February 2022. The two-day tournament was a wonderful celebration of 'hope'. It was heart-warming to see Kolkata's golfing fraternity, corporate houses, and compassionate individuals come forward in large numbers and lend generous support to a cause. We gratefully acknowledge all those who contributed funds and gifts to make the Hope Cup a successful event. We are indebted to President Mr Joydeep Dattagupta; CEO and Managing Member Anil Mukherjee; Golf Captain Gaurav Ghosh; the entire team at the Tollygunge Club; and Protouch for their fantastic support that made the event an unqualified success!

The GOC-in-C of the Eastern Command, Lt Gen R P Kalita was the Chief Guest at the Prize Distribution ceremony, and presented the Hope Cup XI to the winning team on the verdant and picturesque lawns of

Lt Gen R P Kalita with the winners of the IICP Hope Cup 2022: Abhikants Basu, Rakshik Basu, Suryasikhar Bose, and Rohan Sofet





Anil Mukerji, CEO, Tollygunge Club



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



Dr Sudha Kaul conveys a message from Chairperson Rakhi Sarkar



The first lady of Tollygunge Club, Mrs Dattagupta, gave away the prizes for Hole-in-One, Nine Holes, and Special Participation

Mr D K Das, Executive Vice-President, Axis Bank with the 1st Runners-Up: Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, N Sainathan, Arnab Basu, and Subrata Roy






Dr Reena Sen, Hony Secy, IICP, gives the Vote of Thanks



Atul Asthana, MD Goodricke Group Limited with the 2nd Runners-Up: Col Feroz Khan, Brig P Khanna, Col Rajesh, and Col Ravi Tomar



3rd Runners-Up: Karan Verma, Rahul Batra, Uzair Firdausi, and Samridh Sen




HOPE CUP

25th & 26th February, 2022

A Charity Golf Tournament in aid of

Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy



Co Sponsors





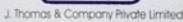





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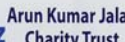


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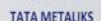


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Heartfelt gratitude to all our Donors and Sponsors

3rd December: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

*I*n celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2021, Sudipendu Dutta of our Ankur Advocacy Group (AAG) attended the inaugural ceremony of barrier-free access to the galleries at Victoria Memorial. While expressing his deep appreciation of this initiative for persons with disabilities, he urged for further accessibility in all public places and proactive measures for social inclusion.



Rahul Singh, a former trainee of the Vocational Training Unit and now a Data Analyst with Tata Consultancy Services, was awarded a Role Model certificate by Dr Shashi Panja, West Bengal Minister of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare, at an event held on 3 December 2021



Trainees Mohana Adhikary, Pampa Rana, Joy Ghoshal, Sromona Das, and Debashish Chakraborty appeared for job interviews with Concentrick, Maxicus, Avsar, DHL, and Hindustan Lever at the Rojgar Mela 2021.

Saswati Mahanti, Coordinator of AAG with others at the rally organised by Disability Activist's Forum, West Bengal



Messages from Students of Centre for Special Education (CSE)



আজ ৩রা ডিসেম্বর। বিশ্ব প্রতিবন্ধী দিবস। এই দিনে প্রতি বছর আমরা স্কুল থেকে হাঁটতে যেতাম। খুব আনন্দ হোত আমাদের। এই দিনে আমরা শপথ নেবো যে আমরাও অনেক কিছু করতে পারবো।

অর্পন ভট্টাচার্য

3rd December is International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Every year we used to enjoy participating in awareness walks from school. On this day, we will pledge to work and achieve our goals.

Arpan Bhattacharya



আমরা সবাই রাজা আমাদের এই রাজ্যের রাজত্বে... আমরা সবাই একসঙ্গে মিলে এগোবো... সহানুভূতি নয়... একসঙ্গে এগোবো।
করবো... লড়বো... জিতবো রে!

অঙ্কিত বাসু

'We are all kings in this kingdom...' (Rabindranath Tagore)
Together we will go forward, not with sympathy but with unity.
We will do, we will fight, we will win!

Ankit Basu

Awareness Campaigns by Ankur Advocacy Group

'We Ring the Bell'

This year, Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month in March was celebrated on a large scale by the Ankur Advocacy Group (AAG). They conducted a series of awareness programmes on cerebral palsy and promoted the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools.

'We Ring the Bell' campaign undertaken by Ankur was supported by our partner organisation Jan Vikas Samiti (JVS), Varanasi, and Liliane Foundation, Netherlands.



Our team interacted with a total of 540 students and 50 teachers across the ten schools visited:

- ◆ Naba Disha School, Taratala Branch
- ◆ Naba Disha School, Garden Reach Centre
- ◆ Alipore Takshal Vidyapith for Girls (HS)
- ◆ Alipore Takshal Vidyapith for Boys (HS)
- ◆ Behala Balika Vidyapith
- ◆ Shree Sambhu Sadan Vidyalaya
- ◆ Behala Aryya Vidyamandir
- ◆ Naba Disha School, Hastings Branch
- ◆ NabaDisha School, Watgunge
- ◆ Kamala Girls' School

During the sessions we discovered that most students in the Middle and Secondary School sections were largely unaware of the difficulties encountered by persons with disabilities on a daily basis. They were provided with information on the different categories of disabilities recognised by the government, and the various facilities and entitlements that can be availed by a person with disability. Myths about disability were put to rest through puppet shows and skits.



Sharing of real-life experiences and success stories did much to enlighten the young audiences about disability in general and cerebral palsy in particular. The overall response from students and teachers was overwhelming.

In each school, at the end of the session, the students unanimously and enthusiastically added their voices to join our mission of building a non-judgemental, inclusive, and barrier-free society. Some expressed their intentions to be more empathetic towards people with disabilities. Encouraged by this spontaneous show of support, the schools have put in a request for more awareness programmes in future.

Glimpses from the Awareness Campaign



Impact of Online Learning

A Report by Susrita Pradhan, Deputy Director, Education

Over the past two years, prolonged periods of stay at home have been fraught with various challenges for the population at large but in particular for children and adults with disabilities. The impact of an unprecedented situation on the overall physical and mental health of our students was a major worry and concern. A complete break from school routine would inevitably result in the depletion of carefully nurtured skills in all domains. Thus, the need of the hour was to have a focal point that could mitigate the situation and reduce parental anxieties. The goal was to ensure a semblance of normalcy and a continuity of educational plans.

Teaching began almost immediately with innovative teaching-learning materials appropriate for virtual pedagogy. Our multi-disciplinary team of special educators, physiotherapists, social workers, and other professionals used various online platforms like WhatsApp, videos, phone calls, and Zoom sessions as per a pre-set weekly time-table. It is gratifying to report that 80% of the total school strength logged in for these classes; 15% who had no access to Android or any other smart gadgets attended classes via voice calls. IICP took the initiative to bridge the digital divide by procuring smartphones for needy students. One of the noticeable outcomes was regular attendance. It was observed that some students who were earlier unable to attend school not only caught up with term targets but, in some cases, accomplished much more than expected.

The use of technology and computers as a vital teaching aid has always been a part of the school curriculum. However, the pandemic situation optimised both the scope and frequency of use for

students and staff. Attending and participating in webinars, virtual competitions, events, and podcasts soon became par for the course! While parental support was initially required to access online classes, many students soon learnt to successfully handle their phones, answer calls, and type out messages to teachers and friends. Some even mastered the skill of independently accessing virtual platforms and social media while others learnt to successfully upload pictures and videos of performances and creative tasks.

Parental concerns and suggestions were addressed at regular meetings that helped teachers to modify goals and, subsequently, worksheets for the students. Assessment of a child's progress was done in conjunction with parents, thereby sustaining a steady growth. There was enthusiastic participation in co-curricular activities and cultural programmes from parents, siblings, grandparents, and even members of the extended family. This strengthened bonds and contributed immensely to the overall developmental progress.

I state with justifiable pride that despite innumerable challenges, IICP did bridge the digital divide to a great extent and ensured our students were not left behind. The success of online classes was largely due to the unstinting support received from parents and the perseverance of our teachers.

Though the importance and advantages of physical school attendance cannot be emphasised enough, it is equally true that the merits of virtual pedagogy cannot be denied. A flexible system of teaching and learning is an option that needs to be further explored and streamlined for the future.

IICP students write success stories with online learning

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey
@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: While the focus has been on online classes in mainstream schools, here children with cerebral palsy face different degrees of difficulties, from speech impairment to the lack of motor control. They have also slogged silently alongside and at the end of 20 months they are able to write success stories.

When the Centre for Special Education, which is the school run by the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP), shut due to the pandemic and the students were told to stay home, no one was sure whether education for these children would also come to a halt because virtual learning needed the gadget bridge. However, today IICP is happy because these children have shown an unusual knack for smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktops that they have been using daily for their online classes.

Like the students of mainstream schools, these children are also connected by WhatsApp groups, where study material, notes and videos are shared by teachers. "You will have to see to believe the alacrity, with which our palsy students have taken to the smart phone.

Initially, these children needed their parents to guide them but now at the end of 20 months children have mastered the art of typing messa-



IICP students participated in the Children's Day celebrations virtually

You will have to see to believe the alacrity, with which our students have taken to the smart phone. They can now type or dial numbers

Susrita Pradhan | PRINCIPAL,
IICP SCHOOL

ges and dialling numbers to call teachers if they are late for class by a few minutes," said the principal of the school, Susrita Pradhan.

Educators here felt that since many children have been using computers as part of their skill training from a very young age — this helps them communicate even when their speech is unclear or their motor skills are underdeveloped — they have be-

en able to cope with the virtual classes.

"Since they do not have to travel to and from school and are saving a lot of time and exhaustion, considering their physical challenges, they are coping with the virtual classes even better," said vice principal Suchetana Mukherjee. The attendance is near 100% (unlike mainstream schools where attendance related truancy has been a problem) and children look forward to the classes — their only connect with the world outside.

Children like Ankush Majhi, Diganta Nagand Srijha Sinha, have now mastered the skill of creative performances and have been uploading videos on their own regularly, said teachers. The school has successfully organised a five-day summer camp, where children did experiments and even performed magic.

This article by author and journalist Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey appeared in the Times of India edition of 25 December 2021. It explores how students with cerebral palsy have adapted to the new mode of online learning. We are sad to report the tragic demise of Jhimli in a road accident on 29 December while holidaying with her family.

The Writer's Workshop: Enabling Self-Expression for All

The Writer's Workshop Webinar hosted by IICP was presented by Madhumita Dasgupta, Inclusion Coordinator, IICP, jointly with Dr Vicki Casella and Aileen Arai of The Bridge School, California, USA. Attended by over 73 professionals from mainstream schools across India and abroad, it focussed on strategies to implement this particular programme for students with communication and motor difficulties. The sessions at our Centre for Special Education successfully facilitated creative writing and self-expressions by students of the Junior, Middle, and Senior Academic Classes as well as the Life Skills Training Unit from both Hindi and English sections.

Video presentations of these students using gestures, signs, pictures, and words to successfully convey and share their independent opinions were greatly appreciated. A positive outcome was the request for conducting such sessions with teachers and students in mainstream schools.

Meet Our Speakers



Dr. Vicki Casella,
Executive Director,
The Bridge School, U.S.A



Aileen Arai
Director of Education,
The Bridge School, U.S.A



Madhumita Dasgupta
Coordinator, National Resource
Centre for Augmentative
& Alternative Communication,
IICP, Kolkata



Community-Based Services

*W*ith the assistance of partner organisations in the Sunderbans – Bali Nature and Wild Life Conservation Society (BNWLC), Hridmajhare, and Bali Samajkalyan Nari Samity – IICP staff extended a helping hand to residents of Pakhirala and Bali. They distributed dry rations, and essential health and hygiene items in cyclone-ravaged areas.



Breaking the Bias

Standing tall in a biased world

In order to create a more inclusive and equal world, what women — and people at large — can do is to learn from women who have truly shattered biases and enriched our lives

Forty-six years ago, when we formed West Bengal Spastics Society, now called IICP (Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy), words like 'inclusion' and 'diversity' were not at the forefront of our minds. We had the firm belief that all children can learn, irrespective of their physical or intellectual abilities or challenges. So, we began with a child-centred approach to learning and teaching, which has since grown into a person-centred approach to learning as we started working with adults.

I would like to share the stories of two remarkable women — who have truly shattered biases — in their own words.

MARINA SAMUEL
I was born with cerebral palsy, and have

difficulty walking. When I was young, I went to the IICP where I received therapy and education. From an early age, I was eager to earn my own living. But, I couldn't travel alone by public transport. I realised I must overcome this problem. So, I pushed myself to take a bus regularly, and now I can travel independently.

I started working with my dance school, Anjika and later in another company as a data generator. I also enrolled myself for graduation by correspondence. Due to some problems at the workplace, I left the job and completed my graduation. Then, I took up a job at a call centre in the night shift. I enjoyed working here. Currently, I work with Tata Medical Centre as a data entry operator.

By this time, I had become totally independent. I started writing to share my experiences.

In our society, it is difficult for any woman to pursue her dreams. It is even more difficult for a woman who is differently-abled. Life for women like us will be much easier if the society guarantees us access in all public places. We need a change in attitude and more respect from society.

SHRADHA KHATOR
I am a writer. I write short stories, essays and poems in Hindi, using my laptop. I also give lectures on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). AAC is the means by which people who have difficulties in speaking can express themselves. I am a wheelchair user and use my left index finger for typing on my phone and computer. I talk to people by spelling the words with an alphabet board. I also use WhatsApp chat and Facebook with

my family and acquaintances.

When I was a young girl, my teachers at IICP introduced me to AAC to communicate clearly and easily.

My true passion is writing and expressing. I work with a group of youth in a Media Lab. We explore different forms of media to express our ideas and dreams. The Media Lab has used one of my stories to create an animation film.

I have also worked with the Youth Community Reporters, in a project conducted by Jadavpur University. We need the determination, resilience and inner strength to ignore what people think and continue to follow our own path.

My sincere hope is for society to look at me as a writer first and foremost, and to fully accept me just the way I am.

DR. SUDHA KAUL
Founder, Trustee and Vice Chairperson, IICP, Kolkata



An article by Dr Sudha Kaul on International Women's Day 2022

Forty-six years ago, when we formed an organisation called West Bengal Spastics Society, now known as the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy (IICP), words like 'inclusion' and 'diversity' were not at the forefront of our minds. We had but one intention — we wanted a school for our children; for children with cerebral palsy who had the right to education like all others. We had the firm belief that ALL children can learn, irrespective of their physical or intellectual abilities or challenges. So, we began with a child-centred approach to learning and teaching, which has since grown into a person-centred approach to learning as we started working with adults. In this journey of over four decades, I have had the wonderful opportunity to learn from women who have truly shattered biases and enriched our lives. I would like to share the stories of two such remarkable young women, in their own words.

Dr Sudha Kaul
Vice-Chairperson, IICP

I was born with cerebral palsy and have difficulty walking. When I was young, I went to IICP where I received therapy and education. I passed my exams at all the required levels. I was always eager to work and earn my own living but I couldn't travel alone by public transport. It was difficult for me to climb onto a local bus. However, I realised if I wanted to be independent, I had to overcome this problem. I pushed myself and kept trying, and now I can travel independently.

I began working with Anjika, my dance school, but left to complete my graduation. Later, I also worked night shifts at a call centre, which was a totally new experience for me. Currently, I work as a data entry operator at the Tata Medical Centre. I enjoy my work.

I wanted to share my experiences as a differently-abled woman who overcame difficulties and barriers to achieve independence in life. Therefore, I wrote about my journey in my book *Up the Ladder, Step by Step*.

In our society, it is difficult for a woman to pursue her dreams but it is even more difficult for a woman who is differently-abled. Life is full of challenges for her. Life for women like us would be much easier if there was a change in people's attitudes, and society gave us our due respect and guaranteed us access to all public places.

Marina Samuel

I am a writer. I write short stories, essays, and poems in Hindi using my laptop. I also give lectures on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). AAC is the means by which people who have difficulties in speaking can express themselves. I am a wheelchair user, and use my left index finger to type on my phone and computer. I talk to people by spelling out the words on an alphabet board. I also use WhatsApp and Facebook to chat with my family, friends, and teachers.

When I was young, I used my eyes to express my thoughts and feelings. I used to get depressed because people could not understand me. Then my teachers in IICP introduced me to AAC, which has enabled me to communicate clearly and easily.

My true passion lies in writing and expressing. I work with a group of young people in the Media Lab at IICP where we explore different mediums to express our imagination, ideas, and dreams. The Media Lab has even created an animation film using one of my stories. I have worked with youth community reporters in a project conducted by Jadavpur University.

Some people wonder about me. They think – how can she write? She cannot even talk or walk. But I know that we need determination, resilience, and inner strength to ignore such judgements, and continue to follow our own path. Only then can we achieve whatever we want to do. My sincere hope is for society to look at me as a writer first and foremost, and secondly to fully accept me just the way I am.

Shradha Khator



Marina presents Shradha with a copy of her autobiography

Author of *Up the Ladder, Step by Step*, Marina Samuel was at the Kolkata Literary Festival (KLF) 2022.

Deepa Mukerji, volunteer and long-time friend reports:

How many of us can hold our own while facing a huge audience for the first time without getting tongue-tied and nervous? With perfect poise, young Marina Samuel, a panellist at KLF's session *Kolkata, My Muse*, did just that! Amidst a plethora of celebrities on stage, Marina shone brighter than the others not despite her disability but because of it!



Marina's disability has lent her extraordinary courage and character, and shaped her into a spirited and strong individual. She spoke with great confidence, exhorting the need for a more inclusive and empathetic society. Acknowledging with gratitude the positive and empowering influences Kolkata and the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy have had on her life, she pointed out that there is vast room for improvement where the general public is concerned.

We warmly wish Marina and her inspiring book many more chapters of success.



Marina in conversation with Maura Hurley Bose at the Oxford Book Store, Kolkata

Expressions



Drawing Competition

Theme: 75 Years of Indian Independence/Pride of India

Group D2: Class VII to Class XII

Students from Centre for Special Education, IICP participated in the cultural event Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, a nationwide celebration of 75 years of Independence. They won awards in drawing, singing, essay writing, and recitation.



Piu Halder



Diganta Nag



Sneha Das



Upasruti Jana



Shiladitya Roy



Nman Pandey

GREAT WOMEN OF INDIA

Women of India in contrast to the rest of the world are different and unique. They have been the driving force behind the nation's surge to power. Women in India have often been deprived of



basic human rights, suffered domestic violence, social discrimination, financial exclusion, and insufficient access to sanitation and medical care.

There are many examples of women who have fought discrimination to shatter the glass ceiling of gender inequality. Shila Dawre was the first woman auto rickshaw driver to break into a male-dominated bastion through sheer grit and determination. At the age of 72, Matangini Hazra led five thousand anti-British supporters in the Quit India Movement. Sirisha Bandla is an aeronautical engineer; eminent writer Mahasweta Devi worked for the upliftment of tribal women; while poets Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu motivated women through their translations and writings. Ritu Karidhal Srivastava is a scientist with ISRO and played an important role in Mangalayan, the Mars Orbital Mission. Mary Kom is an inspiration for promoting sporting talent in women.

I am a specially-abled girl with cerebral palsy and have been lucky to have a very strong set of parents who are ready to fight any odds that may stand in my way. I would like to take this opportunity to salute my mother who has been my pillar of strength, and a guiding light, friend, and philosopher in my life.

Needless to say, I have also been inspired by my teachers at IICP who have been able to draw out my strengths and coax me to go beyond my abilities, helping me fly in this uncertain world that I live in.

Srija Sinha



স্বাধীনতা আমাদের সকলের কাছেই পরম কাম্য, ভারতমায়ের বহু বীর সন্তানদের রক্তের বিনিময়ে, অনেক সংগ্রামের পর এই স্বাধীনতা এসেছে।

ইংরেজরা ভারতবর্ষে এসেছিল ব্যবসার উদ্দেশ্যে, পরে তারা ভারতবর্ষ দখল করে নেয় এবং

ভারতবাসীদের ওপর অত্যাচার, জোর জুলুম চালাতে থাকে। দিনের পর দিন এই অত্যাচার সহ্য করতে না পেরে ভারতবাসীরা ইংরেজদের বিরুদ্ধে আন্দোলন করতে শুরু করে। এই আন্দোলনে নেতৃত্ব দেন মঙ্গল পাণ্ডে। এইভাবে ধীরে ধীরে সমস্ত দেশে বিদ্রোহ ছড়িয়ে পড়ে। এই বিদ্রোহে যোগ দিয়ে অনেকে প্রাণ বিসর্জন দিয়েছেন। যেমন - ক্ষুদিরাম বসু, বিনয়-বাদল-দীনেশ, সূর্যসেন, ভগত সিং, মাতঙ্গিনী হাজরা, ও আরও অনেকে। গান্ধীজির অহিংসা আন্দোলন, ভারত ছাড়ো আন্দোলন অনেকে প্রেরণা জুগিয়েছে। নেতাজি সুভাষচন্দ্র বোস আজাদ-হিন্দ ফৌজ গঠন করে ইংরেজদের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধ ঘোষণা করেন।

প্রায় দুশো বছর পরাধীন থাকার পর ১৯৪৭ সালের ১৫ই আগস্ট ভারতবর্ষ স্বাধীনতা লাভ করে। ভারতের প্রথম প্রধানমন্ত্রী জহরলাল নেহেরু জাতীয় পতাকা উত্তোলন করেন।

এই দিনটি আমাদের সকলের কাছে খুবই গর্বের দিন। আমরাও প্রতি বছর এই দিনে স্কুলে গিয়ে স্বাধীনতা দিবস উদ্‌যাপন করি ও স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামীদের উদ্দেশ্যে শ্রদ্ধা জানাই।

শিলাদিত্য রায়

Our precious Independence was achieved after battles bravely fought and through the supreme sacrifice of many Indians. The British who came on the pretext of trade, usurped our land and used oppressive measures to rule. People rose in revolt across the country led by Mangal Pandey. Some of the other leading freedom fighters included Khudiram Bose, Binay-Badal-Dinesh, Surya Sen, Bhagat Singh, and Matangini Hazra. Gandhiji's movement of non-violence and Netaji's Azad Hind Sena became bulwarks of India's War of Independence. After almost 200 years, Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Prime Minister, unfurled the National Flag of a free nation on 15 August 1947. We all celebrate this special day by paying homage to our freedom fighters and singing the National Anthem with immense pride.

Shiladitya Roy

Salute to our Paralympians



Fifty-four Indian athletes competed in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo and won a record tally of 19 medals. Our students are proud of their achievements.



Niloy Maiti



Pronay De



Deep Dalui



Subhomita Mondal



Akshat Dhuria



Deepanshu Paul



Dipannita Pati



Shuvangi Chakraborty

Art & Craft by our Students



Shaurya Mall



Atri Pal



Ankush Majhi



Tejas Sharma



Mayukh Ghosh



Ankush Muniya

দু-বছর পর অফ লাইনে ক্লাসের অভিজ্ঞতা

বিগত দু-বছর পর আমাদের স্কুল খুলতে চলেছে। এতে আমি ভীষণ খুশী। বিগত দু-বছর কোভিড-১৯ বা করোনার জন্য স্কুল বন্ধ রাখতে হয়েছিল। এই দু-বছর আমাদের online-এ সব কাজ হয়েছে যেমন পড়াশোনা, পরীক্ষা, অনুষ্ঠান। এতে আমরা একটি নতুন জিনিস শিখতে পেরেছি যে সবাই পাশাপাশি বা কাছাকাছি না থেকেও একসঙ্গে থাকা যায়। তবে এই দু-বছর যেগুলি খুব মিস করেছি সেগুলি হল শিক্ষিকাদের সঙ্গে সামনাসামনি দেখা হওয়া, বন্ধুদের সঙ্গে দেখা হওয়া, আর নতুন করে আবার আমাদের ব্যান্ডের গান-বাজনা শুরু করা। আর আমার পুরোনো ক্লাসরুম, কম্পিউটার রুম এবং বেশ কয়েকজন বন্ধু ও শিক্ষিকাদের সঙ্গে দেখা হলে ব্যক্তিগতভাবে আমার একটু বেশি ভালো লাগবে। যেমন শিক্ষিকাদের মধ্যে কাকলি আন্টি, সুচেতনা আন্টি, অনুশ্রী আন্টি, শম্পা আন্টি, মধুমিতা আন্টি; আমাদের মিউজিক স্যার, স্বরূপ স্যার, অভিজিত স্যার, প্রমুখদের সঙ্গে দেখা করতে চাই। বন্ধুদের মধ্যে দীপ, বিটু, অগ্নি, শুভাঙ্গী, উপশ্রুতি, তমরিয়ান এদের সঙ্গে দেখা করতে একটু বেশী ইচ্ছে হচ্ছে। এক কথায় বলতে গেলে এনাদের একটু বেশী মিস করি। আর তার সঙ্গে মিস করি আমাদের সকলের প্রিয় IICP ব্যান্ডকে।

দেবজ্যোতি রায়

Thrilled at the prospect of school reopening after a long gap of two years, **Debjoyoti Roy** writes about his experiences of online learning and celebrations. The concept of being together without being physically close was a novel experience for him and his peers. However, he missed meeting his favorite teachers, his best friends, his classroom, the computer room, and the school band which he loves the most!

স্কুল খোলার অপেক্ষা

আমি শুভাঙ্গী মিত্র। আমি আই. আই. সি. পি.-র NIOS বিভাগের অষ্টম শ্রেণীর ছাত্রী। বিগত 2019 সালের একেবারে শেষদিকে চীনের উহান শহরে এক ভয়ঙ্কর মারণ ভাইরাসের উৎপত্তি হয়েছিল। সেই ভাইরাস কোভিড-19 নামে পরিচিত, সেই কারণে সমগ্র বিশ্বে 'লকডাউন' প্রথার প্রচলন হয়েছিল। এর ফলে সমস্ত শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং কর্মসংস্থানগুলি বন্ধ হয়ে গিয়েছিল। পরিবর্তে 'Work From Home' ব্যবস্থার মাধ্যমে সবাই কাজ করতাম। এরপর কোভিড-19-র ২ বছর পর যখন আমাদের আই. আই. সি. পি. আবার খোলার সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়েছিল তখন আমার মনে আনন্দ হয়েছিল। কারণ, দীর্ঘ ২ বছর পর আবার স্কুলে গিয়ে আমি আমার বন্ধুদের সাথে ক্লাস করতে পারব, আন্টিদের এবং স্যারদের পড়াগুলো সামনাসামনি শুনে বুঝে নিতে পারব।

শুভাঙ্গী মিত্র

Shubhangi Mitra writes on how the deadly virus Covid 19, which emanated from the Wuhan district of China at the end of 2019, led to a global pandemic and subsequent lockdown of all institutions. Work from home became the norm for the next two years. With the reopening of school, she looks forward to going back to her class, meeting her friends, and learning with her teachers in person.

IICP আমার প্রিয় স্কুল। কারণ আমি স্কুল থেকে অনেক কিছু শিখতে পেরেছি। পড়াশোনার পাশাপাশি আমি শিখেছি, কি করে একা খেতে হয়, কি করে জামা পরতে হয়। আমার বন্ধুরা আমাকে অনেক সাহায্য করে। টিচাররা আমাদের এমন করে পড়ান যাতে আমরা তাড়াতাড়ি শিখতে পারি। I love my School.

অভিদীপ সাহা

Abhideep Saha loves his school that has taught him many life skills. Along with studies, he has learnt to eat and dress independently. He has received help from his friends and his teachers have enabled him to learn with ease.

मेरे जीवन का सफर

नमस्कार,

मैं पूनम बिन्द हूँ। मेरी उम्र 27 वर्ष है और मैंने ये 27 वर्ष व्हीलचेयर पर गुजारे हैं। मेरा यह सफर आसान नहीं था, पर मेरे दो परिवारों ने हर कदम पर मेरा साथ दिया।

मेरा पहला परिवार मेरे माता पिता और बहनें हैं। बचपन से लेकर आज तक उन्होंने हमेशा मेरा साथ दिया और आगे बढ़ने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया। मेरी शारीरिक सीमितता जानते हुए भी वे हमेशा मेरे साथ रहे, मुझे आगे बढ़ने का हौसला दिया। रास्ता आसान नहीं था, फिर भी मेरे परिवार ने, विशेष रूप से मेरी माताजी ने मेरा हौसला बढ़ाया।

मेरे माता पिता की वजह से ही मैं अपने दूसरे परिवार – IICP से मिल पाई। छः साल की उम्र में मैं अपने इस परिवार से जुड़ी, जब IICP में मेरा दाखिला हुआ। इस परिवार से मुझे बहुत कुछ मिला – शिक्षा, आत्मविश्वास और मेरी अलग पहचान। मुझे इतनी अच्छी शिक्षिकाएँ मिलीं जिनके मार्ग दर्शन से मैंने पढ़ाई के साथ नाटकों में भाग लेना, छोटे-छोटे लेख लिखना तथा विभिन्न विषयों पर अपने विचार प्रस्तुत करना भी सीखा। IICP में मुझे बहुत सारे प्यारे दोस्त मिले और इस तरह मैं आगे बढ़ती गई। पिछले साल मैंने NIOS बोर्ड से दसवीं की परीक्षा उत्तीर्ण की। इसका श्रेय मैं अपने दोनों परिवारों को देती हूँ। NIOS विभाग की सभी शिक्षिकाओं ने मेरा मार्गदर्शन किया।

आज मैं अपनी आगे की पढ़ाई की तैयारी कर रही हूँ। साथ ही IICP में केटरिंग की vocational ट्रेनिंग तथा मीडिया लैब में कम्प्यूटर प्रशिक्षण भी ले रही हूँ। आशा है इसकी सहायता से मैं जीवन में आत्मनिर्भर हो सकूँगी और अपने दोनों परिवारों की उम्मीदों पर खरी उतरूँगी।

पूनम बिन्द

Poonam's Journey

Poonam Bind has been a part of IICP since her childhood. She joined IICP's Centre for Special Education at the age of 6. Poonam is grateful to both her families biological and the IICP family for jointly nurturing her. She has passed her Class X from NIOS and represented IICP in various plays, debates, and other events. She is an active member of the Ankur Advocacy Group.

Students celebrated festivals and special occasions with great joy and enthusiasm, sharing information, greetings and messages.



Jashojit Paul



Anirban Pal



Niloy Maity



Nman Pandey



Debanjan Das



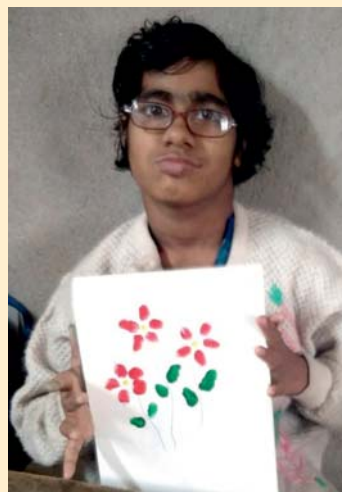
Ankush Majhi



Ankit Basu



Saraswati Puja at IICP



Sahanara Khatoun



Rittika Basak



Srija Sinha



Somdipto Chandra



Ivaan Samuel



Yudhajeet Goswami

News, Events, and Visitors

Summer Camp



The first ever virtual Summer Camp was a bona fide success! A total number of 62 students aged 13 to 18 years enjoyed various sessions including art and craft, science experiments, stories, non-fire cooking, and music. Naturalist Jiban Kishna Ray; stand-up comedian Hrittik Ghosh; popular actor Ditipriya Roy; and educationist Rubena Chatterjee were our Special Guests.





It was a proud moment for us when Mrs Uma Ahmad, Dr Sudha Kaul, and Dr Reena Sen were felicitated by the Progressive Education Techniques Society (The Teachers Centre) for their contribution as mentors and teachers par excellence.



Madhumita Dasgupta, Coordinator, National Resource Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, was a speaker at the prestigious TED X Chowringhee event. Orators from different walks of life shared their unique and inspiring stories. Madhumita shared her exhilarating experiences as a mentor to students who cannot use functional speech. She urged the audience to endorse the Right to Communication for all.



Paintings by our Adult Service users Debarati Banerjee and Somdipatonath Chandra were exhibited at the Nandalal Bose Art Gallery, ICCR

Visits from Sponsors



Students of St Xavier's College enjoy a fun morning with adults at IICP

*Amrita Nerkar from
The Kalpataru Trust, Mumbai
with the teachers of Junior
Academics II, CSE*



*Visit by the CSR team of
Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited*



*Cdr P R Hari, Chairman & Managing
Director of Garden Reach Shipbuilders
and Engineers Limited*



*Lipi Das, Additional General Manager (ER&A)
expresses her appreciation*



Performance by IICP students



Shreya Singh from the Centre for Special Education was one of four teenagers selected to speak on a podcast on *Indian Teens Living with Disability*. Organised by Mumbai-based, Trampoline Media, the episode was aired in March 2022. Shreya candidly expressed her views on a range of topics with confidence.



Users of Adult Services were vaccinated at medical camps held at IICP



***A Farewell Note:
Dr Madhuchchanda Kundu, Deputy Director, HRD (Training)***

How does one compress 36 eventful and action-packed years of learning and teaching, ups and downs, challenges and successes into one short article? From joining the Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy while still pursuing my PhD in 1986 to retiring as Deputy Director HRD (Training) in 2022, it has been a long and memorable innings in the organisation. I leave with mixed emotions and a bag full of memories to cherish for the rest of my life.

In 1986-87, the focus was on training our staff to manage the students in our special school. Some of the initial courses run by IICP included a training course for teachers, a short course on management of cerebral palsy, and a two-week course for community-based rehabilitation workers.

With awareness came the growing need to expand the scope of our training. IICP collaborated with the Adult Continuing Education and Extension, Jadavpur University to conduct a one-year PG Diploma in Special Education recognised by Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI); a course on Basic Management of Cerebral Palsy for medical practitioners; and a Home-Based Training Programme for children with cerebral palsy.

2002-03 saw the addition of the one-year diploma in Community-Based Rehabilitation and a BEd in Special Education (Degree) in collaboration with Jadavpur University, both recognised by RCI. In 2021, we initiated a collaboration with Sister Nivedita University to conduct certificate courses.

Over the years, we learnt that needs differ, situations vary; therefore, the objectives and priorities of teaching and methods of instruction also need to be revised in order to remain relevant. Today, our training is in sync with our mission. Courses are availed by graduate and post-graduate students, community workers, rehabilitation professionals, caregivers, care staff, members of affiliated and partner organisations, parents, and persons with disabilities. Placements and internship appeals come from students and professionals in diverse fields ranging from special education, social work, therapy, and community work to architecture, management, and law. The emphasis is on enhancing technical knowledge and contributing to the growth of human resources in the disability and development sectors.

Thank you IICP for making me a part of your large family. I am very grateful to my mentors for all the wonderful opportunities that have contributed to and enhanced my professional and personal growth. I end with sincere thanks to all my colleagues for their friendship and support, generously bestowed on me over the years. I shall always treasure that. God bless you all!



সেন্টার ফর স্পেশাল এডুকেশন-এর একজন শিক্ষিকা হিসেবে প্রণতি দাসের স্মৃতিচারণ



বিশেষভাবে সক্ষমদের শিক্ষাকেন্দ্রে দীর্ঘ ত্রিশ বছর শিক্ষকতার সুবাদে ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের কাছ থেকে পেয়েছি প্রচুর ভালোবাসা, শ্রদ্ধা ও ভরসা। আমি শুধুমাত্র তাদের জ্ঞানের আলো পৌঁছে দিয়েছি তাই নয়, তাদের থেকে শিখেছিও অনেক কিছু। একটা ঘটনার কথা বলি, যেটি আমার স্মৃতিতে উজ্জ্বল। ছেলেটির নাম সার্থক। সে কথা বলতে পারত না, আমার ইঙ্গিতে আর মুখের অভিব্যক্তিতে সবটাই বোঝাতো আমাদের। আমরাও খুব সহজেই তার বক্তব্যগুলো বুঝতে পারতাম। শিক্ষক হিসাবে বোঝাতাম যে একে অন্যের সাথে share করা কতটা জরুরি। সেভাবেই সার্থকও যখনই কোনো উপহার পেত, দাদার সঙ্গে ভাগ করে নিত। একবার স্কুলে ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের জন্য বিশেষ lunch-এর ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছিল। অন্য সময়ের মত প্যাকেট করে আসেনি। সার্থকের মা-ও সেই অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত ছিলেন। তিনি খাইয়ে দিচ্ছিলেন সার্থককে। কিন্তু সার্থক খেতে চাইছিল না, যদিও সবই তার পছন্দের খাবার ছিল। আমিও তার এই আচরণে অবাক

হয়েছিলাম। ওর সঙ্গে কথা বলে বুঝতে পারি ও দাদার জন্য খাবার নিতে পারবে না বলে খাচ্ছে না। আমি যখন বললাম যে টিফিন বক্সে করে দাদার জন্যও খাবার দিয়ে দেওয়া হবে, তখন সে আনন্দে খেতে শুরু করল। সার্থকের মা-ও বিস্মিত হলেন আমাদের বোঝাপড়া দেখে, এবং খুশী হলেন আমাদের পরস্পরের মধ্যে এই সংযোগ দেখে। এমন অনেক স্মৃতি ও বিশেষ মুহূর্তের অভিজ্ঞতা আমার জীবনের অমূল্য সম্পদ হয়ে থাকবে।

প্রণতি দাস

Pranoti Das looks back on her years as a special educator at the Centre for Special Education

As a special educator at CSE, I have received much love and affection, respect and trust from the children. In my 30 years of teaching, if I have imparted knowledge to my students, I have also learnt and gained from them. An incident that has remained etched in my memory is of a boy called Sarthak who was non-verbal, and used gestures and facial expressions to communicate with us. We were soon able to follow exactly what he wanted to convey. As teachers, we used to tell the children it was important to share with others. So, whenever Sarthak received a treat or gift in class, we encouraged him to keep some of it for his brother, which he did happily. Once there was a special lunch treat for all the students and Sarthak's mother who had come for the event was trying to feed him. She was baffled by his refusal to eat, that too a meal of his favourite items. I also tried to gauge the reason behind his strange behaviour. Then it occurred to me Sarthak wanted to share some of it with his brother. When I told him that I would pack some in a tiffin box for his brother, he immediately opened his mouth for his mother to feed him. His mother was a little surprised at the level of understanding I had developed with her son but was also happy to see our bonding. There are many such memories of special moments that I will treasure all my life.

Remembering Raja Sen



Raja with his IICP family

When I think of Raja, a whole lifetime of memories come to me.

I knew Raja Sen for almost four decades; first as a student in IICP and then as a colleague. I saw him grow from a child to a young adult. In the course of my work, I visited his family and worked with them. Raja had strong family bonds. He was fond of his cousins and extended family who were in regular touch with him. I admired the fact that despite his limitations, Raja was keen to be as independent as possible. Raja loved to read the newspapers. He had strong political opinions and enjoyed discussions on political issues. He liked to go for outings and loved eating street food. Raja was my first computer teacher, the one who helped me get over my fear of using computers. Though he was very happy to get a job with IICP, he would have preferred to go out and work. Unfortunately, Raja had to face many ups and downs in his life. He lost both parents one after another as a young adult. However, he was very close to his elder sister and received great support from her through his life.

Sadly, IICP lost a bright young life far too early. May God bless you Raja and may your soul rest in peace.

Sujata Parekh
Member, Governing Body

The news of Raja Sen passing away evoked a flood of memories of an association that spanned over 31 years. Sadly, due to health and travel restrictions, we could not meet for the last couple of years.

When I joined IICP in 1990, I had no knowledge about disability but soon learnt a great deal while working in the organisation. In the early days, we had a very small computer room where my colleague Swati Chakraborty not only took classes for our students but also did other computer-related work. I had the opportunity to assist her in regular administrative jobs. I then observed

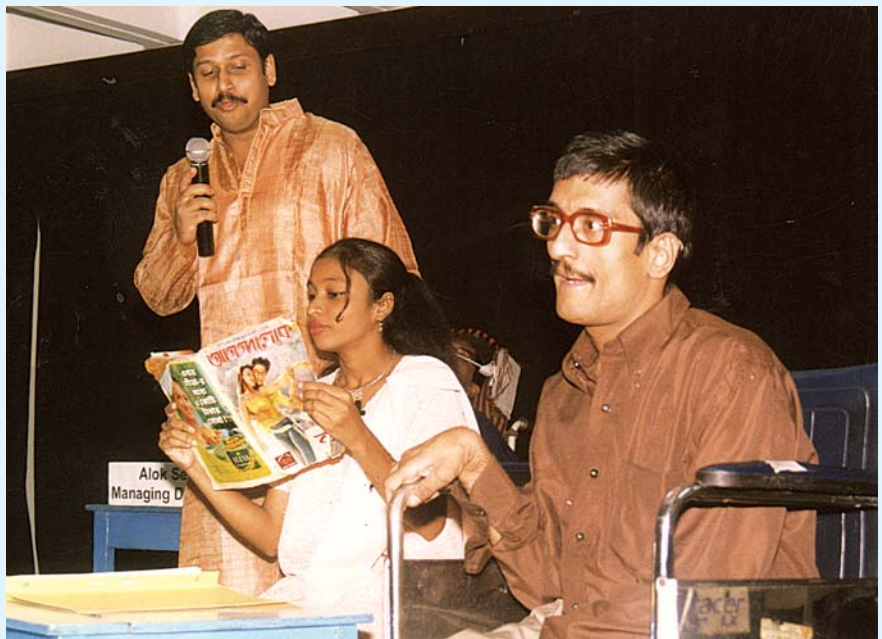
how Raja Sen, a bright young student, used a unique keyguard that prevented his finger from sliding off the keyboard while typing. Years later, Raja was employed in the Administrative and IT Department as an Electronic Data Processing assistant.

In spite of his physical limitations, Raja was most particular about office rules! 'Anshuda, please sign for me in the attendance register' was a regular request every morning. He was a conscientious co-worker and submitted flawless work. A strong grasp of computer skills and proficiency in English communication made him a valued colleague. His dedication and sincerity to the organisation was greatly appreciated by all the members.

I formed a close bond with Raja at work and monitored his activities. We had frequent discussions during our break time, and exchanged news about our families and other matters. He would express great concern about his parents and family, a topic that would also crop up at the interactive counselling sessions he attended with Mrs Sujata Parekh.

I bid farewell to a much-loved colleague and friend. Rest in peace, Raja. Your friends in IICP, especially the ones in the Admin Department, will miss you greatly.

Anshu Chowdhury
Sr Professional, Admin



Raja's stage performance with colleagues

Happy to be back where we belong...



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