

## DRAG Annual Report 2017-2018

DRAG works among deprived communities in order to provide a platform for the concerned people to become aware of their rights, and at the same time impart education to both children and adults, create awareness of environment, health, facilitate /allow them to them to learn skills and develop their creativity, as well as enjoy themselves.

### BACKGROUND :

2018 is DRAG's 30<sup>th</sup> year. It started working with the tribals in Maharashtra in 1987 and was registered as a trust in 1988. Many of the tribals were oustees of the (...) dam others lived in remote hamlets and suffered from constant shortage of water, illiteracy, financial difficulties, etc. DRAG started literacy classes for children and adults, informed them about the benefits allowed them through ITDP and IRDP schemes, helped them started small businesses, provided training in bidi and agarbatti making. After working for five years with 25 hamlets in Raigad district, it shifted base to Delhi where it initially focused on environment, particularly the Delhi Ridge and other environmental and heritage issues of Delhi.

It then started a school in the slums of Kusumpur Pahari behind the elite Vasant Vihar colony and worked there for a few years, holding the school in the open air. It also conducted literacy classes for women and waste management with the residents of the area.

DRAG purchased a two acre plot in Haryana's rural belt where sandstone mining for construction was devastating the Aravalis, an area which is of supreme importance to Delhi's climate. In 2000 it started a demonstration project to show villagers that their holdings could become sustainable and support a small family, thus providing them with an alternative means of earning their living rather than selling their land to outsiders, which resulted in the degradation of the land and the scrub forest. 2000.

In 2002 it established a school in Mohan Garden, west Delhi, for the children of migrants. At that time there were very few schools in the area and the DRAG Vikas Kendra school fulfilled a need. Over the years the school has strived to come up with original activities with the children apart from education. This had also been the aim in Kusumpur Pahari where DRAG got funding from the Department of Women and Child Welfare on the basis of its novel project proposal in the field of child education. DRAG also provides vocational training for young adults in computers and tuition in maths and English.

The DRAG Women's Centre 2002 is also based in an adjoining area of Mohan Garden. For the women the activities offered include sewing stitching, beauty culture. Besides that, there are computer training classes and tuition in maths and English for those who are going to mainstream schools but need tuition.

DRAG Vikas Kendra School :

# **DRAG ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

## **Development Research & Action Group**

### **BACKGROUND :**

Income in money terms is not all. Despite the unprecedented opulence in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, poverty persists along with unfulfilled basic needs. DRAG has strived to fulfill some of these basic needs, starting from its tribal project in Maharashtra.

In Delhi, since it started working there in 1992, DRAG intervened with other NGOs at the state level in the field of environment and then went on to education. In Mohan Garden it established a school, a three-storey structure, the building of which had its up and downs, fulfilling a need in the area which had very few schools in 2000.

Along with education, it specifically tried to create awareness of environment, importance of hygiene, civic responsibility, development of creativity, games, etc.

In Mohan Garden it has a school, the DRAG Vikas Kendra school and a Women's Centre. It also has a 2 acre farm in Manger village, Haryana. It initially served as a demonstration plot to show farmers that their land could be sustainable and support a family of five. However major changes in the area have resulted in farmers, who find tilling the soil difficult and who barely manage to eke out a living, being attracted by the ready money flowing into their pockets, started selling their land left and right. The beauty of Manger resulted in a further danger : the Haryana government wanted to make a tourist resort there and promoters bought up the reserved forest around the Manger bani. Now DRAG's concern with the environment was always paramount and in view of the above, it decided to grow trees that would act as a carbon sink, but also provide fuel, fodder and fruit. The latter was again to show farmers the benefits of growing trees.

### **I – The DRAG Vikas Kendra**

The school provides education to children between the ages of 3-12. It runs a pre-nursery, nursery and a primary school from classes I to V. It follows the syllabus set by the MCD and thereafter children who complete class V are encouraged to join mainstream education. In the school DRAG also offers vocational training in sewing/stitching and basic computer skills and also tuition in maths and English.

The school principal is Madhu Agarwal, a dynamic lady, who is a good administrator and manages to maintain discipline as well as cohesiveness in the school.

The break up of children was as follows :

Level	No. of children
Nursery	30
KG	20
Class 1	19

Class II	20
Class III	22
Class IV	23
Class V	25
Total	159
Maths tuition	25
Afternoon tuition	60
English tuition	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>279</b>

Vocational	No. of students
Computer training	48
Sewing/stitching	30
Beauty culture	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>389</b>

### Staff 17 members

#### Teacher's Name

- Mrs.Madhu Aggarwal, Principal
- Mrs.Gudiya Devi, Nursery
- Miss. Pooja Shakya, K.G.
- Mrs. Mamta Bisht, Ist
- Miss. Kavita, IInd
- Miss. Jeenat, IIIrd
- Miss Shama, IVth
- Miss Pooja Gairola, Vth
- Mr. Vikas Kumar, Computer Basic
- Mrs. Seema Devi, Stitching and Tailoring
- Mrs. Simran Kaur, Beauty Culture
- Mr. Rishikesh Rish, Maths Tuition
- Mr. Pankaj Kumar, English Speaking Course
- Mrs. Archana Gupta, afternoon Tuition
- Miss Neha Shrivastav, afternoon Tuition

- Ram Parkash, watchman
- Archana, helper

### **Appointment and Departure**

- Mamta Dutta, the Vice-Principal has resigned, we therefore do not need the salary of the Vice Principal in this session.
- In November Miss. Kavita was appointed to replace Mrs. Mamta Dutta for class II.
- In December Mrs. Manju was dismissed and Neha Shrivastav was appointed for afternoon tuition.
- In January Rishikesh joined DRAG in replacement of Shweta for the maths class.
- A new English teacher, Pankaj Kumar was appointed. He has a B.A. and B. Ed degree and 4 years teaching experience.

### **Activities**

DRAG introduced a scholarship scheme for talented and needy students. A parents meeting was organized on 8.10.2016 to explain the scholarship scheme in which Patricia Montalto was present. Forms were distributed to parents on January 4, 2017.

This scheme is being handled by Soni Singh, a lawyer and voluntary worker with DRAG.

Other activities include :

- DRAG was whitewashed and painted in 15 days.
- DRAG painted, repaired and purchased new doors for four toilets.
- The carpenter did the wood work in the Computer class room.
- Three black cement boards were made.
- Two tube lights were purchased for the stitching class and the office.
- Teachers meeting was held to discuss –
  - The poor attendance of some students.
  - Republic day function.
  - Teaching methods.
- The system of a contract letter for teachers was introduced by which teachers undertook to stay for the session instead of leaving the school when they wished. They were also asked to suggest the name of a teacher when they left.
- Discussion on cleanliness awareness was held to keep the school tidy and clean. In February, Madhu Aggarwal and Vijay Sharma of the Women's Centre visited Bachpan School to discuss teaching methods and materials used for Nursery and K.G. classes.
- Patricia Montalto has initiated a new project namely a roof garden in the school and work has started on above project.
- The office, outside and toilet lights were repaired.
- Ali Ahmed, mechanic, repaired our sewing machine under Seema Devi's observation.
- Priya Sen gave a geography lesson to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes. She also conducted a pottery class in which the student's made Lord Ganesh, diyas, peacock and snake
- R.O. drinking water machine was installed to provide hygienic drinking water to the school

- All pictures were uploaded on DRAG facebook and Gautam Vohra's facebook.

Several visitors came to our school over the year. They were:-

- Sarah Loveless Jones-a marathon runner from America. She showed teachers how to teach students without the black board.
- David, Patricia's brother who lives in Canada, visited the school.
- Geri Johnson who has a lot of teaching experience gave us a talk on teaching methods.
- Mrs. Simran Chadda, lecturer in Delhi University.
- Madam Kaori Kawa from Japan along with her two friends visited the school accompanied by the DRAG Co-ordinator Mrs.Vijay Sharma. They all liked our hospitality. Our children sang a welcome song for them.

### New Purchases

- DRAG purchased beauty products
- Teachers' teaching materials.
- Three flex boards for the walls.
- A saree for Shweta's, the maths teacher, marriage.
- Items were bought for the school as per the recommendations of Essel Foundation :
- Beauty products
- 6 new Computers
- Syllabus books for all classes (Nursery to 5th )
- Office stationary/toys/register
- 2 second hand computers
- 4 display boards
- Projector
- Display screen (for Projector)
- Home Theater
- Whirlpool R.O.
- Inverter
- Mike
- 4 Carpets

### Celebrations

- We celebrated Diwali, Republic day, Christmas day, New Year, Saraswati Pooja ,Holi and Annual Function. Sweets and gifts were distributed to the students.
- **Independence day.** The children sang patriotic songs, accompanied by dances. . Refreshments were served afterwards to all present.
- **Janmasthanmi**, Shama, Jeenat and Pooja did a fantastic job with the costumes which they had made themselves. Sweets and snacks were distributed to the children and the staff.
- **Raksha Bandhan** Pooja Shakya and Mamta Rawat did a skit on the bond between brother and sister. All boys gifted girls chocolates as a gift and promise to protect and girls put a tilak on their forehead and tied rakhi on their wrists.
- **Teacher's Day**- 5th class students took part in it. They played the teacher's role very well. We gave a pen and a register to all participants. Refreshments were served.

## Visitors to the School

- Ms. Niharika from Essel foundation.
- Mr. Hitesh from Essel foundation visited the school and discussed, made suggestions on the following topics : improvements in the School, putting up charts on the walls, the vice principal's post, short term courses, public advertisements, increasing salaries and student strength.
- In December, Mr. Hitesh visited the school. He checked all the registers and the overall condition of the institute and teaching methods and told us to invite Mrs. Nayyar for the Annual day program on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- Mr. Pete Harwood took the English class and gave simple activities to the children.
- Soni Singh visited the school for the new scholarship scheme for needy and talented students. Parents meeting to discuss the scheme and verify the documents took place in her presence. Scholarship meeting and interview session took place on 1st and 2nd February.
- Vijay Sharma, DRAG Co-ordinator, went to the school for group discussion with students and staff and gave a talk on general health awareness and small family. In January Vijay Sharma visited the school to check overall progress and development.

Madhu Aggarwal  
Principal

DRAG Vikas Kendra

Vikas Kunj, Mohan Garden  
Uttam Nagar  
New Delhi

## **II - Women's Centre :**

The Women's Centre is located at A-30 Mohan Garden. It caters to women, young adults and also children who come for tuition in Maths and English. It also offers other activities like dancing and aerobics and is also open to other occasional courses such as self-defence in collaboration with the police, the municipality, etc.

Break-up of students :

Computers	31
Beauty culture	19
Stitching/Tailorint	14
English	14

Maths	14
Aerobics	14

In the first session the average number of students was 106, but the yearly average comes to 120-150 students. One of the reasons for this variation is due to school students who come for a short time, for example during vacations, then leave to rejoin the school when it re-opens.

## **Staff**

There are eight teachers and one office helper in the DRAG Women's Centre :

Vijay Sharma	Project coordinator
Neha Bhati	Computer Teacher in morning
Yashma Kaundal	Stitching Teacher
Jyoti Thakur	Beauty Culture Teacher
Akram	Maths teacher
Pradeep Gupta	English teacher
Sunil Kumar	Computer teacher in Afternoon
Manoj Arya	Aerobics teacher
Asha	Office Helper

## **Completion of courses and certificates :**

Stitching tailoring : certificates were awarded to Pooja and Deepali. They are working in a stitching centre.

Mamta, Rama, Samta have completed the course and are working from home.

Computer : Certificates were given to Khushboo, Shalu, Pritam, Brijesh, Vandana, Poonam, Minal and Shilpi. They have got jobs in an office.

In the second session six students in the Computer class were given Certificates : Rekha, Preeti, Nikita, Ashu, Beenu and Vandana.

Beauty Culture : Kajal and Geeta were given certificates

## **Other Activities :**

A new six monthly aerobics course was started. It is only for women from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. The participants wear a white t-shirt with a green logo and green leggings and look very professional.

MCD Officials visited the centre twice to educate the women and students about dengue and chikungunya. How to tackle the menace and the treatment recommended. We were also invited to attend a meeting at the local MLA's office

Under Patricia Montalto's guidance the women made clay jewelry and paper collage boxes for an exhibition and sale at Delhi's elite shop, Good Earth, in Khan Market. The women went to Good Earth and were most impressed by the shop. We celebrated Children Day and prizes were given to outstanding students of all the classes.

There was also a fashion show with the women wearing the clay jewelry and prizes were given for the best jewelry.

An award was also given to the best teacher.

A mehndi competition for the beauty culture students was organized. Ms. Priya Sen was invited to judge the competition.

Students and teachers together re-decorated the front wall of DRAG. They painted the wall and created a colorful garden.

Mrs. Vijay Sharma, the DRAG Co-ordinator, gave a talk on health awareness at the DRAG school for the students and teachers.

During the second session 18 girls studying in class 12 from Sarvodya Kanya Girls Government School came for training during their vacations in stitching. This is a requirement by their school and earns them points. A certificate by the DRAG Women's Centre is given to the School to this effect.

#### **Visitors to the Women's Centre:**

Ms. Kakori Kawa visited the centre with two of her Japanese friends.

Ms. Montalto's brother David also visited the Centre.

Alex Smith from Australia came with the Hon. Secretary Priya Sen

Gary Johnson who was principal of the American School visited the Centre with Ms. Montalto.

#### **Celebrations :**

Ms. Priya Sen came to the Centre for Mother's Day and Independence Day and gave a talk.

A festival was organized on the occasion of Haryali Teej, and Teacher's Day

Ms. Olivia Rosen came to celebrate Christmas with the students.

Republic Day, Diwali, Women's Day and Holi were also celebrated.

#### **Purchases :**

Two new computers have been purchased

Four other computers were given to us.

Beauty Products were bought along with a chair for Beauty Culture class

New curtains were also purchased

Repair work undertaken at the Centre :

Motherboard of one computer

Water tank motor

Toilet water tank

Future plan for 2017-2018 :

There is a plan to start a new course in NTT/NTP (nursery teachers' training) in the coming year for 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class pass girl students. It will be a one year or two year diploma course. With this training the girls can get jobs with a better pay scale

Vijay Sharma  
Co-ordinator  
DRAG Women's Centre

### **III - The DRAG farm, Manger village, Haryana**

Farming is about water. DRAG had many adventures digging borewells in this rocky outcrop of the Aravalis. In the initial stages it had taken to farming on a small scale, but with the water table depleting and borewells choking up with debris, it had decided to grow trees that would provide fuelwood, fodder and fruit and shade in this. Vegetables would be grown for the use of the gardener living in the farm. They of course required initial nurturing, but once the trees had grown there was no major need of constant watering. And a little bit of wilderness was a bit of heaven.

The DRAG farm is one of two patches of green in the village. One of course is the Manger bani, the reserved forest surrounding the temple. What we call the DRAG farm is actually a forest, as we had so decided.

During the monsoon the wall on the western boundary had collapsed, so the person who bought the land to the south-west of our farm, built a high boundary wall between the two farms. This will protect us from such mishaps in the future. Praveen had to clear the mud that had piled up and level it out. It was quite a task. Large stones had also fallen which had to be removed. However we were lucky as stones are in demand and someone came and took them away in a tractor.

We had been told that though no authorization would be given for getting heavy machinery for digging borewells, but the government would be laying pipes and that residents could take water for domestic use but not for farming as this water would be limited. This work would be started in a month and water would be available after 3-4 months.

On the farm the changing seasons are so evident. In winter the trees are bare and the branches stand out dark and lace-like. Light filters through to the ground. In spring the leaves turn a fresh green. Soon flowers make their appearance – specially the red orange of the dhak and the semal trees. Then come the pink and white of the bougainvillea and the purple of the kachnar.

Towards summer the laburnum is covered in yellow bunches, undeterred by the intense heat in

which everything else is wilting. Every one waits expectantly for the monsoon. The watering chore is no longer necessary. The forest turns a dense green, almost black. The pink of the bougainvillea flowers is washed away by the rain. Apart from the different shades of green there is no colour. The canopy is so thick that there is hardly any sun filtering through. The undergrowth too is thick, where the sun hits it the leaves appear a fluorescent green. And the mushrooms! Everywhere. So tempting. A pity we can't eat them.

During the monsoon the pits around the farm fill up with water. Buffaloes can be seen wallowing in the water, impervious to the herons sitting on their back, enjoying the view.

Somebody in the village has kept a baby deer as a pet. We see it tethered outside their house. Maybe it got lost and it is an act of kindness, because one doesn't like to think that it was forcibly taken away for the delight of some family.

After the monsoon Praveen has the task of clearing the undergrowth, especially of subabul, which makes it nigh impossible to walk. He had collected the dead wood and broken branches and lined them up. It was quite a lot. He was supposed to distribute the wood to the villagers. However Praveen is not a person to be hurried. Over time he gave some away, but mostly his larger family used it for their own use.

The farm has been getting visitors. We had the DRAG staff come for a picnic last year. They enjoyed themselves climbing trees and taking part in the treasure hunt that had been organized. This year the older school children came. They collected different leaves and bird feathers found in the farm. They enjoyed the typical picnic fare : sandwiches, fruit and sweets. On their return to the school there was a nature lesson. The leaves and feathers were pinned up and identified.

The farm visit and activities are put up on Facebook once a week.

Achievements :

School :

DRAG lays stress on creativeness and through the various activities and visitors the children can widen their horizons. Throughout the year crafts, games, painting, pottery form part of the activities. Pete Harwood who had tried to increase awareness of sound and music the year before came again this year and also gave English lessons. The children were taught paper crafts and also had a painting competition. A geography lesson focused on the polar region through a slide show widening their knowledge and also teaching them important geographical concepts.

A scholarship scheme was started for deserving students on the basis of their family's income, helping them financially to join mainstream education.

Approximately half the students were given certificates on completion of their training in the vocational courses.

Women's Centre :

Practical and creative activities were introduced this year in the Women's Centre. Self-defense training by the Delhi police, clay jewelry by Ms. Montalto with the chance of putting up an exhibition in a high end store, aerobics, a health awareness talk...

19 certificates were awarded to the students in the various subjects and many have secured jobs thereafter.

Farm : The dense forest DRAG has created on the farm is a beacon and can be seen from far off – patch of wilderness in the otherwise practically treeless landscape. Nature is allowed to take its course and no chemical fertilizers are used. This year teachers from the school and the Women’s Centre came to the farm for a picnic. It was important for them to know about this DRAG project which hitherto they had only heard about.

Highest and lowest salaries :

The highest salary is that of the project coordinator and the school principal Rs. 13,000 + Rs. 2000 conveyance, the lowest is that of the helper in the Women’s Centre Rs. 2500.

Staff salaries :

Project coordinator	Rs. 13,000 + 2000
Principal	Rs. 13000 + 2000
School teachers	Rs. 4000
Vocational teachers (tailoring, beauty culture)	
- DRAG School	Rs. 5,500
-Women’s Centre	Rs. 5000
Watchman	Rs. 7,500
Farm supervisor	Rs. 7000
English teacher (school)	Rs. 8000 (two shifts)
English teacher (Women’s Centre)	Rs. 5000
Maths teacher (School)	Rs. 8000 (two shifts)
Maths (Women’s Centre)	Rs. 5000
Computer (School)	Rs. 8000 (two shifts)
Computer (Women’s Centre)	Rs. 5000
Helper (School)	Rs. 3500
Helper (Women’s Centre)	Rs. 2500

Details of total cost of national/international travel by board members and personnel

No such travel took place therefore no cost was incurred by DRAG

Gender Ratio :

There are 13 women and 4 men employed in the school

There are 5 women and 4 men in the Women’s Centre

Governing Board :

Chairman	Dr. Gautam Vohra
Hon. Secretary	Ms. Priya Sen
Treasurer	Rajan Narang
Members	Prof. Veena Ravikumar
	Alka Keshav Bakshi
	Mrs. Vijay Sharma
	Mrs. Madhu Agarwal

Remuneration/Reimbursement

The board members do not receive any remuneration or reimbursement from DRAG

Salary and Benefits to the Head

The Chairman does not receive a salary. He is given no benefits. This is an honorary post.

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