

# KARMA YOGA

## Leadership Experiential Action Program

Highlights of the Journey  
July- September 2019



Great Lakes Institute of Management became a signatory to the United Nations Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in 2013. This quarterly newsletter is published with the objective of sharing with others the way in which the Institute inculcates responsible behavior in students.



# KARMA YOGA INAUGURATION AND ORIENTATION

Karma Yoga— The Leadership Experiential Action Program (LEAP) was inaugurated for the PGDM (2019-2021) at Lake Manasarovar on 14th July 2019. The event began with an Invocation song, followed by a welcome address by Dr. Arulsamy, Asst.Prof.Head of Karma Yoga, GLIM, Chennai. Following his address was a heart-warming and thought-provoking video message from our beloved Founder, **Dr. Bala V Balachandran**. In his address to the students, Dr. Bala gave insights on how the Karma Yoga program was developed not only to teach the students about Leadership but also how it paved a way of giving back to the society.

**Dr. Vaidy Jayaraman**, Director of MBA Business Analytics, spoke about the importance of the Karma Yoga Program and gave a brief description of how valuable the experience was. He enlightened the students about the various benefits that the program bestowed on its students.



The keynote speaker for the day was **Mr. Rajarethinam Arunachalam B.E.**, (Consulting Engineer, Water Management). A person with nature's best interests at heart, Mr. Rajarethinam explained the many benefits of sustainable living—primarily in the realms of Rain Water Harvesting. Drawing examples from his own life, Mr. Rajarethinam showed how important it was to plan in advance and implement a good rainwater harvesting system. It was not only easy to conserve the important resource for consumption but also had a long-lasting impact.

After a small break, Dr. Arulsamy explained the outline of the Karma Yoga program and its many facets. He went ahead to give a brief understanding of the role of students in the program, and how they would work together in groups to help the adopted villages in the required ways however small their role was. Empowering women, educating children and making it a sustainable environment were among the few aspects he touched upon. The session ended with yet another heart-warming video of how the program functioned to help the many adopted villages around the Institute as well as the experiences of the former Karma Yoga Program Participants.





# KARMA YOGA GUEST LECTURE

On 5th September 2019, Karma Yoga team had organized a guest lecture for the PGDM 1st year students. The PGDM students had the privilege of being addressed by a family that dedicated its efforts to the organic businesses. The minds behind Idler's Café. **Mr. David Raj**, along with his wife, **Mrs. Ann David**, and their two children, **Mr. Siddharth David**, and **Ms. Arundhati David** took turns to explain the benefits and importance of growing and consuming alternate crops like millets and ragi instead of old fashioned rice.

The first speaker was Mr. David, who grew up in an agricultural family and went to work in the service sector. However, his roots called him back and he returned to agriculture— but with an innovative twist in mind: Idler's Farm café and shop. His son, Mr. Siddharth started off the session by giving a brief insight about what organic farming was all about. He explained its benefits and difficulties of farming. He was joined in by Mrs. Ann, who spoke about the importance of a wholesome diet and how organic products were a much healthier alternative in the current scenario.



Ms. Arundhati, his daughter explained that the business plan was purely based on the Farm-To-Table Movement. It is a social movement which is currently popular in the United States where customers know where the ingredients of the food come from. It acts as a boost for farmers, who feel motivated upon being acknowledged for their hard work.

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Further facets about the business model including their constant changing menu and the ingredient sourcing groups were explained to the students. True, Organic farming is more laborious than conventional farming, but the group behind Idler's Farm showcased how the model actually benefited the café, providing them with their USP of experimentation.

The slideshow presentation of the different items available in the café's menu was the highlight of the session as it was marvelous to see the innovative ways that the organic restaurant used in creating their daily menus.



The session ended with numerous questions by the students about both organic farming as well as the business model of the café.



## THE GREEN CLUB INAUGURATION

The Karma Yoga team of Great Lakes Institute of Management formed a Green Club to fight the ecological crisis being faced by the society to the best of their ability. The Green Club would be executing projects that will help in environmental conservation and preservation.



The Green Club was inaugurated on 9th September 2019 by the Dean of Great Lakes, **Dr. Suresh Ramanathan** and the Guest of Honor, **Mr. Nitin**, from Nitin Wire Group (India) Pvt. Ltd. The event started with a prayer song and was followed by a couple of musical performances, a video about Karma Yoga and a student's experience with KY, the Green Club oath and moved on to a very motivating and inspiring speech by Mr. Nitin.

The event went very well and was appreciated by the Dean, the Chief Guest and the Karma Yoga head Dr. Arulsamy. The initial few activities planned by the Green Club are beach clean-ups, tree plantation drives, and water conservation programs. The Green Club looks forward to conducting these activities successfully and come up with more such activities for the betterment of our environment. The event ended with vote of thanks by Ms. Alagu Meenatchi.

## PAISA VASOOL – KARMA YOGA

In the Paisa Vasool event conducted by CIECOM of Great Lakes Institute of Management, over a period of three days ranging from 13th September 2019 to 15th September 2019, the Karma Yoga team took the opportunity to put up two stalls showcasing products and services from the Karma Yoga villages.

**Stall 1** – This stall was set up to sell products made by the villagers such as thread bangles, quilling earrings, hand-painted bottles, photo frames, and bookmarks. There was also fresh Aloe Vera gel being sold. The stall made a whopping revenue of around Rs.16000. All the products were well-appreciated by the students and professors. There was also an initiative of "Gift a Smile" where people could buy products and gift it to the Sodexo staff. This gesture was very well-appreciated and successful.





## PAISA VASOOL – KARMA YOGA



Stall 2 – A couple of villagers (Mrs.Kuppu from Naduvakkarai village and Mrs. Padma from Kunavakkam) came all three days to make south Indian snacks such as bajji, kuzhi paniyaram and puttu. There was also ginger tea which was the highlight of the stall. This stall made a revenue of around Rs.7000. All the food items were relished by the students and professors and it was completely sold out on the last two days of the event.

In total, a good revenue of around Rs.23000 was made, which will go back to all the villages that contributed. This was a great opportunity to showcase the different talents of the villagers and simultaneously help them with reward and recognition.

## COMPUTER EDUCATION



On 06-09-2019, Friday the team of Ammanambakkam visited the Govt School taught them basic computer education. We all know that computers are our present and future and how important it is in one's life. One might assume that this requirement is only for urban areas, and kids in rural areas might not understand the importance or might not want to use it. Computer education not only helps the kids to know better about the world, but it is also absolutely essential in helping them to secure better jobs in the long run.

Students taught basic computer function for kids of class 8th and 9th. Kids were very excited, and their curiosity could be easily seen in the way they were asking questions from students. Even after studying for one hour and even though it was time for their lunch, they refused to go and requested them to continue. Since it was a fruitful session, the principal asked them to continue the sessions.



## BLOOD DONATION CAMP



A blood donation camp was organized on 5th July 2019 in the Great lakes campus on the occasion of 82nd Birthday of our Founder Uncle Bala. The Karma Yoga team and Great Lakes administration in association with the Lions Club conducted the entire camp. This saw the participation of students, faculties and staff. In a short of 3 hours 44 units of blood were collected. A lot of students also requested to have another camp as many of them were not able to donate due to exams and classes. The Karma Yoga team is planning to have more such camps in the future in its commitment towards a better tomorrow. The donors received donor card from the Lions Club.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

On 15-08-2019, Thursday the team celebrated 73rd independence day with the children from Periya Colony, instilling a sense of patriotism by talking about the story of our fight for independence. This was followed by a flag painting activity wherein each child & the team had the Indian flag painted on them along with a paper flag pinned to their clothing. After this, the team taught interested children basic choreography to the song Jai Ho & ended their visit by reciting the national pledge. To our surprise, the children already knew the national pledge & were able to recite it on their own with minimal support from us.





## DRAWING COMPETITION



On 15-08-2019, Thursday the team of Vengambakkam organized drawing competition occasion of Independence Day. Children of Vengambakkam exhibited patriotism through their beautiful drawings of Indian national flag. The team exposed children to some facts about our country. Children were interested to provide speech about Independence Day. We helped few children in preparing the content both in English and Tamil (vernacular language) for delivering an oration. Children delivered the speech with minimal preparation. The team concluded the day in village by distributing sweets as a part of 73rd Independence Day celebration.

## BOTTLE PAINTING TRAINING

On 30th August 2019, Friday the team of Kuzipandhandalam conducted bottle painting training under the livelihood initiative. In Kuzhipandandalam, the team got the vasantham SHG members to do a small activity of Bottle painting. The purpose was to get acquainted with the women of the village. As seen in the pictures, they do a very good job when it comes to creativity. The special trainer, Palak Bachani of PGPM section 3 has dedicated many hours towards the development of the SHG. The Kuzhipandandalam team thanks to Palak for her contribution.





## MEETING TO SET THE FOUNDATION FOR SHG



On the 25th of July, Karma Yoga staff Mr. Edward and Mr. Selvakumar visited the Pulikundram village, where the team took baby steps towards creating a self-help group in this village. The team discussed the prospects of starting a small business to help these villagers earn a living and prosper. The team also discussed with SHG the situation of the village houses as they do not have pukka houses and live on disputed land.

## KITCHEN GARDEN

To provide a sustainable solution to hunger and social upliftment, kitchen gardens provide a practical and sustainable way for families to grow their own nutrient-rich food and improve quality of life. Kitchen Gardens can be established and maintained on a small patch of land with minimum inputs. Hence these gardens provide the rural poor communities with a platform to supplemental food production as well as an opportunity to improve their livelihoods. As a part of Karma Yoga visits the team performed a kitchen gardening activity in Kadambadi on 18th August'2019. the team first selected small patches of land near the houses and prepared the land by digging and cleaning, making the soil bed flat for kitchen gardening. Then the team asked small kids to sow the different seeds in different patches. Each kid was assigned a small kitchen garden to take care of it and in order to encourage them to participate to the fullest prizes will be given to the kids who maintain their garden well, at the end of the term. It was very delightful to see the enthusiasm of the villagers participating in the event





## PLANTATION DRIVE



The KY team implemented a plantation drive on the 14th of July in Pulikundram which is an economically disadvantaged village. The team planted 10 trees with local children in groups of 2-3. The team found that the children knew how to dig, plant and water. They understood the process better than they did and we were amazed how they took care of the plants in subsequent weeks. Watching the trees grow is indeed satisfying said a KY member. Why should we plant trees, is not the question? The question is why should we not! It was a learning for the KY team.

## HEALTH EDUCATION ON PERSONAL HYGIENE

The team of Echankarunai observed the villages during their initial visits and felt that there was a need for basic personal hygiene education and health awareness in the area. On 21-8-2019, the team planned their activity accordingly keeping in mind the sensitiveness of the villagers. The team asked villages to gather in groups and addressed them regarding personal hygiene. While addressing, the team also found out their need for Toilet Infrastructure as they were involved in open defecation. The area lacked a toilet. Some of Karma Yoga female members from the group also addressed women and adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene. The team also taught villagers about mosquito breeding grounds and other health hazards spread by mosquito bites. The team noted down the important points and will submit the proposal to Institute.





## TREE PLANTATION DRIVE



On 22nd September, Sunday the KY team along with enthusiastic villagers of Lingapuram carried out a plantation drive in the village. 14 of us along with the local Church Pastor Mr. Amos and 10 village kids took up shovels and planted 15 saplings across the entry road leading to the village. The Pastor being an experienced farmer taught us by example how to properly dig up a pit for a plant and lower the plant gently into the hole. The whole experience was enriching for us and helped strengthen our bond with the villagers as well as learn basic plantation skills in the process.

The team believes this plantation drive will beautify the entry road of the village, which is currently barren and doesn't give a good first impression of the village. As these saplings are nurtured by the villagers, over time they will grow bigger and more beautiful. This way the people entering the village will get a good first impression of lush greenery.

## DISTRIBUTION OF BOOKS

On 1-09-2019, Sunday The Karma Yoga team of Nallur distributed notebooks, pen and pencils to the needy children.





## WASTE MANAGEMENT

On 15/09/2019, Sunday, the KY team taught the kids about waste management through quizzes and games in Veerapuram. The quiz questions were based on general knowledge and also had puzzles, which made the kids think out of the box. This was like a treasure hunt and after the kids were done with the quiz, they got chits of different kinds of waste products, which they had to segregate. Through this game, they explained to them about bio and non-bio degradable wastes and how to segregate them.



## DRAWING COMPETITION

On 08-09-2019, the team did another cognitive activity and conducted drawing competitions in Veerapuram. The kids were very interested in this and actively participated. Many kids came up with theme-based drawings and did works on water conservation, Gods, and also pretty houses and cows. They encouraged students to keep on continuing this by giving them prizes like color boxes, paints etc. The team also made the kids showcase their other talents, by making them sing and dance.



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## ORIGAMI AND BEST OUT OF WASTE



On 01-09-2019, Sunday, the KY team taught the kids about the art of origami and educated them about 'best out of waste' by creating interesting works from old newspapers. They taught them to make wall hangings, frogs, butterflies and boats. They also made paper bags, which we used to collect the trash. Seeing us, an old man nearby also started making boxes using paper. Through this way, they got the kids engaged in a new activity and also spread the message about the importance of paper. We also added the temple pictures and info on Google maps and geotagged the location.



## JEWELRY MAKING WORKSHOP

On 22nd September 2019, the team of Naduvakkarai conducted a jewelry making workshop for the women of Naduvakkarai. The aim of this program was to help the women gain a talent that will help them financially independent. The Karma Yoga team arranged for a trainer, Ms. Susee who also got all the required material. Around 15 women came for the workshop. It went for about 1.5 hours. They all were very interested and keenly learning from the trainer. She taught how to make earrings and bangles out of thread. At the end of the session, they all felt extremely happy that they attended such an useful session and learnt something. The team also got good feedback from them. The remaining materials were given to them to make the products during their free time and sell it in shops or give it to the Karma Yoga team where they will try to market and sell them.



## WASTE MANAGEMENT SESSION

From interacting with the villagers in our first visit, the team found out that the village had no dustbins. So, on the 4th of August 2019, the KY team organized an educative session on waste management and disposal for the villagers. Karma Yoga head Dr. Arulsamy and Mr. Edward also took some time off their schedule to grace this occasion. The team had a good turnout from the village, including both elders and children. Dr. Arulsamy also spoke to the crowd about the pressing issue of plastic disposal and its effects on the environment. The villagers keenly listened to the session and participated with enthusiasm. Under the guidance of Dr. Arulsamy, the team also distributed dustbins to the villagers and educated them on how to segregate the waste and dispose of it. The villagers were pleased with our initiative and were happy about us giving them dustbins as the village had not many dustbins. The team's further steps are to make sure that the purpose of this workshop bears its fruits; to ensure that the villagers follow their plan of proper waste disposal and management and stick to it on a long-term basis. One girl by the name of Shalini, who attended the session, came to us and narrated one incident. She had gone to a store last week to buy some thing and she had refused to take a plastic bag and asked for a cloth bag instead. She told us how our session helped her and how she would empower others in her village to do the same. The team was extremely glad to know that they could make a small difference in the society and one day, this small difference will multiply and hopefully will be seen in the whole society.



## EDUCATING BASIC ENGLISH AND MOTIVATING KIDS



Education is one of the important aspects that enrich the kid's life. It provides them multiple opportunities to explore the life in multi-dimensions. So the Karma Yoga students planned various activities to help the kids to improve their thinking ability through multiple ways in Kadambadi. They used the board materials and competition to encourage kids to participate in the process of learning. Students taught the village kids how to present a good self-introduction to others in English. With the help of Board and other materials, students asked kids to write their names in English and draw pictures to identify the shape and colour of the object or animals on the board.

## CLOTH DONATION

From the hearts of Village and from the team, one of Karma Yoga students NITHIN JOSHUA donated new clothes to the villagers. This was one of the happiest moments of them. The team personally enjoyed such gesture for the villagers.

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## CHART ACTIVITY AND ORIGAMI



Thinking is essential part of personal development. The team enabled a way of doing a creative activity to sharpen their thinking ability. KY students used charts, newspaper and colour pencils to teach kids the art of thinking. Kids readily learned new things and effectively implemented in the process of the delivering the activity. The theme for the drawing activity was on the "USE DUSTBIN", "AVOID PLASTICS". As the theme is very much aligned to their focus for the village, they encouraged those creative chart activity for the rallies in the future.



## HELPING BACHELORS IN JOB SEARCH

On 22nd September 19 Sunday. Karma Yoga students managed to gather youth and job seekers under a shed in Kunnathur village. They organized a job awareness activity where students showed them about different websites to apply for job according to their specializations. Students gave live demonstration of how to use the website. They even volunteered by preparing Curriculum Vitae of a job seeker and informed other villagers about the same. The students discussed about the problems of job seekers faced in the interviews and suggested some remedies. Students believe the action taken would help them.



## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AWARENESS DRIVE

Vittilapuram is one among the many villages that is part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan program of the government. During a survey conducted in line with this program, the Karma Yoga students realized that many of the villages were unaware of the many beneficial government schemes that are available to them. Hence, they decided to hold an awareness drive on 15th of September, 2019. The week prior to the awareness drive they made pamphlets and spread word about the event among the villagers. On the 15th they observed that many of the villagers were actually hesitant to come out as they did not know how this would benefit them. Students then decided to take the presentation to the people, they gathered the villagers around and showed them videos and explained to them about schemes such as PM Jan Dhan Yojana, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, PM Jivan Jyothi Bima Yojana and more. Villagers were very keen on knowing the schemes and were hopeful to know more.





# ANTI-PLASTIC AWARENESS - UBA ACT

As students Magnum-Opus, the Karma Yogis of Great Lakes in collaboration with the budding youth of Sooradimangalam, Nallur, Vitilapuram, Veerapuram and Kunnathur conducted an awareness rally to enlighten the public on the benefits of plastic alternatives such as cloth bags as a part of the UBA act. This event was spread over two weeks. In the first week, they had the Pro-Environment campaign for the young children (listed above) and in the second, they conducted a walk through the village. Children created posters and together, students caught the attention of the curious on-lookers with slogans and attractive posters.



In addition, Dr. Arulsamy gave a talk on how beneficial it would be to switch over to cloth bags in all the KY villages. Many of the villagers agreed that would be a better alternative.



For more images of KY visit -  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1j3Q0wRFVoy-e2XFPqG1hsPqnMVDRJ71D?usp=sharing>



## SHARING OF EXPERIENCE



Alugu Meenatchi

Karma Yoga, a beautiful and enriching experience, is a social leadership program that allows us MBA students to not only provide community service and help the society but also apply our managerial skills in real life scenarios.

Over a period of three months, Karma Yoga allows us to understand the problems of the community, analyze the problems they face and offer them solutions to the best of our ability. For instance, the Naduvakkarai team, in the initial few visits, found out that the village lacked dustbins. So our team decided to distribute dustbins and educate them on waste management and disposal. But it is not enough to just find out a problem and come up with a solution. It is equally important to analyze different aspects of the solution to assess its feasibility. So how did the Naduvakkarai team go about with this idea?

For any idea, product or service; the need, use and benefits, budget, etc have to be studied. We first assessed that there was a need for the bins. We then decided on the type of bins that can be provided. We didn't want to distribute the fully covered bins because there was a chance that the villagers would use it to store water or any other item. So we went ahead with the bins that came with the netted design. Next came the research on the cost of the bins and where we could buy it at good quality and affordable rates. The group in total had decided on the budget and how much each one wanted to contribute. Accordingly, we decided to buy it in bulk from a wholesale store in Chennai. To make our idea beneficial, we made sure we educated them on the usage of bins and the necessity of proper usage.

Another avenue where we could use our learnings was the Paisa Vasool event. The Karma Yoga team set up two stalls in this event; the first stall sold SHG products (bangles, earrings, photo frames, aloe vera gel, etc) made by self-help groups from different villages; and the second stall sold freshly made snacks (bajji, puttu, kuzhi paniyaram) and tea, made by women from Naduvakkarai and Kunavakkam. The different aspects that we had to analyze here were the demand, pricing, production and marketing.

For the food stall, we asked a sample of people what food would they prefer and accordingly finalized a menu based on the demand. The pricing was fixed in a way that would cover the costs as well as provide a reasonable rate for the consumers. When it came to the quantity produced, since we wanted to serve the food hot and fresh, a new batch was cooked as and when the existing batch was about to get over. Marketing was our key aspect in making our stall work. Over the period of three days, we used social media handles (official Great Lakes and the students handles), word of mouth advertising and discounts. Due to our marketing strategy, we also sold out all the products on the last two days of the event.



## SHARING OF EXPERIENCE



Shruthi A

Great Lakes is bringing in a sense of dedication to society through the Leadership Experiential Action Program (LEAP). I believe that Karma Yoga is an enriching process which transforms a student into a leader. This entire journey has been an eye-opening one which has taught me the importance of valuing other people as well the benefits of value addition. As a VR, I got to not only help the villagers, but also guide my team in every visit. I can personally say that Karma Yoga has changed my perspective of who I want to become. It has gotten me thinking on a better horizon. I have learnt to be more patient, understanding, caring, and want to do better things to impact more lives. Most of all, I have learnt to be a better person.





Congratulation VRs



Compiled by Sai Teja - FT201068 & Srujana - FT204083

