



# India for Animals 2014 Conference Report

Jaipur, 12-14 September 2014



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FIAPO is India's apex animal protection organization. As the collective voice of the animal protection movement in India, FIAPO is the catalyst which protects the interests of animals on local and national levels - through education, research, lobbying, mobilization, training and direct action. Created for the movement, by the movement, FIAPO is India's only national federation with over 60 members and over 200 supporter organizations nationally.

India For Animals 2014, a national conference organised by the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organizations (FIAPO) brought together organisations and activists working for animal protection from India and abroad. Into its third edition, being a one of its kind in India, the conference enabled activists and organisations to collectively understand the progress of the animal protection movement in India and to dialogue about the significant issues pertaining to animals and how to move forward. The conference provided a platform to hundreds of grassroots activists, practitioners and philanthropists from across the country to get together under a common banner and connect, build and learn from each other.

Almost 300 national and international delegates attended the 3-day conference and exhibition that was kick-started on September 12th at Clarks Amer in Jaipur.

# FIAPO's India for Animals 2014 Conference Report

## 12 September 2014. Day 1

Day 1 started with a pre-conference workshop for pre-selected participants to receive hands-on training for improving the welfare of dogs. Two sessions – one on adoptions and the other on Animal Birth Control - were run in parallel. Abodh Aras, Jack Reece and Illona Otter provided intensive training on "Improving Your Animal Birth Control (ABC) Programme", while Clarissa Baldwin, Adrian Burder, Steve Goward and Gareth Thomas shared their expertise on "Improving Adoptions".

The main conference kicked off with Abodh Aras welcoming the attendees and providing general overview of the programme. Ms Norma Alvares, graced the occasion and provided an update on the Animal Protection Movement in India.

This was followed by the very lively Erika Abrams leading an ice-breaker session – an animal trivia quiz, which helped participants meet new people. All enthused by this mystery activity, people headed to attend the breakout sessions.



- a) **Working with Policy and Legal Institutions** - Gauri Maulekhi, N.G.Jayasimha  
Working with law enforcers is can be a frustrating task, the path ridden with so many hurdles and obstacles. Our experts gave the audience tips and training on how to overcome all the hassles.
- b) **Managing Young Animal Protection Organizations-Challenges & Strategies** - Sudhir Amembal  
From newbies to experienced hands, this workshop took the attendees through the range of issues geared to put " our house in order" such that the benefit to our constituents-the animals, is maximized.
- c) **Getting the most from your animals shelters** – Erika Abrams and Claire Abrams  
Managing an animal shelter can be an immensely rewarding job for an animal lover. Erika and Claire shared practices and approaches for this challenging job that requires a high level of organizational, leadership and people skills, so that the focus continues to remain on the animals and their quality of life in shelters.

The sessions were followed by the formal inauguration of the event by Dr. Chinny Krishna, Ms. Norma Alvares, Mr. Apurv Kumar, Mr Mofatraj Munot and Mr. DR Mehta.

The inauguration session was followed by the high point of the day: **The Lives We Save** by Ace Bourke. Mr. Ace Bourke recounted the story of Christian the Lion through photographs and the very famous video of their reunion with the lion he and his friend had purchased from Harrods department store in 1969.

Ace's talk was followed by a session to strategise on the Gadhimai animal sacrifice. The day ended with participants heading to the celebration dinner and party, with many participants enjoying themselves at the dance floor and also networking late into the night.



## 13 September 2014. Day 2

Day 2 started with Clarissa Baldwin, the Chief Executive of Dogs Trust- UK's largest dog welfare charity, presenting an informative session on **The Challenges Facing Dog Welfare: A Global Perspective**. Clarissa outlined the biggest challenges she sees facing dog welfare, based on her over three decades of work with the Dogs Trust, and how the animal welfare community can face them now and in the future.

A special Mission Rabies panel then shared the journey, the importance of veterinary training, and community participation in eliminating rabies. Followed by the panel, Brigitte Auloy of the Brigitte Bardot Foundation talked about: **Approaches to Making India Rabies-Free**. She shared their ground breaking work in Sikkim, and the Bridgette Bardot foundation's work worldwide threw light on how to mainstream Anti-Rabies initiatives with local governments.



Ms Norma Alvares then took upon the stage to talk about the importance of federating in her session titled: **Two is better than one: Why we need to federate**.

This was followed by Mr. Sudhir Amembal introducing **Animals India: an internet project of The Animals Voice**, celebrating India's animals, as well as heightening awareness about their plight.

The students of Sadhu Vaswani School, Jaipur then performed an engaging dance drama highlighting the plight of working animals- **Bhoj Humara Hulka Kar Do**



The following Breakout sessions followed

- a) **Animal Care, First-Aid, Rescue and Handling** by Abodh Aras, Steve Goward, Dr. Karishma Gupte

Rescuing and caring for injured animals is an important part of most welfare charities' work. Participants were taken through the basics of dog behaviour, dog-handling, and administering first-aid so that the welfare of the rescued animal and the outcome of the case is positively impacted.

- b) **Getting the most from your Animal Shelters** by Erika Abrams and Claire Abrams

Managing an animal shelter can be an immensely rewarding job for an animal lover. Erika and Claire shared practices and approaches for this challenging job that requires a high level of organizational, leadership and people skills, so that the focus continues to remain on the animals and their quality of life in shelters.

- c) **Impacting Animal Experiments through Ethics Committees** by Norma Alvares and Chinny Krishna

Animal experiments in India have to be approved by ethics committees, and these provide a unique opportunity to animal activists to impact animal experiments to reduce the number and degree of suffering of animals in

experiments. The workshop covered the structure of these committees, and the mechanism through which such intervention can be enabled.

The workshops were followed by lunch, and breakout sessions continued.

**a) Managing an effective ABC programme and engaging with the state** by

Thinlay Bhutiya, Jack Reece

Participants were taken through how to manage an ABC programme to achieve the objective of reducing dog population and importance of field level management and community involvement and also the more technical aspects of good quality surgery, humane animal handling, staff management in general and learning how to maximise the support from local policy makers

**b) Fundraising for Animals** by Abodh Aras, Nilesh Bhanage

This session focussed on discussing fundraising techniques that are essential in building long term successful animal protection initiatives for a variety of organisations and individuals.

**c) Communication: Writing, Speaking, Photographing our message and utilising social media** by Claire Abrams and Erika Abrams

Understanding basic communication dynamics, the workshop covered skills to using effective communication to improve and promote the animal protection message, creating an effective communication strategy and learning to tap the potential of videography, photography and social media to tell our stories.

This was followed by the release of Philip Lymbery's book- Farmageddon by Dr. Rajesh Mann, Director, Animal Husbandry Department, Government of Rajasthan. This was followed by a talk on averting farmageddon in India and the world by Philip Lymbery, Chief Executive, Compassion in World Farming. Philip shared his experiences following his investigative journey to find the hidden cost of cheap meat and the devastating impact of factory farming on people, animals and our planet.

Darshan Desai then presented **RescueArk: Showcasing the Latest Technology for Managing a Rescue Helpline.**

Following Darshan's presentation, the highly awaited **Jeanne Marchig Animal Protection Award** was presented to Ashray.



The session that everyone had been waiting for had now arrived – It was time to enter the Dragon's Den. This was a competition between 2 animal protection enthusiasts to win a cash prize of Rs. 30,000 that will seed fund their ideas to contribute to the movement. It was tough to choose between the contestants! Eventually, it was Fauna Police that emerged out of the Dragon's Den to take the bounty home.

The conference then broke for high tea, followed by the India for Animals awards 2014.

This year's award their winners were:

Clarks Care for Animals Award: Raksha

Jury's Special Award: Muhammad Saud and Nadeem Shehzad

Education Award: Humane Society International/India

Cruelty Response Award: Gauri Maulekhi

Media Award: Sriya Narayanan

Humane Law Enforcer Award: Maninder Singh

Apurv Kumar, Swami S.B. Das, Dev Mishra, Vinod Kumar, Brig. S.S. Chohan and Archana Surana were then felicitated as Animal Protection Heroes for the admirable work they are doing in the field of animal protection.

This was followed by Norma Alwares introducing FIAPO and the screening of a video about FIAPO and its achievements. The amazing video was followed by Sanjay Rajoura treating people to a hilarious stand up comedy show and then a gala dinner.

## 14 September 2014. Day 3

Day 3 started with Abodh Aras introducing the programme of the day, and inviting Erika Arbams and NG Jayasimha to run **The Big Debate: "Is calling for total animal liberation more effective than incremental welfare?"** Challenging the course of the movement in India, the floor opened to all participants and this topic was passionately debated upon.

The debate was followed by a panel discussion: **Unchaining the Gods: Captive Elephants of India** by Christine Townend, Kartick Satyanarayan and Aniruddha Mookerjee

Mrs Maneka Sanjay Gandhi was graced the occasion in two parts. In the pre lunch session she outlined some of the key **priorities for the Indian Animal Protection Movement.**

Following Mrs Gandhi's speech, the conference broke for lunch. Following lunch, Joyce D'Silva, Ambassador for Compassion in World Farming as part of her address on **Achieving Change for farm Animals** explained how CIWF has brought about significant victories for farm animals, initially in UK and subsequently in various parts of the world. The session was chaired by Shri. Ashok Kumar Jain, Special Secretary (Law), Government of Rajasthan.

Mrs. Gandhi then joined the gathering again and continued her address. Some inspiring books were released by her after her address, including the Hindi version of the book which revolutionized the world animal welfare scene- Peter Singer's Animal Liberation by Mrs Maneka Gandhi. Other books that were published jointly by Prakrit Bharti Academy and FIAPO were also released by her. These include Bandhan Mein Bhagwan (the Hindi



version of Gods in Chains) and Moti authored by Christine Townend.

This was followed by the final session of the conference – a training that would equip the participants with the practical skills to help animals and be designated as **Honorary Animal Welfare Officers.**

Bringing the inspiring three day journey to an end, Norma Alavres delivered an stirring closing address.

**Based on feedback from participants as well as the organisers own analysis of the event, the key areas of improvement going forward are the following:**

- ✓ There was wide demand for the low cost accommodation. The provision of such enabled a number of participants to reduce costs and hence enabled their participation. The provision of such accommodation, however, presents management challenges and during IFA 2014 too it was clear that further preparation and maintenance would have enhanced the experience of the participants using the low cost accommodation.
- ✓ Time management needs to be tighter for the break out sessions to be fully effective.
- ✓ The event has a greater potential to reach out to bureaucrats, politicians and other decision makers. They can have a bigger presence at future events.
- ✓ There were some technical glitches in playing some videos and presentations. These can be addressed with better preparation.
- ✓ The role of volunteers and their management needs further sharpening and anticipation.
- ✓ Access to the event needs to be better managed. There were a number of people from Jaipur that arrived at the event without registration and that challenged the logistical arrangements. Possibly single day registration or other such need to be created to handle such cases.
- ✓ Greater advance preparation with the presenters and speakers would ensure higher quality output as well as address time management to an extent.

**Some comments received from participants**

- ✓ "The way it was organised full points! Excellent attitude of the Organisation/ Supporting Staff, Free & Open Discussions, Coverage of Relevant topics"
- ✓ "The awards are a great way to acknowledge the contribution, of animal welfare workers. They often work in isolated circumstances and against severe odds"
- ✓ "As Always it was a Pleasant and very good Experience and my team is going back empowered "
- ✓ "It was a very very useful and inspirational Conference and will definitely very fruitful for me"
- ✓ "It felt wonderful to know that there are such a large number of people that think and feel like me and to be able to connect with them. I feel I am not alone any longer. "
- ✓ "I think the time has come for the animal protection Movement to go to another level in India. A common platform was needed badly. FIAPO has filled this. Organisations must realise that strength lies in working together, sharing information, being transparent & looking at the big picture."

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