

## SUMMER ACTIVITIES AT MADURAI SEED – APRIL, MAY 2017

### Introduction:

Summer is always a celebration at Madurai Seed. No school, No home work, just lots of activities at Madurai Seed centers from morning to night. This year also we've utilized the summer holidays very constructively but gave it a different twist. We looked into possible opportunities and made use of them. For children and young people great opportunities were provided to interact with other organization's children, young people, and leaders.

Activity	Facilitators	Participated Children	Participated Young People
Capacity building & Leadership workshop	CESCI, MADURAI SEED	-	40
Vasantham Summer Camp	MADURAI SEED	90	20
Village camps in 6 villages	CESCI, MADURAI SEED	300	50
Nature- Science-Art camp	Kalari, Littles Trust	10	02
Art Training	Kalagala Vaguparai	10	03
Meeting the waterman of India Mr. Rajendar Singh	CESCI	-	25

### Working Together:

We've worked closely with many social activists and organizations throughout summer and utilized opportunities for our children and young people to learn and grow more. Karthik Bharathi and young people worked in planning the summer camp, and capacity building training for CESCO children and young people. In return Madurai Seed children and young people were provided the chance to participate in their programs. We've got contacts of many resource persons and they will be utilized continuously in Madurai Seed programs.



## VASANTHAM SUMMER CAMP 2017

Though financially our position wasn't great like the last years, and even though amidst the drought, water scarcity and heat waves, we didn't want to withhold the summer camp and break the tradition. For the last four years, the camp was organized as a residential one far away from Karumbalai to give children and young people a new atmosphere to experience and explore. This year the camp was organized in Karumbalai itself for 4 days from 02.05.2017 to 06.05.2017. During water pumping days, children and young people couldn't come to camp, as they will be busy taking water and helping their mothers. So, the camp schedules were altered according to that. But, the camp didn't miss its soul, enthusiasm, and learning opportunities. 90 children and 20 young people took part in the camp.

### Input Sessions:

We strongly believe knowledge of history, politics, and social justice is the need of the hour because of the discriminations, intolerance, and suppression prevailing in the society. To develop a true perspective about everything reading and awareness are important. So, we have planned four input sessions about Gandhi, Periyar, Ambedkar, and Karl Marx. The guests made the sessions very live unlike regular classrooms.



#### Natarajan (Education officer, Gandhi Museum)

spoke about **Mahatma Gandhi** and how children can extract lessons from his life. He told inspirational stories from Gandhi's biography. Children knew many new things about Gandhi.

**Vennila, Social worker** spoke about **Periyar**, great social reformer of Tamilnadu. She explained about self respect, freedom for women, Atheism, superstitions, equality and Periyar's opinions on them. Girl children raised many questions about freedom and equality. Girl students got inspired by the guest's personality and idealism. She and her friend Satagopan has donated more than 70 children books as presentation to the camp participants.



**Kathir, Human rights activist** runs *Evidence*, an organization advocating Human rights exclusively Dalit issues. He spoke about Ambedkar and how he fought a battle against caste system. Caste discrimination is prevailing even now, even though many people are educated. He was known as a serious personality, but among children he sarcastically spoke about many political issues. All the participants took vow to voice

against caste and religious discriminations.





**Comrade Nanmaran (Ex.Member of TamilNadu Legislative Assembly):** We can't believe our eyes when we saw him. He was so simple, came by bus. He is a living example of how a politician should live. It is rare to see such a corruption free politician. We were very happy that our children and young people got the chance to meet and converse with him. On the day he spoke, it was 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Karl Marx.

He introduced Karl Marx. He taught three children songs, which was wrote by him.

These four speakers introduced those leaders. All the guests are influenced by the ideals of the respective leaders and walking on the leader's trail. We introduced books on the leaders which are already available in our library and encouraged children to read them to get a complete understanding. Children got to know about the leaders and we are sure they'll inspired by the guests and also in taking a political stance, ideals.



### Summer Juicing:



Juices were prepared by children using the summer seasonal fruits. They explained the recipe and their health benefits. Finally everyone shared their making. They also shared the juices with old age people in Karumbalai.

## Film Making



Children and young people together tried to shoot a short film using a smart phone. Within a short time period, they came with amazing films touching many genres from horror, social, comic, and fantasy. They used free Apps for editing. With a simple guidance, and a great freedom they are able to produce amazing results. You can enjoy one of the films in this URL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt7ebNYTau4>

## Songs, Games, Cultural Events:

Social awareness songs were taught. Indoor and outdoor games in street were played. Volunteers Vikki and Anand conducted “Connection” a Tamil vocabulary game using digital tools. It was innovative. During cultural evenings, children danced to awareness songs, folk songs, and instrumental music. Former volunteer Muniyasamy took part in the camp and encouraged the children. He talked about summer camps he attended in those days at Seed.





## CAPACITY BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP



A typical summer vacation can take you to a tour, your relatives' place or a temple site. But, the young people from Madurai had a different variety of spending their summer vacation in learning tribal people through the camp organized by CESC & MADURAI SEED. A new cultural experience with the tribal people at COORG in Karnataka state gave an absolute adventurous state of mind.

**For whom:** CESC & MADURAI SEED together organized the camp for the young people of forty numbers from Villages & urban slum of Madurai. It was held for three days from 29<sup>th</sup> of April to 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 2017. A visual treat for the eyesight, surrounded by greenery and the falling temperature dragged everyone away from the hot summer to a pleasant & lively atmosphere at the Yadhygapadi village in Coorg, Karnataka.

21 young people from 10 villages near CESC, 17 young people from Madurai Seed in Karumbalai & 2 from Erode took part in the camp. Among 40, there were equal number of boys and girls.



**The camp comprised of:** Camps are not only meant for refreshment but also for earning values. The young people grow stronger with positivity thoughts about their self-confidence through self awareness related programs. This is a camp on "Capacity building and Leadership Training" for them which enunciated the fundamental social skills related to their better social development.

Nothing else they need to face the outside world when they are capable of leading their village or the city dwellers around them through this camp. The forty young people around 15 to 22 age group get enthralled by means of various learning tools in the campsite. The main thing focused in the camp was to develop the youth to lead a powerful role in enhancing their village children and people.



## Facilitators

- **Mr. Muthappa**, the tribal leader bestowed the training with his session on “Tribal people’s Culture and Lifestyle”
- **Mr. Bharath** Chandra Devaiya, a young man from Thadiyandamol village illuminated the young people to environmentally aware of “Plants, Birds, animals, water resources.”
- **Mr. Chellapandi**, a child rights activist, gave training on Leadership qualities, role of youngsters in the development of villages, and about teaching traditional games to children.
- **Mr. Bakhrudeen**, a dramatist, gave session on the arts, culture, custom of tribal and the ways to revive them.
- **Mr. Thanraj**, co-ordinator of Tamil Nadu Ekta Parishad, tribal activist gave session on : tribal’s lifestyle influenced by the nature, their traditional food, preservations and protections of local natural resources.
- **Mr. KarthikBharathi**, the president of Madurai Seed, gave session on Planning for Children’s progress and developing skills of children, collecting likeminded young people and partners to preserve local resources
- **Mrs. Chellathal**, a staff from CESC, gave training on the basic strategies for creating a self-actualized centers for the children in villages and urban slum.

## Connecting with tribal people:

**Camp premise:** Thousand & thousand varieties of trees, a spacious premise in front of the house of Mr. Muthappa, where the youngsters were among the colorful flowers bloomed ensured that this kind of learning as an independent and special one to them. In the vast tribal culture speaking land, our young people had exercises, yoga, games, input sessions and cultural night. Morning sessions and evening cultural were carried on in the public hall of the mountainous village. It was a new and refreshing experience for the youngsters who swirl with the water scarcity problem under the hot sun in towns. Also there were new life lessons to be learnt for the young people from the tribal.

**Culture & Language:** Merging with the community of tribal people become possible through this camp. They caught the steps and music in the tribal dance “Urutikottu”. No partiality was shown while beating for the tunes. Synchronising with the tribal people let the youth to learn their arts, culture and tradition followed from long long years ago. The language they speak was “Kudava”, which is a mixture of south Indian languages, so the communication was bit easier.





**Food:** Green tea in the morning and evening, steamed rice flour, and pork are the typical food of the tribal. Eating pork wasn't allowed in many people's family. But the participants broke the taboo. Spontaneously it was the delightful intake of our youngsters during the camp.

**Living hand in hand with nature:** Meadows and voluminous trees on the hills attracted the campers for trekking led by Mr. Bharath, a villager. Drunken waterfall in one sip, they surrendered themselves in the colorful sites of the mountain.

**Learning from the camp:** Through their participation in the training, the youngsters have decided to conduct a camp for the village children. For that, they designed a platform for the children in the villages to identify the vital resources in their locals, to engage in preserving those resources, and to stay aware of what they are surrounded by apart from chaos and confusions in the society.

#### **The follow up of this camp:**

- Creating a map consisting of the local water resources
- Coming up with working strategies to preserve those resources
- At last, the forty young people designed a plan to lead the children by conducting camps in their own villages. 40 youngsters will therefore conduct a camp for 300 children in 6 different villages.



## VILLAGE CAMPS

### 6 Villages 300 children 50 young people 15 resource persons

India lives in seven hundred thousand villages, said Mahatma Gandhi. The future of India also lives here proved children and young people from 6 small villages around CESC. 6 camps were conducted from 17<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017 in these 6 villages and more than 300 children were benefited. Madurai Seed young people also played a great role in arrangement and planning of this camp. Madurai Seed's role was greatly admired by CESC staff, young people, children, and P.V.RajaGopal. KarthikBharathi played a major role in designing and planning this camp.

Our volunteers were engaged in duties like purchasing, guest hospitality, arrangements, communications, commute, planning, camp things, documentation, photography and ensured the camp is going without interruption.

Our Director V.Elavarasi as a guest inaugurated one of the camps in village and congratulated all children and youth who are part of it. Our C.Arunkumar gave an input session on "Let our minds be strong" emphasized on ways to improve mental health, confidence, anger and stress management.

The camp emphasized on traditional living and sustainable living. The progress of our life is not determined by money but by the happiness index. Understanding nature, natural resources, traditional medicine, traditional foods, traditional games, identifying the local water bodies, drawing the resource map of the village, tree planting, cleaning the plastics were the major activities.

In this globalized era, digital enables us to get everything handy, we are continuously informed about everything happening around us, and treating everyone as consumers. Yet, many people fail to look things which are nearby. This camp facilitated children and young people in gaining knowledge about their local trees, local birds, local water bodies, local problems, and local people.





### Resource persons: Knowledge sharing and inspiring

Combining all the summer camp activities our children and young people get to listen various persons who are social leaders, and professionals.

<b>P.V. Raja Gopal</b>	Founder of Ekta Parishad, working for land rights
<b>Rajendar Singh</b>	Waterman of India, Environmentalist
<b>Nanmaran</b>	Former member of legislative assembly from Marxist Communist Party
<b>Kathir</b>	Very popular figure in Tamil Nadu working for human rights, and dalit rights issue
<b>Thanraj</b>	State Coordinator Ekta Parishad, Tribal rights activist
<b>Aakam Shankar</b>	Social activist, working for education
<b>Parvathavathini</b>	Child rights activist, runs “Littles” trust for children
<b>Raveendran</b>	Environmentalist, Bird watcher
<b>Senthamizh Selvi</b>	Organic farmer, social activist
<b>Loaba Murugan</b>	Yoga teacher
<b>Rajendran</b>	Lingustic Specialist
<b>Kalimuthu</b>	Organic farmer, environment activist
<b>Vennila</b>	Social activist, Feminist
<b>Natarajan</b>	Education officer, Gandhi Museum
<b>Sumathi</b>	Naturopathy Activist
<b>Sadagopan</b>	Mobile library for children
<b>Teacher Siva</b>	Joyful classroom initiative, doing teacher enrichment programs
<b>Selvam</b>	Drama teacher

### Meeting the water man: Water, water no where



On 23.04.2017, Our young people had a chance to hear Mr. Rajendra Singh. His speech is eye opening. He described the process of rain, rain water harvesting, constructing check dams, and ground water recharge from his experience. In Rajasthan where average rain fall is minimum, he restored many rivers, ground water level, and succeeded

drought. He explained about blue heat (heat from water bodies), green heat (heat from forests) , yellow heat (heat from agriculture lands) , and red heat (heat from cities). For rain fall, blue heat and green heat are important. But the red heat from cities is useless. Unfortunately these days we produce only red heat. That was the reason for drought. The young people took a vow to protect their local water bodies, reviving them, plant trees to escape the drought in coming years.

### Art sessions: Every child is an artist



During 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017, 6 children and 2 young people participated with students from Fine Arts College, involved in some drawing works in the CESC campus. The painted warli art, leaves painting, art from waste, etc. They used things from surroundings, got inspirations and executed their drawing.

### **Nature- Science-Art Camp:** Learning at every chance...



Other than the camps at Madurai Seed, encouraging children and young people to other sites/camps creates them a learning atmosphere about different facts. Here, we thank Mrs. Parvatha Varthini, Mr. Yokesh, Mr. Ravindhra, Mr. Aakkam Sankar for giving us a chance to learn from the summer camp organized at Keezhakuyilkudi near Samanar hills., where they exposed to Science facts, making handicrafts, trekking over hill rocks. Two days camp on 20th & 21st of May,

refreshed both mind and body of the children and young people.

### **Community service:** Together as a family



During Chithirai festival (09<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017), which is a grand festival in Madurai, thousands of people gather in a place. On , In Tallakulam area We have provided water and buttermilk to people. On , In Annanagar, Water, and butter-milk provided to people. In these two events, nearly 3000 people benefited from that service. We don't do this service as a religious activity, but seeing the occasion as a time for working, sharing, spending time together as a family.

### **Screenings:**

**14.04.2017: Babashaheb Ambedkar:** The movie was screened on the birthday of great leader Ambedkar. Children and young people get to know about the social reform works, and the battle he fought against caste discrimination. We also discussed about caste discrimination prevailing in the society today.

**16.05.2017: Tribals of TamilNadu:** After the Coorg camp, young people and children were very interested to learn about tribals. In Indian (Tamil) cinemas tribals are not portrayed realistically. So, we have downloaded some videos from Anthropological Survey of India YouTube channel about Thoda, Irula, Kurumba, Muthuva, Kaadar tribes. Also we have streamed the interview of Mr. Thanraj, one of the tribal rights activists in Tamil Nadu to get a better understanding about their contemporary life, problems, and lessons to learn from them

**22.05.2017: Sonita:** Dr. Laura Villiger has gifted a documentary film "Sonita" in which a teen girl fights all odds to achieve her dream. The documentary is nail biting. We can empathize with the girl with Indian scenario. The film boosted confidence to our girls. Our student Vinthiya, 17 years old said comparing to Sonita, girls in Karumbalai have a better life. But, we have different social problems to face. I learned fighting is important, rather than accepting the social pressure".





**Educational guidance:** A meet to meet the future...On 17.04.2017, The higher secondary students were given guidance for their higher studies. They were given guidance on different courses, employment opportunities. The children were asked about their skills, favorite subject, dream job and provided advice according to that. The parents were given counseling to support their children.



**Vocabulary Building Activity:** On 24.05.2017, The Regipo Game Kit presented by Mr. Keith Rossborough is used as a teaching aid for children and young people to learn English. In summer, a few children made fun learning of English vocabulary related to Kitchen. They learnt making new sentences with the vocabulary cards and game set. Interesting and motivating lesson continues all throughout the year at Madurai Seed Centres.



**Vaigai River Restoration Meeting:** On 29.05.2017, Water man Mr. Rajender Singh addressed a meeting at Vaigai river. Our children, young people and many social activists took part in the meeting. He explained about raising the ground water levels, protecting the river from pollution, and sand mining. As citizens of Madurai, it is our duty to mobilize awareness, and participate in such activities.



**Interaction With An Architect:** On 30.05.2017, our children and young people interacted with Ms. Shamini, Architect who restored a public park. The park is now green, colorful, thematic, attractive, and became functional for public use. Our children and young people asked many questions about her inspiration, her struggle in this mission, art, designs, her future plans, etc.

## Conclusion:

The summer activities were very novel, because this time children and young people learnt a lot about politics, social justice, nature, tribals, environment, sustainable living, water bodies, simple life, helping each other, etc. All these topics have a common thing that is preparing the world for peaceful, better, equitable future and making children and young people as the ambassadors of that mission.



The Hindu (Tamil) 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 published an article about Leadership camp conducted at Coorg. It quoted Madurai Seed also. Our volunteer's Surya's experience with his photo was published along.

# பழங்குடிகளைப் படித்த மாணவர்கள்!

• குள சண்முகன்தரம் •

## கோ

டை விடுமுறையை நீங்கள் எப்படிக் கழித்துவருகிறீர்கள்? ஊருக்குச் சென்றிருப்பீர்கள், கற்றுலா சென்றிருப்பீர்கள் அல்லது ஏதாவது கோடைக் கால முகாமுக்குப் போய்க்கொண்டிருப்பீர்கள். ஆனால், மதுரையைச் சேர்ந்த சில பள்ளி மாணவர்கள் கர்நாடகாவில் சூட்கு மலை பகுதியில் வாழும் பழங்குடியின மக்களோடு பழகிப் புதுமையான அனுபவத்தோடு ஊர் திரும்பியிருக்கிறார்கள். மாணவர்கள் குட்குக்குச் செல்ல மதுரையில் உள்ள 'செளிமறும்' சிறு தொண்டு நிறுவனங்கள் ஏற்பாடு செய்துகொடுத்தன. குட்கின் மிக உயரமான சிகரம் தடியன்மேடம். இங்குள்ள யவஹபாடி கிராமம் இந்தக் கோடையிலும் குள்கிறது. குலுக்கிப் போட்ட சோழிகளைப் போல அங்கொன்றும் இங்கொன்றமாய் தெரிகிறது இங்கு வசிக்கும் மலைகுடியா பழங்குடிகளின் குட்குகள்.



யவஹபாடியில் ஆழ்துளை கிணறுகள் இல்லை. மலையிலிருந்து இயற்கையாகத் தன்போக்கில் வழிந்தோடி வரும் நீரை ஆங்காங்கே தேக்கி வைத்துச் சிக்கனமாகப் பயன்படுத்துகிறார்கள். பயன்பாட்டின் போது சிறுதும் தண்ணீரையும் குட்டை போல ஓரிடத்தில் தேக்கிவைத்து, அதில் மீன் வளர்க்கிறார்கள். வெளியிலிருந்து எந்த உணவு தானியத்தையும் கொண்டுபோகாமல், அந்த மலையில் என்ன விளையுமோ அதை மட்டுமே உண்டு வாழ்கிறார்கள். கடுகளவுசுட இவர்கள் இயற்கையைச் சீண்டிவழிவலை. அந்த ஊருக்குச் சென்று வந்த மாணவர்களில் ஒருவரான சூர்யா சொல்வதைக் கேளுங்கள்.

“அந்த ஊர் மக்களின் தலைவர் குடியார முத்தப்பா அல்லவளாகப் படிப்பறிவு இல்லாதவர். ஆனாலும், தனது மகளைத் தோள்மீது தூக்கி கொண்டுபோய்ப் படிக்க வைத்திருக்கிறார். தான் பெற்ற கல்வியைத் தனது தந்தைக்குச் சொல்லிக் கொடுத்திருக்கிறார் மகள். பழங்குடியினப் பிள்ளைகளிடமிருந்து நாங்கள் நிறைய படித்துக்கொண்டோம். எங்களுக்குத் தெரிந்த சிலவற்றை அவர்களுக்கும் சொல்லிக்கொடுத்தோம். நிஜமாகவே எங்களுக்கு இது புது அனுபவம்தான்” என்கிறார் சூர்யா.

“தற்போது வழட்சி நிலவுவதால் அதுபற்றி ஒரு நாடகத்தை அங்கே நடத்துக் காட்டினோம். ஆனால், இயற்கையோடு வாழும் அந்த மக்கள் வறட்சியைப் பற்றி பெரிதாக அறிந்திருக்கவில்லை. என்றாலும் நாங்கள் சொல்ல வந்த கருத்தை உள்வாங்கிக்

கொண்டார்கள். பழங்குடிகளின் பாரம்பரிய நடனம், பாட்டு, கலைகள் பாரம்பரிய உணவு என நிறைய விஷயங்களை நாங்கள் உள்வாங்கிக்கொண்டோம். இதை எல்லாம் எங்கள் நண்பர்களுக்கும் அக்கம்பக்கத்தில் உள்ள குழந்தைகளுக்கும் சொல்லித் தரப்போகிறோம்” என்று உற்சாகமாகச் சொன்னார் மாணவி சரண்பா.

**அடுத்த பயணம்**

மகிச்சியையும் துக்கத்தையும் சமமாகப் பாலிக்கும் மலைகுடியா பழங்குடி மக்கள், இரண்டுக்குமே துடி என்ற கருவியை

அடுத்ததாக இந்த மாணவர்கள் மதுரையை அடுத்தள்ள வேம்பாளி, சித்தூட்டி, சீகுட்டி, கொடுகம்பட்டி, கடலூர் மாலவிராமம், சேத்தமங்கலம் ஆகிய கிராமங்களில் மே 17 தொடங்கி நான்கு நாட்கள் சிறப்பு முகாம்களை நடத்த உள்ளார்கள். நீதிக்கைகளைப் பாதுகாப்பது, இயற்கை விவசாயத்தைப் போதிப்பது, ஊரின் பழமையைப் போற்றுவது இவை இரண்டுதான் இந்த முகாமின் முக்கிய நோக்கம். இந்த முகாமில் பங்கேற்க வடமாநிலங்களைச் சேர்ந்த 60 இளைஞர்கள் வலியுறுக்கிறார்கள். அவர்களோடு உள்ளூர் இளைஞர்களையும் ஒருங்கிணைத்து நீதிக்கைகளைத் தூர்வாப் போகிறார்கள்.

இசைத்தபடி உருட்டுக்கொட்டு என்ற நடனத்தை ஆடுகிறார்கள். முகாமில் மதுரை பிள்ளைகளும் இந்த நடனத்தை ஆடினார்கள். பழங்குடி மக்களின் வாழ்க்கையைப் பாடும் படித்து விட்டு வந்த இந்த மாணவர்கள், அந்த மக்கள் இயற்கையை அவர்கள் எப்படிப் போற்றுகிறார்கள் என்பதை வகுப்போர் போபோர்டியெல்லாம் சொல்லி விடக்கிறார்கள்.

“இருட்டு இருட்டாததான் இருக்கணும்; இருட்டையும் ரசிக்கப் பழகணும். ஆனால், விளக்குகளின் ஒளியில் இருட்டைத் தொலைத்துவிட்டதால், நமங்கள் எப்போதும் பகலாகவே தெரிகின்றன. இதனால், இயற்கை எல்லாவை சீரழித்துத் தெரியுமா? பழங்குடியினத் தலைவர் குடியார முத்தப்பாவின் இந்த ஆதங்கம் முகாமில் கலந்துகொண்ட மாணவர்களுக்குள் ஆழமான தாக்கத்தை உண்டாக்கியிருப்பது அவர்களின் பேச்சில் உணரமுடிகிறது.



தன்ராஜ்



சூர்யா







The Times of India (Madurai) has published a news note about Village camps in which Madurai Seed young people acted as one of the organizers.



News » City News » Madurai News » Offbeat summer camps are the season

# Offbeat summer camps are the season's flavour

Devanathan Veerappan | TNN | May 26, 2017, 12.28 AM IST



Madurai: **Offbeat summer camps** are gaining favour among parents and children in Madurai. These camps, unlike the usual summer camps which teach children swimming, self-defence skills or dance, expose young minds to various themes like nature, agriculture and birdwatching, among others.

A four-day camp organised at various villages on the Madurai-Dindigul border attracted over 300 children. The camp mainly focussed on the natural way of life and taught traditional games, which were unheard by children of this generation. Karthick Bhrathi of Madurai Seed, which focusses on education of underprivileged children, said, "The participants studied the topography of villages, like Seegupatti, Kadavur, Vembarali, Pethampatti and Senthamangalam, and learnt about the life in a village. They mapped waterbodies and learnt about tanks and streams. The children were also exposed to kitchen gardening," he said.



The Hindu Tamil - 29<sup>th</sup> May  
May published brief note about village camps

The Times of India (Madurai) and The Hindu (Tamil) on 30<sup>th</sup>  
about Vaigai restoration meeting. Our children in the  
photographs.