

# Pudiyador Times

Issue 12, Oct 2012





## Pudiyador ulagam seivom

The 12<sup>th</sup> issue is headlined by Tamil poet Bharathidasan's famous line that inspired the name "Pudiyador". The foundation to *make a new beginning in our corner of the world* is built on the respect and trust that we enjoy in the neighborhoods that we work in.

In Pudiyador's communities, parents usually hold multiple jobs as manual laborers for long hours and low wages. Men are prone to alcoholism and women bear the brunt of running the household and raising the kids. Most are school dropouts, and have little time or skill to help with their children's homework. Somehow, parents cope with their daily struggles, motivated by dreams of a better life for their kids.

Pudiyador's intervention is welcomed by the community, recognizing the need for kids to be in a safe place after school until the parents return home. To ensure such continuous understanding, an excellent relationship with the parents and community members is crucial. Pudiyador learned the hard way with the Urapakkam experience, when we had to discontinue our project due to local politics, and an unsteady relationship between the community and Pudiyador.

The center at Vannandurai was started 5 years ago, and has boasted a solid community relationship that has helped us navigate several instances that threatened the stability of the project. Today, our community surveys show that the Pudiyador project is a success: all children go to better schools, teenagers tutor younger kids and most are headed to college. We are considering a proposal to change to a weekend-only format at Vannandurai, that will free up resources to start a new Pudiyador at nearby Kakkan Colony.

We invite you to join us on a picturesque journey, in the pages to follow, in our efforts to build a strong relationship with the newest and most underserved Pudiyador community at Urur-Olcott Kuppam. You will also get to see what our kids have been up to in the last 3 months since school started. Hope you enjoy it as much as we did!

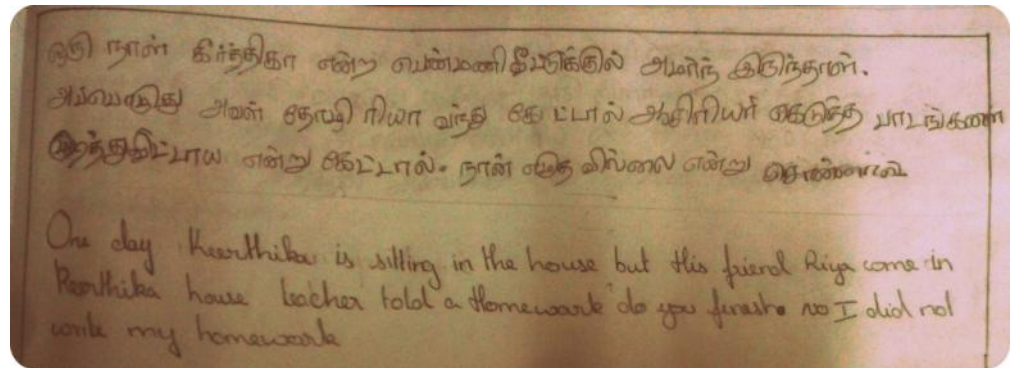
# Art for Change

Change is here! - Pudiyaador's collaboration with M-ART-ram...

M-ART-ram ("change" in Tamil) is our partner organization that runs regular classes in performance art at our centers. In August, based on our need to improve the community relationship at Olcott-Urur Kuppam, M-ART-ram conducted two short-term goal-oriented interventions that involved both kids and parents. The activities in August included film-making sessions and the "Ripple Effect" workshops, with the objective of developing goodwill and trust in the community, and support for our programs, both academic and extra-curricular.

The film-making workshop had three tangible goals: engage the children in writing stories, conduct a photography workshop to build a series of projections, and create short films featuring their parents and community.

As part of the first goal, the kids got together to write stories, mostly slices of their experiences in their neighborhood. These stories - heart-warming and sometimes intensely private - have provided us with a glimpse into the lives of



these children and their community. Four of the stories were selected; groups of kids refined the disjointed and non-sequential initial telling, with simple role-plays and photography exercises. The children really enjoyed writing and then reading each other's stories, and finally creating a story-board with illustrations and photographs. The first story, *Keerthika-vin Aasai* or Keerthika's Wish, is now complete with illustrations, and the other three stories will be completed in the next quarter.

As a follow-up activity, the kids interviewed and photographed community members. At the time of writing, a series of photographs has been selected for a photo projection. The children were involved in the discussions on the subjects of their photos. This module is progressing well and has been wonderful in building a connection between Pudiyaador and the community.



# Art for Change

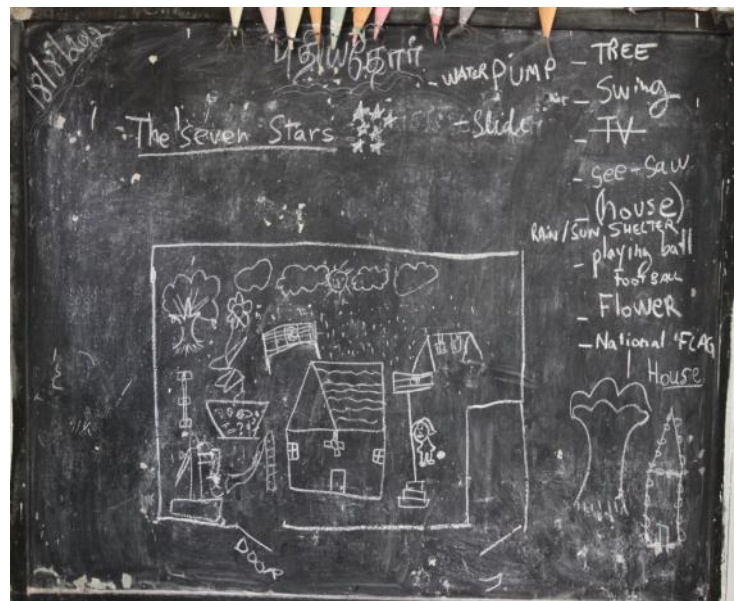
The film-making process has been challenging as it has been difficult to get time with parents – most are fishermen and also work several jobs. Other cultural issues also presented obstacles – for instance, when both parents are present, they are often tongue-tied or awkward in the presence of the other. To overcome this, interviews are now being scheduled with each parent separately. During the workshops, the kids were able to develop good listening skills in spite of the myriad distractions involved in the process of filming, photography, or story-telling.

## Ripple Effect Workshops

The Ripple Effect team from Europe conducted five sessions with the kids and one with the staff. The goal of the Ripple Effect workshop was to transform the backyard of the learning center, with each child making a wish list of what he/she would like to have/build in that space.



The first session focused on learning about patterns, with the kids going all out on the beach, creating sculptures and drawings in the sand. In the next session, the kids created a mind map of what they wanted the backyard to look like. Then, they learned to think about prioritizing viable options for the space keeping in mind constraints like labor and materials. During the exercise, the children confidently pitched their ideas to everyone else, and even made an effort to explain their ideas in English to the visiting Ripple Effect team. The listening skills from the film-making workshop nicely complemented the communication and team-work skills developed in the Ripple Effect sessions.



# Art for Change

The third session involved the Pudiyaador staff and volunteers, and was about taking ownership of the center space and being a role model for the kids. The interactive session included several discussions on Indian and French farming traditions. Ideas about the changes in the backyard were solicited from the participants to give them a sense of ownership of the space. In the last two sessions, kids and adults participated in discussion on topics such as the importance of farming, caring for seeds, global warming and waste management.



The children have also been quite hands-on with their space. By the end of the workshop, the outside area had been cleaned, all the rubbish sorted, white sand have been carried to the center in buckets from the beach to the wall to cover some of the space. The kids also brought in soil and have made narrow beds along the wall ready for planting. The wall-gardens have been created such that they do not encroach the playing areas. The children will continue to work on completing the rest of the components of their vision for the backyard. Many thanks to the Ripple effect team and M-ART-ram for giving their time so freely to our children. The kids have had such immense fun and we have made some great strides in engaging the community, creating a sense of ownership and gaining some insight into the community at Olcott-Urur Kuppam.

# While its business as usual...



... we take the time to perform...



Clockwise from top left: A body-movement workshop based on classical dance, Acrobatics on the beach, Percussion workshop by a visiting musician, and Dance performances at two centers for Teachers ' Day.

... to capture our lives ...



A series of photographs captured by the children during the film-making sessions at Olcott-Urur Kuppam. Some of the photos were selected for a screening for the community members.



... sometimes catch the fire! ...



Lantern workshop run by Ripple Effect team, engaged the kids in making lanterns from easily available materials. The lanterns were exhibited in the renovated backyard for the parents and the community.

... and to bring stories to life.



A book reading session hosted by Tara Publications, provided a space for kids from 4 locations to perform a short play that they produced and also made the props, bringing to life the story of "Catch the Crocodile".

Have you been wondering what *you* can do to help?

Here are our *current and specific* needs →



### YOU CAN TEACH ONLINE!

Using Skype, you can connect with our children during weekday evenings and weekends (IST) to:

- Help with academics
- Impart any of your skills
- Demonstrate science experiments
- Hold discussions about relevant and important topics
- Simply chat with the children about their lives and yours

Sign up for a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly slot at:

[www.pudiyador.org/signup](http://www.pudiyador.org/signup)



### We welcome donations

(PayPal, Google Checkout, Cash, or Cheque)

- One-time or monthly
- We're a 501(c)(3) organization
- We also have FCRA clearance
- **All donations are tax-exempt**



### Spread the word

- Partner us with other NGOs
- Ask your employer about CSR
- How about matching donations?

### 1. Doctors!

- Any specialty doctors to volunteer at our weekly community clinics.
- Child psychologist who speaks Tamil.  
*Do you know any?*

### 2. Projector and speakers

- Skype classes are clearer on the big screen
- We also screen educational/fun movies

### 3. Educational material

- Books in English & Tamil for ages 3-10
- Illustrated books for non-readers
- Picture cards for innovative story telling
- Dictionaries (English and/or Tamil)
- Puzzles/activity books, board games
- E-learning software

### 4. Music and sports equipment

- Veena, guitar, tabla, mridangam, sitar, keyboard, *thappu*, Folk song DVD's/CD's
- Bats/balls/frisbee for group sports

### 5. Cameras and Camcorders

- Digital cameras to record activities and share between centers
- Camcorders for curriculum development and documentation

### 6. Other

- 3 netbooks or laptops and 2 desktop computers - in good condition
- 6 computer tables, computer chairs
- Emergency lights, Ceiling fans,
- Gardening tools

Contact our Program Manager

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### We would love your feedback!

Our newsletter team would love to hear from you—after all, you are the reason our team exists! Please let us know what we can do to make this newsletter more informative and enjoyable. Or just drop a line to say hello :)

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