





**The Courage to Lead:**  
exploring dynamics of collaboration and dissent



June 26 - July 1, 2017  
Mumbai, India

**The Ninth Group Relations Conference**  
(with Entry and Furthering sub-conferences within the conference)



Offered by  
Group Relations India (GRI)  
& Human and Institutional Development Forum (HIDF)

*“Popular perceptions, values, and ways of doing things are rarely the wisest...  
Its job is to preserve the status quo for overly self-defended individuals and institutions...  
Socially taught beliefs are frequently unreliable... Many of these beliefs are so deeply ingrained  
that they are hidden from our own view... Don't listen to what people say.  
Watch what they do and evaluate the attendant consequences”.*

The Art of Living: The Classical Manual on Virtues Happiness and Effectiveness.  
Epictetus: A New Interpretation by Sharon Lebell; Harper Collins, 2014.



**Dear prospective member,**

The title and theme of this conference is an invitation to explore, in a group relations setting, the place of courage, collaboration, and dissent, in exercising leadership.

While leadership and collaboration are words we may easily identify with, dissent is usually seen as an aggressive and dysfunctional stance. As Epictetus points out, as we grow up, we are taught to conform — to the status quo, to the opinions and behaviors of others, and to information that supports our views. The pressure to do so increases as we join formal organisations and begin to climb the organizational ladder. Conformity has been so pushed into us that as leaders we perpetuate it consciously or unconsciously in all our institutions - social, economic, political. It may well be that conformity and not consensus is the opposite of dissent – the kind of conformity that results in stultified, dying systems that do not have the capacity to innovate, to stay joyful and relevant.

This Group Relations Conference is an opportunity to explore how leadership implies welcoming dissent. How real collaboration and co-creation is possible when leaders have the capacity and courage to invite different views to be aired, differences to be worked with, without getting paranoid or anxious. Group Relations Conferences offer a unique way of learning from direct experience through being a member of a temporary organisation. The focus is on the conscious and unconscious processes that we create and that impact us as members of groups and systems. Designed as it is, away from the busy-ness (and business!) of day to day life, and with a minimum of predetermined structure, it offers a fresh and different space to see the same things, but with new eyes. Note that we use the word conference in the sense of to ‘confer’ – to bring together – in conversations, dialogue and exploring together. The setting is not a series of lectures or speeches to a passive audience. Far from it!

We invite members representing a range of work settings, roles and identities, to focus on these issues in an open atmosphere of thinking about and making sense of one's experience. If learning from direct experience and a methodology of learning based on one's own authority is appealing to you then this ‘conference’ is likely to be of immense value to you. We look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you to the conference.

**Rosemary Viswanath & Zahid Hoosein Gangjee**  
Conference Directors

## The Theme In Context

Events in India and globally in 2016 are pointing us towards processes where leadership is increasingly understood to be located in persons rather than being seen as a process. And the leaders we seem to be collectively veering towards are those that encourage us to disassociate, divide, and simplify, to see the world in terms of false binaries without allowing for the multiplicity, nuances and contradictions that make being human worth celebrating. We are being pushed in our organisations and societies to choose – either you are with us or against us - the middle space for the ‘either-both-and-or’ is shrinking. Our societies and organisations are becoming more paranoid, more parochial, more anxious, less tolerant of the other – and any questioning is seen as an attack.

To lead implies, among other things, an ability to influence people towards a goal or objective. It presumes that one first has the ability to lead oneself. It also implies that one is influencing oneself and others towards a goal that is worthwhile for the system and for society. This requires courage – bravery, boldness which has its roots in the Latin ‘cor’ i.e. heart. Therefore, courage seems to be most needed when we are exploring what we have hitherto held close to our hearts and also when we act from the new insights that emerge. Heart courage is also about the inner strength and commitment required for us to speak honestly and openly about who we are and about our experiences - good and bad.

If we are to lead others towards a goal, we need their collaboration i.e. the ability to work with another. While much of the work in leadership and team building programmes focus on how members of teams can collaborate better, there seems less focus on how those exercising leadership impact the possibility, nature, and extent of collaboration in groups and systems. In the need to ensure a buy in, managers and leaders confuse between fitting in and belonging. Not only are they not the same thing, fitting in is one of the greatest barriers to belonging and to genuine collaboration. Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be in order to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we uniquely are and to be able to bring all of ourselves into work.



To add a twist to the tale, the term collaborate also has the connotations of ‘collaborator’— a person who works with the enemy. In times of great stress and powerful social /political leaders, one can unconsciously become a collaborator whilst believing one is collaborating. In fact, whole groups can unconsciously slip into the ‘collaborator’ state and the leader who draws attention to this can be treated as a traitor!

A perceptive leader has to be prepared to be a dissenter – from the latin ‘dissentire’- to be willing to differ in opinion and sentiment and to express such difference. But associations with the word dissent are – ah- that's a strong word, revolution, threat, too radical, anarchy, anti-establishment, to be kept at bay!

We wonder what we have lost in the process of viewing dissent in a monochromatic and largely pejorative way. Perhaps the role it plays in contributing perspective and layers to issues which are sought to be seen as simple, simply because complexity cannot be tolerated. While dissenters are seen as contrary, as a spoke in the wheel, in reality they may be the ones who really



have the organisation's interests at heart and therefore take the risks because of their passion, and because they are willing to pay a price for their commitment to the issues that they care deeply about. Dissenters are extremely valuable to the health, vitality and sustainability of a system.

While dissent requires courage, leaders who encourage dissent also require courage. And so some questions that are up for exploration in this group relations conference – Is collaboration always welcomed? Is dissent always subversive? Is subversive always problematic or destructive? Can there be courage without vulnerability?

## What are Groups Relations Conferences?

GRCs are designed as temporary organisations for learning through direct experience, which may well be the only way of sustaining learning.

GRCs are designed to provide a variety of opportunities for members to exercise authority and find the desire to take up roles in here and now situations, and unravel and deal with the resistances and opportunities encountered in doing this. Taking up authority and acting based on one's authority involves the dynamics of both collaboration as well as the willingness to hold one's own and offer dissent—both being in the service of the common task.



A GRC offers unique opportunities to explore your role as leader, manager, and follower as well as the habitual patterns that influence individual and group identities and collective behaviour – both conscious and unconscious. The spotlight in the GRC is also on groups as systems and how they develop a conscious and unconscious life.

Pioneered by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, in 1957, and introduced in India in 1973, GRCs are based on the frameworks of systems psychodynamics developed by social scientists and psychoanalysts such as S Freud, M Klein, K Lewin, W R Bion, P Turquet, A K Rice, E J Miller and G Chattopadhyay among others. Over time, the design and structure of the conferences have undergone innovations and adaptations as they were offered the world over. However, the focus on unconscious processes in groups and systems, and learning through experience, has remained intact.

## Conference Primary Task

The term **Primary Task** refers to the reason for the existence of any organisation or institution - its most important task – that defines its nature and core purpose. If not worked at, the organisation would lose its meaning. This GRC will work to the following task:

To study the exercise of authority and the nature of leadership that emerges in the taking up of roles - through the interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an organisation within its wider context.

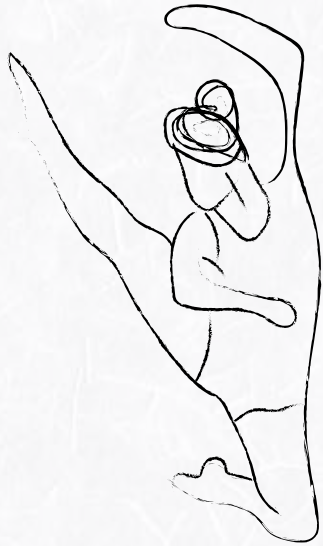
Through its title and task, this GRC is an invitation to explore these dynamics at various levels – the individual, group, organisation and wider social systems, recognising that these levels of awareness are interdependent fractals and are constantly shaping and co-creating each other.



## Conference Design







The conference through thoughtful design provides a variety of opportunities to discover how much the experience of the 'here and now' is influenced by fantasy, (i.e. unchecked assumptions based on both conscious past experience and experience stored in the unconscious) and can drift away from the task. Each event is designed to offer the possibilities of a varied view from which one perceives oneself and others. The multiple roles one takes up in different events in the GRC invariably reflect the assumptions and roles we deploy in our day to day life.

The stance of the conference is one of developing a spirit of enquiry into one's experience through attention, exploration, reflection and the capacity to wonder. There is no preset curriculum or evaluation of performance. Using the theme, task, structure and framework as resources, members generate learning and insights based on their personal authority. They are therefore, likely to achieve different kinds of learning.

### **This year we offer two sub-conferences within the conference**

**Entry sub-conference:** For those experiencing a Group Relations Conference for the first time.

**Furthering sub-conference:** For those who have had prior experience of a Group Relations Conference and wish to further their learning this time.

Some of the events and plenaries will be common to members of the Entry and Furthering sub-conferences. The Furthering sub-conference will be offered subject to adequate number of members applying for it to be feasible as a learning experience.





## The Role of Staff

While staff and members are both participants, the conference accords them different roles. The staff of the conference are not in roles typically attributed to teachers or faculty. They are allocated to each of the events in the role of consultants and/or in the role of collective management to work to the primary task of each event and thus to the task of the conference as a whole. Consultants offer working hypotheses by making sense of their own and members' experiences, constantly linking this to the task and theme of the conference. It is expected that staff hypotheses and interpretations will create the possibility for members to reflect on what they represent to the group, what they are taking in from the group and what they are contributing to the group, particularly in terms of what may be happening unconsciously.

In their collective management role, staff also manage the conference boundaries of task, time and territory. It is expected that the membership will also use its managing capacities to manage these and other boundaries.

## Conference Management and Staff:

**Conference Directors:** Rosemary Viswanath (also Director of the Entry sub-conference) and Zahid Hoosein Gangjee (also Director of the Furthering Sub-Conference)

**Conference Administrators:** Kartikeyan V (also pre-conference administrator) and Yash Kaul

The Conference Directors and Administrators form the Directorate of the Conference. They would also be consultants in some events.

## Consultant staff will also be drawn from among:

Anuradha Prasad  
Eliat Aram  
Gagandeep Singh  
Ganesh Anantharaman  
Uma Ravikumar  
Vartika Jaini  
Vijay Naidoo



### Staff Profile:

**Anuradha Prasad**, Ph.D (Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi), process and institutional development consultant involved in social development for over three decades; life and executive coach; professional member of the Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science; Member, Governing Board, HID Forum; Trustee, Group Relations India.

**Eliat Aram**, PhD, Chartered Psychologist and UKCP registered Gestalt Psychotherapist and supervisor, is the CEO of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, established as not-for-profit in 1947. Eliat's work nationally and internationally draws attention to the existential issues of leading and managing in complexity and ambiguity with attention to processes which are hidden, sometimes unconscious.

**Gagandeep Singh**, PGP IIM Ahmedabad; Consults with organizations on managing change, alignment, transformation, and organization development; anchors interventions on leadership and coaching; Executive Director, Sumedhas Academy of Human Context, and Principal Consultant, Flame TAO Knoware Private Limited;

**Ganesh Anantharaman**, M. Phil. Political Science (Mumbai University); Professional Member, Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS); Member, NTL Institute of Applied Behavioural Science, USA; Consultant, Leadership Development and Culture Building, working primarily with the corporate sector. He has been on the staff of Group Relations Conferences in India since 2003.

**Kartikeyan V**, B.Com. Madras University, P.G.D.PM & IR (XLRI, Jamshedpur). Has worked in Human Resources leadership roles in several corporates in India for twenty years. Has been an Organisation Development (OD) & Leadership Development (LD) Consultant and Executive Coach for over ten years now, and is the Chief Architect of the Transformative Alignment Map ©.

**Rosemary Viswanath**, B.Sc. (Hons) Mathematics (Delhi University), P.G.D.M. (IIM, Bengaluru), consults on organizational strategy and change processes primarily with social development, social justice, and human and environmental rights organisations and movements; Involved in group relations work in India and internationally since 1987; Managing Trustee, Group Relations India.



**Uma Ravikumar**, B.Com, MBA with 15 years experience in technical and leadership roles in the IT industry. Consultant for organization change initiatives, leadership development and performance assessments. Coach for leaders in for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. Gender diversity professional facilitating women's leadership in organizations.

**Vartika Jaini**, B. A (Hons) Economics (Delhi University), PG.D.R.M (Institute of Rural Management, Anand), Chevening Gurukul Fellow. Expertise in investment and programme design for social and economic impact in different contexts including institutional framework, stakeholder collaboration and strategic communication. Founder, Vriddhi Rural Prosperity Services.

**Vijay Naidoo**, M.Com. in Industrial & Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa, Executive Master in Consulting and Coaching for Change, & Diploma in Clinical and Organizational Psychology (INSEAD Business School, France). Registered Psychologist, Executive

Coach, MBA Lecturer and Organisational Development Practitioner with 37 years corporate experience in local and global organisations.

**Yash Kaul**, B.Pharm (Hons) BITS Pilani, Diploma in Marketing Management (NMIMS) and Executive Management Program (IIM Kozhikode). Twenty years experience in leadership roles in Healthcare Industry and currently working as Managing Director at Smiths Medical (Greater India Region). Passionate about Unconscious and Group Processes and their application in real life industry settings.

**Zahid Hoosein Gangjee**, B.Sc. (Psy. Hons.), M.Sc. (Applied Psy.); Fellow (IIM, Ahmedabad); Chief Executive, "Zahid Gangjee & Associates, Organisation and HR Consultancy", Kolkata helping organisations, groups & individuals manage change. Since 1977, directed/been a staff member at GRCs in India, Israel, France (IFSI) & U.K. (Tavistock Institute). Taught behavioural science at IIM, Calcutta & ASCI, Hyderabad.

## Administrative Details

### Conference Venue:

The conference venue is on the outskirts of Mumbai

GCC Hotel and Club

Off. Mira Bhayander Road, Mira Road (E),

Thane, Maharashtra, India. 401107.

<http://gchotelandclub.com>

Participants will be accommodated at this venue as well as at the adjacent GCC Northside which is about a 2 minute walk away. Detailed information on how to reach the venue and other joining information will be sent to members on confirmation of their applications.

### Timings / Registration

**Registration** of members to the conference is from **12:00 - 13:30 hours** on **June 26, 2017**.

The conference will **open** with a **Plenary** at **14:00 hours** on **June 26, 2017**.

The conference **ends** at **16:30 hours** on **July 1, 2017**.

(In order to plan your travel, you may like to know that members are expected to arrive at the venue and check in to their rooms at noon on June 26th and check out of the rooms by July 1st mid morning. You can leave at the close of the conference at 16:30 hours. It would be wise to assume around 90 minutes of travel time between the airport and venue given monsoon and traffic conditions.)

## Fee

- The conference fee is INR 68,000/- plus 15% service tax\* (i.e. INR 78,200 is payable) . For international participants it is USD 1,500 plus 15% service tax (i.e. USD 1,725 is payable)
- The Early Bird Fee is INR 65,000/- plus 15% service tax (i.e. INR 74,750 is payable). The Early Bird Fee for international participants is USD 1,300 plus 15% service tax. (i.e. USD 1,495 is payable)

The conference fee is the same for Entry and Furthering members. This is a residential programme and the fee includes accommodation and board on a twin sharing basis which is booked from noon of 26th June 2017 until 1st July mid morning. Any extra stay needs to be negotiated separately with the preconference administrator and cannot be assumed as available.

**\*Note:** service tax rates prevailing at the time of payment will be applicable.

Single room accommodation is available at an extra cost of INR 7,500 plus 15% ST which amounts to INR 8,625 . For international participants this

would be 120 USD plus 15% ST which amounts to 138 USD extra. You need to mention this requirement at the time of applying and payment .

GRI and HIDF are organisations committed to ensuring that group relations work is accessible to a wide membership – which has enabled people from a range of economic and work sectors and representing many other important diversities and regions to attend. The diversity of members is the hallmark of our conferences, contributing in no small measure to the depth and richness of the learning .

We are committed to make group relations opportunities available to those in the social justice and development sectors. A few partial bursaries are particularly available for participants from small under-resourced NGOs or community based organisations and movements. Those seeking bursary are required to write to us giving the reason for and the amount of bursary they seek. We will revert to you on the amount we can offer based on the total number of requests made and the relative merits of the case.

Last date to avail the Early Bird Fee: March 25, 2017

Last date for bursary requests: April 25, 2017

### How to Apply

To apply please click on this [link](#) to access the application form. Applications will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis. Applications are not automatically accepted, places in the conference are limited, and your place will be confirmed by us on receipt of both the application form and the conference fee.

### Conference Fee by Bank Transfer:

Account Name: Group Relations India

Account Number: 50200002769010

Type: TASC Current Account

Bank/Branch: HDFC Bank, Indira Nagar 100 ft Road (Branch No 1755), Bangalore, India

IFS Code HDFC0001755 ( applicable for domestic transfers)

SWIFT Code HDFCINBB (applicable for international transfers)

**Email: [grourelationsindia@gmail.com](mailto:grourelationsindia@gmail.com)**

Do send us transfer details of fee by email to enable us to track your transfer. If not via electronic transfer, we request you to drop a cheque in our favour, mentioning our account details, at an HDFC branch near you and send us the cheque details for tracking your payment.

**Refund policy:** Refund after deducting 25% towards administrative expenses will be made to those who withdraw before May 25 2017. For withdrawals after that timeline, refunds will not be possible.

*We suggest that if you are living through particular personal difficulties, you consider postponing your participation to next year as the conference is designed as a learning environment and is not a substitute for personal psychotherapy or counselling.*

## About the Sponsoring Organisations



### Group Relations India (GRI) :

GRI promotes experiential learning of individual, group and organizational processes. It uses system psychodynamic and socio-analysis approaches which pay particular attention to unconscious processes. Group Relations India offers a variety of educational programs and workshops for the enhancement of skills and competencies in this area. It also networks with like-minded professional bodies and organizations to further this aim. [www.grouprelationsindia.org](http://www.grouprelationsindia.org)



### Human and Institutional Development Forum (HIDF):


Founded in March 2000, HID Forum works towards developing and strengthening Human and Institutional Development capacities in individuals and organisations who work to empower disadvantaged communities. The key themes of intervention are leadership and organizational change; identity, dignity and diversity; and governance and accountability. HIDF employs the strategies of change facilitation, competence building, research, and knowledge building. [www.hidforum.org](http://www.hidforum.org)

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For further discussions and to assist your decision to join the conference we would be happy to speak to you. Email or message **Kartikayan (+91 98451 23080)** or **Rosemary (+9198454 03773)** to schedule a conversation.

**We look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you to the conference!**






## The Courage to Lead: exploring dynamics of collaboration and dissent

The dynamism and the uncertainty of our contexts throw up systemic opportunities and crises that invite new approaches to organization and leadership. This GRC offers the opportunity to explore through direct experience the processes of self authorisation in taking on roles in groups and systems, what this may tell us about how we lead and follow – and the kind of systems we support and develop – in our organisations and in society.

This group relations conference is an invitation to explore how leadership implies welcoming dissent. How real collaboration and co-creation is possible when leaders have the capacity and courage to invite different views to be aired, differences to be worked with, without getting paranoid or anxious.

The stance of the conference is one of developing a spirit of enquiry into one's experience through attention, exploration, reflection and the capacity to wonder. This has the potential to create more robust, humane and authentic interpersonal, institutional and societal spaces.



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Mumbai, India  
[grouprelationsindia@gmail.com](mailto:grouprelationsindia@gmail.com)



[www.hidforum.org](http://www.hidforum.org)  
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Brochure design by Smriti Chanchani ([smritispostbox@gmail.com](mailto:smritispostbox@gmail.com))

