

Budget 2025-26 and Review 2024-25

Fig Tree Learning Centre (FTLC) was started by Jane Sahi, along with teachers who worked with her in Sita School. Sita School functioned till 2017 and was supported by Asha Bangalore. The school had to be closed due to stringent legal requirements that they couldn't adhere to. During 2024-25, FTLC functioned as a resource centre for children for extra-curricular learning. The Centre comprises of two resource persons, Sarojini and Ghousia, guided by Jane and other outside facilitators. Their activities include visiting the Government- run Lower Primary Schools at Tarabanahalli and Pakegowdanapalya once a week and, and running the centre at Kempapura. All these places are located on the outskirts of Bangalore close to the erstwhile Sita School premises at Silvapura. During the year, I visited them on October 24, 2024 and reviewed their work for Asha for Education. You can [view my site visit report here](#).

During 2024-25, FTLC sought support only for 6 months, for the following

	Amount (Rs.)
Salary - Sarojini Hegde (6 months)	₹ 1,20,000
Salary - Gousia Taj (6 months)	₹ 1,08,000
Salary - Margaret (part time)	₹ 39,000
Rent for Kempapura Learning Centre premises (12 months)	₹ 36,000
Total	₹ 3,03,000

expenditure heads:

A detailed report on the activities by the project partner is presented as an annexure. The project partner has submitted a copy of the audited accounts for the year.

At the end of the year, Sarojini has left FTLC to move back to her home town after more than two decades of service with Sita School (earlier) and FTLC. The learning centre at Kempapaura has to be shut down due to other challenges. They continue their work with the support of Nature Classrooms (an environmental group particularly concerned with education and closely connected with the Nature Conservation Foundation) at Tarabanahalli Government Primary School. A volunteer has agreed to come once a week. In addition, they plan to have at least six workshops at the Fig Tree campus with local school children in the coming year. Gousia will continue as a support in this work for the coming year and will also be involved in library work in two of the nearby Government schools in Kempapura and Pakengowdapalya and in a small community library. Support is

	Amount (Rs.)
Salary - Gousia Taj	₹ 2,40,000
Salary - Margaret (part time)	₹ 84,000
Auditor fees	₹ 10,000
Total	₹ 3,34,000

requested for the following budget heads.

Annexure 1 - Report of the Fig Tree Learning Centre

October, 2024 - March, 2025

In the last six months the work of the Fig Tree Learning Centre has been focused on two of the nearby Government primary schools - Tarabanahalli and Pakengowdapalya where Gousia and Sarojini went on a regular weekly basis. The Learning Centre has continued in Kempapura and we have had five workshops in TFTLC. Collaboration with Nature Classrooms has continued to give a lot of support and we have been happy to have the help of two of the educators from there and access to the resources of NCF and Nature Classrooms.

Learning Centre at Kempapura

Much of the energy of the TFTLC in the last six months has gone into the Learning Centre at Kempapura. Gousia and Sarojini have gone almost every day Monday to Friday from 3.30. to 5.30. Numbers have been somewhat erratic but there has been an average of 12 -15 children coming except during holiday periods when many children went to their native place but the Centre has been open continuously.

The Learning Centre has continued with a number of activities round the library, craft and nature walks which became a regular feature every Friday. There was a focus on children's autonomy and space for them to choose what they wanted to do and there was some re-organization of materials so that children had easy access to resources over the last six months we noticed a number of children

We have seen some significant changes with some children and there is an account of three particular children who Gousia , Jane and Sarojini write about.

Library Activities



The children have been encouraged to take turns to be responsible for checking books that are borrowed and returned to the library. Each child has also kept a library card as a record of the books they have read.

Language games and activities

Some of the many language games that children have enjoyed playing together. It has been interesting to note how children who have been reluctant readers and hesitant independent writers have been highly motivated to participate in games

that required comprehension, phonemic awareness and letter and word



recognition.

Activities in the Learning Centre



Many activities have continued such as paper folding and cutting, construction activities, drawing and making patterns and designs, doing puzzles and collages An additional activity was providing a box of dressing up

clothes for children to enjoy and make up their own dramas. For Diwali the children painted diyas and took them home.



Nature walks, activities and discussions

Nature walks became a regular feature every Friday. There was usually a particular focus such as on leaves or birds. Often the children took photos with tablets and then used these to help their drawings and closer observation. They also drew directly from nature. Topics are usually introduced through games and discussions.

Work in Local Government Primary Schools

Tarabanahalli Government Primary School - standards 2-5



regularly to two nearby

since work began in Tarabanahalli and we have been fortunate to have over this period developed a close relationship with the HM there, Smt. Anita.

Sarojini and Gousia have gone
schools. It is now six years

Although the Government now provides books for the school the children are not allowed to borrow and take them home. The classroom library with books from TFTLC are arranged so that children can borrow these books. There have also been some displays to encourage children to explore the books on particular themes such as 'friendship' and 'Birds'. Read-alouds have also been a regular part of the programme.

Projects round particular projects have included Food and Health, Birds and Friendship. In addition to books the children have also had the opportunity to use OctoStudio with the voluntary support of Lavanya GN to engage with the

environment and create multimodal stories to express their observations and ideas to others.

Project on birds with 4th and 5th Standard children



The children shared their knowledge about what

they knew about local birds but learnt more about different birds' habitats, food and body parts, communication and migration through story, observation, asking questions and reading information.

Project on friendship with 3rd standard children



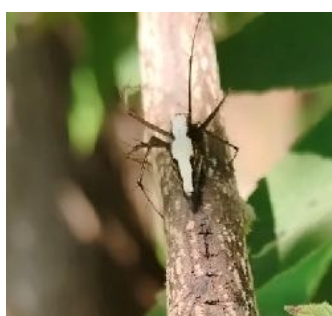
The children discussed friendship through sharing their own experiences through writing, reading and drawing. They also explored their relationships with the animal world and discussed a number of stories that focused on friendship with animals

Pakengowdapalya Government Primary School - standards 1-5

In this school there is ample space but at present there is only a total strength of 17 children. Sarojini and Gousia have gone on a regular weekly basis . Most recently



they did a project with the children on the trees in the school compound. Read alouds, singing, games and some craft work



have been part of this



programme.

Investigating the Singapore cherry tree in the school compound

Sarojini introduced the topic by showing the chart prepared by NCF. The children then looked at the parts of the Singapore cherry tree and the natural life around the tree. The children made bark rubbings and drew pictures of the tree.



Workshops in the Fig Tree



Learning Centre

Between December and February we had five workshops in the local

the Centre. Three were with children from the government schools and one was with the children from the Learning Centre in Kempapura. Another workshop in January was with the 1st standard children of Adwya school from Bengaluru.

Each workshop had its particular theme - leaves, seeds, homes and these were explored through observation, craft work, activities such as Bingo and Scavenger

Hunts and also art and craft work. With the Kempapura children there was heavy rain and we had to quickly change the plan to think of indoor activities.

Visits

We have been fortunate to have had a number of visitors. Padma BM - formerly of APF - came and did a session with the children on language games and this was something that enriched children's learning activities. We noticed that even children who were reluctant readers responded well to the challenge of games and were motivated to participate in play that demanded word recognition and attention to *ottakshara* and *kaagunita* . These activities became very popular with the children across ages and abilities.

Padma also did a read-aloud and taught the children a new action song in Kannada which the children greatly appreciated.



On two occasions Aditi Rao from nature Classrooms conducted activities around birds and introduced the children to a game on migration. We were fortunate to have support from Nature Classrooms and a volunteer called Spoorthy who we are hoping may continue to be involved. For the Adwaya workshop Anjali Sahi was involved.

Vivek from the Regional Institute of Education in Mysore visited the Learning Centre and spoke to the children about their experience and also met some of the children's family members. Anu Chandy formerly of Rishi Valley School also came and interacted with the children.



We were happy to welcome Balaji from Asha who spent time with the children asking about their likes and dislikes.

Parents, grandparents and on one occasion the teachers and all the students from the nearby government primary school came and enjoyed a morning listening to stories and browsing. We had hoped this would lead to a regular interaction with the school but sadly this did not happen.

The Kempapura Learning Centre, even though it will not continue in its present form has been a very positive experience for many children and a learning opportunity for the team at TFTLC about how a different kind of learning space can be created.

Forward plans

At the end of December Sarojini confirmed that she would be leaving to return to Sirsi, her home place, following her husband's retirement and shift there. She has been working in the Sita School and Learning Centre from 1989. During this period of 35 years she has worked as a teacher of Kannada, social studies and environmental studies. She has worked as a library educator and helped in the preparation of a Kannada primer. In addition she has translated samples of children's writing for *In Our Own Words*, a book about independent and creative writing which documents a lot of the work she did with children in the Sita School. She will be sorely missed but there is a sense of deep gratitude for all the ways she has supported so many children's learning.

After a lot of thought and consideration it has been decided that the Learning Centre in Kempapura should close because we were not able to find a suitable person who would be responsible for the LC there. Gousia will continue to work at TFTLC but felt unable to carry that responsibility alone. The work in the schools will continue and we plan to have a number of nature immersion workshops at TFTLC in the coming year particularly for children in nearby Government schools. Gousia will also be involved in a library initiative in Silvepura, *Namma Library*.

We would like to thank support from the following organizations:
ASHA, Nature Classrooms, Sai Vishwanath Memorial Trust and

McFadyen Consulting Software India Private Limited. Please see the attachment for details of money received this year and expenditure.

Gousia, Jane and Sarojini

March 2025.