

Book to Remember

AIM

There are about 10000 government schools in Sri Lanka. They are mainly funded by the government. However, many government schools in rural areas are somewhat neglected. People in these areas are very poor so they do not have any economical power to improve their children's schools. School we selected is in the rural area with a student population of about 60 students. Many of the people who live there are poor farmers or labourers who earn daily wages. There are few wealthy families in this area but their children are not attending this school as it has very few resources. As the Principal of this School mentioned " student population is dropping yearly; If this trend continues government authorities might decide to close down the school and direct the students who study there to go to other schools which are in the town. Some of the students will not be able to go there as they are not economically able to bare the cost. Therefore, one of our main aim of this project is to improve the quality of education of the students and not only uplifting the education of the students who are studying there but making this institution an attractive place for new students. This way we are hoping to have this school functioning smoothly without closing it down forever. In addition , our project will be focused to create a social dialogue to focus on schools in these remote villages where there is a threat of closure.

JOURNEY

We have already chosen an underprivileged school in Iriyaminna, in Kurunegala District, Sri Lanka. We spoke to the education department and got their permission to work with that school. We had several meetings with the principal , villagers ,teachers and some selected students to identify the problems they have in school. In those meetings we recognized that they had several problems such as,

* Absenteeism of students

* They mentioned that if we could give them a helping hand with improving the outlook of the school.

* Students with learning difficulties

* Several students and even teachers requested from us if we could help them to establish a library.

* We also discussed in a meeting with our group members and their parents about several issues as to how we are going to communicate to each other as a group communicating which is very essential and thereby decided to setup a group in the " Telegram App " to pass messages to everyone.

* In terms of raising funds, everybody agreed on having food stalls and plant selling stalls on every parents meeting in our school.

* Every Friday, we shall have ice-cream stalls in the school premisses.* To initiate, every group member agreed to plant chillies, tomato, brinjals (plants which grow in quantity).

* We also decided to post messages in our social media channels, including facebook, youtube, instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram to get attention for achieve our goal.

NEXT

Major challenge we faced with regard to setting up a library is finding a suitable location to setup the library. When we addressed this issue in one of our group meetings, we came up with several solutions. Getting an old bus or compartment of an old train to setup a library was the option. We all agreed and in the next two weeks we will have to work on this process of finding an old bus or train compartment. Further, we are hoping to get in contact with the Railway Department and Sri Lanka Transport Board with this regard. We have estimated a cost of about Rs.1000000.00 needed to carry-out this project. In order to acquire funds we decided on having a group meeting to setup dates for fundraising events. We also hope to get funds from various donors locally and internationally , so with-in the next two weeks we are hoping to communicate with them via our social media channels. One of our major concept of this project is to give the community the message " Importance of Reusing " So we have decided to collect old books from the community to use in the library as well as to sell them and collect funds for this purpose we will be setting up dropping boxes in several supermarkets, clothing stores and other places to collect books..We are also hoping to go door to door in selected communities in the area close to our school vicinity. Our next step would be build a library and present it to them. Hoping to visit this school every weekend and with the help to improve the English and other subject knowledge of primary section. We will be having workdays to clean the school yard as well as building and create a nice surrounding for students for their studies. Furthermore, during some weekends we are hoping to take our school counsellor and other professionals to have meetings with the school community with regards to importance of education and health of children and also we are hoping to address issues with regard to the students with learning difficulties. At the end of the project we will present them with the library, a renovated school compound and all the stationaries required for each student.

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SUCCESS

All team members are so enthusiastic about the project. Even with a short notice, they are regularly attending the meetings. It was easy to make them understand about the aim of our project and how we are going to accomplish them. In terms of fund raising activities and other events they presented with very valuable ideas. We posted a message on "The Lyceum Village" (Communicating forum of our school network) asking for used books for fund raising project. Response was amazing as we were able to collect over 3000 books within a few days. This proves generosity of the people and their opinion about reusing things. This response was encouraging to our team. We are hoping that we will be able to accomplish a great deal of work with our project.

CHALLENGES

1. There were some challenges we came across while implementing this project so far. How to get these students to come school regularly was one of them. Even though the students population in this school is about 60, most of days not even 40 students come to school. As they are very poor, most of days they stay home to help their parents to earn a living. Their parents knowledge about education is so poor that they are in the opinion where they think it is enough to go to school once or twice a week.
2. How to raise funds more effectively to fulfill our goal.
3. How would we find a location to setup a library for them. When we were talking to various groups. The main concern is finding a suitable location to establish the library.

ISSUES

* Mainly we need help with ideas of fund raising activities

* How to help those students with learning difficulties.

Since Sri Lanka is a developing country and most of the people depend on day ways the ability of spending money on education becomes low in fact. This has lead a huge gap between urban and rural schools as privileged and underprivileged schools education systems. Our focus is to bring solutions to the gap, specially to offer the underprivileged community a facilitated education.

The issue is that, the students come from uneducated backgrounds need not to pay much attention on education, since their main objective is to do earning from their childhood. This has become a cause due to lack of having enough facilities.

While doing our project we encouraged the students with learning difficulties. The difficulties mainly arise due to the lack of physical resources. At least they don't have proper classrooms with proper ventilation facilities. The blackboards have turned into white boards and they are dilapidated along with tables and chairs.

Since, most of the students come to school without having their breakfast as well as without bringing the lunch most of the times they were found as less concentrators for lesson. The classrooms are found as very inactive, less communicative backgrounds.

IMPACT

There are numerous ways and means from which we can measure the impact of our project. As a whole, maintaining library cards and getting updates about the way the students utilize the library. In addition to that, getting updates about the reading journal that students are maintaining can also be done to measure the impact. The daily attendance of the library users could also be taken with updates. To get an overview idea about the improvement of this reading skills, creativity and comprehension competitions can be held and reading journal can be maintained for each student.

CONTACT US

To support this worthy cause, please contact us :

[Email : gslyceum123@gmail.com](mailto:gslyceum123@gmail.com), lyceum_lkur@lyceum.lk

Postal Address : Global Social Leaders, Lyceum International School,
No.71, Uduwalpola Rd, Kurunegala, Sri Lanka.