

**KAIGAL EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM  
KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA**

**REPORT FOR THE YEAR – JUNE 2021 – MAY 2022**



**Parijatham Sanctuary School - Kalligutta**

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**The Kaigal river flowing through the Thottakanama forest**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This was an eventful year, as we all know, a year of extreme vagaries. April 2021 started with the severe second wave of the pandemic and as this was gradually tapering down by July an early monsoon set in bringing bounteous rainfall to this otherwise dry land. Rains continued to pour over many months, the forests flourished and the lakes, streams and rivers overflowed after many years! The rains brought so much joy and hope to the people and gradually a semblance of normalcy returned to their lives by November.

## **WORK DONE OVER THE YEAR**

### **i. SANCTUARY SCHOOLS**

#### **Welcoming children back**

Schools reopened in November during this academic year, in line with the government guidelines. After a few more disruptions due to excessive rain fall and flooding in the area we began normal operations by end of November.



**Sriranjani interacting with students**

The focus initially was primarily on bringing children back to the routine of school work and participation in various learning activities. While we had been in touch with children and the communities continuously, the children needed a reorientation

back to the routine of coming to school regularly as well as in working within the classroom.

### **Curriculum over the year**

Our curriculum included different activities like nature walk, birding and gardening and forest study while also working on their reading, writing and math skills. Over the course of the term from January – April, students became more confident in their reading and writing and were by and large, working at age-level competencies. Students also completed a 5 week project on documenting the birds in their surroundings and made calendars with bird illustrations.

Towards the end of the school year, due to the reduced hours (as per government rules, due to rising temperature), we focused on more hands-on art and craft work for children, while also helping the school-leaving children with their reading and math learning.



**Student presentations and group work**

Our play group was also started in November and students were introduced to various hands-on activities, including pre-numeracy and literacy.



**A play group class room**

### **Renewal of recognition under education department**

During this year, we also had to respond to some changes in government guidelines for private schools, under which we were asked to provide a justification for the need for these schools. With the community supporting the need for our schools and with intervention from Rishi Valley Educational Centre, both our schools were able to complete the renewal process for school registration

## ii. LEARNING CENTRES IN NEIGHBOURING VILLAGES

During this academic year, we further strengthened the working of the Learning Centre in Vengamvaripalli village and opened another one in Kadathatlapalli village. The Learning Centres have community facilitators from the villages themselves. Four facilitators were recruited during the year to work in the Learning Centres.

### ***The Learning***

*He joined us in 2019 when we first started this learning space in Vengamvaripalli. Lakshmanan is his name . He is around 11 years of age. "He is different" was all that the teachers would say. And he would come smiling to our Centre every day, play with the materials, sit with a smile in our story-telling sessions and go back. When schools were closed, when we visited the village for a meeting with the facilitators, he came to greet us again, with a smile and without uttering a word. This year again, he was in the Centre, identifying letters and speaking, communicating with others, making his own art. He had a special smile for us. What we have contributed to his learning is difficult to tell, but it is very clear that the Centre was a warm, welcoming and enriching place for him where he seems to be happy. He reminds us of what education is about.*

These are after-school Learning Centres that are open on all days of the week (except Sundays) in the evenings for 2 hours. The Learning Centres are addressing an important need in the villages by providing a resource-rich and enriching learning environment for children attending government schools. In these Centres, the approach to learning is the same as in our schools, focusing on children's individualized learning paths and providing a holistic learning experience. Faced with the disruptions due to the pandemic, the village government schools were also greatly welcoming of this initiative and these Learning Centres are operating in premises provided by the government schools.

Between these two Centres, we were able to reach around 85 to 90 students (between 8 and 12 years of age) in two villages.

We have also been working towards starting learning centres in 2 more villages. These should start functioning by September /October. We are in the process of identifying and training teachers for the new centres.



**A meeting of learning centre teachers**



### iii. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



#### Story telling workshop

During this year, regular structured learning programs were designed and implemented for the teachers and facilitators. Workshops were conducted in person every month focusing on developing materials for reading and mathematics, strengthening teachers' understanding of experiential learning and also an orientation to the underlying philosophy of learning in the Sanctuary schools. An embroidery and macrame thread work program was developed for the teachers.

## **FIELD STUDIES AND RESEARCH AT KAIGAL CONSERVATION CENTRE**

Kavya a PhD student in Ecological Sciences from IISER, Trivandrum, studied foraging in Honey bee colonies. She spent almost 3 years at the Kaigal Centre and conducted her field work in the forests around.

Manasvi, was another student doing her Masters in Life Sciences from The University of Trans-Disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU), Bangalore , who had spent several months at our Kaigal Conservation Centre and interacted with the tribal communities around as part of her ethnobotanical studies on medicinal plants used by the tribes.

Many other students from IISER had come on shorter field assignments during the year.



**Manasvi at work**

### **3. PLANS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR**

The focus for the year 2022-23 will continue to be on working with the communities and supporting the learning for children. Both the Schools and Learning Centres started functioning from July this year. Keeping in line with the government guidelines, we will also be reporting data on students' learning to government databases. In addition to our regular curriculum, we will also be introducing English back into our schools as well as align with the government prescribed syllabus and textbooks. The total number of students enrolled in our schools this year is 45 from 3 to 10 years of age.

Strengthening the community learning and resource centres will be a focus this year. We are proposing to open two more centres this year in two more villages. Together, we will be reaching more than 200 children across 4 villages between 6-12 years.

A resource portal is proposed to be developed with our curricular modules and interventions that are being piloted in our schools; these could serve as exemplars and resources for similar interventions elsewhere.

In addition to regular teacher preparation programs, we will also be supporting two of our teachers to complete their D.Ed certification. All of our teachers will also be undergoing training programs for spoken English.



**Herbal garden at the Kaigal Centre**