

Training and Pedagogy: The Mithu Alur Centre for Inclusive Studies

Pedagogy and manpower training was interwoven into the first innovative model that Dr. Alur set up in 1972 and national-level training courses have ensured the spread of this unique model of education and therapy across the country.

The most significant consequence of the sustained efforts of Dr. Alur has been the inclusion of children with disability under the “Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act” under which children with disabilities have the same rights as any other children to education in mainstream educational institutions. For this inclusion to be sustained, it is imperative that every teacher is sensitized and empowered about inclusive education.

Teacher training for regular teachers rarely prepares teachers for working in diverse classrooms, and in particular does not equip them with the confidence, knowledge and skills to effectively support learners with disabilities. This is a key reason why so many children with disabilities remain out of school, or excluded from the learning process within school. If we are to reignite progress towards quality basic education for all, then regular teachers need to be prepared to meet the learning and participation needs of children with disabilities.

Dr. Alur's philosophy has been to share and disseminate knowledge and train professionals across the country and these have in turn then created context-specific inclusive models in their regions, leading to the model spreading to 29 States.

The Mithu Alur Centre for Disability Studies was set up to address capacity building of all stakeholders. This has been renamed the Mithu Alur Centre for Inclusive Studies (MACIS).

Community Initiatives in Inclusion (CII)

The Community Initiatives in Inclusion course conceptualized by Dr. Mithu Alur, Founder Chairperson, ADAPT (formerly The Spastics Society of India) and Course Director, CII, with initial support from the Institute for Global Health (IGH) is sponsored by ADAPT and The Women's Council, UK to train Master Trainers in the Asia Pacific Region.

The course content includes modules on Disability, Policy, Inclusion and Community. It is conducted in two phases. The first fourteen weeks consists of taught sessions, practical work and field work in Mumbai.

The Course does not have a formal evaluation process; however, it does require that the participants develop a 'Context and Culture Specific Project' on spreading inclusion in their respective countries under the guidance of Dr Alur. This is an Action Plan for spreading inclusion in their respective countries.



*Ms. Ketna Mehta, Mr Jayabrato Chatterjee,
Mr. Kamal Bakshi and Mr. Arup Patnaik
inaugurate the course*

Most of the participants need support to develop their English speaking and writing skills. As in the previous years, Swami Mounananda, Project Advisor to the course, and Advisor, Skills Development Centre, and a veteran theatre personality, worked with each participant on their English language and presentation skills, voice modulation and body language.



Working on presentations with Swami Mounananda

The sixteenth Community Initiatives in Inclusion course was inaugurated on the 10th January 2017 by Mr. Kamal Bakshi, Vice Chairperson, ADAPT, Professor Ketna Mehta, Founder, Nina Foundation & Associate Dean - Research, Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research, Mr. Arup Patnaik, Former Police Commissioner, Mumbai and Member, Advisory Board, Mr. Jayabrato Chatterjee, Member Governing Body and Mrs. Rekha Vijayakar, Senior Director, School Services & Pedagogy, ADAPT.

Additions to the curriculum this year included the concept of Inclusive Employment and the challenges related to it. The Model of Selective Placement and Selective Training introduced by Dr. Mithu Alur was shared with the participants. Another addition was the session on Corporate Social Responsibility by senior staff members of Citibank NY, who have supported three projects at ADAPT. Macro level work was also addressed by Mr. Kamal Bakshi, Vice Chairperson, ADAPT and former Indian Ambassador to Austria, Iraq, Sweden and other countries who shared his experience on working with the government.



Mr. Kamal Bakshi speaks on liaising with governments

Participation in international workshops on "Holistic management of Neuro developmental Disabilities: From Childhood to Adulthood" and 'Speech and Swallowing' organised by the Indian Federation of Neuro Rehabilitation (IFNR) and ADAPT was also added.

Indian and international films on disabilities were also screened for the participants. A special screening of the award-winning film 'Margarita with a Straw' that was co-produced by ADAPT was organized with the director of the Film Ms. Shonali Bose, giving the participants an opportunity to interact with the director, promoting a better understanding of the film and the issues it has raised.

Valedictory Function

Dr. Smita Desai, Educational Psychologist, and Founder-Director, Drishti was the Chief Guest at the Valedictory programme on the 12th of April where three of the action plans were presented: Bangladesh, The Government of Tibet in Exile, Tajikistan and India. Dr. Frances Moore Honorary Technical Adviser, The Women's Council, U.K and



Lighting of the Lamp at the Valedictory Function

Dr Alur awarded the participants their certificates of attendance for the first phase of the CII course and their membership to the National and Asian Alliance for Inclusion. The Alliance has been set up by Dr. Alur to promote inclusion in the Asia Pacific countries.

Twenty-one participants including four with disability from eight countries, comprising of therapists, educators, social workers, activists, volunteers, administrators, researchers, heads of schools and parents of people with disabilities, completed the course this year.

Workshop on “Inclusion Matters”

Ms. Malini Chib, CEO, ADAPT, Chair, ADAPT Rights Group, Diversity Officer, Tata Consultancy Services, London and author, and Mr. Richard Rieser, Managing Director of World of Inclusion Ltd. and Consultant Inclusive Education and Disability Equality, U.K. conducted a two-day workshop entitled “Inclusion Matters”. The main focus of the workshop was on the Rights Approach to Inclusive Education which was attended by 90 professionals working in various fields of disability from across Mumbai including mainstream teachers, officials of the government’s Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme, parents and other NGOs.



Mr. Rieser, Ms. Chib and Mrs. Hooja facilitate the workshop

Other training programmes included:

A 10-day training programme for 25 staff members from 3 Centres of the SEC Day School was held in September 2016. The curriculum was divided in two modules focusing on practical demonstration sessions and observations of therapy, special and inclusive education and theory, and case study presentations.

Mr. Rieser conducted a session on the role of media in spreading awareness about disability and inclusion and discussed the situation in countries across the world.

Ms. Julia Stolberg, Foundation Audrey Jacobs, Nepal held a half-day workshop on Inclusion and the use of Montessori methods.

Better teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning is essential to ensure that all teachers are successfully prepared to teach in inclusive classrooms and the Mithu Alur Centre for Inclusive Studies aims to provide this through both contact as well as online courses.

Funding the CII Course

The Women’s Council U.K., ADAPT CII course: The partnership with The Women’s Council U.K. of over a decade has seen the evolution of the CII programme from a Maharashtra based to a National based to an Asia Pacific Programme. The Womens’ Council UK in partnership with ADAPT runs a four-month programme to train Master Trainers in Community Initiatives in Inclusion. The Course, which was fully funded by The Women’s Council, UK has been channelized onto the path of sustainability. Whilst the Council currently funds the core training costs which comprises of about 40% of the total costs, the balance 60% are funded through beneficiary contribution, a special donation from the Women’s Council and through ADAPT’s fund-raising initiatives for this Course.