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Plustrust News '10-'11



Dear Friends of Plustrust

Plustrust was thought of in October 2008. We began with scattered activities in Hyderabad. By October 2009, we had written up our trust deed and set about formalising the entity. The trust deed was registered on 8th May 2010 and we could set up our financial and operational arrangements over the year. In the last year two aspects of our work took shape and went beyond the embryonic stage. We are happy to share with you an update of our recent activities.

Inclusive Education

We realized soon that we need an 'agenda' of our own to attract and effectively support fellowship holders. We have been able to move forward on this particularly with regard to inclusive education.

Gurukulam Project

In March 2010, we were invited to develop a self assessment process for schools in tribal areas run by the government of Andhra Pradesh. We visited 15 schools in remote corners of AP and witnessed the challenges that children face in gaining access to education. Several friends with interest and experience in inclusive education came forward to be part of the team.

Inclusive Play

Meanwhile we began collaborating with Kilikili which works in Bangalore on inclusive play. This was an introduction to the challenges that autistic children face in integrating with their peers and in more general terms the issues involved in integrating children with special needs in regular schools.



Fellowships

In 2010 we began getting a few applications for fellowships and we have been able to work with four projects so far. The fellowship holders presented their work to a small group of well wishers on Plustrust Day which was celebrated on 8th May 2011 at Bangalore. We are happy to offer you a summary of what they shared.



Varnamaya, Chennai

Bhuvaneshwari B G a trained professional in Art Based Therapy (ABT) presented the progress with her project, Varnamaya. She explained these methods and their impact on children from difficult family situations and socio-economic background. She also shared her plans to extend her work further. The audience took keen interest in understanding her work and offered suggestions too. Mr B Subba Rao offered to introduce her to some editors and Dr Vislakshi Padmanabhan shared details on use of ABT in the post Tsunami counseling efforts.





Plustrust Fellow 2010-2011
Bhuvaneshware B G, **Varnamaya, Chennai**



Bharat Calling, Itarsi

Sandeep Mehto from Itarsi presented his work in Kesla block to link bright students from remote villages to opportunities for higher education. Currently 75 children are receiving coaching and preparation for entry to good higher education institutions. This is based on an earlier summer project. He received suggestions from Anuradha to link up with Eklavya and Pradan. P. Ambedkar emphasized the importance of English language skills for those going for college education. The need for critical examination of the nature of higher education itself was also discussed.



Plustrust Fellow 2010-2011
Sandeep Mehto, ***Bharat Calling, Itarsi***



Reservations and Scientific Research, New Delhi

P. Ambedkar presented preliminary findings from his research leading to MPhil in JNU. He has studied the situation of science researchers from marginalised backgrounds in elite research institutions. They face tremendous social pressures in the hostels. In addition they find no resource or support to cover the gaps in their preparatory education from the research institutions. The severity of the crisis is manifest in the suicides by such research scholars and the attempts by the authorities to either deny or dismiss these events. Anuradha suggested that he should establish contact with the Dalit Foundation in Delhi.



Plustrust Fellow 2010-2011 . P. Ambedkar, *JNU Delhi*

Samabhava ,Bangalore

Sandesh Raju of Samabhava spoke of his work to improve the lives of working animals like ponies and donkeys in the city. It became clear that these animals are indeed playing an



important role in the city even today. They suffer from lack of adequate health care services. The owners themselves are poor and the veterinarians are not taught to care for equines. He is planning to build his organisation and Plustrust hopes to help him in planning for such expansion.



Plustrust Fellow 2010-2011
Sandesh Raju **Samabhava, Bangalore**



Caring Hands for Animals , Hyderabad

This is a new organisation set up by three committed women, Padmaja ,Priyanka and Vani.They could not join the meeting but sent their presentation on the plans for caring for animals. They have been working to improve the plight of animals in the corporation pounds in Hyderabad. They are now hoping to manage a facility in the animal husbandry department in Hyderabad .Plustrust hopes to help the work.



Plustrust Fellow 2010-2011 .
Caring Hands for Animals , Hyderabad



Other Highlights of Plustrust Day 2011

Plustrust supporters came in from all quarters! Mr Subba Rao and Pradnya came from Hyderabad as did Shanti and Amartya. Mrs Gowri came in from Chennai to witness her daughter, Bhuvaneshwari's presentation of Varnamaya. Arul Kani and Ashwini were Gowri's friends who could join. Other friends who could join in were Visalakshi Padmanabhan, Anuradha Eswar, Madhu, Sarah. Ikshvaha's presence was very special too for the family members.

The afternoon was devoted to pottery and tile making. Annapoorni Sitaram very kindly agreed to organise this in her studio. She had made meticulous preparations for the dozen people who turned up in the studio. Vidya Murali joined in. Mahalakshmi brought her daughters and two young friends. Sharanya, Bhuvaneshwari, Mrs Gowri, Kani, Aswini and Ambedkar were the others who could join in. We had a great time and we hope we can use some of the output to decorate the Plustrust office.



Pottery session with Annapoorni Sitaram





Pottery session with Annapoorni Sitaram

What Next

Plustrust Day strengthened our belief that we are on the right path. We hope that our work will gather momentum in the coming year. We look forward now to working more closely with Samabhava and Caring Hands for Animals in the next few months.

Similarly we will continue our association with the Gurukulam schools in the coming year also. By June or July we also hope to begin our work with schools in Bangalore on inclusive education. We hope to offer at least six new fellowships in the coming year. We are also making our plans to set up our own office and build a reserve fund to meet anticipated growth in fellowships.

We invite your suggestions and ideas to take our work further ahead.

Thanking you for your support and good wishes
Shanty Yeachuri, Smriti Kedia Maroo,
Lalitha Iyer & Trustees.

