



People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights  
and  
Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid

*Friends and Partners for  
Human Rights,  
Equality and Dignity*

On the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid, Germany  
in February 2016 in Varanasi, India

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This booklet titled

***“Friends and Partners for Human Rights,  
Equality and Dignity”***

was initiated  
through the very lovely suggestion of the PVCHR.

It is homage to the long lasting unique friendship  
and sustainable cooperation between  
the PVCHR  
and the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid  
to promote the struggle of the Dalit Community  
for their rights  
and their appreciation as equal human beings.

In honor of the special occasion of the 50th Anniversary  
of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid  
the PVCHR  
– *People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights* –  
organized a celebration in February 2016 in Varanasi  
and published this booklet.

The booklet recognizes the so-called underprivileged  
as fellow human beings like you and me  
**and as our friends.**

# Part 1



WELCOMING SPEECH BY

**Sven Wolf MdL**

Member of the state parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia

**Dear Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi,  
Dear Mrs. Helma Ritscher,**

this year the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid commemorates its 50th anniversary. On this special occasion I congratulate with all my heart. I especially thank you, Dr. Lenin for your personal support of the Remscheid branch and for the arrangement of the 50th year celebration in Varanasi. Moreover, I thank everyone who has had a hand in the organization and arrangement of this anniversary celebration.

Since the year 2002, in which the People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights began its cooperation with the Indo-German Society Remscheid, this bond became on the pillars of the work of the Indo-German Society Remscheid. The Indo-German Society Remscheid contributes now in the 50th year to the mutual understanding of these different cultures through a variety of activities such as two way visits, numbers of events and the foundation of facilities in India.

Some of your projects have been supported by the government of North Rhine-Westphalia. It fostered the construction of social- and educational facilities in India, for instance in the villages Raup and Baghwana-la. Many projects, however, could only be realized with the help of fundraisers, through the commitment of many volunteers and the participation of Dalit. This is where the Indo-German Society has done an excellent job – especially you, Mrs. Ritscher, as part of your long term effort in Remscheid. In deep appreciation of your determination the “Helma Ritscher Education Scholarship” has been formed as a sustainable initiative to enable young girls and boys for studying.

You have co-coined a versatile multicultural Remscheid – in the sense of Remscheid Tolerant. Let's continue to promote the mutual understanding between our peoples. Only then our societies can withhold the

influences of intolerance. I have my personal reasons why I deeply honour the commitment of this association which enhances the mutual understanding of two cultures. For me culture does not mean a fixed set of norms and values, instead I understand culture as the instrument of humans with which humans interact with each other and their environment. However, coming from Remscheid, the tool city of Germany, I know that we never only need one tool, one instrument for interacting with others. We need as many different tools as encounters and situations we get in. This is what the Indo-German Society does, it adds tools to the toolboxes of its members and people it gets involved with.

This is why I look forward to further years of the commitment of your members as well as to many more productive and educational encounters of the cultures in Remscheid, in North Rhine-Westphalia, in Germany, in India and the world.

Yours sincerely,



Sven Wolf



Der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Remscheid

Dear Mrs. Helma Ritscher, Dear Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi,

Most people in the City of Remscheid are aware of Helma Ritscher. Since years she has been working relentlessly for the Indo-German Society which is going to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016.

Since 50 years the Indo-German Society is looking after social projects in India, especially in the field of education and the development of schools. A strong focus is on the betterment of the under privileged Dalit community. In the village of Baghwanala, for example, a school named “Remscheid” has been financed by the society since several years.

Another focus was put on a scholarship which is granted to deserving young students to provide them with an opportunity for higher studies. In Remscheid, the Indo-German Society got great support from the “Roentgen-Gymnasium” High School, which raised funds through projects and helps through fieldwork carried out by former students of the school.

Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and his People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights is the driving force behind this social initiative locally. They work tirelessly for people who have no chance of a decent education or a fair income without their efforts.

Thus many organisations and people from Remscheid contribute to providing help and support to the underprivileged people in India, united by Helma Ritscher and the Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid.

The Indo-German Society Remscheid and the indefatigable Helma Ritscher deserve our heartfelt thanks and best wishes for their future charitable initiatives. The City of Remscheid has and will support this exemplary work solidly.

Best regards  
Yours

Remscheid, December 2015

Burkhard Mast-Weisz  
Lord Mayor of The City of Remscheid

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Dear Mrs. Ritscher, dear Dr. Raghuvanshi,

when you will be celebrating in far away Varanasi in February of next year the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid, I shall be with you in spirit and mind! You covered, together with all those who accompanied and helped you, and who have been your pupils and students, a long and successful way to this day of celebration. In the name of the Indo-German Society (Federation) in Germany I sincerely congratulate you on the occasion of this jubilee, for which you both stand!

At the beginning stood your strong personal engagement, dear Mrs. Ritscher, for the strengthening of Indo-German relations between the peoples themselves in the small German town of Remscheid. This will was from the beginning associated with the readiness to reach out to India, in order to do there practical work to promote the welfare of the country. In this direction the Society in Remscheid was following you actively. How and when exactly you both met, Mrs. Ritscher and Dr. Raghuvanshi, I have not been told, but obviously it was a productive meeting, also of two corresponding visions and endeavors. Working for justice and equality through education surely is one of the most important missions, responsible human beings are called to fulfill on this earth. You have built schools and centres for education in India, aiming at the creation of equal chances for the disadvantaged and marginalized, and you have raised awareness in German schools and educational institutions for the fundamental connection between human development and education. Eventually you were also successful in mustering public support for your ever more extensive work.

I hope these days of celebration in Varanasi will not only open up space for you and all those who have supported you, to look back with gratitude to what in the past many years you were able to move and to accomplish, but also will give you fresh courage to go on and to look for new people to follow you in your path.

Hans-Joachim Kiderlen, chairman of the Indo-German Society (Federation)

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# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

### Since 1966



**Greetings  
and a great thanks from Germany,  
For you,  
dear Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, dear Shruti Nagvanshi,  
dear Shirin Shabana Khan and PVCHR Committee  
and dear people of Varanasi!**

It is a great honor for me, to celebrate together with all of you today and with the many invited guests the 50th anniversary of our Indo-German Society Remscheid here in Varanasi. In Germany, we will start the celebration in June 2016 in the town hall of Remscheid, where we will have Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi as our guest of honor. As Dr. Lenin told me that he decided together with his wife Shruti and the whole PVCHR team to invite me to India for celebrating the anniversary of our company here together with all of you, I felt deeply touched. Moreover, I am even now deeply moved in the moment I stand here before you, holding this wonderful booklet in my hands. This booklet was a very lovely idea of PVCHR!

Before I continue, I would like to take this opportunity once again to express on behalf of our society and personally as "Helmaji" our whole-hearted gratitude towards Dr. Lenin and the whole PVCHR- team. Thank you for your generous gifts, the invitation and the ceremony as well as the successful brochure.

Thank you! This brochure tells the story of the extraordinary friendship and harmonious cooperation between the PVCHR and our Indo-German Society Remscheid, since early 2002, when we met each other for the first time. What has brought us together? I will tell you.

At the time of our first meeting, the PVCHR was at the beginning of its development to become a recognized organization for human rights. Our society from Remscheid had experience since many years: we organized numerous events and projects in which we wanted to explain and show the diversity of the Indian culture and its unique traditions, past and present to the German public. We also organized an exchange between Indian and German schools: thanks to pen pal-friendships and project work, the students were able to overcome prejudices, create a better understanding for each other, and develop an appreciation of each other's culture.

***We were convinced, to be good mediators between the two cultures.***

That changed abruptly with the "Global March 1998", which was initiated by Kailash Satyarthi, as the International Coordinator. *Here I want to add, that Mr. Satyarthi was honored for his tireless efforts against the exploitation of children in South Asia and his fight for the access of all children to education with the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2014.*

The "Global March" brought child laborers from different parts of the world for the first time to Geneva, Switzerland, to the meeting of the ILO (International Labour Organization). They should get the opportunity, to talk for themselves about their rights and against intolerable child labor. They also came with thousands of thumbprints they had collected on their way to Geneva, as an evidence of solidarity.

We suddenly became aware of our global responsibility for the fate of this world's suffering children, particularly children in India. The examination of "child labor and the lives of the **marginalized** and neglected Dalit-Communities" showed us quite plainly, that we also had **marginalized** them in the programs of our Indo-German Society Remscheid – until the "Global March".

The issue of human rights was immediately on the agenda of our Society. From this moment on, we actively participated in the "Global March", updated the theme in Remscheid schools through information material and organized a day of action in the city center. One of our activities was a charity concert of the esteemed musicians and brothers Prakash, (*who unfortunately died*), Subhash and Vikash Maharaj of Varanasi. We know each other since 1983. Today we share a deep friendship and a multifaceted cooperation. Vikash Maharaj,

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

### Since 1966



founder and vice-president of human rights organization PVCHR at that time, invited me after the concert to Varanasi to meet the founder of the PVCHR, Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi.

Unfortunately, it took four more years, until I met Dr. Lenin and the PVCHR for the first time. The Global March had already given me an insight into the discriminatory situation of the Dalits, but to see the situation with my own eyes shocked me even more. However, how happy the crowd of children greeted when I arrived at the villages - the people were so friendly! From this moment, the cooperation between PVCHR and our Society was decided: The promotion of Dalit in the struggle for their rights and their appreciation as equal human beings became the main topic of the affiliate Remscheid.

Beginning in 2007, the Indo-German Society utilized public funds of the German Government in North Rhine-Westphalia and sponsors from Remscheid, to enable the construction of social and educational facilities in the villages around Varanasi, like Ayer, Baghwanala and Shivrampur. In the more distant village Raup, a community center was built for and by the Dalit community, headed by Dr. Lenin and the PVCHR.

One year before, in 2006, our affiliate and the PVCHR had started an educational initiative between a student team of a Remscheid Gymnasium and Dalit students. The Remscheid-students have campaigned on public actions to promote the struggle of their Dalit friends for equal rights. Today the German students are grown up but still engaged on sustainable projects. One of them, Henrik Sadlowski, will come in March for the third time to Varanasi – to be with the PVCHR and his Dalit friends.

Over the years, an indestructible bridge of friendship has been created. This bridge brought Dr. Lenin also to Remscheid, where the Lord Mayor in the town hall received him. Moreover, on behalf of our Indo-German Society, I have been here in India for many times. In all the years, I attended some inaugurations of important buildings, like the "**Savitri Bai Puhle Women Centre**" in 2012.

After this opening ceremony in Baghwanala, the "**Helma Ritscher Education Scholarship Fund**" was initiated by PVCHR as recognition for the work of our Society and our commitment to education for all children. The scholarship, as a long-term and sustainable initiative, offers underprivileged boys and girls the opportunity to receive continuing education. Deeply impressed and moved by the idea I accepted this honor.

Tomorrow I will share happiness with all the young people who have successfully graduated with the help of the "**Helma Ritscher Education Scholarship Fund**". It will be a great honor to me, to hand over the "**Certificate of the Indo-German Society Remscheid**" to the young Dalit graduates.

A certificate as a symbol of recognition and as a sign, that they are equal, emancipated and well educated Indian citizens, with rights and dignity.

#### **We truly celebrate this occasion today and tomorrow here in Varanasi:**

The unique friendship and sustainable cooperation between PVCHR and the Indo-German Society Remscheid – on special occasion of the 50 anniversary of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid.

#### **But, why a German celebration in Varanasi?**

Because Germany and India, Remscheid and Varanasi, Indo-German Society and PVCHR live in our hearts – today and in future!

In deep attachment,

*Helma*

Helma Ritscher

Chairwoman

Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid



# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966

**Indo-German Society**  
(Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V.)  
- established 1953 in Stuttgart -  
with 31 affiliated societies

## The Indo-German Society Remscheid is one of the 31 affiliates in Germany

It is a task for all affiliates to bring people from both countries closer together. The affiliates want to highlight knowledge and understanding of modern India in the German public and inform about the traditions and diverse religious, ethnic and cultural sources of India. It is important that every affiliate is looking for its own way to build a bridge between India and Germany.

This year, the Indo-German Society Remscheid is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and all the achievements of the past years in a special way. The society celebrates with the people in Germany and Varanasi, which decisively influenced the character of the society since 2002: Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and his organization PVCHR People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights. It is the smallest part of the 50 years old history, but it has become the most important one and the main topic of the affiliate:

The examination and turning to the global theme human rights, such as the right of all children to receive an education and promotion. *This is the route and the goal at the same time!*



From this point, which is especially close to my heart, and my task as the chairwoman of the Indo-German Society Remscheid, I will tell the "history" of the affiliate. Looking back, I want to tell about the efforts, to build a bridge between India and Germany and its people, because I am highly involved in the work in Germany and during my visits in India.

Now I will start to assemble "report to report" only to the highlights of the whole work, like a mosaic, to form a complete picture:

*It is 2002- The first encounter with Dr. Lenin, PVCHR team and the "Dalit-Team"...*

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## March 2002 – We meet each other

### **PVCHR - People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights in Varanasi and Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid**

*On my flight to Varanasi* my mind wandered back to the year 1991, when the Lord Mayor of our city was elected as chairperson and me as Executive Director of the Indo-German Society Remscheid. It was also the year of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the affiliate and on this occasion, we decided to revive the affiliate with new ideas, contemporary programs and especially, for the first time, with social projects.

Shortly before, I had just returned from my second trip to India and my first visit to the "Vivekananda -School" in Dehradun. This village school was a perfect showcase for a school that combines cultural roots with a progressive way of education. The school was a project of the Indian School Association Bonn and its founder, which was a native from Dehra Dun.

**It was ideally suited to be the first educational project integrated in our society. In addition, because the school was still in the set-up period, we first started with financial support.**

The reason, why this was so important to me, goes back on an experience I made, when I *was on my first trip to India* together with my husband in the year 1985. This trip was a *turning point in my life*. Nevertheless, we experienced heavy contrasts; I have adopted India from the first moment as the country it is. I adopted India, without understanding it. I saw the begging children and I gave them a rupee into their dirty little hands. Children with no chance of education are begging for one rupee. My mind was shocked, because I could feel with them. I realized "as a girl of a poor farmer family", structures that I also grew up with, in a time when education for girls did not matter.

**I definitely had to do something** – and five years later, I decided to travel back to India and to find a school that I could support. When I was elected to the board of the affiliate Remscheid, I was already connected to the "*Vivekananda -School*" for several years.

*I am still in my thoughts, but Varanasi gets closer...*

Since 1991 until 2002, almost 11 years have passed, in which our company has carried out numerous cultural, intercultural and socially critical programs. However, inspired by the positive example of the "Vivekananda -School" and my regular visits to it, the promotion of education and school system moved more and more into the foreground – and *the pure material help* into the background.

The "Global March 1998", where we offered the examination of the degrading living conditions of Dalit and the lack of education of their children to schools in Remscheid, brought us closer to our common goal. In the same year, the first class-partnership between the "*Sophie-Scholl Comprehensive School*" and the "*Vivekananda -School*" was launched. The pupils from both countries started to understand the reality and the culture of the other side and to learn about it...

*Soon I will fly to Varanasi –*

**I will meet Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and his PVCHR team – I will watch the Dalits and their children into the eyes. I will not give them rupees this time – I'll give them my heart!**

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### Finally there! Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Vikash Maharaj and the PVCHR prepared me a wonderful and warm welcome with a crowd of happy children ...

Lenin and me understood each other from the first moment! After visiting the villages, we talked about my first impressions and our common prospects for sustainable cooperation.



In the three villages, Baghwanala, Shivrampur and Belwa, I could see for myself of the discriminatory situation of Dalits and their children with their low chances of education. Here on site, I first became aware that the support of organizations such as PVCHR is the only reason, why these people are aware of their rights and are willing to fight for it – to transform themselves from victims into victors.

*Why governments do not always set the order, which is noted in the conventions?*

This question has no meaning for me at this moment, at the sight of the poor villages, the happy crowds of

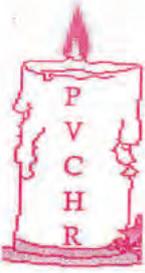
children, waving to me with their blackboards and inviting me to their lessons. After a while, they call my name, I repeat their names, which they wrote to me on their little boards – of course, my pronunciation is terrible. Another reason, to laugh and rejoice together!

*How many of them are carrying the hope in the heart, to learn reading and writing?*

It relieved me to hear that Dr. Lenin and the PVCHR is not “only” fighting with conviction for the implementation of the rights and dignity of the Dalits, especially the right to education of their children, *but also for the understanding and the support by the Indian government.*



After we parted, I promised Dr. Lenin and the PVCHR on behalf of Indo-German Society Remscheid our moral support and full solidarity. As a like-minded person for all projects which are targeted at the needs of the Dalits and the future of their children. That promise was given in consultation with the then chairman of our Society, Mr. Reinhard Ulbrich, Lord Mayor of the city of Remscheid.



मानवाधिकार  
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Human  
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To,  
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**The Chief Executive Officer,**  
**Indo-German Society ,**  
**Vossanackstr 16,**  
**12857 Remscheid ,**  
**Germany.**

27JUNE,2002

*Dear Ms.Helma,*

*Greetings from PVCHR.*

I acknowledge with thanks receipt of your Fax-letter dt. May 2002.

Reading your letter , I am very much happy to know that you have understood our vision and the work we are doing for the marginalized DALITS of India .Our success in these villages in Varanasi (which you visited ) along with the work in progress in the 80 districts of Uttar Pradesh , Madhya Pradesh , Bihar ,Jharkhand & Chattisgarh will help to raise the standard of living of thousands of Men , Women , Boys and Girls of the DALIT community . In this way we plan to replicate this nationally .

Your experience in more than ten years of working with village children and as the **recipient of the AVANTIKA Award** makes you the most ideal person to represent PVCHR in Europe . We are therefore honoured to appoint you as the **AMBASSADOR OF PVCHR to INDO-GERMAN SOCIETY, REMSCHEID** for the following objectives:-

\* **Support the Voice of the marginalized community as per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights .**

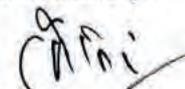
\* **Establish a connection between the City of Remscheid and the City of Varanasi to Facilitate exchange of people and ideas with the view to strengthen East -West relations.**

\* **Extension of economic support to the marginalized community under Fair Trade initiatives.**

We are mobilising international support and recently Justice Zakaria Mohammed Yacoub the sitting Judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa and the Chancellor of Univrsity of Durban, South Africa has agreed to become the Patron of PVCHR. So **please request Lord Mayor of Remscheid, Mr.Fred Schulz to write an official letter addressed to PVCHR on behalf of the citizens of Remscheid -appreciating the work PVCHR is doing for the marginalised in the spirit of the Indian Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, extending full moral support and providing publicity within Remscheid and Germany for the intrest of the marginalised community.** Thus we will develop our relations in the concept of TWIN CITY enabling greater future interaction and understanding between our two citizens. We will publish this in the Newspapers of Varanasi and you will publish in your own city .

Thanking You in Anticipation

Yours Faithfully

  
(Dr.Lenin)



Monday, June 17, 2002

# Hindustan Times

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## Now, their voices to echo on a global platform

Gaurav Saigal  
Varanasi, June 16

VOICES OF bonded labourers and exploited child workers from eastern Uttar Pradesh would now go global with an Indo-German tie-up between People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR) and Deutsche Indische Gesellschaft (D-IG), a German organisation working for Indian villagers.

CEO of Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft's (Remscheid), Helma Ritscher had visited the villages here during the second week of March. She took note of the situation of bonded labourers and child workers in Bhagwanala, Shivrapur and other villages. She convinced the D-IG's governing body about the plight of labourers here and now we expect them to extend a helping hand, said the coordinator of PVCHR, Lenin Raghuvanshi.

The pact is expected to materialise by July end when

ere the role of exploiters and middlemen who procure children for carpet, brick manufacturing and other tedious works would be projected to gather global support against such offences.

"Exploitation of illiterate labourers and children has been growing over the past years. Therefore, there was a need to take such a step. Away from family, they are neither given proper food nor lodging, while the poor family members think their child to be in safe hands," pointed out Lenin.

"The encounter with the children, women, Dalits and their families has highlighted the real picture of the underprivileged of UP. These people without any rights, pitiable lifestyle and their stateless character in the Indian society is a living example of the injury caused to human rights," says the communicque from Helma.

"Our society will take up global responsibility for th-

ese people and raise our voices for the underprivileged living in villages. Being in direct contact with the labourers, you know about their immediate needs. With your approach to help even a single person, we would be able to work towards ensuring a better livelihood for the poor labourers in Indian society," she further stated in her letter.

A large number of bonded labourers along with their family are held in captivity at brick kilns. While men are subjected to inhuman beatings, women labourers are sexually exploited when they demand wages.

"Our effort, apart from bringing the illiterate worker's dilemma before the world community, would be to organise a global stand against exploitation of lakhs of labourers engaged in saree, brick and carpet making. Joining hands with D-IG is one such opportunity", remarked Lenin.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## Indo-German Society Remscheid gives the Dalit-people recognition across the borders of India

Who could have shown us the right way to our goal better than Dr Lenin himself could? I had convinced him that I could convey his vision and work for and with the Dalit-people with our Society and with the population of Remscheid.

And it happened exactly this way! The society undividedly backed the following aims:

- Sensibility and support for the underprivileged in concordance with the “worldwide declaration of human rights”
- Establishing a connection between the two towns of Remscheid and Varanasi to support the exchange of people, ideas and perspectives and to strengthen the east-west relationship.
- Expansion of economic support of marginalised communities through Fair Trade.

In the same year, the Indo-German Society took the first step to realize these aims by taking action within the “Week of the Foreign Citizen”. In the main street of our town, we displayed photos and texts on a billboard to show the progress of our project “Vivekananda-School” and the current “Dalit-Project” with our partner Dr Lenin Raghuvanshi and his human-rights organization PVCHR.

Talking to the citizens of our city, our chairman and members tried to establish a dialogue between them to make the citizens conscious of the inhuman living-conditions of the Dalit and their children and to support them in their fight for their rights. The citizens’ attitude was more reluctant than interested at that time.



On this “Day of the Foreign Citizen”, the Indo-German Society had the biggest attention through this mother and her child. Perhaps she is telling her daughter how little children in a distant country live. They are both looking towards Varanasi and take the first step towards the “Untouchables”.

The second action for “our Dalit” was “Open Day” on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2002. This time the citizens were definitely more interested and ready to deal with this delicate topic - also the local press showed interest. From our point of view, their interest was still too superficial – but this should change soon.

A year later, I visited our partner Dr. Lenin and PVCHR again, the same people, and their villages to reassure them of our solidarity and moral support. Would it not be a real help if we could make it possible to build a school?

After this second visit, we received the unlimited support of the local press for PVCHR and the “Dalit-Project” – a strong voice that from now on steadily helped to strengthen our peoples’ consciousness for the total absence of rights in Dalit-people’s lives.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## Start of 2006

### Indo-German Society Remscheid and Roentgen-Grammar-School start an initiative for the education of Dalit-children

What happened between 2003 and 2006 and what did our Indo-German Society achieve for our Dalit-communities besides the realization of many cultural and social projects and events?

I asked myself this question on the plane while again travelling to Varanasi, to Dr Lenin and the PVCHR.

At the beginning of 2005, the school and class-partnership with the Vivekananda-School ended after six years. The exchange was carried out through pen-pal ships and projects about current topics according to students' ideas and wishes. Every year, as some kind of "living bridge between India and Germany" I carried letters and pieces of work, which the students had completed in that year. *In this way, they were not educationally instructed, but learned from each other.* This active explanation on their own and the foreign culture helped to remove prejudice and to establish a mutual understanding.

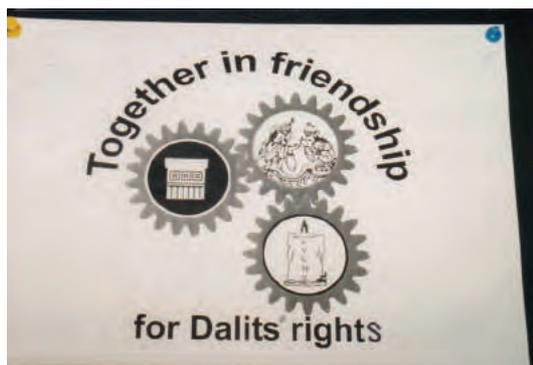
*What had initiated this exchange-project?* After my first visits to the school in Dehra Dun, I was happy about the progress, but, to my surprise, I also noticed that nobody felt linked to Germany and its people. Was it perhaps because Germany only functioned as a donor of money for their school? It was more than luck that eventually this pioneer-project developed into a sustainable model, which could be transferred to exchange-projects with other schools.

#### Why not start an exchange-project now with the Dalit-students from the villages that I knew?

Because of the fundamental differences in education and living-conditions, this exchange would be very different from the one we had before. High-school students would be the proper group, which could understand the Dalit situation and which could give these children a voice outside of India.

At the beginning of 2006, the Roentgen-High School in Remscheid – a partner school that already worked together with us – did a week of project-work about India and our society suggested the topic **Dalit**. This was received and implemented with great interest. During this week, the students learned and felt that the Dalits must fight hard for the kind of basic rights that are taken for granted in Germany. They felt very touched and moved by the plight of the Dalits and wanted to help actively.

After this school-project the "initiative for Dalit's education" was formed. Indo-German Society, Roentgen-High-School with their principal Mr. H. Hammes and the Dalit-team of the project-week with their teacher Mrs. Loosen worked together with Dr Lenin, PVCHR and the Dalit students. The aim of the initiative was to establish friendship with the Dalit community and to help promote their human rights from Germany.



The student-team called themselves "Dalit-Team of Roentgen-High-School Remscheid" from now on. They created their own slogan and logo "**Together in friendship for Dalits' rights**" and started their first project in the same year.

On "**World-Children's-Day**", they informed the citizens of Remscheid by means of a billboard and in many little conversations about the deprived and underprivileged life of the Dalit in India.

**On this day for the second time the Dalit were given moral support and a strong voice outside their home-country India.**

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## 2007 - The beginning of a pen-pal relationship between Varanasi and Remscheid “Together in friendship for Dalits’ rights”



*The founding-members of the Dalit-Team on the day of their first action on World-Childrens' Day in 2006.*

Before further action could be taken, the initial step was to establish first contacts to India via a pen-pal relationship in the three villages of Baghwanala, Belwa and Shivrampur represented through the members of the Panchayat of these three villages. They diligently wrote their first letters - most including some photos - to their yet unknown pen-pals in India.

In February 2007- as a further step to intensify the Dalit-Project and to develop personal friendship - I took the first letters of the German team to India and handed them over to their respective pen pals. For this step, Dr Lenin had made an adequate choice, because in India, only a boy can be a boy's pen-pal and vice versa only, a girl can be a girl's pen pal, due to the traditional Indian background. At the same time, Dr Lenin acted as a translator. The Indian team was more than happy to have friends in Germany from now on. The statements they gave regarding the pen-pal relationship were very moving, while they were holding the letters and photos of their future German pen-pals in their hands.



*Dr. Lenin feels happy together with Indra and Santosh from the village of Shivrampur.*  
(Unfortunately, only some members of the Dalit-Team can be shown, but they represent all participants.)

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

### Since 1966



## At the beginning of 2007 First letters from Germany Poignant statements of the Dalits Team

### **Radhika from Baghawanala village:**

Many visitors come from outside, but they forget about us, they do not come back.

**But „you“always come back. We now have friends in Germany – we are not alone anymore.**

### **Chanda from Baghawanala:**

We now know what we have been missing. We are so happy to have friends in Germany. We are so happy to have friends in Germany now. No one can fight ‘alone’, but now we are no longer alone. That is great!

**Ms. Reekha, class teacher of the two:** The exchange via the Panchayats, is like a candle, it has brought light into our village and into our lives with the hope that in the future more light will come into our lives. The exchange promotes education. We are learning a lot about Germany.

### **Mr. Bhirender Singh, teacher in Belwa village:**

I am very happy about the exchange project for those children. Through this project, I hope to have more support from outside for the kids. Many children do not come to school because the misery of their families is so big and both parents have to go to work. The older children then have to look after the smaller ones.

**Santosh from Shivrampur village:** I do not have enough words to express how happy I am to have friends in Germany. They give me the strength to write about what is important to me. I would love to meet them in person, if I ever get this chance in my life.

### **Indra from Shivrampur:**

I am so happy about the friendship. I feel much stronger now in the fight for our rights.

Why cannot more pupils have such an exchange? I now got more strength and courage to write about myself.

The projects of education and schools of the Indo-German Society Remscheid and their project-partners are listed under the following motto: Promotion of the intercultural competence for children, parents, educators, friends and promoters in India as well as here in Germany. During the exchange the common interest shall be discovered, things that connect us as people in the everyday life on both sides. This way is considered to prepare a better understanding for each other and to contribute to esteem the respective culture.



Chanda and Radhika from the Dalits team



The Dalits team in 2007

# Städtisches Röntgen-Gymnasium Remscheid-Lennep



Röntgen-Gymnasium, Röntgenstr. 12, 42897 Remscheid-Lennep

Dr Lenin Raghuvanshi  
c/o PVCHR  
Varanasi  
India

**Auskunft erteilt:** Herr Hammes  
**Durchwahl: (02191):** 4645330 oder 4645331  
**FAX-Nr.: (02191):** 4645332  
**E-Mail** roentgengymnasium@freenet-de  
**Datum:** 05/02/07  
**Aktenzeichen:** ha

Dear Dr Lenin,

Although India is a country so far away from Germany it is very present in my mind at the moment. This is not only due to our mutual project "Together in Friendship for Dalits' Rights" which my colleague Mrs. Loosen and our students are engaged in and the never-ending energetic promotion by Mrs. Helma Ritscher, the chairwoman of the Remscheid branch of the Indo-German Society, but also to a private coincidence.

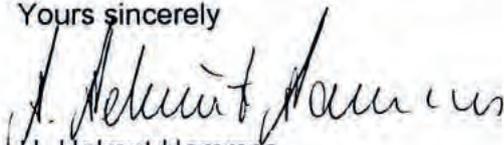
Last week my two daughters, aged 28 and 25, returned from a four weeks' journey to India, full of impressions and experiences of your country. You can easily imagine how much they had to tell at home and how much they were impressed by the culture and people of your country. They also visited Varanasi but didn't have the addresses of the villages and the Pandschajats in the neighbourhood that you are working with. It is a pity because I had advised them to try to visit these places.

Our students here are very keen on continuing our project and besides writing e-mails to your children in India they have already started a few projects in Remscheid, to make people here understand what the problems of the Dalits and the Dalit-children are. Last summer we had a stall in the pedestrian shopping center here in Remscheid on "World-Children's Day" and they also had their own broadcast on the local radio-station, in which the living conditions of poor children in India, and especially of Dalit-children were explained to the audience. It is astonishing how little people know about the cast-system in general and about the Dalit-problem in particular. I am sure Helma Ritscher will tell you about the activities in detail.

I do hope that e-mail contact between our young people will soon become more intensive and that each side will greatly profit from the other side.

Today receive my kindest regards and compliments from Germany.

Yours sincerely

  
H.-Helmut Hammes  
Principal

[www.roentgengymnasium.de](http://www.roentgengymnasium.de)

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

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**2007 – For the first time official funding from Germany –  
Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi’s “flying visit,, to Remscheid  
– The major action took place later this year  
– „Kite-Festival Remscheid“ for children’s rights –**

The joy was huge about the first letters of both Dalit’s teams – promoting education between the two different worlds of pupils that could not be more diverse. Equally important was the *construction of buildings*, in which the children could be educated:

**The first request for funding for this purpose was an immediate success!**

The Indo-German Society received in late 2006 for the first time funding from “**German Ministry of North-Rhine-Westphalia**” via “**InWent-Capacity Building International gGmbH/Germany**“ for the construction of a classroom in Shivrampur and the construction of the first kindergarten in the village of Ayer for Dalit- and Mushar-children, who still received less attention than the Dalit, but were integrated now. What a success! The only condition: the buildings had to be constructed by the end of 2007!

**We were extremely happy! At the beginning of 2006, Dr.Lenin approved my proposal with great enthusiasm: An exchange between Dalit and Mushar children and the kindergarten of the "IKE - Development Association for intercultural education e. V." in Remscheid.** In a poor cottage in the pouring rain – I made friends with the little ones. Soon these children would "have a proper location" – even large enough for the “meetings” of the villagers – and friends from Germany too!

**A surprise! Dr. Lenin's "flying visit", his first and unofficial visit to Remscheid!**

On 19 June 2007, Dr. Lenin was invited to a symposium in the city of Gummersbach. On that evening, I took him to a first personal meeting with the cooperation - partners from Remscheid.

The following persons were already waiting for him:

Mr. Helmut Hammes, Director of the *Roentgen-High school* with the pupils of the *Dalit Teams*, Mrs. Erden Ankey-Nachtwein, chairperson, of the *IKE / kindergarten project* and Mr. Charles Wessler of the *Music- and Art School of the city of Remscheid*.

With him, Dr. Lenin clarified the technical conditions for the planned Skype transmission between Varanasi and Remscheid. The occasion was the **"1. International Remscheid Kite Festival on Children's Rights on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2007 "**. At this, festival kites and “*patangs*” would ascend to heaven, with messages for children's rights written on them. In honour of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar and the imminent Independence Day on 15 August 2007.



*This first unofficial meeting with Dr. Lenin took place in presence of the press, which followed our invitation even late in the evening.*

**The great opportunity:** *For the first time we could officially express our mutual solidarity with the “Dalit” when, Dr. Lenin was present in our society with the cooperation – partners of Remscheid.*

*Left picture: Mr. H. Hammes, Dr. Lenin and the Dalit Team - Leonie, Henrik and Florian.*

# One of the first press reports about Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and PVCHR- People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights in Varanasi - After his "flying visit" to Remscheid -

Remscheid 15

rga., FREITAG, 22. JUNI 2007

## Rechte der Dalits stärken

**DEUTSCH-INDISCHE GESELLSCHAFT** Verschiedene Projekte helfen, die Situation der so genannten „Unberührbaren“ zu verbessern.

Von Ariane Czerwon

Dass mit der zunehmenden wirtschaftlichen Globalisierung die Ausbreitung von demokratischen Prinzipien und Menschenrechten nicht Schritt hält, ist keine neue Erkenntnis. Wie wichtig es aber ist, für solch elementare Rechte einzutreten, zeigte sich jetzt bei einem persönlichen Austausch. Dazu trafen sich Helma Ritscher, Vorsitzende der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft Remscheid (DIG), Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Helmut Hammes, Leiter des Röntgen-Gymnasiums, und zwei Schüler in den Medienräumen der städtischen Musik- und Kunstschule.

Dr. Raghuvanshi setzt sich als Leiter des „People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights“ (Verband zur Überwachung der

Menschenrechte) in den Dörfern um Varanasi im nordindischen Bundesstaat Uttar Pradesh für die Rechte der Dalits, der so genannten „Unberührbaren“ ein.

Unterstützt wird er seit 2002 von der DIG, die durch verschiedene Aktionen vor allem an Remscheider Schulen auf die fortwährende Unterdrückung dieser Menschen aufmerksam macht, die der untersten Schicht des indischen Kastensystems angehören.

**Jugendliche aus Lennep und Indien pflegen Brieffreundschaften.**

So gibt es seit Anfang 2006 am Röntgen-Gymnasium ein „Dalit-Team“, dessen Mitglieder Brieffreundschaften mit gleichaltrigen Jugendlichen aus drei indischen Partnerdörfern unterhalten. Der Förderverein für Interkulturelle Erziehung (IKE) betreibt über-

dies ein Austausch-Projekt mit zwei indischen Kindergärten für Unberührbare.

Für ihre Projektarbeit erhielt die DIG in diesem Jahr Fördergelder des NRW-Ministeriums für Familie, Frauen und Integration, die in den Ausbau von zwei Dalit-Schulen in den Dörfern Ayer und Shivrampur investiert werden.

Die Unterstützung aus Remscheid sei für die Betroffenen eminent wichtig, erklärte Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi: „Der moralische Rückhalt, den sie durch diese Projekte erhalten, gibt den Menschen dort viel Kraft, so dass sie selbstbewusst für die Verbesserung ihrer Lebenssituation kämpfen können. Und es übt einen nachhaltigen Druck auf die lokalen Behörden aus, den man nicht unterschätzen sollte.“

Henrik Sadlowski, der die zehnte Klasse des Rögy besucht, erzählte von seinen Eindrücken: „Vorher kannte man zwar ungefähr die Situation der Dalit-Kinder in Indien, aber durch den Briefkontakt erfahren wir ganz unmittelbar von ihren individuellen Schicksalen.“

**Drachen als Symbole der völkerbindenden Solidarität**

Als Zeichen der völkerbindenden Solidarität lassen Schüler des Gymnasiums beim Drachenfest am 12. August Drachen steigen, die mit Botschaften für die Rechte der Dalit-Kinder versehen sind. Zeitgleich werden auch ihre indischen Brieffreunde in ihren Heimatdörfern Drachen steigen lassen. „Wir werden die Beziehungen zu den Projektpartnern in Indien weiter pflegen und vertiefen, um so unseren kleinen Beitrag zur Förderung der sozialen Demokratie zu leisten“, betonte Helma Ritscher.

*Remscheider General-Anzeiger, Friday, 22 June 2007*

### Strengthen the rights of the Dalits

**Indo-German Society** Various projects help to improve the situation of the so-called "Untouchables".

By Ariane Czerwon

It is no new perception that the increasing economical globalisation does not keep space with the extension of democratic principles and human rights. However, the importance of the pleading for such elementary rights was shown in a personal exchange. For this purpose Helma Ritscher, Chairwoman of the Indo-German Society of Remscheid (DIG), Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Helmut Hammes, director of the Roentgen-High School, and two students met in the multimedia rooms of the local School of Music and Art.

Dr. Raghuvanshi as the head of the "People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights" supports the rights of the Dalits, the so-called "Untouchables" living in the villages in the surroundings of Varanasi in the north-Indian Federal State Uttar Pradesh.

He got support by the DIG-Indo-German Society Remscheid since 2002, which draws the attention to the continuous suppression of these people, who belong to the lowest class of the Indian caste system, by various actions mostly in the schools of Remscheid.

**Young people from Remscheid-Lennep and India have become pen friends.**

Since the beginning of the year, 2006 a "Dalit-Team" has existed at the "Roentgen-High School" whose members keep up pen friendships with young people of the same age from three Indian partner-villages. The Promotion Society for Intercultural Education (IKE) maintains also an exchange-project with two Indian Kindergartens for Untouchables.

This year the DIG-Indo-German Society received financial support for their project work from the North

Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Family, Women and Integration, which is going to be invested in the building of two Dalit-Schools in the villages of Ayer and Shivrampur.

The support from Remscheid was very important for all people concerned declared Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi: "The moral backing which they receive by this project, gives the people there so much strength, that they are able to fight for the improvement of their living conditions rather self-confident. Let means a lasting pressure on the local authorities which should not be underestimated."

**Henrik Sadlowski**, who visits the 10th class of the Roentgen-High-School, tells about his impressions:

"We knew already something about the situation of the Dalit-children in India, but by the written contact we directly learn about their individual destinies.

### **Kites as a symbol of solidarity between the nations.**

As a sign of solidarity between nations, the students of the High -School let fly kites with messages for the rights of the Dalit-children on the kite-festival on the 12th of August. Simultaneously their Indian pen-friends let fly their kites in their home villages. "We will cultivate and intensify our relationship to the project partners in India furthermore in order to give our small contribution to the promotion of the "social democracy" emphasizes Helma Ritscher.

### **Statement to the press release:**

*The first official funding has not been used for two schools, but for the construction of a classroom in the village Shivrampur and the construction of the first kindergarten in the village of Ayer.*

### ***How and why did the idea of additional exchange between a kindergarten in the village of Ayer and here in Remscheid, come up?***

**How?** Since the beginning of our co-operation, we, Dr. Lenin and I, exchanged everything worth knowing for the partners. At the first application of our society for public funding, at the end of 2005, it was very important for our company to tailor everything according to the most urgent needs of the local people to build up a sustainable cooperation. Therefore it was only our partner Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and the PVCHR who could give us proposals for necessary buildings.

So I learned to understand more about the relationships of the still existing box thinking and the vision of Dr. Lenin during my visit in 2006 in the village of Ayer.

That is why I was very happy that our request was for an "integrative kindergarten for children from "Dalit and Mushar families". A meeting place – just for people!

**Why?** Due to the claim of our society to the promotion of education, even from childhood, we were already working with the IKE - Development Association for Intercultural Education eV, and mediated Indian culture in kindergarten through age-appropriate actions. There are children with different nationalities and therefore different cultural backgrounds – In Indian kindergarten all children are of Indian nationality. Here arise significant differences from the opposites within the total population.



*In 2007 – one year later, in Ayer village, I was not welcomed – as at the first visit – in the pouring rain and with fear, but by happy children.*

*They gave "images" to me, which they had painted by themselves. I told them with photographs of the "other children" that they had learned a lot about them and their India through me.*

*Big amazement – just as the Dalit team!*

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## 1st International Kite Festival in Remscheid From August 11. - 12. 2007 – Action for Children’s Rights Skype Conference connects two continents and Remscheid and Varanasi

The 1<sup>st</sup> International Kite Festival was an initiative of the Indo-German Society Remscheid with the aim to gain a wider audience and seek more attention for the children in India and the whole world, who suffer from no access to education and rights.

The society was supported by the Lord Mayoress of the City of Remscheid, Mrs. Beate Wilding, the “Musik- und Kunstschule” (School for Music & Arts) and the kite expert “Kite Mike”. It was a lively kite- and family celebration with a colorful program for clubs, schools, young and old “Kite fans” from near and far. On Sunday August 12, the festival for children's rights was broadcasted via Skype, with our partner Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, PVCHR and Dalit-children in Varanasi.



*Two continents were joined. We sent our greetings and messages of solidarity with Dr. Lenin, the Dalit children and all children in the world, to India.*

*From up right:*

*Press-Mrs. Bona, Mr. Lebfromm and Mrs. B. Wilding, Lord Mayoress of City of Remscheid, Mr. Kucharczyk, Member of Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Wesslerer from the School for Music & Arts Mr. Vaz, Vice-President, Mrs. Hager, board member and Mrs. Ritscher, chairwoman from Indo-German Society, as well as the kite-expert “Kite-Mike” Mr. Zähler.*

**„Together in friendship for Dalits’ rights”**



*An emotional moment for all of us!* After the official greetings to Dr. Lenin, both Dalit teams sent their “patangs” to heaven at the same moment, **attached were slogans for children's rights**, with the hope that their message will be seen and heard. **Flying symbols of freedom and liberation for the children in their deprived lives** – and to commemorate Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, Dalit father for all Dalit of India. For the honor of the imminent "Independence Day" of India, as a **symbol of freedom and liberation from the English domination, kites and “patangs” rose...**

*A festival for the future? Patangs rise up and fly away – freed from their „Saddi”*



**Speech of:**

**Mr. Jürgen Kucharczyk,**  
Member of Parliament of  
the Federal Republic of Germany  
via Skype to  
Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi in Varanasi

on the occasion of our kite-festival  
on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2007 -

**Next to him:**

**Mr. Caio Vaz,** Vice-President of  
Indo-German Society Affiliate  
Remscheid

Dear Lord Mayoress Mrs. Wilding,  
Dear Chairwoman of the Indo-German Society in Remscheid, Mrs. Ritscher,  
Dear Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here with you today at the Kite-festival in Bergisch Born. Soon we will see many handmade kites flying in the sky above us. Kites do not know any borders. That is why they have always been a symbol of freedom; the freedom to live everyday consciously; a right, which needs to be claimed every day. Today these kites will carry a special message.

The pupils of the Roentgen-High School in Remscheid have used the motto “Together in friendship for Dalits’ Rights” and written slogans on kites for the rights of children and will set them free to fly.

The children of Remscheid want to highlight the plight of their Dalit friends in India, whose are considered as the most underprivileged people in Indian society. Moreover, as we are looking at the sky here in Bergisch Born, three villages in India are looking at the sky at the same time and are letting their kites fly, carrying the same message.

I send my honest and heartiest regards to all children, women and men in India who are connected to us in this hour.

This idea and mission is indeed inspiring!

For this wonderful idea and for their committed and passionate support we would like to thank the members of the Indo-German Society Remscheid. The project “Together in friendship for Dalits rights“ took root in 2006 due to the co-operation between the ‘Peoples’ Vigilance Committee on Human Rights’, founded by Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Indo-German Society Remscheid and the Roentgen-High School, especially Director Mr. H. H. Hammes and teacher Mrs Gisela Loosen.

Today’s kite festival is the laudable result of this vital and significant co-operation. However different the circumstances in India and Germany are, they all contain one element crucial to friendship: Sympathy and respect resulting in understanding and fortitude.

Thus, we are morally supporting the young generation in India to fight for their rights. Children do have rights. On any continent, in any country of the world

- The right to develop their personality;
- The right to strengthen their talents;
- The right to be protected against neglect;
- The right to live healthy, to live in a safe environment, free of violence,

This is the message these kites are sending around the world, so that they are acknowledged and are realised.

Even though the situation for many children has already improved, for example by vaccinations, there is still plenty to do, also here in Germany.

The rights of children should become a part of our constitutional law in Germany. My fellow parliamentarians and I are working on changing the constitution in Germany accordingly. It would be the beginning of a series of changes and programmes for the benefit of children. For us here in Germany it is normal that children go to school, that there is clean drinking water available and more and more environmentally friendly energy is produced. But this doesn't apply to the Dalits in India. Everyday they have to fight for their rights and what seems normal to us is the goal at the end of a long road ahead of them.

### **Child labour is forbidden in Germany by law.**

But Dalit walk this road with their heads held high, their backs unbroken. Their role has changed; in the past they were victims, today they are activists.

And we in Germany support this change of role, locally and privately but also nationwide and politically. We all agree that education is the key for developing a fair and free society. And only if education is free for all, people can participate and democracy can be strengthened. Unfortunately, hardly 40 percent of Dalits go to school. It is not only because of this that they have dire existential problems. It also widens the gap inside the society in India and between rich industrialized nations and a developing nation like India.

It depends on us politicians to build a structure, and it depends on society and every citizen to encourage free education as a human right to which all nations have to adhere.

Today we are demanding this right in a playful, colourful and charming manner, though we are aware of its importance. However, we also want to emphasize that fighting for our rights doesn't have to happen in an agitated manner, it can be a happy and humane endeavour.

Now we should start letting the kites fly into the sky, an old tradition, which is held up in many countries of this world.

Finally, but most important, I want to congratulate the people of India on the 60th anniversary of their independence on August 15th. 2007. Hundreds of kites in all colours and shapes will fly in the skies on this national holiday.

Once again, I want to express my gratitude towards all members of the associations and organisations, who came here today, to "Kite-Mike (Drachen-Michel)", to the schools and to the city of Remscheid and to everyone who has supported the idea and helped organising this Kite-Festival.

May the kites fly high and far and may their messages find open hearts and minds.

Thank you.

***Mr. Jürgen Kucharczyk,  
Member of Parliament of  
the Federal Republic of Germany***



**Speech of the  
Lord Mayoress of  
Remscheid  
Mrs. Beate Wilding,**

On the occasion of our kite-  
festival on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2007

Via Skype to Dr. Lenin  
Raghuvanshi in Varanasi

Dear Dr. Lenin,  
Dear children in India and here in Remscheid,  
Dear Ladies and Gentleman,  
Dear kite friends,

***It really is something special, which is happening here right now: both in India and here in Remscheid*** children are waiting with beautifully coloured kites that they are eager to release into the sky. We are all hoping for a fair wind allowing them to make their way. The fact that this is taking place planned and organized and not anonymously and accidentally is due to Helma Ritscher, the chairwoman of the Indo-German Society Remscheid. (Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V). Together with friends, she developed the idea to celebrate a Kite-Festival, as it is celebrated in India and other Asian countries, and found some enthusiastic help to achieve this aim. As we see today, this kite-festival is even more of a festival than it would be just for the aesthetics of the kites and their fascinating play in the wind.

***I welcome you, dear children and kite friends, here in Remscheid and send my warmest greetings to you, dear Dr. Lenin and the children and adults in far India.***

***I would like to thank you, dear Helma Ritscher, for the initiative of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid (Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft Remscheid), in organising this kite-festival. It is the first of its kind in Remscheid.*** The children of the IKE- Kindergarten in the Otto-Pfeiffer-Haus and young people in Remscheid-Lennep, have been building and decorating their own kite each under the skilled supervision of the "Drachenmichel". Michael Zähler, the "Drachenmichel", supported the organizers of the festival and made sure that several guests from the "kite scene" - enthusiastic kite builders - have come to Remscheid and are contributing to the festival with their breathtaking constructions. I would like to thank you for your coming and your support and welcome you here in Remscheid. The media have been showing great enthusiasm in inviting both children and adults to build kites and to let them fly here today. After a week of storms and floods, we are all happy to see that the

weather is adjusting to our wishes. The organizers were looking forward to a blue sky with white clouds and decent winds and were checking the weather forecast more often than usual in the last days.

**But let us come back to our special festival today just ahead of India's 60<sup>th</sup> day of independence. Just like today 60 years ago, many kites were flying as a symbol of the newly achieved freedom.**

**Since the year 2006 there is a co-operation between the students of the Roentgen- Highh School (Roentgen- Gymnasium) in Remscheid and the PVCHR (People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights) – a human rights organisation in Varanasi in India, based on the initiative of the Indo-German Society Remscheid.**

**Today students of the Roentgen-High School (Roentgen-Gymnasium) are going to send their kites on their way to spread the name of this project: "Together in friendship for Dalits` rights"**

**This message is addressed to the Dalit – the underprivileged in the Indian society – and all children in the world in order to support them in the fight for their rights.**

**Just right now, your Dalit-friends in India are standing ready together with you to let their own kites fly, displaying just the same messages and wishes.**

The Indian television channel NDTV (New Delhi Television in Varanasi) was eager to cover this event, which is building a connection between continents. Impressions from our kite-festival are documented by camera by Mr. Charles Wessler and sent immediately to India. They are broadcast by NDTV there and in several other countries. Records of the preparations in India over the last weeks are available to us today.

I would like to thank Dr. Lenin, the television staff in India and Charles Wessler for establishing this live connection and by thus building a bridge between our festivals. It became possible through the help of the neighbouring company SMS-Elotherm, which is supplying the necessary technical resources and work force here in Remscheid. They and a lot of other people who have contributed to the success of this event through their work, i.e. the supply of water and energy, their estates and a lot of smaller and greater helps deserve our deepest gratitude; especially to Autohaus Johann.

***I wish you, dear Miss Ritscher and the Indo-German Society (Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft), that today's initiative together with the friends in India is going to serve a contribution for the rights of the Dalits and especially the children.***

To you and us I wish a lot of joy and fun at this happy and colourful festival, a nice summer's day and always a fair wind to let the kites fly.

Thank you,

***Mrs. Beate Wilding  
Lord Mayoress of City of Remscheid***

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### 2007 – PVCHR uses the first funding from Remscheid to construct a classroom in Shivrampur and the first Playschool (Kindergarten) for Dalit and Mushar children in the village of Ayer

The commitment for the second funding was made very fast, because we had satisfied the necessary criteria for the first official funding by the **German Ministry of North-Rhine-Westphalia via InWent Capacity Building International GmbH / Germany:**

The Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid had to first, explain the necessity of the construction work and the promotion of educational opportunities for children and adults in the application requirements. Second, the construction and funding had to be in national interest. Thanks to the constructive cooperation with Dr. Lenin and PVCHR, the first educational project had succeeded. A project that was focused only on the welfare of the Dalit-Community.



*On 6. September 2007 the buildings in Shivrampur and in Ayer were inaugurated by the District Magistrate **Mrs. Veena** and the director of "8 May Foundation", **Mr. Kim Soo Nan from Korea** under large sympathy of the village community and press. For the Dalit and Mushar people, the **Eklavya Janmitra Centre**, is more than a playschool, it is also their community room for Panchayat and for many other occasions – **and for more convergence!***

When I came to Ayer in early 2008, I was happy to see the building and the joyful children who showed me the new rooms. However, I was even happier that the children received a hot meal every day thanks to "Care House Foundation" and the commitment of Ms. Parul Sharma. It was wonderful to see how everything worked out! I distributed biscuits that were prepared by supporters. Dr. Lenin showed me photos from their everyday life at the playschool. Mrs. Inger Agger, partner of the PVCHR, was with us on the spot.



The aim of the exchange was to arouse the curiosity of **children from both sides** in a new unknown culture. We wanted to do this **playfully and based on the children's own ideas**. They should be able to look beyond their own cultural backyard. We managed that by handicrafts, games, photos, of course by biscuits, and me – as a living bridge between Remscheid and Ayer.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

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## Interaction in the Kindergarten-Exchange-Project Statement by Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi

The Ayer-children now learned in the kindergarten to sit quietly on their little chairs and to listen to the director, who playfully prepared them for school. It was not just the biscuits that interested them during my visit – their joy was especially big about the handcrafted games, for example the memory game.

While playing and learning the game, Frank Hoffmann, who was a student at this time, and who is still a valuable help and friend of PVCHR and our society, supported the children and the director.



*The picture shows Frank and children from the Ayer-Kindergarten in 2008. Frank explains them the new memory-game. It was a gift from the children of the Remscheid Kindergarten. The children hand-made the game, which shows motives of their daily life, with help from their teachers. Other friends and PVCHR-interns participated in the exchange.*



*Together with the Austrian student **Catarina Freundl**, who also absolved a practical training at PVCHR, the Ayer-children also made a memory game for their friends in Remscheid. They drew motives like the sun, flowers or the Indian flag. The children on the picture were enthusiastic about the game, which their friends had made for them.*

***A sensitive project, which provides an insight into the thinking, feeling and acting children and about the way, they experience the exchange.***



*Even before the exchange, the German children became familiar with the Indian culture because of several days of interaction, at which I told them about India, the culture and the daily life based on photos and stories. Ruby had cooked Indian food with the children; Kushal played "Carrom" with them and young Indian students demonstrated classical dances. The children were so fascinated that they initiated, with the help of some adults, a "West-East" dance program, which they were happy to show at public intercultural events. **A great fun and a contribution to cultural approach.***

### Statement Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi to Ayer-project:

Our Kindergarten exchange-project with Indo-German Society and the kindergarten in Remscheid is a great and important experience for the children, because education starts with the youngest. The exchange provided a confidence and feeling of human dignity, which built self-esteem among those. In our Ayer-project, the Government is running a Kindergarten and a primary school in appropriate buildings accompanied by a close monitoring by community-based organization.

# Indo-German Society

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### 2007 – The first impressions in the village Raup with the Ghasias shocked and motivated for the next grant application 2008 – Hope for a Community – and Educational center

In 2007, I accompanied Dr. Lenin for the first time to the village Raup, District Sonbhadra, to the Ghasia-Tribes. The Ghasias are counted among the Dalits, this is why they are unfortunately exposed to the same discrimination.

It was a rainy day, everything was gray and drab, and the people and the meager huts welcomed me – the memorial stone "Martyrdom" as an outstanding monument was visible from afar. *On January 20, 2003, the memorial was raised by PVCHR for the 18 children of Ghasias who died within one year from hunger. It should draw attention to the Ghasias precarious situation. I commemorated these children at the memorial.*

*Dr. Lenin knew how the Indo-German Society Remscheid could help these people!*



Through Dr. Lenin and the PVCHR, I recognized, their vulnerable situation, and that a Centre with rooms for education and pre-school childcare, including ICDS nutrition program for their community, was urgently needed. On the spot, in collaboration with Dr. Lenin and his organisation PVCHR, the project was planned and funding provided by the *German Ministry of North-Rhine-Westphalia via InWent gGmbH / Germany and Indo-German Society Remscheid. It was only the second time that funding for Dalits had been granted.*



In 2008, I visited the Ghasias for a second time, together with Dr. Lenin, the PVCHR team and accompanied by press. They welcomed us in front of their "one-room house", built for the barest necessities by PVCHR. It was also the place, where the cereal rations were kept, which the people received from government. Today we were here, to give a new well-stocked school bag to all school children. We wanted to reward them for regularly attending *school*.

*But the funding by the German Ministry was not yet granted.*



We were there, because Dr. Lenin informed the villagers and the press about the planned construction of a community center and he wanted to give hope of improving their under-privileged lives. In the meantime, many of the children sampled their bags and moved to the "Martyrdom Stone". It touched me very much, to see the children sitting on the memorial, unprejudiced and happy – in contrast to the tragic fate of this tribe. They were sitting on the past, which is always present for the affected families.

*These children are already on their way to a better and more dignified future. On the flight home, I received the message from the German Ministry that the funds had been granted.*

Before we parted, some villagers performed their ancient traditional folk dance, which they maintained until today.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

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## Inauguration of the community centre for education and culture for the Ghasias in Raup village in February 2009 – “Sushil Tripathi Memorial School Building and Community Hall” named after Sushil Tripathi, loyal supporter and friend of the Ghasias

Our second request for funding was approved by the *German Ministry of North-Rhine-Westphalia via InWent-Capacity Building International gmbH / Germany*, without difficulties. Even the matching financial support, which must be contributed by the Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid with each request, was again provided by loyal sponsors and the society. The building was completed under the direction of Dr. Lenin and PVCHR in October of 2008. The centre is close to the "Martydom Stone".

On February 16 of 2009, the *Sushil Tripathi the Memorial School Buildings and Community Hall* was inaugurated in the presence of the *Tripathi family*, with representatives from politics, education and culture and a cultural program of the Ghasias. It was an honor for me to be present and to be able to share the joy of the Ghasias – as they continue their way to a dignified life.



Through the school, cultural and community centre of the Ghasia association the facilitating integration into the Indian society is strongly supported and encouraged, because it serves for the training and political education as well as the perception of their own rights. It offers the opportunity for the education of children and a location for the adults where they can hold their meetings and exercise their traditional folk and dance art – which contributes as a cultural asset to India “as the only 2000 year old living culture in the world”.

### **Our words for the brave Ghasia-community:**

*A “Candle of Memorial-Stone”, reflecting a never ending warning against discrimination and violation of human rights and a candle of “School Building and Community Hall”, reflecting a never ending shine of hope for equal rights, education for your children and a better life in dignity in future in your native home and beloved India.*

### **Statement Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi:**

The *School Building* is used as school, Kindergarten and community meeting. Kindergarten is initiative of Government and Global Fund supports school for Children, USA. Recently Ms. Parul Sharma and 200 Swedish Donors established pumping set for water too.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

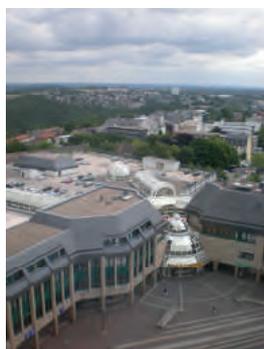
Since 1966



## 2009 – On the occasion of his first official visit Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi is welcomed together with sponsors of the Indo-German Society Remscheid in the City Hall by Lord Mayoress Beate Wilding!

For the first time Dr. Lenin was **warmly welcomed as an official guest in Remscheid**, together with loyal sponsors and supporters of our society, by the Lord Mayoress Mrs. Beate Wilding. The personal acquaintance of Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and the lively exchange about the projects supported by the attending sponsors, confirmed the trust that had been placed on each other until now. Due to the mayor, who had spontaneously endorsed our meeting in the town hall, we got the opportunity to officially thank our sponsors. After all, the sponsors already donated funds for the urgently needed construction of a school for Dalit children in the village Baghwanala near to Varanasi. Through a benefit concert in late 2008, the *cornerstone of the school* had already been laid.

**The objective:** This school should only be built with donations from Remscheid and under the direction of Dr. Lenin – *The heart of our city should take precedence in this case!*



The first official visit of Dr. Lenin took place in the “tower room of the town hall”, with a great view over the city.

In view of the school in the village Baghwanala, we all were happy today for the children – from now on even the city stood behind Dr. Lenin.

For this, we sincerely thanked Mrs. Lord Mayoress Beate Wilding.

Dr. Lenin also visited his other partners from Remscheid – the Roentgen-high school and the *IKE, partner of the kindergarten* project with Ayer. At the Roentgen-high school, he discussed with students about current issues and met Marius and Florian from the Dalit team. Today Marius is already working – but is still connected in friendship and “their project” with Dr. Lenin and India. In *IKE-kindergarten* Dr. Lenin was very impressed by the atmosphere in which the children were looked after. They had no fear, and knew how to surprise Dr. Lenin with the Indian greeting “Namaste”.



# Sponsors & friends of Baghawanala

## Baghawanala School 2010

For the children of Baghawanala village in India, donated by sponsors, friends and the Indo-German Society in Remscheid/Germany. Constructed and supported by the PVCHR.

## Baghawanala Schule 2010

Für die Kinder aus dem Dorf Baghawanala in Indien. Ermöglicht mit Sponsorengeldern von Förderern, Freunden und der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft in Remscheid/Deutschland. Gebaut und unterstützt durch das PVCHR.

भागवानला स्कूल 2010  
भागवानला स्कूल के निर्माण पर, दृष्ट से  
प्राथमिक, प्रायोजकों, टीकाकारों, मित्रों तथा  
भारत जर्मन सौसायटी रैमश्राईड और  
PVCHR की और से दृष्टिक शुभकामनाय



2009 Official reception with sponsors and friends in the town hall of Remscheid.

**Sozialfond Rotary Club e.V.**  
[www.rotary.de](http://www.rotary.de)

**Lions Hilfswerk Remscheid e.V.**  
[www.lions.de](http://www.lions.de)

**Soroptimist - Club Remscheid**  
[www.soroptimist-du.de](http://www.soroptimist-du.de)

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[www.stadtparkasse-remscheid.de](http://www.stadtparkasse-remscheid.de)

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# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

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### On March 08, 2010 – inauguration ceremony in Baghwanala Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Educational Centre The Remscheid school – it's done!

When I arrived for the inauguration, I was overwhelmed by the design of the school, the elaborate and colourful decoration, the presence of numerous unexpected villagers, the "invited personalities" whom I unfortunately cannot name all. I was full of gratitude to Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, his PVCHR team and all those who helped to build this much-needed school for the children.



On behalf of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid, I presented a poster to Mrs. Shruti Nagvanshi and PVCHR, in memory of 2008, Dr. Lenins first official reception with sponsors and friends in the town hall of Remscheid and the warm welcome of Lord Mayoress, Mrs. Beate Wilding.



The celebration was thought provoking. It reflected the progress of Dalit youth and their growing self-confidence as members and reformers of Indian society:

The students of a theatre group, launched by *Mr. Bhirender Singh*, a teacher in the village of Belwa, showed a "street-play" which deals with the rights of Indian women and girls in society and family.

Finally, Mrs. Shruti, Dr. Lenin's wife, lighted the first candle, symbol for the hope that someday *education will be given to every child*. Soon more and more candles burnt!

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

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## On May 2, 2010 – Inauguration of the *Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Weaver Centre and Community Hall*

At the end of 2009, our third application for funding of the Weaver Centre had been granted by the *German Ministry of North-Rhine-Westphalia via InWent-Capacity Building International gGmbH / Germany* without complaint. For what Dr. Lenin had told me about the economic and human tragedy of the weavers, had shocked me deeply. As partners, we share the responsibility for the survival of weavers and the preservation of their existence, in spite of the industrialization and globalization. Should the traditional craft art of sari-weavers and artisans, which always was *a unique cultural asset* to the reputation of India in the world, get lost? But there was some hope given to me: the weavers assisted by PVCHR with Mr. Siddique Hassan as its chairman, founded the union BDAM (*Bunkar Dastkaar Adhikaar Manch*) in 2003, which adopted their rights and revived their weavers industry. *It only lacked its own forum!*

On May 2, 2010, State Minister Sri Harish Rawat inaugurated the “Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Weavers Centre” as a forum for Labor and Employment. High ranked personalities from politics and business, with participation of the population, the press, and various organizations attended the inauguration. Mr. Siddique Hassan welcomed **Sri Harish Rawat, who today is Chief-Minister of Uttarkhand**, at his arrival (photo in the midst).



Only in March 2010, could I convince myself of the construction of the weavers Center, and the fact that a tree has been carefully preserved and a temple was integrated in the building. It was a sign of honoring nature and religion, *living* tradition and modernity.



A year later, I stood on the roof of the “*Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Weavers Centre*”– with Mr. Siddique Hassan, Mr. Bhirender Singh and Mr. Idarish Ansari and a member of the weaver’s community.

*Behind us, the Neem tree flourished and gave us shadow!*

### Statement Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi:

Through our cooperation with Indo-German Society Remscheid, the weavers got a centre, owned by weaver forum BDAM. The *Weaver-Centre* is also used for different vocational training, and a very important instrument for dialog between weavers and Government.

# Indo-German Society

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## 2011 – More space for education

### We engage in two activities for enlarging the Baghwanala School!

Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Educational Centre

Dr. Lenin built the school in foresight so that an enlargement would be easily possible. Because more and more Dalit children wanted to go to school, the Indo-German Society Remscheid initiated a cooperation with the Roentgen High School and its *student Dalit-Team*: Two activities under the motto "More space for education" for enlarging the school. The first activity was ideal for all citizens, who knew nothing about our society and the disadvantaged Dalit children in India, and what could be done against it.

The first activity: On September 20, 2011 **Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Beate Wilding** opened an exhibition in the "Stadtsparkasse Remscheid" with presentations of the school project and their work and commitment to their Dalit friends under the motto „**Together in friendship for Dalits’ rights**“.

Dr. Lenin greeted and thanked the mayor, sponsors and all those present via Skype for the great support from Remscheid. He personally thanked everybody on the Charity Concert!



In the foreground:  
Lady Mayoress  
Mrs. Beate Wilding,  
with personalities of the city  
from politics and integration.

The second activity: On October 07, 2011, the director of the Roentgen high school opened the charity concert for the construction of the "Baghwanala School" in the auditorium of the school. The concert with its various musical performances, the framework programme and the intercultural snacks were organized by the Dalit team, students, teachers, and parents on their own initiative.



Patron of the concert:  
Herr Sven Wolf, member  
of State Parliament  
North-Rhine Westphalia

Guest of honor:  
Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi  
from Varanasi / India

The music group „Flavour“ with Florian, Marius and Oliver, members of the Dalit-team, also contributed to the success of the moving concert.

**The commitment was worth it – the “second floor” could be built!**

# Indo-German Society

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## On February 28, 2012 Inauguration in Baghwanala: *Savitri Bai Phule Women Centre*

In memory of Savitri Bai Phule a centre was constructed for the **Dalit-women today**. The centre aims to strengthen and encourage Dalit women in their self-esteem and in their role as women in family and society. Thanks to Dr. Lenin, it became one of the major concerns for the Affiliate Remscheid to strengthen the role of women in Indian society. The funding for the Savitri Bai Phule Centre For Women was financed by the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid for the first time through the GIZ gGmbH - Society for International Cooperation and the state chancellery of North-Rhine-Westphalia. The equal contribution to the publicly funded project was covered by the affiliate and its loyal sponsors. This project was also completed under the excellent direction of Dr. Lenin and the PVCHR.



Dr. Lenin with team-members, women and children from the village, who are very happy for the women's centre!

**But what is now urgently needed in the interiors?**



This task was taken up by the two friends Jan Dibazar and Stephan Schirrmann from Stuttgart, who had opted for the world proclaimed journey Rickshaw Run in September 2012 from Shilong to Jaisalmer. Hereby, they collected donations for the aid project "Frank Waters Project" and the project of their choice, the Savitri Bai Phule Women Centre's interiors. On their journey they also stopped at Dr. Lenin place and their project. The gift at the end of the journey – the women's house was almost completely equipped with the most important interiors. **Zefant on the run: [www.rickshawrun.de](http://www.rickshawrun.de)**

After the official opening of the centre, a program with honors and presentations was waiting for us at the Weaver Center. There Dr. Lenin called the "**Helma Ritscher Education Scholarship Fund**" into existence. It provides a sustainable initiative for underprivileged boys and girls to study, primarily the girls. **Grateful and deeply moved I accepted the honour.** It was also the year of our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of collaboration with Dr. Lenin and PVCHR.

### **Statement Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi:**

There is no women centre in eastern part of Uttar Pradesh for short stay to women, up to one year according to their wish and settlement of cases. It is very useful centre to provide security, protection and shelter. Other donors, such as European Union and DIGNITY: Danish Institute against torture provided other expenses for legal aid, medical support and stay.



**Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V.**  
**Zweiggesellschaft Remscheid**  
**seit 1966**  
www.dig.rs.de

Dear Jan Dibazar, dear Stephan Schirrmann,

**An extraordinary journey lies ahead of you, a journey combining adventure and social commitment – the famous “Rickshaw Run – September 2012”.**

Having two aims in mind you’re going to cover a distance of more than 3,000 km through India and are also participating in a donation drive for the support of “Frank Waters Project” and a project of your own choice. Thanks to the Indo-German Society you’ve been introduced to our branch, the Indo-German Society Remscheid, and decided to support our project, the

**“Savitri Bai Phule” Women Centre,**

**this was inaugurated on February 28, 2012 in the village of Baghwanala.**

The centre has been built as an educational and cultural centre for *Dalit* women. These women will strengthen their self-esteem and play a bigger role in their family and society. Additionally the centre also provides shelter for victims of abuse and violence covering an area of five neighbourhood districts.

The centre has been named after Savitri Bai Phule who opened the first school for *Dalit* girls, the so-called casteless, in 1852. Savitri was also the first female teacher in India and a *Dalit*.

The Women Centre is a joint project with our longstanding partner, Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, from Varanasi/ Uttar Pradesh, and his human rights organisation PVCHR/PEOPLE’S VIGILANCE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, and has been constructed with donations from German Ministry NRW via GIZ GmbH, Indo - German Society of Remscheid/Germany and Jan Mitra Nyas/PVCHR.



Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and Helma Ritscher at the inauguration ceremony in Baghwanala

**What is urgently required at the Women Centre? How can you help?**

You will hear more about this from Dr. Lenin in his letter to you.

On behalf of the Indo-German-Society Remscheid, we would like to congratulate you on your decision and heartily thank you for your encouraging support of our project.

We wish you a wonderful journey and a safe return and hope that you will have an unforgettable great time with the people of Baghwanala.

With warm regards,

Chairperson



# Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR)

13 April, 2012

**Greetings from PVCHR!**

**Dear Jan & Stephan,**

My heartiest congratulations to the team for taking part in the famous "Rickshaw Run 2012" from Assam to Jaisalmer, and for supporting the fundraising of the "Frank Waters Projects" and of a project of your own choice.

When Helma Ritscher happily informed me about your decision to choose our Women Centre as your own project, we at PVCHR were overwhelmed by gratitude about your decision to support our Centre through your participation in the "Rickshaw-Run" 2012".

The new Women Centre "Savitri Bhai Pule" has been inaugurated on February 28, 2012, and is one of our joint projects of the Indo-German Society Remscheid and the PVCHR.

The construction of the centre was made possible thanks to the financial support of the German Ministry NRW via GIZ GmbH, the Indo-German Society of Remscheid, Germany and the Jan Mitra Nyas/PVCHR and the generous donation of the property by Ms. Urmila Singh: <http://www.pvchr.net/2012/03/from-ground-of-varanasi-emerging.html>

I am sure Helma Ritscher has already informed you through my report on the project, that the centre consists of four rooms – one room as shelter, one room for the warden cum care taker and one office room as place for testimonial therapy, one storage room, lobby and two latrines and bathrooms, one kitchen and one porch. Jan Mitra Nyas/PVCHR supported the building of a well to provide for drinking water. The well also provides drinking water to the poor people living in the neighborhood of the center during the summer reason (when there is scarcity of water).

Dear Jan, dear Stephan, here is a short overview on the items we would require most urgently to run the centre: a battery for uninterrupted power supply (UPS), fans to cool the rooms, 4 - 5 ventilators and cooking gas, etc.. If you do not mind, I will prepare a separate list for you, from where you can choose according to your funds.

Allow me once again to express our gratitude in the name of PVCHR and myself. Your endeavor is truly outstanding and encouraging us to continue our work.

In case you need any help or further support during your rally, please contact me on my mobile [+91-9935599333](tel:+91-9935599333) or by email [pvchr.india@gmail.com](mailto:pvchr.india@gmail.com)

We are all truly looking forward to welcome your team when you are coming to Varanasi.

**With best wishes**

**(Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi)**

**Executive Director**

SA 4/2A, Daulatpur, Varanasi-221002, (Uttar Pradesh) India

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## महिलाओं की मदद करेगा केंद्र

वाराणसी। शिक्षिका सावित्री बाई फूले के नाम पर बघवानाला इलाके में बने महिला केंद्र का उद्घाटन मंगलवार को इंडो-जर्मन सोसाइटी की हेलमा रिचा ने किया। केंद्र में तीन कमरे, रसोई और बैठक के लिए हाल बने हैं, जिसके लिए जमीन उर्मिला सिंह ने दान में दी है और निर्माण का खर्च जर्मन मिनिस्ट्री इंडो-जर्मन सोसाइटी ने वहन किया है। समाज में उत्पीड़ित महिलाओं को केंद्र कानूनी सहायता, टेस्टीमोनियल थरेपी द्वारा मनोवैज्ञानिक सहायता और कुछ समय के लिए शरण देने का काम करेगा। इस अवसर पर जर्मनी के छात्र इलियास स्मिथ व सराह द्वारा मानव अधिकार जन निगरानी समिति के लिए बनाये गये ब्रोचर का विमोचन भी हुआ। संचालन श्रुति नागवंशी व धन्यवाद डॉ. लेनिन ने किया।

22 बच्चियों को मिली छात्रवृत्ति : कार्यक्रम में खुद की मेहनत से अपने बच्चों व बच्चियों को पढ़ाकर मुकाम दिलवाने की मिसाल स्थापित करने वाली कछवां बाजार (मिर्जापुर) निवासिनी निकहत खान को इस मौके पर जनमित्र सम्मान दिया गया। इसके

अलावा स्वीडन के राजदुलारी फाउंडेशन के सहयोग से 22 बच्चियों को छात्रवृत्ति भी प्रदान की गयी।

फाल्गुनदफा फैल चुका है 144 देशों में : चीन ने मले ही फाल्गुनदफा संगठन पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया है लेकिन यह अब तक 144 देशों में फैल चुका है। श्रीमती क्रिस्टियाने टाइच ने चीन के अत्याचारों का जिक्र करते हुए बताया कि सत्यनिष्ठा, सहिष्णुता और करुणा के सिद्धांत पर आधारित इस संगठन को सभी सराह रहे हैं।

डॉ. शैलेश को दी गयी

### नयी पहल

हेलमा रिचा ने किया महिला केंद्र का उद्घाटन

श्रद्धांजलि : कार्यक्रम के अंत में ईमानदार और जनप्रिय चिकित्सक डॉ. शैलेश यादव व समाजसेवी बौद्ध उपासक शिव प्रसाद मोर्य को श्रद्धांजलि दी गयी। इसमें नावें के सुप्रसिद्ध फोटोग्राफर केन आपरान व जर्मन के फ्रेंक हाफमैन, शबाना, अजीत, राजेन्द्र, राजीव, कात्यायिनी आदि शामिल थीं।



महिला केंद्र के उद्घाटन के बाद लोगों से मुखातिब हेलमा रिचा



## महिला पीड़ितों को शरण ही उनकी सहायता

सावित्री बाई फूले महिला केंद्र का शुभारंभ, 22 लड़कियों को छात्रवृत्ति

वाराणसी। महिला पीड़ितों को कानूनी व मनोवैज्ञानिक सहायता और उन्हें शरण देने के उद्देश्य से मंगलवार

किया गया। मंगलवार को बघवानाला स्थित महिला केंद्र का उद्घाटन इतिहासकार डॉ. महेंद्र प्रताप और इंडो



छात्राओं को हेलमा रिचा शिक्षा-छात्रवृत्ति प्रदान करती हेलमा रिचा।

को सावित्री बाई फूले महिला केंद्र का शुभारंभ किया गया। आर्थिक रूप से अश्वम बालिकाओं को छात्रवृत्ति देकर आगे बढ़ने के लिए प्रेरित करने का सिलसिला भी यहां से शुरू हुआ। समाज में अपने बलबूते अच्छा मुकाम हासिल करने वाली महिला को सम्मानित भी

जर्मन सोसाइटी आफ रेमसाइड जर्मनी की अध्यक्ष सुश्री हेलमा रिचा ने किया। लड़कियों की शिक्षा के लिए 'हेलमा रिचा शिक्षा छात्रवृत्ति' की शुरुआत की गई। स्वीडन के राजदुलारी फाउंडेशन के सहयोग से इस वर्ष 22 लड़कियों को छात्रवृत्ति दी गई। बच्चों और बच्चियों को पढ़ाकर एक मुकाम बनाने वाली मिर्जापुर की निकहत खान को 'जनमित्र सम्मान' से नवाजा गया। बच्चों ने 'सब पढ़े सब बढ़े' नुक्कड़ नाटक का मंचन किया। तिलकधारी राजभर, जय कुमार, शबाना, राजेंद्र, अजीत, डॉ. राजीव, कात्यायिनी, नावें के फोटोग्राफर केन आपरान और

जर्मनी के फ्रेंक हाफमैन आदि मौजूद रहे। संचालन श्रुति नागवंशी और धन्यवाद ज्ञापन डॉ. लेनिन ने किया। बताया महिला केंद्र के लिए जमीन उर्मिला सिंह ने दी। निर्माण खर्च जर्मन मिनिस्ट्री एनआरडब्ल्यू, इंडो जर्मन सोसाइटी, रेमसाइड और जनमित्र न्यास ने वहन किया।

## अनाथ महिलाओं को मिलेगा सहारा

वाराणसी (एसएनबी)। परिवार व पति से निकाली गयी महिलाओं को मनवाधिकार जननिगरानी समिति की ओर से आसरा दिया जायेगा।

मंगलवार को पाण्डेयपुर स्थित बधवानाला पर सावित्री बाई फूल महिला सहायता केन्द्र का उद्घाटन किया गया। इस मौके पर संस्था की मैनेजमेंट ट्रस्टी डा. श्रुति ने कहा कि देश की पहली महिला शिक्षिका सावित्री बाई फूले के नाम पर महिला केन्द्र का नाम इसलिए रखा है क्योंकि उन्हें शिक्षिका बनने के लिए काफी संघर्ष करना पड़ा था। उन्होंने कहा कि इण्डो जर्मन सोसायटी आफ रोमसाइड के सहयोग से इस केन्द्र का निर्माण इसलिए किया गया है ताकि असहाय महिलाओं को यहां वैकल्पिक निवास कर सकें। इस केन्द्र में तीन कमरे, एक रसोई व एक बैठक है। केन्द्र में शौचालय व पेयजल व्यवस्था की गयी है। केन्द्र के लिए जमीन उर्मिला सिंह ने दान की तथा इसमें इण्डो जर्मन सोसायटी आफ रोमसाइड ने सहयोग

दिया। महिला केन्द्र की ओर से पीड़ितों को कानूनी सहायता, टेस्टीमोनियल थेरेपी द्वारा मनोवैज्ञानिक परामर्श दिया जायेगा। केन्द्र का उद्घाटन प्रसिद्ध इतिहासकार डा. महेन्द्र

▶ मानवाधिकार जननिगरानी समिति व इण्डो-जर्मन सोसायटी आफ रोमसाइड के सहयोग से सावित्री बाई फूले महिला सहायता केन्द्र का उद्घाटन

▶ केन्द्र की ओर से मिलेगी कानूनी सहायता व मनोवैज्ञानिक परामर्श

▶ निर्धन परिवारों की 22 बच्चियों को मिलेगी छात्रवृत्ति

प्रताप व इण्डो जर्मन सोसायटी आफ रोमसाइड की अध्यक्ष हेलमा रिचा ने किया। इस मौके पर मिर्जापुर की निकहत खान को जनमित्र सम्मान से सम्मानित किया गया। उन्हे यह सम्मान गरीब होते हुए भी अपने बच्चों को शिक्षा न रोकने पर यह सम्मान दिया गया। इण्डो जर्मन सोसायटी आफ रोमसाइड की ओर से बच्चियों के लिए हेलमा रिचा शिक्षा छात्रवृत्ति की शुरुआत की गयी। स्वीडन के राजदुलारी फाउण्डेशन के

सहयोग से इस योजना के तहत 22 बच्चियों को छात्रवृत्ति दी जायेगी। इस मौके पर इलियास स्मिथ व सराह ने मानवाधिकार जननिगरानी समिति के बुकलेट का विमोचन किया गया। कार्यक्रम का शुभारंभ सावित्री बाई फूल के चित्र पर माल्यार्पण से किया गया। संचालन श्रुति नागवंशी व धन्यवाद ज्ञापन डा. लेनिन ने किया। इस मौके पर प्रसिद्ध चिकित्सक व समाजसेवी शिव प्रसाद मौर्य के निधन पर शोक व्यक्त किया गया। इस अवसर पर तिलकधारी राजभर, जय कुमार मिश्रा, शाबाना, राजेन्द्र, अजीत, डा. राजीव, कात्यायिनी, व नार्वे के प्रसिद्ध फोटोग्राफर केन आपरान व जर्मनी के फ्रेंक हाफमैन आदि उपस्थित थे।

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## In July 2013 – The second floor of the school building was constructed Inauguration of the *Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Educational Centre*

When I first met Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi in 2002 and whilst standing on a hill in Baghwanala with a view over the small river Varuna he told me, that he cherishes the secret intent of building a school for the Dalit children one day. He wanted to devote this school to his dead sister in her commemoration. Girls and boys should have the same chance to go to this school. At this time we never even assumed that we, the PVCHR and the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid, would build a school together just 10 years later and even expand it with a second floor just another two years later. To provide more space for education in Baghwanala village today – for every girl, boy and adult. *A dear wish has been fulfilled.*



### Statement Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi:

Thanks to a large joint initiative of the Indo-German Society Remscheid, Roentgen-Gymnasium with Dalit-Team and several and faithful sponsors from Remscheid to pay, the construction costs for the *Raja Suhail Dev Jan Mitra Educational Centre* and second floor on the top of the school building, too. PVCHR realized the project 2013 on site.

There is no school for children of Baghawanala, so this support from Germany is so vital for future of Baghawanala in particular and India in general. There is much collaboration to sustain the other cost of teaching and teaching materials with support of Global Fund for children, USA, Sir Dorabji Tata trust and volunteers from Germany.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## 2015 – Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi’s 3rd official visit to Remscheid Mr. Burkhard Mast-Weisz, Lord-Mayor of the city, welcomed the guest from India in the city hall of Remscheid

Because of the 3<sup>rd</sup> official visit of Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi in Remscheid Mr. Burkhard Mast-Weisz and the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid invited to a discussion panel on 05 May 2015 with special guests of the city, the society and the press in the big boardroom of the city hall. The topic of the discussion: *Pluralism, inclusion and human dignity – the pillars of a peaceful world?*

Do these “great words of our time” lead to the “greatest wounds of our world”? After his statement Dr. Raghuvanshi invited everybody to a discussion from the eastern Indian and the western European view of the topic.



From right to left:  
Mr. Thomas Neuhaus,  
Social department of the city,  
Helma Ritscher,  
the Lord Mayor Mr. Mast-Weisz,  
Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and  
Tobias Grote-Beverborg,  
translator and moderator of the  
discussion panel.

After the welcoming of the mayor and the words of thankfulness to Remscheid by Dr. Raghuvanshi they exchanged their gifts. The guest gift from Dr. Raghuvanshi surpassed the expectations of the Mayor and the guests:



Mr. Mast-Weisz marveled speechless at the Remscheid crest, created by the weavers of Varanasi, woven out of silk and framed, and with lines of thanks to the solidarity and support to the city of Remscheid and the Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid, from Dr. Lenin and PVCHR provided.

Mr. Mast-Weisz thanked warmly!



Wednesday 06 May 2015: The proposal of the society for Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi to initiate an exchange with interested students in the Sophie Scholl Secondary School, ignited the teacher Mr. Oliver Heltewig and his two English classes a great interest to participate in the discussion. There was a lively discussion concerning Indian culture and the reality of life in India with Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, based on the previously acquired knowledge of the class. Particularly great was their interest in current issues about India like forced marriages and human right issues that certainly could not be answered better, than by Dr. Raghuvanshi – and left the pupils deep in thought!

*Statement by Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi on the subject of the discussion board: pluralism, inclusion and human dignity*

**“Confident pluralism is based on inclusion, positive conflict resolution and human dignity”**

5<sup>th</sup> May 2015 in the town hall of Remscheid



My learning from our work on grass roots is very similar to concept of Diana L. Eck, Pluralism project, Harvard University.

- First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but *the energetic engagement with diversity*. Diversity can and has meant the creation of religious ghettos with little traffic between or among them. Today, religious diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies.
- Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but *the active seeking of understanding across lines of difference*. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require Christians and Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and ardent secularists to know

anything about one another. Tolerance is too thin a foundation for a world of religious difference and proximity. It does nothing to remove our ignorance of one another, and leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence. In the world in which we live today, our ignorance of one another will be increasingly costly.

- Third, pluralism is not relativism, but *the encounter of commitments*. The new paradigm of pluralism does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind, for pluralism is the encounter of commitments. It means holding our deepest differences, even our religious differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another.
- Fourth, pluralism is *based on dialogue*. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism. Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean everyone at the “table” will agree with one another. Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table – with one’s commitments.

Confident Pluralism takes both confidence and pluralism seriously. Confidence reinforces the convictions we hold. Pluralism recognizes and reinforces the differences that exist. Confidence without pluralism misses the reality of difference. It suppresses difference, sometimes violently. Pluralism without confidence ignores and sometimes trivializes our stark differences for the sake of feigned agreement or false unity. Confident Pluralism allows genuine difference to exist without suppressing or minimizing firmly held convictions. Confident pluralism is based on inclusion, positive conflict resolution and human dignity. Our model village process and Banaras Convention are our initiative based on same concept.

<http://www.pvchr.net/2014/08/recommendation-of-banaras-convention.html>

# Remscheid

RGa MITTWOCH, 6. MAI 2015

## Dr. Lenin dankt Remscheid

**FÖRDERUNG** Spenden bringen indische Dalits auf den Weg zum Abitur.

Von Gerhard Schattat

Enge Beziehungen gibt es zwischen dem indischen Dorf Baghwanala bei Benares, in dem Angehörige der untersten Kaste der Dalits leben, und Remscheid. Mit Spenden aus Remscheid werden seit 2002 dort Schulen gebaut und gefördert, entstand ein Frauenzentrum. Jetzt gehen die ersten Dalit-Schüler auf das indische Abitur zu. Ein enormer Erfolg.

### Weber aus Indien schufen Remscheider Wappen aus Seide

„Wir danken unseren Freunden in Remscheid“, sagte gestern bei einer Gesprächsrunde im Ratsaal der indische Arzt Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi – kurz Dr. Lenin genannt – und überreichte ein besonderes Präsent an Oberbürgermeister Burkhard Mast-Weisz: Als Zeichen der Verbundenheit hatten die Weber seiner Heimat, die als wahre Künstler gelten, das Remscheider Stadtwappen mit Löwe und Sichel aus Seide nachgebildet.

Der Inder, der in Benares ein Menschenrechtskomitee führt, arbeitet seit 2002 eng mit der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft Remscheid und ihrer Vorsitzenden Helma Ritscher zusammen



Dr. Lenin überreichte ein gewebtes Remscheid-Wappen aus Seide an OB Burkhard Mast-Weisz. Foto: R. Keusch

und besucht derzeit neben Remscheid auch andere deutsche Städte, die die Arbeit des Komitees für die Dalits engagiert unterstützen.

Der indische Menschenrechtler, das war gestern auch Thema im Remscheider Ratssaal, setzt sich dabei für einen Pluralismus ein, der „nicht einfach Vielfalt, sondern vielmehr die aktive Auseinandersetzung mit Vielfalt“ bedeutet. Der Arzt betonte:

„Während religiöse Vielfalt real existiert, ist Pluralismus etwas, das es noch zu erreichen gilt.“

Einfach nur Vielfalt ohne wirkliche Begegnungen und Beziehungen zwischen den Menschen werde zu vermehrten Spannungen in unseren Gesellschaften führen. Es gehe letztlich auch um „das Schaffen fester Vereinbarungen“.

### ■ DR. RAGHUVANSHI

**VITA** Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi wurde am 18. Mai 1970 in Varanasi (Benares) geboren und machte 1994 seinen Abschluss in Medizin, Ayurveda und Chirurgie an der Universität Gurukul Kangari mit Auszeichnung. Er ist verheiratet und hat einen Sohn.

**EINSATZ** Seit 20 Jahren setzt sich Dr. Raghuvanshi für die Rechte der Dalits, Angehörige der untersten Kaste, ein. In diesem Zusammenhang gründete er 1996 das People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR). Dieses Komitee hilft benachteiligten Bevölkerungsgruppen wie Kindern, Frauen oder Minderheiten, ihre Grundrechte einzufordern.

## Dr. Lenin Thanks City of Remscheid

### Funding – Donations allow Dalits to graduate from secondary schools

by Gerhard Schattat (translated into English by Sven Andressen)

There are close relationships between the Indian village Baghwanala next to Benares in which the Dalits live and the city of Remscheid. The Dalits belong to the lowest of all castes. Since 2002, schools are built and promoted with the help of donations originating from Remscheid. Now a center for women has been established. The first Dalit pupils are going to graduate from secondary schools, which is an enormous success.

### Weavers from India made the emblem of Remscheid from silk

The Indian doctor Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi – briefly called Dr. Lenin – said in yesterday's talk in the city hall: "We do thank our friends in Remscheid". After that, he presented the Lord Mayor Burkhard Mast-Weisz a very special gift: As a sign of gratitude, the weavers of Dr. Lenin's home city wove the city emblem of Remscheid from silk. The Indian weavers who have the reputation of being great artists wove the emblem of Remscheid consisting of a lion and a sickle.

Dr. Lenin, who presides a human rights committee in Varanasi works closely together with the Indo-German Society of Remscheid and their Chairwoman Helma Ritscher. After Remscheid, he is also visiting other German cities, which support the work of the Dalit committee.

The Indian human rights activist Dr. Lenin is pleading for pluralism, which was also the topic in his talk at the Remscheid city hall. He said: "It is not only diversity but the active debate on diversity." Dr. Lenin emphasized, "While religious diversity already exists, pluralism is something which is still to be achieved. Simply diversity without encounters and relationships among the people themselves will lead to more tensions in our societies. After all it is about creating resilient agreements."

### Dr Raghuvanshi

**Vita:** Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi was born on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1970 in Varanasi (Benares) and made his degree on medicine, Ayurveda and surgery in 1994 at the Gurukul Kangary University with distinction. He is married and has one son.

**Work:** Since 20 years, Dr Raghuvanshi is engaging himself for the rights of the Dalits who belong to the lowest cast in India. In this context, he founded in 1996 the People's Vigilance Committee of Human Rights (PVCHR). This committee helps backward sections of the society like children, women and minorities to claim their rights.



# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



2006 - 2016

**“Together in friendship for Dalits’ rights” continues,  
Hand in hand with new ideas for a long term and sustainable  
„project initiative for a pluralistic world“**

**www. Plurismo.com**

Looking back, I remember how it all began and how the two teams evolved:

In 2006 the pupils of the Roentgen High School established a „Dalit-Team and exchanged letters with an Indian “students Dalit-Team” via Dr. Lenin and PVCHR to fight together with them for the rights of Dalits. I guess nobody knew that from then on a “*actually impossible friendship and cooperation with exemplary role*” would develop. And yet it still exists today after 10 years. The friendship lives, because some of the founding members of the team took the message of their friends further in 2010 – into their studies and their lives today. Today they are associated with the old team and their own and versatile Initiative: *Henrik Sadlowski and Marius Kurtz*.

The Indian friends carry on as activists for the future of Dalits and their own children. Both teams have been publicly acknowledged for their great commitment with awards. At the beginning it was Chanda, who was the head of the team – today it’s Jyoti and Pooja.

In 2008 the booklet “*Bachon ki Duniya-world of children*” was published for the first time – in it they denounced the grievances in India against Dalits with cartoons. How brave are they all! Chanda is now married, has given birth to a son and already organized her fist campaign against forced marriage.



Great pleasure – Greetings from Remscheid



Jyoti with Mr. Manoj Pandey



Dalit-Team at the Cartoon-workshop



Left: Marius, Florian and Oliver as Representatives of the Dalit teams in the state parliament.

Henrik Sadlowski, was the first of the Remscheid team who travelled to Dr. Lenin, PVCHR and friends in 2014 - and from then on every year. From the new impressions and formative experiences of the past years he and Marius created a concept for "both teams" and a transferable model for other young people from around the world – from which the association *Plurismo e.V.* has arisen:

**www.Plurismo.com**

***Furthermore Marius (1st chairman) and Henrik will tell about this themselves!***

## Statement of Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi

The work of the Dalit team is fantastic and very sustainable with fruitful results for further action. Young people associated with the Dalit team established a new initiative named *Plurismo*. They are trying to build few more social enterprises, to establish new social entrepreneurs.

**Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V.**  
**Zweiggesellschaft Remscheid**  
**seit 1966**



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**PVCHR**

PEOPLE'S VIGILANCE COMMITTEE

ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi

SA 4/2A, Daulatpur

**Varanasi- 221002**

Remscheid, 27.07.2010

**Dear Chanda, Pooja and Jyoti,**  
from  
**Munshi Prem Chandra Bal Panchayat**  
**in Baghwanala,**  
and dedicated magazine  
"Bachon ki Duniya"

On behalf of our Indo-German Society, in my first letter in 2008, I congratulated you and your friends to your first magazine, volume 1, September 2008, which reflects and criticizes unsolved problems of daily life in family and in your village community – **and shows your vision of a way for human rights and a life in dignity.**

When you started with the magazine, you had already learned so much by the support of Dr. Lenin and under the patronage of PVCHR. Especially your presence in campaigns impressed me so deeply, also when once I joined a campaign with you. During the time of years we know each other, I have been taking part by heart in your lives and your development by our yearly meeting as well as besides by regularly information through Dr. Lenin.

When I read the latest news:

***Girls honoured for protesting child marriage and Chanda: a rising young star***  
**Congratulation! Congratulation! Congratulation!**  
to you, from the bottom of my heart.

**You are not any longer admire by your courage and engagement** only from many people, but you are on the way to be more and **more understood by your message** from majority of the youth – You touch not only their heart, **but also their consciousness, and that brings the change into society - also for the next generation.**

A rising and leading star, like you dear Chanda, and other stars like you, dear Pooja and Jyoti, have millions of dark and hopeless stars around them at the "heaven of hope".

**GO ON! Do never stop making them shining and protesting with you against** child marriage, child labour, discrimination, violence, exploitation and **fighting for** education, rights and respect, and a life in dignity.

Your friends from the Röntgen -High School in Remscheid, many people and me in far away Germany, we do stand by you and spreading your message for you too – message for more humanity and peace, not only in India, **but in one world – with one "heaven of hope for all".**

Dear children, I am eagerly looking forward to meeting you again in 2011. God bless you and your beloved India, which is "my India" too!

With lots of love

Yours

Helma Ritscher  
President

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### 2006 - 2016: What began 10 years ago with “Together in Friendship for Dalit’s Rights” – we developed today in our internationally oriented association “Plurismo e.V.” for all people

#### Marius reports:

In 2006, our Dalit project was created in cooperation with the German-Indian Society Affiliate Remscheid, the PVCHR and the „Roentgen-Gymnasium“ of Remscheid in a project week. During this week the aim was to write a letter to Dalit children in Varanasi *and to help them in their fight for their rights*. The project group named themselves “*Dalit-Team*” and their slogan was “*Together in Friendship for Dalit’s Rights*”.

In the following years an unique „actual not possible friendship“ grew across continents. The “*Dalit-Team*” even recorded a radio session for a local radio station and presented the team and their friendship on many days of action. We also participated in a kite festival on which we let self-made paper kites fly – connected via Skype.

In 2011 the “*Dalit-Team*“ collected money for the Baghwanala school. For this extraordinary engagement, we were honored with the “honorary award” by the “*Local Alliance for Families*”. In addition to a certificate for each of us, we got a cash prize. This money was also spent for the construction of the school.

After Henrik was for the first time at the *PVCHR* in Varanasi in January 2014, he came back to Germany with many impressions and ideas. Henrik and I developed a concept with which we wanted to establish an association. With the working title „*Plural World Challenge*“ we further developed our ideas and concepts with a group of former members of the “*Dalit-Team*”.

In May 2015, the association “*Plurismo eV*”. developed out of the “*Plural World Challenge*” – a first and big step for us! Beside the creation of a multilingual website ***Plurismo.com***, we want to encourage young people especially to deal with the culture and the problems of other people and to develop long-term solutions together with them – ***not only in India but also all over the world!***



*Our first public stalls at the European Students Conference in Berlin 2015*

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

### Since 1966



## Of hepatitis, Handwoven Fabrics and Holi

### A story written by Henrik Sadlowski



As a 23 years old medical student I was looking forward to my service in a charitable hospital in India: “voluntarily helping patients that could normally not afford medical treatment”. With this goal in mind, I was sitting with an Indian physician in the doctor’s room and examined people with pale lips and yellowish skin – symptoms resulting from very bad malnutrition and hepatitis. We gave free medicine to them, - but what does a patient with an infectious disease do, when he goes to the small hut he shares with his wife, parents and five children?



As many others I realized, that by treating acutely sick patients one is just scratching on the surface of underlying problems. At this point, I started thinking of how to solve social problems by combining (i) the strengths of poor and marginalized people, (ii) entrepreneurial methods and (iii) a corporate philosophy integrating health as well as social and environmental responsibility into daily work.

This abstract idea became more concrete when I met the weavers in Varanasi: Together we started developing a new fabric and established the manufacturing of high quality shirts from this new fabric. More friends joined the team and together with Marius Kurtz and Noa Goren I founded the enterprise **Sukira**. Under the umbrella of **Sukira** our shirts are now being sold in Germany, Israel, Palestine and India. At the same time **Sukira** is the home of a new, innovative and human-focused entrepreneurial philosophy.

At this point, I would like to note that not all this work would ever have been possible without the support of PVCHR/Lenin Raghuvanshi and the Indo-German Society Remscheid/Helma Ritscher.



Throughout this lasting and successful collaboration, a deep friendship between me and the employees of PVCHR was established. It is captured quite nicely with this picture from Holi. But I also connected to other local people in Varanasi. For instance, I was living in an “Urban Slum”. The idea behind it was actually to be even closer to poor people. But after a few days I realized that the language barrier was quite hindering in this endeavour.

In order to get in touch with neighbours and kids on the streets that are not speaking English, I began practicing Martial Arts in an empty yard. After a while, many curious people joined the training. I repeated this every time I went to India and after a while, friendships between my martial arts students (Abishek, Aryan and Ramjan) and me were developing. To make such visits possible for more people, we created **Plurismo e.V.** to take this movement forward.

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### Think globally – act locally! \* Think locally – act globally! In friendship as partners and friends in partnership Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid and PVCHR- People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights in Varanasi

In line with the slogan and its importance on the world stage, I can say, retrospectively to the previous reports, that we, PVCHR under Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and - the Indo-German Society Remscheid under my leadership, grew as partners and good friends and engaged ourselves for the benefit of the under-privileged till 2016. I could not report about everything – but some important people who are very close to my heart and even some events I kept for the *end of the 1st section* of this brochure.



Photo on the left:

One of them is Mrs. Shruti, Dr. Lenin's wife; herself committed activist and „Trustee of PVCHR". It is a great pleasure to work with here and also Ms. Shirin Shabana Khan, „Program Director of PVCHR".

Dear Shirin, the faithful soul of the entire office is usually available and there for everyone, just like Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Executive Director of PVCHR- People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights. Both, *Shruti* and *Shirin* have grown close to my heart as friends forever through the joint work.



**2012** – On my second visit to the *Muslim area Bazardeha*, the social background was already familiar to me. Again, I was impressed by the eagerness and the friendly nature of children, despite the evening time. Some of the children recognized me, and a boy gave a green scarf to me, which he, so the teacher told, had woven for me. The

loving gesture of the Muslim child surprised and moved me very much. Green – the colour of hope!

**In 2014, Henrik Sadlowski brought hope to Bazardeha with a "Fair Trade Initiative"...**



The gesture that came natural to *Mrs. Shyam Dulari*, cleaner of the premises of PVCHR, when Dr. Lenin and Shruti and the PVCHR team prepared their selves for a multi-day campaign through the villages in Uttar Pradesh on 8 March of 2008, *was not natural to me*.

**But after hesitating for a short while I joined in her gesture.**

***Here it was about human rights, privileges and justice for our Dalit friends!***

**So I raised my fist – for within my heart, I have always been part of their struggle.**

***Jinadabaad-Jinadabaad!***

Back home, the „board of the Society“ assured me of their full support – our slogan lives on!

# Part 2

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



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**50 Years – Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid**  
**A kaleidoscope introducing cultures, their tradition and modernity**  
**through a variety of events and projects!**  
**From West to East and East to West!**  
**– Building a bridge between India and Germany –**

The Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid was established in 1966 as the 24<sup>th</sup> affiliate in Germany. It was the time when many Indians from the educated upper class of India came to Germany, mostly to continue their studies or to expand their "know-how" in their professions.

At this time, the Indo-German Society was only focusing on culture. The society wanted to arouse the interest of the Germans to the exotic culture of India, to the customs and traditions, but mainly to the fine arts, music and dance. And the same time, the society helped the Indians in Germany, to ease their homesickness.

Therefore, the cultural events, which were offered by the affiliate Remscheid once a year, always were a great social event and a popular meeting place for Germans and Indians to find contacts and friendship.

I was also a guest at several events and I made many Indian friends, with whom I am still connected today. This includes the Musicians of the *Maharaj family* from Varanasi. With their music, the father and his sons are international known as "*Maharaj-Trio*" and they are still valued partners of the affiliate Remscheid with their concerts and participation in intercultural music projects.

But with the years the expectations for the Indo-German Society changed, because many Indians lived already in the second generation in Germany. They had to create corresponding offers, which were addressed to the younger and the older generation at the same time.

**1991 – Therefore, the affiliate Remscheid its 25th anniversary as an opportunity to start with "new and contemporary life".**

Thanks to the commitment of the founding and board member Mr. Barun Chatterjee, a new board was elected. This board was entrusted with the task to develop a wide range of offerings, which should be closer to the people and socially oriented. The society should contribute to a better understanding of the respective cultures and it was considered as a further object to maintain cooperation with public institutions, associations and schools.

It was a great honor for me and a tremendous sign of confidence, to be proposed by Mr. Chatterjee as executive director of the affiliate Remscheid. I am happy to have taken this responsibility on me. With the Lord Mayor of Remscheid, Mr. Reinhard Ulbrich, as the first Chairman, we started with a contemporary program in the anniversary year, not without expressing our gratitude to the "previous board" for its 25 years of cultural work from 1966 to 1991.

Now that I have completed the "first part of the brochure", I now turn to "part two of the brochure" with the headline About Us – 1991 to 2016. Due to the variety of our events, I will only report about selected cultural events, seminars, workshops, social and educational projects and about continuously maintained activities for our members, interested persons and friends of our affiliate.

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### “About Us” – Start into the year 1991 What were the highlights of the first year? Introduction to the Indian culture through current topics and the first anniversary celebration – 25 years Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid

The Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid started with the presentation of their annual program and their new tasks and goals for the future. The press was also invited. The interest in both cultures, India and Germany, should be revitalized. *It was extraordinary and unique*, that a Lord Mayor was also the first chairman of an affiliate. To have the Lord Mayor of Remscheid, Mr. Ulbrich, as first chairman, was a special appreciation for and an exceptional introduction to the future work of the Remscheid affiliate. The press reported positively about the new board and the continuation of the society in our city.



And this appreciation should be given by a reception of the Lord Mayor in the City Hall to all the artists and representatives, who come to us to Remscheid and enrich us with their performances. They and their home country India should be honored in a special way by the Indo-German Society and the city. Be it for the contributions for the Indian arts, music, dance, literature, religion, ayurveda, politics, economy, social services and education or the Indian everyday life "with its cooking" and its traditions, or all the other facets of a more than 2,000 years old, still vivid culture.

In the middle: Lord Mayor, Mr. Reinhard Ulbrich and Mr. Barun Chatterjee, he has passed away since.

*At this point, I want to mention that the Lord Mayor remained as our chairman for a long time because of his long term in office. Since I became the first chairwoman in the year 2005, I ensure that the reception at City Hall is guaranteed by his successors for our Indian guests until today.*

But for now – to stick to our story – the major represented the first big cultural event of our affiliate: **The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid on 28 September 1991** – in the house where the annual cultural evenings of the past years had always taken place.



*A contrast-rich program fascinated the many guests: The **Ensemble Sanskriti** sang and played Tagore songs, the Indian children's dance group **Kala Samithy** offered a great show and as the "German part", the **Luigi Quintet** played classical music by European artists.*

*The harmonious atmosphere of the evening certainly contributed to continue the rapprochement between the two cultures. The 25 anniversary of the Society was particularly appreciated within the framework of "Multicultural Week".*

Erstmals wieder deutsch-indischer Abend im Schützenhaus

## Zwei Kulturen kommen sich nah

Von ROLF LOTZMANN

Der deutsch-indische Kulturabend im Remscheider Schützenhaus knüpfte am Samstagabend dort an, wo die Remscheider Zweiggemeinschaft der „Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft“ vor Jahren mit ihren Aktivitäten aufgehört hatte. Im Jahr seines 25jährigen Bestehens wurde der Verein seinem eigentlichen Gedanken vollaufgeleitet. Dies bestätigte auch das Mitglied des Bundesvorstands Kukertz. „Mit diesem kulturellen Angebot ist es gelungen, den Gedanken der Gesellschaft gut zu verdeutlichen. Das einanderzugehen von zwei verschiedenen Kulturen und das Zusammenfinden sollen helfen, Vorurteile abzubauen.“

Mit der Zielsetzung, der Remscheider Zweiggemeinschaft wieder neues Leben einzuhauchen, hatten sich einige engagierte Remscheider, Deutsche wie Inder, schon vor einigen Wochen zusammengefunden. Unter der Leitung von Helma Ritscher und Barun

Chatterjee fand sich eine kleine Gruppe, deren erste Veranstaltungen — Vorlesungen und Vorträge — eine breite Zuhörerschaft fanden.

Mit dem „Deutsch-Indischen Kulturabend“ erreichten diese Aktivitäten einen neuen Höhepunkt. Erstmals kamen hier beide Kulturen zu ihrem Recht, was dem Abend die besondere Note verlieh. Leider mußte der indische Botschafter sein zunächst angekündigtes Erscheinen absagen, und auch eine Vertretung fehlte — ohne ersichtlichen Grund.

### Lob für Ulbrich

Die Worte des deutschen Dichters Hermann Hesse und des indischer Literatur-Nobelpreisträgers R. Tagore standen ungeschrieben über dem Abend. Spricht Herrmann Hesse, von Hilma Ritscher zitiert, davon, daß jeder Mensch in seinem Gegenüber sein Gegenstück sehen soll, spricht Tagore von der „Summe der Menschenliebe, wonach die Kultur bemessen werden

sollte“, Reinhard Ulbrich, Remscheiders Oberbürgermeister, konnte von den Verantwortlichen der „Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft“ das Lob für sich in Anspruch nehmen, Deutschlands einziger Oberbürgermeister zu sein, der einer „Zweiggesellschaft“ vorsteht.

Ulbrich wies darauf hin, daß diese Veranstaltung, eingebettet in die „Multikulturelle Woche“ des Ausländerbeirats, ein wichtiges Bindeglied sei, Brücken zwischen den verschiedenen Kulturen zu schlagen. „Das ist in einer Stadt, die mit einem Ausländeranteil von knapp 15 Prozent in unserem Land ganz vorne liegt, mehr als wichtig.“

Mit dem „Luigi-Quintett“ der Jugendmusikschule (Leitung Roswitha Heitmann) und den Tanzgruppen „Sanskriti“ (Hamburg) und „Kala Samyhi“ (Köln) konnte die Präsenz bei der Kulturen nicht größer sein. Sicherlich lag aber auch hierin der besondere Reiz des Abends. Die indischen Tänze und Gesänge wurden für die deutschen Gäste erklärt und tibersetzt.



Indische Tänzerinnen setzten glanzvolle Akzente beim deutsch-indischen Abend im Schützenhaus.  
Foto: Körschgen

Bergische Morgenpost  
Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1991

## **After a long time again an Indo-German Evening in the Schuetzenhaus Two Cultures Come Close to Each Other**

by Rolf Lotzmann

The Indo-German Cultural Evening in the Schuetzenhaus in Remscheid on Saturday evening picked up where the Indo-German Society of Remscheid stopped working a few years ago. In the 25<sup>th</sup> year of its existence the association truly fulfilled the ideas of its founders. This was also stated by a member of board of the Indo-German Society Mrs. Kukertz: "With this special event we managed to accentuate the principles of our cultural society. The gathering of two different cultures and the joint celebration shall help to fight prejudices."

A few weeks ago, some very active German and Indian citizens of the city of Remscheid set themselves the target of reviving the Indo-German Society in Remscheid. Helma Ritscher and Barun Chatterjee gathered a group of volunteers and organized the first events, readings and lectures. After a while the audiences grew bigger and bigger.

This Indo-German Cultural Evening represents a new peak of Indo-German life in Remscheid. For the first time both of the cultures had presented themselves in a joint program and that gave the event a very special touch. Unfortunately, the Ambassador of India had to cancel his appearance and neither a person to replace him nor an excuse had been sent.

### **Praise for Ulbrich**

The words of the German poet Hermann Hesse and the Indian Nobel laureate R. Tagore stood as unwritten slogans upon this evening. Helma Ritscher quoted Hermann Hesse that every human shall see himself in his counterpart, and cited Tagore: "The sum of love for all humans shall be the only measure of culture." The Lord Mayor of the City of Remscheid Reinhard Ulbrich was praised for being the only Lord Mayor of a city in Germany who is a member of board in a regional Indo-German Society.

Ulbrich said, that this evening was part of a multicultural week organized by the Foreigners' Counsel of the City of Remscheid and would build important bridges between different cultures. "In a city with a 15% share of foreigners this is very essential."

With the 'Luigi-Quintett' of the 'Jugendmusikschule' (headed by Roswitha Heitmann), the dancing ensembles 'Sanskriti' (Hamburg) and 'Kala Samyithi' (Cologne) there was a vast cultural contribution. The performances were definitely the highlights of the Indo-German Evening. All Indian dances and songs were very well translated and explained for the German audience.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## “Festival of India”

From September 1991 to May 1992

*Unique Cultural Convention of the Indian and German Government  
In over 35 German cities more than 400 Indian artists, authors, and  
scientists showed thousand and one facets of their culture*

**Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid  
takes part in two events**

With the launch of the "Festival of India" in 1991, our company had its first event: a **book reading with the high-profiled authors Sunil Gangopadhyay, Nirmal Varma** and Professor Dr. Lothar Lutze from Heidelberg University as moderator. The event took place on 22<sup>th</sup> September 1991. The Indian author Gagan Gill, wife of Nirmal Varma, was also present. It was a literary event for the audience, especially for the Indian guests. They listened spellbound to the **melodic soft Bengali** of the poet and novelist **Sunil Gangopadhyay** and to the *fineness of the Hindi-language* of **Nirmal Varma**, whose domains are novels and prose. The reading draw a colorful, but also critical picture of India - so the press.



The writer Gagan Gill wrote in our guestbook:

*It was the most heart warming get together  
I experienced in Germany*

Professor Dr. Lothar Lutze:

*A great day for the Indo-German Society!*

On the left picture: **Sunil Gangopadhyay** – on the right: **Nirmal Varma**

The second event was the performance of the **Kalakshetra Group** from Madras, one of the leading dance companies of India with their classic dance **Bharata Natyam**. They danced on March 17<sup>th</sup> in the city theatre. For the artists it was a special honor to perform their dances in the city theater Remscheid. And it was special for them that they were received and appreciated at the town hall by the Lord Mayor of the city. *This is a unique privilege of our affiliate.* It applies to all other performances from India who shows their arts in Remscheid. The artist thanked the Lord Mayor with a necklace of golden and red silk. Their gratitude and joy over here and their outstanding performance were reflected in "our guestbook" and in the press. *The Festival of India* was a highlight for both side Germany and India!



Mr. P.V. Joshi, Minister in the Embassy of India, at that time located in Bonn, and his wife came to Remscheid and honored the **Group Kalakshetra**, our affiliate and the city with their visit.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## 1992 – Charity Concert and Anniversary Celebrations 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Music Ensemble of Benares on 14 October 1992 The former Indian Ambassador, his Excellency Mr. Kishan S. Rana, and Lord Mayor of Remscheid, Mr. Reinhard Ulbrich, pay tribute to the artistic commitment of the artists from India



The concert of the *Music Ensemble of Benares* gave us an impressive concert and a reunion of the musicians *Pandit Prakash* and his brother *Vikash Maharaj*, whom I heard years ago as a *guest* in the Society. This time I was the one to welcome and congratulate them on behalf of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid.

With their exotic magical sounds and virtuous performance of Prakash, master of Tabla and Vikash, his brother on the Sarod, along with the other exceptional artists, *Pandit Shivanath Mishra* on the Sitar and *Pandit Krishna Ram Chaudhury* on Shanai, accompanied by the director of the ensemble, *Günter Paust*, on the Tanpura, they excited the guests. They thanked for the warm welcome and the Ambassador for the appreciation of their art by his presence.



*His appearance was based on an invitation of us on the grounds that his visit was to be a surprise for the ten-year commitment of the excellent artists. He accepted spontaneously.*

*Likewise, he spontaneously accepted the invitation of the Lord Mayor to accompany him the following week when visiting the Cologne industrial and tool trade fair at which Remscheid was represented as an industrial city with worldwide exporting companies. During their visit, they were accompanied by the press.*



*The proceeds from the concert were used equally for the support of the following projects of the company:*

*„Vivekananda-School“ in Dehra Dun, the first educational project of our society and the „Remscheid Help Center for the Disabled“, in which particularly wheelchair-bound people were helped in coping with their human and social problems. Our company had already organized a lecture with slides for them: A young man told about his trip to India in his wheelchair.*

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



1993 - 2016

## About the Variety of Daily Life in India “Indian Cooking” as the center-piece of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid’s Program

In the early days of the revival of the society we established ourselves with events which were represented India and also stood out from the multitude of offers of other cultural associations and evoke the interest of the citizens.

With our member Ms. Ruby Ray, an Indian from Kolkata, capital of West Bengal, we developed a concept for „Indian Cooking“: Introducing participants to the cultural identity and culinary arts of this eastern Indian state by cooking together. By the joint preparation of the dishes and the dining of the exotic flavors the „German-Indian cooks“ learned a lot about the daily life in India, experienced it’s cuisine and cultural diversity, customs and traditions.



The interest in „Indian Cooking“ is still unbroken. For the program of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid Ruby Ray arranges two vegetarian and non-vegetarian menus. The concept of a *menu* developed by Ruby Ray over the years is not known in the culinary tradition of India. *However, this European idea of a menu with Indian dishes is what made our offer so popular.*

*In 2006, just in time for the 40th anniversary of the society and for the Frankfurt Book Fair, the „RGA-Verlag from Remscheid“ published the cookbook titled „Ruby’s Indian Cuisine“ – as a sustainable result about the Indian cuisine.*



*However, Mrs. Ray is not only popular and well known for the preparation of Indian menus. With her performance of religious or traditional folk songs, she moves the audience at cultural and intercultural events. With “Sari wraps“ she delights students in school projects and at grassroots festivals often even adults. For this Ruby Ray’s commitment is the heart of the society, and a dedicated facilitator of the daily life in India in our city of Remscheid, a city with people from 120 nations.*

*Namaskar –  
Welcome to Ruby’s Indian cuisine!*

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

### Since 1966

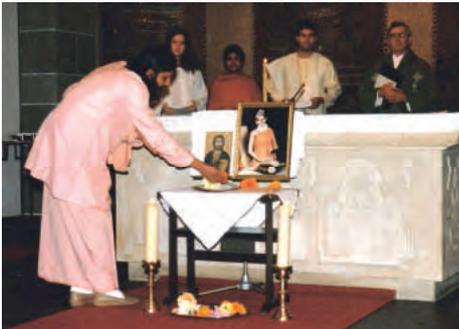


## 1994 - 2006 – Sustainable Encounters with India – its Religions and Spirituality Aryurveda in Theory and Practice

Before our society opened the dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity in 1994 with the Hindu monk **Swami Shuddhananda** from Kolkata, we had already offered excellent lectures about the major religions of India with Indian scholars. But Swami *Suddhananda*, he follows the spirit of the *Saint Baba Lokenath*, impressed the guests at the first lecture through his spirituality, humanity and openness to the world, and the presentation of his many social projects in the service of the poorest of the poor. He built schools and initiated mobile clinics and self-help programs.

**Swamiji:** *People should learn with all the dignity to stand for themselves and should not have to beg.*

After his first lecture, we entered into a dialogue with the Catholic church of St. Suitbertus in Remscheid and their **Pastor Mr. K. Uellendahl**. From this point onwards, events took place in the parish, which contributed to the appreciation of each other's religion and awoke the interest in experiencing and encountering the Hindu monk, and to witness him practicing his religion and spirituality.



*After „A day with Swami Suddhananda“ filled with talks and joint evening prayer, followed the highlight of our exchange at his next visit. The Sunday „Family Mass“ with Swami Suddhananda. The continuous dialogue over many years had left their marks in the hearts of men. The church was filled! The mass and its theme „about winning and losing“ was designed both from the perspective of the Hindu monk and the priest, Mr. K. Uellendahl. The Indian nun, **Sister Krishnapriya** who accompanied the monk on his travels, moved the audience with her spiritual singing.*

Furthermore, our society organized discussions with pupils in schools – and cooperation with the Indo-German Society in Wuppertal. The press reported on each of his visits. Until today, we remain in friendship with Swami Shuddhananda ([www.babalokenath.org](http://www.babalokenath.org)).

We are likewise connected to the Ayurvedic doctor, **Dr. Madhura Dixit from India**, who did the „Ayurveda – in Theory and Practice“ weekend seminar from 1999 to 2006. We had already had lectures on the theory of Ayurveda, but for the first time a practicing doctor of the German Institute of Ayurveda and Naturopathy guided us into the application and the deeper meaning of this proven healing art of India – understandable and practicable for female and male participants.

The yoga teacher **Mrs. Bertel Grote-Beverborg / BDY**, supported her.



**Ms. Dr. Dixit** in the practical instructions of a partial massage of whole-body oil massage „**Abhyanga**“. Many topics were directly about the current concerns of people, to cite a few: *Be healthy and stay healthy through Ayurveda and Yoga – Healthy diet in everyday life and in case of illness – **Antiaging-Rasayana therapy in Ayurveda.***

*The seminars were concluded in 2006.*

Both encounters with India – its spirituality and Ayurveda teachings have enriched many people here in long term.

# Indo-German Society

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1993 - 2000

## A Selection of Indian Classical Dance Highlights For the first time – Approaching the contemporary dance of the big solo dancer Bharat Sharma

Due to the director of the "City Theatre" at this time, *Helga Mueller-Serre*, who had placed her emphasis on dance productions with major dance artists from around the world, also the offers of our society in classical and modern dance in India found a permanent place. The artists were delighted with the theatre as a worthy venue for their "arts dedicated to god" at every appearance. These costly offers could only be implemented by the affiliate with the support of the head office of the society and so-called *ring events* and sponsors, such as the Indian Cultural Center in Berlin.

After the *Kalakshetra-Group in 1992*, a performance of *Odissi Dance Troupe*, which was in Germany for the first time, under the guidance of *Guru Maydhar Raut* took place on **28 October 1993** involved in a „*Little Dance Festival*“ in the City Theatre as a ring event. As a part of the „*Little Dance Festival*“ the most famous principal dancer of modern Indian dance *Bharat Sharma* showed his performance for the first time in Germany in Remscheid and in the Indo-German Society Affiliate Darmstadt, which made this extraordinary invitation possible.

An impressive dance experience! The performance of the „*Mask Dance Theatre Yakshagana*“ with 18 artists from south India took place on 09 November 1998 in the theatre. The mask theatre has its special place in a wide range of south Asian performance forms. An annular *ring event* of the head office, co-sponsored by sponsors.

One of our highlights of the classical dance was an „*Indian Night*“ on 18 October 2000 in the theatre. *Alarmel Valli*, one of the greatest solo dancers of Bharatanatyam from Madras, enriched the audience with her stunning championship, excellent technique and charm. *Madhavi Mudgal*, with Odissi-Dance, *Madhup Mudgal*, with Hindustani vocals and trance drumming from Kerala, who were only in Germany for some shows, enchanted the „Indian Night“.

Compared to the classical dance performances, the *first performance of a contemporary dance with Bharat Sharma was an experiment*, which was hugely successful. The audience was fascinated and the press praised the solo program of Bharat Sharma because it provided an insight into the modern tendencies of dance and spiritual life of India.



That was the theme of the workshop discussion, which *Bharat Sharma* had a day earlier with the dance teacher of the *Academy Remscheid*, *Mrs. Dr. Ronit Land*. Our Society already made contact with the Academy in advance and planned a workshop with Bharat Sharma and Dr. Land for the year 1995.

*Lord Mayor Mr. Ulbrich* welcomes *Bharat Sharma* –and *Guru Maydhar Raut Troupe* in town hall.

# Indo-German Society

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## 1993 - 1997 Contemporary Indian Dance For the first time the "West-Eastern Choreography Forum" between Remscheid and Bangalore took place

After the first successful performance of contemporary dance with Bharat Sharma in 1993 in the city-theatre, an experiment that was absolutely successful, there stood nothing in the way for the planned continuation of the cooperation.

### 1. Choreography-forum: *Academy Remscheid 1995*

Under the title "*West-Eastern Choreography Forum*", a first-time meeting between the *Remscheid Academy* and the *Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid* took place for modern dance. During the period from 6<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> March 1995 young choreographers from Germany met with *Bharat Sharma*, an internationally recognized modern dancer and choreographer from India. The mutual exchange during the two-week seminar gave all artists strong impulses for their further work, also aroused a new understanding of the culture of the other and marked a sign of friendship.

*Press: BM-Bergische Morgenpost, 18. März 1995 / Titel: The dance as a language crosses borders*

### 2. Choreography-forum: *Alliance Francaise de Bangalore 1995 in Bangalore*

Phase II: The choreography, which had been drafted in Remscheid, was designed ready for the stage in the time between 25<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> March 1996 in Bangalore by *Dr. Land* together with *Bharat Sharma*. With the kind support of Dr. Bartsch from *Max Mueller Bhawan*, the choreography was brought to the premiere in Bangalore. In addition, Dr. Land, head of the department dancing at the Academy Remscheid, gave an intensive workshop in contemporary dance with selected Indian young choreographers. *I took part in the name of our society.*

*Press: Sunday Herald, 05. May 1996 / Titel: Dance in a time of ideas*

### 3. Choreography-Forum: *Academy Remscheid and "City theatre" 1997*

Phase III: In 1997, Bharat Sharma came again to Remscheid for his second choreography forum, in context of an international dance seminar. He choreographed a piece for the "*Dance Ensemble Remscheid*". This ensemble is a contemporary group with dancers from different cultures. The choreography by Bharat Sharma and *Mrs. Dr. Land* was performed as a *European premiere* in the Municipal Theatre Remscheid. The title: "*The fist was an open hand*". The music for the choreography by *Bharat Sharma* was composed by the Indian artist *Anjana Puri*. *For the first time one of our cooperation launched in a coproduction between the Academy, the Municipal Theatre and the Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid.*

*"Dancing in the Modern India", the first and cultural venture of our society, as the initiator of the "West-Eastern dance project" was successful!*

Excerpt from *akademieremscheid.de*: The *Remscheid Academy* is a non-profit organisation and is the main institute of cultural education for children and young people in Germany and North-Rhine Westphalia. Our mission is to be the leading provider with the most differentiated and wide-ranging offering for training and teaching professionals in the area of cultural youth education.

# Bergische Morgenpost

RHEINISCHE POST

Samstag, 18. März 1995 —

## BERGISCHES FEUILLETON

Bharat Sharma leitete Seminar in der Akademie

### Der Tanz als Sprache überschreitet Grenzen

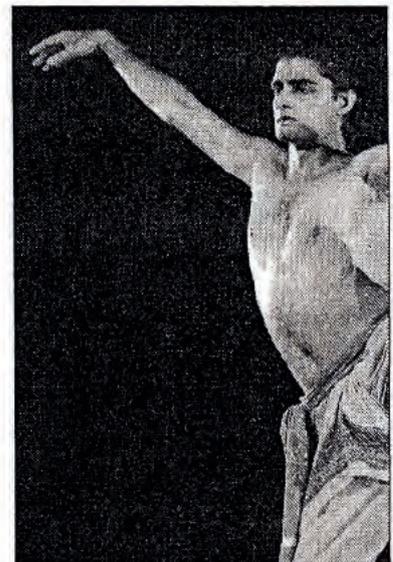
REMSCHIED. Indien und Tanz? In den meisten Köpfen der Westeuropäer haben sich stereotype Bilder festgesetzt: Bilder von folkloristischem Bauchtanz, dunklen Frauen mit rotem Punkt auf der Stirn und schräge, bleierne Musik. Diese Art Betrachtung käme einem Deutschlandbild gleich, das bayerische Schuhplattler stellvertretend für die deutsche Tanzszene nennen würde. Doch die Dinge sind hier wie dort differenzierter. Für ein anderes Indien, für einen anderen Tanz steht der Tänzer Bharat Sharma, der für zwei Wochen in der Akademie Remscheid ein Tanzseminar leitete. Er kam auf Einladung der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft in Remscheid, die zusammen mit der Akademie Remscheid diese ost-westliche Begegnung ermöglichte.

„Ich habe mich hier nie als Fremder gefühlt“, sagt Bharat Sharma. Dahinter verbirgt sich nicht die angeborene Höflichkeit des Inders, sondern eine echte Erfahrung während des zweiwöchigen Seminars. Tanz als Sprache ist multikulturell, grenzüberschreitend. Körperausdruck ist überall kompatibel.

Die Teilnehmerinnen des Seminars haben zusammen mit Sharma eine Improvisation erarbeitet, die sie in einer Kurzchoreographie in der Gale-

rie Remscheid vorstellten. In einer überraschend dichten Aufführung zeigten die Tänzerinnen, daß sie mit dem Vokabular des modernen Tanzes vertraut sind. In simultanen Szenen entwickeln sich Tanzsituationen, mal als Ensemblebildung, mal als Duo oder Solosequenz, hier ein Spritzer Ironie, dort ein Anflug von Dramatik. Über welche Bewegungsqualitäten Sharma verfügt, zeigte er in einem kurzen Auftritt zu ersten Choreographie-Entwürfen von Ronit Land, der Tanzdozentin der Akademie Remscheid. Die Dynamik seiner Bewegung fließt aus einem großen Zentrum der Ruhe, wirkt niemals exaltiert. Auffällig für westliche Augen der prägende Einsatz seiner Hände und Arme.

Das Seminar kam zustande, weil beide Seiten sich auf Widersprüche einlassen wollten, erklärte Ronit Land. Die Erfahrung zweier unterschiedlicher Kulturen, die Ablösung von der Tradition — bei aller Unterschiedlichkeit, die Gemeinsamkeiten überwogen. „Wir stellen die selben Fragen, suchen alle nach neuen Wegen“, meint Ronit Land. So wurden aus vermeintlichen Widersprüchen fruchtbare Ergänzungen. Für Ronit Land hatte dieses Seminar auch eine Art Modellcharakter für die Verständigung zwischen verschiedenen Kul-



Bharat Sharma lehrt an der Akademie; Tanz ist multikulturell. Foto: Archiv

turen. Über die fachliche Ebene das Verbindende entdecken.

Bharat Sharma nutzte auch die Zeit in Deutschland, sich mit den besten Choreographinnen und Choreographen in Deutschland zu treffen mit Forsythe in Frankfurt, mit Linke in Remscheid und Pina Bausch in Wuppertal. Sharma: „Ich nehme für eine lange Zeit gute Erinnerungen mit nach Indien.“ Wenn es nach den Plänen der Veranstalter geht, soll Sharma nicht das letzte Mal in Remscheid gewesen sein. Der Austausch zwischen West und Ost soll auf der Ebene des Tanzes weitergeführt werden. Verständigungsprobleme? Fehlannonce.

CHRISTIAN PEISELER

## **Bharat Sharma leads Seminar at the Academy Of Dance as language exceeds its limits**

India and Dance? In the heads of most West-Europeans stereotyped pictures are fixed: pictures of the traditional belly dance, of dark women with the red point on their forehead and strange, leaden music. This view could be compared with a vision of Germany that the Bavarian "Schuhplattler" stands for the complete German dancing scene. However, things are different in India as well as in Germany. The dancer Bharat Sharma, who led the two-week seminar in the *Academy Remscheid*, represents the other India, the other dance. The Indo-German Society Remscheid, who enabled this East-Western meeting in cooperation with the Academy Remscheid, invited him.

"Here I never felt as a stranger", says Bharat Sharma. This is not only Indian politeness but his genuine experience during the two-week seminar. Dance as language is multicultural, exceeding limits. Body expression is everywhere compatible.

Together with Sharma, the female participants of the seminar developed an improvisation, which was presented in a short version in the *Galerie Remscheid*. In a surprising dense performance the female dancers showed, that they are familiar with the vocabulary of contemporary dance. They developed in simultaneous scenes dancing situations, sometimes as duo, sometimes in a solo sequence, here a drop of irony, there a bit of drama. Bharat Sharma showed in a short performance in the first choreographic models of Dr. Ronit Land, the dance lecturer of the *Academy Remscheid*, the range of his movement qualities. The dynamic of his movements comes out of a deep centre of quietness and is never over-excited. The impressive movements of his hands and arms are conspicuous for western eyes.

This seminar took place, because both sides agreed to contradictions, explains Roni Land. The experience of two different cultures, the detachment of tradition in all differences the common interest was predominant. "We ask the same questions, are in search of new paths", says Ronit Land. Subsequently presumed contradictions proved fruitful supplements. For Ronit Land this seminar was a model for the understanding between different cultures. To discover the connecting element on the professional level.

**Bharat Sharma also used his time in Germany for meetings with the best female and male choreographers in Germany**, with *Forsythe* in Frankfurt, with *Linke* in Remscheid and *Pina Bausch* in Wuppertal. Sharma: "I take a lot of good memories with me to India for a long time". According to the plans of the organizers it was not the last time, that Sharma came to Remscheid. The exchange between West and East shall continue on the level of dance. Communication-problems? Dead loss!

# FLICULATIONS

Dr. Ronit Land, an Israeli-born modern choreographer and teacher based in Germany, was in Bangalore recently to conduct a week-long workshop with 16 contemporary and classical dancers. The workshop was initiated by Helma Ritscher of the Indo-German Society, Remscheid, in association with Max Mueller Bhavan and Alliance Francaise, Bangalore, and Academy Remscheid, where Dr. Land is currently the director of dance.

Dr. Land, who has taught at Tel Aviv University (Israel), Folkwang School (Germany) and California State University (USA), introduced to the participants diverse schools of dance like the Body-Mind Centering methods and the Anna Halprin technique, which not only triggered new connections within the bodies of Indian dancers, but also gave them a collective insight into the concept of the 'thinking body'.

However, the focus of Land's visit to Bangalore was the solo dance she choreographed for Bharat Sharma, a modern dancer/choreographer and an exponent of Mayurbhanj Chhau, who is presently a programme director at the India Foundation for the Arts, Bangalore. Marking the culmination of a memorable event, Sharma's expressionistic piece was preceded by an informal presentation by workshop participants at the Alliance Francaise.

Tripura Kashyap, a founder-member of Apoorva Dance Theatre, Bangalore, recently anchored a discussion between Bharat Sharma and Ronit Land about the modern dance scene. Excerpts follow: Tripura Kashyap: *Over the past few years, my involvement with Indian modern dance has got me*



## Dance in a time of ideas

The modern dance scene in India is gaining momentum. With greater media exposure, dancers are eager to experiment with new ideas.

**TRIPURA KASHYAP** moderates a discussion between modern dancers

**RONIT LAND** of Germany and **BHARAT SHARMA** of India on the state of modern dance.

(From left) Dr. Ronit Land, Bharat Sharma on stage in a dance posture (left) and off it (right).

Main photograph by Jurgen Schug

# Indo-German Society

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## 1995 – For the first time an International Music Project at the Academy Remscheid "Indian classical music – in Dialogue with the West" in cooperation with the "Maharaj-Musicians" from Varanasi

Only two months after the *first cultural venture of our affiliate Remscheid*, the “*West-Eastern dance project*”, our second cultural experiment followed in the Academy Remscheid: “*Indian music in dialogue with the West*”. The event took place in the period from 1<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May 1995.

Who would be more suitable than our musicians *Prakash, Vikash and Subhash Maharaj* from a musical family, who are obliged to the tradition of classical music since 15 generations. They preserve this heritage with passion and act today as *independent musician of Maharaj family*. Due to their experience they collected during their concerts in Western countries, their interest and fondness of experimenting in exchange with other cultures, musical styles and instruments has grown. They had already gained musical experience with western music like jazz, when they came to the Academy Remscheid. Their enthusiasm fits perfectly to the high demands, which the head of the project, Dr. Jürgen Terhag, demanded of the participants of the “*Indo-Western music exchange*”:

*What are the possibilities and limitations of the exchange, how can connectivity between different musical cultures be created? Workshops in theory and practice, lectures, concerts and ensemble projects were part of the high-profile program.*



*From right to left:*

*Pandit Prakash Maharaj, Tabla*

*Subhash Mahara, Tanpura, academic support*

*Professor Dr. Josef Kuckertz, concept, and direction  
and scientific monitoring / Freie Universität Berlin*

*Vikash Maharaj, Sarod*

*Dr. jürgen Terhag, Head of Department of the Music  
Academy*

*Helma Ritscher, Organisation / Indo-German Society  
Affiliate Remscheid*

The music project was a cooperation between the *Academy Remscheid* with the following institutions: Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid, Indian Embassy Bonn, Indian Cultural Centre Berlin and WDR (West German Broadcast Cologne). The patronage of Lord Mayor of Remscheid and chairman of the Indo-German Society affiliate Remscheid.

*From my point of view, the dialogue between eastern and western music and the participants from different countries has helped them for their musical and personal enrichment. During the project week everybody felt the warm and dense atmosphere – with sounds from India and Germany. Near and approaching at the same time. The WDR West German Radio in Cologne reported about the project for a half hour.*

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## 1998 – Global March against Child Labour For the first time – Children and Young People worldwide are on a route to Geneva, to the meeting of the ILO - International Labour Organization to carry forward their concerns there

**An impressive initiative of hope against intolerable child labour in the world!** As our society heard about it, the children affected were already on their long march from Manila and Sao Paulo, and the children of Cape Town were on the move, to Geneva. On their way there they collected thumbprints that they would present at the meeting of the International Labour Conference of the ILO in June, showing their concern for law and justice, and demanding the abolition of intolerable child labour.

**For our society, especially for me as the Chairwoman, an intensive phase of discussion of the topic of this human tragedy began. Immediately it belonged to the global human responsibilities of our society.**

**What could we do?** In the ensuing actions, I will name as representative of all dedicated people, organizations, governments from nearly a hundred countries, only **Mr. Kailash Sartyarthy**, international coordinator and co-founder of the Global March, from "SACCS - South Asian Coalition on Child servitude" Mrs. **Suman**, **Mr. Ramashanakar Chaurasiya**, **Ehsan Ullah Khan**, leader, and **Nageshwer** and **Asaraf**, freed child labourers.

Together with the Lord Mayor of Remscheid and Chairman of our affiliate, we decided to sensibiliser students for the topic of child labour and their discriminated lives, with the help of the press and to gain attention for the *Global March*.

**By collecting thumbprints, their solidarity with the children would grow.**

**On 06 April 1998**, children from different schools were guests in the city hall. **Lord Mayor, Mr. Ulbrich** and the children put as the first signers their thumbprint as a protest against child labour. The students had many questions – and were very thoughtful during the action.

We informed the press that we would soon involve many schools in the *Global March* by handing out information material and that a huge *day of action for children's rights* was in planning for May.

**The next day, the *Global March* left its first traces in the press.**



***The Global March has led "child labourers" from around the world to Geneva – and the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid to them to India.***

***It was a great pleasure and honour to my to personally convey our solidarity to Mr. Kailash Sartyarthy.***

***In the middle: Mr. Sartyarthy with activists of Global March, Mrs. Suman, Mr. Ramashanakar Chaurasiya and kid Asaraf.***

Remscheid beteiligt sich an Aktionen gegen Ausbeutung der Jüngsten / Auftakt gestern im Rathaus

## Mit Daumenabdruck gegen Kinderarbeit

(job). Mit einem Daumenabdruck eröffnete Oberbürgermeister Reinhard Ulbrich gestern die Remscheider Aktionen zum "Global March against Child Labour". Der Hintergrund: Zur Zeit marschieren mehrere Gruppen von Kinderschutz-Aktivistinnen aus allen Kontinenten sternförmig zum Sitz der Kinderhilfsorganisation "Unicef" in Genf. Dort werden sie die Listen

mit Daumenabdrücken abgeben, die unterwegs von ihnen und von Unterstützern gesammelt wurden. Damit soll auf die Kinderarbeit und ihre Folgen in vielen Ländern der Erde hingewiesen werden.

In Remscheid plant ein Aktionsbündnis, unter anderem unter Beteiligung der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft und des "EineWeltInfoLa-

dens", mehrere Informationsveranstaltungen zum Thema. Die Schirmherrschaft hat OB Ulbrich übernommen; außerdem unterstützt der städtische Kulturservice das Aktionsbündnis organisatorisch. Die Listen, die ab sofort in ganz Remscheid ausliegen, werden der Marschiergruppe aus Südafrika bei einem Treffen in Hattingen Ende Mai übergeben.

Der Daumendruck, den der OB gestern zusammen mit rund 15 Kindern und Erwachsenen sozusagen als "Erstunterzeichner" in die Liste stempelte, soll nur einer von vielen sein: "Jeder kann damit die Aktionen für mehr Kinderrechte und mehr Bildung symbolisch unterstützen", erklärte Helma Ritscher von der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft. Daß bei der "Stempel"-Aktion gestern im Rathaus mehrere Kinder anwesend waren, hat ebenfalls Symbolcharakter: Schließlich soll nach den Osterferien in den Schulen der Stadt mit geeignetem Informationsmaterial die Problematik verdeutlicht werden.

Die neunjährige Lena, die gestern im Rathaus dabei war, hat im Unterricht noch nie etwas über Kinderarbeit gehört: "Das haben wir in der Schule noch nie gehabt." Sie interessiert sich aber trotzdem dafür. OB Ulbrich übergab den anwesenden Kindern kleine Stofflöwen, bei denen er auf die Herkunft geachtet hat. "Made in Germany" steht auf den Label, ein Anzeichen dafür, daß sie nicht irgendetwas in der sogenannten "Dritten Welt" hergestellt wurden: "Wir hatten auch schon mal Präsente 'Made in China' angeboten bekommen. Die haben wir nicht eingekauft", machte der OB gestern eine mögliche Maßnahme gegen Kinderarbeit deutlich.



Erstunterzeichner: OB Reinhard Ulbrich und etliche Kinder setzten mit einem Daumenabdruck ein Zeichen gegen Kinderarbeit.

BM-Foto: Hans Dörmer

*Basinde Morgenpost 7. April 98*

Bergische Morgenpost  
Stadtpost  
Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1998

## **Remscheid Participates in Action Plan against Exploitation of Children / Opening Event in City Hall**

### **Fingerprints against Child Labour**

(job) With a fingerprint of his thumb the lord mayor of Remscheid Reinhard Ulbrich opened the activities of the 'Global March against Child Labor'. The background is that these days a number of groups of child protection activists from all continents are marching towards Geneva where the headquarter of Unicef is located. On the way to Geneva, they want to collect a list of fingerprints from their supporters and present it to Unicef. This action is to show the impact of child labor all over the world.

In Remscheid a union of activists' groups including the Indo-German Society and the "EineWeltInfoLaden" is planning a number of actions on the topic of child labor. Lord mayor Reinhard Ulbrich took over the patronage of this program. The organization of the activities is supported by the cultural service of the city of Remscheid. From now on these lists of fingerprints will be displayed all over the city. End of May in Hattingen the lists will be handed over to a group of activists from South Africa on their march to Geneva.

The fingerprints of the lord mayor and the ones of 15 children and adults are supposed to initialize the lists of fingerprints of Remscheid. "Everybody symbolically can support the actions for more children's rights and education", Helma Ritscher from the Indo-German Society in Remscheid declared. That the fingerprints' action has started in the presence of several children has been symbolically too. After the Easter holiday information will be provided to the schools in Remscheid in order to explain the problematic situation of children forced to work.

The nine-year-old Lena for example, who has been present in the city hall yesterday, had never heard about child labour before. "We've never talked about that in school." Now she is interested in that topic. Lord Mayor Reinhard Ulbrich presented little soft toy lions to the children. He had taken care that they were all 'Made in Germany' which is a hint that they are not produced on a Third World country. "Once we were offered presents 'Made in China', but we rejected them," the lord mayor explained and suggested this as a possible way to prevent child labor.

[Text to picture]

Initializing: Lord Mayor of Remscheid Reinhard Ulbrich and a number of children gave their fingerprints as a sign against child labour

# Indo-German Society

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## Global March Initiative of the Indo-German Society and the City of Remscheid 19 May 1998 Action Day for Children's Rights and thumb prints of solidarity for the „Global March Activists“

Six weeks earlier Lord Mayor Mr. Ulbrich had announced a *"Day of Action for Children's Rights"* at the City Hall. In the meantime, based on the information and working documents for schools, the confrontation of students with the life and background of the child laborers of the *Global March*, had moved many. Many of them gave their face to an action of the *Global March* *"Education instead of Exploitation"*. Groups of children have to break broke stones, weave, sort match-sticks or polish shoes.



*Information stalls of various regional and national organizations, children and young people in their customary garb were bustling the square space of the church community.*

*The "colorful day" with a serious background was organized by the "Cultural Service of the City" with a variety of clubs and social organizations and churches, which have turned to it because of their orientation to disadvantaged members of society.*



*Not only the Remscheid press and regional television took part on this day of action for children's rights also Mr. Jha of the "Deutsche Welle in Cologne" participated.*

*The children around him told that they diligently collected thumbprints and they knew to report **for which** they collected these.*

*The Lord Mayor (in the background) rejoiced with them for he had been the first one to give a symbolic thumbprint of the people of the city of Remscheid.*

Franz Lebfromm, Director of the *Cultural Service of the city* (right in the background) revealed that as soon as the thumbprints were counted he would personally hand them over to a *"Global March Group"* of the city of Hattingen. There they would stop for some days.

On this day, a large discussion with the director of the Remscheid Academy, Dr. Max Fuchs, took place. The evening ended with a concert of our friends **Pandit Prakash and Vikash Maharaj**.

**Vikash Maharaj** is a member of the **SACCS – South Asian Coalition on Child servitude**.

Right after the concert, he invited me to come to Varanasi and to Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and the PVCHR – People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights in Varanasi, of whom he is a co-founder.



# Indo-German Society

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### On 21 May 1998 – Hand-Over of the “thumb-prints“ to a Global March Group Spontaneous invitation and reception in the city hall of Remscheid by the Lord Mayor on 22 May 1998

It was not just a thumbprint, but also a symbol for solidarity for those children in the world who still have to fight for their rights. The day of action had shown how serious the collection of thumbprints – the enlightenment in their own words – was for the children. With the first print of the *Lord Mayor* and the collected prints in the weeks before and on the day of action an impressive sum of, 4000 thumbprints had been collected, which now were given to a group of the *Global March*.



*It touched me very much when I saw the big logo on the banner of the group, behind which the tragedy and the great courage of the young people and kids were hidden, across borders of countries and continents – and their own demarcation.*

*For their freedom and their rights – without borders!*

*The day after tomorrow they would again be on their way to Geneva.*



*Tomorrow they could be in Remscheid to be received in the City Hall – couldn't they? The Lord Mayor, who had been informed about our spontaneous idea via phone, agreed immediately. We three, Mr. Lebfromm, Mrs. Ehlers and I had taken the task to hand-over the thumbprints from Remscheid to the group in the city of Hattingen where they rested. Mr. Ahsan Ulla Khan, leader of the group and Nageshwer were very happy – just as we were!*



On the next day *Lord Mayor, Mr. Ulbrich* welcomed the *Global March Group* in presence of the press in the City Hall of Remscheid.

*Lily*, a girl from Bangladesh, *Tamur* (11 years old) from Pakistan or *Nageshwer* from India told very quietly about their liberation from the „*intolerable child labor*“.

*But the press gave them an even louder voice!*

**The Lord Mayor still regretted  
that he could not ask some schoolchildren to join for – they had no school that day.**

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## The Global March and its Impact on the educational work of the Indo-German Society Remscheid The beginning of a school partnership – A way for mutual and better understanding

The Global March led to the first school and class partnership between our so far still only educational project with the Vivekananda School in India and "Sophie Scholl Comprehensive School" in Remscheid, because of a teacher who was taking part in the "Global March Action" had the same vision. Both schools were ideal partners with a modern educational concept. We developed a network of individual modules, which should lead to a vibrant partnership and lead to an approach to each other's culture. A pioneering project that would combine both: promoting education and international understanding. In agreement with the founder of the school, Dr. Sharma, of the Bonn Indian School Association, the partnership was already launched during my visit to the school in early 1999.

For the first time the students showed some interest on Germany.



The exchange went on with pen-pals, preparation of project work on selected topics that most students wished from their partner class. Their interest was referring mostly to questions about the school and the school system, family and everyday life with its festivals and traditions, but also modernity with its progress.

**They learned about the culture of each other by direct exchange and not from their teachers – this enabled them to strengthen the perception of one's own culture.**

The constant exchange with each other and their own culture, pen-pals and project work certainly helped to overcome prejudice and build an understanding and to introduce students to a nearly holistic image of Germany and India. In 2004, this exchange ended with the school year and for both sides began a new phase of life.

A transferable model – a way – for other schools was developed out of it, which we used for similar partnerships and different schools.



**Another way:** The teacher Neelam Sharma of the Vivekananda School, who now lectures at "The Indian Academy" in Dehra Dun, has implemented her German experience there. We send interested teachers to the school who would like to gain some experience in India, where they help to further deepen German culture and language.

**A special way:** The first exchange with the, for me familiar, Dalit students – along with Dr. Lenin – has given them a voice here outside their country.

**A creative way:** Start with readings in schools, with an author who is familiar with both cultures!

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### 1998 - 2016 – The art of writing: The Indian author Rajvinder Singh and his literature and his commitment to the Indian literature

The Indian German speaking poet and author **Rajvinder Singh** in his first reading led not only the audience of the evening **on a creative way for a better understanding of people from different cultures** entitled „Traces of the Roots“ on 27 August 1998 – but also the pupils of the *Gertrud-Baeumer Gymnasium in Remscheid* earlier the day.

He lives in Berlin since 1991, studied English and linguistics there. Numerous poems and short stories by him have been published in German and he received awards and tributes as well in India as in Germany. Mr. Singh is a member of **PEN**, the *German Writers' Association* and a founding member of the initiative: **Courage against Xenophobia**. In their name, he gives lectures at schools and initiates intercultural writing workshops since 1993 to make students familiar with other cultures, to reduce their fear against foreigners and thus broaden their horizons. The focus is always on the creative use of language, as well as on life and people. *With this, he exactly matched the goals of our society.*



Due to his rich experience and his background in India and Germany, **Rajvinder Singh** brought the knowledge and flair with him to make empathetic writing workshops.

With his readings, intercultural work at schools and high schools and educationally valuable outcome of writing workshops, he has given us a decisive boost. Rajvinder Singh became, in addition to individual contributions as a good author, our pioneer of literary youth work, nationwide in other Affiliates!

The initiative of the affiliate Remscheid, to carry out writing workshops with **Mr. Singh**, was embraced by many affiliates in Germany. Mr. Singh knew how to encourage the young people to realize their creative skills, to improve their knowledge of global cultures – **and to look beyond their own horizon.**

In October 2006, the results of these workshops were published in form of a book entitled „**Beyond the Horizon**“ published by “*RGA Publishing Remscheid*” and presented at the **Frankfurt Book Fair** together with pupils of participating schools in the presence of the then Indian Ambassador **Ms Meera Shankar**.

The workshops, represented as a contribution of the youth work of the society, were funded by the “*India Foundation of the head society*” and the “*Indian Embassy in Berlin*” co-sponsored till the end of 2012. **Rajvinder Singh** continues his work until today in our city, with impressive readings in public and schools of Remscheid.

**Mr. Singh succeeded at the book fair to invite high-profile authors and representatives of India to Remscheid for a reading on 11 October 2006. A great honor for all of us!**

## Veranstaltungshinweis:

### **Topklasse Autoren aus Indien lesen in Remscheid** **am Mittwoch, 11. Oktober 2006 um 19.00 Uhr** **im Rathaus Remscheid, Theodor-Heuss-Platz 1, Sitzungssaal**

„Dichtung ist und bleibt meine wahre Leidenschaft. Sie ist meine Lebenslinie“, sagt **Gulzar**, der im pakistanischen Teil Punjabs geborene und seit über 40 Jahren in Mumbai lebende Dichter der Urdu Sprache. Er ist einer der bekanntesten Autorenfilm-Regisseure Indiens.

Diese Leidenschaft für Dichtung beschwört auch seine jüngere Kollegin aus Tamilnadu, **Kanimozhi Karunanidhi**, die bereits 1997 auf dem Internationalen Poesiefestival in Paris ihre Zuhörer tiefst beeindruckte.

Ebenfalls **Upamanyu Chatterjee**, selbst ein Bürokrat, hat in seinen Romanen die Nahtstelle zwischen der Bürokratie und der Öffentlichkeit hervorragend aufgezeichnet und seinen faszinierenden Humor leicht mit der bissigen Kraft der Ironie verflochten.

Und **Pratibha Ray**, die humanistische Autorin aus Orissa, nennt Dinge beim Namen und bemüht sich, in Ihren Romanen und Erzählungen einen Gesellschaftstypus zu entwerfen, in der soziale Gerechtigkeit endlich zur Geltung kommt.

Die Autoren vertreten Indien, das *Gastland 2006* auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse. Sie werden begleitet von dem Präsidenten sowie dem Sekretär der Akademie der Literaturen in Indien, **Prof. G. C. Narang** und Mr. A. Krishna Murthy.



Prof. G. C. Narang

Gulzar

Kanimozhi  
Karunanidhi

Pratibha Ray

Upamanyu  
Chatterjee

**Moderation:** Dr. Christian Henkelmann, Kulturdezernent der Stadt Remscheid und Rajvinder Singh, deutschsprachiger Autor indischer Herkunft und Stadtschreiber in Remscheid im Jahr 2004.

**Veranstalter:** Kulturservice der Stadt Remscheid in Zusammenarbeit mit der Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V., Zweiggemeinschaft Remscheid  
Mit freundlicher Unterstützung des rga-Buchverlages

## Event Note

### **Top Class Authors from India read in Remscheid** **on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at 7 p.m.** **In the City Hall of Remscheid, Theodor-Heuss Platz 1, Sitzungssaal**

“Poetry will always be my only true passion. It is my life line”, says **Gulzar**. Gulzar lived in Mumbai for more than 40 years, but he was born in the Pakistani part of the Punjab and is a poet in Urdu language. He is also one of the best-known art house film directors in India.

The same passion for poetry is burning in his younger colleague from Tamil Nadu, **Kanimozhi Karunanidhi**. She already has deeply impressed the audience at the International Poetry Festival in Paris 1997.

**Upamanyu Chatterjee** who writes novels on the link between bureaucracy and public affairs is a bureaucrat himself. His novels do fascinate with a texture of Chatterjee's fine humour and sharp irony.

The humanistic author **Pratibha Ray** from Orissa follows a very direct style in her novels and short stories. In her writings she tries to create a society targeting social justice.

All these authors represent the host country India on the Frankfurt Book Fair 2006. They will be accompanied the president Prof. G. C. Narang and the chief secretary A. Krishna Murthy of the Indian Academy of Literature.

[Text to picture on previous page]

#### Moderation:

Dr. Christian Henkelmann, Head of the Cultural Department of the City of Remscheid and Rajvinder Singh, German speaking author of Indian origin and town chronicler of the the City of Remscheid in 2004.

#### Host:

Cultural Service of the City of Remscheid in cooperation with the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid (Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V., Zweiggeseellschaft Remscheid)

With the kind support of the *rga-Buchverlag*.

# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



### 2013 – Indian Classical Music in dialogue with Blues Maharaj Trio and Bluesduo Dr. Mojo Charity concert and two workshops at Remscheid high-schools

In 1983 I got in touch with Indian classical music for the first time when I was a guest of the Indo-German Society Remscheid on a concert of the musician brothers *Prakash, Vikash and Subhash Maharaj*, who carried me off to the subtle language of Ragas. A decisive experience, which connects us in an artistic friendship for over 30 years and since guided us for nearly 25 years. Other famous Indian musicians, as a group or soloists, were often staying with us. But due to the long cooperation the Maharaj artists are an example of living tradition and confrontation with Western music for us, which their sons continue today as cosmopolitan and successful.



At this point I would also like to mention the sons *Vibhu* and *Anshu* of the unfortunately deceased great musician *Pandit Prakash Maharaj* and his son-in-law *Sukhdeo*, appreciated friends and unique artists who inspired both the audience and the press. As the *Maharaj Trio* *Vikash Maharaj* and his sons *Abhishek* and *Prabhash* they won't just represent the heart of their great cultural heritage of their family tradition. They are also committed to the social environment project "*Holi-Water*" and for the promotion of the Dalit in their hometown of *Varanasi*.

In 2012 our company launched the first charity concert together with the *Maharaj Trio* for our Dalit-educational scholarship. In 2013, another project took place in Remscheid in cooperation with *Uli Sporman* and *Klaus Stachuletz*, the *Blues Duo Dr. Mojo*: „**Indian classical music in dialogue with Blues**“. In addition, *two workshops* were conducted with interested students of the *Leibniz- and Roentgen-Gymnasium*.



Out of this musical encounter the CD „*Indian Classical Music in Dialogue with Blues*“ was created. The proceeds from its sale flows, without deduction directly to the „*Helma Ritscher Education Scholarship Fund*“. The project was supported by „*Global Engagement gGmbH – financed by funds of the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia*“. With the piece of music „*Hriday-Heart*“, the musical climax and the final of the charity concert merged the results of the workshops with the professional contribution of artists – Indian classical music elements with those of the western Blues – touching one another in a great experience!

*I traveled to Varanasi with a "Heart for Dalit" and with "Hriday" my history of more than 50 years Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid ends – also here in Varanasi!*

# Pandit Vikash Maharaj

Sarod Maestro

Respected dear Helma ji,

I am so happy to know, that **we** are celebrating 50 years anniversary of Indo-German Society Remscheid in Varanasi in 2016. Since 32 years, we have been working on various successful projects. On various occasions, Indo-German Society Remscheid has provided its capability to create unbreakable bridge, between India and Germany.

I congratulate you and Society for your incredible work all these years. You have shown extraordinary dedication and effort to bring European and Indian Music together and understandable. In 1995, you organized the projects at “Remscheid Academy” as “Merging of Indian and European music” and “Indische Klassik im Dialog mit Blues” – Projekt und CD in 2013, which proves as miles stone to all music lovers / students and brought honor to our nation India.

Since 1983, until now, your love and support to Indian Culture and music just increased, which can be easily find out in your social work in India to provide equal education and rights to all children below poverty line at Baghwanala and other villages around Varanasi. Here, the Indo-German Society works under your guidance with your partner, Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi and PVCHR - People’s Vigilance Committee on Human Rights, successfully together. Since 1983, I can truly say, we are also good friends.

On behalf of my family and “Maharaj Trio”, I am sending my warmest regards and congratulations to you and every member of the Indo-German Society Remscheid on this special occasion. I wish you good health in your further life, too.

Yours,

Pandit Vikash Maharaj

## About Maharaj Trio:

With exquisite skill and artistry, this charismatic father and sons trio from Varanasi-India, breathe great joy and vitality into music that dates back thousands of years. Their repertoire of Ragas, the heart of all of their music, comes directly from the ancient Vedic texts. It has been passed down from generation to generation in this family of musicians that can be traced back **15 generations**. Yet, each Raga holds infinite potential for improvisation, always reflecting the shifting moods of the human heart and encompassing the full breadth of a lifetime. Every performance is unique, as the dynamic relationships between musicians and audience create an entirely new and unforgettable experience every time.

[www.panditvikashmaharaj.com](http://www.panditvikashmaharaj.com)

[www.maharajtrio.com](http://www.maharajtrio.com)

C-25/18 Kabir Chaura, Varanasi-221001- INDIA

Ph. +91.542.2207896

[www.maharajtrio.com](http://www.maharajtrio.com)



# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966

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### Danksagungen / Acknowledgments

- **Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi** und PVCHR- People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights Team; für die Idee zur Broschüre und Publizierung in Varanasi anlässlich der 50-Jahrfeier der Gesellschaft  
*for the idea of this publication in Varanasi on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid*
- **Daniela Hager**; Lektorat der deutschen Texte / *editorial of the German texts*
- **Tobias Grote-Beverborg**; Lektorat der englischen Texte / *editorial of the English texts*
- **Helmut Hammes, Sven Andreßen, Stephan Braig, Marius Kurtz**; Übersetzungen / *translations*
- **ein Freund der Gesellschaft**, der unerwähnt bleiben möchte; Computer-technische Beratung / *a friend of the society who wants to remain unmentioned; computer & digital support*
- **Marius Kurtz, Henrik Sadlowski**; Beiträge zur Broschüre / *articles in the brochure*
- **Jonas van Stappen**; Übersetzer in Varanasi / *translation work in Varanasi*

#### Unterstützter und Spender / Supporters and Donaters:

#### **Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft und Partner / Indo-German Society and partners**

- **“Indienstiftung der Deutsch-Indischen Gesellschaft”** / *Indian Foundation of the Indo-German Society*
- **Indische Botschaft in Berlin** / *Indian Embassy in Berlin*
- **Deutsche Botschaft in Delhi** / *German Embassy in Delhi*
- **Burkhard Mast-Weisz**, Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Remscheid / *Lord Mayor of the City of Remscheid*
- **Beate Wilding**; ehemalige Oberbürgermeisterin der Stadt Remscheid / *former Lord Mayor of the City of Remscheid*
- **Fred Schulz**; ehemaliger Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Remscheid / *former Lord Mayor of the City of Remscheid*
- **Stadt Remscheid**, Kulturservice, Stadttheater, Stadtbibliothek, Musik- und Kunstschule, Galerie der Stadt Remscheid / *City of Remscheid, Office for Culture, Public Library, Academy for Music and Arts, Gallery of the City of Remscheid*
- **Sven Wolf**; MdL NRW / *Member of the State Parliament North Rhine-Westphalia*
- **Jürgen Kucharczyk**; ehemaliges MdB / *former Member of the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany*
- **St. Suitberus-Kirche**, Remscheid / *St. Suitbertus Church*
- **Roentgen-Gymnasium**, Remscheid / *Roentgen-High-School*
- **Dalit-Team des Roentgen-Gymnasiums**, Remscheid / *Dalit-Team of Roentgen High-School*
- **Sophie-Scholl Gesamtschule**, Remscheid / *Sophie-Scholl-Comprehensive-School*
- **Leibniz-Gymnasium**, Remscheid / *Leibniz-High-School*
- **Albert-Einstein- Gesamtschule**, Remscheid / *Albert-Einstein-Comprehensive-School*
- **Gesamtschule Hackenberg**, Remscheid / *Comprehensive School Hackenberg*



# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966

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- **Indischer Schulverein Bonn e.V.**, Bonn / Indian School Association Bonn
  - **Sozialfond Rotary Club e.V.** / Social Trust of the Rotary Club
  - **Lions Hilfswerk Remscheid e.V.** / Social Trust of Lions Club
  - **Soroptimist-Club Remscheid e.V.**
  - **Stadtsparkasse Remscheid** / Municipal Savings Bank
  - **Deutsch-Iranischer Freundeskreis Remscheid e.V.** / **German-Iranian Friendship Society**
  - **reprosatz neumann GmbH**
  - **RSN Medienagentur GmbH**
  - **VISIPRINT GmbH**
  - **Helft uns helfen - In Remscheid**
  - **Freunde von damcar**
  - **Arunodaya Charitable Trust/Augenklinik Delhi**, Indien
  - **Vikash Higher Secondary School/Shahabad**, Indien
  - **Anke & Gösta Mennenöh**
  - **Drs. Ingrid & Henning Paur**
  - **Ulrike und Franz Lebfromm**
  - **Charles Wesseler**
  - **Salvatore Lerose Stiftung Remscheid**
  - **Eheleute Bertel und Hans-Gerd Beverborg**
  - **Herr Gerrit de Haas**
  - **Frau Petra Hoffmann**
  - **Bluesduo Dr. Mojo, Ulrich Spormann & Klaus Stachuletz**
  - **Nordrhein-Westfalen via InWent gGmbH** / State of North-Rhine-Westphalia via InWent-Capacity Building International gGmbH / Germany
  - **GIZ Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit gGmbH** / Society for International Cooperation supported by the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia
  - **Global Engagement gGmbH** mit Mitteln des Landes NRW / financed by funds of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia

## Medien / Media:

- **RGA-Buchverlag**, Remscheid
- **rga / Remscheider Generalanzeiger**, Remscheid
- **BM / Bergische Morgenpost**, Remscheid
- **WDR / Westdeutscher Rundfunk**, Wuppertal
- **WDR / Westdeutscher Rundfunk**, Köln
- **Radio RSG**, Remscheid

*In the name of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid I, Helma Rischer, as the chairwoman of the board, want to thank the other board members, our ordinary members and friends for their idealistic and financial support of our Indo-German cultural work and social projects. I also thank Amar Singh being member of the advisory board, contact person and representative of the Indo-German Society of Remscheid in India. Please kindly excuse all the unmentioned friends and supporters of our society, who always stood beside us in public and privately. It is due to their contribution that we can celebrate this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid in 2016 in Varanasi and in the city of Remscheid.*

*Texte und Bildauswahl / texts and selection of pictures by: Helma Rischer*



# Indo-German Society

## Affiliate Remscheid

### Since 1966

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#### Awards for Helma Ritscher:

1. In April 2001, Helma Ritscher was awarded the "**Medal of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany**" by the German Federal President, Mr. Johannes Rau, for her contribution to international understanding.
2. In 2002, she received the "**Avantika National Humanity Award**" in Delhi.
3. On 8<sup>th</sup> March 2010, on International Women's Day, Dr. Lenin Raguvanshi and his human rights organisation Peoples Vigilance Committee On Human Rights (PVCHR) honoured Helma Ritscher with the "**JanMitra Award**" in Baghwanala for her commitment to the rights of the Dalit, Tribes and disadvantaged children. On this day, Helma Ritscher was in Baghwanala to personally participate in the inauguration of a school which was built exclusively with funds from sponsors in Remscheid, the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid and the PVCHR.
4. On 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012, the "**Helma Ritscher Education Scholarship Fund**", was established in Baghwanala on Helma Ritscher's behalf.  
This long-term, sustainable initiative offers underprivileged boys and, in particular, girls a chance for on-going education.  
On the same day, Helma Ritscher was given the honour of inaugurating the "*Savitri Bai Phule Memorial Women's Centre*" in Baghwanala.
5. On 29<sup>th</sup> September 2012, on the occasion on the Annual General Meeting of the Indo-German Society, Helma Ritscher was awarded the "**Badge of Honour of the Indo-German Society 2012**" by the Federal Executive Board in recognition of her special achievements and contributions to the society.  
The "**Badge of Honour of the Indo-German Society**" was introduced in 2004 to honour persons, who have rendered particularly outstanding services in achieving the goals of the society. It been awarded for the first time in 2007.

# Indo-German Society

Affiliate Remscheid

Since 1966



## Publications of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid

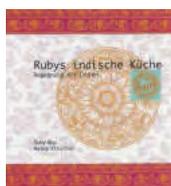
The publications of the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid are completely based on the work and experiences of the people and artists who participated in our projects.



The CD *„Indische Klassik im Dialog mit Blues (Indian Classical Music in Dialogue with Blues)“* is an intercultural musical project with the *Maharaj-Trio* from Varanasi and the *Bluesduo Dr. Mojo* from Remscheid as well as a team of pupils from the Roentgen- und Leibniz High-Schools in Remscheid.

This CD was produced in 2013 by the Indo-German Society Affiliate Remscheid, and was inspired by an idea of Ulrich Spormann.

*The revenues of the CD go directly and without any overheads to the educational scholarships of Dalit girls and boys. This program was established in 2012 by the partner of the affiliate Remscheid, PVCHR - People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights in Varanasi. The project was supported by "Global Engagement GmbH and financed by funds of the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia.*



The cooking book *„Rubys indische Küche (Ruby's Indian Cuisine)“* contains a compilation of dishes by our Indian friend Ruby Ray from Kolkata in Westbengal. This collection was the tasty result of the program *„Indische Küche (Indian Cuisine)“* of the Indo-German Society Remscheid. The cultural background of her home has influenced her cooking very well. The experience of cooking together has created a close relation to Indian culture since 1993 and lasts until today.

*In 2006 on behalf of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society Ruby Ray's cooking book was published by „RGA-Buchverlag Remscheid“ for the book fair in Frankfurt when India was the host country.*

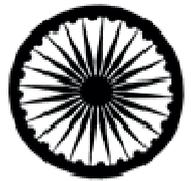


The anthology *“Über den Horizont hinaus (Beyond the Horizon)“* contains narrations originating from teams of pupils who wrote their stories under the supervision of the Indo-German author Rajvinder Singh in writing workshops at schools in Remscheid. This project had been developed by the Indo-German Society Remscheid and was picked up by many other affiliates all over Germany. The aim was to promote the dialogue between the cultures and help to develop a better understanding.

*The book was published by Rajvinder Singh and printed by „RGA-Buchverlag Remscheid“ right on time for the Buchmesse in Frankfurt 2006. The project was financially supported by the „Indienstiftung“ as well as the “Indian Embassy”.*



The Indo-German Society e.V. took up the initiative of the revision of the image of India in the curricula of German public schools. In cooperation with scientists, teachers and the support from political, educational and scientific institutions a selection of teaching materials was collected. 2002 it was published by *„Klett Perthes Verlag“* under the title: *„Wege zum besseren Verstehen (Ways to better understanding)“*. In these teaching materials, the Indo-German Society Remscheid contributed the chapter *„Kulturelle Annäherung am Beispiel einer Schul- und Klassenpartnerschaft (Cultural Advances at the example of school- and classroom-partnerships)“*.



## **Indo-German Society**

(Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft e.V.)

*- established 1953 in Stuttgart -  
With 31 affiliated societies*

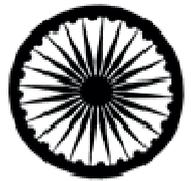
[www.dig-bundesverband.de](http://www.dig-bundesverband.de)

With its colourful image, India has a permanent place in the public awareness of Germans today. But that was not always the case. In spite of continuing poverty in many parts of the country, which is home to more than a billion people, today the country radiates unbounded optimism and determination to provide for the well-being of all within the country and to participate in shaping the world characterised by the multifarious globalisation processes. The Indo-German Society – established in Stuttgart 1953 – wants to:

- bring together people from both countries, and
- convey to the German public knowledge about, and the appreciation of, the modern India and its many-sided religious, ethnic and cultural sources.

The activities of the Indo-German Society include, among others

- the **promotion** of
  - teaching aids in German schools about India
  - school-partnerships and student-exchanges
  - writing workshops about India and Germany
  - social projects in India
- the **organisation** of
  - conferences about India-related topics like the development of democratic governmental and social structures, the status of women in different religions, economic and social reforms and the international perspective of the country
  - exhibitions
  - cultural programmes (music, dance, etc.)
- the **advice** on India
  - in the field of politics, economics, media and educational institutions
- and the **awards**
  - of the „Rabindranath Tagore Culture Prize“ instituted by the Indo-German Society in the year 1986 for creative contributions to communication of Indian cultures and ways of life in German speaking areas (endowment: 5,000 Euro)



- of the Gisela Bonn Prize instituted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in the year 1996 for special contributions to the promotion of German-Indian relations. The prizewinner is given the opportunity to make a scholarship tour of India for two weeks.
- The “**Badge of Honour of the Indo-German Society e.V.**”, was awarded in 2004 to honour persons, who have rendered particularly outstanding services in achieving the goals of the society. For the first time it was awarded in 2007.

The Society publishes a quarterly newsletter ([www.dig-bundesverband.de](http://www.dig-bundesverband.de)) via the Internet and is a corresponding member of the German Asia-Pacific Business Association in Hamburg.

At present, the Indo-German Society is constituted of 31 mostly independent affiliates (see above) from all parts of Germany. The affiliated societies contribute – at the grassroots level, thus all over the country – with more than 2,500 members and numerous local events to the inter-cultural understanding and to their sphere of work – in community life as well as in the academic and educational institutions but primarily on the cultural level. They are also a home to German-Indian families and the younger generations from these families.

The Indo-German Society is one of the largest mediatory bodies present in Germany, which has made it its goal, by way of consultations and in the course of civilian contacts, to promote the many-sided relations with the partner country and to accompany it critically.

The financial support with public funds has become the exception during the last decade. The activities are financed by contributions and donations. The Indo-German Society has set up in the year 2001 the India-Foundation for this purpose, with the object of building up a reasonable capital, and use the income of the Foundation to finance the projects of the Society. The affiliated societies also finance their many-sided activities through donations.

The Chairman of the Indo-German Society and the other Board Members are elected at three-year intervals in the annual general body meeting, in which all affiliated societies take part with votes weighted according to their respective size of membership.

**Chairperson of the Society since 2008  
is former Ambassador, Hans-Joachim Kiderlen, Magdeburg.**



## List of affiliated societies

Aachen	<a href="http://www.digaachen.de">http://www.digaachen.de</a>
Baden-Baden	<a href="http://www.dig-baden-baden.org">http://www.dig-baden-baden.org</a>
Berlin	<a href="http://www.digberlin.org">http://www.digberlin.org</a>
Bochum - via	<a href="http://www.dig-bundesverband.de">http://www.dig-bundesverband.de</a>
Bodensee	<a href="http://www.dig-bodensee.com">http://www.dig-bodensee.com</a>
Bonn/Köln	<a href="http://www.dig-bonnkoeln.org">http://www.dig-bonnkoeln.org</a>
Darmstadt/Frankfurt a.M.	<a href="http://www.dig-darmstadt.de">http://www.dig-darmstadt.de</a>
Dormagen/Neuss	<a href="http://www.dig-neuss-dormagen.de">http://www.dig-neuss-dormagen.de</a>
Düsseldorf	<a href="http://www.digduesseldorf.de">http://www.digduesseldorf.de</a>
Essen	<a href="http://www.digessen.de">http://www.digessen.de</a>
Freiburg	<a href="http://www.digfreiburg.de">http://www.digfreiburg.de</a>
Giessen - via	<a href="http://www.dig-bundesverband.de">http://www.dig-bundesverband.de</a>
Hagen	<a href="http://www.dig-hagen.de">http://www.dig-hagen.de</a>
Halle	<a href="http://www.dighalle.homepage.t-online.de">http://www.dighalle.homepage.t-online.de</a>
Hamburg	<a href="http://www.dighh.de">http://www.dighh.de</a>
Hannover	<a href="http://www.dighannover.de">http://www.dighannover.de</a>
Heidelberg	<a href="http://www.dig-heidelberg.de">http://www.dig-heidelberg.de</a>
Karlsruhe	<a href="http://www.digkarlsruhe.de">http://www.digkarlsruhe.de</a>
Kassel	<a href="http://www.dig-kassel.de">http://www.dig-kassel.de</a>
Kiel	<a href="http://www.digkiel.de">http://www.digkiel.de</a>
Lübeck	<a href="http://www.dig-luebeck.de">http://www.dig-luebeck.de</a>
Mainz	<a href="http://www.dig-mainz.de">http://www.dig-mainz.de</a>
Miesbach/Oberbayern	<a href="http://www.dig-oberbayern.de">http://www.dig-oberbayern.de</a>
Münster	<a href="http://www.muenster.org">http://www.muenster.org</a>
Nürnberg	<a href="http://www.dig-nuernberg.de">http://www.dig-nuernberg.de</a>
Remscheid	<a href="http://www.digrs.de">http://www.digrs.de</a>
Schwäbisch Hall	<a href="http://www.digstuttgart.de">http://www.digstuttgart.de</a>
Stuttgart - via	<a href="http://www.dig-bundesverband.de">http://www.dig-bundesverband.de</a>
Trier - via	<a href="http://www.dig-bundesverband.de">http://www.dig-bundesverband.de</a>
Winsen (Luhe)	<a href="http://www.dig-winsen.de">http://www.dig-winsen.de</a>
Würzburg - via	<a href="http://www.dig-bundesverband.de">http://www.dig-bundesverband.de</a>

**Each Society has its own character and its own priorities**



*Yesterday I dreamed...*

*Yesterday I dreamed  
I died in Benares  
on the banks of Mother Ganga.*

*No falling  
into the abysmal, bottomless  
swirling water.  
A pitch-black nightmare  
from which I have already awoken  
hundreds of times in my own country.*

*Yesterday I dreamed  
that lotus leaves lined my path  
to the glaciers of the Himalayas  
and the oar struck the waves  
six times in resonance with the mantra  
Om Mani Padme Hum  
and the rhythm of my soul.*