

Embracing  
Differences!

# Annual Report 2014 - 15



*V-Excel Educational Trust*



V-Excel has stepped into its 14th year! We humbly appreciate our successful journey this far by extending our gratitude to our children, our committed team of professionals, our Trustees, and all our active supporters. We sincerely thank you for believing in our work; it means a lot to us!



We have been very fortunate in on the work front and have experiencing consistent growth with respect to the in our services we offer and its reach. V-Excel is now recognized in the field of dDevelopmental dDisabilities, as an organization that cares, educates and rehabilitates the special community it caters to.



## ABOUT US

**V-Excel Educational Trust is an NGO that strongly believes in human potential, irrespective of age.** We also trust that with appropriate education and empowerment programs, every individual's potential can be realized and skills developed for leading a meaningful life.

We are a lifespan organization, which works with children and young adults with conditions such as –

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Mental Retardation
- Down's Syndrome
- Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Behavioral and Emotional Disorders
- Specific Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia and Dyscalculia)
- Other developmental delays and disabilities

Our focus is on developing their Self-help and Adaptive skills, Communication and Language, Socialization, Cognition, Gross Motor and Fine Motor Skills.

We run a wide range of programs such as Special Schools, Early Intervention, Specialized Therapies (Occupational Therapy, Sensory Integration, Art, Play, Music, and Movement), Remedial Teaching, Vocational Training, besides offering experiential learning opportunities. While Chennai is the hub of our activity, we also offer services in Tier 2 towns such as Tirunelveli and Erode in Tamil Nadu, and Nashik and Solapur in Maharashtra through our Satellite Centres.

The work we do is extremely resource-intensive and we have a committed multi-disciplinary professional team of special educators, therapists, counselors, and administrators, all working together for every individual's holistic development.

### Our Vision

At V-Excel, our vision is a world that believes in human potential, where individuals with special needs can integrate and contribute to mainstream society.

### Our Mission

At V-Excel, our mission is to create an environment where, individuals with special needs can grow to lead dignified, independent, and productive lives in the society. With a unique holistic approach, we work on the all-round development of every individual's abilities, rather than their disabilities.

## CHAIRMAN SPEAK

Padmashree Dr. V.R.Gowrishankar, Administrator and CEO, Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham

“Who is to decide who is normal and who is 'ab'normal? Basically, we don't have the right to pass judgment on who is normal and who is not. Society does not treat people who are different with sensitivity. Nothing much is really being done for this special population. It is high time we acknowledge that the need for special services has increased astronomically, and as a society start doing something about it, before it starts affecting more lives.”

“There was a lot of pressure from many people to use this space to develop a lucrative joint venture. But I am so happy I stuck to the decision to build a structure that V-Excel could use for the children with special needs. I thank V-Excel for giving me the opportunity to do something so meaningful at this stage of my life.”



Padmashree Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar was speaking at the inaugural function of our new premises at R.A. Puram, a building constructed and custom designed for our special school by Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham. We are extremely grateful to have this dedicated place that exudes positive energy and has the blessings of Mahaswamigal. The inauguration function was on 3rd December 2014, coinciding with World Disability Day.

## QUALITY POLICY

Our Quality Policy specifies that “all activities of the organization will be carried out in a systematic manner in accordance with defined and documented Policies and Procedures, will meet applicable legislative requirements, will be visible and auditable, and will ensure that the needs of Learners, Staff and Stakeholders are met.”

We realize that Quality is the responsibility of all personnel, and therefore we encourage quality culture within the organization by means of sharing information, including personnel in decision making and delegating specific Quality Management functions, to suitably skilled and competent persons.

Where deficiencies are found, corrective and preventative action are taken to ensure continual improvement of policies and procedures. The Quality system has full commitment from the Management.



## ADHERENCE TO GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

- Openness: Information is shared with all stakeholders, and reasons for decisions are made clear while maintaining confidentiality where necessary
- Integrity: Management committee members are not under any obligation to outside individuals or organisations which might influence their role
- Leadership: All principles are supported through leadership, respecting roles of the staff.
- Transparency: All activities and transactions, financial or otherwise, are dealt with transparency
- Objectivity: Decisions are based completely on merit
- Honesty: Open disclosure of private/personal work that may present conflict of interest
- Accountability: Compliance with the law, and accountability for decisions and actions to funders, donors and the public

## FOUNDER-DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



– Dr. Vasudha Prakash

“Working in the field of disability opens out your heart and lights up your mind in ways that cannot be imagined or preconceived. The experiences we have had with our children with special needs have always been filled with transformational energy. It has impacted our lives,

asking us to meet parts of ourselves that are stuck, stagnant or suppressed, with warmth and compassion.

It has been thirteen years of growing respect for what they can do with their thoughts housed in bodies and minds that may be fragmented. 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.

Through our strides in this sector, we convey that individuals with disability count in this world. Being a part of our journey can be your way of embracing differences and stopping for a moment to reflect on what lies behind and beyond. And it is your way of reaching out to a world that is changing from "they" and "I" to a resounding "Us!"

## SERVICES OFFERED

V-Excel is established as a quality service provider in the field of education and rehabilitation since 2001. The wide gamut of services offered include the following:

Early Intervention Services: Children between the ages of 0-7 years, identified as having some irregularity in milestone achievements, are helped through sensory integration, neurodevelopment therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and remedial methods. Parent counseling and training are also important components of this program.



## Kaleidoscope Learning Center:

KLC is our special school dedicated to serving the needs of the growing number of children with developmental disabilities. A multi-sensorial approach using art, music, movement, play, occupational therapy, coupled with a warm, caring environment gives them space and freedom to learn age-appropriate skills



## V-Excel Remedial Center:

This service focuses on remedial intervention for children from regular schools having difficulty coping with academic and non-academic level expected of their age. Time-bound customized programs are designed and students are taught individually using various learning strategies.



## Professional Counseling and Assessment Center:

Formal and informal assessment tools and tests provide extremely valuable insights into specific areas that require focus for individuals with special needs. Counseling children with special needs and their parents, helps to heal and overcome the pain they experience, and in turn, helps in the children's development.

## Vocational Training Unit:

Persons with disability in India face many challenges when looking to develop employable skills and in gaining meaningful employment. While India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with disability (UNCRPD), persons with disability continue to face many difficulties in the labor market. Improving vocational training and employment opportunities for people with disability is a critical element for enhancing the quality of life for individual with disability, their families, but there are also substantial gains for the broader economy.

V-Excel aspires to revolutionize the way Vocational Training and Rehabilitation is perceived in India for persons with special needs. We have two centers in Chennai devoted to Vocational Training and Production.



## V-Excel Satellite Centers:

Our experience shows that Tier 2 cities and their neighbouring areas are devoid of resources for developmentally challenged children. V-Excel has set up Satellite Centres in such towns to provide remedial intervention and therapy services. Presently we have centres in Tirunelveli and Erode in Tamil Nadu, and, Nashik and Solapur in Maharashtra.



## Outreach Programs:

Realizing the importance of carrying its work forth to the rural areas, V-Excel has worked under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) project of Tamil Nadu Government, covering 10 blocks in Villipuram for implementing special education programs, across 680 villages. This program was acknowledged as one of the best in Tamil Nadu.



## Academy for Teacher Excellence:

The programs offered at ATE are aimed at training teachers and parents through specialized long- and short-term courses on Special Education, Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and Autism. Its aim is to create sensitive teachers who will tap every child's potential to the maximum, regardless of the child's level of functioning.

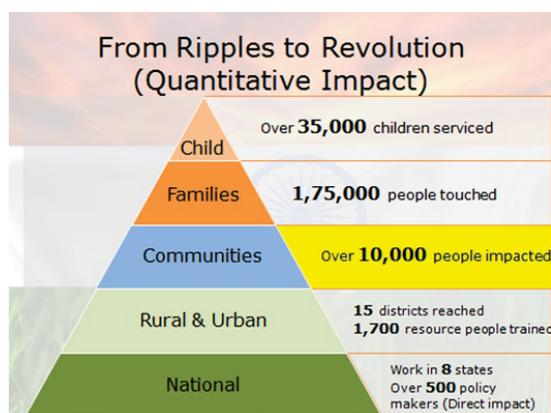


## Resource Development Workshops:

V-Excel's expert trainers orient and educate teachers on disabilities and provide guidance for enriching teaching at schools. We also conduct corporate workshops on parenting, relationship management, and the like. In association with Kuruvilla Jacob Initiative, a skill development and competency enhancement program is successfully run for pre-primary and primary class teachers who work in regular schools.



## V-EXCEL'S IMPACT OVER THE YEARS



## WORK AND PROGRESS AT V-EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST

### INCLUSION

- At our Early Intervention unit, children with developmental delays receive appropriate Neuro-development and Sensory Integration Therapy and, on an average, 75% of these children make it to the mainstream and are successfully included in regular schools.

- All our programs are intended to give the participating children the maximum opportunities to mingle with peers through participation in sports and cultural programs.

### EXPANSION

- Over the last three years, we have extended our presence and reach to children with special needs by starting four satellite centers, Tirunelveli and Erode in Tamil Nadu, and, Nashik and Solapur in Maharashtra. Discussions are underway for establishing a center in Trichy, Tamil Nadu. Most of the beneficiaries in these centers come from economically weaker sections of the society. We aspire to set up many such remedial centers in the Tier 2 cities of the country so that special children have access to education and services.

### TEACHER TRAINING

- We are highly determined to deliver quality education to children and advocate an extremely open-minded and scientific approach for teaching not just special children, but all children.
- We have conducted many workshops covering at least 40 regular schools to impart this knowledge to their teachers.
- We have held many orientation programs for regular school teachers, equipping them to work with special children, following the tenets of Child Development
- Besides, we have also been working on resource development in the field and have been conducting many courses in Special Education, Early Childhood, Autism, Counseling, Parent Awareness, Staff Sensitization, to name a few.

### NOVEL PROJECTS

- We started a Hobby Club whose initial focus has been on photography and trekking. Professional volunteers undertook the responsibility of training our children. We hope to add on more hobbies to this club in the months ahead.
- Nizhal Foundation, run by Mrs. Shobha Menon, promotes biodiversity, community gardening, therapeutic gardening and horticulture across the city of Chennai. Under their tutelage, our students have started a cultivating a herb garden at the Kotturpuram Tree Garden.



- Rotary Club of Madras East in association with SpiceJet organized a plane ride for 20 of our children and 5 staff members on SpiceJet to Madurai and back. It was an unforgettable experience for our children who seldom get this sort of opportunity.

## INNOVATIVE THERAPIES

Movement therapy is the therapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual, based on the empirically supported premise that the body, mind and spirit are interconnected. We have used movement therapy and eurythmy to foster greater concepts of letters, words and math through an understanding of rhythm and patterns.

Art therapy: We have implemented art therapy to help increase focus, sitting tolerance, and calmness in children while simultaneously allowing the mothers of these children relax and reduce their stress through this medium. Our art therapists facilitate the use of colours and tones.

Music Therapy: Music has an extremely therapeutic effect on all, in particular for those with special needs. Recognizing this, we have created a platform for renowned singers and musicians to perform for our children every month. In association with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, we launched our monthly concert series called 'Tarang' where leading artistes perform for an audience comprising mostly of individuals with special needs.

External Therapies: These comprising of massages and rubs with special oils are used to tackle the root cause of distress in children. This is based on the natural scientific approach to biology and pathology. The therapy works on developing a healthy nerve-sense system, rhythmic system and metabolic system

Play Therapy is used on children with developmental disabilities who are unable to understand, comprehend, express, or articulate in words. Our counselling team regularly uses play therapy to provide children an ideal environment for subconscious expression and for communication.



### Cinderella and the Prince....

Once upon a time, in a small house (Grade III of V-Excel's Special School) lived a little princess who was called Cinderella (Divya Shree). She became very attached to the little charming prince (Tarun). It was from the time the princess sensed that prince is going to say goodbye (leaving the school), she became very sad. Repeating and calling his name was she, every now and then, wishing his presence, very sweetly.



One fine day this beautiful incident happened in the last Play Therapy session of the year. The princess got ready with her pinkish robe, and inspired by her the prince wore his wedding robe and got ready for the special

moment...he bent down on his knees and called his dearest princess, "Hey Cinderella...and wore an invisible ring and took her hand in his...". So here's the 'wedding' picture of the beautiful moment!

From the time Tarun's parents said in the year-end meeting that he won't continue...Divya's heart heard it; Tarun also felt it. Swallowing every emotion he had hid this, but it beautifully came out during the play session...

*A special story, narrated by this teacher, Harini.*

## OUR CHALLENGES

- Lack of awareness and Social Exclusion: People with a disability often experience social exclusion whereby they are systematically blocked from the rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of society. To mitigate this, we conduct awareness programs, counsel parents and hold periodic Parent Education Meets to address the apprehensions.
- Acquiring and retaining specialized staff: The disability sector employs a wide variety of people in different roles ranging from management and directors to direct support workers and allied health professionals. Shortage of skilled workers is an acute issue. The reasons for the shortages may include low wages, emotional and physical demand, and the transient nature of employees. On our part, we run teacher development programs, in-service programs for training special educators and teaching new methodologies / technologies to our staff.
- Long-term Funding: Long-term funding is a critical challenge for us. Most NGOs grapple with one-off funding sources that do not enable them to carry out sustained work over the long-term. We look to meet these challenges by developing fund-raising strategies consisting of different sources of funds and incomes that will enable us to sustain our programmes in the long-term.

## MEDIA LINKS

- <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/US-couple-starts-centre-for-adults-with-special-needs/2014/01/28/article2023096.ece>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/a-flight-that-fulfils-their-dream/article5666752.ece>
- <http://www.thebetterindia.com/9324/tarang-symphony-binding-special-children-inclusive-society/>
- <http://newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/article1417906.ece>
- <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=845>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-downtown/special-recital-for-an-unusual-audience/article2602430.ece>
- <http://newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/article1364115.ece>
- <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-downtown/fostering-support-from-siblings-of-the-differentlyabled/article4017924.ece>

## PREMISES



## LIBRARY :

The library in V-Excel's new building in R.A. Puram has been made possible thanks to a generous grant from Mrs. Sudha, in memory of her father Sri. Neelakantan



## VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM

V-Excel, in partnership with Dr. Sudhir Krishnamurthi and Mrs. Nalini Krishnamurthi, started a vocational training program, Youth Empowerment Services, in Mylapore Chennai. Twenty-two trainees are currently enrolled and will undergo various vocational development programs leading to financial independence and job employment opportunities.



## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- The Annual Day programme held on March 19 featured an in-house production of a play called "Garden Of Light". An environmental fairy tale, it involved over a hundred of V-Excel's students and teachers. All the stage props were made by the older special children at V-Excel.

- V-Excel's in-house productions are prop-rich, musically and visually appealing, with thematically deep and thought-provoking content. Through this, children actually take part in a rich fantasy filled world which would be otherwise difficult for them to recreate. It is an attempt to allow the children to participate in the process of learning practical life lessons.



- V-Excel has been an NGO partner of the United Way of Chennai for the Wipro Marathon held around the World Disability Day (3rd December) every year. V-Excel's children participated in several activities leading up to and including the marathon itself.



### Blue Blue Sky Choir:

- The Blue Blue Sky Choir is a non-auditioned ensemble primarily comprising of students of the Kaleidoscope Learning Centre of V-Excel. The choir was founded with the principal aim of creating awareness about the disability sector and to provide opportunities for V-Excel's children to perform in public forums. The choir performed at IshaLife and at the morning assembly of the Jaigopal Garodia Government Girls Higher Secondary School.

### The Green Peppers:

- The Green Peppers, a full service catering company-serving businesses throughout Chennai, organized a special get-together for V-Excel's children in June. They had commissioned V-Excel's trainees to cut vegetables and came away being very impressed at the perfection of the work. Each trainee was honored with a personalized plaque.



- **KLC Graduation:** In June, 11 children from KLC graduated to the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) Centre in Mylapore, our vocational and life-skills training unit. A magical and solemn graduation ceremony was held to celebrate this transition.



- **Trips and treks:** A 3-day, 2-night trip to Pondicherry was organized for students of Grade 6 and the junior prevocational group in KLC. Children from Grade 5 went for an overnight trip to Yercaud.



## MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

### Accolades:

Mrs. Lalitha Sridhar, who spearheads our Early Intervention program, presented a paper at the International Women's Conference at Indian institute of Science, Child and Social Welfare (ICWCS-2014), Indian Institute of Sciences, Bengaluru on November 17. The study and paper "Meeting the Needs of Young Girls with Development Delays (Birth to Seven)" were developed in association with Sametric Research Group, USA. The audience at the conference comprised of pediatricians, gynecologists and other medical practitioners.



## Recognition:

V-Excel was chosen by the State Commission for the Welfare of the Differently Able - Tamil Nadu to conduct a one-day training program on "Early Identification of Children with Autism". This was held on September 13 and had 60 participants, most of whom were special educators from various special schools, parents and also students of M.Sc. (Counselling and Psychotherapy), of Tamil Nadu Open University.

## Welcome Maldives:

An email from a school in the Maldives set off our first workshop for teachers abroad. Seven teachers from a Special Education unit started 5 years ago in one of the biggest schools in Maldives, arrived for a 5 day workshop in Chennai. Since their universities did not offer any special training in Special Education, there was an acute lack of awareness and a dearth of professionally trained special educators. A Google search led them to our website and the work we do and they went away happy with the knowledge they had gained from our workshop.



## Pathway Awards:

Pathway, a well-known NGO of Chennai, celebrated December 3rd (World Disability Day) by honoring intellectually challenged young adults for achieving independence in skill training, individual as well as group work. The Pathway Award for Independence in Skill Achievement (Individual Category) was awarded to V-Excel's intern Ibrahim Shakir for Block Printing. An award of recognition of achievement and skill development in group work was given to our group who stitch various types of bags; Vaishali Murugan for material cutting, Gautami for stitching and Yogeswari Kumar for embellishing embroidery on jute bags.



## Sports:

V-Excel's trainees took part in various sports events at the Unified Sports Meet 2015 organized by Special Olympics Bharat/Tamil Nadu. They children won 15 gold medals and 11 silver medals!

## Inclusive Placements:

Chandramouli Ramanathan, our trainee, was hired as a Front Office Assistant in Square Network Solutions, Chennai.

## Satellite Centres:

In Solapur, the new center was inaugurated in the midst of an enthusiastic audience. The Nashik special school and therapy centre now has an enrollment of 33 children in the school and another 37 children receiving therapies at the centre. Parents have actually begun to move to Nashik from other smaller towns in and around the area to be able to enroll their children at our centre. An inclusive school in Erode approached V-Excel to train its teachers on handling children with developmental needs; to this end, an orientation program was conducted there. The Erode centre has shifted to new premises.



## A CLASS APART:

The fifth in our 'A Class Apart' series, under the Kuruvilla Jacob Initiative was conducted for the first time outside Chennai at the Lakshmi Matriculation High School in Madurai. It was a three-day workshop on sensitizing teachers and teaching them how to recognize disabilities in their classrooms. The workshop was attended by 36 teachers, including principals and academic coordinators.

## AWARENESS PROGRAMS:

ATE started the 2014 events by first organizing the "Awareness Program on Disability", a 3-month distance mode course. The program had an enrolment of 15 and included parents from our Early Intervention Unit, Kaleidoscope Learning Centre and students from another organization Pudiyaador.

## MEMOIRS & RECOLLECTIONS (2014-15)

With special children, progress is measured in every new task they can independently perform, every negative trait that can be changed, a smile of joy that can be brought on their faces. For teachers, these small milestones are a testament to their work and the catalyst to take that extra step to make a difference in the life of a child.

## Change of Heart

"When six-year-old Tara (name changed) came to us for a remedial assessment, we were told that she was rebellious, defiant and refusing to conform to any rules set by the parent," recounts Jayanthi Srinivasan, Coordinator, VRC. "On our assessment we found that she hadn't developed any academic skills though she had been schooled for three years. She was low on motivation, attention span, task completion and lacked boundaries. During our interaction with the mother, we could also understand that the child was mirroring her mother's behaviour in many ways."

An intensive remedial gave Tara the freedom to explore but gradually set boundaries. Over time, her defiant behaviour reduced and she started respecting boundaries. There was also a marked improvement in her attention span and task completion. Tara's mother also willingly undertook counseling sessions. Tara has now moved to an inclusive school.

## Trip to Pondicherry

Living and life skills were practiced, used and celebrated in a 2-night, 3-days trip to Pondicherry. As part of the trip, the group visited a paper factory and Mother's Ashram, spent time on the beach, and a day at the Sadhana Forest. The trip also included hours of singing, dancing, laughing and playing! "It is always heartening to see the parents let out a sigh of relief when children return and the teachers show them photographs of the students eating, sleeping, interacting, socialising and bonding in much the same way as typical people do. Students had much to share after their return. ", said Gita Bhalla, Principal of KLC.

## Haircut Phobia

A 15-year old boy resisted all attempts to cut his hair and was extremely agitated when trimmers or scissors were used on his scalp. He was averse to noise and avoided noise zones such as those where drilling machines were being used.

Interventions consisted of using a therapeutic massager which incorporated different textured vibrating heads. As the massager mimicked the sound and the blade textures of a hair trimmer, an artificial effect was created. The boy was then taught to operate the massager using his hands and he grew confident in its use. Over time, the massager was moved over his scalp and over his forehead. After 15 sessions of therapy, the boy felt comfortable to have the massager placed over his scalp and forehead for a few seconds. Work continues to desensitize his fear of the hair trimmer.

## Helping Hands

Chandini, aged 40, has been in our Vocational Training Unit since 2011. She is mostly in her own world stays aloof. With the vegetable cutting going on consistently within her radius of attention, she became curious and came by to see it happen. It was subtly suggested that she could participate if interested. In a short while, we saw her seating herself with the relevant group and extending her hand to pass on trays or napkins. Soon after that she was willing to try cutting with assistance. In about 5 weeks now, we saw Chandini coming in to receive her weighed tray with vegetables, asking for her cutting board and knife after wearing her apron, cap and washing her hands. For Chandini, who has a lot of sensory issues, wearing new aprons and handling different vegetables is a great achievement.

Today Chandini can cut any vegetable independently and recognizes that her team contributes to the same kitchen.

## Bruxism

A 7-year old boy, a KG student of KLC was continuously and audibly grinding his teeth. The grinding of ones teeth, also known as bruxism, has a direct impact on gums and teeth. He kept things in his mouth, bit everything and had frequent seizures. An oral massager was contraindicative on him, so an aluminium peg was introduced into his mouth. When he moved his mouth, the peg generated a softer sound instead of the audible grinding. During the first session, he was confused but at the end he was able to correlate it with his teeth grinding. He was given for 12 sessions for 10 minutes twice a week and the bruxism has completely stopped.

## Improving Focus

Meena a pretty, bright-eyed girl from the underprivileged section of society, was brought to us for concerns relating to attention issues, distraction, learning difficulties and behavioural problems. During assessments and subsequent remedial sessions, Meena displayed learning skills that were evidently deterred by her environment. She was restless and angry and could not pay attention to tasks on hand.

Working on specific goals, the intervention strategies started with calming her and boosting her confidence and self-esteem. Using appreciation and encouragement, she was then sent for group play therapy sessions and art activities. Over time, she relaxed, smiled a lot and started enjoying the sessions. She made good progress in reading and writing.

## Blinking Problem

A child from a mainstream school came for therapy. He constantly blinked his eyes throughout the day and his mother suspected some impairment in his eyes. This issue had been present for more than a year. He was given 2 sessions of visual-motor integration in the SI room and the blinking was completely stopped. He now cooperates for all activities without blinking and mother felt happy and satisfied.

## Hear Me, Please!

Karthic, a 14-year old boy, brought to us for assessment and remedial was found to have severe lags in learning skills especially in spelling, expressive writing and math skills. He was withdrawn, shy and very low on confidence and self-esteem. As we started working with him we could sense his desperation and with encouraging talks and building on his strengths we could build good rapport with him. He showed amazing drawing skills. Every session would end with drawing time in which he would enthusiastically engage. One day he drew a fish desperately struggling inside a glass bowl. When questioned gently about the picture, hesitatingly, he said that the fish represented him, longing to get out, just to go out there and play and not be reminded all the time to study and study more.

## Training the Trainers

"Vocational Training" was a topic covered during one of the Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) Programs. We had 20 participants and among them, we had three from Gujarat, one from Dehra Dun, and from towns such as Thoothukudi, Nagercoil, Tiruttani and Chengle pattu.

The 5-day training program provided a lot of information dissemination and assimilation of knowledge. One participant said, "I found the CRE program very interesting and helpful. I have always been passionate about working with children with learning disability. I presently am working with children with LD in a remedial set up. I liked the feeling of being taken to a vocational setting as a useful participant, since it gave me great insight into their life after 18 years. Also, it was quite informative knowing all the government policies and updates. It was great meeting the three champions Chandramouli, Paras and Priya; their motivation and willpower is a great learning for all of us. The entire experience has been informative and stimulating. It empowers us so we can get back in the trenches to help our students and their families. I wish V-Excel much success as you continue to bring it forward."

## Going Global

An email from Mrs. Mariyam Shareefa, Deputy Principal, Special Education Unit, from the Sharafuddin School in the Maldives, enquiring about our training programmes, was our first step into the global community. "We are actually a mainstream school with a strength of 1,100 students, one of the biggest schools in the Maldives," explained Mariyam in her quiet, methodical voice. "Five years ago, we were one of the four schools selected by our government to run a Special Education Unit in our premises. We began with around two to three students, but now our numbers stand at 30." Mariyam, who took over the unit last year, felt that there was an acute lack of awareness among parents and lack of professionally trained special educators. "We have a mixed group of children – Autism, Down's syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, children with learning difficulties – and all our teachers are primarily mainstream teachers. In fact, there are five islands connected to where we are located and we are the only special education unit

for all those five. Since our universities don't offer any specialized training in special education, we had to look elsewhere. And we zeroed in on V-Excel," says Mariyam. When asked how they found us and she said, "I did a Google search, came across your website, liked the work that you do and wrote to you."

At the end of the workshops, Mariyam felt that all teachers in the Maldives would benefit from training sessions in V-Excel. Their future plans include more of such training sessions eventually culminating in a dedicated special education in the Maldives.

## Work with a Dash of Play

To commemorate Teacher's Day on September 5, a picnic was organized for all the teachers and therapists of the Nashik school and training center. Mrs. Jayanthi Viswanath our Centre Head in



Nashik shares her reflections.

"We visited a very spectacularly beautiful hill-station called Bhandardara, nestled in the Sahyadri mountain ranges. Lofty mountains, lush greenery and roaring waterfalls were a treat to our eyes. Unlike other hill-stations the country, the beauty is untouched and truly breath taking during monsoon season. We saw the Pravara River and the majestic Wilson dam standing on it. The whole land had murky streams crisscrossing a midst of lush green paddy fields. We hired two boats and went around the tranquil blue Arthur lake. We experienced a cool spray of water in the Umbrella Waterfalls. We had loads of fun, danced in the rain and generally had a lovely day eating hot masala corn-cobs and posing for photographs(need photo caption)Mrs. Parimal Pandit, the Head of the Counselling and Assessment Unit received her International Anthroposophic Psychotherapy Certification this November in the International Postgraduate Medical Training in Mumbai after completing the academic requirements of the International Federation of Anthroposophic Psychotherapy (Dornach, Switzerland). There are only two other Indian psychologists who are similarly certified.

Anthroposophy is a spiritual philosophy, mainly developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It is primarily defined by its method of research, and secondly by the possible knowledge or experiences this leads to.

"To get the certification, I had to attend 5 international postgraduate medical training programs. I was mentored in the syllabi and case studies by the world coordinators of the psychotherapy section of the Goetheanum in Dornach. Getting the certification not only broadened and deepened my vision in psychotherapy but, in addition, it has been a personally evolving experience. Since my work with V-Excel mainly involves working with parents of children with developmental disabilities who carry a lifelong grief with them and also the question "Why me?", this course opened up new ways of looking at it. As a psychologist, I did not feel helpless when parents posed these questions to me. Rather, I could ask them "What has this brought to you? What do you feel is the purpose of this child in the family?" And then provide many healing exercises of art or biography" says Parimal Pandit.

Programs (2014-15)	Individuals catered to
V-Excel Educational Trust	386
Early Intervention Services	185
V-Excel Learning Centre – Nashik	145
V-Excel Learning Centre - Erode	85
Bharathi Teertha Learning Centre -Tirunelveli	64
Academy of Teacher Excellence	45
Youth Empowerment Services	38
Vocational Training Centre	36
V-Excel Learning Centre- Solapur	23
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1007</b>

## STAFF INFORMATION

We have a staff of 132 across all our centres, of whom 12 are volunteers. The disability sector is predominantly served by females - nearly five times that of men. The staff includes program heads and coordinators, special educators, teachers, various therapists, counselors, administrative support, and volunteers.

The salary ranges are as follows:

Salary range (Rs.)	No. of staff members
Below 7,500 (includes Volunteers)	45
7,501-10,000	35
10,001 – 15,000	26
15,000 – 25,000	16
More than 25,000	10
<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>132</b>

## ELIGIBILITY FOR CSR

V-Excel is eligible to receive funds under CSR policy as per the Companies Act of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. Our services qualify under the Schedule VII Tag:

“Promoting education, including special education and employment enhancing vocation skills especially among children, women, elderly, and the differently-abled and livelihood enhancement projects”

V-Excel Educational Trust (V-Excel) has adopted the accounting principles and recommendations promulgated by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

V-Excel rules that for the purposes of consistency in accounting and financial reporting, all organizations and centers under the V-Excel umbrella adhere to ICAI as the required accounting standard.

## REGISTRATIONS

V-Excel Educational Trust is registered as a Public Charitable Trust, number 1069/01 dated August 29, 2001. The Trust Deed was amended on 9th August 2011 when V-Excel came under the aegis of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham and the affiliation necessitated changes at the Board level. The Mutt has constructed and dedicated premises for running of V-Excel's services for children with disabilities in R.A. Puram, Chennai. A special school building was inaugurated in October 2014.

V-Excel has been issued 12 AA - DIT (E) No. 2(445)/2001-02 dated February 26, 2002 by the Income Tax of India and is also eligible to offer tax exemption under Section 80 G. The Ministry of Home Affairs has granted V-Excel eligibility under FCRA for the Educational-Social sector – 075901092, dated July 17, 2006. A separate bank account is maintained for this purpose.

V-Excel Educational Trust has had external auditing from its inception and we file tax returns every year – PAN No. – AAATV3623Q (TAN – CHEV06933D).

V-Excel has a partner organization in the USA names Academic Concepts, Inc. which is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) organization under the US Internal Revenue Code.

Academic Concepts, Inc.  
33 Pine Street  
East Brunswick,  
NJ 08816, USA  
Phone: 001-732-619-7944

Donations made to Academic Concepts are exempted from federal tax under the IRS norms.

## AUDITOR'S NAME & ADDRESS:

Mr. K. Meenakshi Sundaram, FCA.,  
Sundaram & Narayanan Chartered Accountants  
#18, Balaiah Avenue, Luz Church Road  
Mylapore, Chennai – 600 004.

Phone: 044-42169312, Fax: 044-24993511  
E-mail: [enquires@sncaindia.com](mailto:enquires@sncaindia.com)  
Website: [www.sncaindia.com](http://www.sncaindia.com)

## V-EXCEL BANK ACCOUNT INFORMATION

### FCRA ACCOUNT

#### Canara Bank

Account No. - 0942101025670

IFSC Code: CNRB0000942

Branch: Kasturba Nagar, Adyar, Chennai

Swift Code - CNRBINBBBID Account No. 001-1395969

### OTHER ACCOUNTS

#### ICICI Bank (for NEFT)

Savings Account No. – 000101058970

IFSC Code - ICIC0000001

Branch: Cenotaph Road, Teynampet, Chennai

#### State Bank of India

Savings Account No. -34186295748

IFSC Code: SBI0007106

Branch: Shastri Nagar, Adyar, Chennai

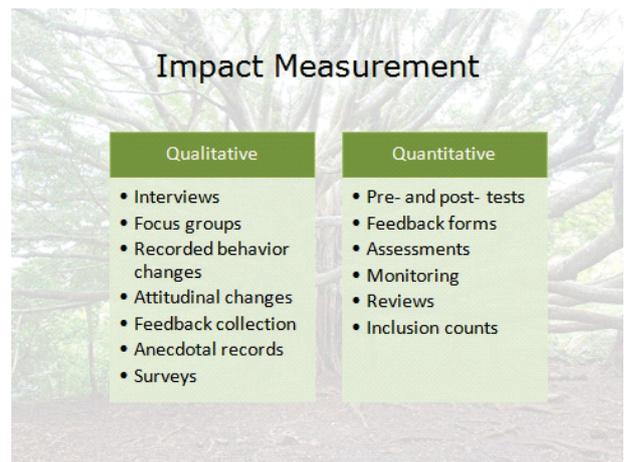
#### Indian Bank

Savings Account No. – 753864113

IFSC Code: IDIB000E001

Branch: E R.A. Puram, Chennai

V-Excel Educational Trust is registered with GUIDESTAR INDIA # GSN 3308 and an NGO partner with The United Way of Chennai. We have undergone due diligence with our donor partners like Dorabji Tata Trust, IL & FS, Cognizant Foundation, and ASHA for Education, besides many others.



**V-Excel Educational Trust**  
No10/23, Thiruvengadam Street  
Opp.LIC Staff Quarters,  
R.A.Puram,Chennai - 600 028.

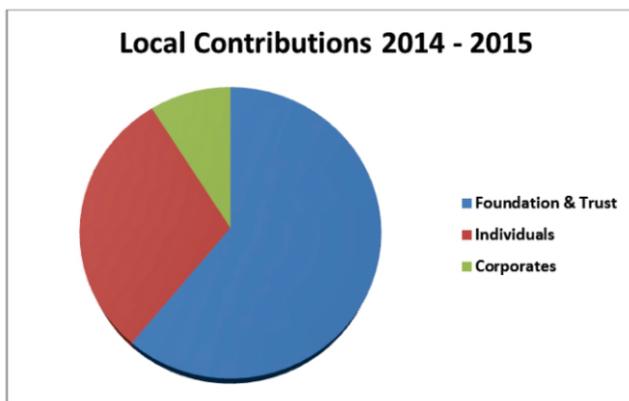
<b>Assets &amp; Liabilities for the Financial Year 1.4.15 -31.3.15</b>					
<b>V-Excel Educational Trust (2014-2015)</b>			<b>V-Excel Educational Trust (2014-2015)</b>		
<b>Liabilities</b>	1.4.15 -31.3.15	<b>Assets</b>	1.4.15 -31.3.15		
<b>Capital Account</b>		<b>20,310,830.94</b>	<b>Fixed Assets</b>		<b>7,954,042.00</b>
Capital Fund	20,310,830.94		Computers	732,696.00	
<b>Loans (Liability)</b>		<b>500,000.00</b>	Electrical Equipments	2,818,199.00	
Unsecured Loans	500,000.00		Furniture & Fittings	3,125,590.00	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		<b>2,089,800.53</b>	Vehicles	2,130,342.00	
Provisions	1,444,200.53		Books and Resources	56,351.00	
Sundry Creditors	28,500.00		Materials		
Income Received in Advance	446,500.00		Depreciation Reserve	(1,256,200.00)	
Accounts Payable	84.00		Musical Instrument	23,959.00	
Accounts Payable – Dr Vasudha	37,621.00		Office Equipment	314,765.00	
Accounts Payable - Stipend for Students	12,000.00		School Needs	8,340.00	
PF Payable	120,895.00		<b>Current Assets</b>		<b>20,752,544.87</b>
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>		<b>5,805,955.40</b>	Closing Stock		
Opening Balance	(312,856.09)		Deposits (Asset)	6,189,656.76	
Current Period	6,118,811.49		Loans & Advances (Asset)		
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>28,706,586.87</b>	Sundry Debtors		
			Cash-in-hand	61,400.00	
			Bank Accounts	8,187,081.11	
			Accounts Receivable	148,078.00	
			Long Term Loans & Advances	5,705,619.00	
			Short Term Loans & Advances	460,710.00	
			<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>28,706,586.87</b>

## KEY DONOR-PARTNERS

We received Rs. 8,036,929.01 through foreign contributions, primarily through philanthropists and individuals who donated through Academic Concepts, Inc. in the US.

We received support from 103 donors, of whom 13 are funding organizations, 6 are Corporates and the rest are all individuals who have contributed in varying degrees.

- Our heartfelt thanks to each one of them!
- Some of our key donors this year:
- Academic Concepts, Inc.
- Asha for Education
- Chennai Willingdon Corporate Foundation
- Cognizant Foundation
- Dr. Sudhir Krishnamurthi
- Esvi Sarada Foundation
- Murugappa Group
- Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham



**V - EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST**

10/23, THIRUVENGADUM STREET, R A PURAM, CHENNAI 600 028

**STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31.03.2015**

(In Rupees)

PARTICULARS	NOTE NO.	31.03.2015	31.03.2014
<b>Income</b>			
Donations	8	20,375,988	13,232,523
Fee from Students	9	7,736,426	8,127,474
Consultation and Counselling	10	5,044,095	3,211,570
Interest and Dividend Income	11	392,438	1,096,245
Other Income	12	1,635,116	224,962
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>35,184,063</b>	<b>25,892,774</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Employee Benefits Expense	13	18,810,318	17,067,616
Depreciation and Amortization Expense	14	1,349,890	690,134
Other Expenses	15	7,696,058	8,447,880
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>27,856,266</b>	<b>26,205,630</b>
Profit / (Loss) before exceptional and extraordinary items and tax		7,327,797	(312,856)
Add / (Less) : Exceptional Items		-	-
Profit / (Loss) before extraordinary items and tax		7,327,797	(312,856)
Add / (Less) : Extraordinary Items		-	-
Profit Before Tax		7,327,797	(312,856)
Add / (Less) : Tax Expense		-	-
Profit / (Loss) for the year		7,327,797	(312,856)
Notes to Financial Statements	16		

For V - EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST

B. Sundari

Rudraksh N. K.

Place : Chennai

Date : 29.09.2015 Trustees

As per our report of even date annexed

For SUNDARAM & NARAYANAN

Chartered Accountants



K Meenatchi Sundaram

Partner



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Padmashree Dr. V. R. Gowrishankar  
Chairman  
CEO and Administrator, Sringeri Sri Sharada  
Peetham

Dr. Vasudha Prakash  
Lifetime Trustee  
Founder-Director  
V-Excel Educational Trust

Mrs. B. Sundari  
Managing Trustee  
V-Excel Educational Trust

Mr. Kandaswamy Bharathan  
Trustee  
Executive Director and Producer,  
Kavithalayaa Productions Pvt. Ltd.

Mr. G. Rajagopal,  
Trustee  
Executive Director, Thiru Arooran Sugars  
Limited

Dr. Prakash Natarajan,  
Trustee  
Managing Director, Checkpoint Data  
Technologies

Mr. Radhakrishnan Iyer  
Trustee  
Managing Director, Premium Lifestyle  
Properties Pvt. Ltd.

All our Board members are people with a social bent of mind, substantial experience, proven individual credibility and are professionals in their own right. Their inclusion in the Board is indicative of their deep genuine involvement and commitment towards the cause of disabilities. The Trustees meet formally thrice every year, in addition to having ongoing interactions through email and phone.

## LEADERSHIP TEAM



Seated (L to R)

Gita Bhalla, Usha Rajagopal, Jayanthi Srinivasan, B. Sundari, Vasudha Prakash, Ajita Panshikar, Jayanthi Viswanath, Maria Josphine

Standing (L to R)

Parimal Pandit, Lalitha Sridhar, Janaki Ashok, Shashikala Subramaniam, Shyama Swaminathan, Subha Ravi, Lilly Margaret, Mallika Swaminathan, Radhakrishnan Iyer, Jason Alexander, B. Sivaprakash, Prabu Manivel, Prakash Subbukalai, Charumathi Sriram

## TESTIMONIALS

### From Vishnu's (name changed) mother

“My son started going to V Excel with a lot of mixed feelings. It has been close to two years since he joined. Now I can confidently say I have made the best move for my child. He did find it difficult to settle in for initial months, but I can see that he is absolutely comfortable and happy being a part of V-Excel now. Has more the sense of belonging.

In team V-Excel, as a parent I feel everyone talks the same language. The kind of dedication and hard work and mainly patience is what is bringing in a change in my child. I really appreciate the structured program, target setting, and the steps followed to achieve them. The best part is they get to experience the field work and the music concerts. My son thoroughly enjoys those activities. The cooking class makes him feel that even he can help out. On those days back home he is very happy explaining what he had done. The skating class is doing him really good. I can see a lot of positive changes due to these activities. My son does have some specific concerns which surely the teachers are working on and slowly bringing in a change. The feeling of experienced people working with my child is the biggest strength for me now. I do not feel alone and stressed as theirs is best support system I get from V Excel.”

### From Sangeeta Anand ( after watching the Annual Day performance)

“Watching the Annual Day program of V Excel would be incomplete if we didn't share our thoughts and feelings about it ..... Here's mine:

1) Kudos to the greater human beings who showed the beauty of some synced minds and bodies, all dancing merrily, as though there really existed a land over there, of the Golden ball and the bees and birds and flowers and trees and happy feet. 2) Glorious was the stage, the props and lighting, the coordinated scene changes, costume changes, done to the T...3) Outstanding music, orchestration, strumming, vocals, direction, simply spell bound. 4) The Staff and Volunteers whose hearts are born magnanimous, holding along their children in every move and shake. 5) The presentation, the order of events, including the Annual report, was all streamlined like a magical weave of Ooh-ba-loo's yarn. 6) The credits roll was all just and fair with an extra emphasis on the humongous task of Direction and Script by the Master-of-it-all, [Neha Bhalla](#) Bharadwaj, and [Puja Bhalla](#) whose sheer dedication, skill sets, leadership, vision, tenacity, and a brimming attitude was flowing along the whole play as with the artists of the wonderfully woven musical....Indeed, my heart wants more of this and wish my kids and the whole of Chennai had such a wholesome rich entertainment to watch every weekend!! Am astounded! [Sowmya Sarathy](#), [Gita Bhalla](#), [Janaki Ashok](#), Puja Bhalla, [Parimal Pandit](#). Niharika, Jayanthi, Ajita, Sundari Aunty, Neha Bhalla Vasudha and the kids, parents, staff,.....Hail V-Excel Educational Trust!!!

### From Jyotsna's (name changed) mother in Nashik

“My daughter was 4 years old, when she joined V-Excel Learning Centre, Nashik i.e. in September, 2012. She was very hyperactive and was diagnosed ADHD. I was giving medicine to control her hyperactivity. But coming down to V-Excel, I was told it is a temporary cure to her hyperactivity and once I stop her medicine she will gradually get back to her old problems of hyperactivity. I tried to make necessary changes in her diet as told by the centre head. The people at the centre helped me lot by reducing my travel I used to do every month to Mumbai in search of good and quality therapy.

In last 1 ½ years my daughter has improved in all aspects - her hyperactivity has reduced, her balance has improved, and speech, behavior, understanding, expression all has improved remarkably. I will continue her therapy at the centre till they say that my daughter does not need more therapies. Now my child has got admission in regular school which she will start attending from June 2015. I am grateful to the V-Excel Learning Center, who takes so much effort for the betterment of my child”.

### From Srivatson's mother in Chennai

First of all thanks for bringing a great change in my son's life. I still remember the first day when I met you with you with tears. The effort taken by you (V-Excel) had brought him to the stage where he is now. Home programs, mode of therapy given from the start to till now has an objective. Problems he had initially like speech delay, improper walking, mouth closure, writing etc., all started vanishing drastically.

Now he started writing which I can't imagine as he was having major problem in pencil holding. He is reading well in academics also. Last performance in stage as "Police Man" has proved his level of improvement. I will be always in touch with you to bring him to maximum level he can reach. Heartful thanks to you once again”.

Regards,  
Kalaivani R.

### From Mariyam Shareefa, Maldives (on Teacher Training in Special Education)

“I believe that the information and experiences we got would help teachers become more effective and successful in helping those students with special educational needs. The teachers and all staff of V-Excel centre were helpful and kind to us. We are grateful for their generosity and hospitality. I do hope that more teachers from our country get the opportunity to come and be trained here at this center. It's an ideal place for teacher training in Special Ed.

From Anna Cherian, (on 'A Class Apart' workshop series)

This workshop was truly an eye-opener. I have learnt so much about special children and methods used to enable them and support them with their academics. The 9-day workshop has surely made a better teacher out of me! Hats off to the V-Excel team and a big thank you to KJI for making this happen.