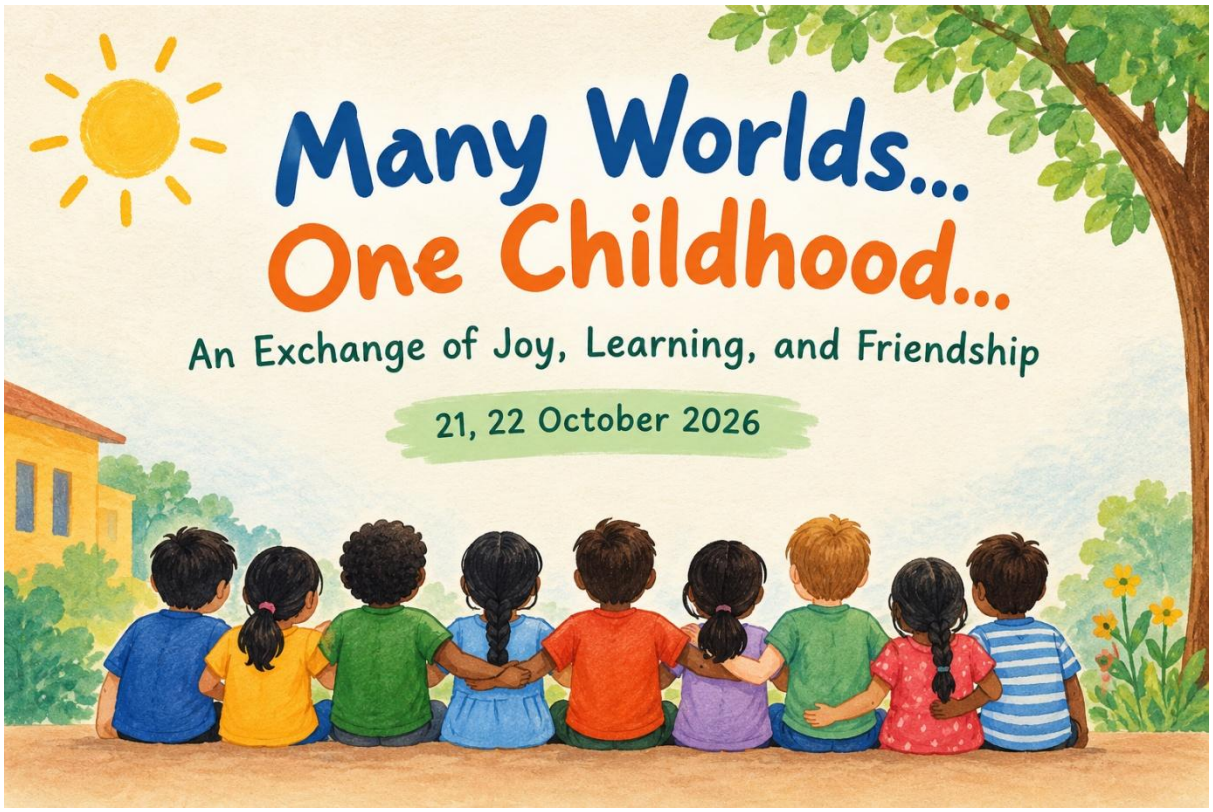

A two-day children's exchange programme was held at Madurai Seed on 21 and 22 September, with the participation of **12 (Grade 5) students and 3 staff** from Kodaikanal International School **(KIS)**. The programme included group interactions, games, gardening, library work, cultural presentations and other activities. It provided an opportunity for the children from both groups to meet, interact and participate in activities together. This is the second time KIS kids visiting Madurai Seed after a few years, thanks to the teacher Ms Pearlin.

Welcome and Getting to Know Each Other

The programme began with a traditional welcome for the visiting students and staff from Kodaikanal International School. The KIS students were seated on one side, while the Madurai Seed children and volunteers were seated on the other side. The children introduced themselves to one another, followed by a brief introduction to Madurai Seed and its work.

The children asked each other questions about their schools, subjects, hobbies and extra-curricular activities such as music and sports. The interaction also brought out some differences in their school experiences. For the KIS students, it was new to hear about government schools, the breakfast and lunch schemes provided in government schools, and the limited resources available in schools for children to pursue interests such as music and dance.

The Madurai Seed teams also explained how the organisation works with children to help bridge some of these gaps and provide children with the resources and opportunities they need. A short video about Madurai Seed was then screened, giving the visiting students a better understanding of the organisation and its programmes.

Visit to NMR Subburaman Primary Residential School

As part of the exchange programme, a group of Madurai Seed children accompanied the Kodaikanal International School students to **NMR Subburaman Primary Residential School**, where 55 children from Grades 1 to 5 stay and study. The children come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Madurai Seed gifted stationery items to all the students of the residential school, while the KIS students brought chocolates from Kodaikanal and shared them with the children. The Madurai Seed children presented two dance performances. The KIS students presented two dances and a song.

The programme brought together children from different backgrounds through performances, gifts and time spent together. The children enjoyed sharing what they had and watching each other perform, making the visit a happy and memorable experience for everyone.

Library Activity at Madurai Seed

On the morning of 22 September, the Kodaikanal International School students visited the Madurai Seed library. As it was a regular school working day, only a few Madurai Seed children and volunteers were present.

The KIS students brought stationery materials including colour pencils, papers and markers, later those were gifted to Madurai Seed. They spent time looking at the books and then took part in organising and decorating the library. They prepared labels for the different sections, coloured them, added borders and fixed them on the shelves.

The children worked both individually and in groups. They enjoyed drawing, lettering, colouring and designing the labels. The Madurai Seed children also joined them, and the children spent time talking, playing and working together. The activity gave them an opportunity to work together while making some useful additions to the library.

Gardening Activity

As part of the visit, a gardening activity was organised to add more green space to the Madurai Seed premises. The **12 KIS students and three staff members** took part along with Madurai Seed children and volunteers.

Fifteen pots were arranged and filled with sand and manure. Fifteen plants, including rose, hibiscus, jasmine and some ornamental plants, were bought for planting. The children worked together to fill the pots, plant the saplings and water them.

The children took turns and helped each other during the activity. Some prepared the pots, while others planted and watered the plants. The Madurai Seed children and KIS students worked together throughout the activity and enjoyed talking and spending time with one another. By the end of the activity, the pots were placed around the premises, adding more greenery and colour to the space. The children were happy to see the changes they had made together.

Farewell and Feedback

The final session began with the Madurai Seed children divided into small groups, with one KIS student joining each group. The children spent time talking and playing together. This gave the children an opportunity to interact more closely and get to know each other. KIS gifted Kodaikanal famous chocolates to all, while Madurai Seed arranged a return gift like small shawls.

Later, everyone gathered for the farewell programme. The Madurai Seed children presented a mime and two dance performances. The mime was on mobile phone addiction, followed by a western dance and a folk dance.

The KIS students and staff members shared their feedback about the visit. They spoke about the differences they had seen in the lives and experiences of the children. The KIS staff also spoke to their students about the importance of understanding life beyond their own surroundings, including their daily life and difficulties. They felt that such experiences can help children understand others better and grow with more compassion.

The KIS students spoke about the friendships they had made and the happy moments they shared during the two days. The programme ended with a dance in which children and staff from both groups joined together, followed by a group photo session.

The two-day programme gave the children from Kodaikanal International School and Madurai Seed an opportunity to meet, spend time together and learn from each other. Through the different activities, they shared their interests, talents and experiences and worked together on common tasks. The visit also helped the children understand that their school and home experiences may be different, while many of their interests and joys are the same. The friendships and memories created during these two days made the exchange a meaningful experience for both groups. Thanks to KIS staff Pearlin, Joel and Daniel.