

**Circles of support in India and the EU -  
towards person-centred community inclusion networks**

**Circles of Support in Indien und der EU –  
auf dem Weg zu inklusiven Gemeinwesen**

**Report on the first international conference  
held on 11–12 October 2004 in Dortmund**

**Bericht über die erste internationale Konferenz  
vom 11.–12. Oktober 2004 in Dortmund**

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**Lead partner:**

Dortmund University of Applied Sciences, Dortmund, Germany

**Operational partners:**

Bolton Institute of Higher Education, Bolton, UK

NYSASDRI, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India

Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India

**Transnational co-ordination partner:**

Klaus Novy Institut, Cologne, Germany

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## Foreword

This report was prepared by two students working on the COS project, Holger Koslowski and Michaela Kusal, who prepared summary texts – with bilingual versions in selected cases – on the basis of the contributions of the speakers to the conference. My thanks to them both for their hard work, as well of course as to all the speakers and participants at our conference for their contribution to making the occasion such a communicative and fruitful event.

The conference would not have been possible without funding support provided by the European Union within the EU – India Economic Cross Cultural Programme and by the Rectorate of Dortmund University of Applied Sciences, to whom I would also extend thanks on behalf of all concerned.

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### **Circles of support for community inclusion**

Both in India and in the European Union, processes of social change place communities under severe tension, and vulnerable members of society come under the threat of exclusion. There is in both regions a search for ways to facilitate and promote inclusive communities. One way is through strengthening the informal support networks in local communities. The idea of COS - circles of support - is an approach we are promoting in this Indo-European project.

### **What is a circle of support?**

A circle of support is a group of people who meet together regularly to help a vulnerable individual accomplish his or her personal goals in life, which cannot be achieved independently. The members of the circle of support may include a facilitator, family, friends and other community members. A circle properly facilitated is empowering to all of the individuals involved and does not reinforce dependence. A circle can support a person in everyday matters, in working life, and in social relations.

### **Training professionals and lay experts**

Human services are coming more and more to focus on tapping and developing the resources of local communities – a changed role from providers to facilitators. This creates new challenges and at the same time poses new dangers. University curricula need on the one hand to train professionals in community facilitation and empowerment skills, while at the same time sharpening their critical awareness of the ambivalence of these developments in human services. This project seeks to contribute to this end.

### **The first conference**

The aim of the conference was to introduce this project at an early stage of its activities to a European audience. The contributors to the conference were the project partners and the advisory board members. The conference sought to meet the interests of participants from higher education, public agencies, non-governmental and community-based organisations.



## **Circles of Support und Community Inclusion**

Menschen in benachteiligten Lebenslagen sind sowohl in Indien als auch in der Europäischen Union ausgegrenzt oder von Ausgrenzung aus ihren Gemeinden und Nachbarschaften bedroht. Obwohl die Erscheinungsformen dieser Spannungen in der Europäischen Union und in Indien sehr unterschiedlich sind, besteht dennoch in beiden Regionen eine Suche nach Wegen zur Teilhabe und Partizipation in den Gemeinwesen. Dies ist Teil einer transnationalen Bewegung unter dem Schlüsselbegriff *Inclusion*: Inclusion bedeutet gesellschaftliche Teilhabe ohne Aussonderung, unter der gleichgestellten Bedingungen, volle Partizipation und Empowerment von Menschen mit unterschiedlichen Unterstützungsbedarfen verstanden wird. An diesen Bestrebungen gilt es anzuknüpfen.

### **Was ist ein Circle of Support?**

Ein COS ist eine Gruppe von Menschen, die sich konstituiert und regelmäßig zusammen kommt, um einen Menschen mit Assistenzbedarf bei der Erreichung von ihm selbst bestimmter persönlicher Zielsetzungen zu unterstützen. Die Mitglieder des Circles arbeiten mit der betreffenden Person gemeinsam daran, ihre Lebensqualität zu verbessern und ihre Lebensziele zu verwirklichen. Ein, allen COS zugrunde liegender, Leitgedanke gilt dem Aspekt von Selbstbestimmung: Der Mensch steht im Mittelpunkt – nicht ein Dienstleistungssystem oder Dienstweg, der eingehalten werden muss. Der Schlüssel zu COS ist das Lernen voneinander und die Schaffung und Erhaltung von Beziehungen, in denen jeder etwas für jeden tut (nach den Prinzipien der Stellvertretung, Solidarität und Gegenseitigkeit). Stärken und Talente werden so multipliziert und individuelle Schwächen, aufgrund der gemeinsamen Fähigkeiten der Gruppe, ausgeglichen. Die Teilnehmer des Circle of Support können sich aus Familienmitgliedern, Freunden und Bekannten, Nachbarn, Studierenden und einer Koordinationsperson zusammensetzen.

### **Ausbildung von professionellen und ehrenamtlichen ExpertInnen**

Die Fachkräfte in den Humandienstleistungen verstehen ihre Aufgaben immer mehr darin, an den Ressourcen des Gemeinwesens anzuknüpfen und diese auszubauen. Damit entsteht ein Wandel in ihrer Rolle und ihrem Rollenverständnis - vom Versorger zum Vermittler. Dieser Wandel schafft neue Herausforderungen und bringt gleichzeitig neue Gefahren mit sich. Die Hochschulen sind gefordert, ihre Lehrpläne entsprechend der neuen Anforderungen umzugestalten, und Leitbilder der professionellen Assistenz auf dem Weg zu Selbstbestimmung und Gemeinwesenpartizipation aufzunehmen. Dies erfordert ein Verständnis für die Kooperation mit Ressourcen aus dem Bürgerengagement auf der einen Seite, während auf der anderen Seite zur selben Zeit kritische Bewusstwerdungsprozesse über die Gefahren der Entwicklungen in sozialen Diensten zu schärfen sind. Dieses Projekt strebt es an, dazu beizutragen.

### **Die erste internationale Konferenz**

Das Ziel unserer Konferenz war es, einem europäischen Publikum einen frühzeitigen Einblick in das Projekt und seine Aktivitäten zu geben. Das Programm setzte sich aus Beiträgen der Kooperationspartner und des wissenschaftlichen Beirats zusammen. Die Teilnehmenden kamen aus Hochschulen, öffentlichen und nicht-öffentlichen Organisationen, Selbsthilfegruppen und beziehen professionelle Fachleute und Fachleute in eigener Sache ein.

**Circles of support in India and the EU –  
Towards person-centred community inclusion networks  
Conference programme - first day -  
Monday 11 October 2004**

- 11.00 *Welcome to participants*  
Prof Eberhard Menzel, (Rector, Dortmund University of Applied Sciences)  
Prof Angelika Cottmann (Dean, Department of Social Studies)
- 11.30 *Circles of support in India and the EU – introducing the project*  
Prof Evemarie Knust-Potter (Dortmund University of Applied Sciences)
- 12.00 *Learning in real situations*  
Prof Jürgen Zimmer (Free University Berlin)
- 12.30 *Training of human service professionals in universities in India*  
Prof Haribhau Kedar (formerly Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University)
- 13.00 Lunch
- Chair: Lennarth Andersson (formerly Malmöhus Regional Council)
- 14.00 *Promoting circles of support in Dortmund*  
Kai Hombrecher, Alina Kirschniok (Dortmund University of Applied Sciences)
- 14.40 *Informal support networks in Orissa – the contribution of NYSASDRI*  
Bhakta Bandhu Dash, Sarang Samal, Sabita Swain (NYSASDRI, Bhubaneswar)
- 15.20 Coffee
- Chair: Jagdish Manubhai Shah (Indian Society for Community Education, Ahmedabad)
- 15.50 *Interventions through circles of support in Bolton*  
Joe Whittacker, Navin Kikabhai (Bolton Institute of Higher Education)
- 16.30 *Community based rehabilitation through Jewels International*  
Dr Narayan Chandra Pati (Utkal University)
- 16.50 Coffee
- Chair: Mandy Neville (Circles Network UK, Rugby)
- 17.20 *Experiences with autistic children at Open Learning Systems*  
Kasturi Mohapatra (Open Learning Systems, Bhubaneswar)

17.40 *Circles of support for differentially able people*  
Prof Sudhakar Rath (Utkal University)

**Circles of support in India and the EU –  
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Conference programme – second day  
Tuesday 12 October 2004**

09.30 *Welcome to participants*  
Prof Gisela Schäfer-Richter (Pro-Rector, Dortmund University of Applied Sciences)

Chair: Prof Gisela Schäfer-Richter (Pro-Rector, Dortmund University of Applied Sciences)

10.00 *Transnational learning in networks*  
Philip Potter (Klaus Novy Institut, Cologne)

10.30 *The movement for circles of support in the UK*  
Mandy Neville (Circles Network UK, Rugby)

11.00 Coffee

Chair: Philip Potter (Klaus Novy Institut, Cologne)

11.30 *Community inclusion in Sweden*  
Lennarth Andersson (formerly Malmöhus Regional Council)

12.00 *The community education movement in India*  
Jagdish Manubhai Shah (Indian Society for Community Education, Ahmedabad)

12.30 Lunch

Chair: Prof Haribhau Kedar (formerly Vice-Chancellor, Nagpur University)

13.30 *Participation and inclusion of people with autism in Denmark*  
Bent Sørensen (Langagerskolen, Aarhus)

14.00 *Women, disability and civil society*  
Prof Asha Hans (Utkal University)

14.30 Concluding discussion

15.30 *Circles of support – the path so far and the way forward*  
Prof Evemarie Knust-Potter (Dortmund University of Applied Sciences)

**Prof. Evemarie Knust-Potter:**  
**Circles of Support in India and the EU – introducing the project**

Circles of Support (COS) are based on the normalization, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) and inclusion principles. They include all situations of real life, self-determined and age-appropriate activities.

A rethinking of professional value systems is necessary as well as strategies for a change in the consciousness and structures in community. From segregation to community participation takes a long way. People have to focus on self-determination and empowerment to facilitate these demands. Activities in people's everyday life and the environment are concerned. We have to start from situations and conditions which are identity-enhancing.

The professional as facilitator and the COS members have to change their behaviour from traditional deficit oriented to innovative resource oriented approaches, from hierarchical duality to plurality, from dominance to interdependence, from the planned and plannable to the diverse and unplannable.

COS and community education are new forms of relations in the community, facilitating the change of public attitudes and recognizing interdependence and diversity.

**Prof. Evemarie Knust-Potter:**  
**Circles of Support in Indien und der EU – Vorstellung des Projektes**

Circles of Support (COS) basieren auf den Prinzipien des Normalisierungsprinzips, gemeinwesenorientierter Rehabilitation (CBR) und Inklusion. Sie beziehen Situationen der realen Alltagswirklichkeit sowie selbstbestimmte und altersangemessene Aktivitäten mit ein.

Sowohl ein Überdenken der professionellen Wertesysteme ist notwendig als auch der Strategien für einen Bewusstseins- und Strukturwandel in der Gesellschaft. Von der Segregation zur gesellschaftlichen Partizipation ist es ein langer Weg. Es erfordert von allen Akteuren, sich dezidiert mit den Prinzipien von Selbstbestimmung und Empowerment auseinanderzusetzen und die Stärkung der eigenen Persönlichkeit durch die Stärkung der anderen Persönlichkeit zu erreichen und nicht durch ihre Schwächung oder Abwertung. Hierfür ist das Augenmerk sowohl auf die Enthinderung der Alltagsaktivitäten als auch auf die umgebende Umwelt zu richten. Wir müssen dazu von Situationen und Bedingungen starten, die die Identität stärken.

Professionelle Akteure als Koordinatoren und alle weiteren COS-Mitglieder stehen vor der Herausforderung, ihre handlungsleitenden Grundhaltungen zu reflektieren und ggf. zu verändern, von der professionell dominierten Dualität hin zur demokratischen Pluralität, von der Dominanz hin zur Interdependenz, vom Geplanten und Planbaren aber Fremdbestimmten der Institutionsstrukturen hin zur situativen Vielfalt und Selbstbestimmung aber auch Unplan-

baren des Lebens und der Teilhabe im Gemeinwesen

COS und Community Education als Leben, Lernen und sich entwickeln in Alltagsrealitäten des Gemeinwesens erfordern neue Beziehungsformen in der Gesellschaft, die dazu verhelfen, einen Wandel in der professionellen und öffentlichen Meinung zu erreichen, die Interdependenz, Selbstbestimmung und Verschiedenheit als wichtige Determinanten würdigen.

**Prof. Jürgen Zimmer:**

**Learning in real situations - School for Life – A concept for educational and entrepreneurial excellence**

The four basic problems of school are: distance to life, museum-like settings, misjudgements of the labour market and underestimation of the children of the poor.

Students are increasingly unable to apply academic knowledge to problems in real situations and solve these. School in its organization and learning methods trails about 200 years behind modern developments of the learning environment. Most school- and university-graduates chase jobs on the labour market in vain instead of creating some themselves, but they are not equipped with entrepreneurial qualifications. School regards the children of the poor only as deficient and problematic in many cases, but their abilities, skills and resources are not recognized which leads to a high drop-out rate.

There are four answers to these problems: situation approach, centers of excellence, innovative entrepreneurship education and understanding the children of the poor as entrepreneurs.

The curriculum has to be orientated towards key situations and problems. Scientific and empirical knowledge is focussed on these problems to enable students to meet the challenges of reality. Situations are understood as something that can be influenced and shaped. Learners become themselves constructors of reality. School is no more a ghetto, but an institution that combines learning and community development. The pupils' entrepreneurial spirit is developed. The best capital is a good idea. In addition such an entrepreneur acts socially and ecologically responsible. The qualifications of the children of the poor are built upon, their ideas are refined, and their previous experiences become a starting point for a qualifying process. They learn to break free from the cycle of poverty.

This can be realized in centers of entrepreneurship, for cultural heritage and economics, for technology and ecology, for culture sensitive tourism, for communication and media, for management skills, for organic farming and for personnel and personal development.

**Prof. Jürgen Zimmer:**

**Lernen in realen Situationen - Schule fürs Leben – Ein Konzept zur Qualitätssteigerung der Bildungs- und unternehmerischen Fähigkeiten**

Die vier Grundprobleme der Schule sind: Distanz zum Leben, museumsartiger Unterricht, Fehlbeurteilungen des Arbeitsmarktes und zu niedrige Bewertung der Kinder von Armen.

Studenten bzw. Schüler können immer weniger akademisches Wissen auf Probleme in realen Alltagssituationen anwenden und diese lösen. Schule liegt in ihrer Organisation und ihren Lernmethoden um ca. 200 Jahre hinter modernen Entwicklungen der Lernumgebung zurück. Die meisten Schul- und Universitätsabsolventen jagen vergeblich nach Jobs auf dem Arbeitsmarkt, anstatt selber welche zu erschaffen, aber ihnen fehlen unternehmerische Qualifikationen. Schule sieht die Kinder von armen Leuten in vielen Fällen nur als defizitär und problematisch an, aber ihre Fähigkeiten, Fertigkeiten und Ressourcen werden nicht erkannt, was zu einer hohen Schul-/Studienabbrecherquote führt.

Es gibt vier Antworten auf diese Probleme: Situationsannäherung, Zentren zur Qualitätssteigerung der Fähigkeiten, innovative unternehmerische Ausbildung und die Kinder von armen Leuten als Unternehmer auffassen.

Das Curriculum muss sich an Schlüsselsituationen und Problemen orientieren. Wissenschaftliches und empirisches Wissen wird auf diese Probleme fokussiert, um die Studenten bzw. Schüler zu befähigen, sich den Herausforderungen der Alltagsrealität stellen zu können. Situationen werden als etwas aufgefasst, das beeinflusst und geformt werden kann. Die Lernenden werden selbst zu Konstrukteuren der Realität. Schule ist kein Ghetto mehr, sondern eine Institution, die die Lern- und Gesellschaftsentwicklung verbindet. Der Unternehmergeist der Schüler wird entwickelt. Das beste Kapital ist eine gute Idee. Außerdem handelt es sich um einen solchen Unternehmer sozial und ökologisch verantwortungsbewusst. Die Qualifikationen der Kinder von armen Leuten werden aufgebaut, ihre Ideen werden verfeinert, und ihre vorherigen Erfahrungen werden zum Ausgangspunkt für einen Qualifizierungsprozess. Sie lernen, aus dem Teufelskreis der Armut auszubrechen.

Dies kann realisiert werden in Zentren für Unternehmer, für kulturelles Erbe und Wirtschaft, für Technologie und Ökologie, für kultursensiblen Tourismus, für Kommunikation und Medien, für Managementfertigkeiten, für biologische Landwirtschaft sowie für Personal- und Persönlichkeitsentwicklung.

**Prof. Haribhau Kedar:**

**Training of human service professionals in universities in India**

The recent trend of liberalization, privatisation and globalisation has positively affected and accelerated a change in community. The opening of economy, markets and service has had an enormous influence as money has become more powerful than national or emotional appeal.

Profit making must give place to the service of those who suffer from all sorts of incapacities and infirmities.

A social order should be brought in that will not differentiate between nationalities, races, sexes or ages, but encompass the world community into “the world as one family”.

Since the Vedic period there is the guiding principle: “Aa no bhadra kratavo yantu vishwatah!” – “Let noble thoughts come to us from every side!” Noble thoughts do not leave any room for selfish motives to create and exploit others to our advantage.

There is no difference between me and other human beings as we are all the children of God. It is to recognize divinity’s existence in others, too. It is a process of perfect human feelings, a most apt and essential solution to all the ills that exist today in society.

The basic purpose of higher education with professional knowledge and skills is to provoke thinking ability, develop social attitudes, look beyond self and personal welfare and develop a sensibility for the problems of the society.

Indian Universities are trying their best to expose them to social realities and the needs of the community through co-curricular activities like National Service Scheme, Festivals, Work Shops, Hobby Workshops, work experience, and so on.

### **Prof. Haribhau Kedar:**

#### **Ausbildung von professionellen Hilfskräften im sozialen Bereich an den Universitäten Indiens**

Der jüngste Trend zur Liberalisierung, Privatisierung und Globalisierung hat den gesellschaftlichen Wandel positiv beeinflusst und beschleunigt. Die Öffnung der Wirtschaft, der Märkte und der Dienstleistungen hatte enormen Einfluss, da das Geld stärker geworden ist als die nationale oder emotionale Anziehungskraft.

Das Profitdenken muss den Diensten von denjenigen Raum geben, die unter allen Arten von Unfähigkeiten und Schwächen leiden.

Eine soziale Ordnung sollte eingeführt werden, die nicht zwischen Nationalitäten, Rassen, Geschlechtern oder dem Alter unterscheidet, sondern die globale Gesellschaft unter dem Motto „die Welt als eine Familie“ zusammenfasst.

Seit der Vedischen Zeit gibt es einen Leitgedanken: „AA no bhadra kratavo yantu vishwatah!“ – „Lasst edle Gedanken in uns kommen von allen Seiten!“ Edle Gedanken lassen keinen Raum dafür, dass egoistische Motive sich entfalten und wir andere zu unserem Vorteil ausbeuten können.

Es gibt keinen Unterschied zwischen mir und anderen menschlichen Wesen, da wir alle Gottes Kinder sind. Man muss die göttliche Existenz in anderen auch erkennen. Es ist ein Prozess von perfekten menschlichen Gefühlen, eine äußerst passende und grundlegende Lösung für all die Kranken, die in der heutigen Gesellschaft existieren.

Der Hauptzweck höherer Bildung mit professionellem Wissen und Fertigkeiten besteht darin, die Denkfähigkeit zu fördern, soziales Verhalten zu entwickeln, über sich selbst und das persönliche Wohlergehen hinaus zu blicken und ein Gespür für die Probleme der Gesellschaft zu entwickeln.

Indische Universitäten versuchen ihr Bestes, sich der gesellschaftlichen Realität und den Bedürfnissen der Gemeinschaft zu stellen durch Zusatzveranstaltungen neben dem aktuellen Lehrplan, wie z.B. nationales Dienstleistungssystem, Festivals, Workshops, Freizeit-Workshops, Berufserfahrung, usw.

### **Alina Kirschniok: Promoting Circles of Support in Dortmund**

I would like to invite you to look on the way which I have gone in the last few years and which leads me here to this place.

Evemarie just comes from Berlin and tells us in her seminar about interesting persons and later about Circles of Support. And at this moment I realize I want to be a part of a Circle. And I am a part of a Circle from 98 to 99. 3 men and a woman. We meet once a week and together we do different activities in the community. It was very nice to work outside an institution and without any given timetable. It was a good base for development and making mistakes. As well as there was room for helplessness and for fear there also was room for success. It was good to learn from each other.

A lot of questions arose at our community activities: Everybody speaks verbally, only one does not. Where does inclusion start here?

Of course we tried to find a mutual communication and therefore asked ourselves: what are his abilities? He uses a typing writer and it was an outstanding experience to me watching him typing letter for letter in a fascinating slowness.

The next question: How do I react if someone is into smells he finds in each open garage and in each car and just steps into it and sit down into the car? We had to react in different ways because the car owners reacted in different ways. So, we learnt, Frank learn and the car owners learnt in this situation.

And our questions are: What is support? What is relationship? What is profession? And for whom? Always new questions with more than one answers to it. Always a balancing act between self determination and over protection. So, our questions are: What is my value system? What are my prejudice? Where do I use my power? Where do I give power?

Very soon we learnt just to imagine something the other person might need can be very dangerous. I remember an experience.

We wanted to cook and we pedagogues thought up a cardboard box with cards showing the single steps. We put it up without any questions and suddenly it hurtles. What an amazement! Nobody is able to react at first. Once again I put up the cardboard box and it hurtles again. Then I realized. We have done a programme for him but not with him.

There are more and more questions we reflected on at university and we looked at the relevant literature. There are more answers to this than one for we all are individuals and have our personal history. And for this reason each of us reacted in a different way when faced to conflicts – for example in public. This of course had effects so that we had to learn to come to an understanding.

One interesting discovery to me was the aspect that it has to do a lot with valuing the other. And another discovery was: Whether we are passionate in our work or not? Whether we are interested in the other person or in getting a certificate? And that is something the other person perceives while you cross his way and walk together a part of this way. Especially people with autism I feel this very exactly. I noticed this after I finished my studies during the work with them in the autism-therapy-center from 2001 to 2004 again and again.

Within that job I accompanied 3 Circles of Support from Evemarie's praxis project. I took part in the meetings at the beginning and was a link between the students and the persons with autism. It was very important to exchange and talk about the experiences the Circles made in the community. This took place during the regular reflections meetings at the university and at the autism-therapy-center. We spoke about: What were the things one occupied oneself with? To what did the students pay special attention? What on COS was helpful and what was hindering? Having this point of view it was absolutely important just to wait; to let the others make their own experiences; to realize not intervening is a very good pedagogical possibility.

In the end the questions to ask were: What have we learnt for our individual future and what is the next step from here? One could say to know all swimming techniques from books does not mean to be capable of swimming. Our opinion is that the combination of theory, practical encounter and dialogue and reflections at the university and at the autism-therapy-center is a big treasure for all of us. For the focus person, for the students, for the university staff, for the professionals and for the community members.

In April 2004 I return to Dortmund University of Applied Sciences as a staff member of this international project. In this research project it will be important to look at the process between professionals and people with support needs and volunteers. With this questions that leads the research: Which skills and knowledge are important to initiate and accompany supporting networks? Which strategies for curricula in the higher education can be derived from these experiences?

This summer there have been meetings with 6 persons with different abilities who want a Circle of Support. An Activity Plan and a Relationship Map have been designed. That is what I have to say today. It is still exciting to see what happens next.

## **Kai Hombrecher: Promoting Circles of Support in Dortmund and Bhubaneswar**

As Dortmund University of Applied Sciences offers a lot of opportunities for meeting of groups of different interests and aims, it does not surprise that there is also a Self-Help-Group from Dortmund. This is the so-called “Hand-In-Hand-Group”. In this group young adults meet weekly at the local adult’s education centre, where they plan leisure activities and represent their interests. This group was founded with help of the Dortmund Organisation MOBILE based on the thoughts of self-determination. During the first years it had supporters, but over the years it changed into a heterogeneous group from students from the adult education centre and students from the University of Applied Sciences.

It is a project from both education institutions together, where there are many occasions for new experiences and learning possibilities for all people involved. On joint trips, weekends and cultural activities the members and students got to know each other and explored possibilities of living apart from institutional situations. In this development self-advocacy plays the decisive role, where all people acquire more and more abilities to speak and act for themselves and to represent their interests. This Self-Help-Group is not a circle of support, because it is not addressing the aim of one person in the centre but is working on the goals of a group of persons with similar interests. But this group is the base for visions and ideas which lead some members to take part in the actual project.

When Evemarie built up contacts to the Indian voluntary organisation NYSASDRI, a cooperation emerged which also included the “Hand-in-Hand-Group”. On different occasions they sold drinks and Indian goods at the campus send by NYSASDRI before. On a celebration in autumn of the same year the group-members could give the proceeds of their activities personally to Mrs. Swain and Mr. Samal - as representatives of the mentioned NGO - who had come to Dortmund to visit the local University of applied sciences and its projects. The members of the self-help-group experienced an important shift of perspective: they did not act as “People with disabilities” who need help from professionals; they found themselves in the role of partners and supporters of an international NGO. Due to the described shift of perspective, some of the group-members decided to start a “People-First-Group” where they concentrate especially on topics of self-determination and contacts to other groups. I think that this example shows that the work in a Circle of Support can create benefits for all people involved. Joining the Self-Help-Group created a field of practical learning for the students involved and this is another thing the COS-Project aims at, where the knowledge shall be turned into educational parts.

The group described before produced a real Circle of Support where some of Evemarie’s students support a man in attending a local workshop called “Help for people with disabilities in Dortmund” where representatives of local authorities and institutions discuss strategies to uplift quality of life of people with need for support. Especially in such workshops it is important that it is not spoken about but with the persons addressed. For Tom – the mentioned member from the self-help-group – his participation gives him the chance to explore the structures of local help systems and to represent the “Hand-in-Hand-Group” and its members’ interests. At the same time he took the possibility to address problems of people with

different abilities and changed his role from a passive member into a representative of a group of adult people. This can be an example for main contents of the work in Circles of Support: It is important to mention, that all have been learning here about the possibilities of such workshop. This learning for everybody should be seen as an important aspect of COS.

Another step on the way to this international project were trips from Dortmund to Bhubaneswar / India. After her return from a trip to India in 2001, Evemarie offered the possibility of such a travel to her students to make own experiences in a different culture. In the autumn of 2002 we travelled together to Bhubaneswar where we held up contacts to local universities. That representatives of the departments for psychology, women studies and political science have become partners of the COS-project shows that there is an interest in topics of integration of people with different abilities despite all regional differences.

NYSASDRI, which is also one of our project partners, allowed us to look at their different projects in the field of education and medicine, what gave us insight in fields of social work in Orissa. They took me in for three months and offered me the chance to conduct a study about the situation of people with different abilities in this part of the world. In this situation I have been supported by the NYSASDRI-Team and lecturers from Utkal University who helped me to build up many contacts and organize visits to different organizations. I got to know about the different ways to work with people with different abilities – from institutional work over self-help-groups to community-based-rehabilitation.

Community based rehabilitation always happens in the direct environment of the person addressed, so given resources can be included in the process. I would like to give a small example:

In the village Routrai Sahi lives a young man with hearing loss – Nakula – with his family. His relatives have been working as barbers for generations. Employees of the local organisation Open Learning Systems searched together with the family for ways, to facilitate vocational independence for him. Now Members of his family and the mentioned organisation alternately teach him the profession skills needed; at the same time he is also learning how to write and read at school. In future he will run an own market stand at a near market to earn his own money.

In this example there are similarities and differences to Circles of support: Nakula is in the focus of attention and it is his aim to get vocational independence. All learning processes take place in his living environment, not in institutions far away. So he can use the given resources – the experience of his family and the local market – to realise his plans practically. In difference to Circles of support the mutual learning does not play the main role here.

That I managed to fulfil my study successfully I owe to the described people whose help I enjoyed during my stay. I hope I showed you a part of the way which leads to the aim of all people involved: "Finding ways of improving quality of life for people with disabilities and autism in India and the EU".

**Bhakta Bandhu Dash, Sarang Samal, Sabita Swain:  
Informal support networks in Orissa – the contribution of NYSASDRI**

**NYSASDRI (National Youth Service Action and Social Development Research Institute)**

NYSASDRI was founded in 1973 under the name “Bapuji Abasara Binodana Kendra” by young people in the village of Santhasara (Gondia block of Dhenkanal district in Orissa). Their aim was to uplift and improve the rural poor and deprived members in their community. In 1985 the name

was changed into NYSASDRI. Since then, it has been a full-fledged organisation, standing up for social justice and the development of marginalized sections in the society. It tries to:

- empower the poor mass by people’s participation in the process of development,
- ensure proper utilization of natural resources within the community,
- raise the level of literacy as a tool for development,
- improve the socio-economic status of the deprived sections in community,
- alleviate human deprivation and
- Achieve sustainability by improving the socio-economic situation of weaker people.

It has been taking up several development intervention programmes to achieve its objective. Some of these include a drug rehabilitation centre; need-based-services for leprosy-cured patients; health services for women and children; immunization and sterilization camps for hygiene and drinking water awareness; a mobile medical unit (MMU); a massive campaign to provide Vitamin A-capsules to prevent against blindness; eye hospitals which restore eye-sight for elders and children; construction of water harvesting structure and roads; capacity building of the community and special workshops for sexual and reproductive health education. More information about the organization can be availed at [www.nysasdri.org](http://www.nysasdri.org).

**SEED (Social Education for Environment and Development)**

SEED was established in 1991 by a group of professionals. Its aim is the development of the poorest and most marginalized communities in the society. For 12 years, SEED has been working for the Koya tribes in Kurkunda block of the Malkanagiri district (the poorest District in Orissa, India). The activities are targeted towards reduction in poverty, enhancement of the capacities of poor people- that will lead to a better and qualitative life. SEED believes in people’s power and tries to strengthen their personal resources by:

- creating a society free from exploitation,
- utilizing the resources properly for developing the poor,
- reducing poverty and the dependency syndrome,
- standing up for social justice,
- eradicating illiteracy, providing a higher education and upgrading the role of environment,
- solving local problems, creating and standing up for a classless society,
- lowering the death rate and enhancing the quality of life and
- supporting the rehabilitation of disabled people

There are already existing adult education centres, strengthening women committees, educational complexes for the tribal girls’ children as well as special camps and workshops to improve the awareness of health, hygiene, drinking water and environment, and there is a refresher training and orientation for staff members, too. For the future a sustainable socio-economic development for the Koya families, primary health care programmes, community-

based joyful education for tribal children, micro finance programmes and more water education and environmental awareness programmes are planned.

### **Navin Kikabhai / Joe Whittaker Interventions through Circles of Support in Bolton**

In this presentation, we discuss the evolving work of Circles of Support. Through the use of semi-structured interviews the presentation draws upon the narratives of individuals who shared their personal histories and lived experiences of 'support' which for the authors (and participants) raise a number of challenges to current service practices. The work is framed within a commitment to the Social Model of Disability, which recognises that it is the barriers in society that truly dis-able people. A number of issues have emerged some of which include: choices, rights, trust, family, friendship, values, experiences of statutory services, 'professionals', communication, culture, gender and finding support. These issues not only challenge assumptions about what support is but also raises questions about how 'Circles of Support' is currently being used and interpreted. The findings from this work will form material for a BA module intended for individuals who will consider critically whether there are alternative ways of understanding models of relationships.

### **Prof. Narayan Chandra Pati: Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs in Orissa, India**

During the last few years a number of Non-Government Organisations have started Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs for the disabled with financial assistance from foreign funding agencies and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of India. These programs are usually planned for all categories of disabled persons.

The home-based skill training has advantages and disadvantages: Intellectually disabled children require intensive training, which normally is not possible in home-based programs. There are some exceptionally motivated parents, those who provide better special education than the Special Educators at school. But unfortunately, the vast majority of the parents do not have the ability or time for their children's education and training, because most of them are forced to work as day labourers to be able at least to support their families below the subsistence level.

Although some people argue that home based skill training for the disabled children of the trainable and pre-primary level shows only a moderate success and is ineffective, it has the advantage of keeping the child in the home environment and the community. The vocational rehabilitation of the children is always better when they live with their parents.

When the child is separated from the family and given special education and vocational training in a special school or vocational training centre, it may become difficult for the child to

accommodate him-/herself in the family and community after returning from the school or vocational training centre.

Therefore the home based skill training through community based rehabilitation programs is a better alternative for the education and rehabilitation of intellectually disabled children. Though on the one hand it may be difficult to teach academic skills at the home level, on the other hand teaching of the self-help skills and vocational skills can be performed successfully.

You cannot ignore the social impact of the CBR programs on the families and on society. The disabilities and abilities (resources) of the disabled persons are understood in a better way. The social acceptability of these persons increases. Development of a positive attitude by the family and the community also helps to develop and strengthen self-confidence and social skills among the disabled persons.

**Prof. Narayan Chandra Pati:**  
**Programme für gemeinschaftlich orientierte Rehabilitation (CBR)**  
**in Orissa, Indien**

Während der letzten paar Jahre begann eine Reihe nicht-staatlicher Organisationen (NGOs) mit Programmen der gemeinschaftlich orientierten Rehabilitation (CBR) für Menschen mit Behinderungen. Sie wurden dabei finanziell unterstützt durch ausländische Fonds und das Ministerium für soziale Gerechtigkeit und Stärkung der persönlichen Rechte in Indien. Diese Programme sind normalerweise für Menschen mit allen Arten von Beeinträchtigungen geplant.

Die Ausbildung im häuslichen Bereich hat sowohl Vor- als auch Nachteile: Kinder mit kognitiven Differenzen benötigen eine intensive Ausbildung, die gewöhnlich in häuslichen Programmen nicht möglich ist. Es gibt einige außergewöhnlich motivierte Eltern, diejenigen, die über eine bessere Bildung verfügen als die Sonderschullehrer in der Schule. Aber die breite Mehrheit der Eltern hat leider nicht die Möglichkeit oder die Zeit für die Erziehung und Ausbildung ihrer Kinder, weil die meisten von ihnen gezwungen sind, als Tagelöhner zu arbeiten, um überhaupt ihre Familien unterhalb des Existenzminimums ernähren zu können.

Obwohl einige Leute argumentieren, dass eine Ausbildung in den eigenen vier Wänden für behinderte Kinder im Schul- und Vorschulalter nur mäßigen Erfolg zeigt und ineffektiv ist, hat dies den Vorteil, dass das Kind in der häuslichen Umgebung und in der Gemeinschaft bleiben kann. Die berufliche Rehabilitation der Kinder ist immer besser, wenn sie mit ihren Eltern zusammenleben.

Wenn das Kind von der Familie getrennt ist und eine spezielle Erziehung und Berufsausbildung in einer Sonderschule bzw. einem Sonderausbildungszentrum erhält, kann es für das Kind schwierig werden, sich anschließend wieder in die Familie und die Gesellschaft einzugewöhnen, wenn es von dort zurückkommt.

Deshalb ist eine Ausbildung zu Hause durch Programme der gemeinschaftlich orientierten Rehabilitation eine bessere Alternative für die Bildung und Rehabilitation von Kindern mit kognitiven Differenzen.

Wenn es auch auf der einen Seite schwierig sein mag, den Kindern akademisches Wissen zu Hause beizubringen, so kann doch auf der anderen Seite das Vermitteln von eigenverantwortlichem Handeln („Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe“) und praktischen Fähigkeiten erfolgreich durchgeführt werden.

Man kann den sozialen Einfluss der CBR-Programme auf die Familien und die Gesellschaft nicht ignorieren. Die Behinderungen und Fähigkeiten (Ressourcen) der beeinträchtigten Menschen werden besser verstanden. Die soziale Akzeptanz dieser Personen wächst. Die Entwicklung einer positiven Einstellung durch die Familie und die Gesellschaft verhilft auch dazu, Selbstvertrauen (Kompetenzvertrauen) sowie soziale Fertigkeiten und Fähigkeiten bei den beeinträchtigten Menschen zu entwickeln und zu stärken.

### **Kasturi Mohapatra: Experiences with autistic children at Open Learning Systems in India**

The organization “Open Learning Systems (OLS)” has been recognized by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Government of India, New Delhi) and by the Department of Women and Child Development (Government of Orissa, Bhubaneswar).

It has been declared as a State Nodal Agency Centre (SNAC) of National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.

It is a Training Centre for Diploma in Special Education with special programmes for cerebral palsy diseases and a pioneer organisation working for the care, education, protection and rehabilitation of children with disabilities.

The key point is that we are taking care of children, not of autism. To enjoy life and have fun is the right of every child. Very often children with autism and their families are isolated, because relatives and friends do not understand the children's behaviour, often misinterpret it as the action of a spoiled child and blame the parents for that. Life then becomes a real burden for the mother or the primary caregiver.

Therefore special parents support groups for parents with autistic children help to strengthen and empower families to educate their children for an environment based on inclusion. It is necessary to value the child, to create a warm relationship, to have appropriate expectations, to recognize the positive aspects and resources and give the child responsibility without underestimating his/her abilities.

The siblings of an autistic child need support of the network, too, because they cannot understand their brothers or sisters behaviour, and often their parents expect too much of

them.

The ultimate aim is to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities by accepting the principles of non-discrimination, inclusion and community involvement through partnerships, participation and social integration. These groups campaign for raising the level of awareness of persons with disabilities in the Indian society.

**Kasturi Mohapatra:**  
**Erfahrungen mit autistischen Kindern bei Open Learning Systems in Indien**

Die Organisation „Offene Lernsysteme (OLS)“ ist anerkannt vom Ministerium für soziale Gerechtigkeit und Stärkung der persönlichen Rechte (Regierung von Indien, Neu Delhi) und vom Ministerium zur Förderung von Frauen und Kindern (Regierung von Orissa, Bhubaneswar).

Sie wurde zu einem staatlich anerkannten Handlungszentrum (SNAC) der nationalen Stiftung für die Fürsorge und Wohlfahrt von Personen mit Autismus, cerebralen Lähmungen, geistigen und Mehrfachbehinderungen erklärt.

Es handelt sich um ein Ausbildungszentrum für Diplomstudiengänge in Sonderpädagogik mit speziellen Programmen für spastische Erkrankungen und ist eine Pionier-Organisation, die für die Pflege, Ausbildung, den Schutz und die Rehabilitation von Kindern mit Beeinträchtigungen arbeitet.

Der wichtigste Punkt ist, dass wir uns um die Kinder kümmern, nicht um den Autismus. Das Leben zu genießen und Freude zu haben, ist das Recht jedes Kindes. Sehr oft sind autistische Kinder und ihre Familien isoliert, weil Verwandte und Freunde das Verhalten der Kinder nicht verstehen, es häufig als Handlung eines unerzogenen Kindes falsch interpretieren und den Eltern dafür die Schuld geben. Das Leben wird dann für die Mutter bzw. den vorrangigen Erziehungsberechtigten (bzw. die Bezugsperson) zu einer wirklichen Belastung.

Deshalb helfen spezielle Elternunterstützungsgruppen für Eltern von autistischen Kindern, die Familien zu stärken und sie selbst zu instruieren, ihre Kinder für eine auf Inklusion basierende Umwelt zu erziehen. Es ist notwendig, das Kind wertzuschätzen, eine herzliche Beziehung aufzubauen, angemessene Erwartungen zu haben, die positiven Aspekte und Ressourcen zu erkennen und dem Kind Verantwortung zu übertragen, ohne seine Fähigkeiten zu niedrig zu bewerten.

Die Geschwister eines autistischen Kindes brauchen auch die Unterstützung des Netzwerks, weil sie das Verhalten ihres Bruders bzw. ihrer Schwester nicht verstehen können und ihre Eltern oft zu viel von ihnen erwarten.

Das Endziel ist, gleiche Möglichkeiten für Menschen mit Behinderungen zu gewährleisten

durch die Akzeptanz der Prinzipien von Nicht-Diskriminierung, Inklusion und gesellschaftlicher Einbeziehung in Form von Partnerschaften, Beteiligung und sozialer Integration. Diese Gruppen kämpfen dafür, das Bewusstsein für Menschen mit Beeinträchtigungen in der indischen Gesellschaft zu erhöhen.

### **Prof. Sudhakar Rath**

#### **Circles of support for differentially able people**

According to Census of India estimates, there are 18.53 million differently able / challenged people, corresponding to 1.8% of the total population of India. Of these:

- Physically challenged population 83%
- Mentally challenged population 17%

Mentally challenged comprises of mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, multiple disabilities etc. Mental retardation/ challenged alone constitute 5.37% of the disabled population. Cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities account for 1.48% and 10.63% respectively.

PWD Act 1995 clearly recognizes the following disabilities in India – Visually impairment, Cerebral Palsy, hearing impairment, Leprosy cured persons, locomotor impairment, mentally challenged, mental illness, multiple disabilities. Differently able persons (so called disabled) have the natural rights to live a full, dignified, productive and meaningful life.

Open Learning Systems (OLS) have adopted for intervention the Puri district in which 13 villages (45 Hamlets) and four urban slums have been target areas in the first phase to promote circles of support. 447 children with different disabilities have been identified. To promote rights of the child and social inclusion of child with disability is the major objective and mission of the OLS. The following activities have been planned and executed:

#### Child Rights Clubs:

Through the child rights club (circle of support) the process of inclusion and awareness generation is strengthened. During April 2003 to March 2004, 16 child rights clubs were formed with 129 (69 males and 60 females) children with disabilities. Regular meetings are conducted at least once in every month. Topics are rights of the child, rights of the disabled child, needs and difficulties of the child with disability etc.

#### Home based management programme:

Imparted to children with severe forms of disability or where parents are not able to bring their children to resource centres / child right clubs. Training on self-help skills, parents training, parents counseling etc. are provided. 82 children have been benefited under home-based management programs.

#### Training Programme Conducted:

Training Programme for Anganwadi workers to educate them on (1) Different types and causes of disability (2) How to identify the child with disability and rights of these children;  
Training Programme for PRI Members: Training programme for CBOs and Volunteers;

Training Programme for School Teachers;  
Training Programme for Parents who have children with disabilities.

Establishment of Resource Centres:

Eleven resource centres have been established to provide the required services to children with disability and drop outs. Inclusion of the children with disabilities in the normal school is one of the major objectives of this programme. Sixty-eight disabled children admitted to normal schools and hence integrated in the mainstream of normal children in the schools.

Self-help Groups:

Formation of four Self-Help Groups by the parents of the child with disability to strengthen the circle of support network.

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a comprehensive approach which encompasses disability identification/ intervention, prevention and rehabilitation. It aims to protect and promote the rights of persons with disability to live within their own community, participating in educational, social, cultural and religious activities of the community. CBR approach has the strong potential for enhancing the quality of life of children or persons with disability to an optimum level through full integration with the community.

### **Philip Potter: Transnational learning in networks**

“Circles of support for all people with disabilities and autism in India and the EU” is a transnational project which aims at developing university qualification modules. These modules are especially for the members of higher educational institutions and social service organisations, as well as vulnerable individuals including their support network. The project impacts at four levels. The first one is the level of promoting scientific knowledge. That means gaining a better understanding of the qualities of social networks in EU and India and understanding the patterns of weak and strong ties and formal/informal networks in the respective regions. This is aimed at stimulating learning both within the scientific community and among lay audiences. The second impact level is the one of developing curricula for higher educational institutions and human service agencies and promoting the exchange of knowledge and skills among professionals in human sciences and human services in respect of community education / COS. This is the level of promoting professional knowledge skills. It is targeted at enhancing learning among professionals and institutions in higher education and social/community services, with dissemination to the wider higher educational community and human service NGOs and CBOs. The third level is on promoting social network resources in the participating communities, i.e. encouraging dialogical learning processes between human service professionals and key community activists. Another aspect to this is strengthening and diversifying social networks and informal institutions of civil society. This is aimed at key lay actors in the participating communities, with dissemination to community activists and CBOs in both regions. The last level on which this transnational project impacts is setting up sustainable frameworks for the promotion of COS in the regions in terms of es-

establishing a bilateral India/EU resource centre on COS within the International Community Education Association. This is aimed at decision makers, policy planners and scientists in both regions.

The applied methodology needs to correspond to the characteristics of transnational learning networks. Transnational learning involves dialogical, qualitative social science paradigms employing symmetrical reciprocal learning approaches. Two basic propositions are needed. If communication is to result in learning, its addressees must be taken into account. For knowledge to be transferred, it needs to take into account its context. So transferability is to be understood as a constructive application of lessons learned in other settings. But still there is the problem of generalisation and strongly connected with this the problem of external validity. The framework to accomplish this is a similar value system of all Operational Partners as much as similar intensities of involvement. This project is rather of peers than of command or hierarchical structure, corresponding to network theory. The symmetry is also a requirement of the learning paradigm, which emphasises the benefits to be gained from reciprocity, favouring dialogical interaction in the pursuit of knowledge and skills, which means that it is symmetrical partnership learning. At the same time the composition of the partnership is guided by the opportunities of complementary and synergy. The three higher educational partners represent the complementary human sciences of psychology, social studies and education. In each operational location there is a synergy between educational and social service agencies. An advisory board gives expert consultancy inputs and facilitates the development of a network of experts and external institutions for securing sustainability and mainstreaming.

There are four work packages to this project. The first is the analysis of informal social networks. As the three participating regions are very different it is important to get insights into the social systems as well as into the meaning of disability and aspects of inclusion and exclusion. This is intended to strengthen the cross cultural sensitivity of the partners. Informal social networks, i.e. structures of social support, weak and strong social ties and their functions in social relations, gender roles and historical mechanisms of social cohesion and disintegration will be analysed. The second work package is about curriculum development. Key actors shall be trained in the humanitarian values, scientific orientations and professional techniques of facilitating supportive networks. Their task will be to promote a culture of participation. To gain this we need curricular approaches using intercultural analysis. The approaches shall be used in university settings (psychology, social studies and education departments). Implementation in practice is the task of the third work package. COS groups will be established in community settings. People with support needs, community activists and human service professionals are the active initiators of circles of support. The community must be empowered to organize circles themselves. COS groups also shall be formed in higher educational settings, in which students of human sciences are to be active initiators and members of COS. As the students have a special educational position there will be turnover in trainee participation.

The fourth work package is about internal transnational knowledge transfer. The intercultural understanding among partners will be promoted as well as paradigms (learning not teaching) and mechanisms (group moderation techniques) for transnational communication will be established. This will happen in five steps, by transfer and adaptation of skills and knowledge among partners, where a constructive critical friendship will be established and by promoting scientific curiosity and openness. Further collaborative evaluation will take place. Visitor and

host are to engage in a process of mutual learning. There will also be an exchange of theoretical approaches to learning, scientific methods of generalizing from unique cases.

### **Lennarth Andersson: Community Inclusion in Sweden**

Sweden, which is the 3rd largest (by area) country in Europe is a federal state with known institutions as executive, legislative and judicative. In Sweden there are living 9 million inhabitants in 22 county councils, two regions and 286 local authorities. In the early sixties investigations' results quoted about persons with mentally retardation or autism and what needs they had. 1968 the first special law as an complement to the general social law system was enacted. Special schools decentralized into "normal schools"/special classrooms. Different schedules for special and normal classes were established.

Integration is understood as normalization and inclusion. Integration is the method and the goal. Persons have the right to have a so-called specialist team-support. The training and access to these teams must be given. A high priority for the training of small children who were individually integrated in the "normal" daycare centres with specialist support exists. Personal assistance as well as escort service ( a person who can follow and support by going to sport events, cultural or other events) belong to these extra rights. Help from a personal contact, relief service in the home and short stay away from home can be called on. Also a short period of supervision (real care after school) for schoolchildren over twelve years is included into these rights.

Arrangements for living in a family home or in residential arrangements with special service for children and young people who need to live away from their families can be made. The law also says that there must be small groups, no residential homes for more than five people. As children have these rights on residential arrangements, adults also can live in residential arrangements with special service. Daily activities for people who have no gainful employment nor are doing any kind of training are offered.

The Swedish law never talks about groups but about individual persons. Up to 1971 all children have been included into school and social life. The support they have is paid. As a disabled person you can employ your personal assistance yourself. It is Society's duty to give the needed support to a disabled person. Society has to include its disabled members.

### **Prof. Jagdish Manubhai Shah: The community education movement in India**

India is a democratic nation with a population of more than 1 billion. It has about 600,000 villages. Almost 75 % of the population lives in villages. Among all the nations in the world, India has the largest number of people in the world that survive on less than one U.S. dollar

per day. In 57 years of independence from colonial rule, many mile stones have been attained, but a lot more needs have to be done. Today, the buzz words are “growth” and “development”. This should not be viewed only in economic terms. According to the anthropologists, preservation of traditional culture and heritage is the key to a healthy growth of the community. According to the economists, economic growth is the key. In fact both aspects are equally important. Just as millions of bricks and different materials are needed to make a great building, similarly the efforts of millions of people from all walks of life are necessary to build a healthy community. The process is a great enterprise of adventure and creativity. Whatever is our religion, region, language or culture, we all must work together.

To ensure higher economic growth and more equitable social development, the government of India has identified several areas where non government organizations and volunteer organizations can be partners. These are:

- Education
- Health care
- Agriculture
- Employment empowerment
- Water
- Environment
- Micro financing

The new generation has to learn and has to be educated the new system, because now there are already new methods e. g. in education and agriculture. India has the largest number of NGOs, volunteer organizations, religious organizations and charitable institutions of all countries. The power of people is infinitely greater than the power of government.

Mahatma Gandhi gave an important message to the Indian people: “Each one of us has the power to do good for the nation, if we are determined. Let us all work together to revive the spirit of idealism, self sacrifice and unity of purpose that characterized our freedom struggle.” Therefore the people’s movement in India develops towards people solving their own problems by themselves.

### **Jagdish Manubhai Shah: Die gesellschaftliche Bildungsbewegung in Indien**

Indien ist ein demokratischer Staat mit einer Bevölkerung von über einer Billion. Es hat ca. 600.000 Dörfer. Fast 75 % der Bevölkerung lebt auf dem Lande. Unter allen Nationen auf der Welt hat Indien die höchste Zahl an Leuten, die mit weniger als einem US-Dollar pro Tag auskommen müssen. In den 57 Jahren der Unabhängigkeit von der Kolonialherrschaft wurden viele Meilensteine erreicht, aber noch weitaus mehr muss getan werden. Heute sind die Modewörter „Wachstum“ und „Entwicklung“. Diese sollten jedoch nicht nur unter wirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten gesehen werden. Laut den Anthropologen ist der Erhalt der traditionellen Kultur und des Erbes der Schlüssel zu einem gesunden gesellschaftlichen Wachstum. Laut den Wirtschaftswissenschaftlern ist ökonomisches Wachstum der Schlüssel. Tatsäch-

lich sind beide Aspekte gleich wichtig. So wie Millionen von Ziegelsteinen und verschiedenen Materialien benötigt werden, um ein großes Gebäude zu errichten, so sind in vergleichbarem Maße auch die Anstrengungen von Millionen Leuten aus allen Lebensbereichen erforderlich, um eine gesunde Gesellschaft aufzubauen. Der Prozess ist ein großes abenteuerliches und kreatives Unternehmen. Was auch immer wir für eine Religion, Region, Sprache oder Kultur haben, wir müssen alle zusammen arbeiten.

Um einen höheren Wirtschaftswachstum und eine gerechtere soziale Entwicklung zu gewährleisten, hat die indische Regierung mehrere Bereiche legitimiert, in denen NGOs und freiwillige Organisationen Partner sein können. Diese sind:

- Bildung
- Gesundheitsvorsorge
- Landwirtschaft
- Stärkung der Beschäftigten
- Wasser
- Umwelt
- Mikrofinanzierung

Die neue Generation muss das neue System lernen und beigebracht bekommen, weil es jetzt bereits neue Methoden z. B. im Bildungs- und Landwirtschaftsbereich gibt. Von allen Ländern hat Indien die größte Anzahl von NGOs, freiwilligen Organisationen, religiösen Organisationen und karitativen Institutionen. Die Stärke des Volkes ist unendlich größer als die Stärke der Regierung.

Mahatma Gandhi gab der indischen Bevölkerung eine wichtige Botschaft mit auf den Weg: „Jeder von uns hat die Stärke, Gutes für die Nation zu tun, wenn wir dafür bestimmt sind. Lasst uns zusammenarbeiten, um den Geist des Idealismus, der Selbstaufopferung und der Zweckgemeinschaft wieder zu beleben, der unseren Freiheitskampf charakterisierte.“ Dadurch entwickelt sich die Volksbewegung in Indien dahin, dass die Menschen ihre Probleme selbst und eigenständig lösen.

### **Bent Vandborg Sørensen: Participation and Inclusion of people with autism in Denmark**

Bent Vandborg Sørensen, director of Langerskolen in Aarhus, Denmark referred on participation and inclusion of people with autism spectrum disorders in Denmark and some actual dilemmas.

First and foremost he stated the importance of understanding the spectrum of autistic disorders. The impairments are to be found in social interaction, social communication and imaginative thought. Before the 21st century statistics often showed a prevalence of 4 in 10.000. New research shows that the number has increased to thirty to sixty people with autism spectrum disorders in ten thousand.

Although there are no special laws for handicapped people in Denmark, there exists an awareness on the situation of disabled people. The Danish Parliament has stated four principles for intervention for disabled persons. They are (1) nearness, (2) minimum of interference, (3) integration and (4) efficiency. Denmark has signed the so called Salamanca declaration.

An example is the Danish school system. All children in Denmark are covered by the same law - also children with special needs. An interesting fact is an increasing number of students in the Danish public school with special needs or in direct need of special education. The normal, existing school system faces severe difficulties in dealing with the actual extent of special needs, the official ideal being an open and local public school with room for all children.

In addition to this, parents of people with disabilities - needless to say - demand politicians as well as schools and social services to act. Public scepticism on these actions are widespread. On one hand it is eligible to include people with disabilities in normal schools. On the other hand objections exist on how inclusion is understood by the political system, in particular that it is a way of solving local financial problems. Cut-backs on special need expenses and lack of expertise in local communities seems to worsen the situation.

Keeping the four principles in mind it is important to consider whether nearness always means one's local neighbourhood; whether minimum of interference always means that people should be left alone with their problems as long as possible; whether integration and inclusion means that a normal classroom in the local school always is the best solution. One must not forget that there are situations in which people with disability cannot be included in say a normal school. The degree of special knowledge etc. sometimes simply do not exist as such in a general context.

Having these questions asked, what is efficiency then? There is a real gap between the concrete special needs of people within the autistic spectrum and the actual spectrum of services. Specialization is a necessity in an inclusive society, When not available in inclusion lack of knowledge etc. is at the expense of people with handicap resulting in often severely reduced quality of life. Efficiency is a question of available service and help when needed. Inclusion without acces to special knowledge and services is not only inefficant, it is morally questionable.

An educational system can work in a flexible way. Examples on how different levels of specialisation can work were demonstrated e.g. :

- Extra support in the normal classroom, allocating extra time and extra teachers.
- Support outside the classroom.
- Special classroom within a normal local or regional school.
- A specialized school.

Inclusion often focuses on access to education and possibility for positive experiences in life. Challenges in service to people with autism in this (and other) context are e.g.:

- to recognize and reduce vulnerability

- to enhance social and functional communication and reduce anxiety
- improving concentration and motivation
- help to become independent.

It is beyond all questions that these exercises are multifarious. Therefore the cooperation of relevant professionals and parents is absolutely basic.

To achieve good inclusion in normal school there is a need of positive attitudes among personnel and other students. People with autism must be enabled to access academic content and qualifying exams as well as being advanced in social learning. One has to focus on their individual prerequisites. The access to relevant support and supervision is basic. Among these criteria the physical context must not be forgotten. It is also important to dispose of materials, rooms etc.

This requires a realistic plan. The involved staff must possess the necessary knowledge and be able to use it. Agreement and support must be consistent among the staff. Special resources must be available when needed. The access to support and supervision must be established in advance.

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) has to be accepted and understood as a specific handicap. This is the first step for inclusion. Is there enough information on ASD for the staff, and is it accessible to everyone? Other students must be explained what the handicap is all about. Is the school in question as such ready for the challenge?

A school's personnel need to know some facts about ASD:

- Learning problems due to extreme difficulties in attention shift.
- There might be problems in communication as well as in understanding spoken language and literature.
- There is inaptness in understanding intention like e.g. irony.
- Unusual stress and anxiety are often to be found.
- Data and information are kept in mind differentially.

There are some hints on how one has to act and react to make inclusion function. Students with ASD need to know the answers to some fundamental questions. These can be summarized as follows:

- What am I to do?
- How am I to do it?
- Where am I to do it?
- Who am I to do it with?
- When am I to do it?
- When have I finished?
- What happens afterwards?

**Prof. Asha Hans:  
Women, disability and civil society**

Professor Asha Hans, of the Department of Political Science and the Centre for Women's Studies, Utkal University, spoke on the theme of "Women, disability and civil society". She focused on the condition of indigenous women in the State of Orissa, and on programme activities in favour of improving their social and economic conditions.

Indigenous women are not only key participants in agricultural work, they also are responsible for homemaking and childcare. They only receive a limited degree of support from institutional services, with antenatal care being unevenly provided in the rural areas, and persistent food insecurity for many families. Grave problems exist for women in the form of violence and economic and social discrimination. In indication of this, rape and dowry cases have risen steadily over the last decade.

One type of response to these conditions has been programmes designed by women. Such programmes focus on the patriarchal system, on poverty and seasonality in employment, and on low awareness levels. The programmes have targeted improvements in the Govt. health delivery system but in particular on women's decision making powers and problems of incentives and disincentives. Community based rehabilitation has tackled the problems of hearing, visual and physical disability, providing physiotherapy, literacy, housing, health centres and community centres. Including women with disabilities in general programmes (for example, through micro credit schemes) has contributed to empowerment.