



(A unit of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham  
Charitable Trust)



# Activity Report 2015-16

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*V-Excel Educational Trust*



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## V-Excel Educational Trust Activity Report 2015-16

As we look back, we find that each child and young adult has inspired us to go beyond our rigid boundaries, guiding us to encounter them, or anyone who has crossed our paths, with a certain interest and warmth. This has brought dignity to the lives of those we touch and we, in turn, have developed into a community of caring and nurturing people. We have learnt an important lesson - to watch and behold with wonder what emerges as the hidden person, behind the disabled person.

This year saw us spreading our wings further, and reaching out to the community while intensifying our work with every child in our care. It was an enriching year with a host of activities, initiatives, events, community programs. A few highlights have been presented below.

### Proud moments

- **Received an Advanced Level- GuideStar India Gold Award:**  
V-Excel has qualified for the "Advanced Level- GuideStar India Gold" award. This certifies our transparency until the end of 2016. GuideStar India launched the GuideStar India NGO Transparency Awards to recognize organisations that practice and voluntarily demonstrate their transparency and accountability in the public domain.



- **Finalists for the India NGO Awards -**

V-Excel was selected as one of the 4 finalists in the "medium" category of the India NGO awards held in New Delhi, on July 25, 2015. There were around 300 applications from all over the country this year.

We did not win the award this year, but the process brought with it a lot of introspection, cemented the need for adherence to standards, documentation, and workflow processes and, above all, validated our credibility as a transparent organization



### New beginnings

- **Café Samarth** - The centre has in the past been training special persons in cooking, but this is the first time they have started such an outlet, called Café Samarth. Nina Reddy, Managing Director of Savera Hotels, presided over the launch and presented aprons and chef hats to the 15-member team that will be taking charge of the cafe. "It is an honour to be a part of this launch. They seem to be doing a great job, I think I'll become one of their regular visitors," said Ms.



Reddy. The menu offers two themes — South Indian and Maharashtrian, besides some gluten-free, casein-free recipes.

- V-Excel Educational Trust and **Wassup-On-demand** joined hands today to under a Public-Private partnership program where V-Excel will use its understanding of Children with Special needs and Wassup will engage and train them with skills in the vocational space related to laundry and dry-cleaning. The program was formally launched by Mr. S.S. Rajsekar (Board of Advisors, V-Excel) and Mr. R. Balachandar, Co-founder of Wassup at our premises in Mylapore.
- We have begun **formal Sports and Marathon training with professionals** for our children across different ages. Physical activity has immense benefit for not just gross and fine motor development but also for social and communication skill development. We look forward to a fitter and agile group in the coming month
- The month of October 2015 was very eventful, as our organisation entered into a **new project in Srirangam to start vocational training centre**. We are addressing the crying need for vocational training and services there. Recently, a bhoomi puja for a new building to house the Abhyasa Kendra, the joint initiative of Kinchitkaram Trust and V-Excel, was held at Srirangam on June 3. The event was graced by the presence of Sri U. Ve. Velukkudi Krishnan Swami.
- Three of our children from the special school -Abhishek, Kailash and Aaqila - **performed on stage in a public show** with a new group of volunteers with no guidance from their teachers! Our sincere thanks to Crea Shakti, the innovative, enterprising and proactive group of young actors, who enthusiastically trained and motivated our children to participate.
- Renowned singer Sowmya and her group of young musicians made a long awaited dream of bringing **Carnatic music as a healing, teaching, therapeutic tool to special children** come true. The commitment of the Sukrtam Trust has helped us in march forward with the musical interlude as a regular feature of our weekly program.

### CSR Projects



- We are *working with Hexaware Ltd. on a vocational project* on Printing and Documenting Solutions. The trainees in the Mylapore unit are being introduced to the operations of a commercial cutting machine, punching machine, shredder and lamination machine, sponsored by the company. Under close supervision, these trainees can now operate these machines independently.
- *Wipro Cares and V-Excel have jointly embarked on a project* for identifying and providing remedial intervention to among students from low-income families. We are working with two schools in the first year and will equip the children and the staff

### Community Programs

- *On World Autism Day, the 2nd of April 2016*, there was a rally arranged by Disha, V-Excel's Parent Support Group. Many parents, children and teachers of V-Excel units participated in it, wearing blue, the colour of this condition. The rally, spearheaded by Dr. Vasudha Prakash, our Founder-Director, was conducted with the objective of spread awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- The parents and about 15 students of the Association of People with Disability (APD), from Chintamani, Karnataka, visited all our centers in Chennai and interacted with staff and students. The visit was intended to have the parents interact with our parents and teachers.
- *Tarang* - Continuing our tradition of a monthly concert for the children, we have had many eminent singers come and perform for us with their musicians. The event is planned to give a relaxed time to children and their parents. Without exception, the singers speak of the enriching experience they had singing for our children, which by now has become an interested, involved audience. Our aim is to ensure that we offer the joys of life that everyone is entitled to and promote inclusion in society.
- *Chennai Wipro Marathon* Run for Fun for special needs, our students rocked the show and we had immense support from the enthusiastic parents, teachers and volunteers. This was the 4th edition of The Wipro Chennai Marathon. Wipro Limited



is the title sponsor for the event. Nearly 30,000 runners have participated in the past three editions.

- Our *clinical counseling work with outside adults* is picking up and we had about more than 30 sessions between all our counselors. V-Excel is also now being recognized as being providing the counseling services apart from special education.
- For *the 5th consecutive year ARUNIM* (Association for Rehabilitation under National Trust Initiative of Marketing) we put up 20 stalls exhibiting varieties of eco-friendly and organic products made by the persons with disability in the L&T premises in Chennai (Jan 28-29, 2016).
- A Tamil TV Channel, Puthiya Thalamurai, had *a detailed interview with Mrs. Usha Rajagopal, Head of Vocational Training Program*, to talk about V-Excel and its work, with a special emphasis on vocational training for young adults.

### Events

- *The Sports Meet 2016* which was held on 27<sup>th</sup> February. "Through the grades" was the theme chosen and each race, drill, movement sequence was related to the main lessons held from Kindergarten to Grade 7. All our children were at their best and enjoyed themselves, despite the scorching sun. Mrs. Gita Bhalla, the creative mind behind all the drills and races, and all the dedicated teachers gave themselves completely to the practice to meet perfection on this day. All the parents felt extremely proud of their children and expressed their happiness.
- *Carnival 2015* - V-Excel's carnivals are events primarily held to raise community awareness of the disability sector and to provide a platform for education and advocacy. Carnival 2015 was in many ways a great success with around 800 to a 1000 people attending it through the day. The food items were excellent as well and students and their families had a great time. From the vendor stalls, to exciting food stalls, games and events, the participation was encouraging and enthusiastic. It was a very well-received event.
- VRC conducted *summer camp* for two weeks, for children age six and above. The summer camp had activities such as storytelling, movements, craft, group games.
- *Navrathri* was celebrated at the center. The puja commenced with Aarti for Lord Ganesha and Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. After the Puja the children played Garba and Dandiya. The colourful attire and the movement of the children was a lovely sight to behold



### Intensifying our work

- The senior school students are learning vocations such as Car Washing, Cooking, Hospitality, Housekeeping, Carpentry, External Therapy, Paper Making, Stitching, and Paper Products.
- **Home program** - The Functional skills assessment done by the therapists together with the parents and teachers input lead way for setting relevant and creative home program. Programs on eating and toileting, that can be followed at home and at classroom were prepared for each and every special child.
- Therapists had term end discussion on each child's short term goals and progress. Then term objectives for the 2nd term were planned and set up towards reaching long term goals. Many KLC children were transferred from Individual to group and vice versa based on their progress and adaptive response.
- On 2nd April, a free dental camp was conducted in the school for our children. A team of interns and dentists from MGVM dental college came to our school and checked the dental and oral status of around 30 children and presented a health talk to the parents who had gathered at the school for the occasion.
- Motor delay assessments and training have been done for children with physical development delay. Children with gross motor delay have shown improvement in muscle power, tone strength and functional transitions. The major milestones achieved in these children are neck control, trunk stability, sitting without support, standing without support and walking without support and performing complex gross-motor skills.

### Fulfilling Initiatives

- Chennai experienced heavy rains and flood this year. Some of our older children were out with the relief team distributing food, clothes, medicines, bedsheets, and many other necessary items.
- The Counselling Department completed the large scale community intervention project on behalf of NalandaWay, in the month of March 2016. It began as an idea about counsellors reaching out to a small number of children traumatised by the floods of December. The team visited several Corporation and Government schools in and around Maraimalai Nagar and Tharamani.
- On 31<sup>st</sup> March, Grade 7 children (6 of them with 3 teachers and 1 housekeeping staff) set out on a trip to Friends of Camphill campus, near Bengaluru for a three days 2 nights stay. They travelled by Shatabdi to Bengaluru and were picked up from Camphill in 2 jeeps. The students benefitted from the serene, quiet but extremely busy schedule followed by the Friends of Camphill. They participated in the gardening, cooking, candle making, and housekeeping duties. It was a great learning experience for them all.

### Training and Development

- **'A Class Apart'** - On Wednesday, August 26, 2015, a solemn closing ceremony was held at our centre in R.A. Puram to mark the completion of Batch 6 of our "A Class Apart" program held under the Kuruvila Jacob Initiative. 'A Class Apart' is a skill development program for kindergarten and primary teachers. This is a program which is spread over an academic year with three sessions of three-day duration each comprising the theoretical and practical aspects of inclusive education.
- The counselling department conducted a two day training workshop in Expressive Arts Therapy. The participants were individuals who work with people in professional settings like counselling, teaching,

training and so on. The workshop involved painting, drawing, exploring through cards, expressing feelings through verse and poetry, movement, imagery, storytelling and so on.

### Satellite Centres

#### *NashikCentre:*

- A milestone was achieved on 27th June 2016, with the inauguration of V-Excel Youth Empowerment Services in Nashik. The inaugural function took place in a new premise taken solely for Vocational Training center for young adults with disabilities. The Chief Guest for the evening was Mr. H.D. Aher, Vice-President of Mahindra and Mahindra and the Guest of Honour for the event was Mr. Vijay Patil, Medical and Social Welfare Office, Nashik Zilla Parishad.
- During the first week of April, all the teachers and therapists carried out extensive Autism awareness campaign by visiting around 35 different primary and secondary schools in Nashik.

*Tirunelveli:* Group program for younger children started last year is continuing successfully this year too. This has led to the start of a group program for young adults this year focusing on prevocational skills and functional academics.

*Erode:* The year 2016 started with many children being referred by doctors and schools. It has been proposed to start young children and young adult group programs as well. The group program aims at facilitating school readiness, develop communication, social skills and pre-vocational training.

*Solapur:* This centre has been progressively supporting more and more children with special needs. We have started getting many young children for early intervention who require occupational and physio therapy. We have a senior Pediatrician on our panel to help parents address the children's developmental and medical needs.

*Srirangam:* A vocational training centre started in Srirangam to benefit differently-abled persons aged above 15 for ensuring a sustained empowerment and social inclusiveness for them all through their life. Called Abhyasa Centre for Rehabilitation and Empowerment, it is a joint effort by Kinchitkaram Trust and V-Excel Educational Trust and will cater to the needs of special young adults.