



DEEP JOSHI

India

2009 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee

Citation for the 2009 Ramon Magsaysay Award

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Despite India's remarkable economic boom in recent years, poverty remains urgent and widespread in this vast country. Forty-two percent of India's population, or roughly four hundred million people, still live below the global poverty line. At the frontlines in addressing this problem is a huge civil society movement of a million non-government organizations, or NGOs. Yet, many of these organizations are small or ineffective. It is in the context of these challenges that Deep Joshi evolved his development work.

Joshi was raised in a remote village in Uttarakhand in the Himalayas, where until today there are few motor roads. But this marginalization did not prevent him from earning a degree from the National Institute of Technology in Allahabad, a master's degree in engineering at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a management degree from MIT's Sloan School.

Returning to India, he worked as a Ford Foundation program officer and accumulated experience in development work. Encounters in the field inspired him, in particular a visit to the US-trained medical doctors Rajanikant and Mabelle Arole, who were working on rural health in remote West-Central India. Deeply impressed by how the Aroles combined their sophisticated training with strong empathy for the poor, Joshi concluded that if only more people equipped with both knowledge and empathy decided to work in the villages, India's rural society would be transformed.

This idea led him in 1983 to form, together with some colleagues, Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN). A non-profit organization, PRADAN recruits university-educated youth from campuses across the country and grooms them to do grassroots work through a rigorous year-long apprenticeship which combines formal training and guided practice in the field. "Professionalizing" development work is PRADAN's mission. Joshi says: "Civil society needs to have both head and heart. If all you have is bleeding hearts, it wouldn't work. If you only have heads, then you are going to dictate solutions which do not touch the human chord."

Living and working directly with India's poorest communities, PRADAN staff empower village groups with technical, project implementation, and networking skills that increase both their income-generating capabilities and their actual family income. Its staff, combining their professional expertise with local knowledge, also train villagers as para-veterinarians, accountants, and technicians who support their fellow-villagers in building and sustaining collective livelihood projects.

In its twin programs of training development professionals and reducing rural poverty, PRADAN has produced impressive results. It has reached over 170,000 families in over three thousand villages of India's poorest states. Over a thousand graduates have joined its apprenticeship program. More than three hundred professionals comprise its staff, most of them working in field-based teams across the country.

PRADAN is not founder-centric. It is a decentralized, collegial body that has developed institutional space for second-generation leaders. Joshi is himself an exemplar of its strength and character as a professional organization, retiring at the policy-prescribed age despite the wish of his colleagues for him to stay on. Still, he remains deeply committed to PRADAN, now working purely as an Advisor. Modest, deeply respected by colleagues for his integrity and intelligence, he has shaped the professional ethos of the organization.

Joshi began by asking himself: Why would engineers and management professionals, with degrees from universities like Harvard and MIT, choose to apply their brainpower to a small village irrigation project? For someone who did exactly that, the pressing question was, what is stopping them? Joshi desires to show that for people with the finest education, there are few intellectual challenges more worthy than addressing rural poverty. He says: "Development work is considered intellectually inferior to high science, industry, or diplomacy. We want to prove it is both a challenging and a noble choice."

In electing Deep Joshi to receive the 2009 Ramon Magsaysay Award, the board of trustees recognizes his vision and leadership in bringing professionalism to the NGO movement in India by effectively combining 'head' and 'heart' in the transformative work of rural development.

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Personal Data

Awardee:	DEEP JOSHI	
Nationality:	Indian	
Date of Birth:	7 May 1947	
Civil Status:	Married	
Spouse:	Sheela K. Joshi	Occupation: Professional
Children:	Uday Joshi (son, 23)	Occupation: Student
	Girija Joshi (daughter 19)	Occupation: Student

Educational Background

1977	MBA, Massachusetts Sloan School of Management, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
1977	Master of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
1968	B.S. Mechanical Engineering, National Institute of Technology (NIT), Allahabad, India

Employment/Professional Background

2007-Present	Part-time Advisor, Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), New Delhi, India
2002-2007	Executive Director, PRADAN
1992-2002	Programme Director, PRADAN
1987-1992	Executive Director, PRADAN
1986-1987	Programme Director, PRADAN
1980-1986	Programme Officer, Ford Foundation, New Delhi, India
1977-1979	Senior Systems Analyst, Systems Research Institute, Pune, India
1968-1972	Lecturer, NIT, Allahabad, India