



## *The Chair Speaks.....*



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Chair, Engage Disability  
Director General, Catholic Health Association of India

I was at a Christmas concert recently and was struck by the image of how closely a choir resembles the Engage Disability Network. The particular choir comprised men and women from different backgrounds and ages ranging between 18 and 79. They all have auditioned to be part of the choir and were obviously good singers individually. But they had spent three months prior to the concert learning to sing with each other.

Being a chorister means not only learning your part in the song but also learning to listen to those around you so that you blend in with them. It is not about individual performances; and yet, each individual's part matters. It is in the coming together of these voices that the listeners are carried away on an emotional roller-coaster ride. It takes each one of these voices, harmonizing with each other, to do so.

How very like the network! We all bring different experiences and varied skills to the table. In the network, it is not about individual performances because each part matters! It will require all our voices blending together to reach our brothers and sisters with disabilities from across the country with the message of love and welcome that Christ brings. As we face the new year with its many opportunities, may we to go beyond the boundaries so that we could reach many more.

Wishing you a blessed year ahead!  
Happy reading!

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## Dialogue in the Dark - Worldwide

Dialogue in the Dark is a brand of Dialogue Social Enterprise with a mission to facilitate social inclusion of visually-impaired and disabled people on a global basis. The concept of Dialogue in the Dark was founded by Dr. Andreas Heinecke in 1989 in Germany, to break the Prejudice about blindness and bring awareness on the lack of access to education and the labor market among the visually-impaired. The goal of Dialogue in the Dark is;

- Changing the mindset of the public on disability & diversity and increase up tolerance for “otherness”
- Providing employment for visually-impaired people around the world.

## Global Impact

Today, Dialogue in the Dark is an international network with presence in more than 41 countries as Exhibition, Workshops, Dinner in the Dark or an additional edutainment formats in their cultural context. More than 9 million visitors have gone through an experience in the Dark and thousands of blind guides and facilitators find employment through exhibitions and workshops. Internationally acclaimed, Dialogue in the Dark is one of the best-known social business concepts worldwide.



## Dialogue in the Dark (DID) - Mission

Dialogue in the Dark was brought to India by Mr. SV Krishnan. In 2009, while waiting for a delayed flight in Atlanta, USA, Krishnan stumbled upon an exhibit of Dialogue in the Dark and was immensely enthralled by its powerful message. Dialogue in the Dark's mission is to facilitate social inclusion of blind and disabled people on a global basis. This impactful experience inspired Krishnan to the setup Dialogue in the Dark (DID) in Hyderabad, India in 2011 and has since expanded to Chennai. DID has been presented in a touring format across 60 locations in India.

## Why is Dialogue in the Dark the best way to sensitize?

Dialogue in the Dark (DID) draws inspiration from Einstein's words that aptly describes our approach to sensitize India about the abilities of PwD's through a Dialogue in the dark experience.

Dialogue in the Dark is an unconventional and powerful experience which addresses the very key issue which has hindered the development of PwDs in an impactful way. Dialogue in the Dark allows you to step into the shoes of the visually impaired, experience their way of living, understand their challenges and their abilities. Giving us a first-hand experience of how a disabled person can lead an independent life.





*"What you hear, you remember for minutes  
 What you see, you remember for days  
 What you memorize, you remember for months  
 What you experience becomes a part of you."  
 - Albert Einstein*

## ENGAGE EVENTS

### Family Retreat: Hyderabad

Hyderabad Hub of Engage Disability Network organized a 3-day Family Retreat for families affected by disabilities from 14th to 16th October, 2018 at CHAI Training Center, Medchal with the support of Joni & Friends, The Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) and Engage Disability (ED). There were 40 people including 8 families with their kids and the volunteers from in and around Secunderabad. Each volunteer was assigned to each family. The retreat was aimed at families touched by disability to provide an opportunity for fun and leisure in the comfort of a safe and accessible environment.

For more information kindly visit our website @:  
<http://engagedisability.com/2018/08/19/family-retreat-hyderabad/>

### Dialogue in the Dark in India

#### Hyderabad

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## Family Retreat: Dimapur

The first Family Retreat organized by the Arukah Network North East Cluster was held from 1st to the 3rd December 2018 at WSBK Centre at Thahekhu Village with a participation of 12 children with disabilities and their families with support and collaboration from 31 short-term missionaries. This retreat was held in association with Joni and friend. The retreat finished with a special celebration on the occasion of the World Disability Day.



## Meeting with families at Chittoor

Through the GFI Church, a camp was organised at Chittoor on 10th October, 2018, wherein 9 children with disabilities and their primary caregivers were seen by a team from Engage disability network. The children were assessed and referred for specific interventions.

## Orientation Programme to Pastors: Chittoor

On 11th October 2018, GFI Church organized the orientation programme on Engage Disability at GFI hall. Total of 35 participants from various walks of life like pastors, members of Christian NGOs, Community health workers and women leaders attended the meeting. The participants were helped to think through what the response of the church should be to disability.

## Workshop on Livelihood by CMAI

CMAI along with the GFI Church in Chittoor organised a workshop for pastors/ leaders/social workers on 26th November 2018. They are around 35 participants were participated in the workshop from the different denominations



# Events in the Network

## Other Events

More-Able Churches Guidelines from 31st August – 1st September 2018, at CSI Centre

CSI involved Heads of the Institutions who deal with the Disability and Representatives from all the dioceses who work with Disability and from other organizations to brainstorm about the possible elements to be taken into account for Disability Guidelines for the CSI. Engage disability network was also represented at the discussion.

## Disability Health Camp

Two health camps were organised by the GFI Church. On 11th October, it was organised in the leprosy colony in Chittoor and 55 persons with disabilities availed of the services. On 25th October, 2018 disability health Camp was conducted in Bangarupalem town School. 120 people participated, among them 40 were Children with disabilities and were referred to CMC hospital, Chittoor campus for different treatments.

## Engage Disability in the Church – Yadagirigutta;

CMAI organized the Workshop on Engage disability at Grace Church on 29th September 2018, situated in Yadagirigutta about 65 kms away from Hyderabad. The church focusses on working with commercial sex workers and with people with disabilities and children. The Workshop was on Introduction to disability and Education.



## Institute on Disability – Nagpur

Held between 19th and 22nd November, 2018 at Nagpur, the Institute of Disability was organised by NCCI IDEA and World Vision. The institute aimed at identifying and responding to key issues arising in the disability sector, especially looking at various expressions of the Church responding to these needs.

## Resources

“Barrier Free World” – Disability channel

Started by a person with locomotor disability and with an IT background, the Youtube channel “Barrier Free World” has more than 130 videos available. The videos focus on rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities, issues surrounding communication accessibility and other relevant topics.

Please click on the link below to explore more:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/barrierfreeworld>

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Core Group – Face to Face Meeting**

**Date: 08 and 09 March, 2019**

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*Engage. Include. Be inspired.*