**Volunteering in government schools**

**Note**: This document is prepared based on our exposure and experience of working with government schools in **Karnataka and Telangana**. Ground realities may vary from state to state.

**Background**:

Education landscape has been going through tremendous changes with more and more private schools coming up even in rural areas. This has led to more segregation where children from only the poorest and most neglected families attend government schools. With the introduction of RTE which dictates private schools to allot 25% seats for deprived classes, the brighter lot of children from govt schools are migrating to private schools and this has led to even greater demotivation for teachers in govt schools.

At Youth for Seva, volunteers are working in govt schools in Bengaluru and Hyderabad as well as other district and Taluk centres. Based on the experience, following proposed activities for volunteers are prepared.

Part 1 covers interventions that can be done by volunteers and NGOs without much financial requirement.

Part 2 covers interventions that can be done with corporate funding and help of volunteers.

**Target groups in class rooms:**

We shall group students as “**Above average**”, “**Average**”, and “**Blow Average**” based on academic learning standards. We acknowledge that a student who is below average in studies may have extra-ordinary talent in some other field. We shall group such talented kids as “**Stars**” who may be in any of the three groups academically.

**Stake holders for government schools**

Following groups of people play important roles in enhancing the quality of school

* Principal/HM
* Teachers (Inspired, dutiful, uninterested)
* Children (Above-average, average, below-average)
* Parents
* SDMC
* Alumni from the school
* Educated youth in the community
* Successful people with roots in the village but settled in cities now

**Part 1: Volunteer interventions**

**Activity #1 – Kannada/Telugu reading competency**

Gap: Many students in class 4 and above are unable to read and write Kannada.

Target group: Below Average, but activity is conducted for all.

Details of Activity:

* Simple easy to read story cards to be given to schools by YFS. Based on their current level of reading ability, books can be selected. YFS will short list story books for various levels. We can reuse some of the material prepared by Akshara foundation, Pratham and other organisations.
* Buddy reading: Pair up a student who is better at reading with a student who needs support for reading. Peer learning helps both of them develop required skills.
* Provide incentives for learning: Give prizes for students who read completely or who can narrate the story that they have read.

Frequency: Weekly is optimal. Twice a month is also okay.

Resources:

**Activity #2–Basic maths concepts**

Gap: Many students in class 4 and above are unable to do basic maths operations.

Target group: Below Average, but others can be included.

Details of Activity:

* A maths kit will be provided by YFS which will have visual teaching aids. These aids are prepared by volunteers themselves. Initial kit is provided from YFS office.

Frequency: Weekly. College student volunteers can also do daily classes for 10-15 days during vacation time.

Reference:  <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxWlHsIoCtrl-k5zd33RYUgwcSNGs07GG>

**Activity #3: Monthly one day program for above-average students**

Gap: Students who are bright and are capable of reaching greater heights are not nurtured to grow to their full potential.

Target group: Above-average

Details of Activity: This activity can be done once a month in a Taluk centre where we get shortlisted bright students of class 6-10 from nearby 10-20 schools. This activity will require identifying resource persons and also some monetary support to arrange for transportation of students and honorarium for resource persons.

* Activities for these children will focus on
  + Creative thinking
  + Problem solving
  + Self-study skills
  + Different ways of acquiring knowledge

Reference: GyanPrabodhini school in Pune has developed a module of 96 hours for this target group.

**Activity #4: NMMS coaching for 7thstd students**

Gap: Students who are bright and are capable of clearing NMMS exam do not get coaching.

Target group: Above-average students in class 7

Details of Activity: Volunteers will shortlist few students who have the potential to clear the exams and provide coaching.

* + Weekly once or twice volunteers must coach students starting from July. Exams are held in November
  + Volunteers shall assist in completing required paperwork for the students to enrol.

Reference: YFS-Hyderabad has successfully implemented this program in over 80 schools in 2016. Books are available for coaching NMMS.

**Activity #5: Kathakar**

Gap: There is not much focus on instilling values among students.

Target group: All students of any class

Details of Activity: Volunteers will tell inspiring stories once a week or twice a month to students. A collection of stories with audio can be prepared as a resource for volunteers.

**Activity #6:Orientation for starting own business**

Gap: There is too much dependency on finding jobs after studies. Many youth are let waiting for jobs for years after they complete graduation or drop out after 10th or 12th.

Target group: 10thstd, 12thstd and final year degree students

Details of Activity: A one or two days workshop to ignite thinking about starting own business.

**Activity #7: Hand writing improvement workshop for 2 days (Kannada)**

Gap: There is no emphasis on improving one’s hand-writing. Good handwriting gives confidence to students.

Target group: Students in class 5 and above

Details of Activity: A 2 days workshop on improving handwriting.

Resource person: HS Sriramakrishna (Rtd. Kanada teacher from Vijaya High School, Bengaluru)

**Activity #8: Hand writing improvement workshop for 2 days (English)**

Gap: There is no emphasis on improving one’s hand-writing. Good handwriting gives confidence to students.

Target group: Students in class 8 and above

Details of Activity: A 2 days workshop on improving handwriting.

Resource person: Dr.Anish

**Activity #9: Summer camp for students during summer vacation.**

Gap: Few days in summer holidays can be well utilizes to identify and nurture talents.

Target group: Students in class 5 and above

Details of Activity: Summer camps can be of 3-7 days from 10am-4pm.

**Activity #10: Guru Vandana, Sewa Diwas and Yodhavandana**

Gap: Absence of structured programs to instil values of patriotism, honouring the teachers and serving the society,

Target group: Students in class 5 and above

Details of Activity:

* Detailed document is available for each of these activities.

**Activity #11: Career guidance for students**

Gap: Absence of guidance after 10th, 10th and final year degree about options.

Target group: 10thstd, 12thstd and final year degree students

Details of Activity:

* One day workshop about various career possibilities and the preparation required for them.
* For final yr degree students, interview facing skills can be taught

**Activity #11: Dignity for all professions (Interactions with parents)**

Gap: Lack of dignity for many rural professions like farming, pottery, etc. And lack of ownership and participation by parents in school affairs.

Target group: Any class between 5-9

Details of Activity:

* Every month one or two parents of children in a class will be invited to the class.
* They shall share their experience and expertise about their work.
* Children can ask questions and seek clarifications
* School shall honour the parents.

**Part 2: Activities which require funding and volunteers**

**Activity #1 –Computer lab setup and sponsoring a computer teacher**

Gap: Students in govt schools lack exposure to computers.

Target group: All students class 6 and above.

**Activity #2 –Chiguru and talent nurturing**

Gap: Lack of motivation and support to competitive spirit of students’ talents

Target group: All students class 4 and above

Details of Activity:

* Talented students from every school will be selected and trained by volunteers, for different competitions
* Students will display their talents on Chiguru day in front of lot of volunteers, teachers, judges, guests
* Talented students get training from professionals of respective category

Frequency : Annually

**Activity #3–Mobile science lab**

**Activity #4–Teachers workshops for enhancing their motivation and competency**

**Activity #5–Crash course for 10thstd students for 7 days to 1 month.**

**Activity #6–Infrastructure : Toilets, science lab or science theme park, etc.**

**How to source volunteers ?**

* College students in the town
* Educated home makers
* People with roots in the village/Taluk for workshops on business enterprise, career guidance, etc.
* Inspired teachers from nearby schools.