



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **ANNOUNCING THE TRANSASIAN ALLIANCE ON TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES FOR INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITIES**

DECEMBER 30, 2014



# **Announcing the TransAsian Alliance on Transforming Communities for Inclusion of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities**

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## **TransAsia Alliance on Transforming Communities for Inclusion of Persons with Psycho-social Disabilities [TCI-ASIA]**

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) sets the global standard for the inclusion and full and effective participation of persons with disabilities. However, people with psychosocial disabilities and users and survivors of psychiatry in Asia continue to live lives of discrimination and exclusion. High income and Common Wealth Asian countries e.g. Korea, China, Japan, India, and other nations of erstwhile colonies, have mental health legislations with accompaniment of many tens of penal type of mental institutions, using forced treatment. In such countries Psychosocial Disability is criminalized. On the other hand, many countries in Asia are bereft of any kind of community support systems for people with psychosocial disabilities. Some of those countries are poised for drafting and adopting a Mental health law, contrary to world experience of vast human rights violations within institutions. The Asian region is geographically, culturally and linguistically diverse with complex social systems. Devising strategies for Inclusion of persons with disabilities has to factor in this dynamism through local mental health programs integrated with community development.

Through two conferences, (Pune, 2013 and Bangkok, 2014) a 'TransAsian Alliance on Transforming Communities for Inclusion of Persons with Psychosocial Disabilities' (TCI-Asia) was formed. TCI-Asia is an alliance of DPOs, and individuals with psychosocial disabilities and users and survivors of psychiatry from Asia, working towards ensuring the full inclusion of persons with psychosocial disabilities in the Asian region. We work in collaboration with cross disability movement and other key supporters in the region and globally, to influence policy at national and regional level in Asia.

The Conference on Transforming Communities for Inclusion – I, held in Pune, where 6 countries from the region participated, highlighted the need to have an Asian frame for advocacy on our Inclusion. We needed inclusive strategies that connect constructively with the cross disability movement; and also persistently engage in dialogue with various regional and global efforts such as the United Nations mechanisms, the WHO, and allied policy frames, to realize the UNCRPD in Asia. Another highlight of the Pune conference was the **strength of**

**Article 19** (Living independently and being included in communities) in effecting the **spirit of the UNCRPD**, especially in Asian region where social and cultural fabric is still strong and negotiable; and where not all social relationships are contractual and neighbourhood & community concepts exist. At this Conference, there were learnings from study visits and sharings on community based efforts at inclusion (both by self advocates as well as by social workers) in the Asian region.

The Conference on Transforming Communities II developed these learnings further and worked intensively over 4 days in Bangkok on the normative, social and other processual aspects of Inclusion of persons with (psycho-social) Disabilities. The glaring difference on aspects of Inclusion, between countries with mental health legislations (Korea, Japan, China, India) and those without (Nepal, Philippines, SriLanka, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand) was evident. This Conference reiterated the importance of implementing Article 19 in Asian region, and Inclusion within Development processes.

The present priorities of TCI-Asia are:

- 1) Advocate through Strategy / position papers, in countries where mental institutions exist, for a process of De-institutionalization
- 2) Influence country policies so that they develop community based mental health programs for people with mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities, with an accent on Alternatives
- 3) Work closely with cross disability and human rights movements in-country and regionally to ensure our inclusion in disability advocacy for the region at various levels
- 4) Facilitate through Missions and Pilots in Asia, that governments ensures the implementation of Article 19 through vibrant community development efforts
- 5) Organize better as an organization for effective advocacy in the region