



सत्यमेव जयते



जहाँ है हरियाली ।
वहाँ है खुशहाली ॥

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Action Towards
Sustainability



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Young Leader for Change 2013

JAGRITI



by

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Project Goal

The goal of this project is to devise a module for Environment Education for all upper primary schools in Dadra Nagar Haveli and establish eco clubs in all 122 upper primary schools while placing more emphasis on the 20 model schools. Then, employing the use of these manuals to carry out locally relevant activities, field trips and creative learning in order to instill responsibility in each child towards the environment, and make schools carbon neutral.



Notes from my experiences

When I first started off on this project, after long deliberations with the Administration of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, we had collectively decided that it would be best to start Eco Clubs in all 121 upper primary schools together. Though this was not entirely impractical, it was without a doubt, ambitious. For some reason I had always had the impression that it would not be hard to coordinate and mobilize an effort so long as there was a standardized manual with information on how to set up an Eco Club and proceed with the activities. For a few months, as I worked during my summer break, I kept thinking that it was the way to go, that we could easily start Eco Clubs in all 121 schools and proceed forward with it. So, we kept that as our goal.

However, in August 2013 when I visited Ahmedabad for the first time for the CEE Leadership Conference, I had a chance to interact with peers as well as experts in the field and I soon learnt that while my project showed great promise in theory, it would not sustain to the extent I targeted without a strong foundation. After speaking with several people, I realized that in order to strengthen the base, and ensure the project's sustainability, the 121 schools required an institutional mechanism. It was for this very reason that Mr. Shukla and I decided to create a system of Model Schools in the area. The purpose of these model schools was to create an incentive, an aspiration and as the name suggest, a model for the other schools in the zone to follow.



Understanding the situation on-ground

On interacting with the teachers and students during the course of my visits, the following problems have been noticed:

In brief:

Increasing Workshops and Seminars- Almost all the teachers of the schools agreed that this was one aspect that needed improvement. Though these have been the first few weeks of Eco Clubs, the teachers explained that classrooms and activities get may become monotonous both for the teachers and students. They hoped to participate in workshops for the students and teachers outside of school where they could learn from an expert on issues related to the environment.

Ensuring distribution of scrapbooks- Many of the schools did not receive scrapbooks in the first few weeks of September.. Since the scrapbooks from Salim's Paper were working out to be too expensive, the Administration decided to purchase scrapbooks made of ordinary paper, and these have been distributed to all 20 model schools.

Better organization during field trips- This issue was raised in regard to the field trip conducted for the students to the Science Express Train. Many teachers complained that the notice was too short and it was hard to coordinate the visit. Such circumstances however, were hard to avoid given the fact that we got the invite letter on a short notice, and we tried to tie up for the busses with the DNH Industries Association as soon as we could. However, it has been decided to plan field trips well in advance.

Awards for the students- A number of teachers discussed the need for an event where the students could receive awards for their work in Eco Clubs from a senior officer, so they would feel better appreciated and encouraged for their efforts.

Videos for the students- In some of the 20 model schools, there are televisions or computers and the teachers are keen on utilizing these facilities by playing videos or recordings relevant to the topics being discussed. However, relevant videos are required to be obtained.

Visuals for students- All 20 model school teachers also wanted more poster and books for the Eco Club members. They said that some topics required visual media to draw attention and make concepts clearer.

Some of the problems reported by the Education Department:

Reports: Many of the schools are not reporting their progress regularly to the zone coordinators. There is a need for establishing stronger communication channel between the zone coordinators and schoolteachers.

Funding: The department has suggested putting a banner/ board at the entrance of the UT with information on the project. Additionally, they want to provide t-shirts for the students, which requires funding beyond the preexisting budget given by the District Panchayat.

Action Areas

In coordination with the CEE, we planned for conducting a meeting for the Cluster Resource Coordinators. This idea received great support during the first Teacher Training Session conducted in August 2013 by the CEE and thus, must definitely be pursued.

GREEN TEACHER DIPLOMA

In response to the demands for workshops, we were hoping to initiate the process for a Green Teacher Diploma for the teachers of the 20 schools and zone coordinators in order to really make them experts at teaching the subject of environment education. The Green Teacher is a one year Diploma Programme which includes two CEE conducted sessions of roughly 5 days, self-study and a programme project. The Centre for Environment Education conducts this program all over India and Dadra and Nagar Haveli falls under its West Region. We have already got in touch with Mr. Santoshbhai Gupta who is responsible for this region and hope to start the process shortly.

BANNERS/T-SHIRTS

We are also arranging for T-shirts with Jagriti logo to all Eco Club members through DNH Pollution Control Committee/ CSR funds of industry.

Action Areas

POSTERS/VISUALS

The goal for the next few months would be to make these 20 Model Schools, the ideal standard for the other schools to be inspired by.

By coordinating with the CEE and also some local NGOs, we plan on providing these schools with relevant posters, and books relevant to the activities completed. The CEE also has a series of videos on environment and related issues which can be issued to the schools that have requested for them.

REPORTS

To improve correspondence between Zone Coordinators of Dapada, Kalonda, Sylvassa and Khanvel zones and the in-charge teachers of the 20 schools, we plan on holding regular meetings between them, so as to establish a monthly forum for discussion.

Progress so far

Though Dadra and Nagar Haveli is not a large Union Territory, starting Eco Clubs in about 120 schools together would have made the process extremely hard to monitor and control, a very vital aspect while implementing a new a concept. For this reason, we created a system of 20 Model Schools spread across 4 zones, to strengthen the foundations and generate ideal eco clubs that can inspire the remaining schools to follow their lead.

By 25th September 2013, each of the schools in addition to 80 others had managed to set up their own Eco Clubs, maintaining registers with club's members' names, and the list and review of each activity accomplished by the schools. The teachers in every school are extremely enthusiastic and have taken the initiative to add more activities that are relevant to the club. In addition to the weekly activities, most schools have undertaken tree plantation projects, and celebrated Ozone Day and Wildlife day. The students have also incorporated role-plays, poetry recitations and singing competitions into the various themes given in the manual. The manual is being utilized well and the system of tracking carbon footprints and handprints is working smoothly. The zone coordinators and cluster resource coordinators have been efficient. The greatest success however, has been the contributions made by the industries under their corporate social responsibility through providing busses, and other resources to schools.



The bumps along the road

Firstly, there are roughly 20 upper primary schools that still need to establish eco clubs. Earlier, I had thought that establishing eco clubs was sufficient, but in order to fulfill and excel in their purpose, these schools need to be strengthened and equipped for the same. This means providing them with resources and guiding them through the process. We need to work on addressing the following problems in the course of the next few months;

- Increasing Workshops and Seminars
- Ensuring distribution of scrapbooks
- Better organization during field trips
- Awarding the students and faculty for efforts
- Providing the schools with visual aids

Also, many of the schools are not reporting their progress regularly to the zone coordinators this indicates the need for establishing systems for reporting.

How the team is faring?

Mr. Shukla and I have been working quite efficiently on this project. We have ensured to visit the schools very regularly and will continue to do so. The administration has also been extremely helpful throughout the entire process, particularly Mr. Krishan Kumar, the Director Education of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Though I am unable to visit schools on a weekly basis, Mr. Shukla and I keep exchanging information along with pictures and details. So far, no logistical problems have arisen apart from those raised by the students and teachers.

I think the reason for our efficiency as a team has been the simple fact that each member in the administration, the teachers, the students and myself have pursued this project very passionately.

Every single individual involved has put a huge effort in starting this initiative right from scratch in such a short amount of time to achieve such tremendous progress. I look forward to pursuing my endeavors in this field with them for years to come.



Further steps



As mentioned, the bulk of the work has been completed with the establishment of eco clubs in a total of 102 schools. Now, my personal job is to ensure that each of these eco clubs established is functional, while paying close attention to strengthening the core; the 20 model schools. In the next few months, it is our duty to address each of the problems raised by the students and the schools through increasing workshops and seminars, providing the schools with visual aids, completing weekly activities from the manual and creating close communication channels within the institutional mechanism to make this project sustainable for not just a few months, but for years. With this spirit, the teachers and I are keen on pursuing Green Teach Diploma courses for the faculty. The most importantly upcoming activity however is going to be the Zonal Exposition Fair for the model schools as well as a few other eco clubs. We plan on using this as a forum to showcase the efforts made by each school towards becoming carbon neutral, and inspiring other schools and students to follow suit. Additionally, we would like to have all these eco clubs registered with Paryavaran Mitra by the end of next month. So far, the project has shown great promise, and the final details and polishing should make it a grand success.

The Journey Toward

JAGRUTI

