



SPECIAL RELEASE

May 27, 2016

**U.S. GLOBAL LINKS PROGRAM HELPS BENGAL WOMEN DEVELOP
SMALL BUSINESSES**

Kolkata -- The American Center hosted a presentation Friday on the Global Links Program on Empowering Women through Education and Opportunity. The presentation was given by the students of Dr. Sharmistha Banerjee, Professor of Business Management at the University of Calcutta, who was selected as the first female scholar for the launch of the 2015-17 Global Links Program in India.

The Global Links program is a public private partnership founded in 2011 between the U.S. Secretary of State's Office of Global Women's Issues, Rollins College, and Tupperware. On being selected for the Global Links Program, Dr. Banerjee took in-depth business and social entrepreneurship training both at the Tupperware facility and at Rollins College, USA. After this training, she returned to Kolkata and integrated her new-found knowledge in the university's educational projects. Both Dr. Banerjee and Professor Mary Conway Dato-On of Rollins College were present at the event.

For this initiative, seventeen students of Dr. Banerjee teamed up with women loan borrowers of Bandhan Bank to engage in hands-on practical learning and mentoring of business activities. As a direct result of such mentoring, mentee borrowers of Bandhan Bank and the mentor students have together developed business models under this program, administered by Dr. Banerjee, who is a Global Links Scholar. Under the guidance of Dr. Banerjee and Prof Conway, the mentor students gave a presentation on their experience of dealing with small business women entrepreneurs and highlighted the challenges and strengths of developing business in the region.

Inaugurating the program, U.S. Consul General Craig Hall remarked, "Farida Begum, being mentored by Neha Guha in her shoe manufacturing unit, Jamuna Joardar being mentored by Tripti Beriwal in her tailoring shop, and Ismat Bibi being mentored by Saugata Banerjee in her cap manufacturing unit are glowing examples of formal businesses being developed through the right kind of collaborations between governments, academic institutions, business partners and civil society."

Note: Please find bio notes attached below.

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Dr. Sharmistha Banerjee

2015-2017 Global Links Scholar

& Professor of Business Management at the University of Calcutta

Dr. Sharmistha Banerjee has been selected as the first female scholar for the launch of the Global Links program in India. Dr. Banerjee arrived in January to begin her social entrepreneurship business training at Rollins College and the Crummer School of Business.

Dr. Banerjee's teaching and research has focused on small business management, microfinance and entrepreneurship, as well as children and women's issues. Under her mentorship, a number of female students have earned their PhD degrees and many more are pursuing their doctoral thesis under her supervision. Dr. Banerjee has extensive international experience. She received a Fulbright Scholarship in 2005 to be a visiting faculty member in the College of Business at Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania and then in 2012, she was a Fulbright Scholar in Residence at Moreno Valley College in California.



Mary Conway Dato-on, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of International Business, Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College

Mary Conway Dato-on, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of International Business at the Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College, where she teaches international business, marketing, and social entrepreneurship. She also leads biannual global consulting projects — mentoring student-led teams to solve real-world business issues. Her teaching service extends across several countries including the United States, Denmark, Spain, Japan, China, and the Philippines. She speaks several languages, including Spanish, Japanese, and Tagalog. Prior to coming to Rollins she was Associate Professor of Marketing and Director of the International Business Center at Northern Kentucky University. She has also taught at Xavier University, University of Kentucky, East China University of Science and Technology, Aarhus University-European Summer School of Advanced Management, the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, and EOI Business School in Spain. Dr. Conway Dato-on was selected for a 2013-2014 Fulbright U.S. scholar grant to conduct research on social entrepreneurship in the Mexican context with Rollins' partner school, IPADE.