**A proposal for running Prakruthi Badi during 2016-17**

**Submitted to ASHA, UK**

**by The Timbaktu Collective**

**1. Introduction:**

The Timbaktu Collective is a grassroots development organisation working for sustainable development of drought prone and ecologically challenged Anantapur District in Andhra Pradesh, India. The Collective works in 170 villages with about 25,000 families, which are economically and socially disadvantaged, landless labourers, small and marginal farmers, women, children, People with disabilities (PWDs), youth and dalits. The main thematic interventions of the Collective are in the areas of Child Rights, Women’s Rights, Natural Resource Management, Organic Farming and Marketing, Disability Rights, as well as rural enterprise development.

The Collective runs Prakruthi Badi (Nature School) in Timbaktu, an agro-forest habitat in Chennekothapalli Village of Anantapur district. Currently at primary level (class 1 to 5), Prakruthi Badi reaches out to deserving children from poor or difficult family backgrounds in need of care, protection and education. The Collective has received Government permission as required by RTE Act to run Prakruthi Badi as a primary school. This proposal is submitted to ASHA, UK for continued part support for this initiative for the academic year 2016-17. The school will continue in the same premises. Prakruthi Badi is also supported by Ion Foundation, ASHA Bangalore, SPA foundation as well as by individuals.

**2. Aim, Purpose and Objective:**

* **Aim:** The aim of the project is that select children from difficult backgrounds in the working area of the Collective have a safe, healthy and happy childhood and they enjoy their childhood.
* **Purpose:** The purpose of the school is that ‘About 50 select children from difficult circumstance who otherwise do not have the opportunity, have access to protection and care as well as education in an atmosphere of creativity and freedom’.
* **Objective:** The Children at Prakruthi Badi receive age and ability appropriate academic inputs, adequate nutrition and health care, orientation in a variety of skills and have a safe and comfortable living place.

Due to difficulty in fundraising we are planning to reduce the number of children from 60 to 50.The difficult circumstances mentioned here refer to children who do not have parents, children from very poor families and families that migrate often particularly girl children. In the last proposal we have mentioned difficulties in including children with disabilities. With renewed support from ‘Militha Team’ (the disability programme team) currently we are able to support 5 children at Prakruthi badi. This support will continue the next year also.

The average school days will continue to be about 300 for residential and 250 for non-residential children.For selection of children, as in past years, help will be sought from the Cooperatives promoted by the Collective which have members in 170 villages, from Timbaktu Panchayati which is a forum of about 120 members who work full time with Timbaktu Collective / the cooperatives promoted by the Collective, the children currently in the school and their parents, the requests for admission received in the current year, the members involved in home based therapy in the Militha programme (disability programme), and on rare occasions news paper reports on specific children who need help.

**3. Activities:**

The activities proposed here include conducting academic sessions, providing nutritious food, taking care of health and hygiene, conducting art and craft sessions, providing facilities for play, sports and games, Growing organic gardens, seed collection and dibbling, conducting cultural activity sessions, conducting events and celebrations, conducting excursions, holding parents meetings, conducting home visits, conducting teacher’s meetings/ study visits/ trainings, and developing the infrastructure. In the previous year we had the activity of organizing access to library, lab and computer classes, which is now clubbed under academic sessions.

**3.1. Conducting academic sessions:**

The practice of reserving mornings to academics sessions and afternoons to other activities will be continued. The academic sessions will include Maths, Telugu, Hindi, English, Social Studies, and Science. Classes will be conducted in separate spaces (huts) and some times outdoors. Whenever possible, teaching / learning will be put into the context of daily living and of the immediate environment. Taking forward from the assessment held in January 2016, attempt will be made to reach the educational goal of each child. Worksheets, teaching/learning materials, songs etc will be used for the classes where appropriate. 7 experienced teachers will hold the classes.

In order to become independent learners, children are encouraged to read and they need access to a variety of books. While the post dinner quiet hour of reading will continue at the school it is planned to access the facilities at the Children’s Resource Centre at Chennekothapalli which is equipped with an extensive children’s library, computer learning facilities and a lab. The children will use this facility on a bimonthly basis. Besides, the children will also borrow books from the CRC. It is planned that there will be 22 visits to CRC in the year.

**3.2. Providing Nutritious Food:**

Since the children of the school are from nutritionally deprived backgrounds, special effort is taken to provide them with healthy balanced nutrition. Healthy organic food will be provided as much as possible with liberal amounts of fruits, greens, vegetables and pulses besides eggs and milk.

**3.3. Taking care of Health and Hygiene:**

The health and hygiene of the children will be supervised and monitored on an on-going basis. Soaps, hair oil and other personal care items will be bought on a weekly basis form the Sunday market in Penukonda. Rest, light diet with liquids, home remedies and first aid, will deal with minor health issues. The teachers are equipped with a basic homeopathy medical kit. At the next level, referrals will be made to the Primary health centre in Chennekothapalli. Depending on seriousness, advanced facilities will be explored in Dharmavaram, Anantapur or Bangalore. Besides, quarterly health checks up of all children will also be conducted.

**3.4. Conducting Arts and Crafts Sessions:**

Working with ones hands nurtures creativity, encourages innovation, and serves to equip the children with skills useful in later years. The activities concerned here are making of puzzles, toys, peg boards, flash cards, stitching, knitting, tailoring, bamboo craft, clay work, paper mesh work, origami, drawings, painting, mat and basket weaving with date palm tree leaves, seed art, nail and thread work etc.

**3.5. Providing facilities for Play, Sports and Games:**

At Prakruthi Badi, the last period every day will be games including cricket, badminton, Kho kho as well as indoor and board games. The children will be encouraged to learn the rules and play in a spirit of friendship rather than competition. This year also we could not raise sufficient resources for football post, Volleyball, cricket etc and also for one more set of swings and slides and a trampoline. We will attempt to do this next year.

**3.6. Growing Organic Garden:**

The children will maintain an organic garden in the vicinity of the school and will work for one period everyday growing vegetables and greens, which will be used in the school kitchen. With support from the organic farming programme promoted by the Collective the children will learn preparation of manures and pesticides by organic practices as part of this activity.

**3.7. Seed collection and dibbling:**

Collection of seeds of trees, bushes, creepers and grasses and dibbling them in the rainy season is a practice adopted in restoring degraded lands. The Collective, with Kalpavalli tree growers cooperative has promoted a wilderness/grassland ecosystem in 7000 acres of common lands. Under this activity, the children will involve in collecting and storing seeds available at the school and dibble them in Kalpavalli through one-day seed dibbling camps. By doing this activity, the children will learn about local flora and also about the practices involved in eco restoration and the benefits.

**3.8. Training in Cultural Activities:**

Classes in traditional cultural art forms such as Chekkabhajana, Kolatam, Dappu (hand drum) as well as vocal music, tabla, dance, and drama will continue. The children will present some of these at various events held at the children’s Resource centre. These classes will be held during 5 days in the last week of every month, in batches, with one hour per session. Depending on the need, some training will be taken up continuously or on alternate days. Teachers from the local villages and towns will be hired for this.

**3.9. Conducting Events and Celebrations:**

The Collective sees celebrations and fun as important components of learning. Popular local festivals like Sankranti, (harvest festival), Ugadi, (Telugu new year) Ganesh Chaturthi, diwali and days of national significance like Independence day and Republic day, children’s celebrations organised by the children’s resource centre and the Mogga children’s forum like sports day, children’s day, school day, science day etc provide opportunities to the children to enrich and take the learning processes out of classrooms. Children will be encouraged to take active part in the decision making process in all these celebrations. They will also learn to work in a group, to plan, design, and take responsibility. Besides, these celebrations will give an opportunity to showcase the skills gained by the children. Working on these events will also bring teachers and students together on a different platform, thus opening up a whole new space of interaction, learning, and bonding.

**3.10. Conducting excursions:**

Excursions provide opportunity to the children for wider exposure and learning. One excursion of 2 days to areas of historical importance is planned.

**3.11. Holding parents meetings:**

For the work with children to be truly meaningful and effective in the long term, it is necessary that their parents/family be also worked with. Where parents are not there, the Collective ensures that an adult in the family or in the extended family takes the responsibility of looking after the children in the holidays and to attend the parents meetings. Parents meetings give an opportunity to appraise on the children’s academic progress, and also to get insights into the children’s personal history. These forums are also used to update parents on information regarding matters like child rights and discuss issues like child marriage. These meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis, thus 4 meetings will be conducted in the year. In these meetings the school will also explore the possibility of the parents offering their skills like story telling, singing, folk dance, craft/needle work etc to the school.

**3.12. Conducting teacher’s meetings/ study visits/ trainings:**

The classes will be conducted by a team of experienced teachers who believe strongly in the work they do. Regular teacher’s meetings will be held besides study visit to see one or two other alternative schools and periodic trainings for additional inputs.

**3.13. Developing infrastructure**

In order to make the space comfortable for the children and ensure smooth running of the school, certain renovations and improvements were planed in the current. Since we could not raise sufficient resources these were not carried out. Subject to availability of funds, these will be carried out next year.

**4. Monitoring & Reporting:**

There are various forums for monitoring and reporting on the school. The first is the weekly teachers meetings held on Saturday evenings. The next level is the Chiguru Working Group meetings once a month where all members who work with children meet together. The next Forum is the Core group meeting held once a month where coordinators of all programmes present their monthly programme and finance reports. One member will represent the school in this meeting. Then there is the bimonthly meeting of Timbaktu Panchayati, which is a meeting of all full time functionaries of the Collective and of the Cooperatives promote by the Collective. Annually once reporting will also done with the Managing Committee of the Collective. All these practices, which are in place currently, will continue.

**5. Budget:**

The budget for the academic year 2016 – 17 is attached.

**6. Future Plans:**

We would like to continue running Prakruthi Badi as long as there is a justifiable need for it. The Collective sees that there is the need to continue running of Prakruthi Badi as a primary school. Since the school is not a profit-making venture and depends entirely on funds raised through donations and grants, long term support, commitment and partnerships are imperative for its continued and smooth functioning. We would eventually like to build a corpus fund for this purpose. Since the school is not a profit-making venture and depends entirely on funds raised through donations and grants, long-term support, commitment and partnerships are imperative for its continued and smooth functioning.

**Annexure 1: The Timbaktu Collective - 1. Basic Profile**

Name of the Society : **The Timbaktu Collective**

Type of work : **Rural Development - Constructive work**

Registered Office : **46, Primrose Road, Bangalore - 560 025**

Field Office and Mailing Address : **Chennekothapalli, Anantapur Dt., A.P., India - 515101**

Chief functionary : **Mr. C.K. Ganguly ,Secretary**

Contact persons : **Ms. Mary Vattamattam – Chairperson**

**Mr. C.K. Ganguly ,Secretary**

Bank Details : **Canara Bank, Trinity Circle branch, Bangalore**

**Domestic Account No: SB 22808**

**Foreign Contribution Account No: SB 22807**

IFSC Code : **CNRB0000792**

Swift Code : **CNRBINBBLFD**

Society Registration : **No. 546/90-91, Bangalore – dated 14th November ’91**

Registration under FCRA : **No. 0 9 4 4 2 0 6 2 1, dated 3rd January ‘94**

Contact Details : **Telephone Number - +91 8559 202335 / 202149**

**E Mail – timbaktu.info@gmail.com**

PAN Number  : **AAATT1760G**

Website : **www.timbaktu.org**