

— ***Annual Report 2008-2009*** —



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Introduction

According to legend, the Cedar tree is a bridge between Earth and Heaven. Like that tree, CEDAR is an organisation with its roots firmly placed in the soil of Southern India and its branches and leaves stretching through out the region and beyond.

Created from the constant reflection of a group of development professionals, the Centre for Education, Development Action and Research was registered as an educational and charitable Trust in 1994 at Madurai.

CEDAR aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of NGOs towards achieving integral and sustainable development of the groups and communities they work with through education, development action and research.

To understand the field realities, gain credibility, generate knowledge and share with practitioners and academicians, CEDAR in 1995 initiated (Child Labour Action Research Project) field intervention at Kovilpatti predominately child labour infected block.

Simultaneously, at Madurai NGO Capacity building programme was initiated with the support of Zurich Financial Community Trust UK.

Board of Trustees

- Dr. T. Chinnaraj Joseph Jaikumar is the Managing Trustee. He is an academican involved in Development Education and Research for over 25 years. He is the Principal and Secretary of American College. He is associated with many universities and academic consortia abroad, developing curriculum in Development Education.
- Prof. Ms Susheela Jeyanthan a retired professor of social work with commitment to development sector. She is associated with many NGOs as consultant.
- Dr. Gio Gndurai is a well known medical practitioner and social worker for last 25 years. He is committed to community health and children education.

Vision

CEDAR envisions a society

- a) that offers an adequate and equal opportunities for all people transcending the barriers of caste and class, religion and region, gender and age, allowing the full realization of human potentials,
- b) that actively promotes peace and harmony with fellow beings and nature,
- c) that is actively built by the people themselves through a process of self-articulation and empowerment and
- d) that is facilitated by vibrant Civil Society Organisations committed to promote moral and ethical standards of human well being.

Mission

To enable the Non Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Institutions in India, make effective use of space made available to them by emerging socio-political, techno-economic and cultural context to address issues related to poverty, by way of,

- a) Systematically building the knowledge base through research, experiential learning and documentation
- b) Promoting meaningful development education and exchange;
- c) Developing new models of programme intervention related to gender parity environment., at the grassroots level;
- d) Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of NGOs through capacity building

Child Development and Children Rights

Children Resource Centres and Early Childhood care

CEDAR presently runs 12 Children Resource Centres and 2 Pre schools in 9 villages. The centres provide the children facilitation to improve their academic skills, cultural arts and social skills. This is done through trained volunteers.

In the pre schools the children are provided with required nutritional supplement and basic academic skills, that would help them to do better when they enter regular schools.

Creative Arts camps and Medical check up were done to benefit all the children in the work area.

- On 23rd August children exposure visit to Kanyakumari, Thirparappu, Petchiparai dam, Children's park, Thottilpalam and Vattakottai, 78 children from 9 villages participated in this visit.
- Children creativity Arts camp was started on 28th September 2008. It was designed as 4 days camp. It was planned to train the children under 5 arts like Kazhil, Oyil, Street theatre, drawing and parai. 66 (39 boys+27 girls) children from 8 villages were participated in this camp.



Volunteers, staffs, resource persons totally 78 persons were involved in this camp. Father Gnana Prakasham, (Udhayam Education Trust) gave warm welcome to the children and he shared his views on learning arts. Ms.Latha (Project officer in "Valnthu Kattuvom" scheme) explained how this scheme entered into community. She also appreciated the children for their participation in learning arts. Each day children shared their experiences as team wise. This helped them to know what is going in another team. IQ session is an important part of this camp. Mr.Jegajothi, a retired teacher as well as environmentalist shared his views on pollution and what is the role of children to save the earth. The last day of the camp, children put their performance. The four teams learnt these arts in a very short period.

Networking/Building Alliance for Children Rights

SCNIC is a collective of three grassroots organisations CEDAR,NEWS and VICTORY. The collective works to abolish child labour and ensure quality education to all children in Thoothukudi, Virudhunagar and Tirunelveli districts of south Tamilnadu.

Started in 2003 as a DI, the project during 2007 and 2008, is in the process of building people's organizations and alliances to take up the issues to macro level. In which SCNIC had evolved children federations, state level civil society alliances and CBOs to monitor child labour.

The DI covers 144 rural communities and 10 urban wards, reaching a children population of 26,000.

- SCNIC now had reached another milestone in its process of preparing itself to macro level campaign and advocacy efforts. With the children collectives, federations have been built and vision building for the children groups is being done. Already the federations had organised a signature campaign during the anti child labour Day and a one day event on child rights. They are able to reach the public through literature and media a lot. The children federations during November 2008 had organised a two day children mela on child rights and childhood in their respective blocks. The entire process had been designed and executed by the Federation leaders themselves with the guidance of SCNIC. 1200 children participated in the process and raised awareness on children rights to the public through cultural activities, rally, pamphlet distribution and exhibition.

- The second one is the building of NGO alliance to ensure the rights of the children, at the level of south Tamilnadu. The alliance, named as Children First had undertaken a couple of fact finding missions on incidents of violence against children at schools. The alliance is also building up a campaign to ensure free, quality and equitable to all children. This campaign also includes demand for common school system throughout the country.



SCNIC had built a civil society alliance, with a membership of 35 grassroots organisations from 12 districts of south Tamilnadu. The

alliance did the following efforts as part of its ongoing campaign for quality education and common school system.

Poster and Pamphlet Campaign

Posters and Pamphlets explaining the status of education in our country, rights of the disabled children and non negotiable demands with regard to the Right to Education Bill 2008 had been circulated in to members of Children First civil society alliance in 12 Districts of south Tamilnadu, covering 44 organisations.

Meeting the Members of Parliament

Along with the poster and pamphlet campaign, letter to 8 of the MP Constituencies had been circulated among the children first alliance, requesting the respective MPs to raise their voice on the RtE bill 2008 during the next session of the parliament.

District Level RtE Campaign

District level campaign on the CSS and Quality Education had been held at 6 Districts from October to December 2008.

The campaign had sensitised public and children on the Right to Education. Educationists, NGO Leaders, Women Group Leaders, School Teachers and Retiered Teachers had participated and gave out speeches supporting CSS and Quality Education.

NGOs Capacity Building Programme

The capacity building phase for sharing expertise on children centred activities and replicating CEDAR's model of children collective in the constituencies of 20 small and emerging NGOs had been completed. During the present year 10 of the organisations who were part of the programme had committed themselves to strengthen the SIRPI network.

A program design and development workshop had been held to arrive at the objectives, strategies and program plan for the SIRPI network. CEDAR is taking the lead in mobilising support from different agencies.

Women In Development

MAHALIR THITTAM project team is reconstituted and activities have been reactivated as Govt has given more priority. In 2008 Government of Tamilnadu has made assessment of NGOs working in this programme.

- Government has approved CEDAR among few NGOs in the district. At present we have 270 SHGs in which 7 are SHGs of persons with disability and 5 men SHGs.
- CEDAR team is seriously considering transforming members of the SHGs as entrepreneurs.
- These groups have accessed loans to the tune of Rs 86 lakhs in 2008-09

Development Education and Exchange

CEDAR has been associated with academic institutions in India as well as in abroad. The academic links under Development education programme has taken a new dimension of having an arrangement with Northumbria University (UK) and CEDAR by sending student volunteers for week field orientation. This arrangement is continuing for last 5 years.

This year the Leeds Metro University has sent 10 students for field assignment as part of their BA (Hons) Youth and Community studies. This university based on the feed back from students Leeds Metro University has shown interest to continue the association. The team was divided into three groups on group (of five member were placed at CEDAR field at Kovilpatti). The other two groups went to CIRHEP, Nilakottai and FHF, Pondyichery. The team at Kovilpatti had selected four communities and made regular visits for a period of three weeks. They taught English in schools, sports/games to children collective members, and visited panchayaths for understanding of its administration.



Mr. Adrian has been organizing Youth Exchange programme from UK from 2002 onwards. Under this programme young people from UK will be visiting us and thereafter they will send invitation for our youth from the community to visit UK for 21 days.

Global Community Sport a NGO based at New castle, specialising in sport and game with the young children has established contact with us. Mr. Rick Shrewder visited our field area twice and worked with children and teachers.

Programme Plans for the year 09-10

Educational Support for the Needy Children.

Joe Homan Charity UK, (JHC) considering our work and creditability sought our support to initiate their pilot project of supporting needy children to continue their studies up to 12th Std or ITI / Polytechnic through monetary support and well as guidance and counseling from teachers and CEDAR. JHC has approved the project of supporting 60 children studying at 8th Std for a period of 5 years from coming academic year onwards. An amount of Rs.250/ per month will be paid to them through banks to wards their educational need to be monitored by the committee of teachers, community members and CEDAR.

On going projects

Children Resource Centres Project Joe Homan Charity UK has after compilation of 1st phase five years, having seen positive results among the children have agreed to support another 12 Resource Centres at Kovilpatti and the programme will continue. Child Rights Programme. (SCNIC) Action aid India has approved the plan and budget for the year 2009 and this on going programme is till 2013.

Research study on Civil Society Activists

Dr. Matt Smith from Centre for Public Policy, Northumbria University (UK) a friend of CEDAR has proposed to conduct study on Civil Society Activists in India in association with CEDAR. He would be visiting Madurai during June 2009.

Youth Exchange Programme.

Mr. Adrian Ramsden, Organiser, Global Rock Youth Exchange Programme, Macclesfield UK along with 16 young people will be visiting CEDAR during August 2009. They will be working with 20 young people representing CEDAR, FHF, Bless and VCDS during a cultural workshop at CESC from 25th Jul to 31 Aug. This team will be visiting CEDAR Field and interact with the community during their stay.

Development Education Programme

7 Students from Northumbria University will be on their field assignments from 9th Aug to 6th Sept 09. Leeds Metropolitan University will be communicating student placement soon.

In Discussion

Project on Children with Special Needs

RTI was filed by us to know the number of disabled children and the Inclusive Education at Kovilpatti Block. From the information received from SSA, there are 129 reported to have been at mainstreamed at schools and 169 children are being given home based support. Thus 298 disabled children are there at our block.

A physical check is being carried out to ascertain the authenticity of the data given by SSA and to identify the gaps in service. The out come of the check will give us initiate a project proposal.

Empowerment of Arunthaiyar's Children.

A study conducted by CEDAR staff reveals the there are 1161 Arunthaiyars of which 319 are children below 14 years in 27 villages at Kovilpatti block. Among the youth in the community only 2 are graduates, 27 are at high school and 29 are out of school. Considering the fact these are first timers who face severe discriminations at school and the community their issues to be addressed. A project proposal will be worked out.

Community College

Though there is great demand for higher education and the opportunities have been opened up by the LPG and technology, mostly the middle class could achieve. The number of children and youth completing 12th Std or qualifying vocational training are less as large number of them end the education with out having skill that could lead decent livelihood. As the opportunities have opened up for the qualified youth, equally there are opportunity for drop outs and lesser qualified.

Over the period of time, Community colleges have been able to provide a space for such individuals. So far we have been operating on project base and could bring changes in the lives of rural poor in a limited way. By establishing Community college we will be contributing to enhancement of human resources and livelihood among the rural youth. CEDAR will be moving forward to its own sustainability in years to come

Network and Alliance Building

Capacity Building Programme 2005-08 saw the partners coming together to work as a net work called “**Sirphi**” Similarly as part of macro level action SCNIC has initiated a civil society alliance called “**Children First**” where the members are only NGOs. These 2 net works are to be activated so that CEDAR facilitation can reach larger community as well as advocate and lobby on policy issues at macro level.

We Thank our Supporters

- Government of Tamilnadu,
 - Actionaid India,
 - Joe Homan Charity UK
 - Northumbria University New Castle UK,
 - Global Community Sports Newcastle UK,
 - Leeds Metropolitan University Leeds UK
 - Global Rockers, Maccelsfield, UK
 - Campaign Against Child Labour, Tamilnadu Chapter
 - Campaign Against Child Trafficking, Tamilnadu
 - Forum for Promotion of Children Participation, Tamilnadu and Puducherry
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