



## Press Release

### **‘Never-the-less’ to launch campaign and conference to promote inclusion of persons with disability**

- *Campaign will engage 6000 schools; 200 colleges; 200 corporate and local communities*
- *Involves Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; Government of Karnataka (Department for the Empowerment of the Differently Abled and Senior Citizens); Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities; Christ University; Bangalore University NSS; NASSCOM*
- *Driven by 1,500 volunteers, supported by 50 NGOs.*

**Bangalore, 4 July 2011:** ‘Never-the-less’ ([www.nevertheless.in](http://www.nevertheless.in)) - a month-long, volunteer-driven campaign will engage 6,00,000 school and college students along with corporate employees and management, and local communities. The goal is to create awareness and sensitise people about inclusion of persons with disability in their immediate environments. The campaign across 6000 government, aided and private schools in urban and rural Bangalore, Dharwad, Gadag and Haveri will be conducted in partnership with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan on the **8th of July, 2011**. Over 200 colleges across Bangalore will conduct the campaign on **15th July 2011**.

The campaign, culminating in a half day Conference of various stakeholders on 22nd July 2011 at Christ University will showcase individual and institutional success stories and set a five year agenda to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream society.

The campaign is an initiative of the Fourthwave Foundation in association with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan; Government of Karnataka (Department for the Empowerment of the Differently Abled and Senior Citizens); Christ University; Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities; Bangalore University; NASSCOM and is driven by over 1,500 volunteers, supported by 50 NGOs.

**Diana Vincent Joseph, Director, Fourthwave Foundation said:** “A small change of perception can make a big difference in the life of persons with special needs and disabilities. If we could walk hand-in-hand, provide the same opportunities and conveniences, it can make life less of a battle and more of a healthy challenge for all. In addition to physical infrastructure for the disabled, the cornerstone of this idea for inclusion is you and me. It is up to us to open our minds to people with disability and understand them for what they are. Never-the-less is a movement to make us look beyond their disability and see them for what they are capable of.”

Fourthwave Foundation has been working to address inclusion of persons with disabilities through specially designed projects such as Nanagu Shaale, working with 60,000 children with disabilities in Karnataka. Naanagu Shaale involves all segments of society and the Government to enable significant

transition from segregated to inclusive education. Ms. Joseph said, “Never-the-less is a natural extension of those efforts.”

Over 6,00,000 children will be engaged at their respective schools through an art activity, skits, audio-visual screenings on the theme of ‘inclusion’ and ‘diversity’ and interaction with persons with disabilities. The school activity is being coordinated by hundreds of employee volunteers with the active support of corporates and through NASSCOM.

Student volunteers from colleges will reach out in their campus and in public places through experiential activities, exhibitions and audio-visual screenings to create awareness about the barriers and battles persons with disability face, in their day-to-day lives. The campaign will also invite college students to contribute suggestions and solutions through mobile video clips on simple ways of removing barriers that will make their lives less of a challenge so that they may participate in mainstream society.

70 million people in India (6% of our population) are estimated as persons with disabilities, but sadly only 2% of them have seen through school and only 1 % gainfully employed. Our ignorance of what persons with disability can and cannot do and lack of facilities that make life simpler comes as a barrier for them to live a productive life with dignity.

**About Fourthwave Foundation**     [www.fourthwavefoundation.org](http://www.fourthwavefoundation.org)     [www.nevertheless.in](http://www.nevertheless.in)

*Fourthwave Foundation (FWF, 2006) partners various grassroots and ground level projects carried by local NGO's on one hand, and individuals and companies wanting to maximise societal benefits from their business enterprises. ‘Nanagu Shaale’ – is its highly successful multi-stakeholder model project involving all segments of society, including the community and the Government, to enable children with disability make a significant transition from segregated to inclusive education. The project currently works in 3 rural districts of North Karnataka and 7 semi-urban talukas and urban slums in Bangalore. Other projects of FWF are “Village Meal Box” Environmental Stewardship project with support of Forest Dept and School Development and Monitoring Committee; Tourism for All: Inclusive Tourism project at Hampi focusing on community stakeholders along with NABARD, ITC Welcome Group; E-labs - labs within Govt schools to encourage and introduce computer literacy in children from rural areas; and +me labs - separate AT labs to help children with special needs in education which can also be part of the e labs project.*

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