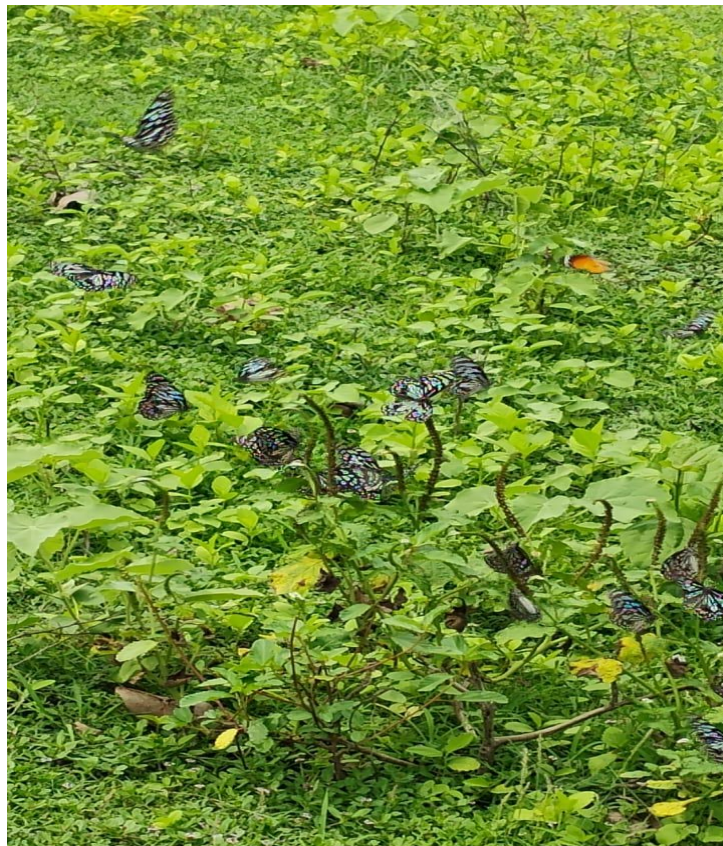


KAIGAL EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM
KRISHNAMURTI FOUNDATION INDIA
KAIGAL, THOTTAKANAM POST, CHITTOOR DISTRICT, A.P

REPORT FOR THE YEAR – JUNE 2023 – MAY 2024



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The year 2023-24 at a glance

It is with great joy that we present this year's report, as the KEEP program entered its 3rd decade of operations. The program and the community regained its strength back as our work resumed in all areas, post the pandemic. In its 21st year of work, the program at Kaigal now caters to 42 children in our two schools and 118 children in our three learning centers. We have 4 full-time teachers in our schools and 6 part-time teachers for our learning centers. Ten environment education programs were conducted with 6 schools and approximately 280 participants. In collaboration with the Native Plant Restoration and Conservation center "Satvan" in The Valley School, KEEP has contributed towards initiating an indigenous-plant nursery and a seed library within the campus.

Work during the year

Sanctuary Schools and Learning Centers

During this period, we focused on improving our Sanctuary School children's exposure to multiple subject areas, including science, mathematics and English. The following were some of the activities.

- Building and maintaining a Butterfly Garden was one activity that the school-year began with. Inspired by their visit to the Butterfly Park in the Bannerghatta National Park, Bangalore in the beginning of the school year, the students and teachers set about creating a butterfly garden behind the class room by growing a carefully selected collection of butterfly-host plants and feeders. This garden soon became a butterfly hub in Parijatham Sanctuary School.
- Teachers were introduced to new ways of enriching Environmental Sciences and English lessons and stories in the textbooks. The methods introduced during the previous years of making read-aloud stories using videos for teaching English and creating different activities for reading, writing and comprehension around the stories, have been adopted by the teachers regularly. Children were also introduced to English stories for 'Story-weaver' at their levels of reading. Exercises for book review were also taken up for children to complete, to strengthen their comprehension skills. Teachers were encouraged to do 'read-aloud' versions of stories and record and share with their peers for feedback. Both the School and Learning Center teachers became confident in the development of English materials. They were also able to extend the lessons by making skits.



- Modules were developed and introduced for teaching geometry and measurements for the children. Both time and length measurements were introduced and activities were done where children measured the time taken for different activities in their environment. They also measured the lengths of different objects in the environment using standard and non-standard measures.



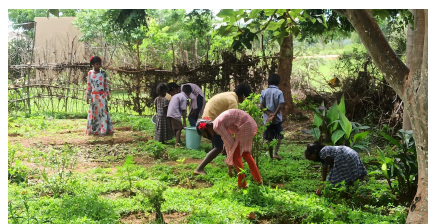
- A Science Exploration Camp was conducted from Feb 26-28 on the occasion of the National Science Day. The objective of this 3-day exploration was for teachers and students to explore happenings around them, observe, reason and equally importantly ‘talk’ about what they understand, what they think is happening, etc. Children and teachers had opportunities to explore the materials, play with the set-up and also talk about what they observed and tried and connected their observations with what they may have seen elsewhere. Life around us, air and water were some of the thematic explorations taken up.
- Students and teachers also visited the science center of Agastya Foundation in Kuppam town, Andhra Pradesh. They were introduced to different science-models and also spent time exploring the library resources and stories.
- In the after-school sessions for older students attending government schools, we have been focusing on supporting them with worksheets for more practice in mathematics as well as reading and writing support for English.
- Children also completed an online introduction to birds based on materials developed by the Nature Conservancy Foundation. While our school children had observed and documented birds locally, this was an opportunity for them to see and hear birds in other environments as well.

- A review of the academic performance of students was conducted in April. Children were able to read, write and speak at their grade-appropriate levels. The older children were able to read English fluently as well. Two children have joined class 6 of the nearby government school and are attending classes regularly. Forty four children have been enrolled in the year 2024-25 in the Sanctuary Schools.



Environment Education and Conservation

- During this year, 10 Environment Education Programs covering schools like Advaya Shaale, Good Earth School, Siksha Montessori School, The Valley School and The Valiants Academy were conducted. Approximately 250 children and 27 teachers were part of these programs. The programs included working with farmers, interviewing farmers about changing farming practices, working in the forest nursery, participating in land care at the Conservation Center and interacting with the children in the Sanctuary Schools.



- A small team from Kaigal Headed by Dr.Sudha has been collecting and processing seeds for the NPRC center Seed and Germ-plasm Bank at The Valley School, Bangalore. The team has also been establishing the Tavaru nursery there. Seeds of more than 150 native species have been collected and saplings of more than 170 native species have been grown in the nursery after identifying appropriate treatment and germination methods.
- A research team from Teachers' College, Columbia University, USA visited the Kaigal Conservation Centre and the Sanctuary Schools and interacted with the tribal communities and the schools to understand the details of the conservation and education work being carried out in KEEP.

Contributions to the Education Space

Jayapalappa, Headmaster and Education Coordinator, along with other teachers from the school submitted an abstract for the Annual Conference of Computational Thinking in Schools, an initiative of CSPathshala and ACM India to strengthen computational thinking in schools. The abstract focused on how an approach to education integrated with the study of the local environment offers opportunity for the achievement of many curricular goals of language development, mathematics-problem solving and computational thinking skills.

Jayapalappa presented a paper at the Conference on preparing a land-use map and how such an activity integrated the elements of computational thinking in design, planning and documentation. This was very well received at the Conference. The Conference participation also allowed Jayapalappa to interact with the teachers and Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh Tribal Schools Society.

Sriranjani, has been part of the “Ennum Ezhuthum” Curriculum Committee for Mathematics in Tamil Nadu, and has been contributing to the development of materials for Primary School children. Many of our approaches of integrating the outdoor environment in the core curricular processes of the Sanctuary Schools have been shared with the Education Department in Tamil Nadu.



Outcomes

1. Our schools have completed 20 years of operation and are continuing to function well with the support of the community. We have become recognized in the teaching community and with the School Education Department for our innovative approaches to teaching-learning.
2. Our schools have also contributed to some form of social stability in the villages. Our own students are now returning to work with children in the Sanctuary Schools and Learning Centers showing the potential for bringing sustainable educational improvements in the community.
3. The establishment and rapid growth of a Native Plant Nursery and Seed Bank for restoration of Native Plant Species at The Valley School in Bangalore is a feather in our cap. It has seen an increasing stream of volunteers wanting to participate in the Conservation effort.

Plans for the year 2024-25

The following will be the focus areas during this year.

1. Strengthening the English learning programs in the schools and initiating this in the Learning Centers. In particular, we will be strengthening the reading program in the Schools and Learning Centers.
2. Digital learning for the older students in the Government Primary Schools attending our Learning Centers and supporting them to successfully complete their schooling; this will be taken up on a priority basis.
3. Creation of a Resource Repository of the materials being developed and piloted in the schools- these could serve as exemplars and a resource for similar interventions elsewhere.
4. Integrating Social Science curriculum with the contexts of the children and building awareness of the problems and ways of solving them.

