

## Welcoming Local and Global Partnerships



### Welcome to Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice 2011

The Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc) was founded in 2006 by Dr Venkat Pulla, to support approaches that promote resilience as opposed to dealing with deficits. A small robust group of believers in strengths approaches and Gandhian principles of 'self reliance' manage the activities of the Institute. The first group or that constituted the board came from a range of professional backgrounds such as social work, psychology, media, accountancy and digital art. Although, Brisbane based and Australian, the Institute's true partners reside in many states in Australia and also come from the rest of the world. Professionals and lay people from various alternate therapies, health including psychiatry, Social Sciences, Human Services, biology neuro-sciences, pure sciences aboriginal people's development, education and management that believe work with and advocate strengths based practices have joined us in several of our initiatives. United Kingdom, South Africa, Malaysia, USA, Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, Netherlands, Thailand, Papua New Guinea, Slovenia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Poland, Israel, Austria, Nigeria, Myanmar, China, Taiwan, and Peru are some countries that have found interactions with us through conferences and training to be meaningful to them. The networks that have built through such interactions have produced great friendships, reinforcing conversations and journeying together through strengths approach to increase coping, build hope in all societies. Since its inception the Institute has flourished offering meaningful, affordable conference and training strategies that bring together people from various NGOs, Government and Private and corporate sector, International agencies, Universities and Research Institutes together to engage in conversations that are aim to influence and

create a more positive world in Australia and the rest of the world. People from diverse backgrounds are attracted to this inward looking practice. For example, teachers utilise such strategies with their students, helping professionals engage with clients to fulfil their potential, and employers and HRD Managers are deploying strength based performance appraisals with their employers- This is a growing movement. We invite you to join in.

#### About Us

The Brisbane Institute for Strengths-based Practice is a not-for profit, voluntary organisation comprised of a wide variety of professional people with many years experience working in varied endeavours and human service organisations. The range of experience to be found within the Institute's members currently includes social work and community development, academic expertise in the social sciences, accountancy, disability support, graphic art, public sector management, Indigenous cultural education, business analysis and project management. This range of expertise is extended through the various networks of each of the Institute's members.

The institute was incorporated in Brisbane in 2006. It is an organisation of good will and all members donate their time and skills to the institute and its projects in addition to the paid work in which they are otherwise engaged.

#### Statutory identities:

The Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice is incorporated as an Association in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. Its Incorporation number is IA 34493. The Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice is also registered as a Not to Profit Organisation with the Australian Income

Tax department and its Australian Business number is as follows. ABN Number is 911 46592057. The registered address of the Institute is 5 Mandell Close, Coopers Plains, Brisbane, Queensland, 4108, Australia. The Institute banks with Commonwealth Bank of Australia. Those organisations, individuals, or groups interested in knowing more about us write to us for partnerships. Ask us about our accounts or audits or about our specific activities.

### **Purpose of the Institute**

The Brisbane Institute of Strengths based Practice (Inc.) propagates, supports and encourages strengths based human resource development and management consulting, strengths based counselling, group and community training activities and projects in the Asia pacific region and elsewhere, through studies, visits, conferences and workshops and major training events. Its purpose is to promote individual and community development through the practice and promotion of various skills including:

The Institute subscribes to 10 foundation tenets of People Development, utilised in their practice by an Indian agency for community development and these are:

1. Development is People
2. Development is Women
3. Development is Change of Attitude
4. Development is Solidarity within the Group and the Community
5. Development is Iterative
6. Development is Participatory
7. Development is Intra-cultural
8. Development is Long Term
9. Development is Not Free
10. Development Builds on Success and Credibility

The principle sphere of operation of the Brisbane Institute of Strengths in the initial years has been the Asia-Pacific region; however the expertise of the Institute's members is being deployed elsewhere in the world as necessary. Current or identified areas of Brisbane Institute of Strengths-based Practice activity include:

- Sri Lanka
- India
- Australia and New Zealand
- Timor Leste (East Timor)

- Vietnam
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Croatia
- Serbia
- Nepal

### **Vision of the Institute**

The vision of the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc) is of a world that moves forward in peaceful collaboration. Its mission is to bring together individuals, communities and organisations from around the world to maximise their potential. Its goals include:

Creating opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to learn about strengths based practice.

- Creating forums where people can come together to share experiences and stories, network, be inspired, challenged, and supported.
- Providing opportunities for members to contribute to the development of specific communities through strengths based practice.

### **Aims of the Institute**

The above vision is expected to be realised through the following aims,

- Holds training events on strengths based practice related issues
- Promotes reputable strength based trainings
- Consulting for organisations in areas of Appreciative Enquiry, Human Resource Development, Strategic vision, Quality and motivational Interviewing amongst others
- Provides opportunities for the practice of strength based strategies through relevant programs (e.g. AYAD)
- Projects in which the Institute may choose to become include:
  - Conferences about strengths-based strategies and community development
  - Minor fund raising for small projects that promote community development or resilience

- Training in strengths-based strategies.
- Making its collective resources available to other organisations that are engaged in projects that are close to the aims and objectives of the Institute.
- Initiating conferences and workshops in utilising combinations of Appreciative Enquiry, Human Resource Development, Strategic vision, Quality and motivational Interviewing amongst others
- Develops networks and collaborative relationships with individuals, groups, and organisations that have the potential to support, inspire, challenge and inform strengths based practice

### **Modus Operandi**

The various members of the Institute contribute their personal and collective expertise and utilise their extensive professional networks as necessary to carry projects. Since the resources available to the Institute do not reside with any one individual member of the organisation, projects are undertaken in a collaborative manner with joint ownership and pooling of available resources. Not all members of the Institute will directly engage with all projects; however all projects must have more than one sponsor from within and other members will contribute their skills as necessary. Therefore all potential projects are discussed in detail and are endorsed by a sufficient number of suitably qualified Institute members before they are actioned. Some projects including conferences and trainings are outsourced to invited contractors, events planners and subject experts where necessary. However applications and administration of grants and sponsorships and financial accountabilities vest with the Institute. The Institute utilises sub-committee approaches for conferences and training and these sub committees meet fairly regularly. Updates to the Board of the Institute are provided either half yearly or at the annual general body meeting. Decisions making and turn around on decisions is quick in the Institute as we also make use of e-meetings and e-decisions and teleconferencing and skype. Thus Projects

undertaken by the Institute are regularly discussed and monitored by all its small but growing Brisbane based membership, throughout the project's life.

### **Partnership with the Institute**

The Brisbane Institute contributes its member's personal and collective expertise and utilises its combined extensive professional networks as necessary to carry out strengths based projects. The Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc.) is a partner of the AusAID Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) program, amongst others. Over the years it has partnered with Griffith University, Australia, Sarajevo University, Bosnia and Herzegovina, National Institute of Small Industries and Extension and Training, Government of India, Ministry of Women and Community development, Government of Malaysia through their National Family Planning Board, Doha Foundation, Government of Qatar, School of Social Work, Kathmandu Nepal, and School of Social Work Colombo Sri Lanka , Australian Association of Social Work (AASW) —Key Industry organisation in Australia amongst others. These collaborative relationships have been possible by visits of Dr Venkat Pulla, the Founder of the Institute seeking active partnerships. Often a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is developed and formalised where necessary.

Projects are undertaken in a collaborative manner with joint ownership and pooling of available resources. **Responsibility charters of actions** for successful implementation of the projects are exchanged. The key to collaborative partnership is communication. Most projects have one Brisbane Institute member as a project lead with inputs from a couple of other members. All communications are transparently seen and read. Where culture specific interventions are required the institute seeks a number of multi cultural resources including consultants within Australia and also abroad.

It is quite possible that major facilitator can also be found and nominated in the partnering agency and the Brisbane Institute of Strengths would discuss this well in advance of partnerships.

External partnerships therefore must realise that there are times and when the Institute will greatly rely on external project partnering organisations to contribute fiscal, and personnel resources where needed. This is crucial as the Institute depends upon primarily on the pure good will of its members and does not have a paid secretariat currently.

Projects undertaken by the Institute are regularly discussed and monitored by sub committee set up by the Institute throughout the project's life.

### **How to Apply for Partnership?**

There are no formal procedures for presenting a proposal for partnership with the Brisbane Institute of Strengths. Proposals accepted by the Institute usually begin quite informally with an expression of interest, a series of dialogues or finding and meeting a member of the institute. This is either initiated at an existing conference or training by the Institute personnel or by the potential partnership seeker. Potential partnerships are discussed through out in both the organisations and are often presented in their draft nature to the Institute's board of directors.

However, there are "ground rules" with regard to financial investment by the Institute and all partnerships are encouraged to quickly gain the understanding that

- Financial liabilities of all partnerships other than in Australia remain solely with the partnering agencies
- Internal and external audits pertaining to monies invested in the project partnerships are to be dealt with in partnering countries.

This means that all projects presented to the Institute for partnership must be financially viable in the first place without any direct financial investment by the Institute. Any financial involvement over the period of partnership or for the event must enhance and bring additional value to the original conference or training event proposed by the partner. Like wise the Institute may invite a potential partner to apply for partnerships and suggest a methodology to seek funds from various sources within the

country of event or external sources from international grants bodies. It is also possible that the Institute might use its own resources or source and apply for grants to assist its members or associates to participate in particular projects but in general it will not directly contribute funds to any partner for any project in which it collaborates.

### **MOU with partners**

A memorandum of understanding is drawn on the basis of consultations with the partner agencies. The basis for these MOUs is a document called Policy Document-1: ***Bids for International Strength based Strategies Learning Conferences: Guidelines and Requirements*** Approved by the Board of Directors of BISBP in 2007

### **Past Projects**

Since its inception in 2006, the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc.) has been responsible for a number of innovative, strengths based projects in Australia and around the world. These include conferences, training initiatives and community based projects. As a partner with the Australian Government's Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development (AYAD) initiative, itself part of the Australia's international aid program (AusAID), the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc.) has also sponsored and mentored young Australians to carry out various projects in the Asia-Pacific region. Past projects of the Institute include:

### **Workshops:**

#### **Human values at work workshop August 2006**

The workshop addresses questions such as how do you work? How do you view your career and your contribution to the world? Does something require change? Human Values at Work focuses on how you can work in accord with your own spiritual view of life and five Human Values that are found cross-culturally in all spiritual traditions: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence. A one day program on Human values at work was delivered in collaboration with University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba, by Venkat Pulla, Rita Kugler, CA and Management

Consultant) & Dr, Coralie Graham, Lecturer University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba.

### Conferences:

- 2006 – Towards Strengths Based Strategies, Hyderabad, India (in partnership with Sanghamitra-India – <http://sanghamitra-mdidp.cfsites.org>)

The inaugural activity of the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc.), the Strengths Based Strategies 2006 conference caught the attention of practitioners, researchers, academics and consumers around the world. Delegates and presenters from developed and developing countries had the opportunity to meet with and learn from significant thinkers and practitioners in HRD, counselling, community engagement, entrepreneur development, disability, mental health and HIV/AIDS. Essentially an Australian-based event, the conference was held in India to facilitate the participation of a large number of local and regional practitioners and academics.

[http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/Inaugural\\_Conference.htm](http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/Inaugural_Conference.htm)

\* 2008 – Consortium for Social Development Asia Pacific Branch-biannual Conference on Social development and Transition: Paths for Global local Partnerships is pleased to establish ICSD AP Branch Students' Forum.

<http://www.iucisd.org>,

<http://www.nepalschoolsofsocialwork.org>

This International forum was inaugurated by Dr. Venkat Pulla, on 25/11/2008

- 2009 – Coping and Resilience, Dubrovnik-Cavtat, Croatia (in partnership with the SPA – <http://www.dpp.hr/eng/onama.php>)
- The Coping & Resilience International Conference Dubrovnik 2009 (C&R Dubrovnik 2009) brought together practitioners, researchers, community activists and academics working in the trans-disciplinary area of human coping with diverse challenging life circumstances and

interested in the capacity of human resilience to most adverse life events. The conference aimed to advance evidence-based practices in resilience promotion and hope building. It examined the interplay of individual, family, community and social responsibility factors in resilience and to provide directions for future practice and research.

- [http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/dubrovnik\\_conference\\_2009.htm](http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/dubrovnik_conference_2009.htm)
- 2010 – Coping, Resilience and Hope Building, Brisbane- Australia, (in partnership with the Griffith University
- The Coping, Resilience and Hope Building International Conference Brisbane 2010 (CR&HB Brisbane 2010) brings practitioners, researchers, community activists and academics working in the trans-disciplinary area of human coping with diverse challenging life circumstances and interested in the capacity of human resilience to most adverse life events. The conference brought in evidence-based practices in resilience promotion and hope building. The commitment of over 120 paper presenters was very overwhelming for us as organizers.
- <http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au>
- 2010 – Sarajevo: Introduction to strengths based practices and Coping, Resilience, Hope Building activities in Sarajevo, Tuzla and other cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (in partnership with the Vive Zene, Tuzla, Front models, Sarajevo and the University of Sarajevo-
- Sarajevo they proudly say 'never dies'. It rejuvenates. It is this hope process that needs strengthening. Using an opportunity of friends and professionals who have attended our previous conferences and at their invitation it was decided to utilise May 19-24, 2010 to assist some skill acquisition seminars in the field of individual, family,

community and social development  
Over time the Brisbane Institute of Strengths will follow it up with specific project work in Sarajevo that would benefit.

- <http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au>
- 2011- Strengths Based Management of Social Change: with special reference to Transition Countries in partnership with Sarajevo University Sarajevo
- Sarajevo Conversations 2011 [http://strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/Sarajevo Conversations Conference 2011.htm](http://strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/Sarajevo_Conversations_Conference_2011.htm)
- 2012 (proposed) – Re-Greening Our Lives, (partnership search is on) Further discussion is taking place about the venue

#### **Training Initiatives**

- Current Training Initiatives are offered through consulting organisations such as Impetus Global, Brisbane Australia
- 2007 - The Strengths Approach: Principles and Processes
- A two day workshop was held on introduction to strengths based practice with Brisbane Institute's Consultant Mr Wayne McCashen April 2007 Wayne is author of the books The Strengths Approach: a strengths-based. A friend of the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc.), Wayne McCashen is author of the books The Strengths Approach: a strengths-based resource for sharing power and creating change and Communities of Hope: a strengths-based resource for building community and co-author of the card-based resource Name the Frame: reminders for building respectful socially just decisions. Presently he is Education and Training Coordinator for Family and Community Services in the Northern Territory, Australia, and was until recently the principal trainer and consultant for St Luke's Anglicare (Bendigo, Australia) in

strengths-based practice to a diverse range of organisations throughout Australia and New Zealand. This was the first in a series of training events to be offered to the Queensland community, by which the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice (Inc.) intends to build on an opportunity to promote strengths based strategies for community and personal development.

- 2007 – Walking Besides –Irene\* Strengths Based Strategies for the Individual
- Training provided at the request of the Brisbane-based Anam Cara organisation. The aim was to facilitate a strengths-based discussion on an appropriate form of service provision that identified and nurtured the service user's strengths while identifying and nurturing the strengths of the team who provided her support. (A pseudo name to hide the real identity of the person)
- 2009 – (Peter Binyon training) Strategic planning, Quality frameworks for counselling for Australian Counselling Network.

#### **AYAD initiatives**

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development program (AYAD) places skilled young Australian volunteers, aged 18-30, on short-term assignments of between 3-12 months, in developing countries throughout the Asia Pacific region. The program offers young people a wonderful opportunity to contribute to development while at the same time learning about other cultures. Youth Ambassadors work with Australian organisations and their overseas counterparts in a broad range of areas that include health, environment, rural development, gender, governance, justice, education and infrastructure development. Youth Ambassadors use their skills and expertise to actively contribute to international development. They gain an increased understanding of the development needs of our neighbouring countries and broaden their experience by living and working in a cross-cultural

environment. The Brisbane Institute of Strengths based Practice has great pride in being one of the partners of this initiative.

- 2008 – Vietnam, Micro-finance development support
- Promotion of a Vietnamese Institute member to the AYAD selection committee as a suitable candidate for the AYAD program in Vietnam. The member spent a year in her native land utilising her banking sector skills to assist a small micro-finance NGO to maintain its existing programs and to expand its operations in outlying areas and in the north of the country.
- 2008 – Sri Lanka School of Social Work, Colombo

Promotion of assistance of teaching and field work supervision at the National Institute of Social Development. Two young Ambassadors were selected for Sri Lanka. Due to continued insurgency the Australian Government made a decision not to send young Australian Ambassadors for that year.

- 2010– Nepal, Kadambari Institute of Science and Management, Kathmandu,

Promotion of assistance of training and field work supervision at the above Institute has been accepted by the Brisbane Institute of Strengths. Nepal AYAD scheme was approved for 2012

2011–2015 Nepal, **Nepal School of Social Work** ( a joint Venture of Kadambari Memorial College, Nepal College of Development Studies and Tulsi Mehar Memorial College) Shankamul, Ganesh Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal  
[www.nepalschoolsocialwork.org](http://www.nepalschoolsocialwork.org)

### **Community Development Initiatives:**

2007-2012 – Sri Lanka School of Social Work development initiative

As part of the Conference two delegates from the School of Social Work of the

National Institute of Social Development, Sri Lanka was invited. Professor Ranavera Amaravamsa and Mrs Shamini Attanayaka presented an overview of the training and faculty development needs of the School of Social Work. This meeting was attended by Professor Parasuram, Director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Professor Lesley Chenoweth, of Griffith University, Amanda Vos of AASW, Heads of the Departments of Indian Schools of Social Work such as Professor Uma Vennam from Tirupathi Mahila Vidyalayam University, Professor Hazel Lima Director Roshini Nilaya, Mangalore University, Dr Mrs Miriam Samuel Madras Christian College, Professor Janki Andharia, and several other academics. The meeting was convened by Dr Venkat Pulla and a number of immediate action plans to assist the Sri Lanka school of Social Work were drawn up.

### **2009 – Soul Gypsy initiative**

Soul-Gypsy is a multi ethnic group arts promotion of the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice. Dance for Development is a nurture strategy to advance community preservation of arts and culture. *“Musicians by nature, not by reason”* is how Soul Gypsy describes itself. The group is comprised of 10 extraordinarily talented musicians and singers from a range of Balkan and Eastern European states, all of which have a recent history of ethnic and religious tension. These musicians have discovered a common love of Romany Gypsy music and together have created an extraordinary showcase of how people formerly at war may use a common interest and their strengths to forge an exciting collaboration for peace. The project includes plans to encourage younger musicians to participate also in a concerted program for peace promotion.

Promotion of assistance of training and field work supervision at the above Institute has been accepted by the Brisbane Institute of Strengths. Selections of volunteers will be made in 2011- 2015

### **Partnerships**

Previous and ongoing partnerships and collaborations include:

\* Sanghamitra – India  
<http://sanghamitra-mdidp.cfsites.org>  
 \* National Institute for Small Industry Extension Training (NISIET)  
<http://www.ndparking.com/nisiet.com>  
 \* Bala Vikasa Social Service Society  
<http://www.balavikasa.org>  
 \* Oxfam Australia  
<http://www.oxfam.org.au>  
 \* AUSAID and AYAD (Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development)  
<http://www.usaid.gov>;  
<http://www.usaid.gov.au/youtham/default.cfm>  
 \* National Institute of Social Development, Colombo, Sri Lanka  
<http://www.nisd.lk/nisd>  
 \* Centre for Strengths Based Strategies, Michigan, USA  
<http://www.buildmotivation.com>  
 \* Society for Psychological Assistance, Zagreb, Croatia  
<http://www.dpp.hr/eng/onama.php>  
 \* The Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development  
<http://www.fsd.org.qa/>  
 \* The Community Connections, Canberra,  
<http://www.comcons.org.au>  
 \* National Institute of Social Development, Department of Social Welfare, Government of Sri Lanka, <http://www.nisd.lk/nisd/>  
 \* Kadambari School of Science and Management, Kathmandu, Nepal  
<http://www.nepalschoolofsocialwork.org>  
 \* Not for Profit Network, Australia ,  
<http://www.nfpn.com.au/>  
 \* Australian Association of Social Workers, (<http://www.aasw.asn.au>)  
 \* Rural Social Workers Action Group- Victoria, (<http://www.aasw.asn.au/>)  
 \* Icongo, (<http://www.icongo.in/>)  
 \* Anamcara, Centacare, Brisbane,  
[http://www.centacarebrisbane.net.au/disability/anam\\_cara.php](http://www.centacarebrisbane.net.au/disability/anam_cara.php)

#### Further Information

For further information about the Institute, its members or its project collaborations, please contact Director of the Institute

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