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IEEE ComSoc in the Latin America Region Interview with Andrés Navarro, IEEE ComSoc LA **Region Director**

by Stefano Bregni, Global Communications Newsletter Editorin-Chief, Director Conference Operations, and Andres Navarro, Director of the Latin America Region

This article continues the series of nine interviews to the Officers of the IEEE ComSoc Member and Global Activities (MGA) Council, which is published every month on the Global Communications Newsletter.

In this series of articles, I introduce the Vice-President and the six Directors on the MGA Council (namely: Member Services, Industry Outreach, and AP, NA, LA, EMEA Regions), as well as the two Chairs of the Women in Communications

Engineering (WICE) and Young Professionals (YP) Standing Committees. In each interview, one by one they present their sector activities and plans.

In this issue, I interview Andrés Navarro, IEEE ComSoc LA Region Director.

Andrés is Electronic Engineer (1993), with a Master on Technology Management (1999), both from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana in Medellín. Obtained his PhD in Telecommunica-

tions from Universitat Politécnica de Valencia in 2003. He is IEEE member since 1995 and Senior Member since 2014. Currently is the IEEE Comsoc LATAM Regional Director. As ITU expert, advised different governments in Digital TV and Spectrum Management. Is a participant on COST CA 20120 INTERACT and former actions COST CA15104 IRACON, COST IC1004 and COST 2100. He is coordinator of the CENIT research center for technology in Health, a joint center involving Fundacion Valle del Lili. Director of the i2t research group at Universidad Icesi since 1999. His research interests are Spectrum Management, mobile radio planning, radio propagation and m-health.

Stefano: Hello Andrés! Would you like to begin by introducing the Latin America Region to our readers? What are main challenges?

Andrés: Latin America is a highly populated region with more than 600 million people. Region includes big countries like Mexico and Brazil with a well developed telecommunications market, but also with important deficiencies in telecommunications coverage.

Perhaps one of the main challenges for Comsoc LATAM is to increase the membership and improve relation with industry. We are near 4% of the Comsoc membership but according to our population, we can grow until 10%. The main challenge is



Stefano Bregni

Brazil, where membership have an important potential to grow and there are a strong telecommunications industry.

Stefano: You mentioned relations with industry as one of main challenges. Would you tell us more?

Andrés: About relations with industry, we have important challenges because Latin America does not have Telecommunications manufacturers or big companies. Most Operators and manufacturers with presence in the region have their headquarters outside LATAM, which in some way complicates our approaches to industry. We are looking for different approaches to increase our relations with industry, by means of the technical committees in some strategic areas that we are defining and will have some meetings during the second semester. Additionally, we plan to increase the relations with regional WISP (Wireless Internet Service Providers) in order to cooperate and develop connectivity initiatives.

Stefano: The ComSoc Latin America Board has been always very attentive to students. Please tell us something about the

many activities that your Board and the LA Chapters are organizing.

Andrés: One of our most dynamic area of growing are the students chapters and activities like Communications day are important to disseminate Comsoc message and relevance to students.

Some chapters like Peru, Ecuador and Panama are quite active with students' activities and membership numbers shows its success. That's why Peru won the chapter of the year achievement in 2021

In order to encourage student membership, we have the Young Professional Award, and the student's contest, which looks to encourage innovative projects between our members. Additionally, we have the Distinguished service award, to Com-Soc Members evidencing significant contribution to the development of IEEE Communications Society activities in the Latin America Region.

Stefano: The Virtual Distinguished Lecturer talks were born in LA, before the pandemic. Now, would you like to tell us what is the current status and what you plan to do in the near term?

Currently, as we are returning to in-person activities, we are receiving requests for DLT in-presence and few interest for the VDL format. However, we want to encourage the Virtual Distinguished Lecturer Format because it demonstrated to be a very good option for chapters with limited budget or just when the Budget for DL travel is exhausted. The pandemics show us that we can search for blended strategies, and this is a good option for DL and to increase technical activities in the LA Region. We are planning to organize some seminars with industry partners and Virtual speakers, in order to encourage people from industry to participate in Comsoc technical activities.

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IEEE ICC 2022, Seoul, Korea Intelligent Connectivity for Smart World by Dong In Kim, ICC 2022 General Chair, and Seong Ha Park, ICC 2022 Conference Secretary, Korea

ICC 2022 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

IEEE International Conference on Communications (ICC) 2022 was held in Seoul, Korea, on 16–20 May 2022. As the global pandemic continued to shift dynamically, we had eventually decided to change the originally planned face-to-face conference to the hybrid conference to make a successful and safe event for all conference participants both from onsite and remote.

ICC 2022 hybrid (in-person & virtual) conference is featured by the theme "Intelligent Connectivity for Smart World" and we planned to go above and beyond the expectations. Our 2022 conference vision was to discuss important future communication issues, share ideas and information, and accelerate innovation. More importantly we aimed to spread the latest research results on communications and networking around the world. On this road, we made a few new initiatives, considering the pandemic situation globally:

- Along with the 2-day Virtual Program of Tutorials and Workshops, the 3-day In-person Conference Program highlighted two Special Workshops in the emerging areas of wireless communications research, such as Reconfigurable Intelligent Surface (RIS) and 6G, to gather all world-renowned speakers from industry and academia to give presentations on their latest research works.
- A newly planned Demo Competition was held in person at venue COEX and also through virtual participation via the virtual platform and Gather.Town. The demo session offered an excellent way to showcase tangible results of the most recent and innovative implementation of wireless communications and networking. The Best/Outstanding Demos were featured as Magnetic MIMO for Alzheimer's Treatment, Low-Power Communications Based on RIS and AI for 6C, and SDR Implementation of a Fully Distributed Cell-Free MIMO System.
- To enhance the interaction with industry, ICC 2022 organized the attractive Industry Programs, comprised of 18 Industry Panels/Presentations, and 3 Executive Forums highlighting 8 Industry Keynotes in the following areas of Global Trend & Future Plan on 5G Vertical Industry Convergence, Opportunities & Challenges for Future 6G Wireless, and Roll-out Vision for Digital Transformation and Industry 4.0 Based on 5G.

In close collaboration with world leading companies, such as Samsung, LGE, Huawei, Qualcomm, Ericsson, ZTE, and ETRI, which were also sponsoring IEEE ICC 2022, all speakers participating in the industry programs were invited to represent the regions equally, thus enhancing the diversity. In this endeavor, we shed light on the new initiative and paradigm shift towards 6G which would bring up *AI-Native Wireless Communications, Wireless Semantic Communications*, and *Human-Machine-Intelligence*, leading to our theme (*Intelligent Connectivity*) for ICC 2022. To highlight the vision of ICC 2022, and to have a balanced view of such paradigm shift, the following 8 esteemed Plenary Keynote speakers were invited from industry and academia:

Yonina Eldar from Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel; Sunghyun Choi from Samsung Research; Mung Chiang from Purdue University, USA; Byoung-Hoon Kim from LG Electronics; Merouane Debbah from Technology Innovation Institute, UAE; John E. Smee from Qualcomm, USA; Ruyue YN Li from ZTE, China; and Peiying Zhu from Huawei, Canada.

Thanks to these new initiatives on top of the existing program layout of ICC, ICC 2022 was successfully offered in hybrid format with 743 registered in-person attendees and 1,602 remote ones (total 2,345).



The Entrance to the Exhibit Hall



CONFlux virtual platform and broadcasting overview



LG OMNIPOD, Exhibit Hall



Welcome Reception Performance (May 16)

HYBRID CONFERENCE PROGRAMS

The conference included:

- Plenary Keynotes/Industry Keynotes/Special Workshops/ Industry Panels/Presentations
- (Hybrid, In-person, On-demand) Technical Sessions with Live Q&A via Gather.Town
- (Live Keynotes/Panels, On-demand) Workshops with Live Q&A via Gather.Town
- On-demand Tutorials with Live Q&A via Gather.Town
- · Exhibitions/Demo Competitions/Podium Pitches
- ICC Best Paper Awards



Banquet Dinner Performance

ICC 2022 used **CONFlux** as the virtual platform. Live broadcasting sessions (Keynotes, Industry Programs, Special Workshops), pre-recorded videos, and on-demand recordings for live sessions were available to watch on the platform until 15 June 2022. The following programs of Technical Symposiums/Workshops/Tutorials/Demos offered virtual live Q&A sessions via **Gather.Town** – a metaverse platform where the attendees create their own avatar, interact with others, visit poster presentations and exhibitions.

The high-quality A/V production required a dedicated **1Gb/s connection** to be able to broadcast live to over 1,000 remote users at 1,080p video quality. To prepare for technical difficulties and any latency issue over the internet, the pre-recorded presentation videos of remote speakers were ready to play. For the live streaming sessions, remote presenter's video, onsite presenter's video, and PPT presentation slides were mixed into one final A/V production by using vMix software.

Especially, Technical Symposium Paper Sessions were comprised of hybrid (in-person & virtual) Special (Best Paper) sessions, in-person presentation sessions, virtual sessions, and e-poster Q&A sessions at venue COEX. In-person participants who do not want to make oral presentations chose to have live Q&A sessions via e-poster at the venue.

EXHIBITIONS/DEMO COMPETITIONS/PODIUM PITCHES

Due to COVID-19 related travel restrictions, several patrons were not able to participate in the physical booths at the venue. Fortunately, all exhibitions were available both at physical exhibit booth and virtual exhibit booth via Gather.Town. In the exhibit areas at the venue, virtual booths were provided as well. Attendees could watch videos on the monitors provided at the booth.

Demo Competitions and Podium Pitches were held in person in the Exhibit Hall. Demo areas and Podium Pitch stage were located next to the Networking Lounge. During 3 conference days, there were 6 slots for Podium Pitches (each slot in the morning & afternoon). Invited speakers from the exhibit companies and universities introduced their exhibit systems for 10 minutes.

While all 14 Demo videos were available both at the virtual platform and Gather.Town, 10 Demos were also lively presented onsite. All Demos had a Q&A session via Gather.Town.

SPECIAL EVENTS

As the opening ceremony of the conference, Welcome Reception was held on Monday, 16 May. The ceremony was held in the Exhibit Hall where the attendees toured the exhibits, enjoyed buffet and performances.

ICC Award Ceremony honors the achievements of IEEE and IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) members with various paper awards for their outstanding contributions to the society. The ceremony was held on Tuesday, 17 May, hosted by Xuemin Shen, the President of IEEE ComSoc.

Conference Banquet was celebrated on Wednesday, 18 May. During this exclusive event, attendees networked and enjoyed the banquet with the musical gala performances. On the last night of the onsite conference day, OC Dinner was organized at the Seoul Sky 123 Lounge, which is located at the top of the Lotte World Tower, the world's fifth tallest building. 65 attendees including OC members, ComSoc BoG members and keynote speakers spent the night above the clouds with great food, wine, and live music.

COLOCATED EVENTS

Two hybrid programs were organized for WICE (Women in Communications Engineering) under the topic "How to Become a Fellow member of ComSoc" and "Talk: Technology empowering Leadership and Management." On Tuesday, 17 May, in-person networking event was co-organized with YP (Young Professionals).

Three virtual YP Programs were organized. The first session on "The Long Journey through PhD to Research and Academia" featured speakers with experience from Industry & Academia. The second program, Industry Fireside Chat featured speakers with leading industry experience. The last one was Panel on "Opportunities for Young Professionals (YPs) in Communications Engineering" which featured speakers with extended experience in volunteering within IEEE.

The i-YES (Young Engineers & Scientists) Education Track organized by the IEEE ComSoc Education Services Board (ESB) featured an exciting Session on "From Performance Modeling to Federated Learning: Lessons Learned from the Strange/ Unusual" having three Keynote Speeches followed by interactive discussion with the audience.

CONCLUDING REMARKS – LESSONS LEARNED

ICC 2022 conference team made tremendous effort in bridging the gap between offline program and virtual program by integrating the two components in hybrid format. To further improve this, we would like to provide some lessons learned for upcoming venues below.

- Incorporating new components on top of the traditional layout of ICC/GLOBECOM program is very critical in attracting more attention from industry and academia:
 - -Special Workshop 1 (on RIS) & Special Workshop 2 (on 6G) -Special (Best Paper) Technical Session 1 & 2 in Hybrid (In-person & Virtual) Format
 - -Demo Competition (14 proposals)
- Organizing industry programs such as Industry Keynotes at Executive Programs, Industry Panels and Presentations with full support from leading companies globally, in an early stage (with more time), is also very crucial in increasing the number of registrations.
- Securing financial support from Patrons with a sustained period is the prerequisite to engaging industry people more actively into the industry programs above.
- Hybrid programs will continue to grow because of the convenience and flexibility via virtual platforms as long as the A/V system integrated with virtual platforms (e.g., CON-Flux and Gather.Town) can be made affordable. However, it is still challenging to fully integrate the onsite presentations with virtual presentations, considering the different time zones.
- ICC 2022 offered workshop authors the preference time slots for Live Q&A via Gather.Town, considering their different time zones. But we realized that it is impossible to implement this preference time slots for Live Q&A with technical symposium papers (~1,000).

We strongly suggest having the Demo Competition in the Exhibit Area which is quite helpful to attract lots of attention, in conjunction with Podium Pitches during Networking Breaks.

In closing, our sincere thanks should go to the fully committed OC members and all volunteers involved for their great efforts without which both the excellence and diversity of hybrid programs would not have been achieved.

IEEE ComSoc Inaugural Student Leadership Conference 2022, Austin, TX, USA by Larry J. Horner, Intel, IEEE ComSoc Dallas TX Chapter Chair,

and Devaki Chandramouli, Nokia Fellow, USA

IEEE ComSoc held the first ever 'Student Leadership Conference' in Austin Texas on Saturday April 9, 2022. It turned out to be the best in anyone's recollection. This conference was a one-day event. Unlike a typical conference, there were no paper presentations, rather the focus was on pursuit of advanced degrees, career development and career growth in the field of communication and engineering.

https://cstlc2022.ieee-cstlc.org/about/

Platinum patronage for the conference was provided by Intel, with AMD and T-Mobile providing silver level patronage. The Dallas IEEE CVT chapter also provide a small donation to assist some students attend.

Our event was held at the Fairmount Hotel in downtown Austin Texas overlooking the Brazos River, and a few blocks from the heart of the city center and its famous music scene. Some members of the organizing committee also took advantage of the close proximity to the Congress Street bridge to celebrate in the nightly flight of the bats over the Brazos River. The conference was held one day prior to the WCNC conference, and this allowed some overlapping participation by some of our speakers and students.

There were 70 Student leaders from 12 universities represented and from five nations. Our program had an Opening Keynote from Lynn Comp, Corporate Vice President at AMD and a Closing Keynote from Sherman Shen, President of Com-Soc. Other speakers included Mike Murphy CTO of Ericsson North America, Prakash Kartha, Segment Director at Intel, Mona Shukla Vice President at Ericsson. Ana Barcia Armada, Professor at Carlos III and ComSoc Vice President along with Fawzi Behmann President of TelNete Management, Nirwan Ansari Professor at New Jersey Institute of Technology and IEEE Fellow, and Lynn Comp joined a panel "A life of Learning" Moderated by the Conference General Chair, Larry Horner, Senior Life member and Intel Principal Engineer.

The middle of the day consisted of four breakout sessions that ran concurrently with the attendees having been divided up into four groups, color coded on their badges. Each group rotated through each session. The four sessions were ' First job, Ninja Resume and Internships led by an all star team from AMD Laura Reuter and Melissa Fontenette-Mitchell. The second breakout session was led by Piotr Weglick of AMD along with Amy Guesner of Mediatek and Chris Hughes of Intel talking about Mentors and Career Coaches. The third breakout was led by Pete Poorman, Director of Industry Outreach at UT Dallas along with Sridhar Rajagopal Senior Vice President of Mavenir and Sean Lion, Senior Architect at Intel for a discussion on Career Progression. The final breakout session "A day in the life of an Engineer" was led by Veera Venigalli Enterprise Solutions Manager at T-Mobile and Adam Mendoza, Field Sales Engineer at Intel. After a slow 'warm up' period with the attendees these sessions became interactive and very



Winner of the T-Mobile mobile phone, Left to right, Larry J. Horner, conference Chair, Raffle Winner Orobosa Ogbemudia, Computer Science Master student at the University of Texas at Dallas; Pete Poorman, University of Texas at Dallas, and ComSoc President Sherman Shen

The conference concluded with a panel, fire side chat and the closing Keynote. The first of the panels, "Advances in CSP over the years" was moderated by Nokia Fellow Devaki Chandramouli and the panelists were Ericsson CTO, Mike Murphy, Brian Evans, Professor at UT Austin and IEEE Fellow, Sandeep Chinchali Professor at UT Austin and Raghavan Alevoor, Senior Manager at Deloitte Consulting. This panel discussion provided some insights and guidance from academia, research and industry perspective for students with their career development in the field of communications and engineering. The second was a "Fireside chat" led by Pete Poorman with Keith Dean, Senior Manager at Dell; Prakash Kartha Director at Intel and Mona Shukla VP at Ericsson.

Sherman Shen President of ComSoc closed out the formal portion of the conference with his talk on "How IEEE and ComSoc can help your career development."

A social hour became livelier with the food stations and beverages bringing smaller groups together at the round top standup tables.

Overall, the conference was quite lively, engaging and one could always feel the "positive vibrations in the room" between the students (who were open minded to listen and learn), and the working professionals (who considered it as a "pay it forward" opportunity to support and guide).

Students from Rice University in Houston and The University of Texas, Dallas were numerous enough that they took coach bus transportation to and from their respective Universities to attend the Conference. While this proved to be a long day for them, they were well cared for and left the driving to the professionals.

This effort would not have been possible without the professional staff from ComSoc, Tina Gaerlan and Melissa Torres, and the conference organizing committee, Professor Alan Willner of USC, Devaki Chandramouli of Nokia, Sylvia Karmanoff, Piotr Weglick of AMD, Pete Poorman of UT Dallas and Web masters, Shyam Annamalai and Adarsh Deiraju.

T-Mobile generously donated an iPhone which was raffled off. See the photo of the happy winner!

engaging to the extent they had to be interrupted mid-session to keep up the conference schedule close to on track.

A sit-down lunch was served during which a "class photo" was taken between courses. Desert options were available, one of the most popular was the plate sized crème brulee, which by at least one account was almost as good as the Crema Catalana.



"Class Photo" of the attendees at the 2022 ComSoc Student Leadership Conference

Panama Chapter Celebrates the International Day of Women and Girls in Science by Yessica Sáez, Universidad Tecnológica de Panamá, IEEE ComSoc Panama Chapter Chair

Science and gender equality are vital to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In recent decades, the international community has made a great effort to inspire and promote the participation of women and girls in science. However, women continue to encounter obstacles to develop in the field of science. In order to achieve full and equal access and participation in science for women and girls, and further to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the United Nations General Assembly decided to proclaim in 2016 (resolution A/RES/70/212), February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

This year, ComSoc Panama, in collaboration with the WIE-UTP-Student Branch, joined this unprecedented movement and decided to celebrate it by showing the role of a scientist within our community, since ComSoc Panama believes that to achieve a greater access and the participation of more women and girls in science in a full and equitable way, we must begin by recognizing the important role that they play in the society.

The event was held virtually, with the participation of members and non-members, including professionals, students, and the general public. The invited speaker was Gina Villafañe, an Electronic and Communication Engineer and a proud volunteer of ComSoc Panama. She is also a consultant in Information Sciences at the Government Innovation Authority of Panama and, along with other collaborators, has managed to position this country as one of the pioneering countries in the use of technological tools that are integrated with all both public and private health systems and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the important tasks that the Gina performs are:

- Lead engineer, responsible for the design of data mining algorithms for the epidemiological monitoring, production of indicators and statistical analysis of the Ministry of Health of Panama.
- Technical representative before the executive council of the Operation Center for the Control and Traceability of COVID-19 (COCYTC).
- Lead engineer, responsible for the design of the data set of the vaccumometer for the Panavac19 operation.

Since Gina also studied Cinematography, she divided her talk into three main acts:

- Act 1: Every end is a beginning, where he shared anecdotes and historical data to show how worlds are often broken to build new ones and the important role telecommunications has played in this.
- Act 2: jump into the pool, where she talked about the importance of deciding to do something that you consider difficult or risky.

CHAPTER REPORT

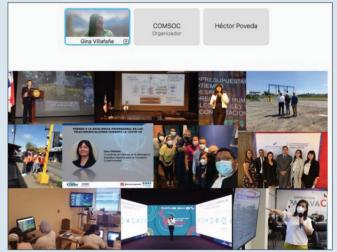
A Day With Children of SOS Village Jamshoro: A Loving Home For Every Child

by Umair Ahmed Korai, MUET, IEEE ComSoc Karachi Chapter Vice Chair, and Bhawani Shankar Chowdhry, MUET, IEEE Karachi Section Chair, Pakistan

The IEEE Communication Society (ComSoc), Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Student Branch Chapter in collaboration with IEEE ComSoc Karachi Section Chapter, IEEE Industrial Electronic Society (IES) Karachi Section Chapter, and QS World Merit Pakistan organized a Community Service (Social) event "A Day with Children of SOS Village



Flyer for the International Day Women and Girls in Science event.



Gina Villafañe shared anecdotes from childhood to becoming the professional she is today.

Act 3: "I feel beneath my heels the ribs of Rocinante," where she shared anecdotes about new adventures undertaken during her professional and personal career.

In her presentation, Gina shared with us facts about how she has rethought how to approach complex problems with the use of telecommunications engineering, the adoption of technology (eg. mature or emerging), intangible assets (eg. knowledge, data, etc), among others, for the creation of public value. Gina Villafañe really is an example of a talented women in telecommunications. For this reason, in 2021, Gina received the Com-Soc Panama Excellence Award for Outstanding Professionals in Telecommunications during COVID-19.

Jamshoro: A Loving Home For Every Child" held on February 05, 2022. The theme of the event was "Spreading Smiles with the Children of SOS Village Jamshoro." The SOS Children's Villages (Save Our Soul) is an initiative which provides alternative families to children without adequate parental care. The children are taken into the custody without any discrimination of gender, religion, race or cast and are provided with shelter and love of a family.

The SOS Children's Village, Jamshoro has been operational since April 2012. It consists of fifteen families where each family has the capacity for 10 children maximum at once. There are currently 108 children living in the care. This event was dedicated to show our love, affection and appreciation of the children living there.

This event was attended by forty-seven people (47), which included thirty-nine (39) IEEE members (including twenty-one (21) IEEE ComSoc Members) and eight (08) non-IEEE members. Upon arriving, the kids were called out by their caretakers to meet all the guests and members. Gifts were also distributed among the children for the sole purpose of expressing our affection to the future heroes. The event was free to attend and organized by Dr. Umair Ahmed Korai (Advisor, IEEE ComSoc MUET Student Branch chapter) and his IEEE ComSoc MUET student branch team members. The IEEE ComSoc MUET student branch team members donated gifts which costs Rs. 15,000 (PKR) to the children of SOS village.

The workshop was formally started with the interaction of participants with Mr. Riasat Ali Changazi, Chairman Saman-E-Shifa Foundation Karachi, and Group Captain (R), Pakistan Air Force who attended the event as Chief Guest followed by the speech of Prof. Dr. Bhawani Shankar Chowdhry, Professor Emeritus MUET and Chair IEEE Karachi Section attended as a Guest of Honor. Both appreciate the efforts of IEEE ComSoc MUET team for contributing their efforts and donations in the great cause. Following members have attended the said event as guest.

- Prof. Dr. Tanveer Phulphoto, Professor MUET,
- Engr. Moiz Rahman Memon, LUMHS FM Manager and Treasurer IEEE Karachi Section,
- Dr. Abi Waqas, Assistant Professor MUET and Chair IEEE IES Karachi Section,
- Engr. Zakir Shaikh-Lecturer MUET and President QS World Merit Pakistan
- Engr. Jatendar, RA MUET
- Engr. Ali Akbar, RA MUET

A couple of cakes were cut in the event to celebrate the birthday of one the kids at SOS village. An especially customized cake was ordered to uplift the environment. After a lot of fun with the children, the event ended with the vote of thanks by Dr. Umair Ahmed Korai to the chief guest, guest of honor, event collaborators, volunteers, and participants followed by shield and certificate distribution, and lunch. From an adult to a kid everyone was overjoyed with the expression of love and warmth, and everyone went on their ways with happy memories and a new ignited spirit of helping the underprivileged people of our society.



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An informal and fun meetup of the adults and children



Cake cutting by Guest of Honor Prof. Dr. Bhawani Shankar Chowdhry with one of the girls of SOS Village.



Group Photo taken at the end of the event with Chief Guest, Guest of Honor, Event organizers, volunteers, and participants