

V-Excel Educational Trust
10 Tiruvengadam Street
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ACTIVITY REPORT 2021-22

WWW.V-EXCEL.ORG

V-EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The disruption created worldwide by the COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone. Compulsory lockdowns, interspersed with relaxation of movement, highlighted a year of uncertainty, school closures and parental concerns. Cognizant of the issues faced by children with special needs and their parents, V-Excel took a proactive stance in providing online support. When lockdowns were relaxed, emergency rehabilitation and therapy services resumed with sanitization and hygiene protocols strictly adhered to. V-Excel was in constant touch with the special community and provided them counselling whenever needed. It has been a year of struggle for all, but V-Excel's programs and services were a source of reassurance for parents and children.



www.guidestarindia.org.in

Ask for our Due Diligence Report for details.



GuideStar India Certifications: Gold FY 2014-15, FY 2015-16, Platinum FY 2016-17, FY 2018-19, FY 2019-20
Subject to validity of registration under IT, FCRA and registration as NPO

SUCCESS STORIES

V-Excel works with children and young adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual challenges, Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD), Behavioural and Emotional Disorders, and Learning Disabilities such as Dyslexia. Every success is achieved by overcoming challenges, backed by perseverant efforts from teachers, trainers, counsellors and administrators. These are some of the year's success stories:

- KLC Shared that when the simple skills of life of using hands meaningfully are done with love and beauty, the simple skill is transformed into a capacity of a higher nature. The children find that their hands can create and creating is the highest human expression of their spirit.
- A few of our students excelled at the new skill of stitching. **Akshay Sunder** and **Rekha** learnt to stitch straight on the machine while children like **Prasaad** and **Akshay** learnt to do complicated stitches like the herring bone and chain stitches. **Hanish, Preethi, Sai** and many others learnt to stitch the running stitch with just verbal prompts. We tried to use whatever the children could possibly do as their contribution. So, colorful clips and rubber bands with crochet flowers were tied on to rubber bands with eager hands. Some children who could only stick, embellished some articles made for children by gluing small pieces of felt and braiding.
- **Harini**, our trainee with ASD in Erode, aged 45 has been coming to us for some years. We were training her for her ADLs, domestic skills, craft work and also were working on her behaviour issues. She was making good progress in all these. But the lockdown and being at home brought lot of regression in her. Her mother who had health issues could not manage her. It was so difficult to make her do some work that she started hitting the mother. The mother was very depressed. Vasuki, our therapist, started online sessions by talking to the mother and Harini. Slowly she started enjoying these sessions. The mother was also given tips on managing her meltdowns. Now, Harini helps her mother in making coffee, cleaning the house, dressing herself and also small chores at home.
- **Rupasri**, aged 15, a student in Erode was given a lot of physical activities as she was overweight. The lockdown had made her so lethargic. Pavithra, our counselor, started her sessions with songs and made Rupasri identify common objects and answering simple questions. She made flash cards to familiarize her with the names of her family members. Rupasri started enjoying the sessions. She is now engaged in household activities and looks forward to more interactions.

SUCCESS STORIES

- **Vafir's** message about independent life skills of a trainee. He shared with great pride achievement of Sai Hariharan from KLC, whose parents Venkat and Ponrajam allowed and facilitated his participation in outdoor camp to Yercaud for 4 days. Sai fended for himself, was part of a group and managed the trip with success.
- At our Nashik center, a child, **Kavin** aged 15, an LD student, was coming from 2017. Initially he was not able to identify basic academic skill like colors, shapes, money concept, time concept and numbers, even difficult to read simple 3 letter words. We started intensive remedial strategies for him using his learning style. Now he is able to identify colors, shapes, and numbers up to 1000. He is doing two digits addition. He knows time accurately. He reads the newspaper and is able to write his biodata.
- **Srinidhi Sekaran** joined V-Excel's Youth Empowerment Services (YES) in 2016 when she was 18. She had learning difficulties and was very docile. With a background in home science, she had a natural affinity for baking and kitchen activities in YES. Alongside, she was introduced to basic computer skills, data entry and even graphic designing. She learned all of this with great enthusiasm and followed instructions diligently. Her training was also extended to include front-office and communication skills. After 2 years of focused training and with the support from her family, she was placed in Hotel Savera's baking unit. Despite the initial hiccups in the transition process, with immense support from the management in Savera and with hand-holding from YES, she settled well and flourished, until the pandemic derailed her career. She was home during the lockdown but actively participated in YES's online sessions. All her skills were fine-tuned and she was given opportunities to attend job interviews. She also interned at the bakery in Crowne Plaza. After going through the interviewing and selection process in Grundfos Pumps, Chennai, Srinidhi was selected to be part of their HR and Admin team. A proud moment indeed.
- As a part of our training on independent living and as an extension of our YES supermarket, 16 trainees from YES were taken to Big Bazaar in Express Avenue Mall. They were asked to bring a list of things that they intended to buy, ₹500 cash and a shopping bag. As the trainees were very familiar with shopping through the YES market initiative. With very little support and guidance, they were able to find things that they wanted, checked the price, carried bought stuff to the billing counter, billed them and got back the change. They also made sure to count the number of items they had bought. It was heartening to see many trainees buying things not only for themselves but also for their mother or sister. Definitely need to mention that the mall authorities and the Big Bazaar staff were very supportive and helpful.

SUCCESS STORIES

- Trainee **Aaqila** in KLC has taken the next step into her training by doing an apprenticeship under Puja, our counsellor who now divides her time in two centres and is the class teacher of Grade 1 in a regular Waldorf School. Aaqila is training to be a teacher assistant and accompanies Puja in her work three days a week. On the other days she polishes her communication skills, and other artistic activity at the Sharada building. With her carefully drawn program, we are hoping that Aaqila does receive quality training and is able to add to the well-being of the class of seven-year-old. We will be following her training closely and wish her the best.
- **Prashant** (name changed), from our Nashik center, age- 5 years had been diagnosed with hydrocephalus. Child was operated for AV shunting at the age of three. There is obvious cranial deformation due to frequent falls and head injury. Child was brought to the therapist 6 months back with child being able to prop up to independent sitting only. Rigorous physiotherapy including trunk work (mat and dynamic surface), training in transition, neurodevelopmental approaches to build muscle strength in dynamic activities and special emphasis on eccentric control was given to the child along with home program. The child is now able to pull to stand with minimal to no support and stand independently for 10 mins and has started taking 3-5 steps independently. With the help of dynamic AFOs the abnormal foot positioning has been restored and lower limb osteokinetics has improved. Trunk stability has improved significantly and frequency of falls has reduced considerably.
- Trainee **Sriram**, of VTU, joined Grundfos Pumps Ltd., in the housekeeping department as an Intern. Manivannan was assigned as job coach for two weeks. Sriram had a grooming experience at a Salon before starting work. He was trained to commute this unfamiliar route of about 12 km. by bus.
- YES team is very happy to share that 9 of our trainees participated in National Science painting competition conducted by United School Organization, New Delhi. Excited to share that 2 of them have been selected as winners in High support and Individual categories. Congratulations to **Vidya** and **Arvind**.

RECOGNITION

Our staff member Ms. **Radhamani Dharman**, at our Erode center, was recognized during our 2021 Town Hall Meeting for her exemplary services during the lockdown. Sharing a few lines about her:

Radhamani has been with us for the past 8 years. She joined as an admin staff and her journey in the center has been extraordinary. A person who is hardworking, dedicated, empathetic, gritty, a motivating leader and a compassionate companion of the parents. Her work during the pandemic has kept the life line of the center alive. Physical classes went for a toss, online classes were the new norm, financial constraints, confused teachers were things that needed immediate clarification and mending. She stood like a warrior and kept the activities moving. She has helped in bringing changes in assessment procedure and remedial instructions. She always works in tandem with the mission and vision of the organization. She has been a great motivator for the staff and held the head of the center high.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Dr. Vasudha Prakash gave a talk on the nationally televised program Mangayar Cholai aired in DD Podhigai on April 25, 2021. These are available on YouTube in the links below
YouTube - Mangayar Cholai
YouTube - Mangayar Cholai

The December 1, 2021 issue of Magalirmani, a supplement of Dhinamani newspaper had a long article about V-Excel Educational Trust and our Founder-Trustee Dr. Vasudha Prakash.

Women Economic Forum (WEF) fosters conversations, community, connections and collaborations among women worldwide. The enabling ecosystem of exchange and sisterhood ignites and inspires greater enterprise and leadership, propelling women's economic empowerment and influence in ALL walks of life. WEF is the forum arm of ALL Ladies League, the largest global women chamber in the world with over 1,000 chapters and an outreach of 1,50,000 inspiring women in 150 countries. At their annual forum of 2021, held in Bangalore on December 10, Dr. Vasudha Prakash, was the moderator of the topic "A Global Perspective for the Sustainable Development of a person with Disability".

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- The students of BLA wrote the annual Exams. This was kind of preparing them to the usual exam model. The papers were corrected and distributed to them. What a happy day for the teachers and the students!!
- The academic year 2020-21 has come to an end and the unusual year of the pandemic brought new opportunities for our students and teachers at KLC. Most of the year spent at home with only online guidance and the last three months of limited attendance has resulted in some consciously crafted collaborations! Conscious because we have learnt to upcycle, reuse, and reduce waste. And collaborations because the staff, students, parents, and some members of our visiting community at Sharada helped to put together, design, work at our products.
- It all started when we decided to participate in the India International Quilting Festival 2021, after our good friend Varshaa Moahan encouraged us to participate. We were delighted that almost every child in the senior school could manipulate the needle and thread and could make running stitches, the stitch needed for all quilting projects.
- It was then when we started thinking of different projects where the children could use these stitches and start from here. What emerged was an entire range of home-decor products like table linen, *dohars*, curtains, and many simple creative products for children.
- Collaborations between teachers and students who worked with textiles old and new - Machine stitching, simple running stitches, blanket stitches, quilting were explored. Simple crafts made from wood, coconut shells, jute, paper, were transformed into useful and aesthetic articles to be used at home and offices and for gifting. We also worked on our regular vocations like candles, bags, and jewelry.
- We were all set to have our summer bazaar live in the foyer of the Sharada building on the 17th of April. Things again flared up in the city and there was a sudden spurt in Covid cases. Thus, on 19 April 2021, as a part of the Town Hall meeting our website was officially inaugurated. Please do visit it. It is a labor of love and all units of V- Excel have put their products on display. It is with great excitement that the craft bazaar was received. Friends and families placed their orders and most of our limited-edition items were sold out within the week. We seek your continued patronage. <https://crafs2021.wixsite.com/bazaar>

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- The craft bazaar has paved its way for the vocations for next year to emerge. Woodwork with gardening products and making eco-friendly containers with coconut shells, jewelry, candles, a lot of fabric related products where children hand stitch and machine stitch.
- The Parent support group of V- Excel Educational Trust revived with new vigor, enthusiasm, determination and to be there for each other. A very happy parent meet with lots of hope for our children. 2021-2022 and the years ahead will surely be full of wonder for all of us .
- V-Excel had its first session of 2021,"NEW BEGINNINGS", Orientation for teachers at MCTM Chidambaram Chettyar School. This was very well-received. We both had the same goal - helping children settle back into school routine happily, with ease and keeping in mind their mental and social well-being.
- You don't need a reason to celebrate! But if reasons pile up, and music is the theme, the celebration becomes a song and a dance! That was Tumbaka Tumba, a free concert organised by our children for the children. V-Excel., our NGO committed to persons with special needs, has its 20th anniversary this year. We were commemorating 'The International Day for Persons with Disabilities' (3rd December). For more details click this link.
- Musical therapy has been proven to have a positive effect on the mentally challenged, but you do not need to be trained in musical therapy to incorporate it into a mentally challenged adult's life. Depending on the level of ability, there are a variety of activities fit for mentally challenged adults ranging from taking lessons to learn their favorite instrument - to attending a concert or a musical. Even home-bound adults can benefit from music by taking the time to listen to music during the day or watching a musical movie. Benefits include improved behaviour and lower stress levels, to name a few.
- Reading biographies has psychological benefit. Biographies help us learn about different cultures, see life through someone else's eyes, and learn from their successes and failures. Carefully reading about ordinary people doing extraordinary things is an incredible source of inspiration. This is the main difference between reading fiction and reading about real people. From a psychological point of view, reading biographies can be a very effective tool for the development of abilities and capacities.

OTHER EVENTS

- In conventional special education you have Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for children. In Kaleidoscope Learning Centre (KLC), a unit of V-Excel Educational Trust, we also have IEPs for adults – teachers and caretakers. For we believe there's much work to do on us as adults. We receive children for lack of communication skills among other things but in reality, they are always communicating. It is we as adults who have to learn new ways to listen and observe, grow new organs to perceive this wonder of a child in our care.
- May and June were months that saw many Group Therapies for Pay pal and also internally for various units of V-Excel.
- A webinar was organised to understand the exceptional work done by the charities. The Indo-Israel study group had their first webinar on 5th September 2021 to commemorate Lt. Gen. J.F.R. Jacob's Centenary year. (Lieutenant General Jack Farj Rafael Jacob, PVSM, was a General officer in the Indian Army. He was best known for the role he played in the creation of Bangladesh in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.) The webinar's focus was to understand the exceptional work done by the charities Gabriel Projects (Mumbai) and V-Excel Educational Trust (Chennai). The main speakers of the webinar were Mr. Jacob Sztokman, Founder Director of Gabriel Project who joined from Israel and Dr. Vasudha Prakash, Founder Trustee of V-Excel.
- Dr. Srijan, a young medical doctor was visiting KLC, and he also practices alternate healing methods. He spent many hours caring for the carers of the school. Teachers, mentors, Dr. Vasudha experienced his healing touch and we were extremely indebted to him for spending hours on caring for all of us. In this way we hope that all teachers feel de stressed and fully prepared to take on the challenge of the coming weeks.
- We had a self-healing session by a Lightwork healer Rohini, based out of Delhi who taught a group of teachers a technique called 'Rhope'! Teachers really enjoyed the relaxing and meditation techniques they learnt to quietly catch their breath during the passage of a stressful day.
- There was another training done by Kejal Bakshi a curative teacher in Chennai and an ex-colleague, on how to organize a day in her classroom where thinking feeling and willing is harmonized. It was quite an eye opener for teachers to see how beautifully all body work, emotional harmony and thinking skills were balanced in the structure of the day. Very grateful to Kejal for her sharing.

OTHER EVENTS

- A visit to Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Indoor swimming pool, on 25th March, Friday by 28 students and 24 staff of Kaleidoscope Learning Centre. It was a wonderful experience. The students had a great time frolicking both in the small children's pool and the big pool under the watchful eyes of the teachers and staff of the swimming pool.
- In KLC the advent of summer is usually accompanied by the festival of colors, Holi, and the children and teachers have this 'organic water day with natural colors' which becomes an excuse to play and cool down with water and wetness! This year it was a double whammy. The festival of Holi was celebrated with colors but in a different way. Each class made colorful salads. The cool watermelon, lime, grated carrots and cucumber made for another kind of cooling down experience. This was on 18 March, the day of Holi.

CELEBRATIONS

- **International Yoga Day** (21-06-2021) was celebrated in a simple manner. A zoom session was conducted where 15 trainees, 5 teachers along with Ms. Lekshmi Ramesh attended. It was conducted by Ms. Sumitha our Yoga teachers. She showed the asanas and exercises, which the trainees enjoyed repeating. We are planning to have more yoga sessions for our trainees, though online, till situation improves.
- **Eid** was celebrated with all children and parents joining in for an online meeting. Vafir contributed a beautiful poem to capture the essence of Eid and Zainabu, the mother of Zubair and Farhan children in V Excel, recited the prayers on the occasion. Neha and Puja invited the participation of all families in the music session and sang devotional songs and told the children the story of Eid.
- **Vinayaka Chaturthi** celebrations at the various V-Excel centres was celebrated with vigour and enthusiasm. Each centre with their teachers and trainees created Ganesha with a different material and their imagination. The variety of Ganesha and the way each centre celebrated was unique and creative. We do see a variety in the celebrations but there was a common purpose - Inviting Lord Ganesha to bless and heal the world, praying for good health and prosperity and blessing V- Excel going back to its times of buzzing school and happy teachers and students.
- **Teacher's Day** was celebrated with full of fun and frolic at Sreyes. Teachers and staff from all the Chennai units congregated at the venue at 2.30 pm. The premises was with color and cheer as warm and loving greetings were exchanged. Our Founder Director Dr. Vasudha Prakash greeted everyone and expressed her appreciation and gratitude to all the staff members for their dedicated service. A special Beat Box performance was given by Mr. Srivatsan Sundarajan. He also gave a dance performance and entertained the gathering. Srivatsan was presented with a mug and chocolates made by our trainees, as mementos. This was followed by one hour of fun games, music and dance along with yummy snacks. The event happened outdoors where all SOPs were followed strictly. It was a rejuvenating evening for all the teachers and staff members amidst all the challenges that the pandemic has brought on us.

CELEBRATIONS

- 2022 started with **Pongal**- a harvest festival in Tamil Nadu. This was celebrated enthusiastically by the staff and trainees at all the V-Excel centres. Though each celebrated in their own way the purpose across was same- to thank The Sun, Mother nature and all farm animals that help to contribute to a bountiful harvest. Good to begin the year with gratitude and hope for fantastic times ahead.
- **International Women's Day** is celebrated all over the world on March 8th to recognize the progress made towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. International Women's Day 2022 theme is 'Gender Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. The role of a mother carries an important part in the celebration of womanhood. A mother is a protector, disciplinarian, friend and is selfless. Being a mother is perhaps the hardest, most rewarding job a woman will ever experience. Being the mother of a special needs child is more tough and demanding too. As a part of acknowledging the role of the mother, activities were planned in the Early Intervention and Remedial center. Cards were made involving children. Every child had a card along with a rose and a sweet and they handed it to their mother with a kiss. It was an emotional moment for all. The mothers expressed this to be the happiest moment for them where they felt confident and energized to lead their life forward. This proved that a small act of kindness can bring in a lot of joy to others.

VOCATIONAL SERVICES

- We began with paper bag making. An elementary or prevocational attempt at all children making small simple paper pouches for pharmacy need and bigger bags for vegetable sellers. But as a new addition, we have also procured some more material which is stronger and thicker and those paper bags are now under production.
- Happy to launch our new product organic handcrafted soaps in 4 different varieties. All of these soaps are made from completely organic ingredients and are fully handmade by special adults at our center. These soaps come in 2 different shapes and sizes. Apart from personal use, this is also suited for individual and corporate gifting.

COLLABORATIONS

- The training division of V-Excel Educational Trust, a knowledge partner of Inkle Weave Educational Training Services Pvt. Ltd., added yet another feather in its cap recently. On the 10th February 2022 we completed a 40 hour training of professionals from Sri Lanka. These included Medical Consultants, Doctor's, Occupational and Physio - therapists, Nursing officers, and other allied professionals from Lady Ridgeway Hospital (LRH) and MJF Foundation, Colombo. A special emphasis was laid on Early Intervention for children with Autism. This was a golden opportunity to teach, share and advocate a totally new way of looking at the child with special needs. The faculty consisted of senior professionals from the field of special education, sensory integration and psychology. We are grateful for this opportunity to be able to impart online training, and for partnering with Sri Lanka on this journey. Special thanks to the Rotary Club of Colombo Reconnections and the Rotary Club of Brisbane for supporting us in this pioneering initiative.

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- V-Excel was once again awarded the Guidestar India Platinum Certification for financial transparency. The award is valid until August 31, 2022. This was a long and arduous process involving deep scrutiny of all our financial documents and transactions. The certification is a testament to our comprehensive transparency, accountability and good governance practices.
- SNEH, Product Hub had launch of their internship program and our trainee Sarvana Prabu was selected as an intern for their sheltered workshop since Feb 2021. He was introduced during the launch and a memento was given.
- Two of our trainees from YES are interning with Crowne Plaza, Chennai from 11 October. Gokulakrishnan Subramani is part of their Front Office system and Srinidhi Sekaran in the baking unit. They are under the internship under their training division and are getting paid stipends.
- The Thursday Ladies Club routinely makes donations to various organizations, every year, on different occasions to recognize them for their services to society. This year, as in many years past, the club made a donation to V-Excel on November 14th, to commemorate the club's Founders Day on November 14. Our heartfelt thanks to the Founder, Mrs. Sudha Seshadri, and to Mrs. Kantimathi (Jaya) Subramanian and to the Thursday Ladies Club for being such staunch supports of our cause.
- United School Organization (USO) based in New Delhi had organized a national level painting competition for persons with special needs. From YES, 9 trainees participated in the same to exhibit their creative and drawing skills. The theme for this year is 'How to build a better and green future'. While 5 of the trainees came under individual category, the other 4 came under high support category as they needed some guidance and support to complete the painting. All the paintings were submitted through YES and the results are awaited in the month of February 2022.

LOCATIONS

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Contributions to V-Excel Educational Trust can be made by cheque/DD/cash at any of the V-Excel branches.
Use Net Banking/Wire Transfers for online donations at www.v-excel.org

Donors from India can avail of tax benefits under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.
Donors from the USA can avail of tax exemptions under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code.

V-Excel and Academic Concepts are eligible for matching grants in India/USA and to receive foreign funds
under FCRA.

Write to info@v-excel.org or visit www.v-excel.org for details.