



Asia
Society

India Centre

Asia Society India Centre Monsoon Edition 2010

In This Issue...

Message from the Executive Director

Highlights:

- [InspirED: An Interview with Raj Mundra](#)
- [Women Leaders of New Asia Conference, Hong Kong](#)
- [Sustainable Cities: Frameworks for Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure and Finance](#)

Featured Web Content

- [Current Realities and Future Possibility in Burma/Myanmar](#)

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Monsoon 2010 edition of the quarterly newsletter from the Asia Society India Centre. As always, we hope this newsletter serves as a way for our members to stay informed about key developments at the Asia Society India Centre, and at our other centres worldwide.

This quarter, the Asia Society continued to host an array of programmes across our centres, from high-level strategic discussions to public education events. These included a diplomatic dialogue and reception by His Excellency Husain Haqqani, Ambassador of Pakistan, for Asia Society members and friends in the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC; and Asia Week in New York, featuring the city's largest and most diverse series of cultural events from Asia.

This August, the Asia Society India Centre will be partnering in a ground-breaking education conference called *InspirED*, spearheaded by Raj Mundra from Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, USA. This edition features an exclusive interview with him about the upcoming conference.

We also feature highlights from the Women Leaders of New Asia conference hosted by the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre. The successful three day summit acknowledged the many achievements of women in Asia's changing societies, and created a strong network for communication and collaboration on key issues facing the public and private sectors.

Then, we bring you our latest update from the *UrbanAsia* series, a panel discussion on the challenges and opportunities in building sustainable cities. Our final section introduces you to the Asia Society's Special Task Force on policy recommendations for engagement with Burma/Myanmar.

As the Asia Society grows, I trust you find that we deepen our commitment to addressing some of the most relevant issues across Asia and the US, ranging from education to policy and business development. We are encouraged by the increasing popularity of our programmes, and will strive to continue serving your interests and those of our mandate.

Quick Link

www.asiasociety.org/centers/india

Upcoming Events

www.asiasociety.org/events

6 August
Asia in Those Days: A Visual Representation of Early Europeans in Asia, Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai

18 August
Tarun Khanna, Harvard Business School Professor, on Winning Strategies in Emerging Markets, Taj Mahal Palace and Towers, Mumbai

18-22 August
NETPAC Conference: The Culture and Politics of Asian Cinema, Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi

27-29 August
InspirED: Innovate. Educate. Lead. Transform Education, American School of Bombay, Mumbai

Founding Members

AIG

Nita & Mukesh Ambani

Amita & Purnendu Chatterjee

DLF Private Limited

Pheroza & Jamshyd Godrej

Hinduja Group India Limited

Jet Airways

Sangita & Sajjan Jindal

Kotak Mahindra Bank

Lehman Brothers

Poonam & Jaidev Shroff

If you are not already a member, we look forward to you joining us. As a membership organization, the Asia Society relies on the contributions of its supporters to build the quality of its activities. Please see our membership form for more information, and feel free to contact us with any questions: <http://www.asiasociety.org/support/membership/india>.

Starting this July until December 2010, **if you refer a friend for membership with us, we will send you a free Asia Society India Centre mug as a thank you gift!**

The Asia Society's Events Calendar (<http://www.asiasociety.org/events-calendar>) will continue to keep you informed about our upcoming events, and you can also stay in touch with us through the Asia Society India Centre's facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/AsiaSocietyIndiaCentre>).

Our next newsletter will reach you in October 2010. Until then, we welcome your inputs about the newsletter and our programmes, and hope to see you at one of our upcoming events!

Bunty Chand
Executive Director
Asia Society India Centre

InspirED: An Interview with Raj Mundra



From August 27-29, two hundred of India's most innovative school teachers and administrators will gather in Mumbai for a groundbreaking three-day conference, "InspirED", aimed at inspiring improvements in education through innovative approaches to education and establishing a network of Indian education professionals. The Asia Society India Centre is co-hosting this conference with the Akanksha Foundation, Teach for India, and the American School of Bombay.

Raj Mundra of the Phillips Academy in Massachusetts, USA, who led the conceptualization of this conference, joined us for an interview to talk about InspirED.

What inspired you to create InspirED?

There are many ways to support the current state of education in India. This past year, I have been on a sabbatical from Phillips Academy (USA) and I wanted to partner with excellent Indian organizations involved in the education sector.

I have many years of experience in developing professional development programs for teachers in South Asia and East Africa, and I have learned that schools, principals and teachers need support from many areas to deliver excellent quality education.

InspirED is an initiative to bring together innovative approaches to improving education. I brought together leaders from the Asia Society India Centre, Teach for India, American School of Bombay and Akanksha to partner in this initiative. They all approach education in different ways and this was a timely opportunity for them to collaborate on this conference. My hope is that this high level professional development conference will lead to a dynamic network of Indian education professionals at the K-10 level, and also bring together stakeholders to collaborate and take action for the future of Indian education.

You have taught both in India and the US. What do you think both countries' education systems have to learn from each other?

The interactions between teacher and student in the classroom are similar in many ways. Teachers want students to learn the fundamentals of reading, writing, maths, history...

Board of Directors

Purnendu Chatterjee
Vishakha Desai
Pheroza Godrej
Dheeraj G. Hinduja
Sajjan Jindal
Sunil Mehta
Falguni Nayar
Rashmi Poddar
Jaidev Shroff
Rajiv Singh

Asia Society India Centre Staff

Purwa Bansod
Programme Associate
purwabansod@asiasociety.org.in

Bunty Chand
Executive Director
buntychand@asiasociety.org.in

Komal Hiranandani
Programme Assistant
komalhiranandani@asiasociety.org.in

George Jose
Programme Director
georgejose@asiasociety.org.in

Moomal Mehta
Senior Business Development Officer
moomalmehta@asiasociety.org.in

Rachna Shah
Office Manager
admin@asiasociety.org.in

Shuba Visweswaran
Senior Programme Officer
shubav@asiasociety.org.in

Phone: +91 22 6610 0888
Fax: +91 22 6610 0887

students want to be engaged, find relevance in what they are studying, and have many opportunities for the future.

The US education system emphasizes more creative thinking, project work, and extracurricular activities. Here, I have been impressed with the work ethic of many Indian students, the support from their families, and the determination to overcome many obstacles within the system.

Recently Kapil Sibal met with Hilary Clinton, US Secretary of State, and Arne Duncan, US Secretary of Education, to establish a bi-national India-US Education Council having academics, entrepreneurs and government representatives as members. These types of initiatives at this level of leadership are critical in changing our education system to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I am also encouraged that citizens in both countries are also increasing becoming more involved in supporting education at home, in partnerships with schools, and in the larger community.

Support for improving education needs to happen at all levels and include every sector. The InspirED conference will highlight this with an innovative program on our opening night.

Education in India faces problems from absenteeism to inaccessibility in rural areas. How do you think that innovation in the classroom—a major theme of InspirED—will overcome this?

There needs to be a detailed review of education in rural areas. There are many different types of challenges—some are systemic and others are within schools. At InspirED, we will highlight innovative and effective approaches led by Principals and teachers to overcome these challenges.

It is the resiliency, determination and creative problem solving that these educators demonstrate that we want to share with other educators and stakeholders. As we develop strategies for how to improve education, we should listen carefully to the many inspiring and successful stories from schools around India.

What's next? How do you hope the conference will leave a continued impact on education in India?

Teachers are the greatest resource for how we can improve any education system. The InspirED conference is one of the first forums in India to bring together innovative educators. We hope that this group of teachers will emerge as a powerful network of education leaders. Our website, www.inspiredindia.in, will provide an important on-line platform for this group as well as other teachers to learn from each other and raise the bar for quality education in India. This network of educators and leaders who support education will grow in the upcoming years.

The time is right. The leadership is there. Citizens want change and can see how an improved education system is critical to the development of the nation. As we prepare for this conference I am inspired by the two quotes:

Education is the basic tool for the development of consciousness and reconstitution of society. - Mahatma Gandhi

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

If you are an educator interested in attending InspirED, please visit the website for application information: <http://www.inspiredindia.in>

About Asia Society

Asia Society is the leading global and pan-Asian organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders, and institutions of the United States and Asia. We seek to increase knowledge and enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of arts and culture, policy and business, and education.

Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, and Washington, DC.

Charles R. Kaye, Chairman,
Board of Trustees

Vishakha N. Desai, President

Mailing List, Membership, and More

For more information on the following, please email admin@asiasociety.org.in.

- Upcoming events
- Join the mailing list
- Individual membership
- Corporate Membership

If you would like to react, offer suggestions, or comment on any of the content you've read in this newsletter, we would be happy to hear from you. Please write to asiasociety@asiasociety.org.in. We look forward to your active participation in the Asia Society India Centre community.

Thank you!

Women Leaders of New Asia Conference, Hong Kong

From June 12th to 14th, the Asia Society held the inaugural summit of the Women Leaders of New Asia Conference in Hong Kong. As part of the Asia Society's commitment to fostering relationships in culture, business and global affairs, this initiative was undertaken to fill in the lack of networks for professional Asian women, despite the rising role that they are coming to occupy in our society. The summit served as a community of key women leaders to build relationships and address crucial issues regarding gender and leadership in a changing world.



The Women Leaders of New Asia conference was the first truly Pan-Asian women's forum, facilitating innovative collaborations that incorporate best practices, and leveraging Asia Society's unique role and ability to foster strong partnerships on both sides of the Pacific. As Asia's dominance in global affairs grows, this network seeks to provide a bridge to organizations in America that have cultural, political or business connections to Asia.

The conference worked to develop a paradigm of leadership that went beyond mastering western codes of personal and professional development, recognizing the rise of Asia and the changing role of women in the region. Introductions were made, interactions were facilitated around common objectives or projects, and an informal framework for feedback was established. The June 2010 meeting served as a point of departure for this multi-year initiative. The Leadership Initiative will attempt to structure "partnerships for the future" between groups of senior and emerging leaders. These partnerships will be formed across geographies and sectors and around areas of mutual interest.

Representatives from India included Mallika Sarabhai, artist, dancer and activist; Vani Tripathi, National Secretary of the Bharatiya Janta Party; Deepali Bhagat, senior advisor to Catalyst engaged in developing knowledge products on women's status in India; Ameeta Mehra, Managing Director of Usha Stud Farms; Nivruti Rai, Director of Intel Corporation's Atom and SOC Development Group in India; and Harshbeena Zaveri, President of NRB Bearings Limited in India.

Visit our website to learn more: <http://sites.asiasociety.org/womenleaders/>

Sustainable Cities: Frameworks for Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure and Finance



On May 31, 2010, the Asia Society India Centre co-hosted a panel discussion on Sustainable Development with the Harvard Business School. In a presentation entitled *Sustainable Cities: Frameworks for Entrepreneurship, Infrastructure and Finance*, Harvard Business School Lecturer **John Macomber** explained that good government leadership can be the saving element to ensure efficient and optimal urban growth. He was joined by panelists **Ravi Raheja**, Director of the real estate and infrastructure company, the K. Raheja Group, and **Sanjay Ubale**, former India Administrative Service Officer and Managing Director of Tata Realty and

Infrastructure.

Macomber explained that India's growing dilemma of increasing population and decreasing resources can be addressed with design and entrepreneurship. Among his main topics was probing the potential at the intersection of finance and planning. Infrastructure, he found, combats the scarcity of resources by making resources go further. NGOs, investors, private companies and entrepreneurs can contribute to sustainable development by investing in

infrastructure. The two panelists supplemented Macomber's theoretical and case-study-based approach with their own experiences of dealing with infrastructure in the government and business fields, revealing some of their own secrets to success along the way.

Raheja emphasized the importance of not blindly following foreign models of design- local infrastructure limits, power supply efficiency and local climate must be kept in mind. For instance, making tall glass buildings in Mumbai to mimic the Manhattan skyline will overburden cooling technologies and raise power bills in Mumbai's intense heat. Ubale lamented that bad governance can wash out good infrastructure, but Tata would prefer to invest in a place with decent infrastructure but great leadership. This is because, in India, the private sector can create any lacking infrastructure. Mumbai's curse in this regard is that the government takes for granted the demand to enter and develop in the city. Meanwhile, cities like Hyderabad and Bengaluru strategise on how to set policies that attract investors.

This brought Macomber to the conclusion that good governance hovers as the soft power that can trump all other issues by making policies that would facilitate investment in infrastructure. On their part, NGOs and private companies can play a productive role in infrastructure investment, and in thoughtfully strategizing development plans that keeps local needs and local resource scarcities in mind.

The UrbanAsia Series brings together experts from various fields to address issues of urbanization in a multi-disciplinary manner. The series attempts to incite dialogue and catalyze action on both the challenges and benefits of growth in Asia's cities.

Current Realities and Future Possibility in Burma/Myanmar

An Asia Society Task Force Report

The Asia Society recently launched its Special Task Force Report, *Current Realities and Future Possibilities in Burma/Myanmar: Options for U.S. Policy*. This policy review comes at crucial time for relations between Burma and the West. In September 2009, the United States announced a new course in its policy toward Burma following a review undertaken by the Obama administration. Recognizing that decades of isolation and sanctions have done little to influence change in Burma, the U.S. introduced a policy of "pragmatic engagement," initiating efforts to expand channels of communication with Burma's military leaders.



The Task Force assesses the new policy direction and provides recommendations for how the U.S. can best pursue this path of engagement. By tying improvements in the bilateral relationship to concrete actions on the part of the Burmese leadership, the report elaborates how elements of the policy recommendations might play out according to both negative and positive developments. In addition to the report of the Task Force, the Asia Society is simultaneously releasing a wide-ranging review of Asian policy toward Burma, incorporating perspectives from leading experts in nine Asian countries, including Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Japan, Singapore, and Thailand.

The Asia Society New York Centre hosted a discussion on the findings and recommendations outlined in the Task Force's report and the collection of reports from Asia. Task Force Co-Chairs, General (ret.) Wesley Clark and Henrietta Fore, along with Priscilla Clapp, former U.S. Chief of Mission in Burma, were joined by the Asia Society's Director of Policy Studies Suzanne DiMaggio. The Asia Society India Centre followed this with an evening panel discussion in New Delhi with Indian Ambassadors Ranjit Gupta, Santosh Kumar and Shyam Saran. Find more information on the task force report here: www.AsiaSociety.org/BurmaMyanmarReport.