



## **THE CHILDREN'S RESOURCE CENTRE**

An initiative of The Timbaktu Collective

Chennekothapalli Village, Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh

## **NARRATIVE REPORT**

**April 2016 to March 2017**

## INTRODUCTION

The Children's Resource Centre (CRC) was established by the Timbaktu Collective in 2002 as a community centre for children and youth living in and around Chennekothapali village, in Anantapur District of Andhra Pradesh. The CRC was set-up with the following objectives: to facilitate deeper learning; to encourage extra-curricular activities and self-expression; to enhance life skills; and to provide young people with the space and opportunity to create a sense of solidarity. The use of the CRC – which includes a Science Lab, a computer terminal with four devices, a library, and facilities for various arts, sports and game – is open free-of-cost to children from schools and hostels in the region. Over the years, the CRC has organised training courses on computer applications, media, ecology, the production of bead jewelry, tailoring, and screen printing. The CRC also hosts various celebrations and events such as the Indian Independence Day, the Republic Day, Ambedkar Jayanthi, Gandhi Jayanthi, Sports Days and the World Environment Day. The CRC is open 7 days a week from 9am to 6pm.

The CRC is a key component of the Collective's '*Chiguru*' programme for Child Rights. The other is the Nature School - a semi-residential school for children from marginalised and difficult backgrounds - which is located in 'Timbaktu', a 32-acre, agro-forest habitat established by the founders of the Collective. The 'Mogga' programme [originally a part of Chiguru], which focuses on promoting ecological child rights among 2,000 children from 40 villages, has now been brought under the umbrella of the Collective's Ecology Programme.

## **THE PROJECT (April 2016 to March 2017)**

The Collective identified the following two key objectives for the CRC in the period April 2016 to March 2017:

**Objective 1:** To provide a platform and learning space for about 750 children and youth to enhance life skills through reading, play, art, craft, sports, games, and computer training.

**Objective 2:** To organise events, celebrations, and trainings to around 2,000 children and youth living in 45 villages within the mandals [sub-divisions] of Chennekothapalli, Ramagiri and Roddam in Anantapur District.

## **RESULTS**

The CRC has been run efficiently and has made progress towards meeting its objectives in the project period. The centre is currently managed by a four-member team led by the CRC in-charge, Mr. Ramanjeneyulu.

### **Objective 1**

The CRC was used by a total of 785 children in the 12-month period between April 2016 to March 2017. These children visited the CRC on different occasions and in varying levels of frequency, depending on their location and the availability of time after studies. The CRC's facilities were used twice a month by 56 children (grades 1–5) of the Nature School located in Timbaktu, 7 kilometres from the CRC. Their transportation was organized by the Collective via its in-house school bus. In

terms of local schools and colleges in Chennekothapalli, the CRC was used by 69 children (grades 3, 4, 5) from the Mandal Parishad Elementary School, 46 children (grades 8–10) from the Zilla Parishad High School, 206 children (grades 6–8) from the Andhra Pradesh Model School, 42 students from the Sri Sai Pre-University College [10 students from the Science department and 32 students from the Humanities department], and 10 students from the Kasturba School for girls (class 5–10).



The students participated in a variety of activities; the younger children spent time filling up colour books, while the older ones conducted scientific experiments, familiarizing themselves with concepts of Ohm's law, magnetic forces etc. They also did some chemistry and learnt to identify various salts. All children, irrespective of class, enjoyed reading the many books at the library and participated in various sports throughout the year.

In addition, the CRC staff undertook two outreach visits to promote arts and crafts, games, science experiments and book borrowing among 32 children (grades 1–5) from the ST Colony School, and 38 children (grade 8) from the Zilla

Parishad School in Venkatampalli village. The CRC staff organized regular sessions on arts and crafts such as sketching, coloring, thread pulling, origami, thumb printing, rakhi making and spray painting; conducted science experiments on the formation of gasses, electricity, sound, water pressure, air pressure etc.; provided trainings on basic computer applications; and hosted screenings of films and documentaries for children.

In March 2017, the CRC team visited the Mandal Parishad Elementary School to evince interest from the head master to send some students to learn 'dappu' (a percussion instrument). He informed the team that the school would be interested in the opportunity and would send some children along with a teacher in June. On the same day, the team engaged with class 3 students to get them interested in reading books.

Also in March, the CRC staff had the opportunity to interact with the principal of the Andhra Pradesh Model School as well as the Special Officer of the Kasturbha Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGCB). They obtained information about the schools' admission procedures and also encouraged the representatives to send their students to the CRC.

In other activities:

- The staff of the CRC supervised the re-wiring and re-painting (through whitewash) of the centre.
- Ms. U Renuka was the recipient of two grants - Rs.8000 to cover her college fees and Rs.915 to cover transportation costs.

- IT facilities at the CRC were expanded when the Collective's Administrative Department ('Sruthi') donated three laptops.

## **Objective 2**

The CRC has some way to go in reaching out to 2,000 children and youth in the region through the conduct of various events and celebrations. During the reporting period, the centre had an estimated direct outreach to 800 children. After discussions with CRC staff, it was noticed that there was a significant overlap in children who attended different celebrations, and there was a lack of clear data within the CRC team about the total number of individual children who attended its functions and also the frequency of their visits. Going forward, we will strive to address this lacunae of information.

Below is the chronological list of events and celebrations conducted by the CRC and the number of attendees per activity.

### **Ambedkar Jayanthi**

The CRC commemorated the birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on April 14, 2016 by organizing a speech making contest, singing performances and discussions. 30 children attended this event.

### **Library Days**

The CRC organised 'Library Days' on April 20 and 21, which were attended by 45 children. They were introduced to the importance of reading, provided



information on the facilities at the CRC's library and its lending facilities; with some children taking part in an essay writing competition on the value of reading. In the end, six students were awarded with Telugu dictionaries for their performance in the essay competition.

### **Various events related to the World Environment Day**

The CRC organised multiple events (on different dates) in relation to the World Environment Day. A total of 181 children were reached through this activity. 36 youth leaders from the Collective's 'Mogga Programme' [to promote conservation



education among children and youth] along with 9 other children were provided with two days of training. They were introduced to the 'Web of Life' (a game which teaches the value of the ecosystem), trained on developing paint from natural dyes, the preparation of organic pesticides, and the identification of bird sounds. The same activities were conducted during visits by the CRC staff to the AP Model School (June 16), the Mandal Parishad Elementary School (June 18), and two hostels affiliated to the Zilla Parishad High School (June 20 and July 26) - reaching out to 136 children in total.

### **Junior Sports Day**

The Junior Sports Day was conducted on August 7. More than 300 children participated, with 180 from the Nature School and other local schools and around 120 from the various youth organizations linked to the Mogga program. This program catered to children studying in grades 1-6, and featured eight

competitions; among which were the sack race, dog and bone, the frog race, musical chairs, lemon and spoon, and skipping. In addition, a special musical chair competition was organised for 8 children with disabilities - associated with the Collective's 'Militha Programme' for People with Disabilities (PWDs).

### **Independence Day**

The Independence Day event on August 15, which featured a flag hoisting and a flag painting competition, was attended by 110 children.

### **Teacher's Day**

The CRC hosted a 'Teachers Day' on September 5. The event was attended by 40 children, some of whom took part in an essay writing competition on the qualities of a good and efficient teacher.

### **Gandhi Jayanthi**

The CRC commemorated the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2 by organizing music performances, theatre plays and discussions. 120 children attended this event.

### **Senior Sports Day**

A Senior Sports Day, featuring koko, kabaddi, volleyball, shotput, long jump, tug of war etc., was organised for older children studying between grades 6 and 10. The CRC reached out to 483 children during this event.





### **Children's Day**

The CRC celebrated the National Children's Day on November 14. The event featured theatre plays, dance, individual and group performances of songs, and trainings on different percussion instruments. This event was attended by 184 youth leaders associated with the Mogga Programme and all 56 children from the Nature School.

### **New Year's Day**

The CRC was used by local students to usher in the New Year. 8 students from the Government Intermediate College visited CRC on New Year's eve and cut a cake when the clock struck midnight. The following day, around 250 children visited the centre to wish each other and play games. A special screening of the Telugu movie 'Supreme' was organised in the afternoon.

### **Sankranti (Pongal)**

Also in January, the CRC organised a Rangoli competition on the occasion of Sankranti, which is the traditional harvest festival. The event was attended by students from the Nature School, AP Model School, the KGV School, the Zilla Parishad High School as well as the Sri Sai Junior College. During the competition, the children were divided into three categories: class 1 to 5, class 6 to 8, class 9 to class 12. All the 121 participants received ballpoint pens, while 6 children were awarded steel plates for coming up with the best designs.

### **Republic Day – January 26**

The Republic Day is one of the most important celebrations organised by the CRC. At the start of the day, 22 children from local hostels participated in a flag hoisting ceremony, after which there was a discussion on the history and importance of the Republic. At noon, 15 children associated with the Collective's Militha programme were handed over learning kits in a special ceremony. The event was enlivened by the arrival of students from the Nature School and other educational institutions in Chennekothapalli. The children had a lot of fun taking part in activities such as Musical Chairs, Tambola and Tug of War. Around 150 children visited the CRC during the entire day.

### Science Day

The CRC held a series of science workshops to commemorate the International Science Day on February 28. A total of 254 students took part in the event and enjoyed learning about the theoretical and practical aspects of concepts in Physics and Chemistry, such as Newton's Law, Magnetic Force, AC/DC power, cloud formation, the uses of air, and the workings of balloon rockets and hovercrafts.

The details of the various science workshops are as follows:

Date	School/Group	Class	Participants
February 19	Children from the Ramagiri Balala Sangha (Children's Club) associated with the Collective's Mogga project on child rights	N.A	49
February	Zilla Parishad High School	8,9	66

20			
February 21	AP Model School	6,7	34
February 21	KGVB School	6,7,8,9	32
February 22	Government Elementary School	4,5	49
February 27	Nature School	4,5	24

**END**