

CONVICTION

(You and the Disabled)

UDIS Forum

Use their Skills * Light their Lives

(A network of parents, persons with disabilities, professionals, and voluntary organisations for facilitating employment and empowerment of persons with disabilities)

First Annual Report

2007

With support from

cbm

together we can do more





INTROSPECTION

“Networking” is a key strategy adopted at all levels to bring out the best. When the society is generally accustomed to witness the emergence of new non-governmental organisations and institutions for persons with disabilities, the UDIS Forum wanted to be a catalyst in building bridges between all potential stakeholders in the field of disability and determined not to develop the Forum as an institution.

The name of the Forum also conveys succinct messages. UDIS means “**You** and the **Disabled**” referring to “You” as the society. It is the belief that the society at large consisting of its people can play a significant role for the betterment of the lives of persons with disabilities. Another meaning is “**Understanding Disability**”, thereby realizing that “disability is not inability.”

While we were looking for a title for the Annual Report, a young person with disability remarked that the Forum is all about Conviction and we thought the term best describes our philosophy of work too. The Forum always says that one strong conviction is better than bundles of opinions and therefore, we decided to use this title for the annual report of 2007. We have been convinced with the network concept and we simply adopted this in letter and spirit in expanding services for persons with disabilities and you can assess the results through this annual report. In order to give shape to our conviction, CBM Germany, which is the largest organisation in the field of disability in the world, through its regional office in Bangalore, came forward to support the Forum's multi-pronged activities. Below the logo of CBM, a sentence “together we can do more” is written and this in fact is the strategy of the UDIS Forum. A big thanks to CBM for helping the Forum to realize its vision and mission.

The annual report in the following pages describes how the Forum established the network concept in the disability sector. Please allow us to present the types of schemes the Forum initiated in 2007 and the results obtained.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M.N.G. Mani'.

Dr. M.N.G. Mani
President, UDIS Forum

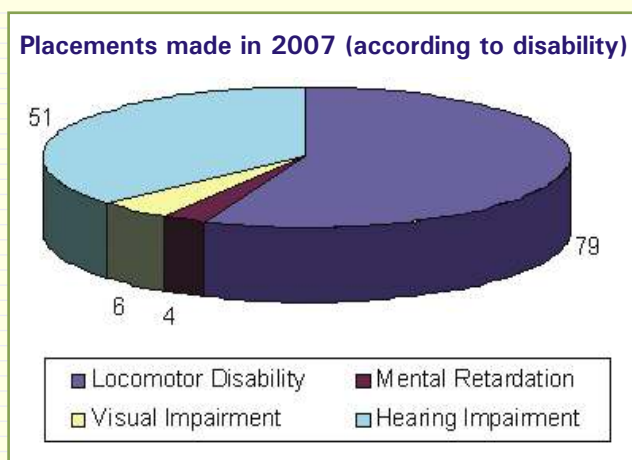
EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE PROGRAMME (EGP)

Job Placement-A multi-dimensional task

Finding jobs for persons with disabilities depends on various key aspects. Firstly, the industry, secondly the nature of job, thirdly the skills of persons with disabilities, and fourthly the availability of suitable jobs for their qualifications. In addition, willingness of the parents to send the disabled individuals for job, accessibility issues, etc., are also concerns. The Forum decided to work in close collaboration with the district employment exchange and also went through the vacancy columns of newspapers to find out the industries looking for trained human resources.

Way ahead of targets

After one year of dedicated and determined work of the staff, we take in pride that 140 persons have been placed in various kinds of jobs. The earning of the individuals varies from Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 12,000 depending on their qualifications, skills and nature of work. Though we fixed a target of 100 placements for the year 2007, we could find jobs for 140, most of whom possessed lower educational qualifications. There were some uneducated disabled persons too who were placed in industries. Surpassing our own targets during the first year of our initiative is in fact a pleasant learning experience.



Need-based pre-employment training

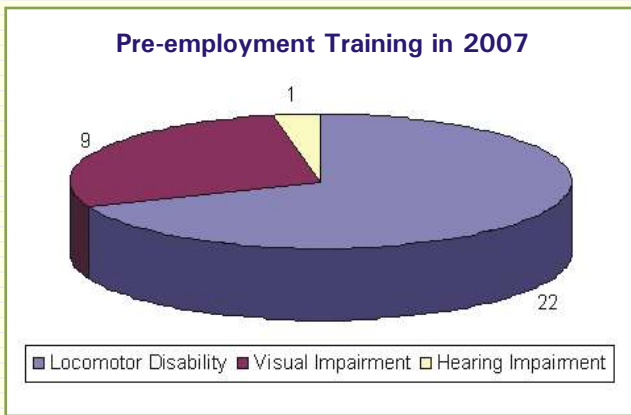
It is true that in most cases, the educational qualification of the individual alone is not gaining successful employment and the companies expect additional skills in communication, ability to work in team, mobility, use of technology for administrative jobs, etc., and therefore, the UDIS Forum also organised a number of need-based pre-employment training courses or arranged training in other organisations.



Training on Interview facing techniques

For example, eight persons were sent for training at the Government Polytechnic for Women, where training activities are conducted for persons with disabilities, 10 persons were provided training on information technology through the IT Centre of the Cheran Region Christian Society for the Disabled, and 4 persons underwent a course on Spoken English organised by Prof. Vijayaraghavan, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Training on 'Interview facing' was also organised for disabled persons. 32 persons with disabilities received pre-employment training during 2007.

The experience of 2007 would be helpful in addressing the issues both at the training level for persons with disabilities and job placement in industries. Employment sector can't be viewed in isolation and it needs to be linked to appropriate



school education in the case of persons with disabilities so that there is a smooth transition from education to employment. This is something the Forum would concentrate in the future. The Forum places on record its gratitude to many companies (list at the last page) which came forward to provide employment.

Support from the District Employment Exchange

The unstinted support of the District Employment Exchange is one of the determining factors for the success of the employment guidance programme. When we were thinking of a location for the employment counselling administrative unit, there were suggestions that we should be in close proximity with persons with disabilities and therefore, we opened the unit just in front of the District Employment Exchange.



Mrs. Latha, Regional Deputy Director of Employment addressing a meeting of persons with disabilities

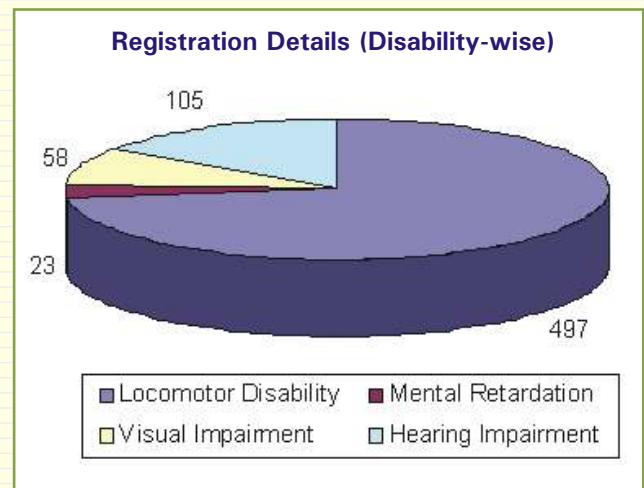


Employment Counselling Centre inaugurated to augment placement services

This unit also registered persons with disabilities for employment in private sectors and as of today, 683 persons with disabilities have registered with the Forum.



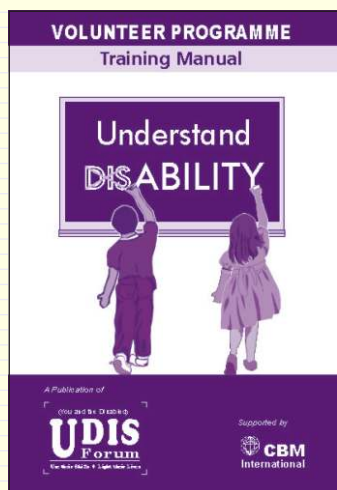
A section of persons with disabilities attending an orientation programme



YOUTH VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME (YVP)

Orientation Programme for Volunteers

The UDIS Forum decided to rope in the Departments of Social Work of Higher Education Institutions for activities related to disability management. The colleges included during the first phase were Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science, CMS College of Arts and Science, Krishna College of Science and Arts, Narayanaguru College of Arts and Science, PSG College of Arts and Science and Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College. Originally we wanted to take a few volunteers from the M.A. / M.S.W. course in social work from each college to train them as master trainers to organise disability management programmes for school students but the first programme organised for this purpose at the Divyodhaya Hall on September 14, 2007 had overwhelming responses. 157 post-graduate students turned up for the event and this really ignited our efforts to go all out to use the social work students for disability welfare. A training manual for the Volunteer Programme was also developed. This manual provides comprehensive coverage of the



nature of visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental retardation, and locomotor disability and also offers suggestions on how the youth of the country can actively involve in disability related work.

Intensive Training on Disability Management

Following the initial sensitisation training, we short-listed about 60 post-graduate students and provided an intensive training for two days on nuances of disability management. This event was organised at the Bishop Appasamy College on 11-12 October 2007. Among the resolutions, the Colleges decided to adopt 10 schools for each college and prepare at least 100 student volunteers from each school to involve in disability related activities. Though we wanted to complete these training activities in schools in 2007 itself, the semester examinations for the college students in November and subsequent half-yearly examinations for school students in December delayed these school-based events. The colleges have identified schools for the Volunteer Programme and the activities will be organised in early 2008. The training manual has been translated into Tamil and each school student trained through the volunteer programme will be provided a copy of the manual to use in the future. We will be working with more colleges in the future.



Ms. T. Suganthi, Asst. Manager (ICICI Bank) and Vice-President, UDIS Forum addressing the volunteers



Section of Social work volunteers of Intensive training course on Disability Management

The Colleges and the UDIS Forum also ventured into other diversification of activities. Each college took up special activities pertaining to disability management, the details of which are provided in the following sections.

District Level Oratorical Contest

The CMS College of Arts and Science and the UDIS Forum joined together to organise a district level oratorical contest for school students on "How I can help in the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities" on 29 October 2007 which was participated by 40 short-listed contestants. The Managing Trustee of the College Shri C.K.V Nambiar inaugurated the competition in the presence of the Principal, staff members of the college and the officials of the UDIS Forum. The prize winners of this event are as follows:

Competition in Tamil

- I Prize :** Miss A. Shanthipriya, TPR Middle School, Perur, Coimbatore
- II Prize :** Miss R. Lokidhakathi, R.S. Puram Boys High School, R.S. Puram, Coimbatore
- III Prize:** Miss M. Gayathiri, Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Ashokapuram, Coimbatore

Competition in English

- I Prize :** Miss Prejasha, CMS Matriculation school, Ganapathy, Coimbatore.
- II Prize :** Miss Sheethapatil, Sachidanandha Matriculation School, Mettupalayam.



Inauguration of Oratorical Contest

- III Prize :** Miss Shaini, CMS Matriculation School, Ganapathy, Coimbatore.



A prize winner of Oratorical contest

The best prize winning speeches have been video tapped and the UDIS Forum is proposing to use these materials under the programme "Peer-to-Peer Orientation" to sensitise fellow students from the schools to know about disability management.

State Level Essay writing Competitions for Social Work Students

The Narayanaguru College of Arts and Science and the UDIS Forum are collaborating to conduct a state level essay competition (in English) on "Disability Management" for the students of social work departments of Arts and Science Colleges in Tamil Nadu. The Krishna College of Science and Arts is organising the state level essay competition on this subject in Tamil. Each college is expected to send only limited entries after doing a college level screening and the final entries should be sent before 9 January 2008.

The prize winning entries will be given cash prizes of Rs. 5000, Rs. 3000, and Rs. 2000 for the I, II, and III prizes respectively on 12 January 2008, on the occasion of the National Youth Day. The Forum and the colleges will also bring out a publication containing select essays which could be used by social work students in the future.

Project work for social work students

The social work students have to work with socially relevant organisations for two days every week for about 3 months during their study period to acquaint themselves with the nature of work in the social sector. Following the discussions with the six colleges during the first phase of the Volunteer Programme, few colleges have come forward to send students to work with the UDIS Forum for gaining experience in placement of persons with disabilities in industries. This is a wonderful opportunity to utilize the human resources and therefore, the UDIS Forum has prepared a training package for these post-graduate students on how to find out jobs in industries, how to convince employers to provide jobs to disabled individuals and the mechanisms of organising enrichment programmes to ensure successful placement. The students have been given a minimum target of 3 placements over a period of 3 months and this would definitely recognise the colleges and the students themselves for their work in the social sector.

State level Seminar on Disability Management

The success of working with social work students in Coimbatore motivated us to organise a state level seminar on this subject to involve social work departments of other colleges in the state of Tamil Nadu. The PSG College of Arts and Science came forward to conduct this activity as a part of its Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The title of the seminar is **“Disability Management: Social Work Implications and Interventions”** which will be addressed by specialists in disability, professionals, and lecturers of social work

departments of colleges. The call for papers has already gone to the colleges and the seminar will take place on 30-31 January 2008. The proceedings of the seminar will also be published for the benefit of other colleges.

Partnership to reach out

The Department of Social Work of the Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College, Pollachi and the UDIS Forum have entered into a partnership for carrying out disability management activities in the following specific areas during December 2007 to mid-2008.

Facilitating successful placement for at least 30 persons with disabilities in the Pollachi region during the said period with the help of social work students.

Conducting orientation programme on disability management for schools

Starting parents' units, under the aegis of the Saarathy Pammac in Pollachi, Oddanchathiram, and neighbourhood to support rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

Organising a half-day orientation programme for small scale industries in Pollachi region

The college is also proposing to introduce rehabilitation related courses for which the Forum will provide technical guidance.

So, our network with the colleges is growing day by day and our mission is to mobilize youth power for the betterment of rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. The mind of the youth is so fertile and the seeds sowed on disability issues would have long-term effects.

**The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched.
They must be felt within the heart.**

- Helen Keller

MARGA-SCHULZE SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR PROMOTING HIGHER EDUCATION OF BLIND GIRLS (MASS)

Dr. Hans-Eugen Schulze is a retired judge of the federal courts of Germany and a man of repute. He is himself blind and his sheer determination helped him receive the top laurels in the society. Realising the difficulties blind women encounter to come up in life, he created a foundation by name, “**Marga-Schulze Foundation**” (Marga his wife) and started supporting adult blind girls in Africa and Asia to pursue higher education. This scholarship scheme is implemented through the CBM and the UDIS Forum took responsibility for implementing the scheme in South India whereas the All India Confederation of the Blind (AICB) is responsible for North India. The Forum started swift action during the beginning of the academic year 2007-2008, contacted many colleges to admit blind girls for higher education and worked with organisations of the blind, educational

institutions and parents to encourage blind girls to pursue higher education. General guidelines have been formulated for the implementation of the scheme in the entire country, and as per the scheme, a student of the graduate level will receive a merit scholarship of Rs. 12,000/- per annum and the amount of scholarship for students pursuing Bachelors of Education Course (B.Ed.) and post-graduate level are Rs. 15,000/- and Rs. 18,000/- respectively. 61 blind girls have been selected under the programme for the year 2007-2008 and the details are given in the table. The applications are being processed through the colleges to provide them the merit scholarship. Special efforts are underway to encourage more blind girls from all southern states to pursue higher education in the years to come.



*Dr. Mrs. Saroja Prabhakaran, Vice-chancellor, Avinashilingam University for Women
addressing blind girls and their parents / guardians at an orientation programme*

Table 1 : List of candidates selected for the Marga-Schulze Scholarship

S.No.	Name of the Student	Course	Institution	State
1	S. Kavitha	I B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
2	P. Jeyanthi	I B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
3	K. Baby	I B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
4	M. Poonkothai	I B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
5	R. Nalaeram	I B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
6	L. Kemil Fernando	I B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
7	B. Antony Selvi	I B.A.	Ethiraj College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
8	C. Jeevamani	I B.A.	Government Arts College, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
9	R. Kameshwari	I B.A.	Holy Cross College, Trichy	Tamil Nadu
10	K. Vijayalakshmi	I B.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
11	M. Deepa	I B.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
12	P. Senbagavalli	I B.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
13	S. Deepa	I B.A.	Meenakshi College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
14	R. Nithya	I B.A.	Meenakshi College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
15	K.V. Vigneswari	I B.A.	Presidency College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
16	C. Sasikala	I B.A.	Presidency College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
17	S. Rajakumari	I B.A.	Presidency College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
18	R. Kalaivani	I B.A.	Presidency College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
19	M. Radha	I B.A.	Presidency College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
20	C. Vijayalakshmi	I B.A.	Presidency College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
21	M. Mariyaselvam	I B.A.	Queen Mary's College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
22	P. Pappakani	I B.A.	S V N College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
23	K. Annalakshmi	I B.A.	S V N College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
24	N. Parasakthi	I B.A.	S V N College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
25	S. Asha	I B.A.	Desheeya Vidyalaya Arts and Science College, Shimoga	Karnataka
26	E. Farhana Banu	I B.A.	Jyothi Nivas College, Bangalore	Karnataka
27	A.K. Ponmari	II B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
28	K. Maheswari	II B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
29	B. Tamilarasi	II B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
30	L. Sudha	II B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
31	J. Jothimani	II B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
32	R. Tamilselvi	II B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
33	K. Shanmugasundari	II B.A.	Holy Cross College, Trichy	Tamil Nadu
34	A. Sentamilselvi	II B.A.	Kandasamy College for Women, Cuddalore	Tamil Nadu
35	C. Kalaivani	II B.A.	Madras Christian College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
36	K. Sumeetha	II B.A.	Queen Mary's College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
37	M. Murugeswari	II B.A.	S V N College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
38	P. Radha	II B.A.	Senthamil College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
39	G. Mahalakshmi	II B.A.	Senthamil College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
40	A. Mariyamerin	II B.A.	Stella Marys College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
41	V. Misha Vincent	II B.A.	St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva	Kerala
42	R. Palarasakumari	III B.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
43	P. Sheela	III B.A.	L N G College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
44	B. Vedhavalli	III B.A.	Madras Christian College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
45	C. Amy Mary Sudhana	III B.A.	Meenakshi College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
46	S.T. Anusha	III B.A.	Meenakshi College, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
47	R. Sumathi	III B.A.	Yadhava College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
48	L. Roothmani	III B.A.	Loyala College, Vijayawada	Andhra Pradesh
49	M. Anjumkhan	I M.A.	Avinashilingam University for Women, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
50	M. Arulmary	I M.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
51	P. Asaikani	II M.A.	S V N College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
52	L. Mariammal	II M.A.	S V N College, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
53	P. Mari	II M.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
54	V. Pavun	II M.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
55	P. Rani	II M.A.	Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai	Tamil Nadu
56	R. Palaniammal	B.Ed. (Spl.Edn.)	NIVH, Chennai	Tamil Nadu
57	A. Joice Issabella	B.Ed.	CSI Bishop Appasamy College, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
58	K. Maheswari	B.Ed.	Govt. College of Education, Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
59	L. Eleeza	PUC	St. Charles Pre University College, Bangalore	Karnataka
60	A. Sheeba Bai	PUC	St. Philomena's P.U. College, Mysore	Karnataka
61	L. Anurin D.Souza	Teacher Training	Sri Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind, Bangalore	Karnataka

Skill development programmes

Besides providing scholarship, skill development programmes are also organised for blind girls from time to time. The Avinashilingam University for Women conducted training activities on information and communication technology, orientation and mobility and braille for 14 girl students of higher education from 1 October to 21 December 2007.

A similar training programme for the students of the Chennai region was organised at the IT training centre of the Keelottivakkam Grama Sangha from 19 to 28 November 2007 in which 17 students participated.

An independent evaluation of the IT skills of the students will be organised in the near future and those students who show proficiency in using computers independently will be provided laptops with screen reader software which will enable them to go to regular classrooms like any other student and become independent as they can take notes on their own, prepare term papers, and also use laptops for taking examinations.

The blind girls of this scholarship programme feel that it is a splendid opportunity for them to

show their true potential. Thanks to the great vision of Dr. Schulze, who is currently 85 years old and thinking non-stop about empowerment of blind girls in Africa and Asia. We also express our sincere gratitude to all the higher education institutions which have opened doors for the higher education of blind girls.

Liaison at regional levels

As higher education services are expanding, the Forum administers the activities through reputed organisations for persons with disabilities in the respective regions. The Indian Association for the Blind, Madurai has accepted responsibility to coordinate higher education activities and conduct leadership programmes for the students enrolled in colleges in the southern states of Tamil Nadu whereas the Keelottivakkam Grama Sangha for the Disabled will organise activities for students from the eastern districts. General orientation programmes for all students and capacity building activities for students in the western districts of Tamil Nadu will be organised at the Avinashilingam University for Women. Regional liaison centres will also be located in Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Cochin in 2008.



Blind girls taught mobility



Blind girls learning IT skills at Keelottivakkam Grama Sangha

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORK WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (TENNGO)

The strength of the UDIS Forum is that it does not want to become an institute and in turn wants to work with the existing institutions to optimize services for persons with disabilities. A few initiatives showed results and therefore, it is mobilising the support of voluntary organisations to work together to compliment the services of each other. Some key activities in this front are as follows:

Collaboration with Project “Empowered” of Dr. PGV Charitable Trust

Dr. PG Viswanathan Charitable Trust, which is doing significant work in the field of hearing impairment and ear research through the renowned Vikram Hospital in Coimbatore desired to venture into rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and the opportunity was well utilized by the UDIS Forum. Both organisations discussed the project in detail and named it as “**Employment Opportunities with Education and Rehabilitation to the Disabled**” (Empowered). As per the collaborative project, 20 hearing impaired persons, parents, and persons with locomotor disabilities will be trained in costume designing using the state of the art machines every six months at the Dr. PGV Training Centre and the UDIS Forum will facilitate employment for the



Trainees at work in Project ‘Empowered’

trained clients, besides assisting in the training activities. This centre alone will be able to prepare 40 persons with disabilities and parents every year for employment in the booming garment industry. This is a classic example of how the passion of Non-Governmental Organisations to work in the area of disability can be put into a reality by networks that are willing to work with all.

Vetri Padigal project of the Siloam Hospital

The Siloam Eye Hospital, Coimbatore has set up a rehabilitation centre for persons with visual impairment to produce and market all types of candles. The Forum assisted the organisation in training the blind clients. The hospital is taking care of the marketing of the products and this is a welcome gesture as marketing is one of the most difficult works in the self-employment of persons with disabilities.



Inauguration of Vetripadigal project at Siloam Hospital

Future collaboration with NGOs

In order to share joint responsibility, the UDIS Forum has evolved a scheme to offer training support to such voluntary organisations, thereby the voluntary organisations set-up infrastructure for disability related work and the UDIS Forum provides support for training activities of the

clients in terms of nominal stipend, providing technical assistance, and also in meeting part of the training cost. The Forum believes that this approach gives an opportunity to work more and achieve the targets in time with more efficiency. The TENNGO scheme will be introduced in other parts of Tamil Nadu too in the future.

Summit of Voluntary Organisations

With an objective of encouraging synergy among voluntary organisations working in the area of disability in Coimbatore district, a summit was organised on November 20, 2007 to discuss the latest trends in disability work, strategies to work together, stock taking of present services, etc., which was presided over by Mr. Subramania Siva, Retired Joint Deputy Director (IB). Representatives from 24 voluntary organisations attended the day-long meeting and reiterated the need of similar meetings from time to time. The meeting revealed that many voluntary organisations, though doing good work for persons with disabilities, were not aware of the



Mrs. Parvathy Viswanath, Member, Tamil Nadu Disabled Welfare Board addressing the Summit of Voluntary organisations

schemes available from the Government. It was also opined that training activities may be jointly organised on themes such as managing disability services, proposal writing, etc. The enthusiasm shown by the NGO summit resulted in a mechanism to keep them abreast with the developments in disability field and also to share expertise with other organisations to facilitate synergy. The pinnacle of this meet was the unanimous suggestion to launch a comprehensive website for information dissemination.

Disability Alliance of Voluntary Organisations (DAVO) website

In response to the recommendations of the NGO Summit organised on 20 November 2007, the UDIS Forum with the support of M/s. AES Technologies (I) Pvt. Ltd., a leading web designing company of international repute, developed a website by name www.davo.in and it was formally launched by Mr. J.J. Jesuraj, District Disabled Rehabilitation Officer, Coimbatore on 27 December 2007. Disability Alliance of Voluntary Organisation (DAVO) is an information sharing platform for voluntary organisations involved in providing services to persons with disabilities.



Mr. Jesuraj, Mr. B. Balaji, MD, AES Technologies and Mr. Subramania Siva at the Website launch ceremony

We foresee a day when the organisations serving persons with disability in the country work in harmony, complement the efforts of each other, exchange expertise, and address both the horizontal and vertical development of services for persons with disabilities covering early intervention, parents' education, primary education, secondary education, vocational education, employment, advocacy, prevention of disabilities, to name a few. We are optimistic that the DAVO Website is just a beginning in this attempt to strengthen network among the Voluntary Organisations.

DISABLED PEOPLES' ORGANISATIONS AND CORPORATE NETWORK (DPOC)

"Nothing about us without Us" is a growing strategy in disability work and therefore, the voluntary organisations and Governments need to involve organisations of persons with disabilities wherever possible as they are the real change agents for developing a positive image about disability. The UDIS Forum itself demonstrated this concept as six of the nine office bearers are disabled themselves and representing disabled peoples' organisations. The Forum is also serving as a bridge to link DPOs with Corporate Houses to facilitate employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Some noteworthy initiatives in this direction are as follows:

Self-Employment Initiative for Mentally Retarded Persons

The Saarathy Pammac is an organisation consisting of parents of children with mental retardation. As employment for these persons is difficult in industries, self-employment opportunities involving parents are feasible. The UDIS Forum explored the possibility of creating such opportunities with the help of corporate houses and in this respect, the gesture of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare Limited (GSKCH) is noteworthy. The company installs Horlicks vending machines which provide

substantial income to the persons managing the unit and the company agreed to the idea of entrusting responsibility of manning a vending unit to a mentally retarded adult and his/her parent. The Saarathy Pammac and the Forum along with the representatives of the company are identifying schools and public enterprises for setting up these units and the first unit established in Alvernia Matriculation Higher Secondary School in Coimbatore has showed significant success. Special thanks are due to the management of the school for taking the lead. A parent and the mentally retarded child are able to make an income of not less than Rs. 150/- per day and this concept has potential for providing employment to thousands of persons with mental retardation. The UDIS Forum and Saarathy Pammac have started appealing to educational institutions to adopt this concept to open up self-employment opportunities for persons with mental retardation. In the future, the Forum will also be working with similar corporate houses to involve them in disability work.

Job-training for persons with locomotor disabilities

CALIBER is an organisation consisting of persons with locomotor disabilities working for their rights



Horlicks vending machine in Alvernia Matric. Hr. Sec. School



During the inauguration of the training programme

and employment opportunities. Discussions with the members of the organisation revealed that most of the persons with locomotor disabilities aspire for training in computer applications as that would enhance their job opportunities. The UDIS Forum has helped this organisation to set-up a training facility which was inaugurated by Sri Subramania Siva, Retired Joint Deputy Director (IB) on 27 December 2007. The Caliber and similar DPO organisations for persons with disabilities will be provided capacity building training to network with Corporate houses.

Developing adult literacy among persons with visual impairment

Adult illiteracy is an increasing problem worldwide and the problem is so acute in the case of persons with visual impairment. 2009 is the year of the bicentennial celebrations of the inventor of the braille system Louis Braille and efforts are on in developing countries to provide literacy to adult blind persons who did not have an opportunity to go to school in the past for various reasons. The UDIS Forum in collaboration with the Association for the Rights of the Visually Challenged (ARVIC) and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) in Coimbatore is preparing a

project to conduct classes for the adult blind persons to learn braille. The ARVIC and the NFB will identify illiterate blind adults and the UDIS Forum will conduct special camps to develop literacy skills. The collaboration will also be used for company visits by persons with visual impairment to identify jobs for employment and recording of lessons for college going students.

Collaboration with Associations of Deaf Persons

The UDIS Forum in collaboration with the Associations for the Deaf is exploring the possibilities of organising job fair and sports for persons with hearing impairment. Meetings with organisations for the deaf in Coimbatore and Tiruppur were organised on 15 December 2007 and we are confident that this collaboration will flourish to help more persons with hearing impairment.

Therefore, the UDIS Forum strongly believes that the parents and disabled peoples' organisations should be actively involved for augmenting rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.

Disability Alliance of Voluntary Organisations
 Website Maintained by UDIS (You and the Disabled) Forum
 to network between voluntary organisations serving persons with disabilities
 Powered by AES Technologies

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What is DAVO?
Disability Alliance of Voluntary Organisations is an information sharing platform of voluntary organisations involved in providing services to persons with disabilities. The DAVO also insists on bringing service providers together from time to time to know about current trends in disability services, initiatives of Governments and international organisations to empower persons with disabilities... [read more >>](#)

Institutions recently added

- Bharathi Rehabilitation Centre
- Coimbatore Spastic Trust
- KRISH
- Neyam Special School
- Sri Prashanthi Academy
- Star Special School
- Vidya Vikasini Opportunity School

UDIS Forum
 Website maintained by the UDIS

Current developments

Emergence of CONSERVE
 The UDIS Forum has just initiated setting up of a professional body called "CONSERVE" meaning CONSULTATION in SPECIAL EDUCATION, REHABILITATION, and VOCATIONAL EDUCATION wherein a pool of resource persons will be available for providing professional assistance to organisations which require such assistance. [more >>](#)

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Home page of DAVO Website

ADVOCACY IN DISABILITY (ADIS)

Besides facilitating employment opportunities, the UDIS Forum is actively involved in advocacy issues in disability welfare. Awareness creation is an ongoing activity at all levels to influence positive attitude of the society and in this context, the Forum is working with national organisations to raise disability issues in all places. While highly appreciative of the efforts of the Government of India to promote education for all children, the Forum reiterates the need for special drives to include children with disabilities in the mainstream as education for all in any country cannot become a reality without the inclusion of children with disabilities. The Forum collaborated with the Tamil Nadu State Coordination Committee of Parivaar, the national body of parents of persons with mental retardation, and the West Asia Region of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment and conducted awareness rallies in 9 districts in the State of Tamil Nadu highlighting the need for

education of children with disabilities. The inaugural rally was flagged off by Mr. V.K. Jeyakodi, Commissioner of the Disabled, Government of Tamil Nadu in Chennai on 8 September 2007. The Commissioner of the Disabled sent a formal letter to all the District Disabled Rehabilitation Offices in the districts of Chennai, Coimbatore, Dindigul, Erode, Karur, Krishnagiri, Tiruchirapalli, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin at the request of the organizers to cooperate in making the rallies successful.



Mr. Jeyakodi, flagged off the awareness rally in Chennai



Mrs. Subbulakshmi Jegadeesan, Minister of State, MSJE, with disabled children in Erode

The rallies evoked tremendous awareness about the issues dealing with the education of children with disabilities and participated by parents in large numbers. In the human chain organised in Erode, Hon. Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Mrs. Subbulakshmi Jegadeesan greeted the participating children.



Participants in Krishnagiri



The District Collector with disabled children in Karur



State Ministers Smt. Poongothai Aladi Aruna and Sri T.P.M. Moideen Khan participating in the rally in Tirunelveli

In Tirunelveli, the Hon. State Ministers Smt. Poongothai Aladi Aruna, Minister for Social Welfare and Sri T.P.M. Moideen Khan, Minister for Environment, Sports and Youth Welfare, attended the rally. In Krishnagiri, the parents of children with mental retardation turned up along with the public. In Karur, a human chain was organised. The final concluding rally was flagged off by Dr. Neeraj Mittal, District Collector, Coimbatore on 19 October 2007. More than 1500 children with disabilities, teachers, social work students of colleges and parents participated in this impressive rally. More than 10,000 persons participated in these rallies in the entire State and they have certainly created an awareness and demand for education of children with disabilities. The Forum places on record its



Participants in Dindigul

gratitude to Mr. S. Samarasapandian, President, Tamil Nadu State Coordination Committee of Parivaar and also the Joint Secretary of UDIS Forum for coordinating the rallies.

Awareness creation in the future

On the occasion of the concluding rally in Coimbatore on 19 October 2007, the UDIS Forum convened a meeting of the parents' organisations in Tamil Nadu. Representatives from Chennai, Coimbatore, Erode, Dharmapuri, Karur, Krishnagiri, Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli discussed at length the measures to be undertaken to create a demand for the education of children with disabilities. The parents' organisations will be taking active role in the implementation of early intervention services for children with disabilities to facilitate their smooth transition into primary education.



The District Collector, Coimbatore, greets a child at the concluding rally



Participants of the rally with the District Collector in Thoothukudi

OTHER EVENTS

Celebration of the World Disability Day

The Forum joined hands with the District Rehabilitation Centre in celebrating the World Disability Day on 3 December 2007. It arranged most of the prizes for children with disabilities distributed on this important day. The UDIS Forum is glad that the United Nations announced "Decent Works for Persons with Disabilities" as the theme of the World Disability Day of 2007 laying emphasis on the employment of persons with disabilities. Though education coverage is increasing for children with disabilities in India, it is true that less than 1% of persons with disabilities have any access to employment. It is the wish of the Forum that more organisations working for persons with disabilities in the future venture into the employment sector too so that they lead an independent life.

Visit of Sabriye Tenberken



The UDIS Forum facilitated the visit of Ms. Sabriye Tenberken, a renowned activist in blind welfare to Coimbatore on 17 August 2007. Sabriye is heading an international organisation by name "Braille Without Borders" and currently

setting up an International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs in Trivandrum, India where young adult blind and low vision persons from all over the world will undergo one year training on institution building and personality development. This is the only institute of its kind and applications have been received from different parts of the world. The UDIS Forum will be identifying potential candidates from India to undergo this prestigious training. The Forum will play an active role in the conduct of the programme too by sending competent resource persons from its pool.

Participation of UDIS staff in various programmes

The Executive Director of the UDIS Forum Mr. S. Sekaran attended a number of professional programmes in the district and also in the State. He and the staff members conducted a series of counselling programmes for persons with disabilities and also assisted disabled individuals to get information on Identify Cards, Special Assistance from the Government and schemes of the National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation for setting up self-employment opportunities.

Setting up of CONSERVE:

The Forum has just initiated setting up of a professional body called "CONSERVE" meaning **C**onsultation in **S**pecial **E**ducation, **R**ehabilitation, and **V**ocational **E**ducation wherein a pool of resource persons will be available for providing professional assistance to organisations which require such help. The UDIS Forum will collect information from professionals from different parts of the country and make them available on the database. Organisations willing to set up educational institutions, vocational centres, self-employment programmes, human resource development activities, capacity building for teachers and other professionals, etc., can approach the coordinator of the CONSERVE, who will network with the UDIS Forum in addressing such professional needs. The work in this direction has just begun and information on this will be available soon on the website

www.davo.in

LOOKING BACK WITH GRATITUDE

Human beings should build bridges and it is the humanism of concern for others that makes the difference in any service. We believe in the indomitable human potential available in every individual, whether he/she is a professional or a personnel. The Forum has a strong conviction that "Disability is not Inability" and therefore, trying to capitalize on the abilities of persons with disabilities. We embrace all those who are doing good work for persons with disabilities by directly helping them and also facilitating them to grow and finally we build trust in every person who wants to be a part of the disability work.

At the beginning of 2007, the network concept was just an idea, and exactly after one year, it is a well established movement. Thanks to hundreds of friends, Government officials, staff of CBM, professionals, parents, and industrial houses who have provided unstinted support to strengthen the activities of the UDIS Forum. Our special gratitude is due to the media, which is doing a remarkable job of projecting the positive image of persons with disabilities, that has influenced the larger society to recognise the abilities of them.

The office bearers of the Forum Mr. T.D. Dinakar (*who is currently in the Indian Railways in Baroda*),

Ms. T. Suganthi (*Assistant Manager, ICICI Bank*), Mr. Rahiman Chandbasha (*Advocate*), Ms. K. Desamma (*Disability Activist*), Mr. H. Samson Chandradas (*President of Cheran Region Christian Society for the Disabled*), Mr. S. Samarasapandian (*President, Tamil Nadu State Coordination Committee of Parivaar*), Mr. S. Thirunavukkarasu (*Social Worker*) and Mr. M. Anandan (*Supervisor, Project Empowered*) stood as pillars in all activities.

Mr. S. Sekaran, the Executive Director of the Forum and his dedicated staff took responsibility for the multi-dimensional activities of the Forum and executed meticulously. Without this team, the Forum would not have seen these developments in its first year of implementation.

We feel that the network concept which was initiated by the UDIS Forum is slowly owned by the disability field and that is what we want. The moment organisations for persons with disabilities, community, people with disabilities and professionals join together under the same philosophy to work for the cause of disability, the network concept wins and that is what we see happening. We are developing this network on a systems approach so that all play their respective roles.



Employment Guidance Team of the UDIS Forum

These and many more strengthen the Network

In summary, the introspection of 2007 reveals that by working together everyone achieves more.

THANKS TO THE MEDIA FOR HIGHLIGHTING ISSUES RELATED TO DISABILITY



DISABILITY IS NOT INABILITY

OUR GRATITUDE

The Forum wants to appreciate the unstinted cooperation, help and invaluable support of the following organisations/departments.

- **Commissioner of the Disabled, Tamil Nadu**
- **The Government Employment Exchange, Coimbatore**
- **CBM, South Asia Regional Office, Bangalore**
- **The District Rehabilitation Centre, Coimbatore**

KUDOS TO THE EMPLOYERS

Many employers provided encouragement to the Forum, which resulted in the placement of 140 persons with disabilities in various industries and organisations. Our special thanks are due to the following employers who have made a difference in the lives of the disabled individuals.

- A1 Chips
- Alvernia Matric. Hr. Sec. School
- Antique Jewellery works
- Arun Spinning Mills
- Bajaj Alliance
- Best Engineers Pumps Pvt. Ltd.
- Captain Electronics
- Cheran Region Christian Society for the Disabled
- CGK Automations Machine Works
- Holy Cross Matric. Hr. Sec. School
- Hutch Teleshoppe
- Infosys Non Technical Services
- KG Apparel Pvt. Ltd.
- KG Denim Ltd.
- Life Insurance Corporation of India
- Louds Computer Training Centre
- Optimum Training Services
- Pricol Packaging Ltd.
- Rovaaris Solutions
- Saravana Xerox
- Seven Hills Entrepreneurs
- Shape India Exports Pvt. Ltd.
- Solamalai Enterprises
- Sri Krishna & Co.
- Sri Ranga Apparels Pvt. Ltd.
- Sri Vidya Vikashini Matric. Hr. Sec. School
- Sunglow Biotech
- V Serve Solution
- Venkateswara Suppliers Ltd.

THANKS TO OUR NETWORK

- AES Technologies (I) Pvt. Ltd.
- Avinashilingam University for Women
- Bishop Appasamy College of Arts and Science
- CALIBER
- Cheran Region Christian Society for the Disabled
- CMS College of Arts and Science
- Disabled Persons' Associations
- Dr. PG Viswanathan Charitable Trust
- Govt. Polytechnic for Women, Coimbatore
- Higher Educational Institutions
- Indian Association for the Blind
- Keelottivakkam Grama Sanga
- Krishna College of Science and Arts
- Narayanaguru College of Arts and Science
- PARIVAAR
- PSG College of Arts and Science
- Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College
- Saarathy Pammac
- Siloam Hospital
- Voluntary Organisations

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