

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME

ACTIVITY REPORT FOR JUNE 2007 – MAY 2008

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (SDPs)

As the name suggests, SDPs are conducted with the aim of provide an opportunity for the child to expose his/her skills and improve them. These programmes also help children to realize their strengths & weaknesses.

Our SDPs are designed to cover the following 7 skills:

- Communication
 - Logical reasoning/analytical thinking
 - Quantitative ability
 - Comprehension
 - Subject knowledge
 - Managerial ability
 - Creativity
- A set of activities is designed for each skill. *Each SDP usually consists of 4 sessions*, each session comprising activities related to a particular skill. Most activities are conducted in groups while some activities are expected to be done by each student individually.
 - A lot of attention is given to ensure that each group has a mix of children with varying levels of aptitude. This is done so that children who can grasp concepts quickly teach their peers how to approach the problem. Therefore, to start with, no group is at an unfair advantage.
 - Also, we ensure that unlike school, an atmosphere is created for girls and boys to interact with each other.

Starting from July, we have conducted *8 skill development programmes for the new batch* of students who have joined us this year *and 7 for the old batch* of students who have been with us for over a year.

Snapshots of some SDPs conducted this year



Children engrossed in sessions involving group work

HEALTH PROGRAMMES

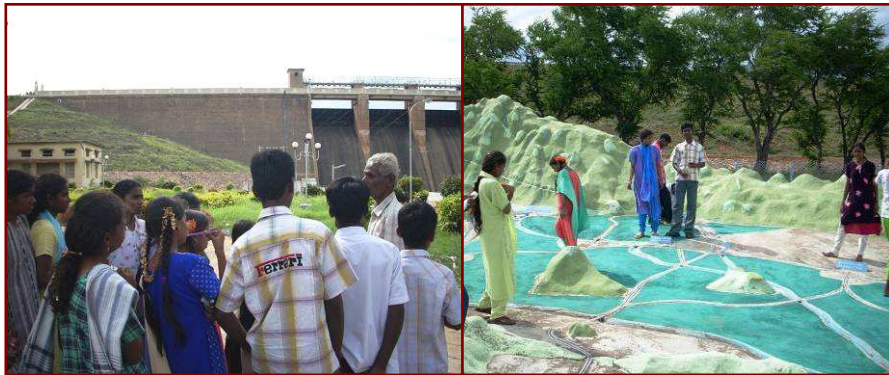
Health programmes are conducted to provide children awareness on preventive health measures, nutrition & hygiene and important diseases & treatment. These programmes are conducted twice a year.

- This academic year, we have conducted 1 health programme regarding leprosy, tuberculosis, eye care & general body care.
- One more health programme is lined up on adolescent health separately for boys and girls. We have requested counselors from Damien Hospital, Nilakottai to conduct the programme for us.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are conducted to provide children an opportunity to relate subject knowledge with how things work in real life. Children are usually taken in batches of 20 for these trips. This academic year, the field trips conducted so far are as below.

At the Vaigai Dam & model Periyar - Vaigai watershed structure



Right - Children at the Anthyodaya Sangh herbarium in Trichy; Following this, they also visited the Anna Planetarium



Children energetically trekking up a hill near Sothuparai Dam, Theni District



SCIENCE WORKSHOP

A science workshop was held on Dec. 25th. 2 resource persons from AID India, an NGO involved in propagating 'learning science through simple experiments' started with a pre-test of children's knowledge of some basic concepts regarding "light" such as 'light travels in a straight line', reflection, refraction, etc. Gauging the children's knowledge from the pre-test, they demonstrated experiments on each of these concepts and conducted a dialogue class to clarify children's doubts.

This was followed by a presentation on the 'Big Bang' – the story of how the earth was formed and involved the children in a dialogue class to clarify related concepts.

Finally, the children were divided into groups and got to try the 'light' experiments hands on, using the kits provided by AID India. There was a lot of excitement as several kids tried out experiments for the first time! Then, each student was given concept booklets on 'light' and 'Big Bang'.



Resource person explaining the "Big Bang Theory" using a ppt



Resource person using an experiment to demonstrate light travel in a straight line

TWO-DAY EXCURSION

We conduct one 2-day excursion in a year, which is an opportunity for both study and enjoyment. Normally, locations outside Tamil Nadu are chosen, as children would otherwise not get an opportunity to visit these places.

This year, our tour was to Mysore and Bangalore. It was a packed tour, on Dec. 23rd & 24th, full of activity and sightseeing. 37 students participated in the tour. The 5 students who did not come were either unwell or had to stay back for Christmas Eve. We stayed in the youth hostel at Mysore. The first day, we visited the following places – Chamundi Hills, Nandi Hills, Karanji Lake, Mysore Zoo, Mysore Palace and Brindavan Gardens.

The 2nd day, we visited the Tipu Sultan Summer Palace/Museum & the Ranganathaswamy Temple at Srirangapatna and proceeded to Bangalore.

At Bangalore, we visited the Viswesarayya Science & Technology Museum, Cubbon Park and Lal Bagh. We boarded our return train from Bangalore. Many children were excited as this was the first time 90% of them were experiencing a train journey!

Some glimpses from our tour

Right - At Chamundi Hill and Karanji Lake



Above - Mysore Zoo

In front of the magnificent Nandi

At Srirangapatna



Tipu's Summer Palace



At Lal Bagh



Outside Mysore Youth Hostel

COMPUTER CLASSES

18 students have been attending our free computer classes regularly. They are now well-versed in using MS Paint and MS Word. They are moving on to MS Excel and MS Powerpoint. We conduct periodic tests to assess children's skill levels and have also enrolled our faculty in a programme to improve teaching skills. Reference material for computer science has been made available at our office.

LIBRARY

Recently, we have set up a small library at the office with books on spoken English, science, math and communication. The library also has sports materials such as cricket bat & ball, throw ball, volley ball, skipping rope & tennecoit which children can borrow and return after using. Additionally, indoor games such as carom, chess and other board games are available for them to play at the library.

OTHER PROGRAMMES PLANNED

SPORTS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

We conducted a 2-day programme on sports and cultural events for the children. Sports events included outdoor sports like cricket, football, badminton, kabadi & kho-kho and indoor sports included chess and carom. The cultural programme was also a great hit. The cultural events were planned and performed by the children themselves. Prior to this event, we had very little idea about our students' extra-curricular talents. Their confidence and enthusiasm took us by pleasant surprise. The judges for the events were volunteers working in event management and HR companies. These volunteers began the programme with ice breakers, followed by a brief session for the students on awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement.



Then, the students commenced their events. First, was a public speaking competition, followed by a singing competition (solo performers). The dancing competition followed - first, individual, then group dances. Dances contained a variety of styles from traditional bharathanaatiyam to western and South Indian folk (karakatam).

Finally, 2 groups of students staged dramas. One group staged a comical play on the exploits of a foolish king who thereafter learns a lesson and changes for the good (inspired by the movie 23rd Pulikesi). The other group enacted a light-hearted play on the carefree life that college students lead, with situational songs adding to the life of the play!

CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAMME

On May 24th we organized a career guidance programme for students passing out of Std. 10, 11 & 12 this academic year (2007-'08). 30 students participated in this programme.

The programme lasted for 5 hours. The forenoon session was handled by Mr. Antony Stephen, a guest lecturer in Holy Cross College, Trichy and a trainer in staff capacity building for NGOs. He has also handled sessions on leadership for students. His session started off with an ice-breaker. This was followed by every student filling in an exercise sheet with 40 questions to discover their aptitude, based on their personal qualities and behaviour.



Students doing an exercise on finding aptitude



Mr. Stephen conducting session on goal setting

Following this, Mr. Stephen discussed the outcome of the exercise and explained what behavioural traits are suitable for each type of career, covering a range of careers such as defence, engineering, software, medicine, arts, social sciences, law, journalism, etc. This was followed by an explanation on goal setting, planning, execution and time management. Students were made to list out their strengths, weaknesses, short-term & long-term goals.

Students discussing their preferred careers

The afternoon session was handled by Mr. Sivasubramanyam, working in the training department in Infosys, Chennai. He started his session by dividing the students into groups of 5 and getting them to discuss their preferred courses & careers and reasons for the same. This was followed by a presentation by each group. He went on to dispel some common myths associated with sought-after career options such as software engineering.



Mr. Siva – session on career options



He went on to provide a brief look at each under-graduate & diploma course and higher education & career opportunities for each of these courses. In addition to providing information on typical courses such as engineering, computer science and commerce, he also spoke about other courses such as journalism, visual communication, catering, fine arts, etc. which many of our students had never even heard of. He also explained in detail about the single window system of counseling for engineering admissions. Finally, we had a one-to-one

session with the Std. 12 students where we discussed their final exam marks, their interest and preferred courses and provided suggestions on the list of colleges to apply in, banks to approach for educational loan and information to be gathered before going for engineering counseling. Students found the entire day very informative and useful.