

Karm Marg 1st quarterly report 2012

The months of April and May came with the usual angst and excitement around exam results. This year an unprecedented 99% of our children passed their exams. Hurray! Now we are busy guiding them towards higher education, professional courses and work apprenticeships. It is not always easy to find the right balance between expectations, aspirations and on-the-ground reality.

Education & Carrier

**This year Six children took the 12th class (senior secondary exam, (final school year))
Three children took 10th class (secondary school), Every one of them scored over 70% marks. Three children sat for the secondary level exam from the open school.**

1. Ansuiya was considering further studies but thought it more practical to apply for a teacher training course. She has been accepted for a 3 year course at the Shri Arbindo Ashram in May. They also have residential facilities so she will be staying on their campus.
2. Deepak wanted to go for further studies in art. We have applied to a sponsorship programme from a UK based group that will enable him to attend an art collage for 4 years. We hope to get a positive response from them soon.
3. Four of our children are still confused and we are giving them as much exposure as possible so they can also fulfill their dreams.
4. Three of our young adults settled into jobs.
 - *Laxmi got a placement in a well know restaurant and after a month's training they have given her a job.
 - *After completing Swaraj University in May, Ashu joined a TV channel as a trainee editor in the month of June. He is happy and now considering further studies in Film-making.
 - *Anuraag was selected at the Taj Group of hotels as a chef in training, but after a week he changed his mind. Now he is working in a small company.

Total number of children going for Education – 38



Highlights

1. One new boy aged 5 joined the family in April.
2. Our 5 children with special needs attended a four-week workshop in May. They got a chance to try out block printing, painting, making paper bags, paper Mache and cooking. They had a great time at the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to assess how much these severely disabled children would be capable of understanding and carrying out livelihood related tasks. The results were much better than expected. We are now in the process of designing a training program that will teach them skills to help them lead productive and fulfilling lives. We are also looking for funding for this program.
3. Six of our children attended a theatre workshop during the month of June. We are looking forward to the final performance in July.
4. In June we also organized two workshops on non-violent communication and restorative circles. Our staff and young adults learnt about transforming and resolving conflicts within our community and were made aware of ways to communicate in a positive manner with one another.
5. All the children went to see Madagascar on the 25th of June at the local cinema hall and they had lunch at Haldiram. A fun day.
6. Yearly medical test for the children took place in July.



Activity

1. Our new venture of growing organic vegetables has yielded good results. This season we had so many vegetables that after feeding the children there was enough surplus for us to distribute amongst the staff, the women's group and friends of KM. Next season we are planning to sell some of this surplus and use the income to develop the farm further.
2. We finally got a long-standing dream project underway. This is to gather information about each tree on our campus and highlight its special characteristics. We found an innovative way of narrating these in the form of a story coming from each tree. Our next step is to display these stories using the recycled materials.



Jugaad

Our new product line is now ready and we have started production in full swing for the upcoming exhibition season starting in August.

In May during the summer vacation we gave each child above the age of 14 a chance to participate in a series of workshops. We had a different workshop each week so they gained exposure to a variety of hand working skills. This gave both us and them the chance to assess their potential and interest levels.

We started a system of participatory report writing with the children. Updated on a weekly basis, in future these reports will be used as a baseline for follow up actions. The children had a lot of fun learning this new skill.



Needs and Challenges

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, motivating our young adults, building their self – confidence as well as helping them deal with the confusion with regard to career choices remains one of our biggest challenges. We are constantly on the lookout for people who can help us with this. So far our remote location has proved the biggest hurdle in our finding the right people who can commit regular time to our young adults.

Karm Marg was conceived to be like a large “home” where boys and girls of all ages as also staff can live together like a large family. It was designed to provide a safe, free and nourishing environment for the benefit of everyone. A couple of months ago we got a “wake-up” call from the government. Their mandate- to strictly enforce a law whereby girls and boys cannot share the same campus after the age of 10. Also everyone above the age of 18 would have to be rehabilitated to another campus or home.

We now find ourselves caught between following our vision and obeying the law. We are not happy about the prospect of breaking our family apart. Also we feel that some of the young adults are not yet ready to face the world on their own. Most of them are still learning livelihood skills and studying or attending professional courses. So we are struggling to find out an “in-between” solution.

Following the law would also involve building more infrastructures like a separate home for boys above the age of 10 and a youth hostel for the youth who are still undergoing training. It also means that we will need more long term financial and human resources.

Inflation is giving us a hard time. Everything is getting more expensive and we have still not been able to become fully self -sufficient.

We are working on these problems and look to come up solutions soon.

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