

FRIENDS

Newsletter of the Ragpickers Education & Development Scheme (REDS) Bangalore, India
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Relocation ...

Summer Camp – 16th to 29th April 2004 - REDS – STC, Deepahalli

The last two months, being the end of an academic year and the start of a new academic year have been full of activity. Everyday work in the areas brings us in contact with a number of children who, some reason or the other have dropped out of school and are gradually taking to ragpicking. At the onset of every academic year programs are conducted, focusing on motivating these children to go back to school. This year too such activities were undertaken.

Two day programs were held in each of the areas to identify children who have dropped out of school and are interested to continue with their education. On the first day the area coordinators along with Ms. Varija interacted with the children to assess their level of education and the grade that they need to be admitted to. On the second day the parents of these identified children were called for a meeting. At these meeting issues like financial commitment of the parents, taking interest in the child's education, punctuality and going neat and tidy to school were discussed. 44 children were identified from the 5 areas that we work in and they participated in the camp that was held from 16th to 29th April 2004.

The camp began with an orientation to the children on, the objective of the camp, a brief of the daily schedule and rules to be followed at the camp. The children were then divided into groups based on their age. There were two groups of children 8 – 10 yrs and 11- 14 yrs. On the first day literacy level of the children was assessed through an interactive session.

Each day the camp began with a prayer service and meditation followed by breakfast for the children. After daily attendance was taken, children would go to their groups for an hour's session on either reading writing or arithmetic. This was followed by an interactive awareness session with the children on different topics every day. Some of the issues that were discussed were; the importance of education, roles and responsibilities of parents, why children take to the streets and the hardships they face etc. Resource persons were invited to teach the children. Mr. Bosco of Mythri entertained the children with magic and mimicry, Mr. Jaya Thirtha from Madhyam taught the children techniques of street theater and Mr. Nanda Kumar taught them arts and crafts.

Cultural Programs and sports was also an integral part of the camp. Games were organized for the children every evening and a Sport Competition was held for the children facilitated by Mr. Lurdusamy, to inculcate a healthy sense of competition among the children. The camp concluded on the 29th with a valedictory function.

A Visit to India

Mr. Brandon Paluch, MS. Colleen E Kelly, Ms. Elizabeth Goins, , Ms. Kathleen Saurber, Ms. Lora Robinson, Mr. Mark Tiemeier, and Ms. Sarah Vecci from University of Dayton and Ms. Jezga Elias and Mr. Nathan Krier from Chaminade University, Hawaii participated in the month long Immersion Program at REDS – STC from 6th of May 2004 to 6th of June 2004.

After an orientation about the history and development of REDS, the vision of the program and the activities undertaken, the students spent the next 2 days getting to know about issues like NGOs roll in socio development,

NGO s active participation in the developmental activates undertaken in India, Indian social system – the people, cultural heritage and religion.

Armed with information on the social and cultural mannerism of the people they ventured out to work at 4 different organizations - The Home for aged, Chitanya - home for girl children on the streets, Jerizme - home for physically and mentally challenged children and Senaha Nilya – residential home for orphans and children from broken families. They also spent a whole day visiting the Koramangala Slum an area where REDS – Bangalore has been working.

The seriousness of their visit was lightened with a picnic to Mysore, a visit to the Iskon Temple, Shopping and a personal experience of Carnatik Music. There was also a moment of spirituality with a retreat lead by Fr. Tony at Yercard, Tamil Nadu.

The program concluded on 3rd June with a farewell program where the staff and children of REDS – STC bid then farewell with heavy hearts but with also happy moments to remember.

News in Brief

REDS – BANGALORE

...Street Presence

Programs focusing on the issue of drug abuse and HIV were conducted for the children in the areas. One such program was a month long camp organized by Sathi – an organization working with children on the platforms of Raichur Railway station. Nagesh one of our boys from Shivajinagar participated in this camp. When we met Nagesh on his return, he seemed a complete new person and has given up using solvents. Although he is still involved in ragpicking as he has debts to repay. He is now working to clear his loan and go to the STC for training.

Mr. Thiru our area coordinator from Shivajinagar area along 2 children participated in a workshop held by CRT on “Election Campaigns and including issues related to children in candidates election manifesto”. He said it was a productive workshop as he was able to share his experiences of working on the street and how children and families living on the streets could be involved for maximum success.

Ms. Shashikala the area coordinator of Neelasandara area attended a 3 day workshop at NIMHANS organized by CHC to plan for the “World No Tobacco Day” Program. 15 children from REDS – STC and 30 children from REDS – B’lore participated in the “World No Tobacco Day” rally held on 7th April. The children threw cigarettes and pan parag into dustbins and pledged not to use tobacco.

An awareness program was held for the boys at Shivajinagar on the issue of ‘Sexually Transmitted Diseases’ HIV & AIDS. The program was facilitated by Jagruthi – an organization working with child sex workers. The organization has a hospital at Ulsoor and has asked the area coordinator to bring the boys to the hospital for a blood test and personal counseling session.

...Play School & Non - Formal Education

Children at the Play School were on vacation from 26th April to 10th May'04. Bro. Xavier is now in charge of the program. Of the 161 children who were studying at the Play School, 59 children have been admitted to various government and private schools in the area.

... Formal Education & placements

In the month of April a 'Summer Camp' was organized for children who had dropped out of school. 44 children were identified and they participated in the camp that was organized at REDS – STC. Through different programs and activities 33 of these children were motivated to go back to school.

In the month of May '04, meetings were held with the parents of these 33 children, with the aim of not only getting the parents involved in the education of the children but also to assess the financial commitment of the families in supporting the child's education. Depending on the financial status and family relationships the children were either admitted to local govt. schools with support from REDS for uniform and books or to residential schools.

Together with the children involved in the 'Summer Camp' 65 children from the areas have been placed in various Schools and hostels, this new academic year.

Ms. Varija has been visiting various hostel and schools to admit children. 65 children involved in REDS 'Street Presence' program have been placed for either schooling or vocational training.

• Govt. Hostel – Bagalur Layout	14	• Nirmala Seva Kendra	1
• REDS – Formal School	9	• APSA	1
• REDS – Skill Training	4	• St. Paul's Orphanage – KGF	4
• Govt. Hostel – Vijaynagar	1	• Govt. Girl's hostel – Karnahalli	1
• Govt. Hostel for Girls - Jaynagar	1	• Govt. School – L.R. Nagar	1
• Nele	13	• Nirmala Seva Kendra	1
• Makkala Ashraya Kendra	1	• St. Euphrasia's Girl's School	2
• St. Mary's Orphanage	1	• Methodist School	1
• Anatha Shishu Ashram	2	• Satyabama School	5
• Chaitanya	1	• Sacred Heart Boy's School	1

Meetings were held with the parents of children from Church Street and Koramangala whose education is sponsored by REDS. Parents from Church Street have agreed that they will bare half the expenses of their child's education; they said that will not able to save money for the next two months as they had to pay the other half of the fee for this academic year. They will start saving money for the next academic year from the month of September. Except for a few, parents from Koramangala did not come for the meeting.

...Solid Waste Management

Discussions have been started with the concerned officials at Manipal Hospital for Waste collection services to be provided by REDS. Bro. Xavier is now incharge of the Solid Waste Management program at REDS – Bangalore. He also takes care of the Play school and NFE program.

...Self Help Group

The SHG Mela and Women's Saving Day was celebrated on 30th April 2004. As planned about 600 SHG members assembled at the IPP Hospital at the entrance of L.R. Nagar Area and proceeded walking towards the venue of the program holding banners and placards communicating the work done by REDS and the purpose and benefits of SHG along with the names of the groups. The program was inaugurated with the lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest Fr. Roys – Parish Priest of Holy Family Church, Rammamurthy Nagar and Mr. Cecil Lazarus of Sangamitra who was the special Guest of Honour.

The Chief Guest Rev. Fr. Roys in his speech appreciated the initiative taken by REDS for organizing the groups and helping the women break away from the vicious cycle of debt. He stressed that these groups must work as a team to solve the problems of their families and as well as the place where they stay. He was invited to present mementos to the three SHG animators, Mrs. Bhanumathi, Ms. Sudarvalli and Ms. Sathyavani. Mr. Cecil the Guest of Honour spoke about the importance of SHGs and its function to improve member's social status. He added that REDS has already formed 73 groups and by the next year it should increase to 100 groups. All the group

members should cooperate to start new groups. He also distributed loans to three groups linked to Sangamitra in the month of April '04. The members put up skits and songs to highlight the importance of SHG's.

	2003 - 2004	Details	2004 - 2005
Total no. of SHGs	74	6 defunct	7 (New Groups)
No. of Members	891	-	76
Savings	Rs. 7,80,539.00	-	Rs. 2,67,587.00
Loans Received	Rs. 21,15,000.00	-	Rs. 7,50,000.00
Loans Repaid	Rs. 8,94,943.00	-	Rs. 48,000.00
Interest Distributed		4 Groups	Rs. 15,305.00

REDS – SKILL TRAINING CENTRE

...46 boys are undergoing training at the STC and 26 boys are attending formal school. 15 boys were referred to the STC for formal education in the month of May'04 by REDS – Bangalore.

Boys from the carpentry section are working at the Novitiate House being constructed at Deepahalli and the tailoring section is busy with the order that they have received from the Marianist Brother to stitch curtains for the new building at Deepahalli.

REDS – RANCHI

April and May were very busy months at Ranchi as children from the centers were being admitted to schools. Center staffs were busy in coaching children for the entrance exams. About 100 children from all the centers had been selected to be enrolled in school and some of them were preparing to write the entrance exams. We are very proud to say that this year we have succeeded in admitting 132 children in school. In the month of June school bags, books, uniform, shoes etc. have been given to the children who were admitted to school

Due to the excess heat of summer children were on vacation from 24th May to 13th June, but tuition for children who go to school was continued during vacation also. Attendance in all centers was poor on the first two day but picked up tremendously after the staff visited children at their homes.

The monsoon has begun and with it comes various diseases due to unhygienic conditions in which the children live. Chloroquine phosphate tablets were given to all the children at the center as a precaution against Malaria. Children are also being treated for cold, cough and stomach upsets. Children at the centers have been given raincoats.

... Toki Toli Center

With 36 children being admitted in the month of May the number of children who attend NFE classes at the center is now a whopping 80children! Families of these children are visited regularly. Tuition for children going to school is regular in spite of the rains. On 25th June a meeting was held with the parents of children from the center, issues like regularity, cleanliness, health, saving and tuition for children going to school was discussed.

... Doranda Center

50 children are regular for NFE classes at the center. In the month of May 3 children who are working as domestic servants were admitted. Home visits are usual are done thrice a week to keep in touch with the family. 23 children from the center were admitted to Kuldeep School and 25 children to JMJ School.

... Mousibari Center

With staff visiting the homes of the children regularly, 60 children come to the center for NFE classes. Children have been divided in 2 groups depending on their literacy level and are taught English, Math, Science and Social Science. Every Wednesday children at the center are given a bath. Parent's meeting that was held in the month of May focused on the issue of caste discrimination. Due to heavy rains the center collapsed and now classes are held at another house but there are plans to build a new center. With regard to this a meeting was held on 26th June with parents. They have decided to help and will look out for a suitable place for the new center and will talk to village headman regarding this matter.

... Khadgarah Center

53 children attend NFE classes every day at the center. In the month of May staff visited the families of children twice. On 18th and 19th of May all the children at the center were given a hair cut and on 20th a meeting was held with the parent's of the children. On 23rd June Bro. Alex from Bangalore visited the center and he was taken by the staff to visit Bhuiyan Toli and powerhouse area.

... Hatia Center

50 children are regular for NFE classes. Attendance at the center dropped in the month of June since many of the children have fallen sick. On June 24 a meeting was held with the parents of the children and they were informed that children going to school will have to forfeit the benefits provided by REDS if they do not have more than 50% attendance.

... Pahari Center

The 35 old children and the 12 new children admitted in the month of May, are regular for NFE classes at the center. On 11th May a meeting was held with the parents of the children who would be admitted to school to discuss the increase in fees and their contribution. In the month of June meeting with the parents was held on 17th and they were strictly informed that relative of children will not be allowed to sit at the center. 10 families are visited every day.

... Prerna

Training in knitting, tailoring and embroidery is given at the center. Children from the center are motivated to undertake training in one of the vocation skills. As most of the girls are illiterate, literacy classes are also included in the program. Girls at the tailoring section are busy stitching uniforms for children who have been admitted in school this year. There are 24 girls at the Tailoring unit and many more have been enrolled in the month of June, as space is not sufficient for them at the center, the tailoring section has been moved to a different building. There are 21 girls in the embroidery section and 6 girls in the knitting section who are presenting undergoing training.

Calendar of Events

...April '04

2 nd April	Boys from REDS – STC were taken to the local hospital for a general medical check-up
6 th April	Awareness program at NIMHANS for trainees at REDS – STC on drug abuse
7 th April	'No Tobacco Day' Rally organized by CHC – staff and child of REDS B'lore and STC participated
16 th April to 29 th April	"Summer Camp" begins for school dropout children
25 th April	4 Catholic boys at the STC receive First Holy Communion

30 th April	'Women's Saving Day' – SHG Mela
...May '04	
6 th May	Students from University of Dayton arrive at REDS –STC for a month long program
11 th May	Parents meeting at Pahari Center, Ranchi
14 th May	Parents meeting at Mousibari Center, Ranchi
15 th May	Children from Neelasandra area visit 'Vigyan Rail'
17 th to 20 th May	Camp for children at Mysore organized by Arivu on substance abuse
21 st May	'International Day of the Family' – Program with SHG members at Madiwala
28 th May	Street Children Art Festival - YMCA
... June '04	
3 rd June	REDS – STC bids farewell to students from University of Dyton.
9 th June	Training program on 'Life Skills' for boys at REDS – STC organized by CHC
17 th June	Exposure visit to 'Sevasadan Training Institute' - Staff at REDS – STC.
17 th June	Parents meeting at Pahari Center, Ranchi
18 th June	"Enrollment Rally" – L.R. Nagar. 100 children from the local govt. school, members of the SHG, and children from REDS – STC walked through the Koramangala slum to carrying placards encouraging parents to enroll their children in school.
21 st June	Play School teachers meeting to discuss new admission, fees and proper functioning of the Play Schools
21 st June	Bangalore Forum Meeting to discuss the issue of 'Urban Homeless'. REDS is also one of the implementing organizations working with the Urban Homeless in Shivajinagar area, this program is being sponsored by Action Aid.
22 nd June	Distribution of Raincoats in all centers at Ranchi
25 th June	Awareness program for SHG members on roles and responsibilities of govt. clinics and the procedures to get govt. water connection.
25 th	Parents meeting at Toki Toli Center, Ranchi
26 th	Parents meeting at Khadgarha, Mosibari and Doranda Center.
28 th June	Awareness program for Children from Shivajinagar area on STD, HIV & AIDS
29 th June	Meeting at CHC regarding roles and responsibilities of govt. clinic and action that can be taken vis-à-vis dereliction of duties by govt. staff.