



Amrita University at the forefront of women empowerment

Head of United Nations in India, Lise Grande

More than 1,500 women from various parts of India poured into Amritapuri for the two-day event in early May—A Celebration of Empowerment. This was the capstone event of AMMACHI Labs' Women Empowerment project, co-funded by the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) and Amrita University.

The participants shared one thing in common: They were all graduates of AMMACHI Labs' unique computerized vocational education and life-enrichment education courses. The head of the United Nations in India, Ms Lise Grande, praised the AMMACHI Labs' Women Empowerment project, saying, "[The United Nations] scours the world looking for the best projects, the most innovative projects, and projects which will have the highest impact.

"The one we've chosen for India is this project, and we chose it because AMMACHI Labs is the most creative way of empowering women. Of all of the projects which the UN funds around the world, this is the one dearest to our heart. It's the one we are most proud of; and it's the one that we intend to take to the rest of the world so that they can learn from what you have achieved."

Over the course of two years, the Women Empowerment (WE) project has empowered over 3,000 women in the Indian states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, increasing their chances of employment. The project has also strengthened the women's capacity to make decisions at the individual, family, and community levels. Economic empowerment is fostered through AMMACHI Labs' computerized vocational education and training (CVET) programs, while social-democratic empowerment is enhanced through Life Enrichment Education (LEE) tailored to the needs of the community.

Over 18 months, the group has opened 18 Women Empowerment Centers as well as 9 mobile centers across Kerala and Tamil Nadu. They have trained 3,134 women. These graduates went on to start 29 self-help groups and 6 small businesses, earning a collective amount of over INR 1 million rupees (≈ US\$17,000) by the end of the project. Furthermore, the graduates have been champions for change, spearheading 73 community awareness activities ranging from alcohol awareness campaigns to environmental clean-up activities. By focusing on women, AMMACHI Labs is creating a ripple effect that improves the welfare of the community at large.

Microsoft confers top honors on India's VIT University students

Around 200 Indian students were selected to compete in the finals of CompuDon-IV, Microsoft's annual Microsoft Office Specialist World Championships, which was held in Noida, Delhi.

According to Dr Dhenesh V Subramaniam, faculty coordinator, associate professor and coordinator at Microsoft Innovation Centre (MIC), eight of them were from MIC, VIT University, Vellore campus, five of whom received top honors.

Those who competed had, as part of an agreement with Microsoft, a chance for placements and internship opportunities with the company and its associate partners through the Ed-vantage campus program. "The Microsoft Innovation Centre at VIT University organizes other events such as Ideation fest, Appathon, Hackathon and Microsoft certifications to enable students to get access to placement and internship opportunities in Microsoft," said Dr Subramaniam.

Congratulating the team, VIT University founder-chancellor, Dr G Viswanathan said "VIT is synonymous for research and development, besides winning competitions in the domestic and international front.

"We encourage our students to come up with innovative and unique society-oriented research, which has made our university top in various global rankings. This team has yet again proved that VITians outperform other teams."

