

Paryavaran Mitra Young Leader for Change 2013-Induction workshop

Coming together to work in the environment

The 4-day Paryavaran Mitra Young Leader for Change 2013 Induction workshop saw 24 students coming together from all over India with their teachers and parents at CEE Ahmedabad from 23 to 26 July. The students aged between 12-15 years were selected through a nationwide process that reviewed their action project plans which tackle local environmental issues. The students have taken up action projects in the themes of Energy conservation, Biodiversity and Greening, Waste Management, Sanitation, and Traffic issues, etc. The workshop was the beginning of this journey. The Paryavaran Mitra Young Leader for Change initiative aims to demonstrate ways in which students can be engaged in Project Based Learning.

The 4 day workshop was designed to help students to firm up their action plans with the help of peer reviews, help from CEE, and to equip them with tools to plan, implement and present their action projects.

The workshop engaged students in sessions on understanding environmental concepts, communicating for change, Change management, Project exhibition and mentoring, using ICT in action projects, and field visits.

I am satisfied because these few days we learnt so much and gained so much. I look forward to the days of success. I would like to say I just loved the 4 days we all had together. I would like to bring change in myself and my friend and family through my action project. -Student



A fun activity on non-verbal communication

This was one of the inspiring thoughts of a student participant which sums her experience and helps us at CEE reflect on the experience the students had which went beyond what we had planned. Some of those things could be:

Interesting approaches

Students spoke of interesting approaches used throughout the workshop and how it was different from their usual classroom teaching and helped to keep them interested and seldom get bored. One student described it as *'The style of teaching was really interactive, not chalk and board one. Really good and was 'my style'.*

Diversity of ideas and perspectives

Exhibition was used as an approach throughout the workshop for students to share their ideas, and to get inputs from their peers and mentors in various themes. Students spoke of the experience as *'the exchange of ideas was very important through two way interaction, I learnt from various projects and got brilliant, usable and practical advice for my project'*. Another student said *'I came to know the clarity of my plan, I learnt to refine my ideas, look at details, think out of the box, it was extremely helpful'*.

'I learnt how to see an issue from the different perspectives of my friends from allover India'.



The perspectives, that's what we think was one of the key factors in this experience. Children from different parts of the country met each other for the first time, listened to each other, put their heads together in the group work during the workshops, went together on field trips. Teachers were constantly observing their students learning, enjoying. One teacher described it as *'I was observing how students who were strangers a few days ago were sitting together and discussing and learning from each other.'* They also spoke about how they learnt *'I got to meet people whom I wouldn't have met otherwise. I didn't know anything about the people's lives in Sagar Island before I cam here. The teacher and student helped me know about the livelihoods in the Sagar Islands, West Bengal on which the student's project is based.'*

What else could've contributed in making this workshop an enriching experience for the participants? It is like the famous quote by Aristotle *'The whole is more than the sum of its parts'*.It most probably is the thoughts, feelings, ideas, experiences that the students and teachers brought in that make this workshop more than the sum of all the sessions in this workshop.



Connecting with each other

One student said, *'The best part was that people from allover India are doing work similar to mine in different environments'* another student said, *'we are from different places but we all have common interest in the environment.'* We think that this helped motivate and inspire students in their action projects, to get a feeling of a community working together towards a common cause in the environment. At the workshop we tried to make the group bond through work and play and to make them feel part of this community and that they had each other to



support and share thoughts with, the students are already connecting with each other over the internet.

To conclude, our efforts are towards creating a vibrant learning environment for students and for teachers to know of the possibilities that lie in front of them in building those enabling learning landscapes in their schools.

