

Director's Message

Great Lakes Institute of Management (<http://greatlakes.edu.in/>) became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) on 9 February 2013. This quarterly newsletter is started with the objective of sharing with other institutions the way in which we inculcate responsible behavior in our students. I am delighted to present to you the first issue of our Karma-Yoga newsletter.

Great Lakes Institute of Management incorporates a Leadership Experiential Project (LEP) as an integral part of its 1-year full-time Post-Graduate Program in Management (PGPM) and 2-year full-time Post-Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM). This experiential project at Great Lakes is called Karma-Yoga.

Trying to learn leadership in a classroom is like trying to learn swimming in a classroom. Just as a swimming pool is required to learn swimming, a live setting with actual potential followers is needed to learn leadership. Creating followers is the essence of leadership, and transforming those followers is the most potent form of leadership. There are 21 villages surrounding the institute's campus that have been adopted by Great Lakes for the LEP. Students visit these Karma-Yoga villages every week. The mission is to enhance the self-esteem and self-efficacy of the villagers (i.e., to empower them), so that they are able to lead a better quality life. The motto is not to give them fish, but to teach them how to fish. "That people can be lifted into their better selves is the secret of transforming leadership" (Burns, 1978, "Leadership," p. 462). The project provides an experiential learning of transformational leadership.

Being totally devoted to our duties toward others and being really concerned about others are the foundations of authentic leadership. Hence, the LEP has been named Karma-Yoga. "Karma-Yoga is the attaining through unselfish work of that freedom which is the goal of all human nature" (Swami Vivekananda, Complete Works, Vol. 1, p. 110).

Venkat

Venkat R. Krishnan
<http://www.rkvenkat.org>

Highlights of Activities

Apr-Jun 2013

Anti-Tobacco Day

As part of Anti-Tobacco Day observed worldwide on 31st May, several of our Karma-Yoga village teams organized entertaining and educative activities in their respective villages. At Veerapuram, Vasuvasamudram, Naduvakkarai, Pattikkadu, and Amanambakkam, posters and videos were presented to a gathering of villagers and skits were performed. In Manamai, the children participated in a drawing competition. At Vengambakkam, science experiments were conducted to demonstrate the ill-effects of smoking on the human body.



Cricket Match—An Ice Breaker



There is nothing better to break the ice than engaging in the national pastime of cricket. The Kunnathur and Pattikkadu village teams came up with the idea of playing a cricket tournament with the village youth. The event resulted in increasing the quality of relationship with the villagers.

World Environment Day

In a drive to spread environment-consciousness, several of our teams conducted rallies, drawing competitions for kids and Rangoli competitions for women. Videos on the topic were screened and posters were put up for viewing. The activities were organized in Echankaranai, Echur, Kothimangalam, Kadambadi, Kuzhipanthandalam, Vayalur, Pudupattinam, Natham-Kariacheri, Nallur, and Mullikolathur.



Spoken English Classes



English has become the language of global communication, with the demand for basic English proficiency reaching even our villages. English classes for school-going children have been initiated in Nallur. The children have been divided into two groups based on their age and regular classes are held every week to improve their command over the language.

Computer Awareness Sessions

Basic computer usage is a common necessity and the children and youth in our villages are no strangers to this interactive medium. However, accessibility to computers on a regular basis is low. Therefore, our teams have begun organizing regular computer-training sessions for children and youth in the villages using their laptops to teach them how to use common applications. The first of these training sessions were initiated in Kuzhipanthandalam and Echur.



Science Club Identity Cards



Science Club in a village is an interest group comprising children. A unique idea to get the village children more involved has been implemented in Manamai. The members of the Science Club were provided identity cards. This card gives the card-holders a sense of belonging and is a key factor in the active participation of children in the various activities.

Organic Farming Awareness Program



Eight farmers from Poonthandalam village went to meet Mrs. Sabitha, an organic farmer who gave them tips to begin experimenting with organic products in their own homes. This personal interaction with an expert helped the farmers to distinguish fact from myth about organic farming. Since their first meeting, these farmers have been working with Mrs. Sabitha to set up vermi-compost pits in their own plots of land. This is a small step towards a larger mission of progressing towards holistic and natural agricultural practices.

Karma-Yoga Team



PGPM Village Coordinators and PGDM Village Representatives along with Karma-Yoga administrative team consisting of (sitting, from left) Archanaa R., Venkat R. Krishnan, Arunkannan A. P., and Hetal K. Pandya.