

Report – HAIN Event, Kolkata (21.03.2014)



Heidelberg Center South Asia (HCSA) in collaboration with Heidelberg Alumni International (HAI) organised Heidelberg Alumni India (HAIN) meet on 21st March 2014, 6 pm at Hyatt Hotel, Kolkata. Other than the HAIN members, the invitation to the meeting was extended to the Humboldt von Alexander (AvH) Club, Kolkata as this club not only has a strong presence in Kolkata but also has competent scientists and researchers, who not only have been associated with Heidelberg., Max Planck Group (MPI) and/or other German Universities but also have associations across the world and they show keen interest in collaborating with Germany. Moreover, Heidelberg University and AvH are Consortium Members of The German House for Research and Innovation (DWIH), so becomes important to know each other and look for opportunities for scientific research collaborations, exchange programmes, joint events such as workshops, symposium, joint teaching, publications to name a few.

In total 16 members (eight from HAIN, six from AvH and one from DFG) attended for the meeting. The members belonged to various institutes and universities in Kolkata viz. Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (CSIR - IICB), Jadavpur University, Calcutta University, S.N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences, SAHA Institute of Nuclear Physics, Presidency University, University of Kalyani, Action Aid to name a few. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Hariharan from DFG Office, New Delhi and he gave an insight into how DFG and DST could support the scientific projects, bilateral programmes, exchange programmes and how DWIH could support various Indo-German initiatives.

The HAIN Kolkata Chapter Head, Prof. Swapna Bhattacharya opened the event with an introduction to HAIN and an update on her work and possible activities for HAIN Kolkata Chapter.

Her speech was followed by Prof. Ujjwal Maulik, an alumnus and long time collaborator with DKFZ, Heidelberg University. Prof. Maulik is from Jadavpur University, Kolkata and runs an Erasmus Mundus programme with Prof. Roland Eils from DKFZ. He gave a summary of his collaboration with DKFZ and showed keen interest to further ties of Jadavpur University with Heidelberg University. He offered HCSA a visit to Jadavpur University and arrange meeting with the Dean and presentation with the students (Bachelors, Masters and Ph.D), faculty and researchers.



This was followed by an introduction round, where each participant talked of their research/work area; how they are collaborating and with whom. The work areas of those present ranged from Geology, Women's collective, Bioinformatics, Southeast Asian studies, Computer Science and Engineering, Nuclear and Particle Physics, Astrophysics, Chemistry and International Relations. The participants were open to research collaborations, exchange programmes, joint events and during the meeting gave suggestions to realise them. The suggestions are listed below.



- Dr. Ujjaini Halim from Actionaid proposed to initiate Joint Publication in the field of social sciences and agreed to deliberate on few topics and circulate an email to those concerned for their buy-in. Once scoping is completed, the reviews will follow. Prof. Swapna Bhattacharya from Calcutta University offered to help here. To this, Mr. Hariharan from DFG added that for necessary funding they could apply to ICSSR programme http://www.dfg.de/en/research_funding/international_cooperation/open_research_area/india_n_european_research_networking_program/index.html and also and also consider approaching the Bonn Group.
- Prof. Anirban Kundu from Calcutta University proposed an Indo-German workshop in Particle Physics and a Summer/Winter School in Astrophysics in the year 2014/2015. He agreed to lend a hand in writing proposal as AvH Member and also organising the event in Kokata.
- Prof. Swapna Bhattacharya from Calcutta University proposed a fund raising activity for carrying out workshops and publications and for sending students on short term exchange programmes.
- Prof. Ujjwal Maulik from Jadavpur University proposed to write a second Erasmus Mundus proposal with DKFZ. He further fielded the idea of publishing a 'Yearly Magazine', showcasing achievements, publications, specific research work from HAIN across India. He however, stressed that we could start the pilot with HAIN Kolkata.
- Prof. Rabin Bannerjee from S.N.Bose Institute, who has in the past worked with the Nobel Laureate Prof. Wolfgang Kitterle expressed his eagerness to work with once again. He proposed to think of possible research topi(s) and touch base with Prof. Kitterle.
- Prof. Amitava Datta, an INSA Fellow and currently at Jadavpur University proposed an Indo-German workshop, where the scientists can exchange working ideas with each other.

This discussion was followed by a reception, networking dinner and vote of thanks from HCSA and HAIN. Lastly, the suggestions from Kolkata meet would be followed up by Prof. Swapna Bhattacharya, HAIN Kolkata Chapter head in association with team HCSA. The idea of the exercise is to do feasibility and implement some of the suggestions by providing necessary support and advise, wherever applicable.

