

RightStart 2015 Report

RightStart 2015, our annual teacher training programme took place from May 25th to May 29th at the IIT campus. Here is a detailed report.

Organisation

This year we were planning to organize the programme in exactly the same way as we did last time. However that didn't happen. Women's hostel was not available at IIT. With the majority of the participants being women, this was the critical accommodation requirement. We looked at a couple of private Women's hostels, the hostels at National Institute for Technical Teacher Training and Research, and Anna University, and also some places which can host conferences (which also have accommodation for the participants). Since the venue of Vanavani was available this year too, we focused on just hostels from where we can bring the participants to IIT every day. We finally circled on Andhra Mahila Sabha Women's hostel at Mylapore. It was a little far but is a respected good hostel. The teachers' breakfast and dinner were also provided at the hostel itself.

One of our volunteers Prof. Kamakoti was also the chairman of Vanavani school. He offered us complete support in hosting the sessions themselves. We held all the sessions in two classrooms at Vanavani. The felicitation function could also be held at their auditorium. Their support throughout the programme was extremely good.

For lunch, the first day was a bit of a chaos at Gurunath canteen. The subsequent days we went to the Staff canteen which was low priced and good quality food. Tea and biscuits were served twice a day at the training venue. This also worked fine.

Trainers

We had planned things ahead of time with the trainers and the sessions therefore took place as planned without any hiccoughs.

Ms. Rekha Balakrishnan organized the English sessions – Half a day on 25th morning and the whole day on the 29th. She is a volunteer of Asha Chennai. She has been teaching at Kids Central a school at Kotturpuram and is also a Cambridge certified Trainer with specialization in Story telling and creative writing. Her sessions were focused on grammar. The teachers learned to structure basic sentences. She was also assisted on 29th morning by Ms. Fouzia, another teacher from Kids Central. She introduced the teachers to Phonic through the Jolly Phonics methodology.

Madras Dyslexia Association has been working on spreading awareness about Dyslexia for several decades. Ms. Harini Mohan, a Principal at MDA conducted a session on identifying and dealing with children with Dyslexia on the afternoon of 26th.

Ms. Meena Suresh and Ms. Kalyani from Ramanujan Museum and Math Resource Centre have been working with Asha Chennai in training the teachers and other aspects of improving the quality of Mathematics education for the last year. They had their Maths sessions on the 26th and 27th of May. Their sessions were focused on the lessons that the teachers need to teach in the first term. The sessions used materials from Ramanujan Museum, which we have already donated to the schools.

Ms. Anuradha Sankar was running Science Sense an organization devoted to better science education through practical experiments. She has been training students at her centre as well as training teachers at various schools in Chennai. She was assisted by Ms. Archana Ghode. She is also a researcher at IIT, Madras working on bettering science education. They had a sessions on practical science on the 28th of May.

Participants

S No.	Teacher	School / Organisation
1	J. Santhasophya	Project Sangamam, PUPS Pattaraiperambudur
2	R. Vanitha	Project Sangamam, PUPS Ammambakkam
3	K. Seetha Ezhilarasi	Project Sangamam, Candidate
4	R. Tamilselvi	Project Sangamam, PUPS Nemiliagaram
5	S. Deivanayagi	Project Sangamam, PUPS Kuppammal Chatthiram
6	K. Sumithra	Poorna Vidhya, Candidate
7	V. Maheswari	Project Manigal, CPS Indira Nagar
8	J. Jennifer Joshi	Project Sangamam, Candidate
9	A. Jayashree	Project Sangamam, PUMS Ramancheri
10	T. Bhuvaneshwari	Poorna Vidhya, Candidate
11	R. Jyothi	Little Flower Middle School, Karumbakkam
12	B. Jeevika	Little Flower Middle School, Karumbakkam
13	C. Malathi	Little Flower Middle School, Karumbakkam
14	P. Bakkiyam	Little Flower Middle School, Karumbakkam
15	R. Nishanthi	Project Sangamam
16	M. Umesh	Navajeevan Trust, Pottal Govt. High School
17	Krupavathy	Project Manigal, Candidate
18	T. Rajakumari	Project Sangamam, Candidate
19	K. Priya	Project Sangamam, PUPS Katchur
20	M. Umamageswari	Project Manigal, CPS Indira Nagar
21	A. Gnanasoundari	FTC Seeyapoondi
22	M. Narayana Doss	Navajeevan Trust, Govt. Higher Sec. School ,

		Marathamputhur
23	T. Sivan Sait	Navajeevan Trust, Govt. Middle School Kasinathapuram
24	A. Nirmala	Project Sangamam, PUPS Allikuzhi
25	P. Sugasini	Navajeevan Trust, Govt. Middle School Marandi
26	E. Manju	Navajeevan Trust, Hindu Thirumurugan Middle School
27	M. Srinivasan	Project Sangamam Coordinator
28	S. Mekalai	CPS Shastri Nagar.
29	S. Sangeetha	Poorna Vidhya, Candidate
30	P. Philomena	Poorna Vidhya, CPS Shastri Nagar
31	P. Janova	Project Sangamam, PUPS Kannigaiper

Felicitatation Function

The felicitatation function was held on the last day after the final English session got over. Vanavani allowed us the use of their auditorium for this function. The event started at 3:45 pm itself.

The following events took place.

- Since the event started earlier than planned, the following people entertained with their singing: A. Nirmala, K. Rajaraman, M. Srinivasan, M. Umesh, P. Sugasini and E. Manju.
- Rajaram then spoke about Asha and our involvement with educational quality improvements at Government Schools.
- Lakshmi Suryanarayanan and E.S. Ananth spoke a few words
- Gifts to the trainers – We gave a token gift to all our trainers. Those present – Rekha Balakrishnan, Anuradha Shankar and Archana Ghode – received their present.
- Certificates to the teachers were distributed by the Asha Chennai volunteers.
- A. Jayashree from Project Sangamam read out the vote of Thanks on behalf of the teachers to Asha and the trainers.
- Jennifer Sarto from Hyundai Glovis (a corporate sponsor/supporter of our projects) spoke about their involvement with Asha.
- Vijaya Sundaram read the vote of thanks on behalf of Asha thanking the IIT authorities, Vanavani school, the trainers and all the participants.

The function ended in the evening by 5:00 pm.

Financials

Budget Item – Details	Budget Amt.	Actual Expense
Accomodation and food for Participants –	40000	31,135

We had planned for 25 out-station participants. There were 24 of whom one of them stayed with a relative and one of them was accommodated at a volunteer's place. Otherwise the costs were along expected lines.		
Resource persons and facilitators Honorarium and travel expenses – Most of the trainers did not take any money from us and did their work for free.	25,000	10,000
Travel Expenses for Outstation Participants – All the things planned were done. But they cost a little less.	32,000	17,065
Lunch for all participants, volunteers, helpers and trainers at venue. The subsidized food at IIT Staff Canteen costed less than we had planned.	20,000	14,933
Materials for participants and during sessions – The teacher's kit cost a lot less than planned.	10,000	4342
Gifts for resource persons	5,000	3,830
Documentation and Administration – This was primarily the honourarium for one staff who spent the time before the function to help organize it and also spent all the 5 days fully at Vanavani (Rs 2500).	8,000	3000
TOTAL	140,000	84,305