

she had dreamed of. 25 years of brutality was present in the streets of Kabul through the remains of notable school buildings and the faces of the children of war. Humira could see the destruction with her own eyes. Following her visit to Kabul, Humira started Ariana Outreach which aims to provide programs that improve the living conditions in rural areas of Afghanistan. Ariana Outreach also works to shed light on the beautiful culture of Afghanistan and builds partnerships between Afghans and Americans. Humira created The Afghan and American Sisterhood Award which will be presented to Ms. Sonia Nassery Cole, founder of Afghanistan World Foundation and Ms. Charlie Ponticelli from the Department of State for their efforts to empower Afghan women.

### **Strengthening Groups and Communities through Collaboration Action**

#### **Rita Noronha**

The presentation will provide detail about a strength based approach toward strengthening groups and communities through collaborative action. The work is based on the following experiences: teaching and field work guidance since 1971; both Micro and Macro based research studies that are practice centred oriented; facilitating and supporting organizations of the marginalized groups; collaborative work with the government and non-government organizations in fields such as promotion of women and child rights; experience of producing educational modules for the training of animators, women representatives of Panchayat Raj or local self government bodies. Some of the Strengths of Indian Communities that will be considered in this particular account of Strength Based Work include: innate potential of the people especially the marginalized groups for self and social transformation; the native wisdom and deep rooted spiritual traditions of the people; the traditional knowledge based on centuries of lived experience; the Syncretic / Pluralist cultural roots; progressive Indian Constitution and some legal provisions; strong rooted traditions of resistance against injustice and violation of human dignity; the availability of many exemplary models and alternative visions of self and society; the availability of material resources (varying in extent) among the marginalized groups. Some of the outcomes of Strength Based Interventions have included the following: deeper critical consciousness of self imposed identities and social realities among the various groups and communities; increased commitment and competency levels among the focus groups through acquisition of attitudes, skills and knowledge; effective organized action on the part of focus groups to improve their situation by building on their abilities for collective planning and problem solving; result centered joint actions by various non-government organizations to pool their strengths and resources towards empowerment of the marginalized groups; strengthening the progressive social movements of women, farmers, fisherfolk; increased competency to manage both individual and collective economic enterprises by the marginalized groups to increase their access to and control over resources; utilisation of relevant traditional as well as modern knowledge and practices for progressive change in localities (i.e; sustainable farming).

### **The Life and Work of the Sunshine Welfare and Remedial Association (SWARA)**

#### **Moyia O'Brien**

In the early seventies Moyia O'Brien (an Occupational Therapist) and her twin sister, Dorothy realised there was a great need to provide a place for people who were not catered for by another organisation as they were deemed unsuitable because of their complex problems. So they decided to set up a place where these people could come on a daily basis to experience more fulfilment in their lives by providing programmes that would help them to grow and achieve their full potential in an atmosphere of love and security. This presented many problems, but with dedication, enthusiasm, divine help and the care and co-operation of many people it was achieved, and S.W.A.R.A has continued to grow and develop into the wonderful organisation it is today, admired and respected not only in Australia but throughout the world. They believed that "If your mind can conceive it and your heart can believe it, you will achieve it."

### **Strengthening Community Health in Remote Rural Areas of India - the Odyssey of Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI)**

#### **Rev. Dr. Sebastian Ouseppampil**

Poverty and communicable diseases, especially HIV/AIDS pandemic world-wide, are nullifying the previous health gains. Widening gaps in income and shrinking access to social services as well as persistent racial and gender imbalances can be attributed to this situation. Governmental double-talk, lack of political will and commitment and bureaucratic betrayal have resulted in the progressive weakening of public health care systems the world over. As per the human development Index (HDI), India figures far down in global ranking in terms of health care, education, drinking water and sanitation. It does not mean that India's performance in the social sector is uniformly poor. We can boast of some of the best health care and medical research institutions in the world. The press praise India as a health care destination fit for the people of developed countries. We have many world-class educational and medical institutions, and yet India's overall ranking in literacy and health care is lower than that of many smaller nations in the world. We have a booming economy on one side and a tottering health care system on the other. As said by the ICHI report health services of our country are in an "advanced stage of decay". The Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) since its inception in 1943 has been adapting itself to the changing health scenario of our country by catering to the emerging health needs of the people. Adapting community health as its focus, it has been successfully promoting community health interventions throughout the country especially in the remote areas.