

# HEADSTREAMS

## ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



*Committed to shaping "a world where every person has opportunities to realise their inherent potential to live a positive, confident, intentional and socially productive life."*



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## I. CO-FOUNDERS SHARE

It is over 12 years since Headstreams began. All through, the consistent desire has been to discover/innovate ways to enable participants to live meaningful lives. Facilitating the realization of their inherent potential to do this, has been the thread that runs through all our work – be it related to education, livelihoods or community development.

This year we explored how the practice of “Habits of Mind (HoM)” can best be introduced among children and youth. We enabled this by providing safe facilitated learning environments underpinned by free choice and goal-setting paradigms. Our belief is that this can leverage capacities for problem solving, self-awareness and empathy. Constant systematic reflection is part of the process, and this is already yielding valuable affirmations, insights and challenges for us as facilitators.

For instance, this is the cumulative effect one session headstreams’ facilitated had. While conducting a HoM session on the habit of “Persistence” in a Home for Boys (who had had a brush with the law), one of them asked, “What if we use our persistence to pursue illegal things?” Later, discussing as a team, we were grateful that the boy was able to voice his thoughts, given the safe space that had been created for the children to freely share. We also realized that by sharing his thoughts, this boy was inviting us into a dialogue regarding a matter that was deeply personal and troubling for him. The sub-text of this question was a challenge: “Do you have anything meaningful to say/offer which can make me alter my thinking (or do you affirm it)?”

As part of that team discussion, we developed an ethical framework which could help anyone evaluate their choices or actions:

- 1) Will my action harm me today or in the long run (physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually)?
- 2) Will my action harm others today or in the long run (on the same parameters)?
- 3) Would it make me proud if my child (or a loved one) made the same choices?

We decided that if the answer to any of these three was a NO, then it implied the need to rethink that choice or action.

Also important was that, while facilitating this ethical framework, one needs to remember that the realities of the participants are often highly complex and sometimes heart-breaking. As facilitators, an attitude of empathy and mercy is always preferred to one of passing ethical judgement. The challenge for us is to attempt holding on to our truth while empathetically dialoguing at the starting points that are offered.

It becomes crucial then that, as facilitators, we are able to read the sub-text of what is being said, to locate root concerns: safety, protection of loved ones, despair, etc. This helps to keep the conversation addressed to these concerns as the reference point, so that the dialogue does not degenerate into a “...but this is wrong and that is right” kind of framework. For example, if doing something illegal was the only way a child could think of, of helping one’s family, we could begin by recognising the desire to help, and commending the initiative to act for someone apart from themselves, before focusing on what other ways there may be to help one’s family. The dialogue would then become a starting point in identifying alternate ways to achieve one’s higher goals.

- Dr Naveen I. Thomas & Selena George

## II. JOURNEY OF THE ORGANISATION IN 2019-2020

Established in 2008, Headstreams is a not-for-profit organisation, known for pioneering learning through play. It creates and facilitates play-based and self-directed learning spaces in different community and institutional settings, including government schools, low-cost private schools, public libraries, child care institutions and marginalised communities.

Headstreams has created deep impressions in the field of play-based learning, free play, self-directed and experiential learning approaches. The organisation primarily works with children, adolescents, youth and community members from underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds.



During 2019-2020, Headstreams continued with its key programs which have been presented in the report. The organisation also launched a new livelihood initiative called the PIPAL LEAF. This initiative promotes entrepreneurial mindsets and supports meaningful livelihoods of women and youth in rural areas and institutional settings.

Since most of Headstreams' programs follow the academic calendar, with the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown in mid March 2020, Headstreams had to wrap up its programs in government schools and other institutions and immediately focus on relief work, to support migrant families, out-of-job landless workers, stone quarry workers, elderly families and households with different kinds of vulnerabilities. During the period 2019-2020, the organisation directly reached out to over 15,000 people through its various interventions.



**Headstreams received the prestigious GuideStar<sup>1</sup> India Transparency Key Award' for 2020 after undergoing a rigorous due diligence process**

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<sup>1</sup>GuideStar is India's largest online information repository with 9800+ NGOs. The Transparency Key is the foundation Level certification indicating that the organisation has filed annual income tax returns as a tax-exempt entity and has shared the same in the public domain. To view Headstreams' profile at GuideStar India, please visit <https://guidestarindia.org/Summary.aspx?CCReg=1892>.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

- Implemented the **Arivu-Disha self-directed learning program** in 12 government schools, impacting more than **3500 children**.
- Set up free and open learning spaces at a **Government Observation Home for Boys** and at the **Girls' Home**, reaching out to **350 children and adolescents**.
- Continued the bachelors program for rural youth in Software Development (**B.Voc.**), certified by the School of Vocational Education (SVE), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, benefitting **over 30 students**.
- Continued a variety of projects and internships to support rural youth find meaningful livelihood opportunities through the 'Aalamba' program. About 78% of the Aalamba Internship program participants got job offers.
- Organised events like '**Rangotri**', a cultural, sports and career guidance fest for rural youth in Malur; a **Discussion on Right to Play** at the CHRIST University in Bengaluru; **Let's Play 2019** online campaign; **Tackle Fest** at St. Joseph's College in Bengaluru for underprivileged high school students and the **International Conference on Multidisciplinary Approaches to Nurturing Children and Youth (ICCY-2019)** at the CHRIST University in Bengaluru .
- Conducted **academic courses on Play and Human Development** at CHRIST (Deemed To Be University), St. Josephs College, and Mount Carmel College.
- Facilitated **playful learning workshops** for different stakeholders including young married girls, local community women, teachers working in varied settings such as tribal belts, remote places and government schools in the states of Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Karnataka.
- Conducted **Tackle Caravan sessions** which offered spaces such as music and movement, art and craft activities, and a maker's space, for children from underserved communities to work on projects and play indoor and outdoor games.
- Launched a new program called the **PIPAL LEAF**.
- Reached out to over 4000 people and more than 3000 children with food and hygiene kits and also playful learning kits towards Covid Relief Work.



## TEAM BEHIND THE PROGRAMS



**“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Helen Keller**

Abhishikta Roy  
Ambarish B. C.  
Anil Kumar S.  
Anne Thomas  
Ananda N.  
Asharani V. R.  
Barani Gopal  
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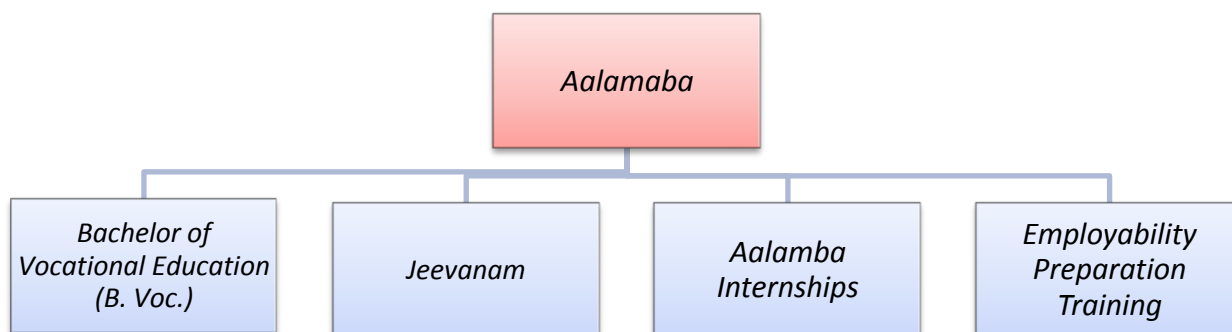
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Naveen Kumar M.  
Nischita Hannah Bhagtani  
Princy Thomas  
Pruthvi Kumar M.  
Rajini  
Sangeetha A.  
Selena George  
Shahajahan T.  
Shobha A.  
Tarini Srinivas  
Victor Fernandes  
Vineetha C.  
Vinayasree S.  
Yamini Priya

Headstreams would like to thank its well-wishers, friends, donors and board members for their continuous encouragement and support.

### III. KEY PROGRAMS

#### I. **AALAMBA**

Headstreams has been working towards improving the livelihood opportunities of rural youth and women in the Kolar district of Karnataka, through its 'Aalamba' program. The different projects under the Aalamba program are listed below.



#### A. **BACHELOR OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (B.VOC.) IN SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**

The program is certified by the prestigious School of Vocational Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, and offered by Headstreams at its Malur campus in the Kolar district of Karnataka. About **33 students** (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students) were enrolled to the vocational program in Software Development in 2019-2020. A 'Tinkering Laboratory' was set up at the Headstream's Malur Campus where students worked on several projects based on the course work and syllabus.



#### B. **JEEVANAM – AN INTEGRATED HEALTH, EDUCATION & ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE**

Conducted by B.Voc. students in government schools, this community initiative helped school children to learn about technology and software-based projects to address certain social problems faced by their communities. The program reached out to **1600 school students** across **13 government schools**.



### C. AALAMBA INTERNSHIPS

The program provided employability skills, English communication skills and basic computer skills to undergrad students. Program participants were groomed and prepared for employment by being equipped with industry specific skills. Two special trainings offered were the Business Process Services (BPS) and IT Employability Skills, certified by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). **70 students successfully completed the BPS and IT Employability trainings** in July 2019. **78% of Aalamba program interns got successfully placed in a reputed IT global company.**



### D. EMPLOYABILITY PREPARATION TRAINING

Started in September 2019, this new initiative offered a short-term (4 months) certificate course to youth between 16 and 24 years old, who dropped out of their education. This course helped **10 participants** to get equipped with skills which are important to build their career. The program focused on basic computer and English, employability, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) and problem solving skills.

## II. ACADEMIC COURSE IN PLAY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Headstreams and Snehadhara Foundation successfully conducted Certificate and PG Diploma Courses on Play and Human Development for college students. This year, the program commenced in July 2019 and **about 60 students from 3 institutions** of Bengaluru including CHRIST (Deemed To Be University), Mount Carmel College and St Joseph's College Autonomous enrolled for the academic program.



The sessions were conducted through play and multi-arts: using music (drum circle), stories (Treeveler's Katte), theatre activities and games. Along with their weekly experiential learning sessions on theories related to Play and Human Development, participants got field exposure through the Tackle Caravan sessions.

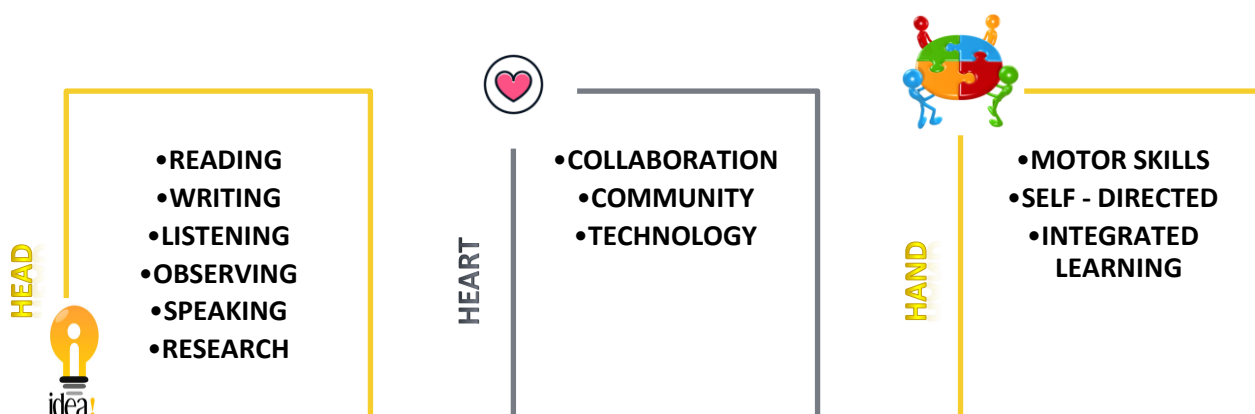


### III. ARIVU - DISHA



The program was implemented in **12 government residential schools** across three districts of Karnataka. The program focused on improving English learning and problem-solving skills (Science) and was based on the self-directed learning approach where participants were encouraged to think, feel and do, based on the 3H Design Principle (Figure 1). The skill sessions of the program are designed using Habits of the Mind<sup>2</sup> principles. The program was administered by **15 facilitators** who conducted playful, hands-on and experiential learning sessions in these schools for two adjoining periods of 45 minutes each, per class, per week. The Arivu-Disha program **benefited over 2500 students of classes 6 to 9**.

Figure 1: 3H DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF ARIVU-DISHA SESSIONS



<sup>2</sup>There are 16 [Habits of the Mind](#) as identified by Costa and Kallick which help individuals to take action when there is no known solution to a problem, and also support thoughtful and intelligent action. These skills empower individuals to work through real life situations.

#### IV. PROGRAMME IN PLAY AND LEARNING (PIPAL) AT THE OBSERVATION HOME FOR BOYS AND GIRLS HOME

The PIPAL program continued into its second year at the Government Observation Home for the Boys in Madiwala, Bengaluru. In addition, the PIPAL program began at a Government Home for Girls in Bengaluru.



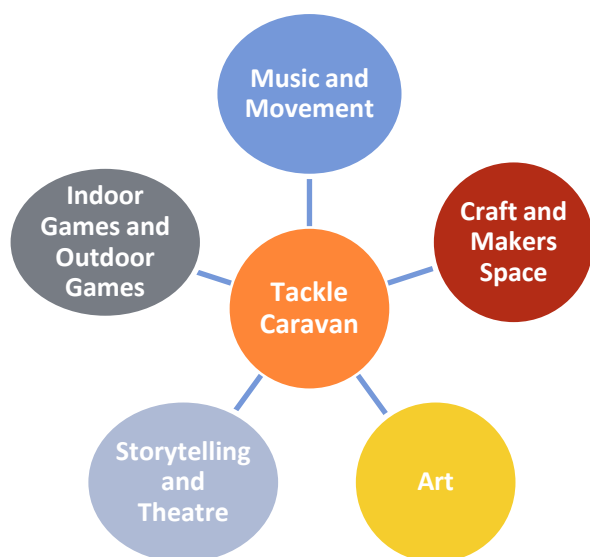
Children at the Boys' Home enjoyed the open learning sessions conducted by Headstreams. They enjoyed learning computer and drumming. Children at the Girls' Home too enjoyed the open learning and free play sessions. They were actively engaged through activities like drawing and craft. In the month of December 2019, these boys and girls were given livelihood trainings and they made a variety of Christmas decorations which were sold.

#### V. PIPAL LEAF LIVELIHOOD PROJECT



Headstreams' PIPAL LEAF livelihood initiative involved working with women and youth in rural areas and institutional settings to promote entrepreneurial mindsets and support meaningful livelihoods. This was achieved by creating exploratory learning spaces for design thinking, skill building and entrepreneurship development. 'Kattoos', hand-crafted miniature terracotta bricks, is the first product of the venture which was launched at different flea markets in Bengaluru. More than 60 boxes sold out in 2 days. The product is also available on Amazon and Instamojo.

## VI. TACKLE CARAVAN



Tackle Caravans are organised on Saturdays, to enable underprivileged children to access a plethora of media and resources that will bring out creativity, confidence, innovation and social skills among them. Held in the premises of government schools and facilitated by play facilitators and volunteers, Tackle Caravan play spaces offer different stalls, facilitated by trained play facilitators and volunteers.

this year, the Tackle Caravan sessions were conducted in four locations in Bengaluru including Church Jubilee Memorial School, Byappanahalli; Government Observation Home for Boys, Madiwala and Government Home for Girls, Hosur Road; and Morarji Desai Residential School, Chamrajpete. It was also conducted in the Kolar district at Headstreams' Campus in Malur. **70 Tackle Caravan sessions** were conducted this year, benefitting **over 700 children**. **About 90 volunteers** including college students and corporate employees participated in these weekend sessions.

## VII. COVID -19 RELIEF WORK

As an immediate response to the lockdown, Headstreams reached out to the neediest households in 80 villages in the outskirts of Bengaluru and distributed food and hygiene kits to over 4500 socio-economically vulnerable people. Subsequently, it also developed and distributed play and learning kits for over 3000 children in these villages.

The organisation was supported by several individual donors and well-wishers as well as Atkins, Humane Touch, Indian School of Business (ISB) Alumni, Karnataka Jesuit Province, Santokba Premkorba Charitable Trust, Sarojini Damodaran Foundation and SOCHARA , to name a few, through their contribution to the people affected by the COVID-19 lockdown.





#### IV. OTHER EVENTS

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO NURTURING CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Headstreams successfully co-hosted the International Conference on Multidisciplinary Approaches to Nurturing Children and Youth (ICCY-2019) held during on 12-14 December, 2019 with CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Binghamton University, International Play Association (IPA-India) and NGOs such as Drishti and Stepping Stones. The conference was hosted at the CHRIST (Deemed to be University) campus in Bengaluru and it brought together research, intervention and practices from India and across the globe. **It hosted 286 registered delegates and 74 speakers through 11 keynote sessions, 5 panel discussions, 3 symposiums, 29 workshops, 4 poster presentations and 82 presentations by experts.**

### LET'S PLAY 2019

Headstreams initiated the annual 'Let's Play' campaign to affirm the natural play spaces of children and inspire adults to revive/celebrate the child in them. This year the event was kicked off on November 7 and got extended till December 15, 2019.

The play campaign reached out to **over 5000 individuals** across **40 locations** in India, this year. Over **43 play hosts** who are primarily college students, play facilitators and organisations, organised play events for different audiences such as children, the elderly, professionals, community helpers and people from all walks of life.





## RANGOTRI 2019



Organised in November 2019, Rangotri - the career guidance, cultural and sports fest for the rural youth, welcomed over **700 participants** including students from 25 pre-university colleges and polytechnic institutions from Kolar district, representatives from the Department of Education, private companies and several corporate volunteers. Among the esteemed guests were Ms. Sreeshyala, Deputy Director, Pre-University Board, Kolar; Mr. Sreenivas Ramanujam, Head of Academic Interface from Tata Consultancy Services, Bengaluru and Dr Nagappa, Head of the Information Resource Centre, Tata Consultancy Services, Bengaluru.

The event witnessed students participating in many creative activities and sports such as 'making wealth out of waste', *rangoli* and collage making, street play, treasure hunt, hurdle race, volleyball, kabaddi and throw ball.

A career guidance stall was also put up by TCS volunteers to orient rural college students to a range of academic and career choices.

## TACKLE FEST 2020



Students from underprivileged communities are often first generation school-going children, who lack information and exposure to the academic and career possibilities available after they finish their schooling. In February 2020, Headstreams organised one of its most-sought-after annual events called the Tackle Fest2020, to expose students of classes VIII, IX and X to various academic and career options. The event was organised in collaboration with the English department of St. Joseph's College (Autonomous). About **33 experiential stalls** were set up by students from various departments and it benefitted **450 government school students** from **5 schools** located in Hoskote and Kolar. Over **40 corporate volunteers** were present to help the young visitors in this process of exploration.

## V. WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

### PLAYFUL LEARNING WORKSHOP

Headstreams was invited by Swasti Health Catalyst to facilitate a playful learning workshop for **40 women from the local communities** around Bommanahalli in Bengaluru. Participants experienced the power of free choice and explored their own interests. The women participants got a chance to experience jewellery making, marble painting and toy making.



### TRAIN THE TEACHERS' WORKSHOP

Ananya, a not-for-profit organisation that empowers women, had invited Headstreams to train teachers from government schools and low budget private schools at Hallegere village in the Mandya district of Karnataka in November 2019. The training was an introduction to ways in which the teachers can engage children in their classrooms, spark their imagination and aid in their innovative thinking by focusing on their learning skills. The play and fun-filled workshop introduced teachers to the concept of multiple intelligences and The Habits of Mind that are an identified set of 16 problem-solving life-related skills necessary to effectively operate in society and promote strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and craftsmanship.

### WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN IN CRISIS

Two separate workshops were conducted for women in crisis at the Women's Reception Centre and the State Home for Women. **110 women** were given a chance to explore their hidden talents and bring out their playful nature. They made beautiful bead key chains, jewellery and art work at the workshops. Some of the women were so inspired that they wanted to try these hobbies at home and start small businesses of their own.



### PLAYFUL LEARNING WORKSHOP FOR CRY SCHOOLS

In December 2019, Headstreams facilitated a playful learning workshop for **35 government school students** of classes I to VI at a school in Devanahalli, situated in the outskirts of Bengaluru. The event was organised by Child Rights and You (CRY), Bengaluru. Employees of Menzies Aviation, Bengaluru, volunteered to participate and helped to facilitate the



workshop. Volunteers and children got their hands dirty as they painted a butterfly park and created an animal farm out of clay!



### **TACKLE CARAVAN LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVE FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

Headstreams facilitated 2 workshops on entrepreneurship for community women of Maya Bazaar. The events were organised by SOCHARA. The objective of the workshops was to help women explore different hobbies and find out what interested them. For women, the workshops were an opportunity to learn new skills and consider alternate avenues for their livelihood. Participants were introduced to jute craft, jewellery making and beads toy making. Approximately **70 women and 60 children** participated in the two

workshops.

### **PLAYFUL LEARNING WORKSHOP ON COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Headstreams conducted a workshop for students pursuing post-graduate studies in SAIACS. Twenty students participated and were exposed to Headstreams' community outreach programs, which helped them to understand the skills involved in developing relationships and connections with children and other community members.



### **SELF-DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP**

A workshop focused on self-development was conducted by Headstreams in Mysuru. The workshop helped the participants who are members of ESAF (an NGO that works with a larger vision of sustainable and holistic transformation of the poor and the marginalized) in understanding the transformation that the organisation is bringing

about in the lives of the people they serve. The session ended with each member identifying a couple of concrete steps to serve their beneficiaries better and pledging to do so. The workshop was very well received by the participants.

## SCIENCE WORKSHOP FOR GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STUDENTS

A science workshop was conducted in a Government Residential School at Adakamaranahalli, Bengaluru. Through problem solving and experiential learning activities, children explored concepts and experiments related to topics including Energy, Light, Newton's Law of Motion, Gravitational force etc. About **200 students** of classes VI to IX participated in the interactive workshop.



## WORKSHOP TO EMPOWER WOMEN THROUGH PLAY

Headstreams conducted a workshop for approx. **30 women** from the Institute for Family Wellbeing in Bengaluru, who had suffered domestic abuse at some point of time in their lives. The workshop was to celebrate Women's Day with the participants and bring out the confidence in every woman. Participants were able to share their stories of empowerment and paint out their journey during the workshop.



## VI. MOMENTS OF PRIDE

### MR. AZIM PREMJI'S VISIT



**Mr. Azim Premji** visited the Government Observation Home in Bengaluru where Headstreams works.

Mr. Premji was introduced to the free play space and open learning space created by Headstreams at the Observation Home. The boys at the Observation Home showcased their drumming skills. The interaction between the boys and Mr. Premji was interesting as the boys asked him questions related to Mr. Premji's journey, about his opinion on various issues, and ways to build their academic and professional life. Azim Premji's visit was indeed an inspiration for all the participants and for Headstreams.



### COMMUNITY WALK

Walk into the communities is an initiative to appreciate the strengths and possibilities available locally. Arivu-Disha program participants pushed themselves beyond their comfort zones and went out to explore their neighbourhoods, spoke to entrepreneurs, visited enterprises and institutions such as sericulture work stations, veterinary hospitals, tailoring centres, post offices, gram panchayat offices and government hospitals, to understand not just the social issues but also the strengths and facilities available in the communities. Around **300 students** participated at different locations.

## PROJECT WORK



Pipe compost done by the students of Kittur Rani Chennamma Residential School (KRCRS), Yelesandra, Kolar



Students of Morarji Desai Residential School in Malur made baskets out of bamboo sticks



## SESSION ON BUILDING ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

Students from Arivu-Disha program school in Yelahanka, Bengaluru, were given challenges to be solved. They identified the problems, found practical solutions and also put it to test in real life situations. Such activities were continuously given to students. It helped them to develop entrepreneurial skills.

## AN OPEN DAY FOR LEARNING

Unlike regular classroom sessions, Headstreams organised open learning days for program students to explore anything they wished to. Students of Morarji Desai Residential School in Parshaganahalli, Kolar, visited a farm and learnt about various crops, tools and techniques of farming.



## BATTLE AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Headstreams participated at the Global Climate Week in September 2019 at the Town Hall in Bengaluru. This was a global climate change mobilisation initiative. About 7.6 million people and 185 countries participated in this movement.

## VIII. TESTIMONIALS

"The Arivu-Disha program brings out the potential of students and also develops entrepreneurial mindsets among students who do beyond what they are taught and explore different intelligences. Unlike a typical classroom setting, the program does not restrict learner to think, do and move in a certain way. Such a self-directed learning environment brings out the best and creative self of a learner."

**Kheerthan, Facilitator, Arivu-Disha Program**

"After a stressful day in the college, the sessions organised by Headstreams were so much fun. This course changed me from a shy, introvert person to a person who loves to mingle with others and this change is visible in my personality now!"

**Magdalene, Student, Certificate Course on Play and Human Development**

"Under the influence of bad company, I was initially addicted to alcohol and also lost money in IPL bettings. I later joined a private company and worked for 3months. Then I learnt about the B.Voc. program in Software Development, offered by TISS and Headstreams in Malur. I joined the program last year. I am hugely benefitting from the program. My technical knowledge is escalating and my social and life skills are also improving. The program is helping me professionally as well as in my personal journey."

**Guruprasad B.V, 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, B.Voc. Program**

"I was an introvert person because of which I was never able to mingle with anyone in my college. The Aalamba Internship program helped me to overcome my inhibitions. I learnt different skills such as English and Computer which helped me to present myself professionally and communicate efficiently. As a part of the internship, every Sunday I would also facilitate Tackle Caravan spaces which gave me an opportunity to teach drawing, painting, craft, share stories and play outdoor and indoor games with school children. I am an extrovert person now and I have been able to overcome by stage fear."

**Nagaveni S.K, Intern, Aalamba Internship Program**

"It has been 83 days since I am here. Initially I was uncomfortable attending the sessions conducted by Headstreams. Ever since I started learning computer and engaged myself in other activities conducted by Headstreams, my mind feels free. I feel that when I go out of the Observation Home, I will be able to take care of my life better. "

**Janardhan, Participant, Observation Home**