



ACTIVITY REPORT - APRIL TO SEP. 2010

- SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
- LEARNING CENTRES
- STUDENTS' CLUBS
- SUPPORT CLASSES



PROGRAM SCALE

- **SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM – 100 students**
- **LEARNING CENTRES – 3 centres, 150 children**
- **STUDENTS' CLUBS – 15 clubs, 100 children**
- **SUPPORT CLASSES – 10 villages, 250 children**

Total reach – 600 children

INAUGURAL PROGRAM

PARTICIPANTS

- 96 scholarship students & their parents

CHIEF GUESTS

- Assistant Elementary Education Officer, Nilakottai
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Supervisor
- Retd. District Education Officer, Dindigul



This is our 6th batch of scholarship students. Starting with 16 students in 2005, we now reach out to 100 students.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Scholarship program goal and the variety of inputs explained
- Parents' co-operation sought in sending their children regularly
- School uniform material, bags, notebooks & stationery, fees distributed

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



In the last 6 months, 6 skill development programs have been conducted for each batch of students focusing on skills such as communication, team building, logical reasoning and managerial ability.



These sessions had a mix of activities which were individual –based and group-based. Sessions which involved group activities such as team building & problem solving, as always, generated a lot of animated discussion among the students.



One session also required students to make miniature model airplanes without using the instruction manual. Students had fun cracking these!



FIELD TRIPS

SURULI WATERFALL & VAIGAI DAM

- 22 students participated in this field trip.
- At Suruli, students trekked up the hill.
- At Vaigai Dam, children learned about the process of electricity generation and explored the model watershed structure.



AAVIN DAIRY UNIT & AZHAGAR KOIL

- 27 students participated in this field trip.
- At Aavin, children learned the process of milk purification & milk processing into dairy products such as milk powder, butter, cheese and ghee.
- The children also learned about the historical importance of the Azhagarkoil.



WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

SCIENCE WORKSHOP

- How does mosquito fog help get rid of the mosquito menace?
- Why do appalams splutter when you drop them in hot oil?
- Why does your grandmother ask you not to oil your hair soon after a bath?
- Why does an egg float in salt water but sink in plain water?

These were among the 30-odd questions that Mr. Ramamoorthy, resource person at the science workshop asked the students. Most of the questions were related to phenomenon that children observe in daily life. Our students were inspired to think, question and find answers.

Mr. Ramamoorthy conducted the workshop in an interesting, interactive manner, explaining simple science facts and encouraging children to keep asking questions about everything around them. 81 students participated in this workshop.



WORKSHOPS & EVENTS continue...

CAREER GUIDANCE FAIR

20 students participated in the career guidance fair conducted by Dina Malar in Madurai. The fair was useful in helping students find out about courses & career options which are commonly not opted for, but have potential.



EXHIBITION OF MODELS

The scholarship students got together and put up an exhibition of various miniature models that they had created. Some interesting exhibits were miniature monuments, a zoo, an amusement park, a volcano, a rainwater harvesting house, etc.

HEALTH PROGRAM

Over 70 students participated in the health program. Health inspectors, Mr. Pugazhendhi & Mr. Rangasamy explained about the types of diseases caused by viruses and precautionary measures such as the importance of keeping one's home and surroundings clean.



NEWS ARTICLES PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION

This program encouraged students to read the newspaper, form opinions on articles they read and present a few articles which caught their attention. Most students picked articles concerning social welfare & justice and public amenities. Some students chose sports, outstanding achievements & amazing facts.

DAILY CLASSES IN THE LEARNING CENTRES



FOCUS ON CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING IN ACADEMICS

Our 3 learning centres at Thummalapatti, Thoppupatti and Sengatampatti villages have been functioning well these last 6 months. Each centre is open for 2.5 hours every evening. Both primary and middle school children frequent the centres. Over an hour daily is spent on helping children with their school work. The rest of the time is spent on improving conceptual understanding and skills of middle school children through workshops and events.



WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS

WORKSHOP ON NUTRITION

Though all children learn about nutrients and the food pyramid in school, little do they apply it to their daily lives. We got a science teacher to explain the essential components of a healthy diet to children in our 3 centres. Then, children sat in groups and listed out their diet in the previous week. We realized that most students hardly ate enough vegetables & fruits. Children's height & weight were measured and they calculated their BMI. Many children had low BMI. We are planning to monitor children's food chart regularly.



GET TO KNOW YOUR GRAMA SABHA

The village administrative structure forms an important part of the middle school social science curriculum and one that is directly relevant to children in rural areas. We took our children to a grama sabha in a nearby panchayat on May Day. Children got to observe the meeting. The panchayat president & ward members explained the powers & functions of the grama sabha and the importance of people's active participation therein. Children asked several questions which the president answered.

WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS continue...

SKILL DEMONSTRATION

This was an event organized by children.

- It started with a demonstration by Junior Red Cross students of first aid techniques which are useful in the case of snake bites, strokes and injuries caused by accidents.
- Following this, some students demonstrated art using leaves, creating animals and a miniature of Lord Vinayaga.
- The event ended with a skit on the importance of education and sending all children to school.
- Parents who attended the event commended the children's initiative and confidence levels.



NURSERY VISIT AND TREKKING

- In order to get children interested in plant life, we took them to a nearby nursery where the owner explained about the varieties of plants and seeds suitable for growing in the local climate. A few children bought seeds. This was also interesting for these children, who have already undergone a couple of workshops on medicinal plants last year and grown vegetable patches in their backyards.
- Children were taken on a trek up the Sitthar-karadu, a hill known for its diversity in flora, especially medicinal plants. It was fun and good exercise too!



STUDENTS' CLUBS PROGRAMS

A FORUM FOR CHILDREN BY CHILDREN

We have 100 members in our students' clubs. These middle school children have been selected from 15 villages based on their willingness & interest to volunteer. These are children who are extremely keen to organize programs and campaigns which have children's issues and rights as their core focus.



SPORTS MEET

Sports competitions were conducted at each village. From this preliminary round, students who were interested and performed well were chosen for the final sports meet held at a playground in Chinnamanaickenkottai village. 66 students' club members participated in this meet.

The events for girls were football, kho-kho and kabadi, while events for boys consisted of cricket, kabadi and football. The children participated with great zest and prizes were given for the winning teams.



STUDENTS' CLUBS PROGRAMS continue...

STORY TELLING & STORY WRITING COMPETITION

For the last 3 years, we have been conducting the story telling and story writing competition as part of the state level Art Arattai Arpattam festival organized by Nalanda Way, Chennai and UNICEF. In 2009, Nalanda Way recognized Aspire Foundation as the second best implementing partner NGO in Tamil Nadu and gave us a Fuji digital camera!



- We held this competition in 20 villages. In each village, children were seated in pairs. While one played the role of story narrator, the other wrote the story and illustrated it. Children came up with creative story ideas.
- The 2 best story writers and 2 best story tellers in each village were awarded certificates and medals certified by UNICEF. In each village, local dignitaries such as the panchayat president, school headmaster and other well-wishers gave away the prizes & commended the students.

SUPPORT CLASSES

AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMIC SUPPORT

In 10 of the 15 villages where we run students' clubs for middle school children, we also conduct support classes for children in Std. 1 to 5. Trained volunteers conduct classes for 2 hours every evening in basic Tamil, Arithmetic & English for these children. These classes aim to improve children's basic academic skills.



Student mobilization through events

Following this, we held events such as language & math melas and cultural programs in all the 10 villages to motivate students to attend the support classes and to make parents aware of the importance of sending their children to our centres. Children participated with great enthusiasm in these events and this has helped increased enrollment in our centres.

Training

In Sep., our team got trained on the curriculum by Eureka Child resource persons in Chennai. Subsequently, we passed on this training to our volunteers from 10 villages. We are looking forward to conducting effective classes & improving children's skills in language & math.



VOLUNTARY SERVICE CAMPS

In an effort to bring together children under different programs run by Aspire Foundation, we involve our children in voluntary service activities once or twice a year. Each camp is a 2-day event. One such camp was held at Aathoor, a village 20 km from Nilakottai in May. 27 children and our team cycled to Aathoor and back. Another camp was held recently at Nattarpatti, a village near Nilakottai. 47 of our students volunteered at this camp. The photographs below explain the happenings at these camps.

AT AATHOOR



A combination of voluntarism, manual work, living together and lots and lots of fun!

AT NATTARPATTI



What's coming up?

- A 2- day Excursion to Kerala
- A cultural exchange program during Pongal

AND LOTS MORE ...

Do visit us and participate in our programs.

Looking forward to your feedback.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE 😊