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V-EXCEL EDUCATIONAL TRUST ANNUAL REPORT

2014

*A report of our journey in the past year as we shape our little successes in
the ever-abounding world of special education*



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From the Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

There are always mixed feelings of nostalgia and apprehension when presenting the Annual Report. The nostalgia, of course, stems from the very act of preparing an Annual Report. As we look back at the many triumphs and challenges, we marvel at the accomplishments and silently resolve to try harder with our failures. The apprehension is a result of the road ahead of us, because the field of special education is not finite in its needs. For every special child we work with, there are a 1,000 more who require good, accessible education, early intervention services, remedial services, therapies, psycho-educational assessments, counselling, as well as vocational and rehabilitation training. It's an ocean out there and we move ahead in the knowledge that with our little drops of contribution, we will be able to create enough ripples of inclusion for a revolution of change.

Our mission is to create an environment where children with special needs can grow to live dignified, independent, and productive lives in mainstream society. We believe in an education that extends beyond conventional teaching to pragmatic learning. We are committed to enriching the quality of education through teacher development and by ensuring right learning inputs to children. With a unique holistic approach, we work on the all-round development of every child, focusing on the child's abilities rather than disabilities. Our vision is to reaffirm our belief in human potential, regardless of caste, creed, race, religion and ethnicity, and become an organisation where individuals with special needs can be served

We have come a long way and have made great strides and have become known in the field of Disability. With five satellite centres under our umbrella now, our focus continues to be in setting up similar centres in smaller towns where the need is great. We are also actively working with CSR programmes in the corporate world and trying to find partners in our various initiatives.

One highlight of this year has been the fact that we have moved to a new building and to new premises in R.A. Puram, Chennai. The building was given to us by the Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham and, without the constraints of space, we look forward with renewed enthusiasm and vigor to the year ahead.

We would like to thank all our donors, partners, sponsors, well-wishers and trustees for supporting our work, and our parents, teachers and children for their faith in us.

Dr. Vasudha Prakash
Founder & Director



Highlights of the Year



A NEW SPACE

To coincide with World Disability Day, our new centre, *Sharada*, was formally dedicated on December 3, 2014. Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar, Administrator and CEO of the Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham was the Chief Guest and Mr. A. Krishnamoorthy, Chairman of Amalgamations Group, was our Guest of Honour.

On the occasion, Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar said:

“Who is to decide who is normal and who is abnormal? Basically we don’t have the right to pass judgment on who is normal and who is not”

“Society can be very insensitive. Society does not treat people who are different with sensitivity. Many people say many things, but their actions won't reflect any sincerity. When teachers and schools don't even treat people who are normal properly, people with disabilities don't come anywhere close to their hearts. Look at our schools.. the less said the better.”



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SERVICES

On January 26, 2014, V-Excel Educational Trust, along with Dr. & Mrs. Sudhir Krishnamurthi, launched Youth Empowerment Services, a dynamic vocational and life-skills training centre for young adults with special needs

As the nation celebrated the 64th year of the Constitution of India coming into force, we, at V-Excel, had an equally momentous occasion to celebrate. It was the inauguration of our brand new Youth Empowerment Service centre! Thanks to Dr. Sudhir Krishnamurthi, Senior Managing Director at The Rock Creek Group, LP in the United States, and his wife Nalini, who had the vision for this centre, and our Trustee, Mr. Bharathan Kandaswamy, who, as a result of a casual conversation with his college-mate, Dr. Krishnamurthi, ended up being the catalyst of change in this collaborative effort between the Krishnamurthis and V-Excel. YES allows V-Excel to expand its existing vocational training services, where many of the trainees earn stipends and are making significant strides towards independent living. Both units will work in tandem with the existing unit focusing on production work and YES on training.



CHENNAI WIPRO MARATHON

With more than 10,000 participants, the Wipro Chennai Marathon has become the second largest marathon after Mumbai, and what a proud moment it was for us to watch 14 of our children – 8 from the Kaleidoscope Learning Centre and 6 from our Vocational Training Unit – participate in the ‘Run for Special Children’. Fellow runners, the crowds in the sidelines, and the volunteers who accompanied our children were extremely supportive, cheering our children with enthusiasm as they ran. Two of our trainees from VTU won the first and second place in the Special Needs Persons category. But to us, as clichéd as it might sound, all our children were winners as they truly personified the spirit of a marathon – perseverance, overcoming odds and continuing to smile.



FLYING HIGH!

On February 7, 19 developmentally challenged children from V-Excel Educational Trust experienced their first airplane ride to Madurai and back, thanks to the joint efforts of the Rotary Club of Madras East and SpiceJet!

The Rotary Club of Madras East (RCME) and SpiceJet presented the gift of experience to 19 developmentally challenged children who have never been on an airplane before, and, given their socio-economic background, are not likely to be on one soon either. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. T. Muthukumaran, past President of RCME, Mr. Sudhakaran, the current President of RCME, Rotarians Mr. S. Sudhir and Mr. S. S. Rajasekar, these children will benefit from this once-in-a-lifetime experience. The children, mostly those with Autism and Mental Retardation, flew to Madurai and back on the same day, with lunch and snacks provided during the day that adhered to the dietary requirements of the children. Along with five members of staff from V-Excel Educational Trust, the children visited the Gandhi Museum and Nayakar Mahal in Madurai, before they took the evening flight out to Chennai.

***Flying High in the press!** <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/a-flight-that-fulfils-their-dream/article5666752.ece>*



BLUE SKY UNPLUGGED!

March 23, 2014, a very 'special' choir of autistic children, along with some of their teachers, performed, for the first time, for an external audience at Isha Life, Mylapore!

The concert, Blue Sky Unplugged, by a group of autistic children and their teachers, was everything it promised to be – fun, entertaining, and heart-warming. This was the first time that Blue Sky was stepping outside the safe environment of home and school to perform for an external audience and it certainly was a milestone moment for us at V-Excel, a testimony to our core vision of integrating individuals with special needs into mainstream society. With a repertoire of songs both well-known and those composed specifically for the children by our teachers, the music came straight from the heart, speaking the language of gestures, taps and claps, some intensely felt voices, and some dreamy eyes, making this choir truly one-of-a-kind.

Blue Sky in the press! <http://mylaporetimes.com/epaper/MTMar222014.pdf> (page 5)



TARANG

Three years ago, V-Excel Educational Trust, invited renowned classical singer Bombay Jayashri for a classical concert at the Trust's premises. The concert lasted 20 minutes, and even autistic children who had difficulty sitting down for long periods of time listened in rapt attention. The experiment was a resounding success. Since then, V-Excel conducted these free concerts every month and it was the success of this endeavour that became the inspiration behind Tarang. And so, once a month, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, in Chennai, opens its doors to persons with special needs in the city for a free musical concert organised by V-Excel. Through this one-of-a-kind project, V-Excel hopes to provide a forum for the seamless integration of people with disabilities into mainstream society.

Tarang has now expanded to Bengaluru.



VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

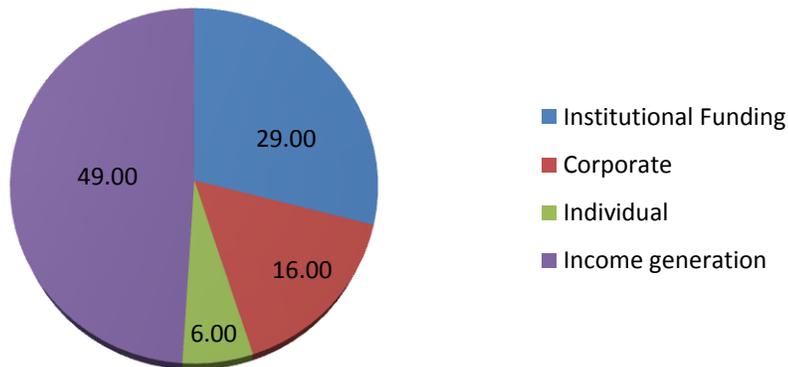
The interns from our Vocational Training Unit were invited to the Pathway Vocational Excellence Award function at the GRT Grand on Saturday, December 13, 2014. Three of them were awarded certificates for independent group activities and one for independent individual activity. The individual award was given for work skills in "Block printing". And the group awards were conferred for independent group work in the bag-making process.

Financial Summary

INCOME 2012-2013

SOURCE OF SUPPORT	INCOME (RS)
Institutional Funding	74,35,090
Corporate Funding	41,82,000
Support from Individuals	16,15,433
Income Generation	1,26,60,251
Total Amount (Rs)	2,58,92,774

Income for the year 2013-14

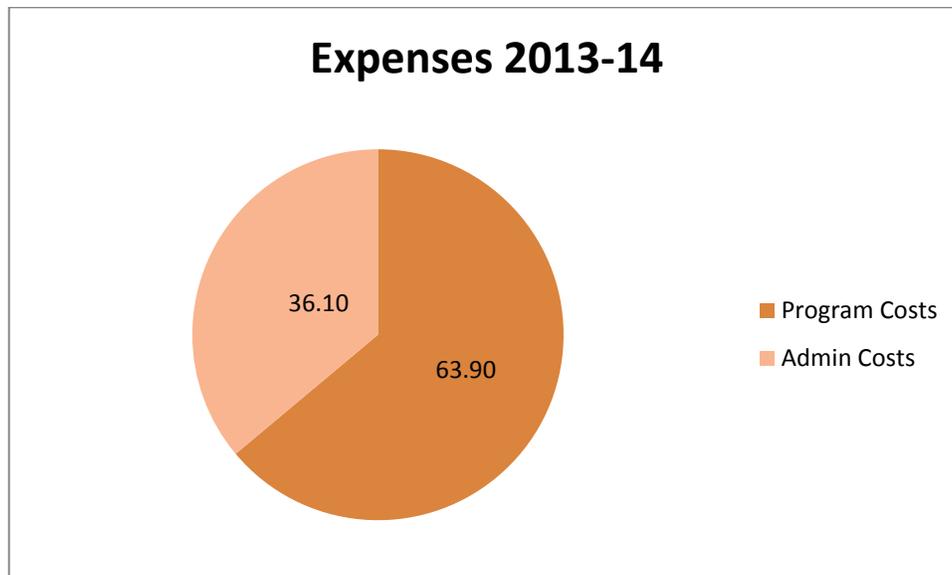




Financial Summary

INCOME 2012-2013

DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES
Programme Cost	63.9
Admin Costs	36.1



Community Impact: From the Inside Out to the Outside In



- Geetanjali, Seattle's Tamil music band, recently hosted a music concert to raise funds for 'ASHA For Education', a volunteer-driven organisation that reaches out to underprivileged communities in India. As an organisation, they believe in the strength of education and over the years, have been a great source of support for V-Excel's work in special education too. As part of their four-hour music extravaganza, that saw a packed house with 800 music enthusiasts, ASHA trained the spotlight on V-Excel. "An hour into the programme, we presented ASHA and V-Excel. We played the 20-minute film on V-Excel titled 'A Symphony of Silence' (watch the video here: <http://www.v-excel.org/potpourri/videos.shtml>). When the film ended, there was a standing ovation! Many from the audience met up with us after the concert to know more about V-Excel and ways in which they could extend support," said Anand Raman, one of the volunteers at ASHA. Currently, ASHA funds \$14,000 towards V-Excel's annual expenses.
- The fifth in our 'A Class Apart' series, under the Kuruvilla Jacob Initiative was conducted for the first time outside Chennai. We travelled to the Lakshmi Matriculation High School in Madurai for a three-day workshop on sensitising teachers and teaching them how to recognise disabilities in their classrooms. The workshop was attended by 36 teachers, including principals and academic coordinators. Apart from lectures and interactive sessions, it included practical work such as circle time and movement and rhythm exercise where the serious and staid teachers ran, skipped, hopped, climbed, rolled around and experienced the magical world of the kindergarten and primary grades! These circle games and rhythmic exercises included the practice of some developmental milestones, which were necessary to be completed before reading and writing. The workshop was jointly conducted by Dr. Vasudha Prakash, Founder & Director of V-Excel Educational Trust, Gita Bhalla, Principal of the Kaleidoscope Learning Centre, and Puja Bhalla, a teacher, art therapist and counsellor at V-Excel.



Community Impact: From the Inside Out to the Outside In

- Seven teachers from the Maldivian Islands arrived on June 3rd for a week-long training session. This group got the most of V-Excel's best practices honed over the last 12 years, such as art therapy, play therapy, individualised programme planning, psycho-educational assessments, vocational and rehabilitation training, and therapeutics. For instance, they were given a live demonstration of foot massage by the teachers of KLC to show the importance of touch, and how this technique has helped children with autism and ADHD, as they seemed to be more present in their bodies after receiving a massage.
- Mudra therapy - a seminar by Mrs. Suman Chiplunkar on Mudra and its health perspectives was organized on 22nd November for the parents, teachers and therapists of the school and training center. Mrs. Suman stressed on the fact that the nerves in the human body carry electromagnetic powers. "These are emitted through the tips of our fingers, nose tip, toes, etc. Our ancient yogis evidenced that creation comprised of Panchamaha (five fundamental) mudras . And the entire universe is made up of five elements (Pancha bhoota). These five elements need to be balanced for a healthy life in an individual. It was logically concluded, then, that the five fingers on the human hand were manifestations of five outer elements in nature. For instance, the thumb denotes agni (fire), the index finger vayu (air), middle finger stands for aakasha (space), the ring finger depicts prithvi (earth) and the little finger jal (water).

V-Excel Educational Trust's Milestones

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Establishment of V-Excel Educational Trust Teacher Training for Special Educators Special School for Children with Autism & MR	Remedial Intervention Services Workshops for Regular Schools	Rural Outreach Program (SSA) Program for Learning Disabilities	Association with ESVI Sarada Foundation Launch of Strides, monthly e-newsletter	Vocational Training Services Early Intervention Program	Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) Courses Counseling & Assessment Services	Advocacy Events for Special Needs Corporate Training & Workshops	Integration of Waldorf Education Principles Introduction of Play, Art & Movement Therapies	Major thrust on Parent Training & Counseling Launched Somarth Products by Vocational Unit	Set up of Satellite Centers in Tirunelveli & Madhik with backing of Sringeri Sharada Peetham Presentations at International Conferences	Inception of Sibling Forum & Alumni Association Hooby Club for Children with Special Needs Addition of Satellite Center in Erode

2001

- V-Excel Educational Trust is registered as a Public Charitable Trust and develops its vision and mission under the guidance of a sound founding team.
- Dr. Vasudha Prakash returns to India from the USA to set up a centre for Teacher Training and special services for children with mental challenges.
- Academic Concepts, Inc. is registered as a non-profit organisation in the USA.

2002

- Kaleidoscope Learning Centre, the special school, is set up as a lab school for teachers. Children with conditions such as Autism, Mental Retardation and Attention Deficit Disorders are enrolled.
- The Academy for Teacher Excellence begins its first training programme on methods used to teach children with Multiple Disabilities and Specific Learning Disabilities.

2003

- A young V-Excel is chosen by the Government of India to run the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) / Education for All - programme in ten blocks of Villipuram district of Tamil Nadu.
- The V-Excel Remedial Centre is born out of a rising demand for supplemental remedial teaching for school-going children with learning disabilities and children who were not admitted to regular schools.



2004

- Bridges Learning Academy, a pull-out school programme for slow learners and children with dyslexia, is initiated to address the serious concern of academically low-performing students.

2005

- V-Excel associates with ESVI Sarada Foundation for using their premises for additional services such as early intervention and rehabilitation.
- Operations move to larger space to accommodate the growing number of children catered to across different services.

2006

- The Vocational Training Unit is set up. It focuses on developing suitable employment opportunities for young adolescents with mental challenges.
- The Early Intervention program for children between 0-7 years having developmental delays is launched. It is intended to provide a proactive step for early remediation.

2007

- The Counseling and Assessment Unit begins operations. It reaches internal clients and the outside community of corporate employees facing parenting issues.

2008

- Demand for Workshops and Training for different target groups like teachers, parents, doctors, professionals, etc. increases significantly as V-Excel's credibility is established. over the years

2009

- V-Excel offers many short-term courses in Special Education. The ATE Diploma course is accredited by The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI).
- Kaleidoscope Learning Centre, starts conscious integration of Waldorf principles with conventional special education and witnesses encouraging outcomes.

2010

- V-Excel's work in the Rural Outreach Programme of the Government is seen as one of the most effectively run NGO programs.
- The Early Intervention program gains ground. The incidence of mainstreaming in schools at a young age boosts enrolments.

2011

- The Vocational Training Unit expands to offer practical and wide range of viable options for employment opportunities for young persons with developmental disabilities.
- V-Excel is represented at two International Conferences, New York (USA) and Reykjavik (Iceland) through shared learnings from Curative Education for children with Autism in the Indian context.
- V-Excel launches its first satellite centres in Nasik and Tirunelveli.

2012

- The V-Excel Alumni Association is formed to develop a strong foundation of V-Excelites in the field of Special Education and Rehabilitation.
- The V-Excel Sibling Forum is launched to bring together a cohesive group, understand them and enlist their support for the long-term care of persons with special needs.
- Erode satellite centre is set up and services have commenced

2013

- Introduction of IGNOU courses in Early Childhood Education and Parent Awareness,
- Initiated the process for developing Solapur (Maharashtra) as a Satellite Center and conducted training for the local team
- Nashik Centre started a special school given the consistent demand from parents

2014

- Dedication and inauguration of our new building, *Sharada*, in R.A. Puram, Chennai
- Inauguration of our new facility called Youth Empowerment Services (YES!) in Chennai
- Teacher-training for a group of teachers from the Maldives Islands

Our journey continues.....



V-Excel Team

V-Excel's Beneficiaries

V-Excel's 'Life Span Education Model', offers complete and comprehensive services for individuals with special needs, starting from birth to adulthood for those with developmental disabilities – Autism, Mental Retardation, Down Syndrome, Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder, and Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia). Through our range of services – Early Intervention to prevent the socio-economic burden on families; special schooling that gives the child the opportunity to fully develop his/her potential through accessible good education; and vocational training that empowers the child with specific professional skills – we have managed to change perceptions, reduce the financial burden on families, and are fostering independence in children with special needs.

SERVICE	BENEFICIARIES TO DATE
Rural Outreach	22,000
Workshops	5,000
Counselling	2,000
Early Intervention	1,000
Remedial Programme	700
Special Schools	400
Teacher Training	500
Satellite Centres	400
School for Learning Disabilities	80
Vocational Training	70
Total	32,150





Testimonials

Thank you so much for such a wonderful feedback. The Journey with Pranav had been really filled with new challenges which were unknown to us. Our coming those seeing a bright day is a real dream come true! Today, I really feel like a proud mother who has accomplished with your greatest support and guided suggestions. Hoping best for all of us in future and keeping faith for best!

I found the CRE program very interesting and helpful. I have always been passionate working with children with learning disability (considering their hidden disability). I presently am working with children with LD in a remedial set up. I liked feeling taken back to the vocational setting as a useful participant, since it gave me great insight into their life after 18 years. Also, it was quite information knowing all the government policies and updates. I am an ardent believer of alternate education. It was indeed great to witness the practice of Eurythmy and how well it has been integrated into your school curriculum. I was great meeting the 3 champions (Mr. Chandra Mouli, Mr. Paras & Ms. Priya), their motivation and will power is a great learning for all of us. The entire experience has been informative and stimulating. It gives us our own oars so we can get back in the trenches again to help our students and their families.

I am student of IGNOU University and doing Early Childhood Special Education in V-Excel. It's my pleasure to bring into your attention that this course is conducted in a well-planned and very informative way. We can feel the trainer's in depth information not only related to books, but also the practical and problem solving experiences shared would definitely make us excel in the field of special education and do wonderful services to the children with special needs. V-Excel provides empathetic trainer who understands our needs very well and trains us in every aspect and trainer is very approachable and takes that extra effort to clarify our doubts and guides us through our journey. Looking forward to work and train with her in few more courses and gain that extra knowledge.

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Company Information

V-Excel Educational Trust is an 13-year-old organisation based in Chennai (with eight centres across the country) and has successfully been running an educational and vocational training institution dedicated to the cause of persons with special needs. As a quality service provider in the field of Special Education, V-Excel emphasises holistic development. The core philosophy is that every child has the potential to learn and that the focus should be on *abilities*, not disabilities. Through pragmatic education, specialised therapies and rehabilitation services, V-Excel empowers special persons to be dignified, independent, contributing members of mainstream society. V-Excel Educational Trust is at 10/23 Thiruvengadam Street, R.A. Puram, Chennai 600 028, India. Tel: 91-44-24956373/24620243. Website: www.v-excel.org

