

We Care Film Fest Celebrated at BITS Pilani - Goa Campus during 12-13 February 2010

We Care Film Fest 2010, on the disability issues, was celebrated at the state-of-the-art auditorium of BITS Pilani, Goa Campus during 12-13 February 2010. Organized jointly by BITS Pilani Goa Campus, Brotherhood, the National Trust, UNIC, UNESCO, and Asian Academy of Film and Television of India (AAFT) in association with the local organizations ESG (Entertainment Society of Goa) Sangath and DRAG (Disability Rights Association, Goa), the festival entered successfully its 7th year.

The We Care Festival, which has attained the unique distinction of traveling to educational institutions to create greater acceptance of the differently enabled as part of mainstream society, witnessed the screening of 32 documentary and short films on various forms of disability from India and overseas. The Festival is traveling to around fifteen venues in the country over the next three months. It has introduced a unique participatory rating process wherein the students and the audience rates each film and an independent jury judges the films on the basis of these ratings.

Inaugurating this unique festival, the first of its kind to be organized by BITS Pilani, the Chief Guest Prof. K E Raman, Director of BITS Pilani Goa Campus appealed to the students to think about the various issues of persons with disabilities and make use of their knowledge to promote their rights as set out in the various acts like PWD Act, the National Trust Act and UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disability which came in to force last year on May 3, 2009. He also said BITS had been organizing various national-level cultural and other educational events in its Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad and Dubai centers, but it was the first time that it had organized a festival on disability issues. He gave an assurance that BITS will continue to support We Care Filmfest and will take it to other centers of BITS as well.

On behalf of We Care, Prof.KE Raman honoured ESG for making IFFI venue accessible to all. Receiving the honour on behalf of ESG Chief Executive Officer Manoj Srivastava, General Manager Venancio Furtado expressed his gratitude to the organizers and appreciated the objectives of the We Care Filmfest and its participatory rating process. He gave an assurance that ESG would be happy to associate with the We Care Filmfest in the near future.

Mr. Avelino D'Sa, President of the Disability Rights Association of Goa, expressed his pleasure over the We Care Filmfest being organized in Goa and said this festival would be taken to various corporate, State Government and owners of the malls to sensitize them on various issues of disability. Mr. Vishram

Gupte, Chairperson of Sangath Goa, said short films are very effective in sensitizing general public, students, children and persons with disability and their parents. He said the festival would be taken to schools and other educational institutions of Goa.

Children with disability from Sanjay School , Goa , enthralled the audience by their scintillating dance performances. Students from The Department of Theatre at BITS Pilani Goa Campus presented a thought-provoking skit to convey the message that everybody should explore and support the talent of persons with disability and should provide them an opportunity to hone their creative ability.

Mr Satish Kapoor, the Founder Director of We Care said: "a world that truly embraces diversity is one where the rights, dignity, and well-being of individuals are realized regardless of differences in race, faith, gender – or ability. People living with disabilities often surprise us with their abilities, with what they can do rather than what they cannot do, but not many tell their stories." Mr Kapoor says the Festival 'is an opportunity for all students to develop their understanding and perspectives relating to disability issues besides contributing to the process of participatory rating. This will help the students whenever they plan to make short films/documentaries on disability. And the general audience will be sensitized on various issues of disability.'

Organizing Secretary Prof. Meenakshi Raman thanked the dignitaries, performers, members of Organizing Committee and the Audio Visual Unit for making the Festival a huge success.

The five film-screening sessions showcased 32 films of varied duration-- one, five, twenty, thirty and sixty minutes. About 200 students from BITS Pilani-Goa Campus, St.Xaviers, Don Bosco College and people from other local NGOs actively joined the participatory rating process and judged the films on the basis of quality, content, theme, packaging, etc.