

CENTRE FOR LEARNING

A Place Where Learning is Fun



ANNUAL REPORT

2012-2013

Centre for Learning

A Place Where Learning is Fun

(1982 – ____)

*The **face** of CFL is an alternative education centre that helps young learners connect with themselves; figure out their values, interests, direction in life, while acquiring a strong academic foundation and necessary life-skills.*

*The **heart** of CFL is a continuing enquiry to understand what constitutes (quality) education beyond formal schooling. At CFL we attempt to understand the challenges of living a meaningful, self-regulated life of inner and outer harmony.*

Our hope is that we may together evolve a lifestyle and a way of looking at things that is truly just, that genuinely respects the cultural and biological diversity of all living beings and bring out the best in ourselves as individuals and as a collective.

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Overview

CFL is changing! It wasn't easy to say goodbye to the avatar of CFL that we've lived with for thirty years. There are so many emotions tied to it, memories, experiences, friends, and learning. This was one reason for which the decision to change the old familiar CFL was delayed. But gradually that poignancy began to be laced with the excitement of a new CFL in the making; the sadness and confusion gave way to direction and determination.

Many students left this year because of the proposed changes, while a few parents decided to stay on with us despite the risks – even knowing that they may have to pay more.

The year was packed with classes, projects and events. Independence Day was celebrated with cultural activities; we ended the year with an Art and Craft Exhibition where children presented their work in art, craft, theatre, music and dance. In addition, we managed to fit in some local trips and movies.

2012-13 will be remembered as the year that CFL reinvented itself and evolved into a different space. We changed the setup of the rooms, worked on new posters, reworked the website content to reflect the change, spent time evolving the new programme and curriculum and thinking through the different aspects of the new CFL. We worked on wondering what this change would mean for us in terms of new students, our daily functioning and our future learning journey.

What didn't change through all this was our continuing to work closely with the children at CFL and with the team questioning everything, arguing, discussing, and debating every decision, every inch of the way.



Children's Programme

A typical day at the (education) Centre started with either dance or physical activity depending on the group to which that child belonged. After half an hour of dance or games, the children attended academic classes till 12 o'clock, which was when we broke for lunch. The youngest group went home after their lunch, while the middle group got involved in their individual or group projects. The older group had another hour of academics post-lunch after which they broke into different groups as per the projects that they had chosen to be part of. This is in consonance with our decision to lessen the time spent in academics and spend more time on different kinds of activities.

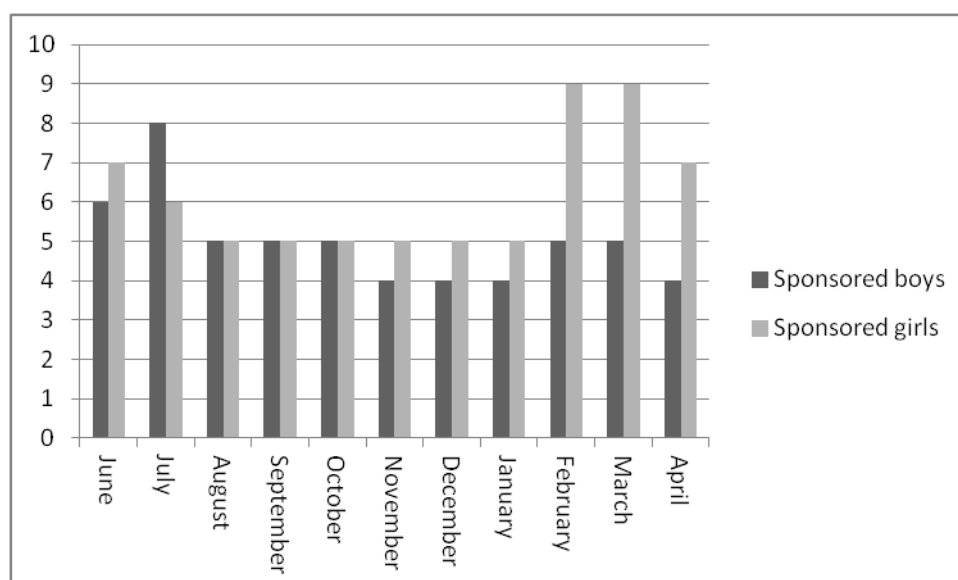
In retrospect, it does appear that while a lot was happening, there wasn't enough tracking of each child's progress across the different classes. Consequently not everyone worked at their challenge level in all classes. This was partly because of a change of teachers in the middle of the year and partly because we were moving towards a more learner-driven learning process. Children, after years of being told what to do, need time to unlearn and reorient themselves. We too need to rediscover how much under-gridding is necessary in this new process.

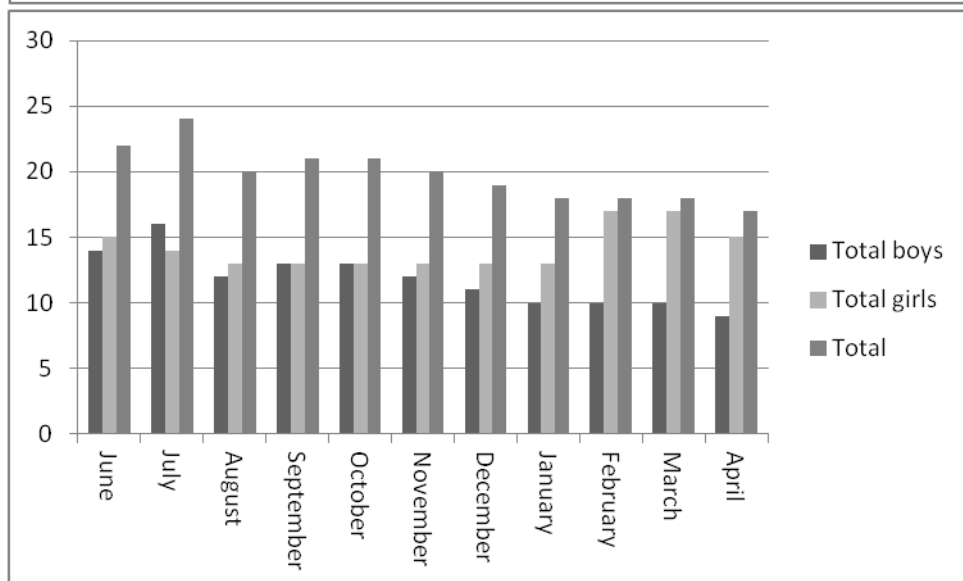
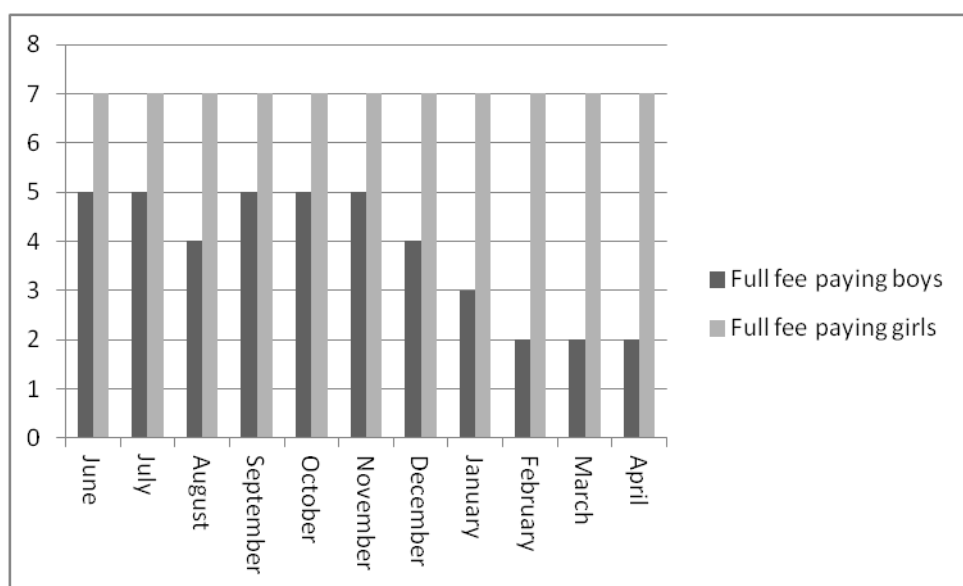
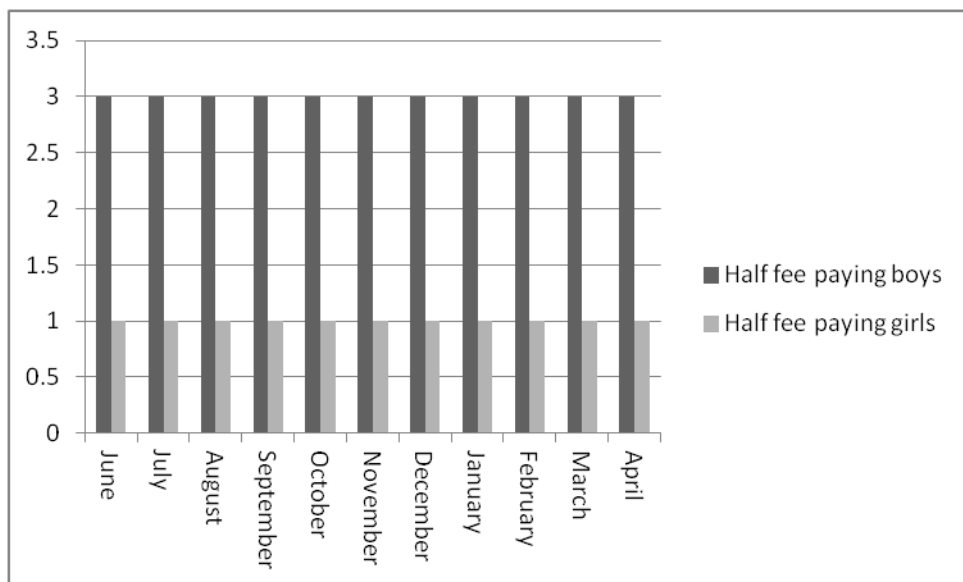
Enrolments, Fall Outs/Move Ons, Attendance

CFL has never really been a formal school, which is why it has called itself an alternative education centre, but with the public announcement that CFL would no longer work within a school frame, there was a further fall in numbers. The numbers remained at approximately 25 throughout the year, give or take a few.

We remained very conscious of the decrease in enrolments even though CFL has never been about numbers. We felt as if we had to justify the loss, even though we constantly spent the whole day working. It wasn't as if we didn't try to increase the numbers but did not want to do so without telling the new comers about the impending changes in CFL and implications of RtE upon their children's education. This usually meant we lost out on what could have been a new admission.

The graphs below give the details of the enrolments per month with break-ups.





Most of the children who left have joined other schools and so are not dropouts but “move-ons”.

The attendance of most children was above 80%. Only 3 children's attendance was around 75%; one of them had a medical condition and needed to go to the hospital.

Our attempts to increase enrolments in the 14+ category are proceeding slowly – as expected. With the new programme being such a change from the usual choices, it will take people time to gain the confidence to join and will require us both to be patient and continue to be hopeful despite low numbers for at least the next two years.

Children's Meetings

Children's meetings were fewer in number – partly affected by the reduction in numbers and partly because there were mostly younger children. It was however very encouraging to see most of the children participate frankly, put forth their ideas and suggestions without hesitation and argue their case giving reasons in support of their view.

The Events

Independence Day Celebrations

The first event of the year, as per the tradition in Centre for Learning, was a celebration of the Independence Day. CFL celebrated the Independence Day with a large number of varied events, with teachers and children of all ages participating in the fun. The celebrations included a classical dance performance, blind fold dance and dance with Poi. We sang songs in all three languages – Hindi, English and Telugu. We also had an all-girls percussion band (with the youngest being a seven year old) perform at the event with five different percussion instruments.

During the celebrations we screened a short film made by the children called *The Baba and the Boy*. The movie was uploaded on YouTube. We showed parents and visitors around the place, showcasing the gardening that children had done.



Sleepover

We had a sleepover in November at CFL. This time, in addition to it becoming an annual tradition, it was also meant as a farewell party to the two children who were migrating to two different countries. It was a last-minute plan as we wanted a get-together before they left. The sleepover as always had elements of fun, music, dance and a little bit of spook. The children and the teachers stayed over after regular classes. Some of the children engaged in games and some went for a walk to collect fire wood for the bonfire, while the teachers cooked up a meal. After the meal, we sang around the bonfire and then went for the 'graveyard walk'. When we were at the edge of the yard, we had a few jittering knees. Children said that they were afraid of the stray dogs, not so much the graveyard itself. And so we turned back. We had the late night movie and then of course most didn't sleep peppering the night with giggles, screams, scuffles, laughter, some scared shrieks and just too many mosquitoes. The next morning Jayasree made hot idli, sambar and chutney for breakfast. We had a sumptuous breakfast before we said our reluctant goodbyes. Perhaps a more appropriate term for our sleepover is night-out!

The Arts and Craft Exhibition

This time the idea was to open the platform to parents and others to participate in the exhibition along with children. Children showcased the products they had made during their art and craft classes. Items ranging from their writings, poetry, art works, calendars, jewellery to artefacts made from paper (wall hangings, lanterns, lamp shades) and wood (bird houses, houses, cycle and a water fall) were exhibited. Some of the exhibits from parents and other outsiders included photographs, coasters made out of jute ropes, a wood carving piece and two paintings. An ex-student came and put up a stall of handmade pizzas.

At the exhibition, children presented a play called *Jhahala and Muinu*, a story of two tribal villages that united to oppose an incursion by city-folk who wanted to build a resort in the forest. All aspects of the theatre (from the inception of the story to the direction of the play) were handled primarily by the children. We presented a Kuchipudi dance, choreographed by Saroj, a break dance choreographed by children and sang a few songs. One of our students teamed up with an ex-student to present a dance.

Movie List

A movie is screened on one Friday in a month. The following documentaries were screened as part of their science and social study classes.

- ◆ Planet Earth – A series on different facets of our planet made by BBC.
- ◆ Animals are Beautiful People – A wonderful documentary that captures the intelligence of various animal species in a humorous way from across the planet.
- ◆ Documentary made by Sunitha Williams on her space travel.

Some of the other movies screened were:

- ◆ Hugo – Set in 1930's Paris, an orphan who lives in the walls of a train station is wrapped up in a mystery involving his late father and an automaton.
- ◆ Kitaab – A classic by Gulzar that talks about a boy and the journey he takes after running away from school.

- ◆ Madagascar 2 – The animals try to fly back to New York City, but crash-land on an African wildlife refuge, where Alex is reunited with his parents.
- ◆ Whale Rider – A contemporary story of love, rejection and triumph as a young Maori girl fights to fulfil a destiny her grandfather refuses to recognize.

Walks and Visits

Walks to Military Dairy Farm

Military Dairy Farm is a forest reserve area. During and after monsoon the place becomes really beautiful and one can find many birds, including peacocks and peahens. The children at the Centre love the place and we go there often to enjoy the peaceful scenic beauty. Children would sometimes take their writing or drawing pads, sketch what they see around and write articles and poems.

We visited the dairy farm three or four times this year. At times we would take some snacks along. Here is a poem written by one of the children.

पैरों से रास्ता नापते हुए,
घने जंगलों को पार करते हुए,
हम पहुंचे हैं एक जगह,
जहाँ फसल उग रही थी ।
ठंडी हवा कानों में गूंजती हुई,
गालों को छूकर चली गयी ।
पेड़ ऐसे हिल रहे थे,
जैसे नाचते हुए मोर ।
खुला आसमान था,
जैसे गम बिना खुशी ।
अब बस थोड़ी देर,
उसके बाद ये अलग और हम अलग ।

Visit to Ananda Bharathi

Ananda Bharathi conducts non-formal classes for girls in Tarnaka, a middle-class neighbourhood in Secunderabad. Most students are domestic workers and live in a nearby slum. They organize a science and math festival every year. We have been visiting them regularly. This year we took children to show them the exhibition.

Girls in Ananda Bharathi had made various stitching designs on kurta, salwar and other women wears. Few of the experiments they conducted explained the effects of electromagnetism, floatation and buoyancy. In the mathematics section they showed puzzles they had made with geometric designs,

numbers and magic squares. It is always interesting to visit Ananda Bharathi and see young girls enthusiastically demonstrating all that they have learnt and understood.

The People's Biodiversity Festival

'People's Biodiversity Festival' was held in Hyderabad at the same time as the global Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). A lot of us felt that the CBD had already bent backwards to accommodate the interests of big industry and capital, at the cost of the basic needs of people. As a response to this, people from across the country got together to organize People's Biodiversity Festival.

All of us from the Centre spent one day at the festival. Different people from different regions had come together to celebrate diversity in cultures, food and clothing. There were various stalls showcasing products made by different tribal and non-tribal communities. There was a stall from Madhya Pradesh that presented more than hundred varieties of rice and pulses. There was a 12 year old child from Kerala who was there to present his paintings along with his parents. Children from CFL loved seeing his paintings and talking to him.

Hands-On Projects

We decided to devote sometime everyday towards working on some hands-on projects. This year the children had many options from which they could choose their projects. They had the option of working individually, in pairs or in groups. In the first term the children had a choice of any two from the following: film-making, embroidery, percussion, poi, theatre, art, carpentry and gardening.

Film 1

In the first term Saroj and Lukas did a film-making project with the older children that culminated in a film screening on Independence Day. Children aged 11+ chose a theme, and then came up with their own story, dialogues, characters, costumes and scenes. The children gained an understanding of the different aspects of film-making – though the teachers did struggle at times to get each team to shoulder their responsibility. The children enjoyed giving some of the teachers roles in their film and directing them. They obviously also experienced the thrill of producing their own film.

The movie called, *The Baba and the Boy*, was shot over a period of two days. The movie has been uploaded on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOakAGw3fKk&feature=youtu.be>).

Percussion

Ram taught percussion to those interested. All the children put in effort, learnt with interest and grew in confidence. They used a jingle stick, dappli, dholak, ghatum and jzeumba. The ten minute performance on Independence Day was ample evidence of the effort put in by the teacher and the children and was much appreciated by all. Interestingly, the performance was by an all-girls band.

Gardening

The gardening project, under Amit's direction, began with building a bed. As the Centre is built on a rocky base with no mud to support gardening, Amit decided to explore urban gardening techniques. In the backyard of the centre a small area was cornered off by building a small wall and was filled with mud. The

wall was built by all, which made the teachers and children realise how much technique and skill is required to build a wall straight. Amit, with the gardening group, used this area for growing vegetables (tomatoes, coriander, mint, spinach, okra, ridge-gourd and lemon) that were used for the children's lunch by the centre.

Amit also tried bottle gardening techniques, growing plants like coriander and mint and some flowering plants in the one litre plastic bottles. With the children, he designed it in a web pattern to help conserve water. The design worked well during the rainy and winter season. However the plants dried up as the heat rose in summer.

Poi

Lukas, the German volunteer, offered to teach poi. Many boys opted for this and really put in the effort to learn the different ways of swinging the poi. Lukas had to improvise and come up with something the children could use as poi. He used long white stockings that were weighted at the end. He also choreographed to a chosen track of music for the children's performance. It was something very new and not only caught the fancy of the boys but was much appreciated by the audience on Independence Day.

Film 2

Towards the year end, younger children worked on one minute films and they could choose to do it any way they wanted. They created their own stories and did the art work. The art work was filmed with children's narration of the story. These photo stories were screened during the art and craft exhibition.

Craft

Children worked with waste paper and cloth to make lamp shades. Later they started working with waste wood to make different kind of houses including bird houses, cricket bats. Different wood work tools were bought and children learnt how to use them effectively.

Puppet show

The younger group worked on creating hand puppets and then worked out different puppet stories in smaller groups. They showcased these stories in a class. The stories were video recorded and screened during the art and craft exhibition.

Theatre

Towards the latter part of the year, a group of children worked on a theatre project. We did several theatre exercises with the younger group and encouraged them to create their own short dramas and perform either in smaller groups or individually.

With the older children we worked on creating a drama called *Jhahala and Muinu*, a story of two tribal villages that united to oppose an incursion by city-folk who wanted to build a resort in the forest. All aspects of the theatre (from the inception of the story to the direction of the play) were handled primarily by the children. Even the younger children joined the play and helped in writing dialogues and later in playing different roles.

Classical Dance

Saroj has been teaching dance regularly over the last year and throughout this year. Initially all boys and girls attended the classes – except the pre-school children. All the children benefitted from these classes and progressed. However, this year the boys gradually chose to opt out – mainly because it is not 'cool' and is viewed as a feminine domain. The group that stayed on were divided into advanced, middle and beginners based upon the individuals progress and interest. The final performance on the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Day included children from across the different groups and beautifully showcased the improvement and skill of each child.

Embroidery

The eight year olds embroidered pencil cases. The children were encouraged to learn new stitches and choose their own colour combinations and designs for their pencil cases. A few went on to complete two pencil cases. Two girls really stretched themselves in learning very challenging stitches.

The ten-to-eleven year olds embroidered cloth bags. They were encouraged to use the stitches they had previously learnt to come up with their own designs and colour schemes. Four of them completed their bags to their satisfaction. One 15 year-old boy completed the bag that he had started in the previous year. While he needed to be pushed, his design and quality of work were impressive. He actually taught himself several new stitches to complete the design.

Art

The children who opted for Art classes did improve their skill in sketching and colouring. Most of them have deepened their interest but only two show a greater confidence in their own ability. However, some of them are still very hesitant to experiment or create their own pictures and some freeze when asked to do so.

Water Conservation

In order to conserve water we have been collecting the water used for washing dishes and hands in wash basin and using it for watering the plants. We have been using ash to wash the dishes instead of the soap as soap contains chemicals that could harm the plants.

Waste Reduction

We've been trying to reduce waste as much as possible. Pencil shavings, crayon pieces and shavings and paper are all used and recycled in craft. Old magazines, gift wrapping paper are used in paper mosaic pictures. Cardboard and art paper is sourced from the waste of a printing unit. A composting bin has been brought in and all organic waste is dumped in that.

The Team

In the first half of the academic session, the teaching team consisted of Ramgopal, Saroj, Amit, and Jayashree. Gurveen Kaur was on leave from teaching and re-joined working full time from January when Ramgopal proceeded on an indefinite leave.

Ramgopal – He worked with students across all ages on Maths, English, Music (singing and percussion), and Drama. After December, Ramgopal took a break from the centre to travel and learn.

Amit Deshwal – He worked with students across all age groups on Maths, Science, Hindi, Singing, Carpentry and Gardening. Amit took on the responsibility of continuing games and physical activities with the children after Lukas left.

Jayashree – She helped the centre with cooking and accounts work. She also worked with the youngest group on their hands-on activities.

Saroj – Saroj handled Social Studies, Telugu and Classical Dance. She also worked with children on film making and puppet show.

Lukas Englehardt – He was a volunteer from Germany who was with CFL from September 2011 to August 2012. Lukas helped with teaching art, graphic design and sports.

Kala – She worked with Jayashree, helping her with cooking and general upkeep of the place.

Surveen Kaur – She had been on a break from teaching for a year; she restarted teaching in January 2012. She taught English, Art, and Embroidery.

Prabha Sattiraju – She dropped in on some afternoons and helped Amit with Craft classes during the second half of the year and with preparation for the Exhibition.



The Mid-Day Meal

The mid-day meal continued to be tasty and nutritious. Almost all the children were eating in school – the fee-paying children would pay for their meal. The parents were happy that their children had started eating nutritious food and more vegetables than they did at home.

Ram must be acknowledged for not just sourcing non-pesticide, organic food but also encouraging use of semi-polished rice and millets. Jayashree is appreciated for keeping a check on prices, getting us good bargains and producing tasty food day after day with Kala's help. Her tomato chutney with semi-polished ragi rice was a favourite not just with all of us but with visitors too. After Ram left, Saroj offered to purchase the vegetables. Ram, for the first part of the year, and Amit, for the second half of the year, got drinking water for the centre – in addition to their other responsibilities.

With a team of highly independent teachers, each with strong convictions and different view-points, it was a stimulating ambiance at CFL. The Centre was charged with energy (from more and younger people), new ideas, varied interests and with under-currents of unresolved issues stemming from differing priorities and values. As the activities described above show, this did not affect our functioning adversely, mainly because each person was committed to their work and the children, and members also gave each other space.

Meetings

Teachers' Meetings

At the Teachers' Meetings, apart from the review and planning sessions, we discussed the following:

- ◆ In a small organization (like ours) how much does a difference of opinions and values bring in vitality and value *and* when does it start to make the effort incoherent and contradictory? Do we have the basic coherence that is necessary for the organization and our work with children to be effective and non-contradictory?
- ◆ What does it mean to be a teacher-run, non-hierarchical organization? Especially in terms of the everyday functioning of the centre? What, if any, is the need and role/responsibility of a principal in such a set-up?
- ◆ What does it call from each of us to become a truly democratic, non-hierarchical and effective institution/organization?
- ◆ Is a discussion useful only when we can come to some definite conclusion? Or, is there still a gain even if we fall short of a collective, rational conclusion? What is required from each of us to genuinely participate and foster the space for real dialogue?

The academic issues that surfaced through the year and engaged us were:

- ◆ How can we use the constructivist approach in teaching children – particularly in view of the challenges of this approach in teaching history?
- ◆ Is the logical aspect of teaching a subject always more important and therefore to be preferred over the psychological aspect?

A few questions that engaged us came from our decision to not subject children to organized, subject-wise classes throughout the day but to let them explore their interests and to create space for self-initiated activities/topics which could then lead to integrated learning across subjects.

- ◆ To what extent should learning be teacher-driven and to what extent it should be student-led? In some areas does the learning initially have to be teacher-led? Does a teacher/adult-led learning process take the initiative (and fun) away from the child – and in the long run make them dependent?
- ◆ In view of our changed functioning, how much structuring, undergirding and teacher intervention is required for children to make true choices and for meaningful, relevant learning to take place that increases the children's capacity and competence?
- ◆ What should be given greater value: personally meaningful learning or learning at the conventional age-class appropriate level (if and when the two cannot be reconciled)?
- ◆ Were we offering more choice and variety than what children could sensibly choose from and cope with in terms of learning and a deeper engagement?

An under-lying concern was how the background of the person might influence choices and preferences and how this might adversely affect the learning outcomes of some students and may even polarize students of different classes instead of bringing them together. We felt that even if we didn't subscribe to the deficit theory, this might end up being an unequalising factor - given the larger societal values.

Observations and Reflections: The Case of A and K

I was compelled to reflect upon my own teaching. A, a seven year old, came into my embroidery class and said that she'd like to try it. I gave her a few preparatory exercises but after the third class she said that she didn't want to be part of the class. She said that she thought she was too young for embroidery! I decided to let her decide. She didn't come back to my class for the first or second term. In the third term she came up and asked to be part of the class. She really worked with concentration to learn to embroider, to do it neatly and evenly. She put in the necessary effort, even sitting alone, after the others had gone, to finish her work.

This contrasted so sharply with my experience of the previous year. A boy (K) who had previously done embroidery with fair amount of interest wanted to do something much below his challenge level because his friend was doing something simpler. I urged him to take a design more at his challenge level. The whole time was a struggle, at the end of which he lost interest in doing embroidery and at the end of the year the piece remained incomplete. I wish I had been less conscientious and had left the decision to the child so that at the end he wouldn't have lost his interest in embroidery.

Gurveen

Parent-Teacher Meetings

Most of the Parent-Teacher meetings focused upon informing parents about the forthcoming changes of CFL and discussing their implications. We also addressed the issues and doubts raised by parents so that

every aspect of the change was transparent and they could take informed decisions as per their inclination and understanding.

There were two meetings (mid-session and year-end) to inform the parents of the progress of their child. In addition we met with parents individually as and when required.

Outside Interactions

Visitors

Azim Premji University, Bangalore

Ankita and Surya were two students from Azim Premji University who chose CFL for their field experience. Two reasons guided my decision to have them at CFL for their field attachment: one, they'd bring in something new for us to learn from and the CFL students would have some new experiences and, secondly, their three week engagement would give them sufficient familiarity for them to give us a slightly deeper view of CFL from the outside. Being education students, their feedback would be particularly useful for us.

Ankita worked on Art with two groups of children. She also came at a time when we were suddenly without teachers for a short while and helped out by taking classes for the youngest group.

Surya's study was on Alternative Schools. He did not need to work with children directly and initially spent his time observing and asking us questions. Later he started helping out in the classes as the children drew him in. (Part of Surya's report is attached as Addenda).

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Simran Luthra from TISS Mumbai did her field attachment under Gurveen. Her topic was a study of gender in elite, international schools. She came over to discuss and get guidance but her observations were in an international school. (Field reports of all are available).

International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad

The IIIT students visited us as part of their Humanities course in which they were introduced to alternatives in education/life. We started with a brief introduction of everyone and to CFL, its staff and their journeys followed by a question and answer session. The teachers continued to interact and one of their teachers has decided to volunteer for one day per week for the next term.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad

A few students studying at TISS (Hyderabad) visited us to find out more about our new course after seeing our poster. We screened two small videos – one based upon the concept of deschooling (Ivan Illich on Education) and the second, a five minute introduction to a documentary, *Schooling the World*. The

screening was followed by a discussion on education and its meaning. Students also shared their interests and possible ways they could associate with the Centre.

Other Outside Interactions

Network Meeting

Gurveen, Binit and Amit went from the Centre to attend the Network Meeting. Ram, who was on leave, came independently. This time it was held in Centre for Learning, Bangalore. (For the last 20 years, every year, for three to four days, this Network Meeting brings people working in small alternative spaces in education together to spend time with each other. The meeting is held at different places every year).

This yearly retreat with our fellow-travellers of alternative education centres is an occasion for meeting, sharing and learning. During the meeting we share our questions, issues and aspects of our respective journeys. Away from the daily work of our own centres, this meeting gives us an opportunity to talk and learn from our fellow travellers, and to brace ourselves for the forward journey.

Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

Ram represented CFL at a Seminar held in JNU on Alternative Education. His paper argued that the learning centres run by the people of the Network actually live the core spirit of the Right to Education Act, even though they may not fulfil the specified infrastructure norms. Hence, if the state is really interested in changing the spirit of education, it ought to recognize this fact and make a place for these centres. Other Network members presented papers with their (centre's) perspective on the same.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad

Since Gurveen was on partial leave, she was able to take up a short teaching assignment with TISS (Hyderabad). She taught the M.Phil. students Philosophy of Education over a semester. It was a challenge that she wanted to take so she could check her ability to teach a complete course independently at this level. She also wanted to test if she could still connect with students to communicate a passion for Philosophy of Education. This gave her the much needed change and opportunity to work with more mature students and get in touch with Philosophy of Education again.

AP Mahila Samatha Society

Gurveen also undertook a week-long workshop with forty field staff of AP Mahila Samatha. It was an intense day-long workshop on different topics relevant to them and it was very encouraging to rediscover that one retained the capacity to completely involve all the participants and retain a high level of interest and interaction. It was humbling but very encouraging and satisfying to get spontaneous applause from all the participants after one particular session.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

AAP included Gurveen in its team that was created to think of AAP policy stand on Education. This was not a very satisfying process as there wasn't much open dialogue and discussion. Instead, members simply thrust their points of view into the party. Gurveen did give her inputs into other areas and was asked to write the language position paper, which she did.

Edu-Care

We are still struggling to bring out Edu-Care (regularly). We do need to look more seriously at our failure to produce a new Edu-Care even this year.

Preparations for the 14+ Programme

The preparations for the 14+ programme are under way. The work has already been initiated – website changes, posters, enrolment efforts, meeting different people, contacting NGO's and friends, and putting up posters in different locations. Amit participated in the Good Seeds Bazaar at Lamakaan and Saptaparni to advertise the programme.

We have discussed the changes in timings and work days and created a tentative schedule for the year. We have been thinking through the curriculum and the different aspects of the programme. As part of the preparations, we have contacted experts in different areas who the children could be apprenticed to. The setting and arrangements of rooms have been made to accommodate the changes in functioning.

We advertised for an additional team member. After examining a number of responses, we're happy to identify our new colleague: Dhanesh Sharma. He is (also) an engineer exploring a more meaningful life and wants to work in education. He has some previous experience of working with children.

Outline of the Future Programme

After working largely with children between the ages of 3 and 15 years for more than 30 years, we are now evolving an educational programme for teenagers and young adults. The programme is designed mainly for students who wish to look beyond conventional schooling and take their education into their own hands. The programme will aim to do three things:

- ◆ It will provide students with a space that allows them to reflect and become more self-aware, examine their values and beliefs and learn about their relation with and responsibility towards society and nature.
- ◆ We shall work to build their language proficiency, acquire necessary mathematical skills and basic academic competence. If some of the students are interested, we will help them acquire certification through NIOS 10th class, VIOS Senior Secondary Certification or Open University Undergraduate certification.

- ◆ In addition, we will help them discover their interests – those that they might also wish to pursue professionally or as a livelihood option. We would support the students by mentoring them through this period and connect/apprentice them with experts who would support them in understanding the field and build their skills in the chosen area. Some interested students could subsequently be helped to develop it entrepreneurially. We hope that through this attempt, students will move away from the now dominant approach of merely seeing what the market dictates and/or peer-parental pressure and look for options that the student finds personally satisfying and which are socially useful.

The duration of the program has been kept flexible, ranging from a minimum of two years to a maximum of five years, as each student learns at his/her own pace and needs a different amount of time to discover his/her interests and acquire competence in their chosen area.

Programme Poster

Leo Tolstoy from Russia

Rabindranath Tagore from India

Paulo Freire from Brazil

and many more from around the world...

decided to go beyond conventional schooling
and redefine Education

If you too are looking for a Space to

Discover your own self, examine your values and beliefs.

Find an area of interest and pursue it as a serious livelihood option.

Find mentors/ gurus in your interest area.

Gain required certification.

Contact



Centre for Learning

a place where you design your learning with people who respect your individuality

Admissions for the program have already begun.

Plot Number 56, Sai Sagar Enclave, Kanajiguda; near Mansarovar Heights, Secunderabad - 500015
www.centreforlearning.org Phone: 8897484484 Email: cfl.secunderabad@gmail.com

Financials

Grants

We would like to thank Asha-Seattle for their support whilst we struggle with dwindling numbers and RtE. Their grant of INR 3,26,035 doesn't just make our work easier but give us the moral support and encouragement to hang in through challenging times like these.

Fund-raising

We appreciate the support of Eleanor Watts and her effort to raise funds for our new programme. Eleanor – an old friend of CFL, who has donated many times in the past – asked people to donate to CFL instead of giving her any birthday gift. Eleanor herself donated GBP 1,000 and her friends gifted her/raised GBP 630. We thank all her friends who decided to support CFL for their faith in us and support of our new venture.

Individuals

We would like to thank Charumathi Srinivasan and Rekha Pappu for their continuing support.

We would like to acknowledge the lovely storybooks and games donated by:

- ◆ Sujata Ramani
- ◆ Suchitra Reddy, Nihal and Sahil
- ◆ Mary, Mike and Keegan

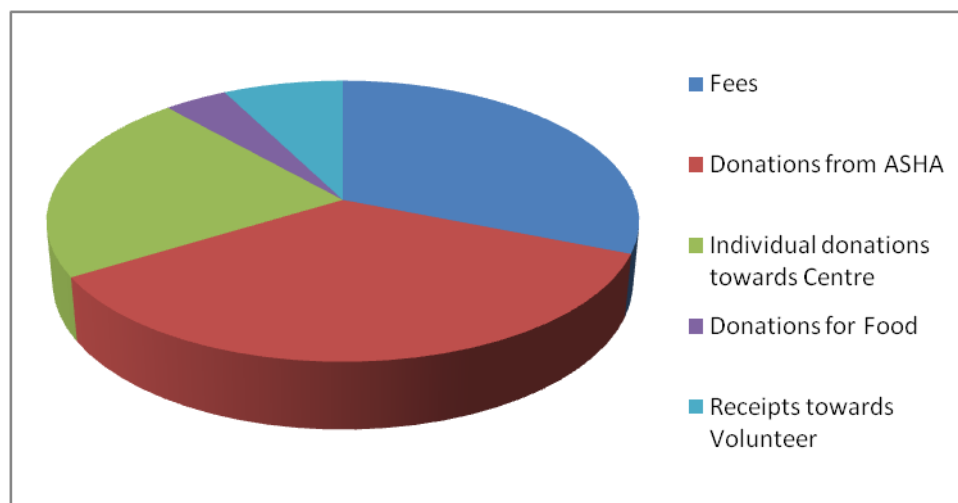
We would also like to acknowledge the guidance of Amar Nandyala in teaching the teachers and students how to build the wall of the bed created for the vegetable garden. Satish gave us the material for building the wall.

We would like to acknowledge Sarath and Sameer for taking excellent photographs at all CFL events.

We would like to acknowledge B. Surya Kiran for helping Saroj and Lukas with filming the first film.

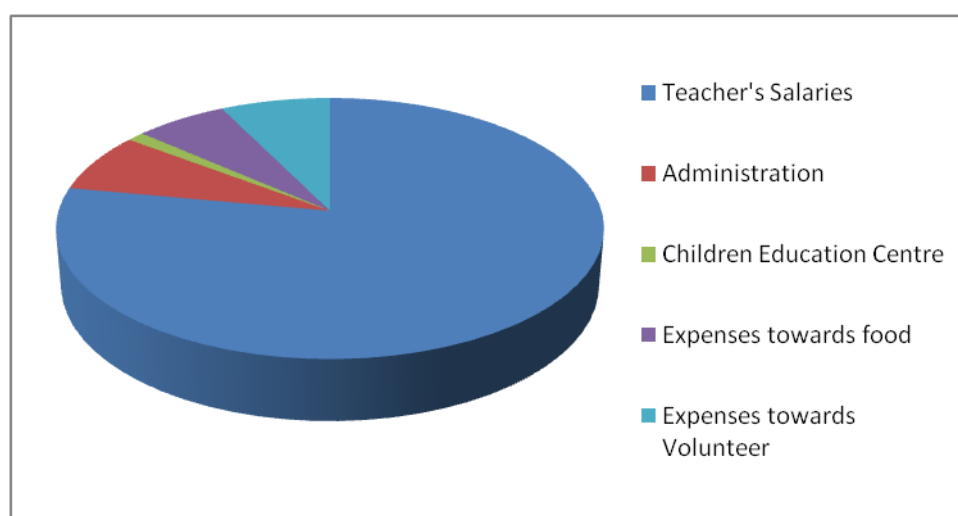
Brief Overview of Accounts

Income



Income	Amount (INR)
Fees	287350.00
Donations from ASHA	326035.00
Individual donations towards Centre	204594.40
Donations for Food	37125.00
Receipts towards Volunteer	70100.00

Expenditure



Expenditure	Amount (INR)
Teacher's Salaries	564000.00
Administration	53039.00
Children Education Centre	8458.00
Expenses towards food	44996.00
Expenses towards Volunteer	53396.00

Accounts and Audit

The cash transactions and the day-to-day accounts were tracked by Jayashree who maintained the petty-cash book.

Ramgopal explained CFL accounting to Amit, handing him that responsibility, while remaining in touch to help with a problem-free transition.

Amit had his first experience of maintaining CFL accounts, also using Tally. He managed the same and was able to hand all the documents/books to the auditor for the audit.

Mr Harjeet Singh, the auditor, readily provided the necessary guidance for maintaining accounts and for the accounting team to learn Tally. He patiently answered our queries and tolerated our short-comings. He very helpfully finished the audit as soon as all the papers were given to him.

Addenda

Surya, a student from APU, had written a report on his observations at CFL. The following is an extract from the same.

Curriculum Artefacts

Claims: I would like to start of my discussion about curricular artefacts with the following basic claims:

- 1) If you want to understand or evaluate the philosophy of a school (at least partially), see the kind of waste it generates or in short "the dump".
- 2) The normal schooling system is making the child's brain/memory as the biggest dump in the world, by pressurising the child to dump all the unnecessary waste in the form of subjects in his memory.

Curriculum artefacts:

All the metropolitan cities in India have been facing the problem of 'solid waste management' because of drastic increase in population and change in living style. Bangalore generates 3,000 tonnes of waste every day from households and commercial establishments. Around 70% of this waste is organic. The balance is accounted for by inorganic and hazardous waste. Municipality could not get enough landfill's to dump the increased waste, so most of the waste was lying on streets for days together leading to decay and stink. The government framed 'Solid Waste Management and Handling Rules (2000)', according to which segregation of waste to be done at source instead of moving all the waste city outskirts only to cause pollution on account of open burning. The segregation of waste at source would enable composting of organic waste and retrieval of recyclable material. However for the segregation at source to happen, the government felt the need to 'EDUCATE' the households, industries, hospitals and other stakeholders involved in the generation of waste. As a part of this process members of welfare Societies geared up to the marathon task of initiating waste segregation and tried to ensure segregation through door to door campaigns, distribution of pamphlets, SMSes and e-mails to 'EDUCATE' residents about the importance of adopting the system.

The government further felt the need to 'EDUCATE' or sensitise younger generations on 'Solid waste management'. An article in 'Times of India' newspaper indicates this importance:

Times of India- Oct 20, 2007

"The government [was] working on a proposal to incorporate waste management in school curriculum to sensitise the younger generation about managing municipal solid waste in a hygienic and scientific manner. Urban development secretary M Ramachandran [wrote] to the secretary, secondary and higher education, pointing out the need to incorporate the subject in school curriculum."

Though the initiative to tackle the social issue of 'Solid waste management' through education (social needs driven curriculum) appears good, the idea of introducing another subject in school curriculum may only lead to burden the students further in the already existing water tight compartment subjects. Schools already have the concepts of 'Bio degradation', compost, manure, 'organic and inorganic substances', 'degradable and non-degradable substances' and 'environment and pollution' in their subjects being

taught, 'Solid waste management' only requires the application of these concepts already taught to aid in the process of segregation and reduction of waste. Hence I believe that 'Solid waste management' should be treated as a theme which would involve the combination of concepts in science, social studies and ethics rather than treating it as a separate subject. The school I have been to works in the same line to enable its students to reduce and manage solid waste.

'Center for learning', Hyderabad has adopted the way of teaching 'waste management' through practise. The school uses or reuses the material which is considered as waste by the society. It collects the leftover wood in the colony, used papers to be reused by the learners in their craft work. I have the experience of seeing the secretary and founder member of the school, using the leftover outer hard shells of pista in her crafts work. The school itself segregates and reuses the waste generated through practises like 'dump pot' and 'reuse water'.

Dump pot:

The school (Learners and teachers) follows the practise of dumping all the organic waste like the waste generated from food, vegetables and leaves into a clay pot. The learners get the chance of observing the read concepts of 'bio degradation', compost, manure, 'organic and inorganic substances' and 'degradable and non-degradable substances' in their physical or natural world. The organic waste once degraded and converted into compost, can be a further source of experimentation and application of learner's concepts. The compost is used for gardening where the learners would be applying further the read concepts of 'photosynthesis'.



This experience with natural world would not only enable the learners understand the concepts in 'solid waste management' like wet waste and dry waste in segregation process, but also increase the curiosity of learners in further explorations. It helps them realise that 'knowledge is all around' or 'nature is the best source of knowledge' rather than restricting the term knowledge or education to textbooks or classrooms. It also enables the learners to realise the values like 'self-awareness' and 'self-responsibility'.

Reuse water:

Scarcity of water is experienced across the world, more prominently in metro cities. The school follows the practise of collecting the water used for cleaning soiled plates and floors in classrooms to water the plants.

All the members of the school collect the water used for cleaning their respective soiled plates in a tub. Each member of the school would clean the floors of their classrooms in their respective turns. This member would reuse the water collected for cleaning soiled plates and floors of classrooms to water the plants. This practise would enable the learners partly to realise the values of sustainability, self and social responsibility. This mechanical work of cleaning soiled plates and classrooms, watering plants by themselves would help learners realise the hardships involved and the potential use of the work, thus leading them to respect people in other professions which society considers as inferior professions.



The school has implemented these practises more to drive the values rather than just to tackle the social issues. When the values of self and social responsibility, self- realisation have been imbibed into the minds of learners through rational persuasion, they would have the ability to tackle many other social issues rather than just restricting themselves to 'solid waste management'. The government believes that education is a tool to tackle social needs, views curriculum more to be driven by social needs but whereas the school believes in imparting values should be the main aim of education and believes that the learners with these values be able to tackle any kind of issues. As the school uses 'dump pot 'and 'reuse water tub' to drive the values and concepts of waste management that are part of its curriculum, I consider these as curriculum artefacts.



Wish to break out of
fixed notions of learning and life
the usual subject combinations
a predetermined time table



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Explore your interests & design your own curriculum

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fine arts, poetry, robotics, crafts, pottery...



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and if desire acquire a qualification

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re-engage with learning in a like-minded community

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Picture taken from net - Source unknown