

Pudiyador Times

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The Story of PR 2

“Nalla irukkeengala? (How are you doing?)” - Radha Aunty calls out to a parent. She nods and smiles her hellos, exchanges pleasantries or stops for a quick chat with some parent or the other in the community as she makes her way to the same corporation building that functions as a Balvadi (government sponsored preschool) during the day. It is now evening, and it is that time of the day when



our second Pudiador Ramapuram center (PR2) stirs to life where over 40 children spend their evenings and weekends. It wasn't always this way or this easy though it started easily enough. Sukumaran, a volunteer at the original Pudiador Ramapuram center (PR1), started providing academic help to a bunch of kids from the slums near his neighborhood. Having experienced Pudiador first hand, he wanted to bring the same program to these children as well. Once he floated the idea, some of the older children from the PR1 started volunteering their weekends at what was quickly becoming our newest center.

Just as the peer-to-peer sharing/learning was taking root, the child volunteers faced what seemed like an insurmountable problem at the time. Like in many slums across India, alcoholism, public drunkenness and abuse was a prevalent problem in this community as well. This made for some awkward encounters with our child volunteers and in order to not expose them to such experiences, we had to make the difficult decision to keep them out.



This center was floundering before it had even started. We needed a more experienced hand to turn this situation around and that's when we turned to Radha Aunty, one of our most beloved and veteran staff members. In the months that Radha Aunty has been running PR2, we have seen a remarkable turnaround in the community.

The Story of PR 2

We have engaged this community head on and to overwhelmingly positive response. Today, the staff count has grown to six and we are looking at adding more staff and volunteers. Connecting with the community and getting buy-in from them for the Pudiyador mission has been a real focus here. Outside the walls of PR2, Radha Aunty and the other Pudiyador staff make frequent house visits where they make it a point to engage the fathers in addition to themothers - "What do you want your children to learn from you?" "What do you see in their future?" In these neighborhoods, PR2 has facilitated youth camps aimed at fathers and youngsters to curb alcoholism and public drunkenness. Other activities and events are more celebratory or fun in nature and have invited participation from both parents and children. Our efforts have started paying off - most parents seem thrilled with the strides that their children have made at PR2. Almost every one of the parents we spoke to were bursting with pride at their children - how they now have become more responsible, how confident and articulate they have become and how much they seem to enjoy learning. And inside our PR2, life goes on in consummate Pudiyador fashion- some 40 children come in everyday, get academic help, eat healthy snacks, share their days/feelings, play sports, pursue the arts, go on field trips and most importantly learn to dream big:

Number of children:

35 between 5 and 14 years (14 girls, 21 boys)

Schools they attend:

Panchayat school (public), Hussaina Bath and Lamarck (private)

Number of Pudiyador teachers: 6

Size of community:

more than 500 families

Parents' occupation:

House maids, painters, masons, cleaning staff at local college

"College poganum- enna padippunu ellam 10th marks-kku approm dhaan theriyum - aana nichayama college poven (I want to go to college - I will only know what I'll specialize in after my Class 10 grades - but I will definitely go to college)"

Jyothika, Class 9

"Police aaganum, thirudana pidikkanum; yedhunaachum tholanjupochunna kandupidichu kudukkanum (I want to become a policeman and catch thieves; if something is lost, I need to find it and give it back)"

Mohanasundaram, Class 6

"Collector aaga poren - ilavasa thanni kudukkanum. Kudikkiraan-galeadha niruthanum - suthama vaazha vazhi pannanum (I will be a collector - a civil administrator - I will provide free water to all. I want to prevent alcoholism and provide means to clean living)"

Prabha, Class 5

Face Painting



“Kuttu makeup session conducted by Thilaga. Some of us loved it so much that we didn’t want to take the paint off even to go to school!”

Pre-Community Event



We held a pre-community event to build rapport with community members and to bring together the families of the Pudiyaador children.



Teenagers also participated in a Parai (traditional hand drum) session.



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Pre-Community Event



We held a mapping exercise for the women to identify the safe and dangerous areas and the reasons behind them.



For the mothers, we held a kolam drawing (traditional designs drawn on the floor inside and in front of houses using rice flour) and pot painting session.

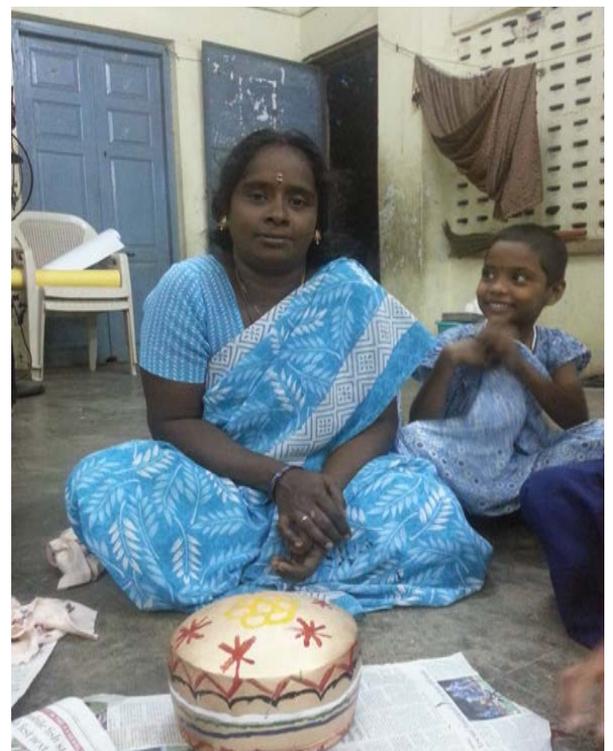


Pre-Community Event

The mothers were delighted to take their pots home and showcase their art. We slowly started playing music in the background. Soon some of the mothers started dancing with us.



The ladies' dance moves ran the whole gamut from Bharatanatyam (traditional classical south Indian dance) to folk to Bollywood styles. These ladies got talent!



Quarter Updates

Community Interface

We continue to engage with our home-visit facilitators who conduct regular home visits. Through the initiative, we have been able to identify and help some of our community members avail rehabilitation for their alcohol dependency



Teenager Program

We organized a frisbee tournament in Auroville where 30 kids from our teenager program played with external teams



7 kids from our teenager program also participated in a national soccer

Alumni Club Program

Dan and Jess, Ultimate frisbee enthusiasts who are biking from Creswick, Australia to London, UK stopped by at our center and conducted a workshop



Our spoken English workshops this quarter are focused on getting kids to explore other cultures from their own. Each other them was presented a new tid-bit on a cultural aspect that was new to them.

