



VISWA BHARATI VIDYODAYA TRUST
Gudalur, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu
ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES
2017 - 2018

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1. BACKGROUND

The Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust is a charitable body registered (no. 41 of 1993) under the Indian Trusts Act. Its registered office is 12/669B, Thottamoola, Gudalur – 643 212, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu. It has nine members on the board of Trustees, which includes the Managing trustee.

Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT) was started in 1993 order to address widespread educational deprivation amongst adivasis in the Gudalur valley. It has focused its energies on the development of innovative, alternative and supplementary educational systems for children who are frequently first-generation learners.

In 1996, on a request from the adivasi community, VBVT took adivasi children into Vidyodaya school. Soon VBVT became a school ran by adivasis, for adivasis. The Trust also took on adivasi educated youth to train as Teachers. Today they form the Education Team, which handles the entire education programme.

In the year 2000, with the support of SRTT, VBVT launched a major programme of ensuring enrollment in schools. From 737 children in year 2000, by 2016 it had covered almost all the 303 villages ensuring education to around 2980 children. A key thrust of VBVT's work has been to ensure 100% enrollment in all these villages. In order to provide motivational and academic back-up to these children who were going to school, an Outreach programme of Camps, Mobile and Village library, Science experiments, and village level institutions such as Study centres, non-formal centres and such other programmes were initiated.

VBVT has been able to create a consciousness about education in the minds of the adivasi population; now, what may be called education-seeking behaviour is the norm rather than the exception. At the same time, there remains a need for good quality schools and teachers sensitive to the cultural hurdles that adivasis face. It is in this context that a long-term collaborative effort with government agencies sensitive to these aspects is envisaged by VBVT.

VBVT's work has been both at the institutional level as well as to reach out to the children in villages and schools through an outreach programme. This report begins with the Institutional approaches first and then goes on to delineate the outreach programmes.

2. INTRODUCTION

Consolidation of the gains of the previous year and taking them forward has been the main aim during the current year. Having taken on the SSA School and the Foundation Course, the challenge of ensuring that they have the kind of impact we hoped and also the reach to the children in the community is what VBVT has been striving for this last year. In the SSA school we suddenly found ourselves without the Head mistress and a couple of teachers as they did not qualify according to government norms. This upset the whole school and it was not till November that a new staff could be taken on.

The Foundation course too had taken on 17 new students in addition to some of the old batch and this too was calling for some direction.

On the field, the ECE programme which has been the main thrust these last two years was slowly taking shape and parents in the villages were beginning to take the programme a lot more seriously. From the ICDS end, the teachers and the staff were also willing to cooperate with the community and ensure that children attended.

This year too VBVT planned to have camps for children who were attending the government schools. This was directed towards the vulnerable age-group of 13 to 15 years who would at the slightest distraction leave school.

We were happy to have Rahul Kumar who has been with us for 7 years, leave and return within a few months. We also took on Divya Jayaraman who was previously working with Teach for India, to support the SSA school on a full time basis. She joined us in August of 2017.

This year also saw the support of Nilgiris Adivasi Trust in UK stepping in to support the two schools and following a visit from their directors, a commitment to continue support. Asha for Education continues to support both the school and the Foundation course. Neither of them were supporting the Camps or scholarships and so individual donors had to be found for this. The Charities Aid Foundation in Delhi had done a Due Diligence on VBVT and had directed some funds to us from Microsoft. This is an area that needs follow up. The Sir Ratan Tata Trust has been the back bone of the education all work with the adivasis in Gudalur over the last 18 years and this commitment continues till the end of 2018.

3. SSA RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

3.1 Introduction

The ACCESS residential school, Kozhikolly was inaugurated by the then Honourable Chief Minister on 18th of July 2016 . The school is managed by the Vishwa Bharathi Vidyodaya Trust, Gudalur which helps hand in hand with the mission of ensuring the adivasi children up to the age of 14 to continue with their studies till they had acquired minimum levels of learning . The school has been running successfully with an enrolment of 100 this year. The children belong to these three tribes: the Paniyas, the Bettakurumba, the Kaattunaika.

The school has a strong team of teachers and staffs to support with the mission. The year 2017-2018 has seen a great progress with respect to student behaviour and student retention.

3.2 Enrolment in the school :

S.No	District	Block	Location	Children enrolled							
				Gender			Social category				
				Boys	Girls	Total	Sc	ST	Muslim	Others	Total
1.	The Nilgiris	Gudalur	Kozhikolly	52	48	100	0	100	0	0	100

3.3 Staff details:

The SSA ACCESS Residential school currently has the following teachers and staffs

S.NO	Name	Qualification	Designation
1.	Mr.Suresh Kannan	M.A, Mphil, B.Ed	Tamil Teacher
2.	Mrs. Velanganni	M.A,B.Ed	English Teacher
3.	Mrs. Divya	Msc, B.Ed	Maths Teacher
4.	Mrs. Lakshmi Devi	M.A, B.Ed	Social Teacher
5.	Mrs. Vijitha	Msc, B.Ed	Computer Teacher
6.	Mrs.Udhayambika	Tailoring	Vocational
7.	Mr. Christopher	M.Com. CA	Accountant
8.	Mrs. Azhagujothi	SSLC	Office Assistant
9.	Mrs. Selvarani	SSLC	Head cook
10.	Mrs. Koima	IV	Assistant cook
11.	Mrs. Padmini	IV	Assistant
12.	Mr. Chandran	IV	Watch Man

- Each and every member in the school has been working towards the holistic development of the children in the school.

3.4 Pedagogy:

- Each student at the school is diverse in terms of their education history, learning needs, stamina levels and attitude towards learning, hence the kids are grouped according to their learning levels and supported with a targeted curriculum that helps the children re-engage in the learning process.
- VBVT has appointed 6 supporting Teacher Trainees from the adivasi community in the school to help the teachers overcome the language, cultural barriers etc.,

3.5 Maintenance – food and basic amenities

- Nutritious food is decided at the district level and a Menu is prescribed. This is followed very strictly.
- Food sample are preserved considering safety of students' health, hygiene

Day	Morning	Break Fast	Lunch	Evening	Supper	Night
Time	Before 07.15 AM	08.00 - 08.30 AM	12.30 - 01.15 PM	04.30 - 05.00 PM	08.00 - 08.30 PM	08.30 - 08.45 PM
Sunday	Health drink (Any one of Mixed grains powder, Boost , Horlicks , Bournvita & etc)	Kichadi and Chutney	Rice, Chicken (100 gram per child)	Ragi Drink and Goundnut Burfy	Rice , Rasam & Potato or Beetroot poriyal	Panang karkandu Milk
Monday	Ragi Malt	Pongal and coconut chutney	Rice, Sambar, Beetroot Porial and egg	Sundal and Jaggery coffee	Variety Rice, Curd rice,Thuvaiyal, Appalam	badam Milk

Tuesday	Health drink (Any one of Mixed grains powder, Boost , Horlicks Bournvita & etc)	Idly and coconut chutney and groundnut chutney	Rice, fish curry	Horse Gram & Jaggery coffee	Rice , Rasam & cabbage or ladies finger or Beans poriyal	Ginger Milk
Wednesday	Health Drink	Wheat Uppuma & Banana	Veg. Briyanai , curd salad , egg	Bread sandwich & jaggery coffee	Idly & coconut chutney and groundnut chutney	Elaichi Milk
Thursday	Health drink (Any one of Mixed grains powder, Boost , Horlicks Bournvita & etc)	Ragi semiya with coconut scrapes	Rice , Fish curry	Jaggery coffee and groundnut burfy	Vegetable rice and onion tomato salad	Badam Milk
Friday	Health drink (Any one of Mixed grains powder, Boost , Horlicks Bournvita & etc)	Rava Uppuma and coconut chutney	Mixed rice (vegetable curry mixed) with egg roast	Biscuits and jaggery coffee	Rice, chenna gram curry and beetroot and carrot poriyal	Ginger Milk
Saturday	Ragi Malt	Idly & coconut chutney an groundnut chutney	Rice, Kondakadala curry and beans poriyal	Ginger tea with Bread/ Bun / cake	Ragi Noodles/ idyappam with coconut chutney	Elaichi Milk

3.6 Preparatory camp activities :

- Teachers visited the various villages in and around Gudalur to understand the children and their community better and also brought back a lot of kids back to school.

3.7 Specific skill training:

The following specific skill trainings are given to the students in the school across the year.

- Vermicompost Training :
- Train/bus ticket booking Training
- Spiral binding and lamination Training
- First Aid Training
- Life skill training
- Health and Hygiene Training

3.9 Vocational activities :

- The students are trained in vocational activities like craft and tailoring.
- The tailoring syllabus includes blouse cutting, full skirt, pillow cover, handkerchief, frock, and petticoat
- The craft syllabus included flower basket using newspaper, flowers, bangles, wire bag, mat, woollen hat, purse, cloth painting, ice-stick, paper designing, and woollen thread work.

3.10 Physical education :

- The physical education teacher has been working on building physical activity and psycho-motor learning of the children.
- The school had organized the annual sports day to showcase the talents of the kids in various physical activities

3.11 Self defense training:

- A karate teacher is appointed to train the students and classes were conducted three days per week.

3.12 Parents and teachers association meeting :

- The most important stakeholder in the students growth are the parents, thus a Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting has been organized every quarter to facilitate parental participation in a school.

3.13 Menstrual hygiene:

- Sanitary pads are issued by health department to ensure the hygiene of the girls.

3.14 Events celebrated:

- Adivasi Day was celebrated on the 5th on December. To celebrate the cultural significance of adhivasis, all the teachers and students of the school came together and celebrated.
- Kalvi Valarchi Naal was celebrated on the 15th of July 2017.
- Independence day was celebrated on the 15th of August 2017.
- Children's day was celebrated on the 14th November 2017.
- Republic day was celebrated on the 26th of January 2018.
- Deepavali was celebrated with sweets distribution among students on 18th October 2017.
- Annual Sports day was celebrated on the 24th of March 2018
- Women;s day was celebrated on the 8th of March 2018.
- Christmas and Pongal were also celebrated in the school.

3.15 Exposure Visits:

- *Educational Tour :*
The students were taken to Ooty on an educational tour. They visited All India Radio station, botanical garden. The AIR staffs gave a live demonstration of how the live FM works receiving and transmitting the signals and the students enjoyed the colorful walk in the botanical gardens



- *Visit to Municipal Office, Gudalur*
The students were taken to Gudalur Municipal office to understand its administration and function.
- *Paper Recycling Unit, Kargudi :*
The students and staff visited Paper recycling unit which located near by Gudular to know about waste paper recycling and its usage.

3.16 Stipend deposited in the individual accounts of children:

- Savings account has been opened in the post office for all the students present in the school and a stipend of Rs.100 is being deposited every month.

3.17 Insurance coverage for children :

- Insurance covered for all 100 students. Premium is taken in the name of National Insurance Company Ltd.

3.18 Quality Food Provision:

- The school ensures procuring quality provisions form the market and keeps track of the expiry dates of the same.
- All the provisions bought are stored in clean and closed containers
- The staffs monitor the quality of vegetables that are used for every meal.

3.19 Maintenance Work:

As part of the school maintenance the following have been done

- The broken plastic doors in the bathroom have been replaced to iron doors.
- Water tank has been cleaned once in every two months.
- All the leakage in the building has been fixed.
- Broken water pipes in the school were fixed.
- All the blackboards in the school were repainted.
- The firewood ovens were repaired.
- The weeds around the school campus were removed.
- Glasses in the bathroom were replaced.
- Pipes in the septic tank were replaced.
- Waste disposal pit was dug in the backyard of the school.
- Classrooms were repainted.

3.20 Highlights :

- Two students from 8th grade have qualified the NMMS (National Means cum Merit Scholarship) examination .
- Science and maths exhibition was organized in the school on the 13th of December 2017.
- Annual Sports day was celebrated on the 24th of March 2018 showcasing the extraordinary talents of the children.



Students presenting their exhibits at the Science and Maths exhibition at SSA on December 13, 2017



Students sporting their certificates, won at games organized as part of Sports Day

4. VIDYODAYA NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL

4.1 Introduction

In 1996, on a request from the Adivasi community, VBVT took Adivasi children into Vidyodaya school. Soon VBVT became a school run by Adivasis, for Adivasis. The Trust also took on Adivasi educated youth to train as Teachers. Today they form the Education Team, which handles the entire education programme.

Starting from June 2014, Vidyodaya School reaches out to children between 1-5th standard. The school has now been recognized by the government of India under the 2009 Right to Education Act.

At Vidyodaya School importance is given to the all-round development of the child, which involves academics, handicrafts, innovative project work, drawing, painting and theatre. Great importance is also given to Adivasi traditional songs, dance and story-telling.

The teachers at Vidyodaya School are drawn from Adivasi and non-Adivasi communities. Some were themselves trained through the school.

Today the school functions as an example of what can be achieved: the school is distinctive for its atmosphere of peaceful cooperation, near absence of disciplinary problems, and sky- high retention rates.

Vidyodaya's mission is to improve the quality of education received by underprivileged children in Adivasi communities and to establish a culturally appropriate learning system with active participation of the community.

We want to ensure that

- every Adivasi child completes schooling;
- every child gets a good education;
- every child can pursue learning (not only schooling) up to whatever level they desire and
- the supportive and cultural environment for this is facilitated

4.2 Student strength 2017-18

4. 2.1 Overall student strength

Grade	Boys	Girls	Total
LKG	7	5	12
UKG	6	7	13
I	6	4	4
II	4	9	13
III	9	2	11
IV	3	2	5
V	10	3	13
Total	45	32	77

4.2.2 Tribe-wise student distribution

Class	Paniya		Bettakurm ba		Kaatunaya ka		Mullakurum ba		Irula		Non Tribal		Total
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
LKG	4	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	12
UKG	4	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13
I	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
II	-	3	4	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3	13
III	4	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	11
IV	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5
V	5	2	3	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	13

4.2.3 Area- wise student distribution

Area	Students
Devarshola	9
Srimadurai	22
Devala	18
Gudalur	28
Total	77

4.2.4 Distance-wise student distribution

Distance	Number of students
0 – 5 km	28
5 – 10 km	9
11 – 15 km	0
15 – 20 km	40

4.3 New Admissions:

This year 21 new students were admitted to the school. The details are as given below:

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
KG	7	6	13
I	1	1	2
II	1	2	3
III	1	-	1
IV	-	1	1
V	1	-	1
Total	11	10	21

All the students who completed class V, have joined school for the next academic year. The details of the same are as given:

S.No	Student Name	School joined after class V
1	Ashok Kumar	Government School, Srimadurai
2	Bibin	Global Matric School, Devala
3	Govind	Rishi Valley School, Madanapalle
4	Gowtham	G.T.R School, Devala
5	Hariharan	Government School, Puthuruvayal
6	Manush.H	Sacred Heart School, Kaynni
7	Maran	Government School, Kunkurumoola
8	Nishanth	Government School, Puthuruvayal
9	Vijith	Global Matric School, Devala
10	Vishnu.V.M	G.T.R School, Devala
11	Manjari	Fathima Higher Secondary School, Gudalur
12	Sandhya	Fathima Higher Secondary School, Gudalur
13	Sunitha	Fathima Higher Secondary School, Gudalur

4.4 Excursions & Field Visits

37 students and 7 teachers from Vidyodaya went for one day trip to Ooty. They visited botanical garden and boat house. All the students enjoyed the trip.

4.4.1 Local Visit :

- On June 12th, children were taken to see the circus which had just come to Gudalur after many years. There were no animals in the circus but the children got to see amazing gymnastics by the performers. They enjoyed the circus.
- KG and I standard students were taken to the Ice-cream parlor and on the other day they were taken near the main road for vehicle counting. Each group of students were assigned the counting of two-wheelers, three-wheelers and four-wheelers.
- Students of class II went to the fish market where they observed the different varieties of fish and questioned about the preservation of the same.
- Students of class V went to the fruit shop. They also went to the bus stand where they interviewed the drivers and conductors.

4.5 Teacher Details:

S.No	Teacher's name	Subject taught
1	Saroja	KG, all subjects
2	Janaki	KG, all subjects
3	Parvathi	KG, all subjects
4	Suja	English, all classes
5	Sivagami	EVS, Tamil
6	R.Shanthi	Science, Maths, Social
7	Shuba	English, Maths (KG)
8	P.Shanthi	Maths, Tamil
9	Radha	Librarian

4.6 Library Books read:

Total number of books	Number of books Tamil	Number of books English	Number of books read
3105	2020	1085	797

4.7 Savings of children:

Year	Savings	Withdrawal	Balance
2017-18	24,125	7,372	16,753

4.8 Parents Teachers Meeting

- In June 2017, teachers went to 2 areas, Devarshola and Devala from where 23 children come to our school. They met the parents of the children. The meetings were conducted in the village in Devarshola and in the area centre in Devala. Some of the issues discussed were as follows:-

- a) Teachers explained the progress of the children to individual parents. They also showed the files of the students to their parents.
 - b) Pick up timings by the vehicles hired were discussed.
 - c) Teachers and parents discussed the need for children to study and come to school regularly.
 - d) Teachers explained that it was possible to admit 25 or more new students for this academic year 2017 – 2018. Then parents asked about whether the school would be able to admit children from newer villages, and a discussion about transport and logistics ensued.
- Another parents meeting was conducted on 28th of July. 45 parents participated in the meeting. We discussed about the following:
 - a) New admission
 - b) Savings
 - c) About school
 - d) Health
 - e) Absentees
 - f) About old students

One of the teacher spoke about the importance of Aadhar and EMIS. Teachers talked about the school timing, activities and health because there were a few new parents. Then, they spoke about the students' savings and discussed about old students, who left school in June and had joined in other schools. They all came to school when they had holidays. They are in touch with Vidyodaya school.

- Meeting with parents of graduating students:
In the month of February, there was a meeting of parents of 5th standard students along with the teachers. Eight parents out of thirteen parents participated in the meeting. Some of the topics discussed have been given below:

Teachers talked about the academic levels of the students to their parents. Some students had been irregular to school because of which their academic levels had been dropping. Parents of these students were told that their children had to work hard and make up for all the classes that they had missed. Parents were requested to make sure their children came regularly as they had few months left at school.

Teachers talked about students' individual skills like Leadership, Initiative shown in Project work, Teamwork, Responsibility, Dance, Song and Craft. Parents were shown assessment records done for individual children. There was also a discussion about entrance examination for V standard students.

Parents were informed that application forms for issue of Transfer Certificates should be submitted to the school office in the last week of March.

4.9 Culture

- Onam

Onam festival was celebrated in the school on 2th of September. There was a drama by 5th standard students and songs by rest of the Vidyodaya students. Old students also took part in the function.



- Adivasi Day

Adivasi day was celebrated on December 5th in the school. One of the teachers shared a few things about Adivasi day. Students from the Foundation Course presented a drama about Adivasi culture and there was a cultural dance.

- Christmas function:

On December 21st, Christmas was celebrated in the school. Vidyodaya students, teachers and foundation students prepared 12 cakes for the function. Christmas carols were sung by the students, and also students from the Foundation Course made a crib. The children enjoyed the function eating the cakes which were done by them.

- Pongal celebration:

Pongal was celebrated in the school by the teachers and children by preparing Pongal. They sang songs and the Foundation Course students did Kummi dance. Some games were also conducted like lemon and the spoon etc.



- Republic day function:

Republic day was celebrated in the school on January 26th. Flag was hoisted by Advocate Mr.Malaisami. The students sang few songs about the national festival. Sweets were distributed to the children.



- Health

There was a dental checkup for the children on January 20,2017. Dentists from ASHWINI (Adivasi Hospital) came to the school.

- Exposure visit:

In the month of December, teachers from Vidyodaya went on a trip to Maharashtra. They went to visit the school Anand Niketan in Wardha. They also visited Gandhi Ashrama.



- Craft mela:

Marudam school, Tiruvannamalai, conducted a craft mela on December 25. Four teachers from Vidyodaya school took part. Varieties of craft were distributed in the mela.

4.10 Curriculum & Teaching Materials

A new curriculum was prepared for Class 3 level social studies. The topics were about 5 Adivasi groups in Gudalur. The material that had been collected by the culture team was made suitable for class 3 level.

New teaching materials in English, Social studies and Science were prepared. In English, materials for phonetics, reading, and vocabulary building were made for the children of 3rd and 4th standards. Matching cards for the districts of Tamilnadu, and states of India were made so that the children find it easy to remember names and work on their own. Materials for correlating and association of objects help the 1st std children in their cognitive development.

4.11 Assembly Activities

Prayer activities are conducted every day from 9:00 to 9:30 am. All the teachers and the students get together for these activities. Every term a schedule of activities is prepared and followed. These activities are sometimes interchanged or new ones added. This year activities were as follows: -

Days	Activities
Monday	Songs in all the tribal languages and in Tamil, English or Malayalam.
Tuesday	Children narrating stories or reciting rhymes individually
Wednesday	Newspaper reading and discussions about the news read
Thursday	Physical Exercises
Friday	Cultural Dance

4.12 Craft

In the afternoons, the students are engaged in craft work. The children from class 1-5 are divided into 5 groups:

Groups	Boys	Girls	Total
Bead chain	7	1	8
Wire bag	4	6	10
Drawing	6	3	9
String art	7	2	9
Macramé	7	2	9
Total	31	14	45

LKG and UKG children do coloring during the craft time which helps them in the motor skill development.

4.13 Teacher training and Skill Development

Budget training for Vidyodaya school teachers was conducted on 24th June. Our accountant Sreeja taught the teachers how to divide the annual budget of the school for each month. She also explained the line items of the budget and the money allocated for each item.

- Internal training for junior teachers
On August 12th, Janaki teacher gave materials training for Parvathi, Saroja and Suba, teachers from Vidyodaya school. The importance of the training was, how to use the materials for a child.
- Balwadi Training
Balwadi teachers training was conducted on 18th July. Balwadi teachers from 4 areas attended this meeting. Janaki teacher trained the teachers from the ICDS centre. She explained about the importance of the materials and how to use it for the maximum benefit of the children. The teachers shared their suggestions and their problems during the meeting. The following were the suggestions:
 - 1) How to make Teaching Learning Materials
 - 2) The need for training every two months
 - 3) Guidance from Vidyodaya

The problems faced by them were:

Inability to take care of the children in the ICDS

- 1) When they are on official duty
- 2) When one teacher is assigned more than one centre
- 3) When there are no building facilities.

- Training for SSA teachers:

The teachers from Vidyodaya conducted regular trainings for the teachers from our SSA school. In the beginning of the academic year, P.Shanthi teacher conducted training regarding setting up structures, writing lesson plans and using teaching aids. Janaki teacher conducted sessions and helped with afternoon craft activities, organizing the materials in school and the personal belongings of the students.

A structure was set so that, teachers from the SSA school took turns so that everyday two of them could come to Vidyodaya for classroom observations and planning.

On Saturdays, teachers from Vidyodaya and the Education team area coordinators conduct non-academic activities for the children in SSA.

- Support for Foundation Course

The VBVT also runs a Foundation Course for the teen drop-outs among the Adivasi community. The mission of the foundation course was to enable youth to learn to imagine creatively, reason systematically and learn continuously, to confidently interact with the outside world and possibly become anchors in their community by exposing them to various skills and knowledge while staying rooted in their values.

English and craft classes for these students was conducted by Suja teacher from Vidyodaya School.

5. ADIVASI FOUNDATION COURSE

For the year 2017-18, we had 16 youth enrolled in AFC, and also we have been supporting 3 kids from the previous batch studying at our network institutions. We achieved nearly 80% of our planned objectives and missed out on the remaining due to lack of opportunities, time or resources.

During and after the course, it was felt that every single kid went through some kind of transformation, many times unique to the individual. Several of these changes were noted and shared by their own parents, staff members outside of AFC and by their peers. Generally speaking, confidence of every child increased several folds in dealing with new people, overcoming challenges and managing difficult emotional situations. They are seen to be more responsible and willing to take ownership in dealing with various situations. They see a new meaning in their lives, with a resolve to make a difference.

In addition to the kids, the 5 full-time teaching staff members and a few other voluntary teachers also had a great learning experience in designing and executing an unconventional programme.

This year AFC included regular sessions on Maths, English, Tamil, Computer Programming, Adivasi Knowledge, Life Skills, Tailoring & Hand-stitch, Crafts, CORT thinking & Human Intellect, FRA, Electricals and Gardening. In addition, there were several other activities which are briefed below.

- **Community Work:** The group painted the office walls depicting cultural elements of the 4 different local tribes, using traditional materials and techniques. AFC group helped dismantle a storage room that collapsed due to heavy rains. The children made a Greeting card and hand-woven thread neck piece for each of the 30 GoMAD (Cycling for a cause) riders, and performed some tribal dance and songs during their welcome program. The children took responsibility to plan and execute a well appreciated Street Play demonstrating Adivasi Lifestyle on December 5, for Adivasi Day celebration in the Hospital. Kids increased their self-confidence several folds by planning on their own Pongal festival celebration and traditional dances, songs and games on campus. The children are grouped into 3 teams and each team gets involved every morning community activity like vegetable cutting in the kitchen, cleaning the classroom and surroundings.
- **Organizing a leadership camp:** The AFC group facilitated a 3 days Leadership camp for about 80 children from different villages, a crucial community involvement where they got to exercise many of their skills. Besides the freezing cold of December, the AFC group worked as a team in running the camp. The children were leading many activities including teaching craft, running

the critical discussion sessions after a Movie screening, providing guidance & support for the participants and conducting games activities. A team of 2 children with a teacher gave a presentation on 'Machineries and Future Jobs' to bring awareness among the participants on the need for education. Overall, this camp gave the children a good boost and improved their confidence level and the participants from the community were impressed with the leadership skills of this group.

- Reversing the generation gap: 60 Health Animators from different villages visited Vidyodaya School and there was a mutual exchange of talking about their experiences. AFC children had put up an exhibition on their craft and other hand-made products and explained to their elders on what they have been learning here in the course. In turn, the animators shared their experiences on how they support people in the community through various activities right from guiding them for appropriate health access, following up with pregnancy care, child malnutrition management and so on. They danced together, questioned and learned from each other.
- Guest sessions: 3 foreign volunteers conducted a critical thinking programme through movies with many activities and group discussions that increased the awareness of the influence of media on the kids' thinking. A TISS student exposed the kids to various elements of street play, enabling the kids to enact a simple and powerful street play. The kids interacted with a retired Geography teacher from Scotland, discussing about traditional and scientific views on various aspects of Earth & Universe and also enjoyed building a model volcano. Kids also went for a counselling session with Veena at Adivasi hospital so that we can understand their problems through another viewpoint. The group participated in a new 'Lifeskills through Frisbee' programme as well. Kids hosted 14 teenage students from Patshala school Chennai, and the two groups exchanged Adivasi and telugu songs along with craft products display.
- During the multiple parents meetings in the year, Kids presented their learnings and experiences, beautifully exhibited their makings, performed tribal and other dances and songs. Students meet every week to discuss their problems, possible solutions and make decisions to overcome some of them.



- Educational Tours: AFC Children and the teachers visited Marutham Farm school in Tiruvanamalai for a 10 days craft week and exhibition where they were exposed to 20 different varieties of traditional crafts and the Afforestation work done in the hill. Group also went on a 5-day visit to Wayanad and Calicut, including river cleaning with CFL school kids at Gurukulam botanical sanctuary (GBS), Sargalaya craft village, harbour, Veppur ship production facility, planetarium and tribal museum.



AFC students at the Craft Mela at Marudam Farm School, Thiruvannamalai

- Adivasi Village Visits: Kethan AMS President took the group to 3 villages in Theppakad to understand on Bettakurumba tribal culture, lifestyles their community issues and Elephant characteristics at the Elephant camp. The group also visited 2 villages in Erumad to attend a Gramsabha meeting to understand the importance of FRA and visit a study centre interacting with nearby villagers.



- AMS institutions visit: AFC group visited Adivasi hospital to understand and learn various aspects of medical services, and discussed with Dr. Nandakumar on preventive health and on major health issues in Adivasi community today. Group visited Sarva Siksha Abhiyan school on Independence day and their science exhibition to see how the other drop-out children in their community are coping up. A visit to the Just Change Coffee Cycle Project and a well-written report by the kids gave a good insight on how the bean from the coffee trees turns to powder. Group also visited PLENTI interacting with volunteers from other countries who were happy to see the confidence and thoughtfulness behind the questions and answers of the kids



AFC students interacting with Dr.Nandakumar during their visit to the Adivasi hospital

Included are some personal stories of the kids

1. Manikandan is a paniya boy who is passionate about football and loves to be with friends. He dropped-out of school in his 9th grade as he was not excelling in academics, constantly ignored by the teachers in his school and was never guided or supported to improve his academic level. He started to roam around with friends, play, without interest to learn anything, got into substance use, using foul language and disrespectful to other people. He was also scolded by others for being irresponsible. When he joined the course he had a lot of anger, impatience to learn and was disrespectful to the teachers. Then he got acquainted with new friends and had a new experience of his teachers being very patient with him to teach with care even if he doesn't excel in something. That turned him and he started showing interest to learn. He opened up, started taking responsibilities and now has a goal to continue his studies. His parents are very happy that he has become responsible and is able to guide his siblings on how to use money responsibly.
2. Rajesh is a Kattunayakan boy who had issues socializing with any new people and always liked to have free-thinking style. When he joined here he was very silent, showed less interest in learning, felt lonely and reluctant to make new friends. He had 3 subjects to clear for his 10th grade. Here he got opportunities to express his talent like pencil sketching, craft and drama. This gave him good confidence about himself and started to make new friends. With lot of counselling from teachers and some Life Skills sessions, his socializing skills started improving. Today he is able to create a new drama – making script, bringing people together, giving practice etc. He has given his 10th exams (3 subjects) with lot of perseverance to study with little help.

3. Sandhya was a very silent and sensitive Paniya girl who has talent in art and craft expressions. When she joined here she was very reserved, not expressing her problems, doubting her academic capabilities and had less confidence overall. Her first year of the course was smooth enough to keep her here and improved her arithmetics and language skills to some extent. However she still had less confidence about herself of going to a new school. Her decision to stay back for another year helped her in many ways. She got more opportunities to explore her skills and started realizing her talent. Being able to help her friends in their art and craft also gave her confidence. She started showing more interest in mathematics and English. Today she goes to the front of the class and teaches others on mathematics. She also has decided that she could manage in a new school and continue her 9th grade.

As with any programme, AFC has not been without its challenges. The most critical challenge we faced was in dealing with the teenage issues and personal/family issues among the children. It was also difficult in enabling the kids to adapt to a new environment with different climate or cultural aspects. Most often, empathetic conversations with the kids enabled the teachers to overcome many of these issues. Secondly, efforts are on-going to plan the succession of the AFC co-ordination as the non-tribal couple who were handling it have to relocate outside Gudalur due to their family reasons.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqpthXadHKE&t=23s>

6. TEACHER TRAINEES

The teacher training programme was conceived in order to have young people who could teach up to primary level in the villages. VBVT has been conducting these training in the past and in the recent past between 2011 and 2015 it conducted two such two-year training programmes. The trainees were essentially drop-outs from the community and put through an intensive two-year training programme along the lines of the Tamil nadu govt's D.L. Ed syllabus. It was of course modified to suit the conditions of the local community and context. These trainees would after the programme continue to work with the organisation under the supervision of Mentor teachers. We now have the following persons working with the organisation and are paid a stipend:

Sl no	Name	Area of work
1	Meena	Foundation course
2	Nalini Ganesh	Foundation Course
3	E. Chandran	Foundation Course
4	Saroja	Librarian, Vidyodaya school
5	R. Parvathi	Teacher, Vidyodaya school
6	Vishnu	Teacher, Vidyodaya school
7	Prasath	Teacher, Kootat Study Centre
8	V. Chandran	Education Coordinator, Gudalur Area
9	M. Parvathi	Teacher, SSA school
10	Jothimani	Teacher, SSA school
11	Nisha	Teacher, SSA school
12	Priya	Teacher, SSA school
13	Saravanan	Teacher, SSA school
14	Sekar	Teacher, SSA school

7. OUTREACH

7.1 Coverage

Villages covered: There has been no change in the number of villages covered – we are covering 295 out of the 303. Effectively we are covering all the villages and taking care of the educational needs of the children but as not to get into a the wrong side of certain NGOs we have maintained a certain distance in terms to certain programmes like Camps and scholarships.

Student coverage: In the beginning of each year VBVT along with the SSA does a survey of the number of children in the schools in each of the classes and also the number of children who have dropped out. Then during the months of June to August, a massive effort is made to mainstream them through various methods. The SSA school of VBVT and the SSA school of Ambalamoola has been able to absorb a large number. During the year around 45 children were mainstreamed in these two schools. The rest mainly the ones in the Primary sections were mainstreamed in the schools from which they dropped out. It is quite a matter of appreciation that our Area Education coordinators were able to mainstream almost all of them. The bigger children especially the boys were difficult as they had gone to work outside the state. Keeping constant tabs on these children and ensuring that they keep at school has been a major effort. Also working along with the school teachers in the various schools is often a bigger strain.

The number of students who are going in for higher education is significant and that is encouraging in the whole. This shows that the community is aspiring for better jobs and better life. In the early years, it was only from the Mullukurumba community that children would go to college, but now there are more Paniya and Bettakurumba children going to college.

One can also see that the vulnerable group at class 8 and 9 needs to be addressed but this is a difficult one as children are spread out and one is not in a position to ensure that children learn. The Foundation course is a good system but to have a residential course for over 100 children is not practical.

7.2 School-going adivasi students in villages covered under the project:

Class	No of students
1	286
2	257
3	353
4	292
5	270
6	367
7	360
8	308
9	303
10	144
Total	2806
11	106

12	91
Post-school	108
Grand Total	3107

7.3 Drop-outs

2017-18	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Total
Surveyed June 2017	8	31	32	33	32	41	46	52	45	31	351
Mainstreamed	8	31	32	33	32	40	41	44	35	21	317

7.4 Area Education Coordination

The coordination of the various education programmes in the villages continues on a war footing. There are 8 Area coordinators attached to an Area office and covering roughly 30 villages. They have to ensure enrolment in the schools and in the Balwadis, ensure that there are no drop-outs or if children do drop out then try to take them back to the schools, or get them employed profitably somewhere else like apprentices. Otherwise the fear that they may get into alcohol abuse is a very real one.

In addition to the 8 Area coordinators, VBVT has a full time person to coordinate the ECE programme and another full time person to coordinate aspects on the field for the institutions.

VBVT also has Village Education workers who are essentially escorts to take the children to and from school or the Balwadi. The number varies depending up on the need but there are between 11 and 15 workers at different times. These persons have been the back bone of the programme and they have over the years taken hundreds of children to school. Today the older children take the younger ones. The 11 workers take as many as 100 children to school today.

8. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)

While there have been many improvements against a variety of development indicators, this weakening of village and community structures has also resulted in problems like lack of access to ICDS centres resulting in growing malnutrition on the one hand and the deprivation of early childhood education. The inappropriateness and lack of access to government programmes has meant that a large number of children do not avail of the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services). Our challenge is to ensure that all barriers to the ICDS are removed. The scope and reach of the education programme is to be strengthened by getting involved with Early Childhood Education at one end of the education spectrum and with programmes to ensure that children do not drop out at the other end.

This year VBVT has taken on 3 more centres in Vellery, Bospara and Benne – so now has 18 centres that it is directly working with. This is because of the pressure from the local communities and the ICDS staff to give support. So at present these are the centres we are working in:

Area	S.No.	Name of Balawadis	Name of Teachers	Assistant Teachers	Name of Aya
Ayyankolly	1	Manalkolly - ICDS	S.Suganya		Radha
Devala	2	Kumamoola - ICDS	S.Jothilakshmi		Saraswathi
Devarshola	3	Kadichankolli - NGO	Pravitha	Bommi	Kethi
Devarshola	4	Karkapally - ICDS	Lalitha		Meenachi
Devarshola	5	Kawundankolli - ICDS	V.Sreeja		Reena
Erumad	6	Thirumangalam - ICDS	K.Prajitha		Yasotha
Erumad	7	Cherachal - NGO	Jayasudha		Kalyani
Gudalur	8	Theppakadu - ICDS	C.Jaya		Sarasu
Gudalur	9	Kodamoola - NGO	Pappamma		Bommi
Pattavayal	10	Choladi - ICDS	Sunitha		Rabiya
Pattavayal	11	Kaniyanvayal - ICDS	A.Madavi		Suseela
Ponnani	12	Kadalakolli - ICDS	A.rajalakshmi		Reena
Srimadurai	13	Chembakolli - ICDS	Girija	Vasanth	Suseela
Srimadurai	14	Kozlikandy - ICDS	Suseela		Yasodha
Srimadurai	15	Pozhampatty - ICDS	C.Sathi		Pushpa
Srimadurai	16	Bospara ICDS	C.Seyamala		Nill
Srimadurai	17	Benna ICDS	B.Kumari		Yasotha

As with the school education programme, here with the ECE programme too we have not made much headway with regard to our target of education for the children in the Balwadi. From the community end there has been a concerted effort to bring the children to the centres. This is as much as they can do. Teaching the children is the task of the teachers in the centres and over this they have no control. We have suggested to the ICDS to have an assessment of the children at the time of leaving the centre so that they have achieved certain minimum academic levels. They have not come out with a system so far although they are experimenting in Chennai. This is seriously affecting the tribal children as their proficiency in language is affected and leads them to drop out at the Primary school stage itself. Nowadays, the class 1 text books demand that the children already have prior knowledge of certain matters.

There is a very high degree of malnutrition too in these villages mainly due to alcoholism of parents. So the effort has been to ensure that the children receive the nutritional supplements as otherwise it could lead to stunting which is another danger that we are seeing. Stunting leads to learning difficulties for children.

This year too we have ensured that children who have finished from the Balwadi enrol in class 1.

No of Balwadis	No of Teachers	No of Attendants	Total No of Adivasi students April 2017	No attending	No. enrolled in school -June 2017
18	18 (2 by VBVT)	18	307	232	50

Regularity of children attending ICDS centres

March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018
50%	70%	87%	90%

The education team and the health team has also seen the impact of the work with the Balwadis so far and this has encouraged them to come forward to take up the programmes. It was difficult initially to get even staff members to see the importance of working with the children in the pre-school stage. As with the schools, it is quite clear that in future very little will be needed in these 18 villages to get parents to send their children to the Balwadis. The next stage will require that we expand to other centres at least some of the aspects like attendance, nutrition and regularity of teachers. Teachers are also not always available in the centres.

Programmes	Planned	Programmes Conducted
Training for ECE team of 10 persons -	3 sessions	4 sessions
Meeting with ICDS officials	4 meetings	5 officially but others too
Support meetings for Village ECE committee	30 meetings	39 meetings
Exposure visit for team and parents	1	1

The parents and team members have also had the opportunity to go on an exposure visit to Kozhikode in Kerala where there are some excellent centres run by local communities. This has been a huge boost to the morale and encouragement of the local people here.

The temporary centre in Chembakolli continues to run with a limited number of children as all the children cannot reach the place. The permanent centre has finally been sanctioned by the Panchayat and a sum of 11 lakhs has been set aside and the contract also is given. So as soon as the rains are over in 2018, the construction will begin. Karkapaali continues to be a problem mainly because a building is not available.

9. CAMPS

Although VBVT had no financial support for Camps, we had a cyclist who came up with an idea to support us for this purpose and he was able to raise as much as Rs 1.5 lakhs which was used to

conduct these camps. These have been large numbers and again it has targeted the vulnerable age group of 13 to 18 years. This year the camps were essentially around games, especially Ultimate Frisbee. For this VBVT collaborate with an organisation called ONE ALL which uses Frisbee to teach values, life education, and various other aspects that are very beneficial for children. VBVT has entered into an arrangement with ONE ALL to continue this process during the year even during holidays and train our team to undertake this educational process.

Camps	No. of students attending
May 2017	100
December 2017	84
Total	184



Pictures from camp, December 2017: (From left) Picture 1: Craft workshop , Picture 2: Reflection session for the students

10. SCHOLARSHIP

Category	Numbers	Amount
School students	20	31,725
College students	8	1,08,589
Teachers	7	45,367
TOTAL	35	1,85,681

Although the number of persons have been almost the same as last year the amount given has reduced as we have tried to link some of the higher education scholars to the donors directly. Some donors prefer this and so we have put a few of them on this direct link too. All scholarships are given through the Area Teams, who negotiate with the parent as to the percentage that they can pay. Usually it is 50-50 deal that is struck, unless the parent is in dire straits.

11. STUDY CENTRES

The Study Centre in Kootat village run by Prasath continues and it is these children who are attending the Government Tribal school in Kappala. No other children attend. There are 35 of them and the teachers there find Prasath's work a great support.

Two more centres were started up, one in Ponnani Area centre and the other in Koomamoola village in Devala Area. Both worked well with around 20 children attending both. Continuing both after the holidays is the main task. It has not been easy to run these centres as there were no persons in the immediate vicinity to take care of them. So a team of 6 teacher trainees led by Vishnu from Vidyodaya school has been attending to both on weekends. Two teams were formed to alternate between the two centres.

12. CONCLUSION

The coming year throws up new challenges with the need to find some one to anchor the Foundation Course as the two persons who are taking care of it are leaving. An assessment of the work done and how to take it forward will need to be done.

The Vidyodaya school needs to move out fast and so the preparation for getting a design and construction will have to be undertaken too. Having only a primary school is not helping parents who don't want to keep shifting their children.

The SSA school is doing well but we still need to put systems in place. The government's insistence on qualifications and our inability to find persons with it have left a gap. We still need a full time Head mistress and a science teacher. Hopefully in the next academic year we will be able to find people who will be committed to the adivasi children.

On the field, there is a growing and compelling need to push the ICDS staff to take a lot more interest in the centres and in the adivasi children. We need to do this without rubbing them on the wrong side otherwise we will get no further cooperation. We also need expand our area of work and ensure that more children attend the various centres as we have a growing number of children with malnutrition. We have been working in tandem with the Ashwini's health personnel to ensure that more nutrition centres are started and more children are attending the centres.

As far as the children going to school are concerned we do not have much more to do as such as from now much will depend on the quality of education that they can get. It is encouraging to see that a large number of children are doing their Higher secondary courses and also going to college or ITI. This means that in due course others will also follow. However, where they are stuck is to find some financial support to carry on with this level of education. There is a growing need to find funding for scholarships.

As one can see from the data given above there is a large number of drop-outs at the 13 to 16 age group. These young people tend to get into alcoholism. This is a danger that we are trying hard to avert. Our major thrust in terms of games for both boys and girls by encouraging Ultimate Frisbee, football, volleyball, Kabaddi and sports has helped to bring together and address these issues with over 200 of them. VBVT's collaboration with ONE ALL, organisation that promotes values using sports is not making inroads into these communities.

This year a major area of work is to ensure that children at the Primary level do not drop out and also to find out the reasons why this is happening.

With the TATA trust funds coming to end in the coming year, VBVT will have to re-think its strategy of functioning as consistent funding may not be available. This will affect many of the programmes in the field. Nevertheless, there is enough goodwill that has been generated by VBVT in the community as well as in larger public and it is expected that the work will continue in the years to come.