



**THE BURGEONING CLUBHOUSE MOVEMENT
ADVENTURES IN CLUBHOUSE EXPANSION AROUND THE WORLD**

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The theme of this conference is Tomorrow's Clubhouse: Being the Change the World Needs.

And the world needs Clubhouses more than ever.

Just last week in the Wall Street Journal was a photo of a man chained to a tree in West Africa. There were in fact rows and rows of people chained to trees as a form of mental health "treatment." They were being chained to the trees to receive a form of religious treatment to drive the voices out of their heads and prevent them from escaping. They had no doctors available, no medication, no real forms of treatment, and certainly no rehabilitation. A Clubhouse would seem beyond their wildest dreams.

We need to change that and you are going to hear stories today in which a Clubhouse, a real opportunity center for people with mental illness, was also just a dream -- but became a reality for regions across the globe. You are going to hear how the world is changing in Sri Lanka, in China, in Medford, Oregon, and in Ireland.

But first I just want to share one story of how we helped each other and how we are being the change the world needs. Can Bimal Subedi and Mukunda Subedi please stand up? These gentlemen are from the country of Nepal and a Clubhouse named Grameen Clubhouse. We weren't sure they would be able to be here for a number of reasons. In April Nepal suffered a devastating earthquake that killed over 6,000 people and destroyed homes. Grameen Clubhouse had some damage, but their immediate response was to help those most in need. They handed out blankets, tents, food and water, and even helped to construct toilets to help prevent widespread health problems and provide for the basic needs of people. Cyrus, from Fountain House helped to organize a crowd-funding site to provide support and we tried to support Grameen in a variety of ways during that difficult time. Most recently, we worked with a small university in Ohio called Antioch College to place two students there and they are now assisting both in ongoing relief efforts and at the Clubhouse.

Grameen is a small Clubhouse with 10-13 members a day and is operated out of Mukunda's parents house. The Clubhouse is on the first floor and his parents live on the 2nd floor. They have assisted 26 people to reintegrate back into the community through employment opportunities. Isn't that something!

We had to navigate the often challenging visa process to help Grameen get here but what really helped to bring them here, all the way from Kathmandu, Nepal is support from Independence Center in Missouri and Friendship House in Hawaii. Friendship House didn't have enough resources to bring people to the seminar but they had some money and they donated it to help Grameen to be here. Here is another gift from them for you.

Independence Center is another story. Can the colleagues from Independence Center please stand?

Independence Center did a fundraiser and with their financial support we were able to bring Bimal and Mukunda to Denver. I wanted to take this opportunity for you to meet each other, and to show in one example how Grameen is *being* the change the world needs; and how two Clubhouses were doing the same to help a sister Clubhouse.

Pete Estrader from Independence Center also just turned 50 years old. He's probably not too happy I told you that but happy birthday Pete!

We have people from 21 countries here at our seminar and new start-ups from Michigan, Norway, Washington DC, Wyoming, California, France, Italy and many other places. I can't encourage you enough to take advantage of every break, of every institute and workshop to meet each other, learn from each other and - *Be the change the world needs.*

At Clubhouse International we take seriously every call or email that we get when hearing about desperate situations and interest in starting new Clubhouses around the world. So let's get to it with hearing from regions around the world and their stories.

First we are going to hear from Rekha Aththidiye from Apegedara Clubhouse in Sri Lanka. Then we will hear from Eva Yau and Ashley Liu from Hong Kong and mainland China. Then we will hear from Matt Vorderstrasse from Compass House in Oregon and our last speaker will be Niamh Coady from Phoenix Clubhouse in Ireland.