

## They defy disability with dance

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Founder of Intercultural Network for Development and Peace Augustin Brutus Jaykumar at an interactive session at Alliance Francaise in Puducherry on Thursday.— Photo: S.S. Kumar

At the Jwala Home, as many as 12 mentally challenged children remained focused to exhibit their talents in dance and give their best.

The children performed dance movements they had been learning for the past one week at the home as part of an intercultural dance event, organised by the Intercultural Network for Development and Peace (INDP) in collaboration with Adras, a French association working for the rehabilitation of mentally challenged children in France through dance.

Choreographed by Dany Beltran Smadja of Adras, the programme was aimed at providing a platform for mentally challenged children to develop their creative ability and to develop self-confidence through contemporary dance.

“Indian children have the instinct of dance in their body. They pick up quickly and are very stable in their body, which is vital in contemporary dance. Dance is therapeutic and it is very encouraging to see these children full of joy and hope,” said Dany Beltran Smadja.

Augustin Brutus Jaykumar, founder and director of INDP, says that art is a way to share and offer the best. Holding of such events encourages intercultural exchanges and help children with special needs to get to know their talents, capability and to become independent in life.

For the first time, these children displayed their talents without their educators on stage.

The event presented an opportunity for the French team and the children to learn from each other, he said.

The cultural programme which will be documented and presented in India and France is part of an

international project “Other Climates,” initiated by the INDP.

This project was conceived in March 2014 and aims at organising a conference in November 2015 in connection with the international climate conference hosted in Paris at the beginning of December.

The goal is to show that it is not only the environment that is dangerously warming up, but also the cultural, pedagogical, social, economic, and political climate, Mr. Jaykumar adds.