



LET US DREAM 2022

ANNUAL COMMUNITY CONFERENCE – 2022



CONNECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND
SERVICE INITIATIVES THROUGH
GLOBAL NETWORKING

Edited by – Lijo Thomas, Pancinovia Neelu M & Alpana Akolkar

USA
Louisiana
New York

INDIA
Trivandrum
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Partnership Universities



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FOREWORD

‘Let Us Dream’ as a social Movement has made his mark not only as the local movement but has gone far ahead and has created a Global impact. It has tirelessly marched as a social movement empowering communities through shared knowledge and practices. The whole idea of starting this movement of ‘Let Us Dream’ was to create holistically developed communities world over. From the time of its initiation, it has been working towards fulfilling this basic idea. The dream of ‘Let Us Dream’ project is developing a Global family in which each and every member works towards creating a

sustainable world. This initiative is the common platform for all the likeminded people from diverse backgrounds working towards supporting, guiding and leading the vision of holistic development which is in the growth of each and every individual which in turn results in the growth of the society.

The overall concept on which the ‘Let Us Dream’ Conferences are organised is for sharing, learning and celebrating the diversities of our selfless acts around us and among us. It welcomes the experts from various fields who actually want to

do something for the society and are seriously willing to work for the betterment of the society. These conferences introduce the people to the possible areas of community service and different models of intervention for all the age groups and encourage them to be the volunteer and have the sense of social commitment.

From the year 2017, when the 'Let Us Dream' conferences begin at Louisiana Tech University, they have been completely focused on the projects and ideas related to community development. It has been the vision of these conferences to empower the local communities to create the global impact. The conferences create an opportunity to share, learn and support the local communities with more research, theories and models where all share their experiences which include the success stories and the challenges faced and how they worked to overcome them. 'Let Us Dream' welcomes individuals who without any inhibitions are ready to come forward and willingly take

steps ahead to become a support system for the various community empowerment initiatives.

In the heart of Ruston, Louisiana, Grambling State University hosted the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022,' paved an extraordinary and transformative event that left an indelible mark on attendees. The conference, featuring an array of keynote speakers from diverse backgrounds, provided a platform for sharing profound insights and wisdom. Dr. Howard Conyers took the audience on a journey through time and space, underscoring the importance of preserving cultural heritage and knowledge. Dr. Sanjay Gupta, a trusted voice in health journalism, shed light on the critical intersection of healthcare and social justice, urging everyone to prioritize the well-being of their communities. Sister Helen Prejean's moving account of her fight against the death

penalty reminded us of the power of compassion and advocacy, while Dr. Donna Brazile's unwavering commitment to democracy and civic engagement served as a call to action, encouraging active participation in shaping our collective future. The panel discussions were equally enlightening and empowering, delving into various aspects of education, community development, holistic well-being, and the resilience of the future generation of leaders. Throughout the conference, a powerful message resonated – the importance of unity, compassion, and taking action. This event was more than just a gathering of voices; it was a call to arms for positive change. It encouraged participants to transcend boundaries, collaborate across disciplines, and recognize their shared responsibility in creating a better world. The 'Let Us Dream Conference' wasn't just an event; it was a catalyst for transformation, igniting dreams and fostering connections that will continue to inspire positive change. Together, we are not just dreamers; we are doers, and with unity and determination,

we can turn our dreams into reality. Our journey toward a brighter and more inclusive tomorrow has only just begun, guided by the collective wisdom, commitment, and passion that defined the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022.'

The 'Let Us Dream Conference,' hosted by Binghamton University, proved to be an exceptional gathering that left a lasting impact on all who participated. Driven by the collective wisdom and unwavering passion of extraordinary individuals, the event was characterized by an atmosphere of inspiration and motivation. The keynote speakers, Dr. Lotta Granholm and Kristin Licardi, were instrumental in setting the tone for the conference. Their profound insights and shared wisdom resonated with attendees, underscoring the significance of their collective experience and knowledge. Dr. Granholm's expertise and Licardi's perspective added depth to the event, providing a strong foundation for the discussions that followed. The panel discussions further enriched the conference experience,

offering a platform for rich dialogue and meaningful exchanges. The society panel, led by experts such as Gay Canough, Jordan Ramsay, Dr. Ross-Scott, and Mary Whittaker, addressed critical societal issues and proposed potential solutions. The education panel, comprising Kerri Bullock, Matthew L. McConn, Doug Overton, James Reece, and Jo-Ann Sexton, delved into the future of education, while the health panel, featuring John Barry, Matthew Griffin, Pamela Guth, Laura Pascucci, Karen Riewerts, and Mathew Stein, explored essential healthcare topics. A common thread that ran through the conference was the resounding message of unity, compassion, and proactive action. It was clear that the 'Let Us Dream Conference' was more than just a gathering of voices; it was a resounding call to inspire positive change. The event urged participants to transcend boundaries, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and recognize their shared responsibility in shaping a better world.

The 'Let Us Dream Conference' hosted by All Saints' College,

Thiruvananthapuram, was a powerful testament of the collective essence of collaboration, unwavering resilience and a passionate commitment for making a positive impact, all powered by the dreams that empower to make a difference in the society. 'Let us Dream' has created a platform for the people with similar intents to make collaborative efforts to make the difference through their willpower and strong desire. The basic idea of the Trivandrum Conference was to facilitate knowledge exchange between researchers and practitioners on a global scale, bridging critical gaps in understanding. This helped in exchange of community interventions, theories, research models which is actually the need of the hour. The conference was really an August gathering of many important persons who had a lot of knowledge to share. The list of the guests included - Mr. Jacob Punnoose (Rtd. State Police Chief); Mr Jimmy Manuel (Regional Council Secretary, Hemophilia Federation of India) and Mr Gokul Krishna (Community worker and Co-coordinator of the LUD community conference). There

were four panels- Social panel, Unsung heroes panel, Education panel and Healthcare panel. Dr. Soniya J. Nair was the moderator for the social panel; Mr. Sheikh Hasan Khan(in absentia) and Mr. Mohammad Wazer led the Unsung Heroes panel ; Education panel was led by Dr. Smitha Asok V and the Healthcare panel was moderated by Ms Kukku Xavier. All the panel were actually a cluster lot of ideas which had only one mission to make the difference by collaborative efforts which is possible through innovative thinking and support of communities. The LUD Conference 2022' was profoundly influenced by the vital contributions of its diverse panellists, each bringing a rich tapestry of backgrounds and a wealth of knowledge to the table and made code combined efforts to create the transformative experience for creating a successful and bright future for all. 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022' in Thiruvananthapuram wasn't just an event; it was a catalyst for profound transformation.

The 'Let Us Dream Community Conference', Bangalore 2022 was hosted by St Anne's College for Women it begin with lighting of the lamp which in itself indicates the illumination of the knowledge and the beginning of the collective journey for the social betterment. During this inaugural ceremony, a significant moment was dedicated to expressing gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Fr Lijo, founder of 'Let Us Dream', who had made exceptional contributions to the cause of community improvement. The conference was very well coordinated by many experts as panel coordinators , mentors and community leaders. The conference had four different panels – Education, Health, Social and I am changemaker. The Education panel was moderated by Dr Anne Varghese, Speech and Hearings specialist; Health panel was moderated by Ashish Pratap Singh the Chief Marketing Officer at Happiest Health; Mr Venu Doddavarapu, a certified consultant for children and experiential learning for teacher transformation moderated the Social Panel and

I am the Changemaker included a number of speakers on the four themes of Corporate, Education, Health and Social factors. This 'Let Us Dream Conference' brought together a diverse lineup of keynote speakers like Renu Mukunda, a distinguished sociologist, Dr Geetha Ramanujam Academic Director of GR Educational Institutions who shared their unique insights and experiences on topics ranging from education and community engagement to healthcare and resilience. To summarise the 'Let Us Dream Community Conference' in Bangalore in 2022 was notably elevated by the inclusion of a diverse and accomplished panel of experts.

All the 'Let Us Dream' conferences actually impart invaluable lessons which everyone needs to understand and share it with the world. If we have to make the world a better place it is possible only through the collaborative efforts and making it our mission and nurture the dreams and with determination work towards the positive change in the society. Let us persist in dreaming,

evolving, and flourishing, for our journey has only just begun.

In the words of Robert Frost :

The woods are Lovely dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And Miles to go before I sleep

And Miles to go before I sleep.....

CONFERENCE 1

Dream. Grow. Flourish
Creating a sustainable plan for community development and growth by
investing in our Health, Education, and Society

Louisiana Tech University, USA
October 27, 2022

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Lisa Elam
Will Dearmon
Natalie Yates

Introduction

In a world marked by ever-evolving challenges, the quest for innovative solutions and the determination to create a brighter future has never been more vital. The 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022', held at Grambling State University, served as a powerful testament to the spirit of collaboration, resilience, and the unwavering commitment to making a positive impact.

This transformative conference brought together thought leaders, professionals, educators, and students from diverse fields to explore innovative solutions across four key panels: Education, Community and Social Services, Healthcare, and a Student Panel. The event aimed to shed light on the critical issues facing these sectors and inspire collaborative action towards sustainable and inclusive solutions.

The conference was expertly coordinated by dedicated individuals, including panel coordinators,

mentors, and community leaders. Their collaborative efforts ensured that 'Let Us Dream' became a platform for sharing insights, fostering dialogue, and celebrating the indomitable human spirit.

- **Education Panel: Nurturing Minds for Tomorrow's Challenges**

The Education Panel, led by coordinators Kathy Cox and Lindsay Murray, delved into the dynamic world of teaching and learning. It explored innovative teaching methods, discussed the importance of equity and access to education, emphasized community engagement, and showcased the role of mentorship in guiding students towards success.

- **Community and Social Services Panel: Empowering Communities from Within**

Coordinated by Will Dearman, this panel focused on community-driven solutions. It celebrated the role of youth engagement in community

development, highlighted the significance of support systems for vulnerable populations, and underscored the importance of mental health and well-being as cornerstones of community and social services.

- **Healthcare Panel: Healing Beyond Borders**

Donna Hood and Deborah Craighead spearheaded the Healthcare Panel, emphasizing community-centric healthcare and the importance of mental health awareness. The panel also explored innovative healthcare solutions and the power of collaboration among healthcare organizations, community leaders, and educational institutions.

- **Student Panel: Resilience and Empowerment**

Coordinators West Cabin, Jaderrett Tolbert, and Ali Cowan led the Students' Panel, which celebrated the resilience and determination of young individuals. The panelists

shared personal stories of overcoming challenges, the role of mentors in academic and personal growth, and the significance of empowerment within the student community.

Each panel at the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022' served as a crucible of ideas, experiences, and perspectives, driving home the message that through collaboration, innovation, and community engagement the change is not only possible but also achievable. The event highlighted the power of mentorship, support systems, and the indomitable human spirit in the face of adversity.

As we journey through the insights, innovations, and stories that emerged from the 'Let Us Dream Conference', we invite you to join us in the pursuit of a better tomorrow. Together, we can inspire change, foster inclusivity, and build a brighter future for all. 'The Let Us Dream Conference 2022' is a testament to the transformative power of collective action and the unwavering belief that dreams can be converted into reality.

Panels

Panel 1: Education - Nurturing Minds for Tomorrow's Challenges

Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow: The Let Us Dream Education Panel

Education has always been a keystone of progress and development in any society. The 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022' recognized this fundamental truth and dedicated a panel to explore the challenges and innovations in the field of education. Under the expert coordination of Kathy Cox and Lindsay Murray, the Education Panel became a platform for celebrating the art of teaching and nurturing young minds.

Innovative Teaching Methods:

One of the key takeaways from this panel was the emphasis on innovative teaching methods. Panelists deliberated how educators are evolving their approaches to adapt to the changing needs of students. They explored the power of technology, interactive learning, and

personalized instructions in creating engaging educational experiences.

Equity and Access to Education:

The panel also underscored the importance of equity and access to education. Education should not be a privilege, limited to a select few, but a right that should be accessible to all. This discussion sheds light on the efforts being made to bridge educational disparities and ensure that no student is left behind.

Community Engagement:

The 'Let Us Dream Conference' emphasized the symbiotic relationship between educational institutions and the communities they serve. The Education Panel highlighted how schools and colleges are becoming hubs of community engagement. Partnerships with local organizations, mentorship programs, and community-based learning were all recognized as powerful tools for holistic education.

The Role of Mentorship: Mentorship emerged as a recurring theme during

this panel. The transformative impact of mentors on students' lives was celebrated. These mentors play a special role in providing academic guidance and serve as a source of inspiration and motivation.

The 'Let Us Dream' Education Panel made it clear that education is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. It is a dynamic field that must evolve to meet the unique needs of each generation. By exploring innovative teaching methods, promoting equity, fostering community engagement, and celebrating mentorship, this panel showcased how education prepares the leaders of tomorrow.

*Panel 2: Community and Social Services
- Empowering Communities from Within*

**Building Stronger Communities:
The Let Us Dream Community and
Social Services Panel**

The second panel of the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022', focusing on Community and Social Services, brought together individuals

dedicated to creating positive change at the grassroots level. Coordinated by Will Dearman, this panel celebrated the power of community engagement and the importance of support systems in enhancing the quality of life for all members of society.

Youth Engagement: Youth engagement was a central theme of this panel. Young people were recognized as the driving force behind community development. Their passion, energy, and fresh perspectives were celebrated as catalysts for change.

Support Systems for Vulnerable Populations: The 'Let Us Dream' Community and Social Services Panel emphasized the significance of support systems for vulnerable populations. This included discussions on homelessness, addiction, and mental health. Panelists shared insights into how dedicated organizations and individuals are working tirelessly to provide assistance and opportunities to those in need.

The Importance of Mental Health:

Mental health emerged as a critical aspect of community well-being. The panel explored the importance of raising awareness about mental health issues and promoting accessible mental health services. The message was clear: 'A healthy community starts with healthy individuals.'

“Empowering Communities from Within”, Perhaps the most resonant message of this panel was the idea that communities have the power to empower themselves from within. Local leaders, organizations, and citizens drive positive change by identifying their unique strengths and addressing their needs.

The 'Let Us Dream' Community and Social Services Panel showcased the incredible work being done by individuals and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of their fellow community members. It was a testament to the resilience and determination of those working to create stronger, more inclusive communities.

Panel 3: Healthcare - Healing Beyond Borders

Healing with Heart: The Let Us Dream Healthcare Panel

Healthcare has always been a critical pillar of any society, and the Let Us Dream Healthcare Panel, coordinated by Donna Hood and Deborah Craighead, explored the nuances of community-centric healthcare, mental health awareness, and innovative solutions in the healthcare sector.

Community-Centric Healthcare:

One of the key themes of the Panel was the idea of community-centric healthcare. Panelists discussed the importance of healthcare services being accessible and tailored to the unique needs of the community they serve. Local healthcare providers and organizations play a pivotal role in ensuring that healthcare is not just a service but a commitment to the well-being of the community.

Mental Health Awareness: The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ recognized the significance of mental health and the importance of breaking the stigma surrounding it. The Healthcare Panel shed light on the efforts being made to raise awareness about mental health issues, provide support for those in need, and integrate mental health services into primary healthcare.

Innovative Healthcare Solutions: The panel also highlighted innovative healthcare solutions that are transforming the field. These innovations, from telemedicine to community health clinics, are making healthcare more accessible and efficient.

The Power of Collaboration: Collaboration was a recurring theme during this panel. It emphasized that the best results are often achieved when healthcare organizations, community leaders, and educational institutions work together. The power of collective action and shared knowledge was celebrated as a means to improve healthcare outcomes.

The Let Us Dream Healthcare Panel demonstrated that healthcare is not just about treating illnesses; it’s about nurturing the well-being of entire communities. By embracing community-centric healthcare, raising awareness about mental health, exploring innovative solutions, and fostering collaboration, this panel showcased the ways in which healthcare is healing beyond borders.

Panel 4: Student Panel - Resilience and Empowerment

The Future Unleashed: The Let Us Dream Student Panel

Youth is synonymous with resilience and boundless potential, and the Let Us Dream Student Panel, led by coordinators West Cabin, Jaderrett Tolbert, and Ali Cowan, proved just that. This panel celebrated young individuals’ strength, determination, and empowerment as they navigate the challenges of education and life.

Overcoming Challenges: One of the central themes of this panel was resilience. The student panelists shared personal stories of overcoming challenges, whether they be academic, personal, or societal. Their stories served as a powerful reminder that setbacks are not roadblocks but stepping stones on the journey to success.

The Role of Mentors: The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ underscored the transformative power of mentors. The Student Panel highlighted how mentors play a pivotal role in providing young individuals with guidance, support, and inspiration. The mentor-student relationship was celebrated as a source of empowerment.

Empowerment Within the Student Community: Empowerment within the student community was another key focus. Panelists discussed the importance of student-led initiatives, organizations, and networks that create growth, self-expression, and advocacy spaces.

The Power of Youth: The student panelists demonstrated that youth is not synonymous with inexperience but with potential. They are the thinkers, leaders, and trailblazers of tomorrow, and their voices are shaping the future.

A number of insights were shared during ‘Let Us Dream Conference’, from panels on Education, Community and Social Services, and a Student Panel sharing stories of resilience and empowerment.

Keynote Speakers

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference 2022’ brought together a diverse lineup of keynote speakers, each of whom shared their unique insights and experiences on topics ranging from education and community engagement to healthcare and resilience. Here, we delve into the wisdom and perspectives offered by these remarkable individuals.

1. Dr. Ralph Abraham - The Power of Education: Dr. Ralph Abraham,

- a celebrated mathematician and former Congressman, delivered a keynote address emphasizing the transformative power of education. He underscored that education is not merely about acquiring knowledge but about empowering individuals to become critical thinkers, innovators, and contributors to society. Dr. Abraham's message resonated with the 'Let Us Dream' audience, highlighting the essential role education plays in shaping the leaders of tomorrow.
2. Dr. Lisa Cole Smith - Fostering Community Engagement: Dr. Lisa Cole Smith, known for her commitment to community development, addressed the conference with a focus on fostering community engagement. She emphasized the symbiotic relationship between educational institutions and the communities they serve. Dr. Smith's insights illuminated the importance of collaboration, mentorship, and grassroots initiatives in strengthening communities from within.
 3. Dr. Kalpana Kannan - Mental Health Awareness: Dr. Kalpana Kannan, an advocate for mental health awareness and accessible healthcare, delivered a keynote address that resonated deeply with the Let Us Dream audience. She highlighted the pressing need to break the stigma surrounding mental health and integrate mental health services into primary healthcare. Dr. Kannan's message underscored the importance of holistic well-being in any community.
 4. Dr. Eldon Berthiaume - Navigating Healthcare Challenges: Dr. Eldon Berthiaume, an expert in healthcare administration, provided valuable insights into navigating healthcare challenges. He highlighted the importance of community-centric healthcare and the power of collaboration among healthcare organizations, community leaders, and educational institutions. Dr.

Berthiaume's keynote illuminated the path towards improving healthcare outcomes by working together.

5. Student Panel - Resilience and Empowerment: The 'Let Us Dream' Student Panel, led by coordinators West Cabin, Jaderrett Tolbert, and Ali Cowan, was a testament to the resilience and empowerment of young individuals. The panelists shared personal stories of overcoming challenges, emphasizing that setbacks are not roadblocks but stepping stones to success. They celebrated the transformative power of mentors and the role of youth as the thinkers, leaders, and trailblazers of tomorrow.
6. Panel Coordinators - The Architects of Change: The 'Let Us Dream Conference' wouldn't have been possible without the dedicated panel coordinators who worked tirelessly to make each discussion a success. Coordinators like Kathy Cox, Lindsay Murray, Donna Hood, Deborah Craighead,

West Cabin, Jaderrett Tolbert, and Ali Cowan played pivotal roles in orchestrating insightful conversations and ensuring that the conference's message of positive change reached the audience.

The 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022' was a platform for these keynote speakers and panel coordinators to share their knowledge, experiences, and insights with a diverse audience passionate about making a difference. Their collective wisdom underscored the importance of education, community engagement, mental health awareness, and collaboration in building stronger, healthier, and more empowered communities. The conference served as a reminder that positive change begins with individuals dedicated to creating a better tomorrow.

Renowned Panelists at the Let Us Dream Conference 2022:

Education Panelists:

- **Dr. Patsy Huey:** Dr. Patsy Huey, a prominent figure in the field of education, brought her extensive experience to the Education Panel. As an advocate for quality education, she shared her insights into improving educational systems and empowering students.
- **Dr. Cheryl Ensley:** Dr. Cheryl Ensley, a distinguished educator, joined Dr. Huey in the Education Panel. Her expertise in curriculum development and student engagement added depth to the discussions on enhancing the learning experience.

Community and Social Panelists:

- **Will Dearman:** Will Dearman, a dedicated community advocate, played a vital role in the Community and Social Panel. His insights into community development and engagement were invaluable in addressing pressing social issues.
- **Natalie Yates:** Natalie Yates, the co-chair of the Let Us Dream

Conference, actively participated in the discussions related to community and social challenges. Her leadership and commitment to positive change were evident throughout the event.

Health Panelists:

- **Donna Hood:** Donna Hood, who coordinated the Health Panel, is an expert in healthcare management. Her knowledge and passion for improving healthcare outcomes were instrumental in addressing healthcare challenges during the conference.
- **Deborah Craighead:** Deborah Craighead, working alongside Donna Hood, shared her expertise in healthcare and wellness. Her contributions helped shed light on the importance of holistic well-being in communities.

Student Panelists:

- **West Cabin:** West Cabin played a pivotal role in coordinating the Student Panel and was also a panelist. His dedication

in empowering students and fostering resilience was evident in the discussions.

- Jaderrett Tolbert: Jaderrett Tolbert, another coordinator of the Student Panel, brought insightful perspectives to the discussions. Her commitment to uplifting youth voices was a driving force in the panel's success.
- Ali Cowan: Ali Cowan, a coordinator for the Student Panel, shared her passion for youth empowerment. Her contributions highlighted the potential of young leaders as catalysts for positive change.

Faculty Panelists:

- Dr. Maya Reddi: Dr. Maya Reddi, a passionate advocate for education and research, shared her expertise during the conference. Her dedication to shaping the future of education was evident in her contributions to the Faculty Panel.

With their diverse backgrounds and wealth of knowledge, these panelists played essential roles in shaping the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022'. Their insights, experiences, and commitment to positive change resonated with the audience, reinforcing the conference's empowerment, collaboration, and community engagement message. These panelists and the keynote speakers contributed to a transformative event focused on building a brighter future for all.

Conclusion:

In the heart of Ruston, Louisiana, at Grambling State University, a powerful and transformative event unfolded in the form of the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022'. As the echoes of the conference gradually fade, we are left with a profound sense of inspiration and hope powered by remarkable individuals' collective wisdom and passion.

Hailing from diverse backgrounds and experiences, Keynote speakers

graced the event with their insights and shared wisdom. Dr. Howard Conyers took us on a journey through space and time, emphasizing the importance of preserving our cultural heritage and knowledge. Dr. Sanjay Gupta, a trusted voice in health journalism, spoke about the critical intersection of healthcare and social justice, urging us to prioritize the well-being of our communities. Sister Helen Prejean's deeply moving account of her fight against the death penalty reminded us of the power of compassion and advocacy. Finally, Dr. Donna Brazile's unwavering commitment to democracy and civic engagement resonated as a call to action, urging us all to be active participants in shaping our future.

The panel discussions were equally enlightening and empowering. In the realm of education, Dr. Patsy Huey and Dr. Cheryl Ensley illuminated the path towards improved learning experiences and equitable opportunities. The Community and Social Panel, guided by Will Dearman and Natalie Yates, delved into the heart of community

development, reminding us that true progress begins at the grassroots level. Donna Hood and Deborah Craighead from the Health Panel highlighted the urgency of holistic well-being, emphasizing that health encompasses more than just physical wellness. The Student Panel, led by West Cabin, Jaderrett Tolbert, and Ali Cowan, offered a glimpse into the brilliant minds of tomorrow's leaders, showcasing their resilience and determination. Dr. Maya Reddi, a dedicated faculty member, further emphasized the role of educators in shaping a brighter future.

Throughout the conference, a powerful message emerged - the importance of unity, compassion, and action. The 'Let Us Dream Conference' was not merely an assembly of voices but a call to arms for positive change. It urged us to transcend barriers, collaborate across disciplines, and embrace our shared responsibility in creating a better world.

As the conference came to a close, Grambling State University's

President, Rick Gallo, reminded us of Apple's North Star principle, to make insanely great products that change the world and enrich lives. In our context, the North Star represents a shared purpose: to leave our communities better than we found them.

In this conclusion, we celebrate the collective wisdom, commitment, and passion that defined the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022'. It was not just an event; it was a catalyst for transformation. The insights shared, the connections formed, and

the dreams ignited will continue to ripple through our communities, inspiring us all to reach for the stars and build a brighter tomorrow.

As we bid farewell to this extraordinary gathering, let us carry forward the lessons learned, the dreams nurtured, and the commitment to positive change. Together, we are not just dreamers; we are doers, and with unity and determination, we can turn our dreams into reality. Let us dream, grow, and flourish, for our journey has only just begun.

CONFERENCE 2

Uniting in Divisive Times

**Binghamton University, New York USA
November 18, 2022**

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Micheal Kaufmann
Jeff Smith

Introduction:

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ serves as a platform for sharing, learning, and celebrating the efforts of individuals and service organizations dedicated to selfless acts that benefit and uplift the society. This conference extends a warm invitation to those with compassionate hearts and profound insights to come together, discuss, and reflect on their experiences, both accomplishments and challenges, in the realm of community improvement. These annual community gatherings are meticulously planned and orchestrated by groups of volunteers and hosted by institutions located in various regions worldwide.

In essence, ‘Let Us Dream’ serves as a forum where a diverse array of service opportunities and intervention models are introduced, fostering and promoting engagement in volunteerism across generations. Since its inception in 2017, these yearly conferences have progressively expanded, providing an increasing number of participants

with opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions deeply rooted in community improvement research, practical experiences, and the sharing of best practices.

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ aspires to accomplish the following objectives:

- **Empower people of diverse age groups and backgrounds working in a myriad of community improvement programs aiming at a better tomorrow;**
- **Consider the concepts and findings of researchers with the real-world experiences of practitioners, providing relevance to and synergizing combined knowledge; and,**
- **Promote community service and learning among students by introducing diverse community improvement interventions.**

Binghamton University hosted the ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ on November 18th from 9.00 a.m. to

1.00 p.m. This virtual event took place over Zoom and was open to the public. The central theme of the Conference for this year revolves around ensuring access and equity for all.

The conference was opened by a welcome address by Michael Kaufman, Conference Co-Chair and Farm and Wildlife Director; Green Chimneys Farm who invited Harvey Stenger, President, Binghamton University; Dr. Laura Bronstein, Dean, College of Community and Public Affairs, Binghamton University and Dr. Pauline Leonard, Co-Director, 'Let Us Dream Conference', USA; Ali Wittenberg, Conference Technical Support and Director of Professional Learning & Growth, Change Impact and Dr. Lotta Granholm, Professor, Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus to deliver addresses.

This conference saw three different panels being set up which were proficiently coordinated by dedicated individuals, including panel coordinators, mentors,

and community leaders. Their collaborative efforts ensured that 'Let Us Dream' becomes a platform for sharing insights and fostering dialogue to bring change.

● **Social Panel**

The Social panel was expertly moderated by Carla Michalak, Professor of Political Science, SUNY Broome Community College. It was aimed to address and discuss ways to break down real and perceived barriers that divide society and to promote unity and collaboration through innovative solutions.

● **Health Panel**

Moderated by Deborah Blakeney, MS BSN RN CCM, Sr. Director, Clinical Integration and Population Health, Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital, Inc. The agenda of the panel was to explore the broader aspects of community health, including the partnership between healthcare and social care systems, the adaptation of decision-making processes, and the

positive changes in care delivery. It focused on topics such as expanding telehealth services, providing telehealth training for non-technical individuals, addressing behavioural health impact, and offering solutions for social care services in both urban and rural areas.

- **Education Panel**

Moderated by Patricia Follette, Ed.D., Retired Superintendent, Whitney Point Central School District. The agenda of the panel is to address the educational crisis magnified by the pandemic, focusing on countering its adverse effects and providing support to create healthy, engaged, and thriving educational environment for educators, students, families, and communities.

The panels served as a diverse blend of ideas and experiences, reinforcing the notion that change is not only achievable but readily accessible through cooperation, inventive thinking, and active community engagement. The event

highlighted the profound influence of mentorship, support networks, and human resilience, especially when facing adversity.

As we reflect on the wealth of insights, innovations, and stories presented at the ‘Let Us Dream Conference’, we extend an invitation to you for joining us in the pursuit of a brighter future. Together, we can ignite change, foster inclusivity, and build a more promising world. The ‘Let Us Dream Conference 2022’ embodies the transformative power of collective action and the enduring belief that dreams can be transformed into reality.

Panels:

Panel 1: Social Panel: Breaking Down Barriers

“Societal Unity: Bridging Divides Together”

The social panel holds significant position within the ‘Let Us Dream conference’ as it provides a platform

for panelists to contribute their distinctive insights and expertise. This forum facilitates the exchange of diverse ideas, strategies, and success stories, which can serve as a source of inspiration and information for the audience. Importantly, these discussions within the social panel foster collaboration and innovative thinking, ultimately contributing to the progression of social initiatives and the development of effective solutions for addressing the pressing social challenges.

“The Social Panel,” was expertly moderated by Carla Michalak and featured a distinguished lineup of panelists: -

- Gay Canough (PhD, particle physics, U of Notre Dame, 1988) has been working in the solar energy field since 1993, installing mostly photovoltaic systems. She founded Extraterrestrial Materials, Inc. (ETM Solar Works) in 1988, doing design work on small spacecraft such as the Lunar Prospector (which went to the Moon in 1998).
- Jordan Ramsey is currently pursuing a Liberal Arts degree at SUNY Broome where he serves on the Student Assembly as Vice President of Administrative Affairs. In recognition of his passion for civic engagement, Jordan was selected as SUNY Broome’s cohort for the Civic Newman Fellowship for the 2022/2023 academic year
- Dr. Ross-Scott is the Vice President for Student Affairs and SUNY Broome is the inaugural Chief Diversity Officer. Prior to joining the SUNY Broome family, Dr. Ross-Scott was the Founding Chief Student Affairs for the country’s first private Liberal Arts university, American University of Kuwait (AUK).
- Mary Whittaker, is a clinical social worker who has taught and been a program coordinator in the Psychology department at SUNY Broome Community College. She has nearly 40 years’ experience in clinical treatment and supervision, community programming, and education. She has developed and managed

programs for Broome County Mental Health, Broome County Health Dept., United Health Services and Lourdes Hospitals.

Each panelist contributed valuable insights during their engaging discourse.

Panel 2: Health: Changing the face of healthcare delivery - The Covid Pandemic

“ Revolutionizing Healthcare in the Era of COVID-19”: The Let Us Dream Health Panel

The health panel is of paramount importance as it delves into the multifaceted aspects of community health, encompassing the collaboration between healthcare and social care systems. This discussion highlights the need for innovative adaptation in decision-making processes to address the evolving healthcare landscape. Furthermore, the panel emphasizes the positive transformations in healthcare delivery, with a particular

focus on critical areas such as the expansion of telehealth services, ensuring accessibility through telehealth training for non-technical individuals, addressing the critical issue of behavioural health impact, and proposing effective solutions for delivering social care services across urban and rural areas. In essence, the health panel serves as a catalyst for bridging the gaps in community health, fostering collaboration, and offering practical solutions to enhance the overall well-being of communities.

“The Health Panel,” was expertly moderated by Deborah Blakeney and featured a distinguished lineup of panelists: -

- John Barry is a University of Chicago graduate with an A.M. in Social Service Administration and is a licensed social worker. He has 30 years of experience in the fields of HIV, substance use treatment and mental health in both direct service and administrative roles. He has been an adjunct instructor at both SUNY Cortland and

Binghamton University. He has been the Executive Director of the Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP) since 2008.

- Matthew Griffin is the Director of Health & Nutrition at the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, has been with it since 2002.
- Pamela Guth, Director, Community Health Services, has led Rural Health Network SCNY Community Health Workers assigned to Broome, Tioga and Delaware Counties since mid-year 2013. Pamela's work experience covers 43 years in the public health, human service and education fields.
- Laura Pascucci, MHA is the Vice President, Provider Network at Lourdes, part of Ascension in Binghamton, New York.
- Karen Riewerts is the Director of Community Development at Lourdes. Karen began as a home visitor with the Lourdes Parents and Children Together Program (PACT) in 2002. In 2004, she

became a PACT Supervisor and in 2013 became the PACT Program Manager. In 2017, Karen became the Manager of Community Development and in 2021 became the Director of Community Development.

- Mathew Stein is the Director of Revenue Cycle at Lourdes, part of Ascension in Binghamton, New York. Mathew has been an associate at Lourdes since 2009.

Each panelist provided invaluable insights throughout their discussions.

*Panel 3: Education - Schools after covid:
A time to heal*

“Nurturing Minds, Rebuilding Futures”: The Let Us Dream Education Panel

The significance of the education panel lies in its commitment to addressing the adverse effects on education. This panel is instrumental in proposing and discussing strategies to provide robust support, aiming to foster the

creation of healthy, engaging, and thriving educational environment. Its importance is underscored by the holistic approach, as it considers the well-being of educators, students, families, and communities. Through its deliberations, the education panel endeavours to pave the way for a brighter future by ensuring that the education system remains resilient, inclusive, and conducive to effective learning and growth.

This panel session, focusing on education, commenced under the guidance of Patricia Follette. The panel featured an esteemed group of experts: -

- Kerri Bullock has been with Broome-Tioga BOCES for the past sixteen years. She currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Support Services & Leadership, working in collaboration with BOCES staff and the staff of the school districts of Broome and Tioga counties.
- Matthew L. McConn is an Associate Professor of English education and Chair of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Leadership at Binghamton University, SUNY. He has over a decade of English teaching experience in urban secondary schools in Houston, TX.
- Doug Overton is the co-founder of Edtomorrow and a leading expert in the work of Restorative Practices. He has facilitated over a thousand restorative circles and trained more than two hundred campuses nationwide. Doug is the creator of The First Five, a daily curated email for educators that is currently being used in over 10 countries and every state in the USA.
- James Reece is currently a Community Schools Coordinator for Ann G McGuinness Elementary School in Union-Endicott. James has been in this current role for a year. Prior to that James worked for three years in Whitney Point School district as a Family Advocate.

- Jo-Ann Sexton is the current Superintendent of the Whitney Point School District. She has worked in this district for many years, first as a counselor, then Assistant Principal, Director of Special Services, Assistant Superintendent before becoming the current Superintendent.

This panel brought together an eclectic blend of perspectives and expertise, making it a pivotal platform for educational themes.

Keynote Speakers

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ brought together a diverse lineup of keynote speakers, each of whom shared their unique insights and experiences on topics ranging from education and community engagement to healthcare and resilience. Here, we delve into the wisdom and perspectives offered by these remarkable individuals.

1. Dr. Lotta Granholm - Opening Keynote Address

Dr. Lotta Granholm, originally from Sweden and residing in the USA since the 1980s, is a distinguished Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. With an extensive research background in neurodegenerative diseases, particularly in the context of neurodegeneration and aging, she has received continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for over three decades, having authored over 170 peer-reviewed articles.

Dr. Granholm’s notable roles include establishing the South Carolina Brain Bank at MUSC and spearheading an international collaborative effort for brain tissue biobanking in individuals with Down syndrome, encompassing 12 participating sites across the USA, India, and Europe. She serves as the founding Chair of a Professional Interest Area (PIA) dedicated to Down syndrome-related Alzheimer’s disease (DS-AD) within the international Alzheimer organization ISTAART.

She also leads the CU/DU Concussion Research program, which concentrates on the identification of long-term biomarkers for sports-related concussions. Her recent transition from the University of Denver (DU), where she served as the Inaugural Executive Director for the Knoebel Institute for Healthy Aging (KIHA), to the University of Colorado's Anschutz Medical Campus to the Department of Neurosurgery underscores her commitment to advancing research and care. She is also a Board member of the Colorado Chapter of the Alzheimer Association.

Dr. Lotta Granholm delivered a comprehensive speech titled "Maintaining a Healthy Brain in the Face of Stress, Injury, and Adversity". The lecture began with an overview of normal brain anatomy, behavior, and physiology. It then delved into the impact of stress, aging, and injury on the brain, exploring long-term changes associated with conditions like PTSD and CTE resulting from multiple traumatic events. Dr. Granholm also provided

insights into proactive measures that individuals can adopt to mitigate the risk of brain injury or degeneration, including lifestyle adjustments, stress reduction, and cognitive exercises to enhance resilience.

2. Kristin Licardi - Closing Keynote Address

Kristin Licardi is a highly experienced Licensed Clinical Social Worker, a graduate of Hunter College School of Social Work, and boasts a remarkable career spanning over 28 years in behavioural health services for children and families. She commenced her early career in various mental health settings, eventually finding her professional home at Green Chimneys Children's Services in Brewster, NY, where she has dedicated 23 years of service.

During her tenure at Green Chimneys, Ms. Licardi held the esteemed position of Director of Social Services for a remarkable 17 years. In this role, she had a direct and transformative impact on the

programs and services provided to children and families. Her influence extended beyond this, as she also played a pivotal role in training clinicians, direct care staff, educators, and parents. Recently, she earned a well-deserved promotion to the position of Associate Executive Director of Behavioural Health Services.

Ms. Licardi's extensive expertise extends to adapting and facilitating various training curricula for her agency. Her areas of specialization encompass trauma, trauma-informed care, Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), and issues related to suicide and non-suicidal self-injury. She has further showcased her knowledge and leadership by presenting at professional conferences, including the Association of Children's Residential and Community Services (ACRC) and the Leir Foundation Trauma Conference.

She delivered a speech on the topic of "Cultivating Resilience in Turbulent Times." In her presentation, she

addressed the significant challenges faced by individuals and communities in today's world, including the global pandemic, war, terrorism, violence, and natural disasters. These events and circumstances are often experienced as traumatic, impacting physical and social-emotional well-being. Mrs. Licardi emphasized the importance of resilience and how it can be developed and learned to help individuals and communities cope with and recover from traumatic experiences, ultimately enabling them to weather and grow from the adversities encountered in life.

Renowned Panelists at the Let Us Dream Conference 2022:

Social Panelists:

- Gay Canough : (PhD, particle physics, University of Notre Dame, 1988) has been working in the solar energy field since 1993, installing mostly photovoltaic systems. She founded Extraterrestrial Materials, Inc. (ETM Solar Works) in 1988, doing design work on small spacecraft

such as the Lunar Prospector (which went to the Moon in 1998).

- **Jordan Ramsey:** Currently pursuing a Liberal Arts degree at SUNY Broome where he serves as Vice President of Administrative Affairs on the Student Assembly. In recognition of his passion for civic engagement, Jordan was selected as SUNY Broome's cohort for the Civic Newman Fellowship for the 2022/2023 Academic year.
- **Dr. Ross-Scott:** The Vice President for Student Affairs and SUNY Broome's inaugural Chief Diversity Officer. Prior to joining the SUNY Broome family, Dr. Ross-Scott was the Founding Chief Student Affairs for the country's first private Liberal Arts University, American University of Kuwait (AUK).
- **Mary Whittaker:** Clinical social worker who has taught and been a program coordinator in the Psychology department at SUNY Broome Community College. She has nearly 40 years'

experience in clinical treatment and supervision, community programming, and education. She has developed and managed programs for Broome County Mental Health, Broome County Health Dept., United Health Services and Lourdes Hospitals.

Education Panelists

- **Kerri Bullock:** She has been with Broome-Tioga BOCES for the past sixteen years. She currently serves as the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Support Services & Leadership, working in collaboration with BOCES staff and the staff of the school districts of Broome and Tioga counties.
- **Matthew L. McConn:** Associate Professor of English education and Chair of the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Educational Leadership at Binghamton University, SUNY. He has over a decade of English teaching experience in urban secondary schools in Houston, TX.

- **Doug Overton:** Co-founder of Edtomorrow and a leading expert in the work of Restorative Practices. He has facilitated over a thousand restorative circles and trained more than two hundred campuses nationwide. Doug is the creator of The First Five, a daily curated email for educators that is currently being used in over 10 countries and every state in the USA.
- **James Reece:** Currently a Community School Coordinator for Ann G McGuinness Elementary School in Union-Endicott. James has been in this current role for a year. Prior to that James worked for three years in Whitney Point School district as a Family Advocate.
- **Jo-Ann Sexton:** is the current Superintendent of the Whitney Point School District. She has worked in this district for many years, first as a counselor, then Assistant Principal, Director of Special Services, Assistant Superintendent before becoming the current Superintendent.

Health Panelists

- **John Barry :** He is a graduate from University of Chicago with an A.M. in Social Service Administration and is a licensed social worker. He has 30 years of experience in the fields of HIV, substance use treatment and mental health in both direct service and administrative roles. He has been an adjunct instructor at both SUNY Cortland and Binghamton University. He has been the Executive Director of the Southern Tier AIDS Program (STAP) since 2008.
- **Matthew Griffin:** He is the Director of Health & Nutrition at the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, where he has been working since 2002.
- **Pamela Guth:** Director, Community Health Services, has led Rural Health Network SCNY Community Health Workers assigned to Broome, Tioga and Delaware Counties since mid-2013. Pamela's work experience covers 43 years in the public

health, human service and education fields.

- Laura Pascucci: MHA Vice President, Provider of Network at Lourdes, part of Ascension in Binghamton, New York.
- Karen Riewerts: Director of Community Development at Lourdes. Karen began as a home visitor with the Lourdes Parents and Children Together Program (PACT) in 2002. In 2004, she became a PACT Supervisor and in 2013 became the PACT Program Manager. In 2017, Karen became the Manager of Community Development and in 2021 became the Director of Community Development.
- Mathew Stein: Director of Revenue Cycle at Lourdes, part of Ascension in Binghamton, New York. Mathew has been an associate at Lourdes since 2009.

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’, Binghamton University, 2022 was significantly enriched by its diverse panelists, who brought a

wealth of knowledge and diverse backgrounds to the forefront. Their valuable insights, extensive experiences, and unwavering commitment to promoting positive change deeply connected with the audience. Alongside the esteemed keynote speakers, these panelists played central roles in moulding an event focused on empowerment, collaboration, and community involvement. Collectively, they dedicated their efforts to curating a transformative experience with a shared vision of a brighter future for all.

Conclusion:

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’, hosted by Binghamton University, was a life-changing gathering, driven by the collective wisdom and unwavering passion of extraordinary individuals.

The keynote speakers, Dr. Lotta Granholm and Kristin Licardi, graced the event with their profound insights and shared wisdom.

The panel discussions were equally enlightening and empowering, providing a platform for rich dialogue and meaningful exchanges.

The society panel, led by Gay Canough, Jordan Ramsay, Dr. Ross-Scott and Mary Whittaker who are experts in the field, brought to the forefront critical issues and potential solutions for societal challenges. The education panel consisting of Kerri Bullock, Matthew L. McConn, Doug Overton, James Reece and Jo-Ann Sexton discussed the future of education, and the health panel consisting of John Barry, Matthew Griffin, Pamela Guth, Laura Pascucci, Karen Riewerts and Mathew Stein delved into the essential healthcare issues of our time.

Throughout the conference, a resounding message echoed - the significance of unity, compassion, and proactive steps. The 'Let Us Dream Conference' transcended being a mere gathering of voices; it served as a resounding call to inspire positive change. It urged us to break down barriers, foster

interdisciplinary collaboration, and recognize our shared responsibility in shaping a better world.

In conclusion, we unite to celebrate the collective wisdom, commitment, and passion that characterized the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022' in Binghamton University. It was not just an event; it stood as a catalyst for profound transformation. The knowledge shared, the connections forged, and the aspirations kindled will continue to resonate throughout our communities, motivating us to strive for a brighter future.

As we bid farewell to this extraordinary assembly, let us carry forward the lessons we have gained, the dreams we have nurtured, and our unwavering dedication to instigating positive change. Together, we dream, and together, we act. With unity and unwavering determination, we can turn our dreams into tangible realities. So, let us persist in dreaming, evolving, and thriving, for our journey has only just begun.

CONFERENCE 3

Community Collaboration in the Post Pandemic Period

**All Saints' College, Trivandrum INDIA
December 5, 2022**

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Gokul Krishna A
Reshmi R Prasad
Sreelekshmi Srikumar

Introduction:

In a world filled with ever-shifting challenges, the quest to dream, innovate and empower has never been more crucial. The 'Let Us Dream Conference' hosted by All Saints' College, Thiruvananthapuram, on 3rd December 2022, is a powerful testament to our shared spirit of collaboration, unwavering resilience and a passionate commitment to creating a positive impact, all fuelled by the dreams that empower us.

'Let us Dream' (LUD) is an initiative started by Rev. Fr Lijo Thomas to create holistically developed communities the world over, which has strived for to achieve since its inception. It is a locally rooted and globally established not-for-profit organisation. It believes in the idea of a global family, where each individual and society works interdependently to create a sustainable world.

The programme comprises of like-minded people from all ethnic groups around the world to support,

guide and lead this vision of holistic development and growth of individuals and society. It also helps individuals to work through desire, empowerment and action to attain mastery for success.

The primary objectives of the Trivandrum Conference were to facilitate knowledge exchange between researchers and practitioners on a global scale, bridging critical gaps in understanding. Furthermore, the conference aimed to generate recommendations for fostering enhanced global peace and harmony, while concurrently offering a platform for exchange of community intervention, research, theories and models. It also served as a forum for sharing of experiences, encompassing both successes and challenges in community organisations and initiatives. Ultimately, it sought to rally individuals with a profound commitment to society, fostering a robust support network for community empowerment initiatives.

The proceedings commenced with a prayer song followed by an invocation dance, establishing a reverential and auspicious ambience for the event.

The conference officially began with Prof. Dr. Reshmi R Prasad (Principal, All Saints' College) welcoming, Mr. Jacob Punnoose (Rtd. State Police Chief); Mr Jimmy Manuel (Regional Council Secretary, Hemophilia Federation of India) and Mr Gokul Krishna (Community worker and Co-coordinator of the LUD community conference), along with all delegates and participants.

This conference saw four different panels, which were expertly managed by dedicated individuals, including panel coordinators, mentors and community leaders. Their collaborative efforts ensured that LUD became a platform for sharing insights and fostering dialogue to bring about change.

Social Panel

The Social panel, expertly moderated by Dr. Soniya J. Nair, had the agenda to address and provide solutions for societal challenges, promoting comprehensive development and empowerment.

Unsung Heroes Panel

Led by Mr Shaikh Hasan Khan (in absentia) and Mr Mohammad Wazer, this panel's intention was to celebrate and shed light on the exceptional contributions of individuals, who are often not recognized, emphasizing their transformative impact on society.

Education Panel

Led by Dr. Smitha Asok V, it was aimed to discuss the future of education and the importance of innovative approaches in providing accessible and quality education to all, including marginalized and underprivileged communities.

Healthcare Panel

Skillfully moderated by Ms. Kukku Xavier, this panel aimed to raise awareness about important health-related issues, advocate for wellness and empower individuals to lead healthier lives, while supporting those with unique healthcare needs, including marginalized groups and the LGBTQ+ community.

Each panel at the ‘Let Us Dream Conference 2022’ acted as a melting pot of ideas, experiences, and perspectives, underscoring the message that change is not only attainable but within reach through collaborative efforts, innovative thinking and active community participation. The event showcased the profound impact of mentorship, supportive networks and the resilient human spirit, particularly in the face of challenges.

As we traverse the wealth of insights, innovations and narratives that unfolded at the ‘Let Us Dream Conference’, we extend an invitation

to you to stand beside us in the pursuit of a brighter future. Collectively, we can spark change, nurture inclusivity, and construct a more promising world for all. The ‘Let Us Dream Conference 2022’ stands as a testament to the transformational potential of united action and the enduring belief that dreams can evolve into reality.

Panels:

Panel 1: Community and Social Services - Empowering Communities from Within

“Building Stronger Communities”: The Let Us Dream Social Panel

Community development has a huge role to play and the ‘Let Us Dream conference’ gives each panellist an opportunity to bring in their unique perspectives and expertise, allowing the exchange of ideas, strategies and success stories. They can inspire and inform the audience and in turn contribute to the advancement of social initiatives

and promote effective solutions for social challenges.

The inaugural panel session, themed ‘The Social Panel’, was expertly moderated by Dr. Soniya J. Nair and featured a distinguished line-up of panellists.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The panellists for this session included Mr Abhijith R Mohan, who serves as a Capacity Building Associate, is a dedicated climate advocate and an educator with a profound commitment to achieving the SDGs.

Empowering Marginalized Communities: Mr Muhaimin Abubakar, a seasoned social enterprise consultant, focuses his efforts on empowering marginalised communities, particularly tribal and forest-dependent collectives, in their journey towards sustainability.

Collaborative endeavours: Mr Abrar Ali, the Co-founder of Designer’s Community, Olam

Festival and Urban Ants Studio, is a dynamic catalyst for collaborative endeavours. With a penchant for transforming innovative ideas into tangible designs and community events, Abrar passionately believes in uniting people through design.

Prisoner Education: Mr Vimal Stephen, a devoted social worker, shared his vision regarding the transformative power of education for prisoners and highlighted Tejus, a technopark initiative.

Each panellist contributed valuable insights during their engaging discourse.

Panel 2: Unsung Heroes

Unsung Stories of Achievement

This session was planned to be addressed by the unsung hero, Mr Sheikh Hasan Khan, a man who embodies the spirit of following one’s dreams. As a passionate mountaineer, adventure photographer and communication

engineer in government service, he had achieved the incredible feat of conquering the formidable Mount Everest. His summit was a toast of courage and patriotism to the 75th Independence Day of India. Mr Khan and his fellow climbers hoisted the largest ever tricolour atop the summit, which was a moment of pride and unity.

Unfortunately, Mr. Sheikh Hasan Khan couldn't attend the event, but his awe-inspiring expeditions were showcased through a captivating video.

Geo-Tagging: The baton was then passed on to Mr. Mohammed Wazer, who shared anecdotes from his life's journey, which was filled with ups and downs. He was duly honoured for his resilience and determination. He has set up a tree plantation initiative in collaboration with an NGO. He talked about the significance of the geo-tagging system, which can create a better tomorrow.

Panel 3: Education - Nurturing Minds for Tomorrow's Challenges

“Preparing the Leaders of Tomorrow”: The Let Us Dream Education Panel

The education panel is vital, as it brings together experts with diverse experiences and insights to discuss and promote transformative educational initiatives, addressing crucial issues such as marginalised communities, sustainable living and environmental activities, ultimately contributing to the advancement of education and social development.

This panel session, focussing on education, commenced under the guidance of Dr. Smitha Asok V. The panel featured an esteemed group of experts.

Social Engineering and Gender Sensitisation: Mr Anson P D Alexander, the Director and Founder of 'Kanal' is a remarkable individual, whose aviation background has seamlessly blended with a passion

for social engineering and gender sensitisation, extending even to the Kerala Police force. He delivered an insightful address.

Marginalised Communities and School Dropouts: Mr Subash, a dedicated advocate for marginalised communities and school dropouts, is the driving force behind Memory Casket, engaging in grassroots-level community initiatives to promote education and empower communities.

Sustainable Living: Mr Anil Kumar T, an IT Marketer with over two decades of experience, wears multiple hats, including Head of Marketing at Familheey Community App and a faculty member at Greencross Foundation, Centre for Deep Ecology. His interests span across various social causes, with a special focus on sustainable living, ecosophy and environmental activities.

Education for coastal students: Mr Jaison John, representing the Green Cross Foundation and Coastal

Students Cultural Forum (CSCF), shared his initiatives aimed at expanding educational opportunities for coastal students. The panel brings together a wealth of knowledge and diverse experiences, making it an invaluable platform for exploring the multifaceted realm of education and its transformative potential.

Panel 4: Healthcare - Healing Beyond Borders

“Healing with Heart”: The Let Us Dream Health Panel

The Healthcare Panel is of significant importance, as it serves as a platform for discussions over a wide range of critical health-related issues and initiatives. The panel at the ‘Let Us Dream conference’ promotes awareness and education about these essential health-related subjects, fostering greater inclusivity and support for marginalised communities.

The fourth panel session, centred around health, was skillfully

moderated by Ms. Kukku Xavier and featured an array of distinguished panellists.

Blood Donation: Ms Varsha Bijith from the 'O Negative Squad,' passionately advocated for blood donation and emphasised the community's role in aiding accident victims.

Rights of persons with disability: Mr Nishan Nizar, an aspiring model with multifaceted talent, shared his inspiring journey from being confined to a wheelchair to breaking societal stereotypes regarding beauty, body image and disabilities as part of the Caravan Organisation. This initiative works towards providing treatment and employment opportunities for individuals with disability, thereby championing disability justice and rights.

Nature-centric lifestyle: Mr Roshan Ajay, with his wellness start-up and the Svaro Foundation, expressed his deep connection with nature, dedication to healing and educating

children about a nature-centric lifestyle and natural medicine.

Challenges faced by the LGBTQ Community: Mr Athul P V, a dedicated Queer Activist and Executive Board Member of Queerhythm LGBTQ Community, shed light on the challenges faced by the LGBTQ community and discussed the significance of the Pride Month and Pride Rally.

Accessible healthcare: Mr Albert Zachariah, an inner expansion coach and immunity designer, articulated his vision of understanding the human body deeply and making a positive impact on the lives of millions by empowering a network of coaches. He emphasised the importance of disseminating health information and making health accessible to all.

This health panel brought together an eclectic blend of perspectives and expertise, making it a pivotal platform for exploring health and wellness topics.

Keynote Speakers

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ brought together a diverse lineup of keynote speakers, each of whom shared their unique insights and experiences on topics ranging from education and community engagement to healthcare and resilience. Here, we delve into the wisdom and perspectives offered by these remarkable individuals.

1. Mr Jacob Punnoose - Opening Keynote Address:

Mr Jacob Punnoose, the retired Director General of the Police, post-retirement, has shouldered responsibilities such as being the Chief Commissioner for the 35th National Games of India and is at present a member of the Kerala State Security Commission, Judicial Commission Police Purchases, Judicial Commission on Christian Backwardness and also the Principal Advisor of the Pushpagiri Medical Society. He was the opening keynote speaker and promised that the

conference would be an insightful journey into the realms of sustainable development, social enterprise and education.

As the event commenced, the audience was introduced to Mr. Punnoose, a man whose dedication to public service spanned nearly four decades. His awards, including recognition from the President of India, spoke volumes about his commitment to law enforcement. He introduced innovative policing strategies, fostering community-friendly relations through the Janamitri Suraksha Project.

Mr. Punnoose’s wisdom shone through his message to the audience: “If you do not enjoy a moment, you lose it forever; if you enjoy it, it is yours forever. So, enjoy all moments of your life.” His words resonated with everyone present, reminding them of the importance of cherishing every moment.

2. Mr Jimmy Manue - Opening Keynote Address:

Mr Jimmy Manue has worked for the empowerment of people who are infected by Haemophilia. He addressed the audience and briefed them about the objectives of the 'Let Us Dream conference'. He hoped for this conference to be interactive.

3. Mr Paul Kronenberg - Unsung Heroes:

The subsequent keynote address was given by Mr Paul Kronenberg, an unsung hero in his own right. His presentation revolved around the NGO Kanthari, which he described as a 'Change Maker'. This organisation is dedicated to collaborating with individuals who aspire to create a positive impact in the world.

4. Mr. Abhijit Mohan - Sustainable Development:

Mr Abhijit took the stage and passionately spoke about his goals of achieving sustainable development, emphasizing the need to incorporate climate consciousness into our culture. The presentation was

punctuated by engaging discussions and a video presentation that captured the essence of his message.

5. Ms. Sreelekshmi Sreekumar - Sexual Abuse Survivors:

Mr Sreekumar, a dedicated professional social worker, provided profound insights into her personal interactions with young rape victims. Additionally, she shed light on her involvement with the 'Kaval' project, a life-skills training initiative that also offers vital psychological counselling for survivors of sexual abuse. Ms. Sreekumar further delved into the significance of understanding the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and how it can be a key tool in supporting dropout students, who have been victims of sexual abuse.

6. Mr Azif Muhammed - Youth Leadership Development:

Mr Azif Muhammed is an unsung hero in his own right. A young resident of Trivandrum, he is

primarily dedicated to fostering leadership development among the youth and contributing to the betterment of society. He serves as both the founder and President of the youth organisation known as ‘Tick Talkers’, while simultaneously pursuing his postgraduate research in Development Studies.

7. Mr Maitreya Maitreyan - Closing Keynote Address:

He is a retired reformer who dedicates his life to aiding others, spreading joy, nurturing love, providing care, education and healing, all through his captivating photography. Maitreya is widely recognised across the state for his unique ability to approach every challenge with a fascinating perspective: “Life is a precious, one-time commitment that won’t come again.” In the 1980s, he gained acclaim as a pioneering figure in feminist movements in Kerala, often regarded as an anarchist pioneer. His approach and perspective on everyday life situations inspire diversity and enthusiasm. Notably, his profoundly moving letter to his

18-year-old daughter, welcoming her to the world of adulthood, was celebrated as an exemplary model to follow.

8. Panel Coordinators:

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’ owes its success to the unwavering dedication of the panel’s coordinators, who put in relentless effort to ensure the success of each discussion. Coordinators like Dr. Soniya J. Nair, Dr. Smitha Asok V and Ms. Kukku Xavier played pivotal roles in orchestrating insightful conversations and ensuring that the conference’s message of positive change reached the audience.

Renowned Panelists at the Let Us Dream Conference 2022:

Social Panelists:

- Mr Abhijith R Mohan: Mr Abhijit works as a capacity-building associate, volunteer at Climatehood and an educator. He talked about his aims at

achieving the goals of sustainable development.

- Mr Muhaimin Abubakar: Mr Muhaimin is currently working as social enterprise consultant for livelihood development projects by Tribal Community Collectives, which are social enterprises owned and run by marginalised communities. They include tribal and forest-dependent collectives that need support to become sustainable.
- Mr Abrar Ali: Mr Abrar is the co-founder of Designer's Community, Olam Festival, Urban Ants studio. Mr Abrar is a spark of team spirit. He is involved in gathering a team for a good cause, organising an event and bringing people together. His strength is rooted in his ability to translate an idea into practical design. He talked about how design plays a major role in improving the value of an object. His ideology is to unite people through design.

- Mr Vimal Stephen: Mr Vimal is a social worker. He shared his vision about the importance of education among prisoners. He also mentioned Tejus - a technopark-based company.

Unsung Heroes' Panelists:

- Mr Shaikh Hasan Khan: He is a man who embodies the spirit of following one's dreams. As a passionate mountaineer, adventure photographer and communication engineer in the government sector, he had achieved the incredible feat of being the youngest civilian from Kerala to conquer the formidable Mount Everest.
- Mr Mohammad Wazer: Mr Mohammad Wazer has a tree plantation in collaboration with an NGO. During his session as an unsung hero, Mohammad Wazer passionately emphasised the significance of geotagging in the context of their tree plantation project. With fervour, he conveyed the transformative power of geotagging technology

as a vital tool for tracking and preserving the environmental impact of their reforestation efforts.

Education Panellists

- Mr Anson P D Alexander: Mr Anson P D Alexander is the director and founder of 'Kanal'. Mr Anson, professionally an aircraft maintenance engineering graduate, finds his real passion in social engineering as well. He is also a trainer for gender sensitisation in the Kerala Police force. He is a TedX speaker too. His self-directedness, passion and commitment have ensured that Kanal's efforts have spread out, as the organisation has conducted several successful campaigns under his effective leadership. He talked about comprehensive sexual education.
- Mr Subash: He works with students from marginalised communities and school dropouts. He is the founder of Memory Casket and has been undertaking grassroots-level community activities

to raise awareness regarding education, to help overcome the sense of inferiority, along with empowering the community to support students.

- Mr Anil Kumar T: He is an IT Marketer with 20+ years of experience. Currently, he is Head of Marketing at Familheey Community App. He works with various NGOs for social causes and is a faculty member at Greencross Foundation, Centre for Deep Ecology. He discussed his interest in various issues, especially sustainable living, ecosophy, and environmental activities.
- Mr Jaison John: He is from Green Cross Foundation, and is currently working in Coastal Students Cultural Forum (CSCF). He also shared his attempts to provide educational opportunities for coastal students.

Health Panelists

- Ms Varsha Bijith: Ms Varsha Bijith, from 'O Negative Squad', spoke

about why one should donate blood, especially to help someone who has met with an accident.

- Mr Nishan Nizar: He is an aspiring model from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. He is also a born artist, badminton player, wanderer, fitness freak and even a diligent ramp walker. Being a Bopo Model, he can break the stereotypes of beauty, body image, disabilities and perfection in our society, fashion industry and media. He shared his passion to be a role model for others who are confined to wheelchairs. He is from Caravan organization, which supports the differently abled. It aims to work for treatment and jobs for such people. He deliberated that such activities and disability rights can protect and fight against injustice.
 - Mr Roshan Ajay: He has opened a wellness start-up and a charity organisation called Svaro Foundation. He is an avid nature lover and takes immense satisfaction in healing and educating children about a nature-centric lifestyle and
- natural medicine. He is a black belt champion, plays the guitar, and loves to live in hill stations.
- Mr Athul P V: He is a Queer activist and Executive Board Member of the Queerhythm LGBTIQ community. He has talked a lot about hardships in society. Queerhythm has headed a number of LGBTQ movements. He talked about the Pride month and Pride rally.
 - Mr Albert Zachariah: He is an Inner Expansion Coach and an Immunity Designer. His vision is to understand the human body at a deeper level and to make a positive impact on the lives of a 100 million. He has been on a mission since 2010 to make healthy habits accessible to everyone, by empowering 10,000 coaches to work with 10,000 individuals. He created awareness about the importance of spreading information about health. His aim is to make health accessible to everyone.

The 'Let Us Dream (LUD) Conference 2022' was profoundly influenced by the vital contributions of its diverse panellists, each bringing a rich tapestry of backgrounds and a wealth of knowledge to the table. Their valuable insights, extensive experiences, and unwavering dedication to fostering positive change profoundly resonated with the audience. These panellists, in concert with the esteemed keynote speakers, played pivotal roles in shaping the event, which revolved around themes of empowerment, collaboration and community engagement. Together, they worked tirelessly to create a transformative experience that was focussed on building a brighter future for all.

Conclusion:

The 'Let Us Dream Conference', hosted by All Saints' College in Thiruvananthapuram on December 3, 2022, was a powerful and transformative event, fuelled by the collective wisdom and passion of remarkable individuals.

The keynote speakers, Mr. Jacob Punnoose, Mr. Jimmy Manue, Mr. Paul Kronenberg, Mr. Abhijit Mohan, Ms. Sreelekshmi Sreekumar, Mr. Azif Muhammed and Mr. Maitreya Maitreyan, representing diverse backgrounds and experiences, graced the event with their profound insights and shared wisdom. They lent their unique perspectives to the four panel discussions on society, unsung heroes, education and health. The discussions were equally enlightening and empowering, providing a platform for rich dialogue and meaningful exchanges.

The society panel, led by Mr. Abhijith R Mohan, Mr. Muhaimin Abubakar, Mr. Abrar Ali and Mr. Vimal Stephen, who are experts in their fields, brought to the forefront critical issues and potential solutions for societal challenges. The unsung heroes, led by Mr Seikh Hasan Khan (in absentia) and Mr Mohammad Wazer, celebrated the unsung champions of change, shedding light on their extraordinary contributions. The education panel, consisting of Mr. Anson P D Alexander, Mr.

Subash, Mr. Anil Kumar T and Mr. Jaison John discussed the future of education and the health panel, consisting of Ms. Varsha Bijith, Mr. Nishan Nizar, Mr. Roshan Ajay, Mr. Athul P V and Mr. Albert Zachariah, delved into the essential healthcare issues of our time.

Throughout the conference, a powerful message resonated - the importance of unity, compassion and action. The 'Let Us Dream Conference' was not just a gathering of voices. It was a call to action for positive change. It urged us to transcend barriers, collaborate across disciplines and embrace our shared responsibility in creating a better world.

As the conference drew to a close, the audience was addressed by a distinguished panel, including Prof. Dr. Reshmi R Prasad, the Principal of All Saints' College; Mr Jimmy Manuel, a dedicated social worker; Fr. Lijo, the Founder and Director of the Let Us Dream Community Conference; Mr Gokul Krishna, a committed community worker and Coordinator

of the Let Us Dream Community Conference; and Ms Sreelekshmi Sreekumar, a passionate social worker and Coordinator of the Let Us Dream Community Conference. They encouraged us to channel our collective wisdom and passion to create exceptional products that can change the world and enrich lives.

In closing, we come together to applaud the collective wisdom, dedication and fervour that defined the 'Let Us Dream Conference 2022' in Thiruvananthapuram. It wasn't just an event; it was a catalyst for profound transformation. The knowledge shared, the bonds strengthened, and the aspirations ignited will continue to radiate through our communities, inspiring us all to aim for the stars and construct a brighter tomorrow.

As we bid adieu to this remarkable assembly, let us carry with us the lessons we've learned, the dreams we've nurtured and our unwavering commitment to effecting positive change. Together, we dream and we are agents of action. With unity and unwavering determination, we can

transform our dreams into tangible realities. So, let us continue to dream, evolve and flourish, for our journey has only just commenced.

CONFERENCE 4

Empowering Communities for Sustainable Transformation

**St. Anne's Degree College for Women, Bangalore INDIA
November 19, 2022**

CONFERENCE CHAIRS

Jimmy Cherian
G Nancy Angeline
Nisha Joseph

Introduction :

Since its inception, the 'Let Us Dream Conference' has continued to grow and evolve, with each year witnessing a more extensive gathering of individuals with compassionate hearts and profound insights. These annual conferences have become a vital platform for sharing, learning, and celebrating the diverse array of service opportunities and intervention models that contribute to community upliftment. With meticulous planning and dedicated volunteers, these conferences have expanded their reach, providing more and more participants with opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions grounded in community improvement research, practical experiences, and the sharing of best practices.

The Let Us Dream Community Conference, Bangalore 2022 was hosted by St Anne's College for Women on 19th November, 2022. It started with a beautiful ceremonial start, featuring the lighting of a lamp that symbolized the illumination

of knowledge and the beginning of a collective journey towards community betterment. The conference's inauguration was graced by Prof Nisha Joseph, the Principal of St Anne's College for women, who extended a warm welcome to all attendees.

During this inaugural ceremony, a significant moment was dedicated to expressing gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Fr Lijo, founder of 'Let Us Dream', who had made exceptional contributions to the cause of community improvement. In recognition of his selfless dedication and profound insights, Dr. Fr Lijo was presented with a token of appreciation.

The 'Let Us Dream Conference' aspires to accomplish the following objectives:

Foster empowerment among individuals of all ages and diverse backgrounds who are actively engaged in a wide range of community improvement initiatives,

all with the common goal of building a brighter future.

Bridge the gap between the insights and discoveries of researchers and the practical experiences of hands-on practitioners, creating a powerful synergy that adds relevance and depth to our collective knowledge.

Cultivate a culture of community service and experiential learning within student communities by introducing a variety of diverse community improvement interventions and opportunities.

The Keynote speaker for the day was Ms Renu Mukunda who is a sociologist by qualification and a Social Development Specialist by Training and Experience who spoke on Empowerment.

This conference then saw four different panels being set up which were expertly coordinated by dedicated individuals, including panel coordinators, mentors, and community leaders. Their

collaborative efforts ensured that ‘Let Us Dream’ became a platform for sharing insights and fostering dialogue to bring change.

Education Panel

The Education panel was expertly moderated by Dr Anne Varghese, Speech and Hearing specialist who has a vast experience of working among children with autism and their family. She is the Principal of Samvad Institute of Speech and Hearing.

Health Panel

Moderated by Ashish Pratap Singh, the Chief Marketing Officer at Happiest Health, a health and wellness knowledge enterprise. Earlier, he also headed global publications like Men’s Health and FHM as their Editor and American Express at their global headquarters in New York with Global Reengineering and Six Sigma team.

Social Panel

Moderated by Mr Venu Doddavarapu, who is a certified consultant for children and experiential learning for teacher transformation, who has worked with the Government of Delhi, East African Government and is the founder of Theatre for Liberation. He creates a community enrichment enabled with the aim of promoting inclusivity.

I Am Changemaker

This segment saw speakers take the stage on four different themes that were corporate, education, health and social factors offering their insights on it.

The panels at the 'Let Us Dream Conference' represented a rich tapestry of ideas and experiences, underlining the belief that change is not only attainable but also within our grasp through collaborative efforts, creative thinking, and active participation in our communities.

The event underscored the profound impact of mentorship, supportive networks, and human resilience, especially in the face of adversity.

As we contemplate the abundance of wisdom, innovations, and narratives shared during the 'Let Us Dream Conference', we extend an open invitation for you to join us in our mission to create a brighter future. Together, we have the power to spark change, nurture inclusivity, and construct a more promising world. The 'Let Us Dream' Community Conference in Bangalore in 2022 embodies the transformative potential of collective action and the enduring faith that dreams can be turned into reality.

Panels:

Panel 1: Educational Panel

The Let Us Dream Educational Panel

The education panel holds profound importance in its dedication to

mitigating the negative impacts on education. This panel serves as a pivotal platform for putting forth and conversing about strategies geared towards offering substantial support, with the objective of cultivating vibrant, nurturing, and flourishing educational settings. What makes it particularly significant is its comprehensive approach, as it takes into account the welfare of educators, students, families, and communities. Through its discussions, the education panel strives to chart a path towards a more promising future, where the education system stands strong, inclusive, and conducive to meaningful learning and development.

“The Social Panel,” was expertly moderated by Dr Anne Varghese and featured a distinguished lineup of panelists: -

- Lisa Jungkamp is a German Social worker and systemic counselor. Since 2017, she works at the Catholic University of Applied Science of North Rhine-Westphalia in Cologne
- Priya Krishnamurthy is co-founder and CEO of Children’s Movement for Civic Awareness which builds citizenship and life skills in children and youth, with a mission to transform the young into concerned, thinking and active citizens, for an inclusive and sustainable India. She is a Carmelite with background in Psychology and literature.
- Ms. Sidra Siddiqua is an aspiring Psychologist and a Social Worker with University Rank holding in her BSc Rehabilitation Science education and has received the prestigious Rashtrapati Puraskar in Bharat Scouts and Guides. She is an active member of The United Foundation (TUF), and with collaboration of HBS Hospital, coordinates the

Dialysis Awareness Campaign. She has volunteered with Mercy Mission, a coalition of 20+ Bangalore based NGOs to help the distressed during the COVID 19 pandemic, Presently, Sidra is a volunteer at the National Mental Health Helpline and also works among the hearing impaired at Bangalore Neuro Centre.

- Mr. Yogesh is a Christite (MBA) and is associated with KPMG Global Service. He holds a strategic leadership position in the DREAMS intervention, a community-university partnership guiding underserved middle school students to develop leadership skills. He is the founding member of the Global Youth Leadership Network (GYLN) and instills entrepreneurial leadership in future leaders, creating a Community of Practice to empower more global leaders to develop compassion and resilience required to achieve the sustainable development objectives.

Each panelist contributed valuable insights during their engaging discourse.

Panel 2 : Health

The Let Us Dream Health Panel

The health panel shoulders a position of great significance, as it delves into the intricate dimensions of community health, spanning the integration of healthcare and social care systems. In essence, the health panel operates as a catalyst for bridging the gaps in community health, promoting collaboration, and providing pragmatic solutions to elevate the overall well-being of communities.

“The Health Panel,” was expertly moderated by Ashish Pratap Singh and featured a distinguished lineup of panelists: -

- Prof Dr Alben Sigamani, MD, MSc (Clinical Trials), MBA (Hospitals & Health Administration) is the Founding Partner & Chief

Scientific Officer - Numen Health, a start-up that is helping millions of people suffering from heart-related diseases. He is also the Director & Founder Carmel Research Consultancy. Earlier, he was Group Head for Clinical Research of the Narayana Health Group of Hospitals & Head, Center of Excellence at St. John's Research Institute. He holds MBBS and PG in Clinical Pharmacology. Alumnus of St. John's Medical College, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine & Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences.

- Dr. G. Nancy Angeline is a Senior Resident at the Department of Community Health, St. John's Medical College. She teaches undergraduate, postgraduate and allied health science students. She also mentors student research and provides clinical service for the underprivileged in Bangalore. Her research focuses on Workplace mental health promotion, intimate Partner Violence prevention, Psychological First Aid Provision and Workplace Sexual Harassment prevention in

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. She holds an MBBS from Kanyakumari Government Medical College and in Community Medicine from Christian Medical College, Vellore, Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from the Royal College of Physicians, London.

- Dr. Narendra Pindipapanahalli is the Chief Operating Officer at Narayana Nethralaya, a super specialty eye care hospital in Bangalore, committed to providing quality eye care and treatment of eye disorders to all sections of society. Earlier, he was Regional Manager - HIV Care & Surveillance with the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust and the Resident Medical Officer at the Siddlaghatta Government Hospital. He has served the Indian Army as resident Medical Officer in Kashmir, Joshimath and Secunderabad. He holds an MBBS from the Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, PG Diploma in Hospital/Healthcare Management, HRM/Personnel Administration from the

Symbiosis Institute of Healthcare Management.

Each panelist provided invaluable insights throughout their discussions.

Panel 3: Social

The Let Us Dream Social Panel

The social panel within the 'Let Us Dream conference' plays a pivotal role by offering panelists a platform to share their unique perspectives and expertise. This forum encourages the exchange of a wide range of ideas, strategies, and success stories, which, in turn, become a wellspring of inspiration and knowledge for the audience. Significantly, these conversations within the social panel nurture collaboration and promote innovative thinking, ultimately leading to the advancement of social initiatives and the creation of viable solutions to tackle urgent social challenges.

This panel session, commenced under the guidance of Mr Venu

Doddavarapu. The panel featured an esteemed group of experts: -

- Vidya Selvamony (LLM) is a practising advocate with 20+ years of extensive experience. Her expertise spans across various legal domains that include working with domestic & International NGOs in the aspect of the law relating to Tourism, Women & Child protection and has represented her organisation in national and international forums. She is a visiting faculty at the CMR University School of Legal Studies. She also runs a Trust (Legal Aid Trust) as part of her philanthropic initiatives.
- Naghabhushana K is a Senior HR leader with 26 years of experience in the field of HR, Legal and Industrial Relations. Presently he heads IR in SEG Automotive. Besides his HR profession, he has also authored three books. He is also very passionate about Social development. He formed a community development organization called 'Namanam' at Noorundumalai, a tribal village in Krishnagiri. This village has been

alcohol and tobacco free since 2002 and over 1,000 youngsters have found a new direction for their lives through Namanam.

- Smita Sharma, works as Global Program Manager with UST, a global digital solutions company. She leads the CSR, Sustainability and volunteering engagement initiatives of the organization at the Indian and Global levels. She has done her Master's in Food and Nutrition, and CSR with the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs. Currently, she works with 40+ NGO partners.

This panel brought together an eclectic blend of perspectives and expertise, making it a pivotal platform for social themes.

Panel 4: Changemakers

The Let Us Dream 'I Am Changemaker' Panel

- **J.R Satish Rajkumar: Corporate**

Mr. Satish Rajkumar is instrumental in Sustainable Development Goals of Volvo Energy that were translated into a clean environment-leading to less pollution and better health.

Volvo group has a deep-seated commitment to sustainability. Volvo Energy is Volvo Group's newest business area, dedicated to accelerating the Group's electrification and sustainability journey.

- **Madhusudhan Shukla:
Education**

Mr. Madhusudhan designs environment awareness programmes from children in Thirthahalli and Agumbe- rain forests in Western Ghats. Through the Kalinga Foundation, he has empowered children in to be eco-ambassadors. He interacts with teachers and urban population too on environment conservation. His efforts are transforming the future Indian citizens to be sensitized about sustainable Environment.

- **Gousiya Sultana : Health**

Ms. Gousiya works as the Anganwadi Worker under the Integrated Child Development Services, Government of India, Neelasandra, Bangalore. She takes care of around 50 children and uses innovative techniques such as whatsapp audio messages and video display in her anganwadi to convey health and education related information to parents and children. Her work is impactful for children of India who are from underprivileged, minority and migrant background to attain holistic development.

- **Indumathi : Social**

Ms. Indumathi is a former waste picker who worked in Dry waste collection centre. Now she is an entrepreneur managing dry waste collection in 3 wards of Bangalore. She creates

awareness about waste segregation and maintains liaison with residents. Through partnership with the BBMP, she manages now 3500 KG

of dry waste per day. She has created employment for 88 individuals, providing benefits such as free breakfast, lunch and tuition services for their dependents. Through her efforts, Bangalore is a cleaner and a better place and waste management has become a more dignified occupation.

Keynote Speakers at the Let Us Dream Community Conference, Bangalore 2022

The 'Let Us Dream Conference' brought together a diverse lineup of keynote speakers, each of whom shared their unique insights and experiences on topics ranging from education and community engagement to healthcare and resilience. Here, we delve into the wisdom and perspectives offered by these remarkable individuals.

1. Renu Mukunda - Opening Keynote Address

Renu Mukunda, a distinguished sociologist with extensive

qualifications and a wealth of experience as a social development specialist, has dedicated over four decades of her professional career to the realm of social development. Her remarkable insights shed light on the imperative nature of discussions surrounding empowerment, which have emerged in response to prevailing discrimination and social injustices within our society. Mukunda's profound perspective extends to the very essence of empowerment, which she elegantly simplifies to a fundamental principle: choice. Empowerment, in her view, hinges on the freedom to make choices in life, encompassing a realm of options. It manifests as individuals receive the support they need to make informed decisions, thus positioning them as equal citizens who garner respect and confidence within their communities.

Furthermore, Mukunda underscores the necessity of nurturing a critical mindset as an integral component of empowerment. She advocates for a constant questioning of established norms and beliefs, whether they

originate from external sources or internal convictions. According to her, this propensity to question serves as a pivotal pathway to empowerment, enabling individuals to challenge and transcend constraints.

Mukunda also candidly shared her personal academic journey, replete with challenges and opportunities, underscoring the profound transformative power of education as an empowering tool.

In her discourse, Mukunda delineated three distinct phases of empowerment: charity, welfare, and development. These phases represent the evolution of empowerment efforts, culminating in a comprehensive video presentation as a tangible demonstration of the concept in action.

Renu Mukunda's insightful contributions serve as an invaluable source of wisdom and guidance in the pursuit of empowerment and social progress.

2. Dr Geetha Ramanujam - Closing Keynote Address

Dr Geetha Ramanujam is the Academic Director of GR Educational Institutions. A multi-faceted personality, she is not only an acclaimed educationist but also an award-winning play-wright and director, recognised public speaker and renowned philosopher.

Driven by a profound passion for teaching, Dr. Geetha Ramanujam has elevated her commitment to education to new heights, with a special focus on rural youth who often lack access to quality educational opportunities. After an illustrious tenure at the prestigious National College in Bangalore, she embarked on a remarkable journey by establishing the Geetha Ramanujam Educational Institution (GREI) in a remote and underserved area. Her primary aim was to empower rural students. She made it her mission to transform underperforming students into successful achievers.

Throughout her arduous journey, Dr. Geetha Ramanujam consistently acknowledges the support she received from her family. Her aspiration has been to equip the current generation with the skills and competitiveness necessary to face life's challenges and become independent, successful citizens. To achieve this, she employed theatre and various forms of art. Her proficiency as a playwright allowed her to impart the essence of our culturally rooted education.

In the words of Dr. Geetha Ramanujam herself, "There are no limitations to the mind, except those we acknowledge." Her unwavering courage and conviction have propelled her to great heights in a relatively short span of time. At every stage, she encountered significant hardships, including opposition from family, scepticism from villagers while teaching in rural areas, and disapproval from colleagues who questioned the recognition she received and her versatile accomplishments. Yet, her

commitment to her chosen path remained resolute.

Dr. Geetha Ramanujam stands as a unique embodiment of dedication, determination, and remarkable achievements, all while remaining humble, approachable, and ever-committed to her mission.

Renowned Panelists at the Let Us Dream Community Conference Bangalore 2022:

Education Panelists :

- Lisa Jungkamp : A German Social worker and systemic counselor. Since 2017, she works at the Catholic University of Applied Science of North Rhine-Westphalia in Cologne as an Assistant to the Prorector of Studies and Teaching. She manages the international DREAMS program, which started in Germany in 2021. Prior to this, she gathered practical experience in the field of Social Services at the youth welfare office and as a School Social worker.
- Priya Krishnamurthy : Co-founder and CEO of Children's Movement for Civic Awareness which builds citizenship and life skills in children and youth, with a mission to transform the young into concerned, thinking and active citizens, for an inclusive and sustainable India. She is a Carmelite with background in Psychology and literature.
- Sidra Siddiqua : An aspiring Psychologist and a Social Worker with University Rank holding in her BSc Rehabilitation Science education and has received the prestigious Rashtrapati Puraskar in Bharat Scouts and Guides. She is an active member of The United Foundation (TUF), and with collaboration of HBS Hospital, coordinates the Dialysis Awareness Campaign. She has volunteered with Mercy Mission, a coalition of 20+ Bangalore based NGOs to help the distressed during the COVID 19 pandemic, Presently, Sidra is a volunteer at the National Mental Health Helpline and also works among the hearing impaired at Bangalore Neuro Centre.

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'I Am Changemaker' Panelists

- **J.R Satish Rajkumar : Corporate**

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The ‘Let Us Dream Community Conference’ in Bangalore in 2022 was notably elevated by the inclusion of a diverse and accomplished panel of experts. These panelists brought a rich tapestry of knowledge and

diverse life experiences to the forefront, enriching the event in substantial ways. Their invaluable insights, extensive backgrounds, and resolute commitment to advancing positive change resonated deeply with the audience.

In conjunction with the distinguished keynote speakers, these panelists assumed pivotal roles in shaping an event that revolved around the themes of empowerment, collaboration, and active community engagement. Collectively, they wholeheartedly dedicated their efforts to curate a transformative experience, united by a shared vision of a brighter and more promising future for all.

Conclusion:

The ‘Let Us Dream Conference’, hosted by Binghamton University, was a life-changing gathering, driven by the collective wisdom and unwavering passion of extraordinary individuals.

The keynote speakers, Renu Mukunda and Kristin Dr Geeta Ramanujam, graced the event with their profound insights and shared wisdom.

The panel discussions were equally enlightening and empowering, providing a platform for rich dialogue and meaningful exchanges.

The education panel, led by Lisa Jungkamp, Priya Krishnamurthy, Sidra Siddiqua and Yogesh L who are experts in the field, brought to the forefront critical issues and potential solutions for societal challenges. The health panel, consisting of Prof Dr Alben Sigamani ,Dr. G. Nancy Angeline, Dr. Narendra Pindipapanahalli discussed the essential healthcare issues, the social panel consisting of Vidya Selvamony Naghabhushana K, Smita Sharma delved into the social issues of our time and the 'I Am Changemaker panel' saw initiative by J.R Satish Rajkumar, Madhusudhan Shukla and Gousiya Sultana Indumathi,

Throughout the conference, a resounding and unifying message reverberated—a message that underscored the profound significance of unity, compassion, and proactive initiatives. The 'Let Us Dream Conference' transcended its role as a mere convergence of voices; it emerged as a clarion call to inspire positive transformation. It urged us to dismantle barriers, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and embrace our shared responsibility in shaping a more promising world.

We come together to commemorate the collective wisdom, unwavering commitment, and unbridled passion that characterized the 'Let Us Dream Community Conference' , Bangalore 2022, hosted at St. Anne's College for Women. This event was more than just a gathering; it acted as a catalyst for profound change. The knowledge imparted, the connections formed, and the aspirations ignited will reverberate throughout our communities, continually motivating us to strive for a brighter future.

As we bid adieu to this extraordinary assembly, let us carry forward the invaluable lessons we've acquired, the dreams we've nurtured, and our steadfast determination to initiate positive change. Together, we dream, and together, we take action. With unity and unwavering resolve, we can transform our dreams into tangible realities. Thus, let us persist in dreaming, evolving, and flourishing, for our journey has only just begun.