

Empowering them through education

TOI's Teach India initiative led youngsters to start an NGO that focuses on schooling

Geetha Rao | TNH

Contributor: Yuvabengaluru

When they joined The Times of India's Teach India initiative, little did this group of youngsters imagine their efforts would go beyond that. Today, they have gone on to start an NGO called



Yuva Bengaluru and are completely involved in equipping schools with infrastructure and other facilities. It all began when,

through the Teach India programme, some college students started interacting with children at Deena Seva Sangha, a government-aided school in Seshadripuram. Apart from teaching, they would play cricket and lagori with the children, and get them cakes and biscuits. The children looked forward to their visits.

Tanu Kulkarni, a group member and first-year BA student at Mount Carmel College, says they realized they will have to do something more substantial. "Some of their parents didn't want them or couldn't look after them. So, many kids stayed on at the school hostel. We realized the only way we could help change their lives was through education," she says.

Kiran Gangadhar, who works with an MNC, guided the young group. Kiran was into social work about two years ago. He and his friends had been teaching spoken



YOUTH POWER: The NGO aims to equip schools with better infrastructure and other facilities

DIYVA DAWN'S DEVELOPMENT TRUST

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So, all of them formed Yuva Bengaluru and launched the website, which later began to receive 120 hits a day. They decided they would build on existing facilities at the school. By collecting donations from friends and wellwishers, they had the school's waterproofing done and painted 11 classrooms on its first floor themselves. "They look gorgeous," says Tanu. They had the existing toilet repaired, and two more built. They also had doors and windows fixed.

Their next goal is to get enough benches and uniforms for kids, as

English and a few core subjects in two or three schools around Malleswaram, including DSS. Later, they were also part of the Teach India programme at DSS and that was where they met Tanu and other like-minded people. They made a combined effort.

"Impressed with our work, the school management wanted us to adopt the institution," says Kiran.

well as tubelights, fans, slides, swings, wall paint and notebooks. "Our costs will be Rs 8 lakh," says Kiran, who is now Yuva Bengaluru's president. Yuva Bengaluru's motto is, after all, 'Educate, empower, enable'.

(Tell us about similar initiatives at kalyanreporters@timesgroup.com with 'Sunshine Schawer' in the subject line)

Empowering students, school by school

Techie Kiran Sagar's four-year-old NGO, Yuva Global, helps educate under-privileged children by adopting government-aided schools



Kiran Sagar started off in 2008 by adopting a dilapidated govt-aided school at Seshadripuram

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Nothing about Kiran Sagar is ordinary. Yet he is a face you could easily lose in the city where every other person is an IT professional like him. But once you get to know him you are unlikely to forget him easily.

Kiran works for HP in Bangalore and leads a pretty much normal life during the weekdays. During weekends he runs an NGO called Yuva Global, a four-year-old institution which helps educate under-privileged children in government-aided schools in the city.

He started off in 2008 by adopting a dilapidated government-aided school at Seshadripuram. This

school was opened some 80 years ago at the behest of Mahatma Gandhi when he visited the place in 1934. The school's founder was Army major T Ramachandra, who quit his job to join Gandhi in the freedom struggle.

Within four months, Kiran managed to collect Rs 14 lakh from donors. He restored the physical infrastructure and began empowering children through education. At present, only teachers are now paid by the state government. The rest of the responsibility rests on Kiran and his fellow volunteers.

Chandrashekar Hariharan, CEO of Zed Homes and a big supporter of Kiran and his work, said, "You will find him going around and asking people for money for this trust without any inhibition." Four years on,

Yuva Global has adopted four schools accounting for 2,200 students. The number of volunteers at Yuva Global has also grown to 2,500.

In January, Kiran will hit the streets to spread awareness among voters to make the right choice. He says his first source of inspiration was former president Dr APJ Kalam and his book *Vision 2020*.

He credits his work to the fact that his employer allows him to work from home. Such is the impact of his work with his NGO that all his three Facebook accounts are brimming with friends. Any fresh request sent to these accounts bounces with a message that the account holder has reached the maximum limit of friends. A slightly amused Kiran says he currently has some 15,000-plus FB friends.