



In Celebration of VGIF's 40th Anniversary
Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund and
Indian Federation of University Women's Associations
Friendship Tour to Nepal and India and Kolkata Conference

18th - 20th November, 2009
WOMEN, WATER AND FOOD SECURITY
Conference Highlights

18th November 2009 - Hotel Hindustan International, Kolkata

Press Conference – 40 Years of VGIF Grant Making Worldwide
Welcome Reception

19th November 2009 - American Center, Kolkata 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Women in most parts of the developing world spend a disproportionate amount of their time collecting firewood and water for household needs. Yet, their labor is rarely counted by any standard measures relating to economic productivity. As important and crucial as these tasks are, providing water and food security for millions of women are woefully neglected priorities in the agendas of governments, international donors and funders.

A distinguished group of leaders will critically examine the intersections between gender and development agendas in the global South. They will speak on the challenges and opportunities for initiatives that target women, the strategies for building leadership on gender-related issues that demand urgent attention, and the resources needed to mobilize coalitions to advance a global agenda for women, water and food security. Speakers will identify areas for potential public-private partnerships, and provide an analysis of lessons and best practices that have emerged in South Asia and elsewhere. Finally, they will address the role that NGOs can play to press for greater accountability and transparency in the implementation of such policies.

Shaping Development Agendas in the Global South: Priorities and Challenges

- Maithreyi Krishnaraj, National Commission on Women, Government of India (Gender and livelihood)
- Vidya Muthuram, ICICI Foundation of Inclusive Growth, Mumbai (Rural women and healthcare)
- Suman Sahai, Gene Campaign Project, New Delhi (Bio-diversity in food production)
- Namrata Sharma, Centre for Microfinance, Nepal (Role of microfinance and women's leadership)
- Madhura Swaminathan, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata (Nutrition for women and children)

Moderator: Nirmala Banerjee, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata

New Global Opportunities Toward Human Rights for Women and Girls: North-South Linkages

- Louise Croot, International Federation of University Women, New Zealand (Literacy for women and girls as a human right)
 - Sapana Malla, Member of Parliament, Republic of Nepal (Rights in transitional democracies and women's leadership)
 - Rajashi Mukherjee, Water for People, Kolkata (Water security and social justice)
 - Shirley Randell, International Federation of University Women, Rwanda (Critical issues on water for women in Africa)
 - Joyashree Roy, Coordinator, Global Climate Change Programme, Jadavpur University, Kolkata (Gender impact of climate change)
- Moderator: TBD

Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund Projects in India

- Kate Rajya Lakshmi - Bharathi Educational Society, Kavali, Andhra Pradesh
 - D. Leelavathi - Rural Development Women Welfare Society, Yerraguntla, Andhra Pradesh
 - Tabassum Siddiqui - Narkeldanga Rehnuma-e-Niswaan, Kolkata
 - Suman Sahai - Gene Campaign, Delhi, India
- Moderator: Fay Weber, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund

20th November, 2009

Visit to Project 5-O Calcutta

The Centre provides an integrated program of training in welfare and income-generating activities for women from Thakurpukur and other villages around Kolkata. After taking craft courses in tailoring and weaving, embroidery and knitting, tie and dye, many of these women are earning a cash income from sales of their products in the local market, products such as blouses, saris, petticoats and pajamas, table-linen and towels. Courses are also given in printing of wrapping paper and beautician skills which is a popular profession and easily ensures the students a job in this business.

Other subjects taught are literacy, health, nutrition, environmental hygiene, childcare and family planning. Children who come to the Centre with their mothers are catered for in a pre-primary school (a *balwadi*). The Centre also runs a mobile library, holds general educational seminars, and provides food supplements for children suffering from malnutrition. A medical-cum-personnel van has been acquired to extend medical help to village women, particularly in provision of immunization programs

Visit to the Heritage School and the Heritage College of Technology, Engineering and Management

A tour of a college offering state-of-the-art technology and degree programs in computer engineering, bio-technology and management studies. The campus also includes a traditional co-ed nursery to high school in addition to a primary school for children in extreme poverty and a health clinic for their families.

For additional information on the Kolkata Conference please contact vgif@vgif.org