



GLOBAL VISION FOR YOUNG TIBETANS 2017

Global Vision for Young Tibetans (GVYT hereafter) Conference is a biennial yet one of the most significant events being organized by Empowering the Vision (ENVISION) project since its inception in 2007. GVYT 2017 was held in Lugsam Tibetan settlement, Bylakuppe in Karnataka from December 13-17, 2017. Mindful Tibetan with a Global Vision as the guiding motto, the GVYT 2017 Conference held in one of the largest Tibetan settlement in exile enlisted the participation of over sixty young Tibetans (including young speakers) who came from Nepal, Dharamsala, Delhi, Baroda, Mysore and Bangalore. The panels of the conference with its two main components motivational and learning session endeavored to engage the potential and the enthusiasm of the youth into self and community development, while celebrating the achievements and contributions of many of them.



CONFERENCE REPORT



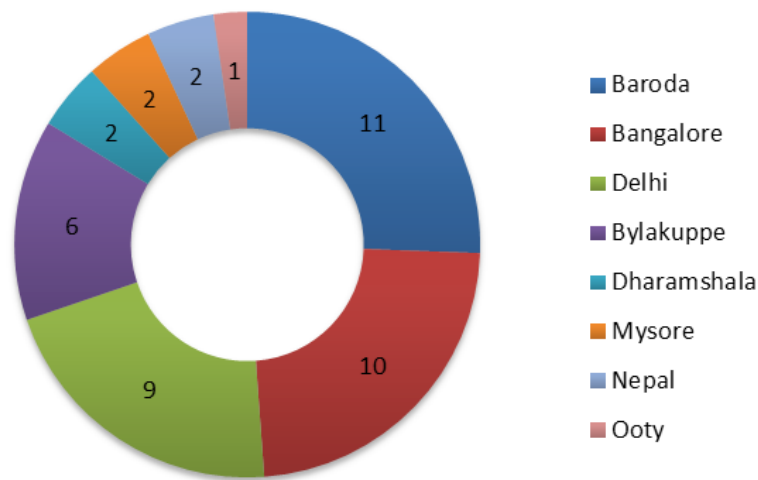
The Conference started on 13th December evening with the orientation program for participants at Sakya Monastery Hall. The following day on 14th December, the inaugural session at Lugsam Nyamdrel Hall began in the presence of the Chief Guest Prof. Dr Siddiq Wahid, Director of the Institute for Kashmir Studies in Kashmir and Guest of Honour, Dr B Tsering, Director of Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Studies where officials and community leaders of Lugsam and Dekyi Larsoe, the two Bylakuppe Tibetan Settlements were also invited.

With the reading of HH Dalai Lama's message for the GVYT 2017 Conference and the participating youth, the inaugural ceremony started with sincere contemplation on his positive and hopeful words. Guest of Honour

Dr B Tsering spoke on the importance of resilience; observing how Tibetans under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama started from scratch in the early 1960s in exile, becoming one of the most successful refugee communities in the world by preserving Tibetan culture, language and identity for the last sixty decades. She also touched upon the importance of critical thinking, and stressed the essence of the binary, "right and responsibility are the two sides of the same coin".

Prof Siddiq Wahid chronicled the political and cultural history of Tibet through his family's affiliation to Tibet and his study of the geo-political narratives. Emphasizing on youth and education and the "Vision", he professed the importance of inculcating a personal vision first and then furthering to community and a global vision. Prof. Wahid also stressed on the inherent values of

No. of Participants





Celebrating Success

15th December, 2017



Tibetans and how the youth could imbibe the fundamental message in all of HH Dalai Lama’s teachings and books which is, “to be a good human being” in leading a purposeful life.

The inaugural ceremony was followed by a settlement educational tour to some significant organizations, cultural and cooperative centres in Bylakuppe led by Central Tibetan Administration, cooperatives and individuals. The purpose of the tour was to familiarise and motivate the participating youth and professionals with the self-reliant model of Tibetan settlements and to encourage ‘rethink-innovate-create’ opportunities within. ‘Go to learn, Come to serve’ best echoed the motive of the settlement educational tour.

The highlight of the day was a brief meeting with his eminence Professor Samdhong Rinpoche at Lawa House (Khamtsen) of Sera Jhe Monastery. Prof Samdhong spoke on the importance of education and role of youth in nation building. He argued that as individuals we too often focus on our “rights” and neglect “responsibilities”. He said the two needs to go together, and youths should focus on the “responsibilities” that come with these “rights”.

The first part of the motivational session started off on the second day of the conference with Khube Rinpoche, President and founder of Karuna Home for Disabled ‘Phenday Ghatsal, and Tenzing Rigdol, a contemporary Tibetan artist as speakers. Khube Rinpoche spoke about his personal journey, from being a monk at Sera Monastery to founding Karuna Home, a self-sufficient state-of-the-art rehabilitation and residential center for physically and/or mentally challenged and orphaned children of Tibetan refugee parents in India. Karuna home today serves 45 differently abled children/ adults and 15 orphans while empowering them with the feeling of belongingness in a world not so kind.



Tenzing Rigdol whose work ranges from painting, sculpture, drawing and collage, to digital, video-installation, and performance art illustrated his personal journey from a school dropout to now becoming one of the most known young artist in the Tibetan diaspora Community. He highlighted the stigmas that are attached to school dropouts and mavericks in the society and advised students to not be bogged down by such stigmas in the pursuit of one’s passion and interest. Rigdol also made a comparative analysis of Tibetan youth in America and in India when it comes to taking



ownership, studying and embracing our culture, language, tradition and history.

The second part of the Celebrating Success Panel was led by Yangchen Dolkar, Director of Operations at Andersen Bjornstad Kane Jacobs (ABKJ)-a premier American consulting design firm based in Bangalore, Jamyang Wangyal, Counselor and Deputy Secretary of South Zone Guidance and Counseling Cell under Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and Tamdin Kyab co-founder of leading Tibetan IT-start-up 'Dachompa'.

As diverse as their professions were, the panel was vibrant, interesting, illuminating and inspiring. Yangchen illustrated through her



example the imperative that perseverance and passion, is to achieve success in life. She marveled the participants with her resilience and triumph against challenges that she encountered in her personal and professional journey. Jamyang spoke on the importance of differentiating between “just interest” and “real interest” in choosing a career in life. Narrating his own story from school to adulthood and how he overcame his “weakness” of public speaking, dwelled on the importance of building one’s confidence as he observed, “many Tibetan students feel they lack it”. One of the few IT and App developer start-up in exile, DACHOMPA, Tamdin Kyab the co-founder shared it came into being. The challenges of resource (both human and capital), initial setbacks et al yet pulling it off and how he hopes to leave a legacy of Tibetan IT/Digital success map through Dachompa.



Migmar Bhuti
JNU, New delhi

“

I came here with some expectations and at the same time wanted to see how different this event is from all other conferences that I have attended thus far. I must admit that GVYT 2017 gave the participants more space for interactions as well as engagement with the speakers than any other conference that I have been part of in the past.

”





Emerging Tibetan Generation

16th December 2017

Emerging Tibetan Generation sessions provided a space for young visionary Tibetans to share their work and stories. The session had panelists who are and were direct and indirect ENVISION beneficiaries along with other role models and change agents in the Tibetan diaspora/exile.

The first session began with scholar and entrepreneur Tenzin Dickyi Sinzitsang, co-founder of Munsel - an online language learning platform, Dr Tashi Namgyal, a medical doctor and currently Chief Medical officer at Tso Jhe Khangsar Hospital in Bylakuppe and a scientist Kalsang Tharpa, working with SABIC Research and Technology, Bangalore. The three exceptionally young bright panelists spoke on excelling in whatever one chooses to pursue while performing with a sense of purpose in life. The speakers also iterated the importance of self-respect and self-thinking and not to get influenced by social imitation or general narratives. They opined that when there is too



much social influence, people start to think more like one another and take less information into account to make decisions, wisely.



The last panel discussion of the conference was led by direct beneficiaries of ENVISION's programmes - Tenzing Wangdu, co-founder of Genla Tractor Service in Dhondenling Tibetan Settlement, Tenzin Tashi founder and Director of Yak Events and Jamyang Tenzin, Programme Coordinator of EduLift Nepal. Tenzin Wangdu, also a recipient of ENVISION's Tibetan Entrepreneurship Fund 2015 shared the success story of Genla Tractor Service in Dhondenling Tibetan settlement and how it serves the Tibetan farmers in the settlement. Young entrepreneur Tenzin Tashi engaged the audience with his story of personal struggles and hardships while pursuing his passion in DJing and the eventual vindication upon founding his Event Management company 'Yak Events'. Jamyang having been instrumental in creating the artworks for EduLift's book "Rethinking Education - A curriculum for developing 21st century classroom", in his inimitable charm argued "rethinking of Tibetan communities and uniting them based on passion/interest, skills and talents rather than regional and religious sectarian identities".





Interface with Local Change Makers/ Leaders

The third element of the Conference was aimed to provide a space for learning and motivation through informal community exchanges. GVYT being hosted in Bylakuppe, one of the biggest Tibetan settlements in India, an informal exchange was planned between the local heads/change makers

with the student participants. As such, Dawa Tashi, Principal of Central School for Tibetans, Bylakuppe, Dhondup Tsering, Principal of Tibetan Children’s Village, Bylakuppe and Ngawang Norbu, a monk graduate from Emory University and head of Sera Jey Monastery Science Centre were invited to share their experiences and motivate the participants. The interactions brought to the fore the influences and motivation of these achievers in committing a life to serving the Tibetan community and society at large.



“

The speakers of the Conference are young, vibrant and inspirational achievers. As such, I found their sessions relatable and motivating.”

Tsering Topgyal, Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Studies

”



Workshop Session

The sessions on learning – workshops in the afternoon – led by Jaya Iyer, co-founder of Lunar Energy, a theatrical group was a space for self-introspection and developing skills to equip young Tibetans with the capacity to embrace their role in the community and society at large. Jaya's session kept the participants engrossed and engaging with her educative,

introspective and expressive activities on nonviolent communication, the power of empathy, social change and identifying and expressing feelings in our day to day lives. Jaya also recapitulated the quintessence of "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey through group activity in the form of theatrical presentation and discussions.



Tamdin Kyab, one of the speakers and participant opined, "The session taught us to identify what is "self" and the importance of introspection, through creative activities. I would recommend inclusion of such sessions in future conferences as well since this propels the mind toward thinking constructively of one's abilities and responsibilities".



17th December 2017

Let's make a difference

The last day of the Conference was fully dedicated to reflections, observations and feedback on Global Vision for Young Tibetans Conference 2017 and was led by ENVISION Team. With the first part of the session spent on seeking feedbacks and critique on the Conference from the participants; the last session worked on 'Participant Initiatives to make a difference (s)'. Participants were made to come up with individual action plan (initiatives to make difference in the society) and then democratically choose the best five affirmative change/initiative amongst all, and form groups to work on the adopted action plan.

The five chosen plans and their Champions:

1. **Cyber Security and Safety Project (Samdup, New Delhi)**
2. **Health Awareness Initiative (Dhondup Gyaltsen, Mysore)**
3. **Career Counselling in Tibetan schools (Tsamchoe, Mysore)**
4. **Employment Generation for school dropouts, (Tsering Namgyal, Baroda)**
5. **Research Think Tank Project (Tsering Tashi, Bylakuppe)**

The team members of the aforementioned groups are expected to coordinate amongst themselves and support the champion in realizing the goals. ENVISION team agreed to extend help (resources and otherwise where need be) to carry forward these initiatives led by the students themselves further. As a follow up, ENVISION has set up a WhatsApp group with the champions of the action plan for future communications.

Proposing, organizing and concluding an event like GVYT Conference by the small team of seven staff has been overwhelming and not one without some hiccups. We however feel humbled by the experience and look forward to incorporating the learnings and lessons and the feedbacks we received from the participants and speakers, toward organizing a successful Global Vision for Young Tibetans Conference in 2019.

In conclusion it must be said that GVYT 2017 was a resounding success as the participants felt the four-day learning and engagements to be fulfilling and an enriching experience. Many hitherto less visible professionals some





of whom single handedly build a state-of-the-art Home for the differently-abled, while some in their twenties are founders of start-ups, an event company, and one from Nepal with a very tragic yet inspiring story of hope and triumph, all of who made an indelible impression on the participants. The formal and informal events at the Conference, the active engagement of the panels and participants amongst each other, and the thoughtful community engagements all helped in shaping the discourse on ‘how young Tibetans with a sense of purpose and motivation could become change agents in the community and the world at large’. It was also encouraging to note that the participants without imposition agreed to implement what they learnt from the Conference in their respective place of residence. The GVYT 2017 conference was made possible



Nyima Dolkar, Executive member of Drokpo (an NGO) GVYT 2017 participant from Nepal said,

“I will try and implement the learnings by sharing it with as many Tibetan youths as possible in Nepal through/ by partaking initiatives and projects that engages youths.”

“

I deliberately took out time from my regular course and chose to participate in the GVYT 2017. In retrospection, I feel I made the right decision. Through GVYT, I learnt to practice self-introspection and self-awareness as we often get swayed by our daily chores and engagements and don't really get time to sit back and evaluate. GVYT provided me the space to do so.

-Kunga Wangmo (B.Ed, Delhi University)

with the funding from the ISDELL Foundation facilitated by the Tibet Fund and also the continued and generous support of our core funder Tibet Relief Fund. ENVISION is grateful to the three organisations for their support in delivering the 2017 GVYT Conference successfully.

”

