

Isai Ambalam School – Support a Child Program

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Brief

Setting up SAC (Support a Child program) for Isai Ambalam School to provide for running expenses of the school.

Phase 1: 70 children @ Rs.11,000/year = 7,70,000.

Cost breakup: Food: 3000, Teacher salaries: 5000, EBD activities: 3000.

Breakup:

About

Isai Ambalam School is an outreach school of Auroville catering to children from villages around Auroville including Kottakarai, Annainagar, Edayanchavadi, Irumbai, Poothurai, Pattannur, etc. Isai Ambalam School follows the CBSE curriculum and has around 130 children. In demographics, the occupation of parents in the school is unskilled labor (35%), skilled labor (55%) and salaried workers (10%). The predominant community accessing Isai Ambalam School is SC (Scheduled Caste).

Isai Ambalam School implemented many teaching techniques that benefited the local village children in their learning including the use of Glenn Doman for early childhood second language learning, Rishi Valley for activity-based learning, etc. Even though the methods could only be implemented to some extent at the school, at least one of them, the trans-creation of the Rishi Valley Ladder method in Tamil, had a big impact. Over 300 teachers from across TN and Pondicherry were trained at Isai Ambalam School in the period of 2005-2008 in this method. The method is now successfully prevalent in all of TN as the ABL (Activity Based Learning) methodology.

The school provides holistic education to children, which includes access to art, music, swimming, meditation, Judo, sports, etc. Snacks and lunch are provided by the school. Children graduating from the school have done well both holistically and academically in the secondary schools they have gone to. There is a school bus, the expenses of which are covered by the parents along with a nominal fee once a year of Rs.1000.

In the last year and a half the focus in the school has been the successful integration of critical skills, values, English communication and STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) education through real life EBD (Education by Design) projects. In addition to the regular teaching staff there are over 10 engineers who volunteer time at the school adding to the richness of the Math and Science programs. We hope that our work on these programs can spread to other schools through developing a

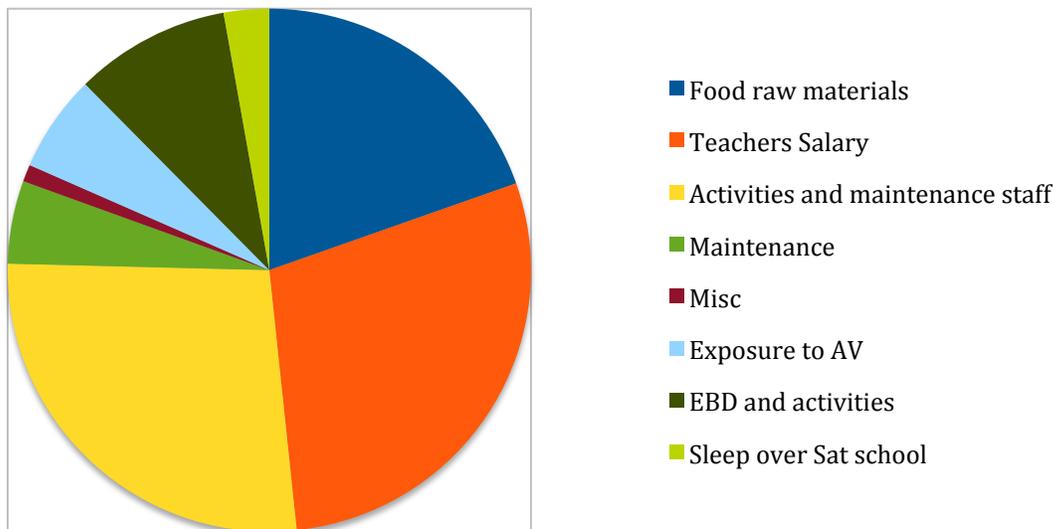
curriculum (that is in alignment with CBSE) and teacher training modules. This work has been presented and workshops given at various conferences including epiSTEME (Homi Baba Center of Science Education), Sinthanai Sangamam, Learning Festival, Lnet, etc).

Finances

The running expenses of the school exceeded Rs.1,24,000/month on an average last year. The Auroville City Services supports around Rs.63,000/month in addition to taking care of the support for four teachers who are Aurovilian. Last year we received a one-time grant (from Bajaj through SAIER) that enabled us to include many activities and initiatives we felt were essential for all-round development of the school and this year would like to continue these activities and projects.

These activities have led to tangible improvement in the children, which has been perceived or recognized by the community and the strength of the school has increased from 89 to 130 this schooling year. We need to at least raise what we were able to last year through SAC and raise the rest through individual donations, etc.

Our goal in the first phase is to raise funds for 70 children from the higher grades using the support from the city to account for the remaining children. We would like the parents to continue to support the expenses for running the school bus and an equivalent fee of one month. Parents are also expected to take care of one time expenses like school dress, books/notebooks required by the children. The focus of the SAC program is to provide for the running expenses of the needs of the child at the school to provide holistic, effective and innovative education.



Blogs and other information

School Blog: <http://isaiambalamschool.wordpress.com/>

STEM activities: <http://www.aurauro.com/>