

# DECADAL STREAMS OF PLAY

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2008-2018



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# I. DOWN THE MEMORY LANE

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Headstreams was born in the summer of 2008. A group of professionals came together to discuss issues and challenges related to the life of the underprivileged in the society. The realities that were unveiled in the course of discussions challenged them to do something about it. They formed a Society and registered it under the Karnataka Societies Registrations Act 17 of 1960 and named it **headstreams**.

The group which included social workers, educationists and counselors started working among the homeless and neglected children in the market places of Bangalore by contributing their time and expertise. The activities gathered momentum over the years as several people joined the team and expanded the scope of work.

The work has spanned from SHGs, relief work in flood affected areas, livelihood training which included entrepreneurship development, awareness programme and financial literacy to implementing programmes on play based learning for children from under-served communities; career - guidance, employability and life-skills programmes for adolescents and youth; teachers training and academic courses on play and human development.





## II. JOURNEY OVER A DECADE

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2008 - 2009: Headstreams was registered as a Society and started working with young women and school drop-out youth in urban (Bengaluru) and rural (Bagalkot) Karnataka. Headstreams' first field programme **Aalamba** was designed to provide livelihood training and development. The activities included facilitating livelihood trainings and setting up livelihood units; promoting awareness on health, education, environment, disaster and mobilising groups of youth, small traders, road side vendors and SHGs.

2009 - 2010: Under the Aalamba programme, the organisation worked with women's SHGs, potter's collectives and youth groups. Headstreams helped in the formulation of SHGs and strengthened it through trainings in book keeping, resource mobilisation and management. Headstreams' Employment and Entrepreneurship Skills (EES) training benefitted several individuals by creating livelihood opportunities.

2010 - 2011: The focus of Headstreams which has been on livelihood training and development, transitioned from a building phase to a consolidation phase. The organisation offered two types of training programmes - the Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP) for those with no experience of being an entrepreneur and the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) for all the participants to plan and develop their livelihood programme and business proposal. In Bagalkot district where Headstreams' intervention was limited to disaster relief and rehabilitation, widened to rural development including education, health and sanitation initiatives.





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2011 – 2012: The focus of organisation continued in SHGs and livelihood development, facilitating the formation of several livelihood units for people from low income groups who were trained and equipped to undertake small and viable businesses for their livelihood. Over 100 livelihood units were set up by trainees.

2012 – 2013: This year was the turning point for Headstreams. The organisation implemented new programmes reaching out to new participants. Work, across rural and urban areas of Karnataka with women, added a fresh perspective. In the SHG meetings, discussions pertaining to children, particularly their low attendance in school, poor grades, behaviour as observed by parents, pushed Headstreams to intervene into the mainstream system of education and holistic development of children. As a first step, Headstreams engaged with the children through Summer Camps. The camp offered a creative play space for children that encouraged articulation of their voice and exploration of their potential to the fullest without the fear of being judged. This was an eye opener as Headstreams realised the significance of playful environment in the lives of children and perhaps every individual.

2013 – 2014: Headstreams work with SHG groups, livelihood interventions with youth and women continued, but its engagement with children strengthened through Tackle initiatives including Summer Camps, Tackle Fests and the Caravan. Tackle programmes focused on positive mental health and creative learning of children from low-income areas. Youth volunteers were encouraged to facilitate the Tackle programmes. Gradually, Headstreams started internship programmes and academic courses to equip youth who could meaningfully engage themselves as play facilitators.



2014 – 2015: The organisation’s work with marginalised women participants for seven years saw a transformation. The first among these was the need for more specific trainings that would not just boost livelihoods but also life – skills including confidence, ability to communicate in English and empower them digitally. In response to the needs of the participants, Headstreams designed a Foundation Course to empower women with English and basic computers skills.

Headstreams also expanded geographically from urban and rural areas of Bengaluru and Bagalkot to Malur taluk of Kolar district. Headstreams offered employability and life-skills internship programmes to the youth from the area who were pursuing their under-graduation degree from Government College.

2015 – 2016: Headstreams Tackle programmes became popular among children who desired a continuous engagement with Headstreams. Most of these children were from under-served communities and devoid of opportunities and experiences like their peers. This led Headstreams to design a programme for children in schools. Schools were the best possible choice for Headstreams to meet a good number of participants who could be benefitted. Headstreams play based learning programme, Arivu-Disha took off in government schools that impacted the lives of several middle and high school students from low-income backgrounds. Learning was made a joyous process through play, music, dance, art and craft, movement art, stories and other creative activities. The play and learning programme also introduced digital tablets to make learning interactive and exciting among students.





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2016 – 2017: Headstreams’ largest programme, Arivu-Disha, impacted students in three districts of Karnataka. The play based learning model addressed the gaps in the mainstream education which is mostly a top-down, information-heavy, mono-dimensional system which promotes rote learning and has very few avenues for students to incorporate or articulate their own ideas. The creative playful learning programme led to positive learning outcomes and development of social, emotional and life-skills among students.

Arivu-Disha inspired Headstreams to also reach out to others beyond schools, hence there were play programmes rolled out to terminally ill patients in hospitals, children with special needs and in institutions of higher learning.

2017 – 2018: The organisation that started working primarily with women, successfully reached to a diverse groups and participants including school students, drop-outs, children with special needs, youth, women, men and elderly. In 2018, the organisation implemented programmes in play and learning in two very unique spaces including a public library and an observation home in Bengaluru.

Headstreams’ play programmes have been identified as a pioneer in reimagining learning through play.



### III. MILESTONES AT A GLANCE

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2008

- Formation of Headstreams Society
- Work with school drop-out youth in Russel Market and other market places of Bengaluru
- Study of lives and livelihoods of small traders and road-side vendors

2009

- Partnership with Mphasis
- Formation of youth Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in slums of Bengaluru
- Creation of career guidance modules for youth

2010

- Formation of Women's Self Help Groups
- Aalamba Livelihood Training and Development Programme launched
- Manual on Health and Hygiene for Food Handlers created
- Employment and Entrepreneurship Skills Training started
- Employment Information Exchange Programme launched
- Sangam Foods ( Women's Self Help Groups) and Potter's Collective (sales and training outlet by Traditional Potter's Self Help Group) initiated
- First group livelihood initiatives set-up; alternative livelihoods programme initiated in Khyada and Katharaki villages of Bagalkot





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2011

- Livelihood units set up (food and eateries, tailoring, provision stores, saree and garment sales services, product manufacturing and value added services)
- Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme and Entrepreneurship Development Programme trainings launched
- Women's SHG group members launch action to address their issues on Public Distribution System & Right to Education
- Village Development Committees formed in Budihala, Thaminala, Katharaki and Khyada villages of Bagalkot district
- Swachha Gram Programme launched in association with Mphasis and several toilets built

2012

- FCRA Registration
- Trainings on financial literacy, SHG booking, management trainings launched
- Two programmes on social security (NPS-Lite) and education (Vidyabhivrudhi) introduced to SHG members
- Study on health situation in Bagalkot district conducted covering 20 primary Health Centres and 20 sub-centers. Report presented to CEO of Zilla Panchayat
- New livelihood units set up
- First Summer Camp organised for children (Camps for few days organised every year in April across different location)



## 2013

- First Tackle Fest (a career guidance and creative learning fest conducted once a year) initiated in association with St. Joseph's (Autonomous) College, Bengaluru
- First school sessions on life-skills in A. Narayanapura Government School initiated
- Internship programme for college youth initiated
- Swavalambana Leadership training programme launched for SHGs to help them function independently
- Livestock insurance programme started in Badami
- Makkala Grama Sabhas conducted in four Panchayats of Bagalkot district
- Empanelment with National CSR Hub located at TISS, Mumbai
- Women's Health Mela organised for women participants
- Certificate Course in Development Journalism and Volunteering launched in association with St. Joseph's (Autonomous) College, Bengaluru
- Tackle Caravan (play-learn-change session conducted every Saturday) launched

## 2014

- Pratham 'library - in - a classroom' set up in Tackle Caravan
- Children's Library and Resource Centre launched as an after-school centre
- Rural development programme initiated in Malur, in association with TCS
- Tackle Caravan, Tackle Fest and Summer Camps organised





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2015

- Arivu-Disha a 'learning through play' programme launched in three districts of Karnataka , through an MoU with Department of State Education Research and Training (DSERT), Government of Karnataka (programme scaled up and continuing)
- Arivu bilingual English learning app launched with Dhruva interactive & Ijsfontein, a Dutch gaming company
- Aalamba 'Enhancing Employability' Internship Programme initiated for final year B.A students of Government First Grade College, Malur
- Let's Play- an annual event to promote play was initiated (conducted for a couple of weeks every year in November)

2016

- Aalamba internship expanded as a two year programme for second and third year B.A students
- Aalamba pre-service teacher training programme on play and learning for D.Ed and B.Ed students in Malur started
- P.G Diploma and Certificate Course on ' Play and Human Development' started in colleges
- Arivu comics, missed call learning services, community street plays launched as a part of Arivu playful learning programme
- Play & learn summer kits (Glee box) designed and distributed by Headstreams to Arivu students
- Soukhyam 'healing through play' programme launched in Kidwai Cancer Hospital for patients and care-givers (project completed)
- 'Play and Learn' programme supported in Mar Thoma Opportunity School, Bengaluru
- Lets Play conducted by several participants globally



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2017

- First International Conference in Play conducted in association with Christ University , supported by Mphasis
- First volume of Play-Cyclopedia released; first edition of 'We Play' a directory of play organisation released
- Headstreams' work on Tackle Caravan presented at the Association for the Study of Play (TASP) conference in the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, New York
- Playathon challenge to design game for learning and developing life-skills launched
- Arivu launched in Karnataka Government run residential schools through an agreement with Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS )
- Lets Play conducted across geographies

2018

- Second International Play Conference conducted in association with reputed institutions
- Second volume of Play-Cyclopedia and 'We Play' directory released
- Arivu digital stations launched
- Projects in Play and Learning (PIPAL) initiated in association with Karnataka State Department of Public Libraries in City Central Library, Shivajinagar
- PIPAL Open Learning space opened in Government Observation Home for Boys in Bengaluru
- Headstreams collaborated with Play Ground Ideas as a part of the 'Rang Maidan' project, set up play grounds in low income areas and schools
- Empathetic problem-solving training for Police recruits and trainers initiated





## IV. MOMENTS OF PRIDE

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ARIVU BELIEVES "IF A CHILD CANNOT LEARN IN THE WAY WE TEACH, WE MUST TEACH IN A WAY THE CHILD CAN LEARN"

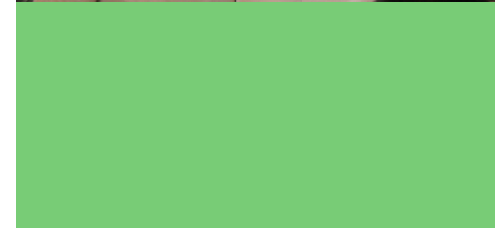
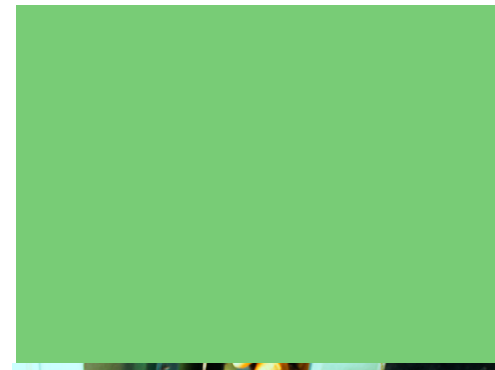
A very powerful impact of the programme has been to introduce an alternative pedagogy of learning that has particularly helped students who have been less motivated. Savithri, a student of A. Narayanapura School in Bangalore, said: "I feel bored in all other classes except Arivu class. I feel happy when you (facilitators) come to teach us". When interviewed, class teacher and English teacher, Ms. Nirmala .K, said that Savithri struggled to follow what was taught in the class. As also observed by the facilitators, Savithri has been a quiet student who did not talk to anyone during the initial days when the programme started in the school. However Savithri soon became very engaged in the Arivu classes and began learning English through tablets, songs, dance and drawing. She liked to do worksheets in class and at home. Savithri's mother, Yellamma, who is a house keeper, also noticed her daughter become active at home and being excited about learning.

**(Case Study, 2016)**

### SOUKHYAM IS THERAPEUTICAL

"Students are a lot happier on Fridays when you (facilitators of the programme) come to school because the children feel free with you."

**(Teacher, Mar Thoma Opportunity School, 2016)**



## INSPIRED BY THE DISHA PROGRAMME

"I have learnt a lot from Disha sessions. I attended the Tackle Fest organised by the Disha Team at Bengaluru. Since the time I have returned from Bengaluru, I have been telling my parents that I want to study further. I am really inspired and I cannot wait to apply and pursue my education in St. Joseph's College."

**(Likitha, Student, Harati Government High School, 2017)**

## PIPAL BROUGHT LIFE

The PIPAL Open Learning and Free Play Space at the Observation Home for Boys, Madiwala had special visitors on May 7, 2018. They were members of the Committee for Welfare of Juveniles and implementation of the Provisions of the Juvenile Justice in Karnataka – Hon'ble Mrs. Justice B.V.Nagarathna, Hon'ble Mr. Justice B.Veerappa and Smt. Uma M. G., Member Secretary (Karnataka State Legal Services Authority). They were accompanied by Smt. Kalpana Purushothaman, Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) Member. They participated in an inclusive session with the boys and the Observation Home staff, facilitated by Gitanjali Sarangan of Snehadaara Foundation. The judges were happy to see how the programme made a difference in the lives of participants who looked happier. One of the judges said "Headstreams has brought life into this place."

**(Open Event at the Observation Home, 2018)**





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## VOICE OF A VOLUNTEER

"As a kid I would participate in the Tackle Summer Camps organised by Headstreams. Initially I was hesitant to join the camp as I thought it would be another boring camp. But I was wrong as these summer camps let me play, have fun and learn new things which I never did before. The best part was that I could do any mischief without being punished or judged! I was always encouraged to speak up and share my feelings. Since then my journey with Headstreams has continued. First as a participant in summer camps and now as a volunteer. I enjoy being with children and encouraging them to enjoy, explore and experience the different creative activities that summer camps and weekend Tackle caravan offer."

**(Roshan Emmanuel, Volunteer, 2018)**

## LEARNING THROUGH FACILITATION

"Moving from one of the largest investment banks to Headstreams was the most emotionally satisfying decision I made. Headstreams believes in learning through playing. It gives students a space to explore their potential and reach their own goals while having fun in the process. What a great way to learn I thought to myself, but could it be true? Could this methodology actually work? So I joined Headstreams in search of answers and an opportunity to grow and I soon realised it's not just the children that learn through playing; it's also the facilitators. I had thought working in an MNC had honed my communication and problem solving skills until I had to work with a 7 year school kid who constantly asked, "Why to do Miss?" almost 10 times a day. Overall it's been a great learning experience for me. I took a leap of faith and the transition has been truly exciting and exhilarating."

**(Tarini Srinivas, Facilitator, 2018)**



## V. PLAY BASED LEARNING TOOLS

**YO - YO FROG DIGITAL GAME FORMAT:** It is a tablet based game, in a quiz format. Competences it develops includes critical thinking, time management, learning English and Science concepts.

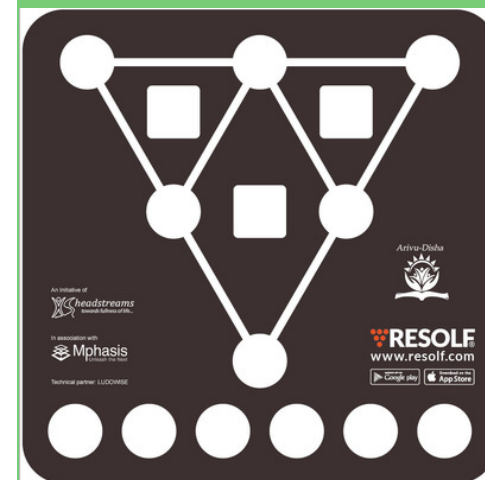
**MARBLE DIGITAL GAME FORMAT:** It is a tablet based game format and develops critical thinking, curiosity, learning English and Science concepts among participants.

**RESOLF:** It is an open game system which could hold content from Maths, English and Science. Competences it develops includes problem solving, collaboration, competition, learning Maths, Science and English concepts.

**ISLAND GAME:** This card game helps to build connects and associations. It helps to enhance skills like communication, critical thinking, creativity, curiosity and logical thinking among players.

**NANTOOS:** This box of blocks made of cardboard helps to create patterns and models which strengthens the power of imagination, connection and creation in players.

**GLEE BOX:** This box of 8 different games and activities includes board games, a card game, activities like painting with nature, lantern making and creating a pen-stand. This box keep the users engaged constructively and creatively.



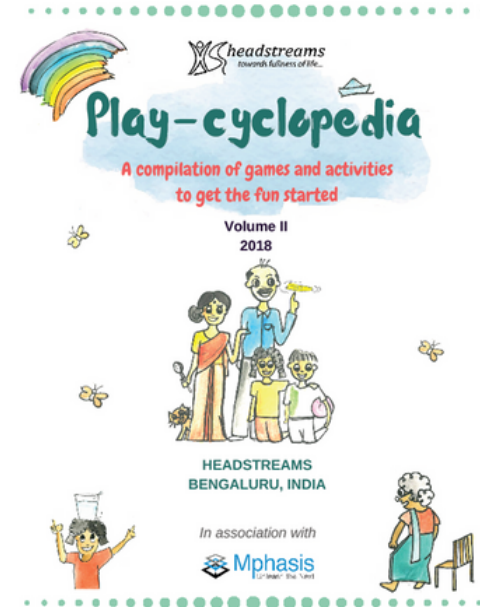


PLAY- CYCLOPEDIA (2 editions) : These compilation of games and traditional game songs encourages playing games in different contexts for fun, enjoyment, learning and building relationships.

COMICS: Comics are bi-lingual (in Kannada & English) and each episode exposes a reader to a new place and different culture. These comins available in print as well as digital format also develops a habit for reading, thereby improves reader's comprehension and speaking skills in English and Kannada.

JIGSAW PUZZLES: These puzzles are primarily from the comics/ stories of Ballu and Chinnu. These puzzles are useful as they encourage players to concentrate, create and leaves him/her with a sense of accomplishment when the puzzle is complete.

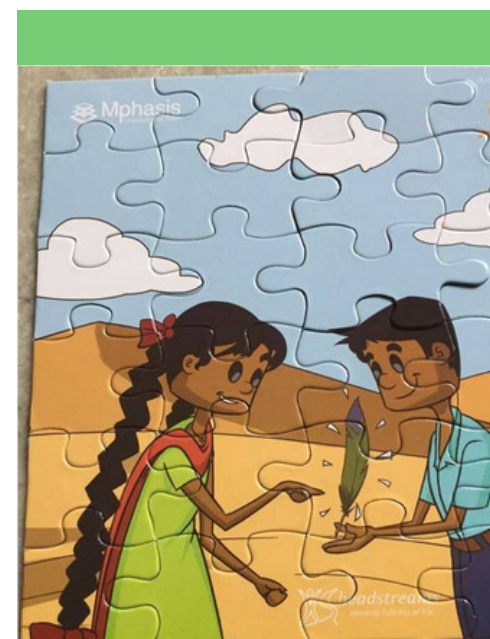
DIAL - TO - LEARN SERVICE: This service was primarily offered to Arivu programme students. Participants could listen to stories, songs and rhymes in English through this missed call service.



Episode 23  
(South Africa-English)



Episode 20  
(Japan-Kannada)



# VI. REACH



- >15000 children impacted
- >1000 youth trained
- >1000 women across  
50 SHGs empowered
- >200 teachers equipped
- >100 livelihood units set up
- 7 playgrounds created



# VII. RECOGNITION



- NASSCOM Social Innovation Forum 2017 Award
- TCS Outstanding Support for TATA Affirmative Action Program, 2015
- Ashoka Changemakers and Lego Foundation, Pioneer in Learning through Play, 2014
- Mahindra 'Spark the Rise' Challenge, Winner, 2012

# CONTACT US FOR....

## **ARIVU**

Play based  
learning  
programme  
schools

## **DISHA**

Career guidance  
programme for high  
school students

## **TEACHERS' TRAINING**

Programme on play  
and learning in  
education setting

## **PIPAL**

Creating open  
learning spaces  
in public library,  
juvenile correctional  
homes and other  
public spaces

## **AALAMBA**

Work  
integrated livelihood  
training for youth

## **TACKLE CARAVAN**

Creating  
experiential and  
exploratory play  
spaces for children

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