

YOUNGINFLUENCERS

www.younginfluencers.com

A Pravah newsletter • For private circulation only • October 2008 • Vol. II Issue III

Few words from us...

The third year of CLAP (Citizenship Learning and Action Programme) brings together a diverse group of young people who share a powerful common vision- a vision to bring in a positive change in the society. These young people not just break the myth that Gen-X is interested in only themselves, they also inspire other young people to actively engage in social action.

The strong belief in the potential of young people to bring about a positive social change led Pravah, Sanskriti School and The Ford Foundation to initiate CLAP in 2006 to recognise and encourage young people working towards social cause.

CLAP is a programme that shifts attention from competition to learning and recognition. It seeks to create a national platform for young people that promotes and shares new approaches, develops practices, celebrates youth led change and introduces perspectives and viewpoints.

As we reflect back, CLAP 2007 gave us an opportunity to appreciate a number of exemplary youth initiatives from various parts of the country. CLAP 2008 seeks to further this common vision and recognise similar youth-led initiatives from different corners of the country.

The young people who are a part of this initiative are all "bridge-builders" - capable of helping others and adept at integrating new ideas for the betterment of society. They boldly undertook challenges by working on issues and addressing concerns of their communities. Their initiatives promoted inclusive practices among children and society in general.

This newsletter seeks to introduce you to these inspiring young boys and girls who have travelled the journey from 'self' to 'society'.

SPECIAL FOCUS CLAP 08



CLAP Process

CLAP is collaboration between Pravah, an NGO working with young people in Delhi, and Sanskriti School. Pravah is supported in this endeavour by The Ford Foundation. The CLAP 2008 recognition event is organised in partnership with Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML).

Information about CLAP was distributed through posters, emails, letters, phone calls, and online spaces. After receiving several applications, the CLAP team in Delhi shortlisted candidates and conducted telephonic interviews. Pravah requested its partner organisations, such as Patang in Orissa, Pajhra in Assam, Shaisav in Gujarat, and Doosra Dashak in Rajasthan, to nominate potential CLAP participants in their states, who were then nominated for the national programme. The finalists for CLAP 2008 are a group of dynamic young people who are not only working on social issues, but who are doing so with levels of awareness, initiative, and team work that deeply inspired us.

Prior to the event, the CLAP participants were involved in a 3-day workshop, where they discussed approaches towards social development, interacted with young development professionals and entrepreneurs, and set goals for the directions their own projects will take in the months to come.

PROFILES OF CITIZENSHIP LEARNING AND



Shehzad Khan and Akleem Dhanu lead the Bal Panchayat in a village near Jaipur, Rajasthan. This group of young people works on a variety of issues that are of concern to their village and neighbouring villages, including cleanliness, rights of girls, etc. They are very active about preventing child labour, for which they have lobbied with families, the panchayat, and block administration to help working children back into schools. Recently, Shehzad even approached the Chief Minister of Rajasthan to present his concerns regarding the lives of children in the villages.



For Vaibhav Pratap and Parul Singh of Ramjas School, New Delhi, it all began with a research for a school project on 'organ donation'. The more they read, the more strongly they felt about the issue. Their research soon spilled over into an action project. The group they represent decided to lead by example - they pledged to donate their organs, and then began persuading their teachers, families and neighbours. Organising rallies, creating posters, setting up a stall at Parent-Teacher Meetings, going door-to-door in their localities, the group has so far managed to convince 67 people to donate their eyes. They have also been able to collect another 25

signatures for organ donation.



Lalita and Preeti study in an alternative school run by an NGO called Muskaan in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Concerned by the wastage of food and organic matter in the hostel, their social science teacher suggested vermi composting and educated the hostellers about the process. The hostel girls soon took complete ownership of the project and are now running it. Along with the hostellers, Lalita and Preeti collect waste from the kitchen as well as from neighbouring areas and compost it regularly. They have taken this initiative a step further and are now marketing the organic fertiliser they produce in nearby shops.



Ajay Parmar and Daxa Solanki belong to Balsena, an independent children's organisation in Bhavnagar, Gujarat, which is committed to working towards the theme of "All children in schools, Child Labour Free Bhavnagar." Their work centers around various community initiatives which can help prevent child labour. Their efforts are also directed towards creating an environment which motivates more children to start going to school. They go door to door persuading children and their parents about the importance of education, assist the children enroll in schools, and make regular checks to ensure that the Anganwadi schemes are running

smoothly in the community.



ACTION PROGRAMME 2008 PARTICIPANTS



Chandaraj Solanki and Ravai Ridhi represent a group of children who study in municipal schools in Bhavnagar and, as members of the Balsena, work in their own schools to create an atmosphere conducive to keeping children in school. These children have realised and identified simple things which go a long way in doing just that! So, they look into matters such as cleanliness, water, sanitation, and also supervise the mid-day meal scheme to ensure basic quality of food. If any of their classmates drops out of school to work they go to the child's home to try and convince him / her and the parents about the importance of education.



Anima Pegu and Modish Chungkurang work in rural Assam on various community development activities. These children participated in a leadership and capacity building training course three years ago, and subsequently formed a core group to tackle the problems in their villages. With the aim of developing "model villages", they have taken on sanitation and school empowerment programmes, they go to government run primary schools, bathe the children, comb them and put them in the classroom. Their efforts also resulted in closing down of liquor shops in their villages and discouraging the frequent gambling that youth there indulged in. The work of these two young, dynamic people, has inspired others and the outcome result has been a dramatic transformation of the villages.



Bhavesh Kumar and Soni Kumari are the face of Yuva Manch in Bali village. Along with their volunteer group, these two young people have shown the way in various development activities, ranging from monitoring the "anganwadi" scheme, to village cleanliness, to raising awareness about employment guarantee schemes. Soni had to drop out of school after class 3 because she had to take on housework and graze her family's cattle, however, through the Yuva Manch activities, she managed to continue studying on her own and also educating other girls around her. Finally she got a chance to go back to school to complete her elementary education away from her village. She has now returned home and continues to work as a volunteer to raise awareness about girls' education, cleanliness and health-related issues.



Inventive Haji Husain and Devanshi characterise a larger, city level advocacy project initiated by members of the Bal Sena. They have been promoting large-scale signature campaigns and awareness programmes, and also working in schools and other public places to reach out to children from upper-income homes in an effort to convince them not to use any products made by children. This group is also using tools like the Right to Information to seek information about and influence city-level policies pertaining to child labour.



PARTICIPANTS OF CLAP - 2008



Dinabandhu Biswal and B Rama Rao study in a government High School in Burla, Orissa and are crusading for a greener planet. Over the last 1 ½ years, the students have taken the initiative of planting and caring for trees in their area. In the beginning, their plantation was somewhat haphazard, but guidance and support soon corrected that and now they choose the trees and plants and their plantation is well planned. Till date, they have grown hundreds of medicinal plants and trees near their homes, school and on the banks of the Mahanadi River.



Yamini Jain and Aanchal Modani are two creative young girls from Jaipur who are concerned about water management. Ever since a trip to a nearby village in Rajasthan, Yamini was deeply moved by the importance of water conservation. After attending a camp at Bal Bhavan in Jaipur, where the focus was water conservation, the two friends decided to take up the cause in their school. Since then, they have made films and short plays about the importance of water and encouraged friends, family members, and school teachers to become more conscious of the ways in which they use water.



Kalyani Pal from St Paul's School, New Delhi is a dynamic crusader for global warming who has led many innovative energy saving initiatives in her home, school and neighbourhood. Fondly known as the 'Principal' at home, she helps people understand how global warming would affect their lives through her passionate and innovative pleas.

We welcome your involvement and support. In case, you want additional information about CLAP (Citizenship Learning and Action Programme), please contact :

Aditi Rao

Ph.: 011 - 26440619, 26213918, 26291354

E-mail : aditi.rao@pravah.org