Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access

EMPOWERING UNDERPRIVILEGED AND MARGINALISED CHILDREN THROUGH LEGAL EDUCATION
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INTRODUCING IDIA

The Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access is a nation-wide movement to empower underprivileged and marginalised communities by creating top-quality lawyers from within. Founded by legal academic, late Prof. (Dr.) Shamnad Basheer, it runs on the backbone of more than 600 passionate student volunteers spread across India.

Underprivileged and marginalized students in India lack equitable access to quality legal education. This can be traced to:

- Lack of awareness about law as a career that can improve their lives;
- Entrance exams (such as CLAT) that require expensive coaching;
- Extremely high fees and expenditure for the 5-year law degree; and
- Lack of financial aid to students from low-income backgrounds.

IDIA identifies underprivileged students with an aptitude for law and trains them for law entrance exams over a 1-2 year period. In 10 years, 132 students trained by IDIA have gained admission to leading law schools.

IDIA not only enables access to legal education, it also fosters diversity at the leading law schools and enriches the very process of legal education.

WHY LEGAL EDUCATION?

Law is a powerful tool that can be deployed by underprivileged communities to help themselves. Access to quality legal education facilitates gainful employment across many sectors, including courts (litigation), law firms, companies, international organizations, human rights and social activism, policy think-tanks, research & academia, and legal journalism. It also enables students from underprivileged communities to develop advocacy skills and become effective leaders and spokespersons for their communities.
OUR IMPACT IN 10 YEARS

40,000+ students sensitised to law as an attractive career, and 500+ students selected and trained for CLAT and other law entrance exams.

Of the 500+ students trained:

158 students (called “IDIA Scholars”) cracked the law entrance exam and became eligible for admissions to leading law schools.

Of these 158 IDIA scholars:

132 IDIA Scholars went ahead and took admission to various law schools.

88 IDIA Scholars are currently studying in law schools all over India.

Of these 88 current IDIA scholars:

60 are in National Law Universities (NLUs).

15 are Person with Disabilities (PWDs).

Our Graduates:
Till date, we have had 5 batches of IDIA Scholars who have graduated from law schools across the country. While some graduates are partaking in community service full-time, others are doing it part-time alongside their full-time jobs at leading law firms, corporates, government, etc.
GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY OF IDIA SCHOLARS

IDIA Scholars hail from various parts of India, including some very remote areas — Sunderbans in West Bengal, Gudemaranahalli in Karnataka, Machhilipatnam and Ongole in Andhra Pradesh, Karimnagar in Telangana, Phagwara in Punjab, Barmer in Rajasthan, Pitij in Jharkhand, L. Gamnom in Manipur, Chhinga Weng in Mizoram, and Kollam in Kerala.

This also exposes IDIA student volunteers to parts of India that they might otherwise never have interacted with. The various states that IDIA Scholars hail from are highlighted in blue.
OUR ACTIVITIES

SENSITISATION
We conduct sensitisation sessions for underprivileged and marginalised students at various schools in different parts of India. Our sessions focus on raising awareness about law as an attractive career option. Alongside, we also make students aware of their legal rights.

This is critical since most people in India have a poor opinion of the law and lawyers, and are unaware of the benefits of a good quality legal education.

SELECTION OF TRAINEES
We select around 70-80 underprivileged and marginalised students each year and train them for 1-2 years for CLAT and other competitive law entrance examinations.

Our selection process consists of a basic aptitude test and a series of interviews to identify students with an aptitude for a career in law. A thorough background check confirms their eligibility for our support.

TRAINING
The selected IDIA students (Trainees) are put through a rigorous training and mentorship program.

This is administered by IDIA volunteers from the top law schools across the country, along with leading CLAT coaching centres who have partnered with IDIA for this purpose.
Some of the leading law schools have instituted fee waivers and scholarships for IDIA Scholars. We are negotiating with other law universities to institute similar policies.

Where Universities provide no waivers or scholarships, we sponsor the fees and expenses of IDIA Scholars by raising funds from top lawyers and others in the legal fraternity.

IDIA Research and Policy team seeks to further IDIA's vision for inclusive education, by research and advocacy initiatives at the macro level. The IRAP vertical has worked on:

- CLAT Reforms
- Diversity Surveys at NLUs
- Scholarships at NLUs

IDIA's involvement does not end with the admission of students into law school. Our ultimate goal is to transform underprivileged children into community leaders and leading lawyers who are “Creative, Holistic, Altruistic and Maverick Problem Solvers” (CHAMPS). To this end, our CHAMPS project provides them with a rigorous mentorship program, specialized leadership and soft skills training, as well as access to internships.
The IDIA Disability Access Program is an initiative to make the legal arena more accessible for persons with disabilities. Under this initiative, we seek to expand the opportunities offered to students with disabilities before and after law school, and create a more inclusive atmosphere.

As part of it, IDIA has collaborated to set up two accessibility labs: Prof. (Dr.) Shamnad Basheer Accessibility Lab at the West Bengal University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata; and NLUO – IDIA Accessibility Lab at National Law University, Odisha.

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OUR HARVEST: SOME FORMER SCHOLARS

PRIYANKA HAZARIKA
IDIA Alumnus
NLUD (Batch of 2018)
Associate, AZB.

YAMUNA MENON
IDIA Alumnus
NLSIU (Batch of 2020)
LL.M., University of Cambridge

YUGAL JAIN
IDIA Alumnus
NALSAR (Batch of 2017)
Associate, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas.

YOGENDRA YADAV
IDIA Alumnus
NUSRL (Batch of 2017)
Community Leader. Contested Lok Sabha Elections in 2019 from Jharkhand.

KARTHIKA ANNAMALAI
IDIA Alumnus
NUJS (Batch of 2017)
Associate, AZB.
THE PEOPLE DRIVING IDIA

The core strength of IDIA is the large pool of passionate student volunteers from across India, who work around the clock to further the cause of diversity and inclusion. Each student volunteer is either a part of a State Chapter or a National Vertical, as discussed below.

STATE CHAPTERS: IDIA comprises of around 25 State Chapters. Each Chapter is led by a student team leader and comprises around 20 to 30 student volunteers from various law schools in the state. They conduct sensitisation sessions at schools in their state, select underprivileged students with an aptitude for law, train them for CLAT and other competitive exams, and mentor them once they are admitted to law colleges.

NATIONAL VERTICALS: National teams, comprising of student volunteers from law colleges across India, also work on various activities that have a pan-India impact. This includes Training and Materials, Research and Policy, and the Disability Access Program. These verticals have developed accessible training materials, hosted assistive technology training workshops, conducted national diversity surveys, and more.
TRUSTEES

Prof. (Dr.) M.P. Singh, Chairperson, Delhi Judicial Academy and former Vice Chancellor, WB National University of Juridical Sciences (WBNUJS).

Justice (Retd.) Ruma Pal, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India.

Shishira Rudrappa, Director, Spire Capital; BOA, Kalpavriksh Fund.

BOARD OF ADVISORS

We have numerous eminent personalities on our Board of Advisors, including a former Law Minister, Vice-Chancellors and Professors of various National Law Universities, Partners at top law firms, General Counsels of multinationals, leading disability activists, and heads of various institutions.

You can know more about our team and advisors at: http://www.idialaw.org/about-us/.

MANAGEMENT

We now have a full-time management team in place:

- Arnab Roy
- Sharmeen Kibria
- Swati Agrawal
- Sabah Mistry
- Svetlana Correya
- Prateek Suri
- Adeeba Rahman
- Shinto Mathew
- Sushovan Bhattacharjee
- Mingma Lhamu
- Shivakumar Palani Swami
- Yuvaraj M
INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

CLAT TRAINING
Some of India's leading CLAT coaching institutes provide valuable classroom training and learning materials to IDIA Trainees.

- IMS Learning Resources
- Heritage Education
- Career Launcher (LST)
- Manu Law Classes
- Crack CLAT
- Law Prep
- LEGALIGHT
- Do-Zen
- LegalEdge
- iQue Ideas

LEGAL EDUCATION
The following universities have generously provided fee waivers for IDIA Scholars:

- West Bengal NUJS, Kolkata
- NLU-Delhi
- ILNU, Ahmedabad
- Indraprastha University, Delhi.
- HNLU, Raipur

The following colleges have also generously provided fee waivers to IDIA Scholars:

- VIPS Law College
- IFIM Law College
- Al-Ameen College of Law

MENTORSHIP & COUNSELING
IDIA has associated with various professionals in the legal field, to provide professional mentorship to our Scholars by guiding them on career and personality development.

Vahura has conducted counselling sessions and workshops for IDIA Scholars on various themes, such as Writing Effectively and Attending Interviews.

Microsoft and General Electronics have also provided several mentorship partners and opportunities to IDIA.
Lawctopus Law School provides online learning courses to our Scholars.

LexisNexis India has sponsored prizes for IDIA competitions and provides IDIA Trainees with their CLAT preparation books.

Eastern Book Company has spread awareness about IDIA through its publications and events and provides books to our Scholars.

Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) (through its foundation) rewards exceptional IDIA volunteers by providing an opportunity to attend workshops, lectures and interactive sessions.

O’Melveny and Myers (OMM) awarded the best performing IDIA team leader a fully paid internship at OMM’s Singapore office.

Mr. Jyoti Sagar, a leading lawyer and educator who founded J. Sagar Associates has instituted the Sagar-IDIA Fellowship for top-performing Team Leaders and Deputy Team Leaders.

IDEA Legal helps us liaise with legal professionals and to participate in their various legal outreach programs.

Sony Pictures Networks Distribution India Pvt. Ltd. and Allen & Overy sponsor several workshops for IDIA Scholars, including the IDIA Disability Access Program, and the Smart Start Training Program (respectively).

Citi Foundation, HSF, LinkLaters, and Bharti Airtel have generously sponsored several IDIA Scholars’ fees.

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THE FUTURE FOR IDIA

IDIA's ultimate vision is to become redundant – having institutionalised diversity and inclusivity in the legal sector to such an extent that external intervention will no longer be necessary.

To succeed in this goal, IDIA needs to continue growing and implementing its programs. IDIA hopes to add new chapters, and launch state liaisons/small teams in the remaining states/union territories in India. This will facilitate an increase in the number of sensitized communities and students as well as more trainees and scholars.

To increase its capacity in the next few years, IDIA aims to strengthen its financial sustainability by growing the corpus funding, and securing long-term donors. IDIA will complement this by improving its efficiency, effectiveness, and reach of its operations, and attracting more talent to the core team.

"My life changed when I was selected as an IDIA Trainee. IDIA provided me a platform to make mistakes, learn and grow. I was trained intensively by IDIA volunteers in Delhi for the law entrance examination. Currently, I'm in my second year at NLU-Jodhpur, and I'm very grateful to have this opportunity to study at a premier law school. I cannot express with words how I feel today. Not only has IDIA paid for my education, but IDIA volunteers in Rajasthan have mentored and supported me from my first day in college.

My mom taught me a very valuable lesson: if someone is doing something for you, it is your responsibility to give back one day. IDIA is the organization which has done a lot for me and someday, I hope to do my little bit, by helping other students also succeed."

- Rishabh Kumar, IDIA Scholar, Year V, NLU Jodhpur
HOW YOU CAN HELP

We have listed below the various ways in which you can support us. We would appreciate it if you could also help us gather more support from various individuals and institutions interested in this revolutionary cause of creating a more inclusive India.

IDIA is keen to partner with law colleges, law firms, corporates, and other like-minded organisations. Monetary partnerships enable us to sustain and scale up IDIA’s activities, and non-monetary partnerships increase the impact of our activities.

SECURE FEE WAIVERS: Some law schools have granted fee waivers to IDIA Scholars. It would significantly further IDIA’s cause if you could help us secure similar partnerships with other NLUs and leading private law colleges.

INSTITUTE SCHOLARSHIPS: Instituting Scholarships for IDIA Scholars enables them to pursue their legal education free of financial worry. These Scholarships can be named as the donor wishes, and progress reports will be sent regularly to donors.

OFFER INTERNSHIPS: Offering internship opportunities will greatly help open doors for our IDIA scholars and incentivise IDIA Volunteers to work harder towards IDIA’s mission.
MENTOR SCHOLARS: We need more lawyers to provide professional mentorship for our Scholars. Our Scholars could also use your help with improving their language and communication skills. Volunteering a few hours each month goes a long way in the development of our Scholars.

INSTITUTE INCENTIVES FOR VOLUNTEERS: Since volunteers play a critical role in IDIA activities, incentives such as internship opportunities, cash awards, and nominal monthly stipends for best performers will go a long way towards boosting IDIA’s impact.

SPONSOR ACTIVITIES OF YOUR STATE CHAPTER: State Chapters incur expenditures in conducting sensitisation sessions, and selecting and training Trainees. Sponsoring the activities of your State Chapter enables them to expand the scope of their operations and increase their impact.

SUPPORT OUR DIFFERENTLY-ABLED SCHOLARS: Providing software and hardware solutions to assist differently-abled scholars would increase their learning opportunities and help them in adapting better to their lives at law schools and internships.
PARTNER WITH US: Partnerships that help augment our operations, improve our processes, or increase our know-how can give us a tremendous fillip in scaling up our operations. Do get in touch with us if you or your organisation can contribute in this manner.

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CORPUS FUND: We are setting up a Corpus Fund to help sustain us in the long run. This Fund will cover operational expenditure—for conducting sensitization, selection, and training of Trainees, administering scholarships, etc. We are seeking annual pledge contributions to our Corpus Fund, which will allow us to focus exclusively on our core activities of selecting, training and mentoring (instead of spending a large chunk of our time on fundraising), and help us scale up and boost our impact.

If you wish to support us in any manner, please drop us an email at info@idialaw.org and we will get in touch with you. Thank you!

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
Contributions to IDIA count towards fulfillment of a firm's CSR obligations under S.135 of the Companies Act, 2013. By contributing to a reputed, well-structured, and economically efficient organisation, you will ease your directors of the administrative burden of monitoring the spending of funds at every stage.

At IDIA, funds are sanctioned and managed centrally. Accounting is consolidated, and consequently, all expenditure is accounted for. In the interests of transparency and good governance, we make public our audited accounts.