

SRI VIDYANIKETHAN SCHOOL



In August 2011, a team from Lions Club of Bangalore and Sumukha Foundation conducted a dental health camp at Sri Vidyanikethan School for children and their parents. Supported by Accenture, the children were checked for dental illnesses. The camp helped not only in the timely identification of dental irregularities but also in the sensitization of proper gum and teeth care.



The increasing prices of accessories often make it difficult for many a low income family to meet the growing needs of their children. Therefore, the contribution of learning accessories (note books and pencils) by US based Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc was very welcome and useful. It is indeed heartening to receive support from across the world.



AFP (Asian Foundation for Philanthropy), who is our partner in progress since many years, in its characteristically innovative way, organized a competition that married sensitization with creativity! The subject was the toilet commode. It is a matter of pride that Meena R 7th class of Sri Vidyanikethan School won the competition. Organized under the aegis of Gyan Yatra, a knowledge journey, the citation read as follows: *With her concern for old people backed up with a catchy design, 14-year-old Meena R. has emerged as the winner of our toilet competition.*

It is interesting to note that most of the children who participated in this competition are users of the Indian styled floor level toilet. The link to the entries in this competition is <http://gyaanyatra.affp.org.uk/news/story/and-winner>



Highlights:

- 38 children got educational support from Accenture, AFP, Mouly Company and individuals.
- On 26 December 2011, Sri Vidyanikethan School celebrated the School Day with much gaiety. The highlight was a performance on the journey by pilgrims from across the country and the world to visit Sabarimala and see the sacred divine light in the hills.



PROJECT MARGASUSI

Health is wealth!

Motivating people to test blood for HIV is a challenging task and especially so when the people are from the vulnerable group of sex workers. Project Margasusi organized a health camp to screen parents of the children living in its hostel for the diagnosis of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and HIV. All the participants of the health camp tested negative for HIV indicating an adherence to safe sexual practices. Of these, 4 persons who were diagnosed with STI were referred to health care centres. The camp, which had the support of Vijaya Nursing Home and Arogya for testing and counselling, also examined the children for general ailments.



The CD 4 Count of women who tested positive for HIV in the past has increased. The nutrition food support by Project Margasusi and TAI (an NGO) has helped HIV Positive women to access adequate nourishment free of cost.



When she first came to Project Margasusi in 2011, 11 years old Archana was just 22 kgs. It seemed like an uphill task to bring about a positive change in the reticent girl, whose



interest in studies was also limited. However, within a year, Archana has gained 10 kgs and is enthusiastically participating in cultural programmes. The company of children, an enabling atmosphere and nourishing food, provided at the hostel, has brought about this positive turnaround.



It was a day of frolic and fun when all the 55 children of Project Margasusi went on an one day recreational trip Yercaud. The children visited most of the tourist attractions at Yercaud, which is a hill station in Salem District, Tamil Nadu. The children enjoyed the hair pin bends drive to Yercaud, and visited the aquarium, flower show, boating at the lake and the special park for children.



to



After the fun and frolic, the children utilized the 12 days of Christmas Holidays for some serious studying. Due to a change in the syllabus, many children got their regular

textbooks two months later than scheduled. This required extra classes in order to make up for the lost time.



Understanding the struggles of valiant individuals not only inspires but also inculcates values among young children.



Veerapandiya Kattabomman, an 18th century chieftain from Tamil Nadu, was among the earliest to oppose British rule in these regions. He waged a war with the British six decades before the Indian War of Independence occurred in the Northern parts of India. He was captured and hanged in 1799 CE. His fort was destroyed and his wealth was looted by the British army. (Source: Wikipedia). The Postal Department issued a stamp to observe the bicentennial honour of Kattabomman's hanging. His life and times were depicted by the children of Project Margasusi during the cultural programme organized on August 15, 2011, the day when India became independent sixty four years ago. The children also had comedy shows and enjoyed the refreshments served after the programme.



Congratulations to young David and Manikanthan! After passing out from Project Margasusi and undergoing vocational training in automobile mechanic course, the two have got employment in Ashok Leyland and Rajeshwari automobiles. The entry level salaries of approximately Rs. 4000/- will help to supplement their family income in a substantial manner.



Facilitated by Vidyanikethan, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Government of Tamil Nadu organized a two day training on animal husbandry to 25 women from Dharmapuri cluster. The training helped women to understand ways to increase the yield of milk, prevent diseases, and on different types of cost effective animal feed.



The training guided the women, especially those who did not have their own land, to earn in the comfort of their neighbourhood. After purchasing their own cows, the women can hope to earn upto Rs. 2500/- a month by selling milk. The training is part of the capacity building programmes for income generation and self-employment.



Project Margasusi, which regular networks with various companies, supports Commercial Sex Workers to get employment in different places. In the last six months,



11 CSWs (Commercial Sex Workers) gave up earning by sex work as they got work in different work places. Aged between 28 to 35 years, the women are earning an average of Rs. 2200/-. It is good to note that among these 11 women, a few women are below 30 years. Usually, a commercial sex worker below 30 is inclined to earn through sex work as many clients prefer young women. By opting to work all day in different sectors, the women seem to indicate a change in their mind-set and attitudes.



Mr. Abert Jap Van Santbrink, Executive Director, TdH-NL, Mr Lie Brouns, Regional Director, TdH-NL, Mr. Meru Miller, India Program Director, TdH-NL Mr Thanga Perumal, Program Project Officer TdH-NL visited Project Margasusi in September 2011.



A capacity building training on Child Protection Policy and Child Rights was organized by Vidyanikethan in Project Margasusi. As children are vulnerable to different forms and degrees of abuse at schools and homes, the larger level sensitization will help to prevent child discrimination. The participants stated that the programme was useful they learnt about the importance of being friendly and respectful with children.



Representatives from Project Margasusi and RPDP attended the Child Rights Conference, organized by UNICEF, NGO Forum and Shikshakara Sadana, Bangalore. Attended by representatives of different Government Departments, ICDC,(Integrated Child Development Centre), and various NGOs, there were discussions on health, sanitation, nutrition, drop outs from schools etc. Our representative Shri Siddaraju expressed concern about the repercussions of the Primary Health Care Centres in the rural areas not having sufficient doctors.



A girl student, Jaya, (name changed) living in the hostel of Project Margasusi is the daughter of a rag picker. During the holidays, she visited her 10 feet by 10 feet sized single room house, whose bathroom was located outside. One day, a boy began blackmailing Jaya allegedly claiming that he had taken photos of her having a bath in the external bathroom. A panic stricken Jaya informed her parents and the Project staff

as well. The Project staff met with the guy who was troubling Jaya and said that if he did not stop doing so, then it will inform the police. After this, the guy has stopped troubling her. Jaya is slowly getting over the traumatic experience. The Project staff is motivating the family to build a bathroom inside the house, but given the extremely small size, it is a challenge.



A donor donated new dresses to the children on the occasion of Pongal, an important local cultural festival.



In two different incidents, Project Margasusi saved two children from exploitation. In one of the cases, the partner of a commercial sex worker, tried to molest her daughter who visited her house during holidays. The daughter, who is living in Project Margasusi's hostel chose to inform the Project staff about it. The staff counseled her mother about the need for security for her daughter. The staff recommended that the mother should not call her partner to her house during holidays.

In another incident, a father, whose two daughters are living in the hostel, tried to sell them off but was unsuccessful, thanks to the timely intervention of the staff and a relative. During the school holidays, the father came to pick up the children and allegedly sold them for Rs. 10,000/- each. The helpless daughters were taken to a hotel for 'delivery' to the customer. A timely call from a panic stricken aunt to one of the organizer of Project Margasusi saved the girls. After getting the call, the organizer went to the hotel, and spoke to the owners about the children, who were restrained there and rescued them. The staff member managed to re-unite the children with the mother but but the father is absconding.



Rural Poor Development Programme

The health of women is connected closely with the overall development of the family and in the larger perspective, with that of the society and the nation. The health of women in the rural areas needs special focus.

In the last six months, 157 women living in the project area accessed essential medical services such as ANC, and PNC care, sensitization on nutrition, and immunization shots to prevent tetanus and six chronic diseases. 54 women underwent permanent family planning methods. 10 mothers got Rs. 36000/- each from Dr. Muthulakshmi Thittam scheme after the delivery of their respective child for the purchase of essential baby accessories.



79 physically challenged children were referred to the health camps (organized at the Block Level). The health camps has different disability specialists. The children, who

came in for disability assessment for the first time, were referred to the District Rehabilitation Centres. 52 of the children got medical certificates, of which disability pension was sanctioned for 17 students. 20 children got scholarship in schools while 3 children were given free aids and appliances.



A health camp was organized on 2nd October, 2011. Attended by more than 600 patients, RPDP mobilized the support of Vijaya Nursing Home for their medical team including doctors and para medical staff as well as the Drugs Association of Hosur drugs association, Hosur, Proposal writing renewal joint evaluation – findings H and SE was good, need to improve education on sector reporting, patter has to be improved



RPDP organized 12 baby shows in the last six months attended by over 170 children aged between 3 to 6 years. It was good to note that no child was malnourished and that the majority of the children came under the normal weight category.



In August, RPDP organized an exhibition on agriculture and agro based industries. The objective of the exhibition was to improve the awareness of agro based activities for supplementing the family income of communities, in particular women. As the project beneficiaries are primarily from the farming community, the exhibition helped to get awareness on diversification and improving yield.



Two exposure visits were organized for the children. One was to the Chitradurga Fort while the other one was to Bannerghatta National Park, Bangalore.



2 television artistes Mr. Venkatesh and Ms. Lakshmi visited the organization. Lakshmi gifted sarees for the staff members of the organization.



38 women beneficiaries, who had attended the RPDP facilitated tailoring programme at Gummalapuram, got employment in Shahi Export Garments, a leading export house.



Two tree plantation drives were organized where children of the Children Clubs planting saplings at Karinapalyam and Gummalapuram.



Updates from PEARL PROJECT - People's Empowerment to Access Right To Livelihood, supported IGSSS

Participation in state level protest against Government announcement: The beneficiaries participated in state level networking protests against the Government's announcement to money instead of ration to people in the low income group (BPL –

Below Poverty Line). People from Soundatti who participated in the protests felt that if given cash instead of ration, there are chances of misuse. Many of the men may use the money for alcohol or the family may divert the money for some other immediate personal expenditure. A memorandum has been submitted to the DC (Development Commissioner) in February 2012.

(ii) Organizing a micro-planning training programme: A micro planning training programme was organized in Chikkumbi District to ensure the adequate participation of people in their respective processes of development. People felt that our training was useful as they can participate more productively as they can discuss issue in an informed way during Gram Sabha meetings. The presence of CBO members and beneficiaries from the public at Gram Sabhas and Panchayat meetings will help in effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the development programmes.

Other highlights:

- Organized a tailoring training programme that is helping our women beneficiaries to improve their socio-economic condition.
- A village by the name of Karikatte has been awarded **Sampurna Swachatta Yojana** of Soundatti Taluk Belgaum Dist. This award was given in recognition of its relatively better sanitation facilities.

Volunteers who have visited Vidyanikethan

Among those who volunteered at Sri Vidyanikethan School in Januray 2012 was Ms. Dagrún Adalsteinsdóttir Keilufell of Iceland. She came in to work with the teachers on upgrading the teaching of the English language. She developed a good rapport with the teachers and the students during her stay. According to her feedback, "I feel that I have learned a lot with this experience and I am really grateful for having had this chance to get to know the children and the school." On her visit to Project Margasusi in Hosur, Dargun has written, "I spent some time with the children and I read them a story and they showed me some dances."

PHOTO GALLERY



On the left is Vonda (right) of the US who is donating stationary to the children of Sri Vidyanikethan School. (left – Jalaja, Senior Coordinator) and centre – Susheela, Principal)



Above left: Dental health camp for children and parents at Sri Vidyanikethan School.



Above right: A team from Accenture took some drawings made by the children for future use in their greeting cards. The children drew the greetings on the spot in the school in a spontaneous way.