

Pudiyador Times

Issue 16 Oct 2013



Dear friends,

In this 16th issue of PudiyaDor Times, you will learn more about our core program: **after-school academics**.

Despite top-ranking education indicators in the state, and government efforts to improve primary education, most of our kids face gaps in individual care at school that results in low confidence and poor academic performance.

Children attending PudiyaDor after-school programs spend weekday evenings and entire weekends at our learning centers. 60% of that time is structured for academic activities. To retain the child's interest is a significant challenge, considering the quality of in-school experience - PudiyaDor's methodology is based on creating an environment where kids feel safe to learn by creative exploration that allows for mistakes, through various "fun learning" activities.

The monsoon is upon the city... I walk briskly towards the Vannandurai community center to escape the fierce drizzle and stop at the closed door. Fingers snap softly, tongues go click-clack, imitating the sounds of the first rain drops; hands slap thighs with increasing energy as the storm builds; feet stomp out the rolls of thunder, and slowly the rain dies down to more finger-snapping, tongue-clicking, to the soft sighing of the wind and then silence. And then each kid recalls one of the 20 new English words that she learned in the AID English session to describe the weather.



Pudiyador's after-school program addresses basic language (Tamil and English) and mathematics. Pudiyador's curriculum team has developed a modified version of the English and Tamil syllabus from AID's Eureka Child Foundation. In addition, Pudiyador staff also teach an innovative approach to improving math skill designed by the Ramanujam Math Education Center.

The biggest challenge is to achieve a balance between spending time with each child and meeting her homework deadlines imposed at school: Pudiyador's after-school teachers sometimes end up providing an answer instead of helping the kid figure it out. As with everything else, the after-school program is continuously evaluated and monitored for quality, and its implementation has improved dramatically in the last 2 years.

But, it's not the three Rs all the time... we also present a photo-feature on "greening the beach" that tells the story of how one center's dream of a backyard garden came to fruition :-)
Hope you enjoy this issue as much as we did!

Please write to us with suggestions and questions: newsletter@pudiyador.org

Last page: Spike abacus for place values and metrics
This page: Math toolkit for fractions and angles



Academics: Learning = Fun!

A cursory look at our website or any of our previous newsletters will tell you that Pudiyaдор children are outgoing, sporty, artsy and have loads of fun. While these activities are inherent pieces of Pudiyaдор, we invite you on a different journey with us this time around. We want to talk to you about something that happens consistently and often without much fanfare at our centers - academics at Pudiyaдор!

At Pudiyaдор, we stress on the importance of education in many ways: we insist on school attendance, provide homework help and provide several learning avenues like computer/vocational and Skype classes. In addition to that, we try to develop an interest in basic Mathematics, English and Tamil. Luckily for us, we are not alone in this quest.



We are ably guided in this endeavor by two partner organizations - the *Ramanujam Museum and Math Education Center* and AID's *Eureka Child Foundation*. Both organizations provide content, teacher training, baseline and final assessments, and center visits. Ramanujam Center is focused on developing fun and innovative ways to make the math lessons from the school syllabus more accessible to children. In addition to developing the curriculum and content, they focus on capacity building for education-based NGOs like us by providing teacher training and teaching aids.

Both the basic Math and Tamil programs are delivered through the staff at our Pudiyaдор centers,



Learning = Fun!



while the basic English program is delivered almost exclusively through volunteers. The content and teaching methods that Eureka provides us is further refined by our Integrated Arts team to add more fun active learning components.

However, we face our fair share of challenges as well. At times, few kids have struggled with a much lower starting point and need to cover a lot of ground to get up to speed and at other times, we have faced consistency issues with volunteer attendance. To improve the quality of the program, our curriculum team is working on assessment of the math and language programs. We are eagerly awaiting the conclusion metrics from the assessments and an analysis of the larger impact from these programs. We are also in the process of restructuring our homework support program, with a goal to provide more individual support. We constantly strive to foster critical thinking and hope to enable the children to arrive at the answers themselves.

We now also track their academic records from their schools to get an overall assessment of the effectiveness of our interventions. We hope to share the results of our endeavors shortly- so please stay tuned.

Growing produce in our own garden!

This is a story about how our children dreamed about converting a barren and trashed patch of land into a beautiful garden bearing fruits and vegetables, and how they went about accomplishing it!

It was exactly a year ago that we told you about “Imagine The Space” project to help our children take ownership of their center space ([“Art for Change” in Issue 12](#)). Our kids visualized what they wanted to do with their space and volunteers helped them depict their imagination in a computer-generated photograph (see below).

A team from [reStore Gardens](#) worked with our kids over the last few months to first clean the yard, then remove all the broken cement patches, then turn the sand into soil (a very laborious and painful albeit successful endeavor) and finally sow seeds and watch them grow.



Original backyard: cement and rubbish



Cleaned and cleared



A gorgeous *edible* garden!

... our own garden!

Our efforts bore fruit - literally - and now we have a gorgeous garden growing on a barren beach!! Fat little brinjals, healthy green spinach, juicy chickleos, up and coming watermelon, fresh holy basil (tulsi)...



We used the spinach in snacks we cook for our kids. The kids also shared their bounty with other centers. And now we have begun the same process in other centers as well (PR1 has always had a garden, PR2 and PSA are catching on)!

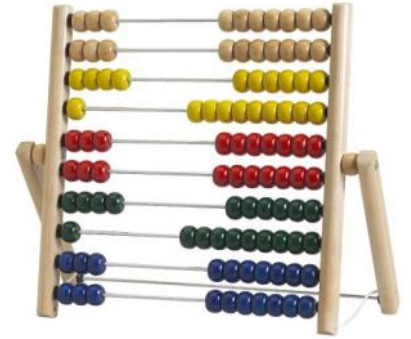


Recently, we have also begun composting so that we can “grow” our own soil. If you are in town, you should visit our green spaces, and stay on to enjoy a garden fresh meal with us! Thanks much to the wonderful folks from reStore who helped our kids turn their imagination into reality.

Quarter highlights: July - Sep 2013

July

We carried out math skills assessments in all our centers to get an understanding of our children's needs. We also hope to use it to help us provide more customized attention to each kid.



We continued to engage with our teachers through our ongoing teacher training sessions in all centers and kick-started puppetry sessions in PVA

Aug

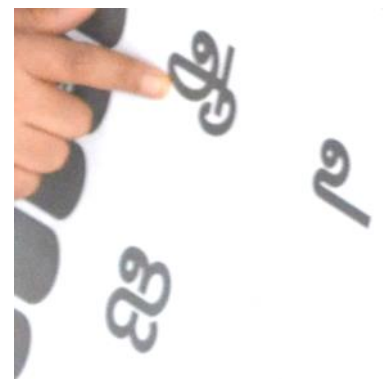
A professional story teller from UK conducted story telling sessions in all centers

Our kids are blooming into professional gardeners at PU (more details [here](#))



AID India visited to observe our Tamil classes.

We conducted a few special arts sessions in PVA with a specific aim to help kids with shorter attention spans focus better. One kid even came up with a complete storyboard with well developed characters and dialogues during one such session.



Quarter highlights: July—Sep 2013

Sep

We conducted visual arts and theatre (Kattai Koothu) sessions in all centers



For the Mid-term holidays, we conducted a 10-day intensive theme-based mini-camp where the kids learnt all the steps involved in maintaining a garden from planting seeds, watering, composting, using compost as manure etc.

Throughout the quarter

We continued to implement our Child Sexual Awareness campaigns and medical camps, We had doctors as well as counselors conducting both group as well as individualized sessions for at-risk kids.



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

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!

- Need doctors to volunteer once a month for health check-ups in our communities. Any kind doctors you know of who would be willing to help?
- Need a child psychologist who speaks Tamil. Know any?

2. Projector

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

3. Educational material

- Books in English 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
- Art Material: Color pencils, crayons, water-colors, paint-brushes
- Science experiment kits

4. Music and sports equipment

- Musical instruments
- Bats/balls/frisbee for group sports
- Carrom boards / Chess boards

5. Cameras and Camcorders

- Digital cameras to record activities and share between centers

6. Others

- Computer tables, Plastic chairs, Storage cupboards/bureaus, Ceiling fans

Contact our Planning Team

info@pudiyador.org: +91.99629.34227

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 :)

newsletter@pudiyador.org