

To See IDEA Heard All Over the World



Tien Pei Lee (IDEA Taiwan) greets Abakar Adam Mohammed (IDEA Sudan) at the 17th International Leprosy Congress in Hyderabad, India. Also pictured is Alfred Muzee Aquilino. *Photo by Pam Parlapiano*

Through our begging in Khartoum, we came and made 10 savings boxes . . . the money we took from our savings box we used to register IDEA Sudan. We felt we should start IDEA without getting something from the outside . . . Sometimes I sacrifice and don't eat just for the purpose of creating IDEA . . .

When Shehu (IDEA Nigeria Representative) came to us and talked to us about IDEA, then we said that this should not only work in Khartoum, but extend to all our brothers in Darfur . . . I want to see IDEA heard all over the world.

-- Abakar Adam Mohammed, IDEA Sudan

IDEA Mission Statement

IDEA shall promote the human rights and dignity of all human beings around the world, with a focus on individuals affected by leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, to ensure that they live rewarding lives, as fully participating members of their community.

The 17th International Leprosy Congress was held in Hyderabad, India from January 30 - February 4, 2007. This newsletter will present IDEA's Mission Statement illustrated by photographs taken at the Congress and excerpts from presentations made by IDEA representatives.



(Left to right): Mieko Morimoto and Ayako Yaegashi (IDEA Japan), Parwati Oli (IDEA Nepal), Chamada Abibo (IDEA Mozambique), Ngoma Ngoma (IDEA D.R. Congo), Shehu S/Fada (IDEA Nigeria), Josefina Gomes Correia (IDEA Guinea Bissau), Kofi Nyarko (IDEA Ghana) and Mary Aliemeke (IDEA Nigeria) meet each other, many for the first time, at the 17th International Leprosy Congress in Hyderabad, India. Photo by Henry Law

There are innumerable problems related to the fundamental rights of women in Nepal. Women are deprived of their basic rights. They have not been able to utilize their rights as men can. Nepal is a male-dominated country, therefore many decisions are made in favor of men and women are not involved in different social activities . . .

In the context of Nepal, when a woman has leprosy, she is sent out of the village . . . Due to lack of education and knowledge, it is not known that leprosy can be cured with treatment. A woman has to divorce her husband when she has leprosy. Women have to leave their homes even when they are pregnant . . .

IDEA Nepal is working for the empowerment of women, for example through the First Empowerment Workshop for Women that was held in 2006. IDEA Nepal is trying to remove discrimination against women and help women to realize their rights. Education brings change in society. Unless people are educated, their problems will remain the same in the future.

-- Parwati Oli, IDEA Nepal, Excerpt from Presentation, Plenary Session on Empowerment

IDEA shall facilitate an international network of support, so that people from around the world can discuss their shared experiences, and gain strength from each other to address the challenges they face.



(Left to right): Taixi Ma (IDEA China) and Shehu S/Fada (IDEA Nigeria).
Photo by Pam Parlapiano



(Left to right): Zilda Borges (IDEA's President for International Advocacy), Valdenora Da Cruz Rodrigues (MORHAN), and Parwati Oli (IDEA Nepal) participate in the Plenary Session on Empowerment. Photo by Pam Parlapiano

Several years' endeavor and practice have taught us that the only way for the persons affected by leprosy to live with dignity is through unity, mutual support and self-esteem. We must rely on ourselves rather than others. Welfare from the government is limited, and help from relatives and friends is also limited. Dependence on the aid and sympathy of others tends to aggravate social discrimination. Only if we become self-confident and mutually supportive and empowering can we receive social recognition and realize dignity.

--Tiexi Ma, HANDA/IDEA China, Excerpt from Presentation, Plenary Session on Community Based Rehabilitation

Noerine Kaleeba (far right), Founder of TASO Uganda (The AIDS Support Organization) and Chair, ActionAid International, participates in the Pre-Congress Workshop on Stigma, Identity and Human Rights, organized by IDEA. Other participants include: (Left to right) Chamada Abibo (IDEA Mozambique), Zilda Borges (IDEA's President for International Advocacy), Ymelda Beauchamp (IDEA USA) and Graciela Baéz Benitez (IDEA Paraguay).
Photo by Henry Law



IDEA shall advocate on behalf of individuals to address the stigma, discrimination, segregation, isolation, and derogatory terminology that profoundly affects people's lives.



Dr. P.K. Gopal, IDEA's President for international Advocacy, and Noerine Kaleeba, IDEA Uganda Representative. *Photo by Pam Parlapiano*



Malavika Vartak, representative of COHRE (Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions) conducts a training session for IDEA members on the right to adequate housing. *Photo by Henry Law*

I will always transform a moment of discrimination into an opportunity to give information

-- Zilda Borges, Brazil, IDEA's President for International Advocacy



Osamu Usami speaks at the Pre-Congress Workshop on Stigma, Identity and Human Rights. *Photo by Henry Law*



Members of IDEA arrive at the 17th International Leprosy Congress. *Photo by Pam Parlapiano*

IDEA shall promote the use of positive images, inspiring words, artistic talents, and other means of self-expression, to replace outdated images and stereotypes with a holistic understanding of individuals whose lives have been challenged by leprosy/Hansen's disease.



(Left to right): Miyoji Morimoto (IDEA Japan) and Sigurd Sandmo (IDEA Norway), Curator of The Leprosy Museum, Bergen.
Photo by Pam Parlapiano



Graciela Baéz Benitez (IDEA Paraguay) with Jose Ramirez, Jr., (IDEA USA).
Photo by Pam Parlapiano



IDEA members help display paintings by artist Rintu Karjee (third from left) at the Training Session on Eliminating Stigma organized by IDEA. *Photo by Henry Law*

IDEA shall invest in the potential of each individual so that they can regain their rights to live where they choose, marry whom they wish, worship where they desire, provide for themselves and their family, and ensure that their children receive an education.



Recipients of IDEA scholarships in Tamil Nadu.



A. Prakasam (right) describes his fundraising efforts as part of IDEA's One Hour for Justice Campaign. Nevis Mary translates from Tamil for him. *Photos by Henry Law*

Children are the promise of humanity for tomorrow. Education plays a pivotal role in the growth and development of any society and nation . . . The children of people affected by leprosy as well as children affected by the disease need financial support to pursue their education. Due to the difficulties in finding resources they used to drop out from schools.

Just because the parents are affected by leprosy and unable to support their children, the normal growth of these children should not be affected. If no intervention is done to support them, then they will become a burden to the society in the future. To overcome the above scenario IDEA India has launched the children's education program and supports over 1,200 children every year who live in the leprosy villages and in the community.

Many children who have completed their education were placed in good jobs after completing their education. They support their parents. After employment they have brought their parents back from the Government leprosy homes to live with them. Various educational support rendered through IDEA India has enabled the families to be empowered, to improve their quality of lives and to have an integrated life in society with dignity.

-- A. Prakasam, IDEA India, Excerpt from Presentation, Plenary Session on Empowerment

IDEA shall actively involve individuals who have been personally challenged by leprosy/Hansen's disease in the governance and management of IDEA, and the conceptualization, planning and implementation of programs including the Global Campaign to Eliminate Stigma, empowerment process, self-sufficiency projects, scholarship programs, psychological support, professional and public education, and media awareness.



(Left to right): Kofi Nyarko (IDEA Ghana), Ngoma Ngoma (IDEA D.R. Congo), and Abdou Yohanna (IDEA Niger) describe IDEA's Expert Exchange Program as part of the Training Session on Eliminating Stigma. Photo by Henry Law



(Left to right): Mrs. Saroja Prakasam, Mr. A. Prakasam, Mr. Rajendran, Mr. Soundra Pandian, Mr. Krishnamurthy, Mr. Rajamani, Mr. C.S. Cheriyan, Mr. Karunakaran, and Mr. Ranganathan. Photo by Pam Parlapiano

I visited so many places in Ghana, camp by camp and community by community, school by school and door by door. This door to door grass roots empowerment did not only help those who had leprosy but also those who have HIV.

I met many people who have been rejected for so many years. I also got to know that some of the people who had this disease thought that since they have had leprosy they will be rejected even after they have finished the treatment. But with the help of IDEA, when they got back to their families and communities, they welcomed them . . .

In Ghana these days people have the belief that if something has happened to you today anything can happen to me tomorrow, so they should not discriminate against anybody, no matter if they have leprosy or HIV or any kind of disease or disability. So I can say people in Ghana are now free and I hope they will be free forever! And also this grassroots empowerment did not end in Ghana. We went to D.R. Congo and I wish you were there to see how happy the people of D.R. Congo were and how they welcomed us. "Ah, we have been waiting for this for 30 years now" said one man.

-- Kofi Nyarko, IDEA Ghana, Excerpt from Presentation, Plenary Session on Empowerment

The IDEA Banner of Honor



Nevis Mary (IDEA India) holds the panel that remembers Frans Jacobs and other outstanding individuals in South Africa who personally faced the challenges of leprosy. *Photo by Pam Parlapiano*



(Left to right): Sarmila Shrestha, (WATCH -- Women Acting Together for Change), Doo Sung Lim (IDEA Korea), Suiko Shibata (IDEA Japan), Yoko Murai (IDEA USA) and Abakar Adam Mohammed (IDEA Sudan) hold panels that remember outstanding individuals in Romania and Japan. *Photo by Pam Parlapiano*

IDEA is just like a big tree with so many branches, so many leaves.

-- Kofi Nyarko, IDEA Ghana



IDEA's Banner of Honor is displayed at the 17th International Leprosy Congress to assert the right of people affected by leprosy to be included in their own history. *Photo by Henry Law*

Publication of the IDEA newsletter is made possible through a grant from the Sasakawa Memorial Health Foundation

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