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Turning over new leaves

Sandhya Iyengar, Jan 20, 2015,

HELP THEM RISE



Lalcha is studying at the premier National Law School. Lancy is at the Ambedkar Medical College and Chaitra pursues Biotechnology at Ramaiah College. So what is the big deal about this, you ask? All of these students came from slum communities and orphanages across Bengaluru, from disadvantaged backgrounds and are all first-generation learners. What gave them the opportunity and advantage was the schooling they received at Parikrma Humanity Foundation, an NGO that strives to give such children a head start in life.

A disconnect

The CEO and Founder of Parikrma, Shukla Bose, who after studying management at the acclaimed IIM, spent decades in the corporate sector. But once in Bengaluru, home to a well-heeled and salaried software generation, Shukla began to feel the disconnect between growing number of international schools catering to financially well-off families and socially disadvantaged children who could not even dream to access such facilities. Parikrma was born nearly 12 years ago to address this gap and transform the lives of children with an education that would equal the best.

End-to-end model

There are four schools across the city, one junior college and a total of 1600 children studying at these centres under the CBSE board. A 360-degree model ensures an all-encompassing development that percolates down to different aspects in a child's life. Shukla is very sure Parikrma has to be an end-to-end model. The child is kept engaged and addressed beyond school hours by ensuring supportive home environment and health care. Nutrition needs are met with three meals a day, six days of the week.

Holistic approach

Parikrma believes that a good school foundation does not merely begin and end with academics. For these children, many practices have to be in place, beginning with a stable home environment to good placement in different fields. The lives of Parikrma children certainly come full circle once they are inducted.

Children from Parikrma are making a mark on the sports field, bagging awards in inter-school competitions.

The Duke University Talent Identification Programme saw students from Parikrma travel to San Diego for the Global Youth Leadership Summit!

Scholarships are provided to students who show potential, for admission to reputed colleges. Vocational courses round off the high school education and upon completion, students begin to earn in different trades.

Former students of Parikrma walk tall. They work at places like Infosys, Cisco Systems, and Hilton Hotels. A few of them have returned to teach Parikrma kids.

Volunteer network

A strong international volunteer network ensures that the children get exposure to various countries, histories and cultures.

A recent interaction by a group from Myanmar saw the Geography classes come

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alive with charts and presentations from that country. Speaking at student workshops and seminars, learning and performing the intricate whirls of ballet at performances, training at foreign institutes, and being put through the paces to learn high-end technologies and robotic creations from members of the University of Girona, ensures that no opportunity is missed to give the children that extra edge, that special opening. Parikrma is now extending their successful module to Government schools, with a programme called 'Education Transformation Centre'. About 200 Government school teachers are being trained and mentored.