

# Building Research and Self-Advocacy Networks with Colleagues in the Asia/Pacific Region

by Trevor R Parmenter AM



In the lead up to the IASSIDD 15th World Congress held at the Melbourne Convention Centre in August 2016, and with the support of the Congress Patron, Professor Fiona Stanley AC FAA FAASA, a grant was secured from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to support the participation of 14 researchers and 12 Self Advocates with Support Persons from Low and Middle Income Countries (LMIC) in the Asia/Pacific Region.

In addition to providing the opportunity for these people to enjoy participating in an important international meeting, where they were able to attend presentations and make new friends, DFAT is also committed to building research capacity and the growth of self-advocacy across the region.

Many of the scholarship holders were able to meet Australian researchers and self-advocates during the course of the Congress, but DFAT is also committed to encouraging a significant follow-up, whereby Australian Researchers and Self Advocacy organisations might initiate contacts that may lead to more lasting relationships with our colleagues in our neighbouring countries.

In comparison to colleagues in MMIC, we are relatively much better off in terms of our disability support services and research efforts. We also have Self-Advocacy organisations with a long history of development which could be shared.

I am hopeful that ASID members might consider contacting one or more of the DFAT Scholarship awardees to offer support in sharing common interests, possibly

establishing research collaborations, or at least just communicating with them to learn of the problems facing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in our neighbouring countries.

IASSIDD has submitted a report to DFAT on the immediate outcomes realised by the Scholarship awardees, but a further report on longer term outcomes is required after the IASSIDD Regional Conference being held in Bangkok in November, 2017.

ASID has a long history of commitment to people with intellectual disability within the borders of Australia and New Zealand. If possible, I urge members to reach out beyond our borders to colleagues, who in most cases, lack to resources we are fortunate to have.

Attached (see next page) are the email addresses and interests of the Scholarship awardees, whom I am confident would appreciate a message of support. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional details.

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## DFAT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

### RESEARCHERS

- Jayanthi Narayan -INDIA, Special Education  
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- Eamin Zahan Heanoy – BANGLADESH, Psychology  
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### SELF-ADVOCATES

- Sarah Dela Rosa - PHILIPPINES, F  
Sarah is involved in W-DARE (Women with  
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- Ram Prasad Dhungana - NEPAL, M  
(President of National Centre for  
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He is also a researcher with a MA degree  
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- Ngugen Vu Khank Duong - VIETNAM, M  
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- Channtey Heng - CAMBODIA, F  
( Channtey is a strong Disability Activist in  
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- Sefanaia Vakarau Valesimede - FIJI, M  
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