

# THE IMPACT ISSUE

Last Sunday I was invited to a very special event, a lunch gala hosted by the Parikrma Alumni. Some students of the first two batches rallied around, called all their classmates to organise this grand event. Narayana who is a Chef at Royal Orchid, Santosh who is a Chef at Hilton International took charge of the cooking and rolled out a superb menu most creatively executed. Asha who is the HR Manager of a FMCG company and Diwakar who is in the F&B department at Hilton International was in charge of PR, communication and entertainment. And Shiva who is a software engineer in a multinational IT giant took charge of the management. It won't be just my maternal pride speaking when I say that it was the best Sunday I have had over a long time.

It was sheer wonder laced with pride to see the strapping young men with biceps that have seen many a gyms or the well turned out ladies with budding signs of grace and elegance. I suppose all teachers feel awed when they see their students all grown up. For me it was much more. I was relieved that they were all in touch with each other and continued to be each other's support system. I was moved by their confidence combined with humility. No one entering that farm house, where this party was hosted, would ever guess where these young men and women originally came from. Selvakumar, a qualified nurse in Manipal Hospital shared that he planned to give his mother, who continues to be a cobbler, a thorough health check up as soon as his probationary period is over. He also said that he does not want too many material things in life as he has found joy in service. Shobhana is looking after administration in a multinational IT company and has been selected to attend the company's annual conference in US in November 2015. Karthik who has always been our 'enfant terrible' married his girlfriend of six years and convinced her to be a teacher. He said that he realised how important a role teacher plays in a child's life. I suppose he remembers how we found him on the streets 15



years ago.

I could see transformation all around me. Was I surprised? Not at all. Delighted but not surprised because that is what we had envisioned when we began. My grin from ear to ear dissolved to tears when Diwakar announced the real reason for the get-together. These students had been talking to each other for some time and had decided that they now needed to do something collectively for Parikrma. So they took a pledge they would begin by sponsoring a few children and give me some relief. My children have truly grown up to be the citizens that we wanted them to be.

The credit for this transformation goes to the teachers and the Akkas and Annas of Parikrma. And our gratefulness to all Parikrma friends and supporters who believed in us.

Oh I must not forget, Narayana is planning to participate in the Masterchef competition. You must vote for him!!



# CHANGING THE GAME

The first 12 years of our journey were spent working tirelessly and rigorously to build a holistic programme of academics, extra-curriculars and community care. We are now beginning to see the lasting impact of our model, and have been able to take our programme to the next level. Two initiatives kicked off this year that brought our children together with students from other schools. These events show how Parikrma can change the way schools interact on academic and extra-curricular platforms, by rethinking traditional cultural and competitive programmes.

## A Celebration of Learning

The Festival of Science, supported by Synopsys, is a celebration of learning. This first-of-its-kind event in the city took science out of the classroom and fostered a spirit of discovery among students from private, government and non-profit schools. For five days, students donned sparkling white lab coats and settled into mixed school groups for experiments, workshops and field trips to learn all that they could about this year's theme, "water". The festival was inaugurated by every child's favourite former-President, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who inspires curiosity and perseverance, who encourages children to dream big.

Scientists, conservationists, activists and policy-makers came together at the festival to create an atmosphere in which students could learn and engage with science in a fun way. As socially engaged scientists, children recorded their reflections in a memorandum and shared their ideas with water user groups across the city. As M S Yashaswini (Nagarjuna Vidya Niketan School) said in a quote to The Times of India, "We usually don't measure how much water we use and tend to waste it. What we learnt here will have an impact on our life." We hope to make The Festival of Science an annual affair, to encourage students to look at the role that science plays in society and to become important voices in discussions that affect their communities.



**Celebrating the Spirit of Discovery: Former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam addresses the Festival of Science The Parikrma Health Awards**

One of the key elements of the Parikrma programme right from the start has been health. We learnt early on that a child who is hungry, ill or unhappy cannot focus at school and cannot make the most of learning opportunities. In order to create more awareness of the importance of physical, psychological and social well-being, we instituted the Parikrma Address School Health Awards. The awards were open to schools across the city, and several applications were received. Schools were shortlisted by an eminent panel of judges, and those with high rankings would qualify for the overall 'Healthy School' award. In order to address every aspect of a child's health, the Parikrma Health Awards identified 12 categories to rate a school's health programme.

As we enter our 13th year of operations, we have become increasingly involved in the education space in Bangalore and the rest of the country. Having revolutionised the way in which we educate our marginalised, we continue to push boundaries of excellence and reinvent traditional perspectives on education. For there to be positive change, there must be a holistic understanding and a bottom-up approach to making a difference. The Parikrma Festival of Science and the Parikrma Address School Health Awards are steps towards changing views on what really matters to children and to schools.



# EDUCATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

**A**t Parikrma, education has always pushed the boundaries of traditional learning and curriculums. Our children learn both in the classroom as well as on the sports ground, on field trips and through interactions with volunteers and friends from around the world. While we understand the value of academic learning, we ensure that this learning is not restricted to text books and structured classes, but becomes engaging, interesting and fun for the children.

Universe2U, our beyond the classroom science programme has been one of our most exciting and unique initiatives. Through workshops and projects hosted by our Science, Nature and Space Clubs the children of Parikrma have been exposed to a range of ideas and concepts, and learned from some of the best minds in the country. This hands-on learning has proved invaluable, and has helped many of our children find their individual interests and passions. The Parikrma Festival of Science was the first step in taking this programme to a wider audience, reaching out to both schools around the city as well as experts from across the country. This year, we are expanding this engagement further, by joining a citizens' organisation in Yelahanka to adopt a lake.

The Yelahanka United Environment Association (YUVA) was founded by a group of residents from the neighbourhood who were concerned by the degradation of the Allalassandra Lake. After the in-depth research and learning about water done during the Parikrma Festival of Science, working with YUVA to adopt the lake seems like a natural extension of this theme. Our children in July 2015 worked closely with members of the organisation to study the lake and its surroundings and prepare reports on its status. They visited the area regularly to learn about the extent of pollution, the species of flora and fauna and how they are affected and develop community awareness programmes to protect the lake. In association with members of YUVA, they conducted interviews with the varied communities in the area to gain a deeper insight into



**Learning in the field: The children of Parikrma conduct their study of the Allalassandra Lake**

the role the lake plays in the neighbourhood. They were also involved in the monthly lake water testing done by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board. At the end of this period of intense research and study, our children have begun to gain a great deal of knowledge, and also developed a sense of responsibility, accountability and ownership. We hope that by adopting this lake, they understand the importance of speaking up for the conservation of natural resources in the city.

At Parikrma we believe that small actions can gather force to have a great impact. And through this effort, we believe a larger movement will come together. Our children will present their findings in a report at the next Parikrma Festival of Science, showing that the initiative is not a one-off event, but a continuous cycle that has a larger impact on the city's landscape.



## COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE

For the last few years, our Community Development Services team has been busy with interventions aimed at creating stable and happy homes for our children. From de-addiction sessions for alcoholic father to self-help groups and vocational training for mothers, the programmes have been varied and holistic. Over the last year we have seen the impact of these initiatives in transformational stories of families who have turned their lives around.

Bharathi is the mother of Bharat and Sowmya, students at the Parikrma Centre for Learning, Koramangala. As the sole earning member of the family, Bharathi worked as a house maid and struggled to make ends meet. When Parikrma conducted a beautician's course, Bharathi showed both interest and skill, never missing a class and picking up the tricks of the trade quickly. She applied for a loan to start her own beauty parlour, and is now doing very well. Her business is flourishing and so is her family.

Spoorthy studies in Uranus Class (Grade 8) at Parikrma. Four years ago, her family often never knew where their next meal was coming from, so fragile was their financial status. Spoorthy's mother Shasikala joined the women's Self-Help Group (SHG) started by Parikrma, and took a loan to start a milk business. Over the course of time, she took and returned several small loans from the SHG, each time to improve her business. Now, she runs a Nandhini Milk Shop in Amruthahalli with her husband, where she also has a small tea and coffee stall. Spoorthy helps out her parents by delivering milk to a few customers in the mornings before she comes to school. They have become a financially independent and stable family.

At Parikrma, it is interesting to see the growing aspirations that parents harbor for their children. Padma has two sisters and a brother. Her father, who used to be a hawker, now runs a store and believes in saving up for the future of all his children, his daughters as well as his son. Padma is a bright



Above: Spoorthy, a Parikrma student, with her parents outside their Nandhini Milk shop, which her mother started with help from the Parikrma self-help group. Below: Bharat and Sowmya's mother Bharathi, who did the beautician's course that we conducted for parents, is now running her own beauty parlour successfully

student of Venus Class (Grade 2), while her sisters go to a government school. Her father works hard at his store that is located in front of an IPS coaching centre. He dreams of his eldest daughter becoming a police officer, his second daughter an engineer and his third, Padma, becoming a teacher at Parikrma!



## A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

**A**t Parikrma, we love a challenge. The 4th edition of the Parikrma Champions League took place at the HMT Sports Club, Jalahalli, which doesn't have the same infrastructure as the Bangalore Football Stadium where we have hosted previous editions. We took on the challenge and recreated the same exciting atmosphere, with a tunnel for players to emerge from, an LED screen and a tournament that is like no other. Among the many firsts this year, was a charter for coaches to sign, pledging to play fair, to focus on sportsmanship rather than winning, and to push to make sport a key element of education. We also had not only the support of the Karnataka State Football Association, but also of the All India Football Federation, whose representative Kushal Das inaugurated the tournament. Among the highlights were a CEO match, in which Bangalore's top brass took on the best players in a Dream Team, and a girls exhibition match between the Parikrma and Greenwood High girls football teams. For the first time this year, the parents of our students were as involved in PCL as their children.

The tournament turned into a unique opportunity for the community. We had parents set up food stalls to



**Huddling Up! The Parikrma team strategizes at the Parikrma Champions League 2014**

feed the hungry footballers and spectators. Fathers who have auto-rickshaws decorated their vehicles and transported the organizers to and from the grounds. Parents also helped to set up and clean the grounds each day.

At Parikrma, we not only strive to excel in everything we do, we also try to push the boundaries of excellence in all directions. With new ideas around every corner, ours is a journey that is always thrilling and truly inspiring.

### **A Scottish Connection: Ravi Babu experiences football in the UK**

Ravi Babu, our Sports Coordinator and a star footballer himself, recently travelled to Scotland, with the support of Richard Knight, a good friend of Parikrma who has been involved with the Parikrma Champions League from Day 1.



This was an experience of a lifetime for Ravi, who has played football for years at the competitive level. While in Scotland, he attended a workshop, watched football matches and learnt a great deal from the international exposure. He was part of training and fitness sessions as well. Of course, he also tried his hand at shooting, took in the city's sights and enjoyed Scotland's greenery! He has come back refreshed and rejuvenated, filled with ideas about how to take the Parikrma sports programme to the next level. Ravi has been a key driver of the Parikrma Champions League and we hope this experience has given him new insights that will add to the event.

At Parikrma, global exposure is not only important for our children, but also for our teachers, who take on the responsibility of transforming a child's life through education, care and insight.



## THE FINAL LEAP

If you happen to walk into the Hilton International in Bangalore, be sure to look out for former Parikrma student Diwakar, now an Assistant Manager of F&B at the five star hotel. Diwakar followed his passion for food to college, to strong internships and finally to an incredible job. And along the way, he didn't forget Parikrma, cooking for all his former classmates and teachers at Alumni Meetings. Today, Diwakar's mother has been able to stop working as a maid and open a small shop, with the help of her son. Not long ago, Diwakar came to school to take Shukla for a ride on his new bike that he bought with his salary. He wanted her to be the second "woman in his life" to sit on his bike, after his mother.

Diwakar's story is the story of the Parikrma impact. He has worked hard, absorbed all that he could from his time at Parikrma, and stayed closely in touch with us over the years. His life has slowly but surely begun to transform. Like many other alumni, Diwakar is already asking about how he can get involved to support the Parikrma programme, how he can give back. And for our model to be healthy and sustainable, this is exactly what we had hoped for. For our children to grow into sensitive, responsible and globally conscious young people, who believe that equal education is the key to breaking out of the endless cycle of poverty.

Santosh K studied Hotel Management at college after finishing from Parikrma. He studied hard, took part in extra-curricular activities and graduated with 85%. He is now joining Starbucks, the international coffee chain, as Manager of the Koramanga branch. Before starting his first job, Santosh spent a day at Parikrma, talking to the Junior College students about his experiences. He said that he always felt equal to his peers because of his good grades and his strong English communication skills. His advice to them was: "Know your strengths and weaknesses, and do what you are interested in, even if people advise you against it!" Santosh followed his heart and worked his way to the top. We hope that he is an



**CHAMPIONS** Parikrma FC, winners of the 'C' division football league championship in Bengaluru on Saturday. (Standing, from left): Chiranjeevi, Fayaz, Chaminiun, Guru Raj, R Rav-Babu (coach cum player), Saravana (assistant coach), Gopal Krishna (assistant manager), Junil, Dushyanth, Arvind, Henminial, Zamsai, Appu, Shiva, Benny, Santosh J and Prashanth. (Kneeling: Henminial, Zamsai, Appu, Shiva, Benny, Santosh J, Prashanth and Irfan. DH PHOTO

Several former Parikrma students, along with our coaches, have started a football club called Parikrma FC, and have stayed in touch with the game even after school. The recently won the C Division football league championship in Bangalore and have now graduated to the B Division. It is heartwarming to see that our students remained connected to each other and to all of us at Parikrma even after finishing school and flying away from the nest. We hope to have many more such stories of bright futures and compassionate youngsters over the years. As they continue to excel at the game, they also continue to represent Parikrma everywhere they go.

example to our younger students as they prepare to go out into the world.

Shiva recently graduated to become Parikrma's first engineer, and has got a good job in a well-known multi-national company. This year, more of our children will finish their college courses and find their way in the world, and we are as excited as they are to embark on new journeys. Lamcy, who has been studying Dental Medicine at the Dr B. R Ambedkar College, graduated in the summer of 2015 and has big plans for her future. Madhumala, who recently finished her B.Com, has started her articleship as she dreams of becoming a Chartered Accountant. Many students who finished the Parikrma Vocational Training programme have joined the Taj Group of Hotels in various capacities.



# TEACHERS TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

**A**t the 2015-16 Teachers' Orientation, we focused on inspiration. How do we, as teachers and leaders, inspire and be inspired? Is being a good educator related to being able to ignite inspiration? We spoke about how our teachers have grown as leaders and what education means to them at Parikrma. As we grow and learn each year, the questions and issues we choose to address change. This year we are thinking about the need to create school leaders, about citizenship and statesmanship. As more and more of our children go out into the world, it is of utmost importance to us that they go out ready to take responsibility for themselves as citizens and become a part of this larger movement for equal education.

This academic year our focus will also be on one of our long-term projects, that addresses the oft-asked question about scaling our model. The Parikrma Education Transformation Centre (ETC), was inaugurated in July 2014 to share our best practices with other schools and educators. Right away we began training programmes for teachers from 16 government schools in North Bangalore, and have so far had three 4-day sessions, focusing on English as well as core pedagogy skills. The ETC training is practical, focusing on the deep connections between education and life while fostering values of empathy and culture. The sessions have dwelt upon student-



**Sharing the Model: A group of teachers after a training session with the ETC**

teacher interactions and unique ways in which to engage students in the classroom, from encouraging questioning to using storytelling, drama and poetry in the classroom.

Ours is a Teacher Sensitivity programme, based on the belief that when teachers become more sensitive to and aware of their students needs, they will begin the journey to becoming better teachers. The programme also has a pedagogical component, based on the best practices we have discovered over the years at Parikrma.

At the same time, the ETC provides a platform for teachers to share ideas, provide feedback and support one another.



This year, two of our finest teachers, Asha Akka and Anupama Akka, visited a British school in the UK as part of the British Council teacher exchange programme. They interacted with various classes, presented projects on Indian culture and taught written activities to students there. They also did some cooking for the children there, and Anupama Akka made her famous biriyani for their new friends and students in England to try!

(Pictured left: Anupama Akka with a class of young students in the UK)



# CHANGE YOUR WORLD

## FROM PARIKRMA TO NEPAL, WITH LOVE

Recently, the students of Parikrma decided that they wanted to do something for the children of Nepal, whose lives have been devastated by the earthquake. Each of them is doing their bit. Many are walking to school and contributing their bus money to the 'Heart for Nepal' boxes that we have set up in each school. Others have decided to use fewer pages of their work books so they can send supplies to their friends in Nepal. The idea came entirely from our children, and shows that compassion truly has no geographical borders. We have identified a school in Phatpur village in Nuwakot district, which has been demolished completely, leaving its 360 students without a school. We need to raise Rs. 20 lakh to build a school with 10 classrooms, a computer room and a library. We will help train the teachers and build a curriculum. Our children's gesture is a small but meaningful one. Our children need your help to reach their goal of rebuilding this school. Please get in touch with [info@parikrmafoundation](mailto:info@parikrmafoundation) to make your contribution and for more information on this initiative.



## VOLUNTEER-SPEAK: ARCHANA SAHAY ON HER PARIKRMA EXPERIENCE

My relationship with Parikrma goes back a long, long way. Ever since I was first introduced to the organisation, I have always been in touch with Shukla and Parikrma and have been very impressed with the quality of the work they do. Through my work in CSR, I have



been able to collaborate closely and work with Parikrma. My experience with Parikrma stands out from my experience with any other organisation. What strikes me and has always impressed me is the focus of Parikrma on quality – whether in education, sport or extra-curricular activities. I can see that they have been very passionate about making sure that their children stand out in the community, and never let them get the feeling that they are less than

anyone else. And the proof of the pudding lies in how well the children of Parikrma do – be it in the area of sports or academics, they shine and do as well as children from private schools.

The first thing that struck me about the children was the moment I heard one of them speak. This is what makes a big difference—the confidence with which they speak, their body language, their delivery of English. They are articulate and confident, and this speaks volumes about their school. The depth of the intervention at Parikrma is impressive. Parikrma's focus on quality and depth has made it stand out. It makes us feel that Parikrma is worth the investment we're making in our country's future.

**Parikrma Humanity Foundation is a non-profit organisation that runs 4 schools and a junior college for children from slum communities in Bangalore, with a focus on the best possible English medium education. If you would like to be a part of the Parikrma programme, please write to [info@parikrmafoundation.org](mailto:info@parikrmafoundation.org)**