

KARMA YOGA

Leadership Experiential Action Program



Highlights of the Journey
January- March 2020

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

KARMA YOGA DAY

The *Karma Yoga* team celebrated its first KY day on the 7th of February 2020. KY day was organized to give an opportunity to the KY teams to showcase their efforts and activities that they have done in their villages over the last year. It was organized mainly so that the faculty of Great Lakes could also have an idea of what had happened in the past one year in the villages. Stalls were set up by each village where they showcased their activities through charts, pictures and scrapbooks. Products made by the villagers such as jewelry, candles, paper bags, religious idols, etc were also exhibited and sold. To quote a few, there was jewelry from Naduvakkarai, wax candles from Sooradimangalam, idols of Lord Ganesha from Kadambadi and the list goes on.



On this day, to make this initiative even more fruitful, "GRAMAPURA MARUTHUVAM", a book written by Dr. NS. Vyas (M.D. General Medicine) on homeopathic medicinal prevention and cure, was released by Uncle Bala. The book is about the common medical problems people face today and how villagers, right from their homes, can treat the same using the ingredients available at their home. Dr. Vyas, along with his wife Dr. Mrs. Jayanthi Vyas and colleague Dr. S. Mohan Raj graced this occasion with their presence. Along with the above esteemed guests, the event was also attended by Mr. Sadhasivam (Sub-Inspector, Mahabalipuram) who also created awareness about the Kavalan-SOS app, Professor Pramila Krishnan (University of Malaysia) and Professor Ramalingam (University of Malaysia) who had come down to Great Lakes to study about the *Karma Yoga* initiative. To make this evening more pleasant, there was live instrumental music by the very talented Mr. Patrick Rosario. His heart warming music was the icing on the cake for KY day.

The chief guests, Dr. Vyas, Mrs. Vyas, Professors Pramila Krishnan and Ramalingam also visited all the stalls, talked to the team members and scored each village on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest rating the efforts and activities done by the KY team members. The Dean, Dr. Suresh Ramanathan, his wife, Mrs. Kalpana Suresh and Uncle Bala also visited the stalls and also bought a few products to support the villagers. The overall revenue earned by each stall would go back to the villagers. Overall, the event was a success. The book is a must have for everyone. The *Karma Yoga* team's next plan of action is to distribute the book in the villages and ensure villagers are well aware and educated about such home remedies. The stalls who won the top three places will also be given their prizes on KY convention, scheduled on March 1st 2020.



8th ANNUAL KARMAYOGA CONVENTION

From past seven years *Karma Yoga* convention has been conducted in order to celebrate the beautiful bond that students of Great Lakes share with the adopted villages through the *Karma Yoga* program. This year as well the *Karma Yoga* convention was conducted with the same goal and enthusiasm. The buses left from college to pick up the villagers at 8:30am. The villagers along with their respective volunteers reached the venue around 10am and were welcomed with refreshing welcome drinks. The event started with the prayer song which was presented by VC Bhavya which instilled a sense of serenity in everyone. Further, just as any other event in India, the light lamping ceremony was carried out next. Dr Arulsamy honored the esteemed chief guests of the event, Shri Karmegam IAS and Smt Dr K. Santhakumari. This was followed by welcome address by Dr Arulsamy and the Dean of Great Lakes, Dr Suresh Ramanathan. After which the chief guests addressed the crowd.



The addressal of the dignitaries enlightened the students and they felt encouraged to pursue their dreams with passion and determination. The prize distribution was carried out next in which people were appreciated and encouraged for their good work. The cultural events started next which included a performance from the students of great lakes as well. All the villages participated with enthusiasm and the event gave the villagers a platform to showcase their talent. An event of this size cannot happen over a day, the wheels of preparation started rolling weeks in advance. All the VCs/VRs and volunteers put in a lot of groundwork and preparation along with constant help from the faculty of *Karma Yoga* which made the event a huge success.



Dr. RAY WHITTINGTON REPORT

On 5th December, 2019, the *Karma Yoga* team had the privilege to host Dr. Ray Whittington. As a part of his visit, he was given a briefing about what KY does, a viewing of the many items made by the women of Self-Help Groups of various village. Dr. Whittington was also given a tour of two villages to understand first hand the environment that the Karma Yogis work with and the purpose we want to accomplish. He was taken to Perumalchery Colony and Sooradimangalam. The villagers at Sooradimangalam had decorated their village, ready to welcome their guest

with pride. There was a sense of excitement among the villagers as they drew up the Kolam (Rangoli) and lit the lamps on their streets. When Dr. Whittington arrived, he was welcomed with a traditional flower garland and an aarti.



The VR of Sooradimangalam M.s Shruthi explained to Dr. Whittington about the brief history and background of the village, how they all once made a living from capturing and skinning snakes, soon left without employment after the government ban. The village had since grown, but still was under the threat of scarce employment opportunities, crippled with lack of infrastructure. Further, she explained that as a team, KY seeks to give them that security, but through holistic upliftment where they try to enable the villagers to enable themselves. The villagers expressed their gratitude to Uncle Bala, who provided them with structural housing, and showed Dr. Whittington the tree that they had erected in his honour. The villagers then gave Dr. Whittington a tour of their humble Temple dedicated to their Goddess Chelliyaamma and gave him a musical performance. Through this visit, the KY team hoped to have given Dr. Whittington an idea of how Karma Yoga is about giving back to the society, but not just monetarily, but through the upliftment of the spirit of people.

SUKRITI

Inter b-school competition on anti-plastic sustainable solution & sustainable solution for the development of village. Guests of honour are Dr. Arul samy, Prof. Preethi, and Prof. Priya. This event is conducted as a part of Lattitude 20, The core team members were Rachna Ranjan , Krithika G & Srujana Turlapati.



The event was a three-stage process organized by the *Karma Yoga* team under the college fest of Lattitude'2020. The first stage was an online quiz competition on the social and environmental issues in India. The second stage asked the shortlisted teams to submit PowerPoint presentation on the sustainable solution for a plastic free economy. The third stage was an in-campus activity where each team had to visit one different village, interact with the villagers and had to come up with the sustainable ways to develop that particular village. The teams visited the village on Day1 of the event and then give presentations of 10 minutes each. Three guests were invited to judge this

The event gained the attention of various b-schools pan India and shown participation of around 40 teams. The teams in the second stage presented new and innovative ways of anti-plastic solution. In the third and final round teams presented an optimal and sustainable developmental way for the betterment of villages they visited.



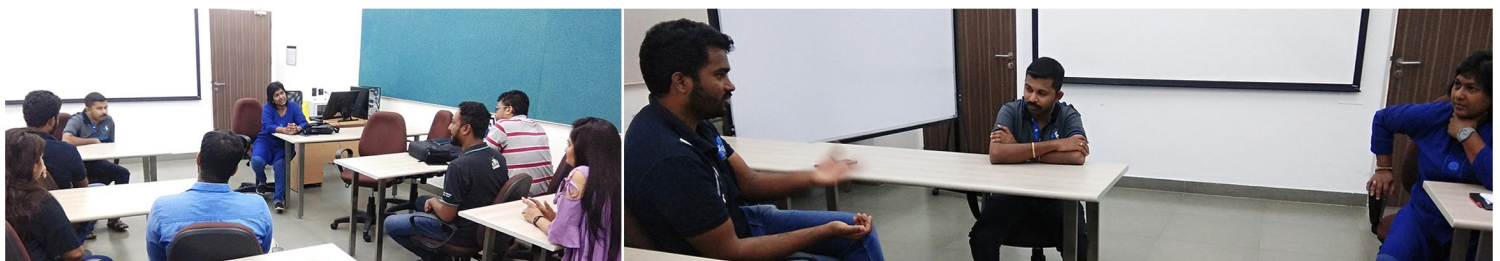
1st prize- Team Solutors, DoMS IIT MADRAS
1st runner up- Team Mind Benders, IMT Hyderabad

Meeting with Malaysian Professors

Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai was visited by two eminent Professors from Malaysia - Mr. Ramalinggam and Mrs. Pramela Krish. The objective of this visit was to understand the methodical, student driven approaches followed by Indian Institutions in implementing a successful and sustainable outreach program. The reason for the Professors visiting Great Lakes Institute of Management was because of its indigenous *Karma Yoga* Initiative. They were impressed by the success of the program and were looking to understand the reasons behind the success in order to implement a similar program in Malaysia. The Professors met a group of Village coordinators (VC's) to hear first-hand the various schemes and initiatives taken by the Village Coordinators in their respective villages.



The professors explained about the various problems faced by Indian origin students in Malaysia such as broken homes, gang influences, perceptions of society etc. After obtaining an understanding of the problems, the VC's brainstormed various solutions to tackle the issues by using similar experiences faced in their own designated villages. Some of the solutions presented was to have a permanent central administrative team to coordinate with student teams who would visit various regions on a frequent basis. Another idea was to have successful students from a similar background, share their experiences with younger students and inspire them to be role models for those students. Inculcating younger students into activities such as sports, dance, art, farming etc. was also suggested.



Overall, it was a very fruitful discussion where the *Karma Yoga* team was able to get a glimpse of Malaysian society while the professors were able to derive a lot of useful insights for the model program which they wished to implement. Future collaborations between foreign institutions and Great Lakes Institute of Management to implement real world initiatives and solutions would be most welcomed.

MEGHALA STATIONARY SHOP

Meghala, a specially abled woman of the village Kuzhipandandalam, was dependent on her family for support. She couldn't walk as her lower body was not functional. With the help of Edward sir, KY team was introduced to her. When the team spoke to her, she was very confident, and the team wanted to help her. After a lot of discussion with faculty of KY, the team decided that a stationery shop would be best for her to run. There were no stationery shops in the village although there were two schools and a junior college nearby. This was a win-win for all the villagers.

The major challenge for the team was to raise funds for the cause. The team started project "HERO" for the cause and other projects as well. Sidharth Satyabrat, a member of the KY team raised a huge amount of 9k single-handedly. There were several other contributions coming from Uncle Bala and students as well. The KY team thanks each and every one of them. The budget for the shop was 15k. This money was mainly spent on buying wooden shelves and the first set of stationery for Meghala to get revenue. Edward sir helped the team with wooden shelves. The KY team worked very hard to get the stationery



Ramya, the village coordinator of Kuzhipandandalam thanked the faculty members of Karma Yoga, Dean Dr. Suresh Srinivasan, beloved uncle Bala and all the students who have helped Meghala. Also, thanked her KY teammates Bobby John, Maadhusri U, Vrathi JB and Sidharth Satyabrat for their selfless efforts and hardwork. She expressed that helping Meghala by lending a helping hand in making her financially independent has instilled a sense of satisfaction in her. Ramya further says, "Cheers to Karma Yoga!!!".



CPR & FIRST AID TRAINING

The village of Veerapuram doesn't have a health care facility of its own. The people of the village need to travel up to 4 km to avail the health services. Further, unavailability of transportation makes the situation more difficult as there are no direct public vehicles. Due to these issues there is a need for villagers to get themselves equipped with knowledge about how to do First-Aid and CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation). So, the *karma yoga* team of Veerapuram decided to teach the children of the village the basics of first aid. With great support from HM of the community school and a professional trainer Mr. Neelagandan.S, the team was able to train up to 60 students. The session was quite successful as students performed exceptionally well and the KY team received great appreciation from the teachers. They had informed that they look forward to organizing many more such activities as they have realized the importance of them.



MEDICAL CAMP

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Karma Yoga volunteers from Great Lakes Institute of Management organised a mega medical camp with the active co-operation of 30 doctors, other medical and nursing staff from SRM medical college. The camp was organised and inaugurated by Dr. Arulsamy on 16th Feb, 2020 at Government Higher Secondary school at Vayalur village. People across 5 villages were given free medical check-up and free medicines. Pudupattinam, Vasuvasamudram, Ayappakam, Periyacolony and Vayalur were the 5 villages who participated in this medical camp. All means of transportation for the villagers were arranged by Great Lakes. Approximately 200 villagers benefitted from this free medical camp.



MOTIVATIONAL SESSIONS

On 03-02-2020 (Monday) *Karma Yoga* team organized a motivational class cum career guidance at Manamai Govt School for the tenth and twelfth students who are going to write a state board exam. Dr.Muthuraj, Assistant professor Great Lakes, invited as a special guest to deliver a motivational talk. The event began with welcome address by Mr.Edward, *Karma Yoga* staff. The special invitee who himself is a source of motivation to students, gave encouraging examples from his own life and inspired students to be a self-motivator. He discussed the importance of education and positive thinking which brings optimism into life and such constructive changes can make one brighter and more successful. This session helped students to be guided by a score a high marks and self-motivation. The students thanked the institution for all the support. The event concluded by gift distribution.

SWACHH VILLAGE DRIVE



Pulikundram Village had an open sewage which was unhygienic and caused smell and possibly diseases and allergies. To protect the villagers from the risk of the all the harms caused by it, the KY team of Pulikundram had been trying to fix it by giving them high quality pipe. However, since it was expensive, Edward Sir suggested that they can possibly arrange an extra pipe from construction site of college and hand over to the village. The KY team then contacted Shikhar Sir, who work for Great Lakes Construction work, collected the pipe from their site and handed it over to the villagers.

It was a happy moment for villagers. They soon fixed the sewage and have a more hygienic passage now. Ideas such as these happen due to the willingness and compassion that karma yoga teaches Great Lakers.

MOVIE SCREENING

The team of Vasuvasamuthiram screened the short film Makku using a projector. The KY team overcame technical glitches with teamwork and creative thinking. The children enjoyed the film and narrated the story after watching it. Further, the visit ended with the KY team playing cricket with the children and the children receiving chocolates from them.



DRAWING CLASSES

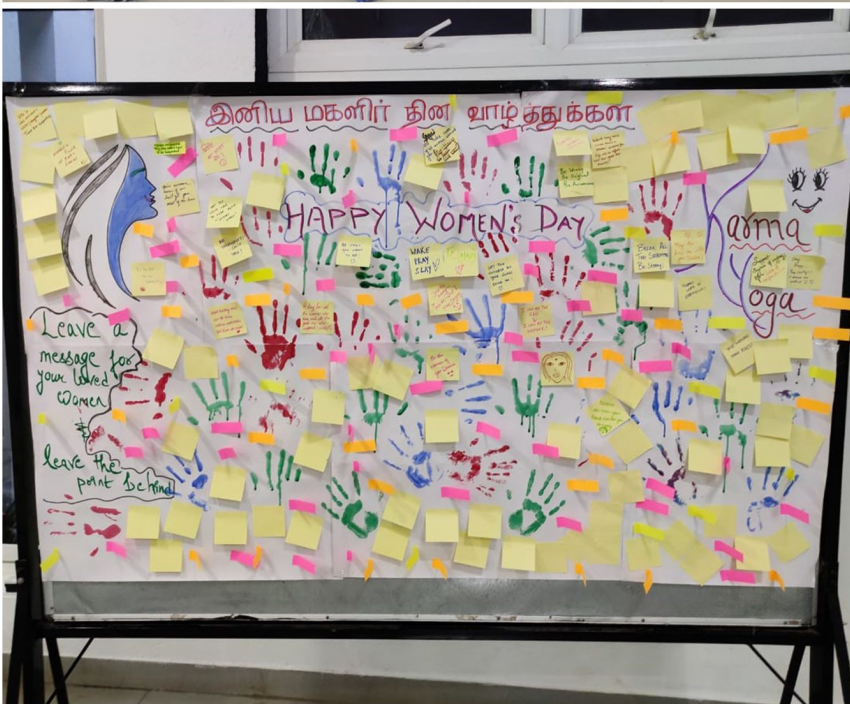
The team of Vasuvasamuthiram was accompanied by the student Sumit who is inclined towards Art and sketching. He runs the Instagram page for Sumittoons. He conducted Art class for the children along with the KY team and taught the kids the basics of sketching. The kids were enthusiastic to learn and were inquisitive to understand the techniques of sketching.



WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

In Great Lakes campus, we come across many ladies who help us to keep our rooms and campus clean, who work in the canteen and in other areas. Being busy in our packed schedule, we often forget to express our gratitude towards these ladies. On this Women's day, team *Karma Yoga* took this opportunity to say "Thank You" to every Sodexo lady staff and to make them feel special. The *Karma Yoga* team had some donations from Paisa Vasool event in the form of bangles and earrings and also some unsold SHG products. We donated all these to the ladies and had little fun activities with them.

In addition, team KY encouraged each and every one to dedicate a few words for women in their lives on the message board that was set up for the occasion of Women's Day.



TREE PLANTATION DRIVE

On the 4th of March 2020, the Naduvakkarai team started its journey to the village with a goal of planting tree saplings in the village. They bought 6 saplings (2 lemon, 2 guava and 2 mango) to be planted in the village. The saplings were planted around the pond in the village. All the children gathered to help them achieve the goal. The team dug a 3 by 3 feet hole, added a different soil, fertilizer (cow dung) and watered it before they put the sapling inside. After the sapling was inside, they covered it with sand again and watered the plant. The next plan of action of the team is to protect the plants with small fences so that goats don't chew on them. The children of the village had promised to water the plants daily and take good care of it.

ORPHANAGE VISIT

This was the second activity of the *Karma Yoga* team at the orphanage. Last time they visited the orphanage on 25th December, 2019 to spend Christmas with the kids. The *Karma Yoga* team gifted them badminton, volleyball and other sport items along with sanitary napkins donated by the ladies of Great Lakes. During the visit, the team came to know that the kids at the orphanage do not have access to books which are not related to their academics. Great Lakers had taken a pledge to add books to their library so that they can access new sources of knowledge. KY team collected donations from Great Lakers and with the assistance of students they were able to procure more than 60 books of various genres.



The team visited the orphanage on 3rd March. After seeing the joy of the kids and winning their love, they realized that this is what *Karma Yoga* is about. This is what they had been trying to do all year; to bring happiness to lives. As they returned to college, each and every member had a feelings of satisfaction and happiness. This was an activity that had them emotionally attached and the volunteers lived every moment of this visit.

MEMORY BUILDING EXERCISES

On 13th February'20 evening, the team of Naduvakkarai had planned on conducting exercises for the children that will improve their memory. For the first exercise, all participants (children and team members) sit in a circle. The kids chose the topic of animals. We start with person A who says "lion", then person B says "lion, tiger", then person C says "lion, tiger, elephant" and it goes on till the last person. The idea is to see how well the children are focussing on what the other participants are saying and how orderly is their list. A lot of the kids were able to remember it well and a few of them struggled, but they didn't give up and that was more important. We also played a second round using favourite food items. At the end of the exercise, the team distributed chocolates to keep them motivated. To conclude this visit, the KY team also had a dance session with the children.



CONSTRUCTION PIPE DONATION

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KARMAYOGA EXPERIENCE

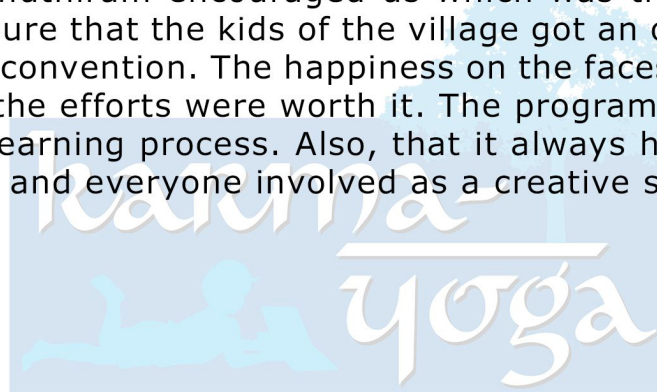


SRUJANA

The experiential learning program of *Karma Yoga* has been an immense learning experience. It gave me an opportunity to put into practice all the learnings of leadership that I have learnt throughout the years.

I was initially the village coordinator of Sooradimangalam and later on I became the village coordinator of Vasuvasamuthiram. Both the villages had kids who were always enthusiastic to learn and were excited to use the computer. During the course of my journey, one of

the most challenging tasks was to keep the team motivated. With language being a barrier, I understood that it will take patience and creativity to work effectively. Initially, we spoke to the presidents of the villages, to the people of the villages, conducted various surveys to understand their pain points and the areas where we can help them. With that information we decided to work on helping children with computer education and English language learning as these would add on to their employability skills. Every visit was challenging but at the same time at the end of every visit we would return with the contention that we could do out bit for the villagers. Further, the head-mistress of Vasuvasamuthiram encouraged us which was tremendously helpful. With her help, we could ensure that the kids of the village got an opportunity to present vil-lupatu on karma yoga convention. The happiness on the faces of the kids made me and my team feel that all the efforts were worth it. The program has taught me that leadership is a perpetual learning process. Also, that it always helps to keep an open dialogue with your team, and everyone involved as a creative solution is what it takes to



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KARMAYOGA EXPERIENCE



CHINMAY

The rural immersion program at *Karma Yoga* has been a truly enriching and humbling experience for me. It was a step towards understanding the socio-economic culture of rural India.

Being the village coordinator of a small village named Perumalcherry Colony, I had the honor and privilege of leading a team of highly motivated individuals and working for some truly special people. Without a common language or a common way of living, I knew that I had a job that would get my hands full. In

the initial days, we tried to analyze and understand different facets of their daily lives and the areas that we could work on. Once we understood what the people wanted and what our capabilities were, we decided to work on education, sports, arts, health, and sanitation. Whatever we did, the kids played a major role in all the activities in every way possible. We applied many concepts from our regular classes in the implementation of various activities and could appreciate how all my theoretical knowledge was being put to practice. The love that we received from the people, the way they looked up to us as a glimmer of hope, filled up our hearts with warmth and it further encouraged us to work. The team of 11 volunteers made sure that every plan that we had drawn up at the start of the curriculum was taken up to the finish. The experiences at Karma Yoga humbled me and made me realize the privileges we take for granted. I promise to come back to Perumalcherry whenever possible to meet these families especially the kids and I am positive that the bright and young children of the village will blossom into smart, responsible citizens of tomorrow.

I came out of the program a changed man, a socially conscious adult, with a greater understanding of the life in rural India.

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KarmaYoga Convention



Mr. Edward
Senior Executive KY



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