



# THULIR TRUST

A Centre for Learning

## Note on Activities in 2007-2008

Thulir Trust is envisaged to be an unique educational intervention for adivasi children and provide them with a conducive Learning Atmosphere. The objective of Thulir Trust is to provide children from adivasi and other disadvantaged communities the required educational resources, exposure to varied learning situations and opportunity to express themselves.

The Trust was formally registered on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2007 in Gudalur, Nilgiris District as all the three Trustees are currently based in Gudalur. As a first step, it has been decided to focus our attention in supplementing whatever little formal education that children from adivasi and other disadvantage communities receive from the mainstream schools with rich resources and exposure.

The belief of Thulir Trust is that

- Children from disadvantaged sections in the rural areas need an education that would help to them **gain self respect and help live with dignity**.
- Children have a natural curiosity and capacity to learn which needs to be nurtured, giving them space and the right environment.
- Children need the company of sympathetic adults who can encourage / motivate them to acquire skills and knowledge.

### Learning Centre in Sittilingi

Based on our experience in the field of education till now, it has been decided to work more intensively in the Sitheri hills of Dharmapuri district in running a Learning Centre for children belonging to adivasi community for the following reasons :

- The 21 adivasi villages in and around Sittilingi are quite remote. There is only one access road, which used to get cut-off during heavy rains.
- This valley surrounded by forests has a low 35% literacy rate.
- The existing educational facilities are quite poor in these villages. Even though there are a few Government schools in this region, teachers do not come to these schools regularly.
- Very few adivasi boys and girls from these villages complete their school education successfully.
- Ms.Anuradha and Mr.Krishna, two social workers (Architects by profession) had moved into this remote village and were volunteering as part of another project for about two years before. They had been staying in this remote village and were supporting school going children needing additional inputs and the drop-out children.

With the help of Ms.Anuradha and Mr.Krishna, Thulir Trust established a Learning Centre in Sittilingi. Thanks to the activities of Thulir Trust, adivasi Children in sittilingi valley deprived of any good quality educational resources now have the option of accessing library facilities, computers, art and craft workshops and interactions with inspiring adults.

## **Highlights of Learning Support**

The adivasi children coming to Thulir have access to the following support at the learning centre in Sittilingi :

- **Class room teaching** of Maths, language skills and science
- **General exposure** classes where related concepts across many subjects are explored
- **Workshops** conducted by visiting resource persons on a range of subjects from art, craft, music, dance to hobby electronics, machine maintenance, electrical and plumbing etc.

About 50 students use the Thulir space at varying times throughout the day and night. During the last three years, this centre has helped more than 400 children with such teaching materials and exposure. Professionals like engineers, artist, fair-trade specialist, trainer for disabled people have visited the Learning Centre and interacted with the children. The centre also acquired used solar panels and other electronic items for installation in the centre.

## **Basic Technology Course**

Thulir places **equal emphasis on academic skills and life skills** that can lead to meaningful vocations.

While students have made progress in learning basic language and math skills; and many have finished pending subjects in class 10 exams, they have also been learning and producing valuable products such as greeting cards, bamboo craft items, bamboo furniture, white LED torches and light fixtures, soap, handmade paper, honey from bee boxes, organic kitchen garden produce etc.

Younger children in the centre are being taught “vocational skills” in the weekends. The activities include making bamboo toys, basic electronics, etc. All the children are continuing their studies while learning to help the Centre in administration and teaching.

## **Helping students in X Exams**

The Tamilnadu government class X exams for private candidates were held in September. Thulir Learning Centre provided teaching inputs to children appearing for X exams. Six students wrote one or two subjects each and four passed. We have a group of 11 students (including 6 girls) coming during the day to study and write X exams. They are given the basics of all the subjects; and the focus is more on learning rather than memorizing.

## **Other inputs for the class X dropout – students**

We also had many discussions on the social and personal issues that confront them. Effects of the media (TV, cinema), suicides, alcoholism, infatuations and romances, real education, etc. were some of the issues we discussed with them at length. Initially most of them were silent, but with time there is an increase in their participation. Schooled into “not thinking, just receiving mode”, they have just started realizing the importance of “thinking” about some of these issues.

Adivasi girls trained in this centre make good LED torches. There is a great demand for the bamboo torches made by the students of Thulir Centre.

### **Organisational Issues**

During the first year of activities, we have also set in place the organisational issues required for running the Trust as follows :

- Accounting Systems for undertaking the financial transactions of the Trust have been finalised; required documents have been printed and ledgers have been decided.
- A bank account has been opened in the name of the Trust in Gudalur for the Registered Office's transactions in State Bank of India, Gudalur.
- Another bank account has been opened in the State Bank of India, Kotapatti, Dharmapuri district for the transactions of the Field Office in Sittilingi, Dharmapuri district.
- Applications for registration under sections 12-A and 80-G of the Income Tax Act have been prepared and submitted to the Government.
- Permanent Account Number has been applied for the Trust and the same has been obtained.
- M/s John Mathew &Co., Gudalur have been appointed as the Chartered Accountants for the Trust.

### **Attachments**

- Pictures showing different activities of the Thulir Learning Centre in Sittilingi.
- Audited Statement of Accounts of the Trust for the financial year 2007-2008.