

2015/2016 has seen a lot of developments at Vidiyal and the main building at Muthupatti has been expanded to meet the needs of Vidiyal and Childline.

Childline

The work of Childline in Madurai, managed and run by Vidiyal, has put increased pressure on the confines of space. Girls and boys need to be accommodated separately so Vidiyal has used some of its roof space to create a new light, airy home for those girls rescued through Childline.



In the neighbouring building, where the boys live, walls have been knocked down and a new floor has been put in to make a much lighter and more practical space.

Jolly Camp

When we visited last July a lot of building work was going on on the roof at Vidiyal.



The plan was to cover the existing roof to create a large space, open at one side but sheltered from the sun and rain, so that all the Vidiyal children could gather together in comfort. A new roof space above this would also be created. It was a thrill to see from some of the Jolly Camp photos that the area is now in operation.



The theme for this year's Jolly Camp was "Liberation". Just looking below at the subjects for each day gives an indication of all the things that Vidiyal is having to tackle on a daily basis.

Central theme 20th Jolly camp – 2016
: Liberation

Day's Theme

- 1 Liberation from Inferiority Complex
- 2 Liberation from Evil Thoughts
- 3 Liberation from Superstitious beliefs
- 4 Liberation from Drug Addition
- 5 Liberation from Violence
- 6 Liberation from Gender Discrimination
- 7 Liberation from Religious Fundamentalism
- 8 Liberation from Caste
- 9 Liberation from Imposed Traditional Occupations
- 10 Liberation from Slavery



Other news from Vidiyal

Jim says:

Herewith I enclose the photos and news clipping on the recent workshop on Short film making. I am so delighted with the news article appeared in the Hindu, a reputed daily in India and I am sure this will amuse you too. This workshop was very successful as we could enter a new avenue and provide this opportunity for our kids.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, MADURAI
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Slum kids get first taste of film making

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Madurai: P Prema, a 15-year-old girl hailing from Melavasal, a slum in the city, had never touched a professional camera before. But now she is all set to call the shots for her short film titled 'Thazhumbu', a two minute video on the plight of children from downtrodden community.

Like Prema, 25 other students hailing from the slums will be shooting their own short films. They are undergoing a three-day workshop on film making, and at the end of it, they will be given a chance to shoot their own films.

The children aged between 13 and 17, who are attending the workshop, are all excited about the short film, which they will be shooting in a couple of days. "I have long been wondering how a camera works and how movements are captured and made into a film. I never thought I can learn the techniques of film making, but it has now come true," she said.

They thought learning film making and all costly affair are meant for children belonging to the creamy layer of the society. Prema says it is fun learning about camera and its functions. "Now we are undergoing theoretical classes. We are going to enjoy more when we learn to do things practically in the days to come," she said.

The boys and girls are from slums - Ambedkar Nagar, Melavasal, Thideer Nagar and Subramaniyapuram in the city. The workshop is conducted by Sakthi Vidiyal, an NGO working for children rights. It is organized in order to provide an opportunity for children of the downtrodden people.

"It will also be helpful in channelizing the children, making them spend their summer vacation in a useful way. The places from where they hail are vulnerable. They can be easily attracted towards bad habits," said Abdul Rahman, a volunteer.

Jim Jesudoss, director of the organization, says the children were very eager in learning film making. For a long time, they wanted to learn it. It was only recently that they were able to source the requirements needed for the workshop. They have roped in camera and software professionals to teach the children in capturing images and editing films, he said.

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P Prema learning film making during a workshop for slum children

The children aged between 13 and 17, who are attending the workshop, are all excited about the short film, which they will be shooting in a couple of days



Solidarity Camp, news from Jim

“As you are aware we always wanted our children to move from the receiving end to the giving end. The Ripples circle provides them the opportunity to learn about the society and do an analysis about the society and life. Every year we take them to a field where they learn about life of other marginalized groups in the country and render service to them.

This year 15 of our girls and boys participated in the work camp titled "Solidarity Camp" on the 17th and 18th May 2016. This camp was organized at a remote tribal village in the Western Ghats called 'Chelumi Thot-ti'. Our children took leadership roles and conducted activities for the tribal children. 52 tribal children participated in this camp and appreciated the Vidiyal kids for their commitment and talents.

I and Arockiam went with the children and supported them. We could nurture the leadership potential in our children. Our children also contributed Rs.20 each to buy a small kit for the tribal children. The kit included writing pad, play things, balloons, stationery etc., The tribal children enjoyed the singing sessions very much. The debriefing session helped our children to reflect on the process and to assimilate the learnings for their life. Children also taught them flower making which the tribal kids appreciated. The treasure hunt was also much enjoyed by the children.

Sivaranjani, Abdul Rahman, Jeyakumar and Loganayaki were the volunteers working in this camp.

It was a beautiful landscape in the remote region of the western ghats. We travelled for 8 hours and reached the spot. We enjoyed our stay in the school for tribal children. Children cleaned the surrounding of the school and rebuilt a stone wall to prevent soil erosion.

We all returned to Madurai this morning with joy filled hearts.”



Trekking, news from Jim

On the 13th and 14th we took our senior children for a trekking in the Western Ghats. Our team started from the bottom of the Ghats - a place called Kurangani and reached the Topstation which is closer to Munnar. We organize this once in three years to amuse children and enable them to physically reach the top of the mountain and make them to think that they could reach greater heights in life after hard work. It is also a physical activity aims at their physical development. Children enjoyed it thoroughly and thanked you all for this golden opportunity. Arockiam and Chandran looked after the team. Anbu and Loganayaki were the volunteers who helped in ensuring protection for the children



New drop-in centre in Melavasal

The main drop-in centre caters for children from the Melavasal slum. This slum covers such a vast area that it is too great a distance for some of the younger children to access the present centre.

Jim writes:

I am happy to tell you that we have started another centre inside Melavasal slum on the 3rd June. As you all know Melavasal is the biggest slum in Madurai and we have a strong rooting there. This initiative would give the opportunity to some more children to access Vidiyal. We have got a small community building to be used for this purpose.

I take this opportunity to thank you all for being there to support Vidiyal's cause at every step that we make in our work among the children from most disadvantaged backgrounds.



Forthcoming events at Capel St Mary Methodist Church.

17th September Plant and Cake Sale 10am—12 noon
Come along to buy your plants and bulbs, enjoy a coffee in friendly surroundings and treat yourself to some home made cakes.

8th October Annual Curry Evening 7 for 7.30 pm.
Booking for this is essential. Please contact Brenda Sturgeon on 01473 310125 or at sturgeons71@gmail.com

IMPORTANT

If you are happy to receive up-to-date news and these newsletters via e-mail please send us a working address. Also, if you change e-mail address please let us know. Postage and printing costs continue to rise and it is a big help if we can cut down on these. The cost of posting a newsletter to you alone would provide 10 meals for a child. Just send your address to s.e.davies10@gmail.com.

Child marriages - some facts from Jim

I hope most of you know that Child marriage is a big problem in our district. Girl children are forced into marriage after they reach puberty. In some situations children develop relationships with boys which is normal for that age but the families react negatively and arrange marriage for the girl. In such situations the girls take extreme steps including eloping with the boy. Boys also exploit this situation and sexually exploit girls. Some families even kill the girls which they call 'honour killing' as they believe the honour of the family and caste pride is in the girls chastity.

It's part of Vidiyal's work through Childline and the Reception home that we rescue these girls who are in acute vulnerability and protect them from any harm. We also take support from the police and social welfare in this regard. I am happy to inform you that in the past three months between March and May 2016 (found as crucial months as issues of this sort emerge after the publication of exam results) we could stop 24 child marriages and rescue another 23 girls from risk of elopement and sexual violence.

Thanks for your continued support and encouragement to Vidiyal which enabled us to reach this statutory position to intervene in issues affecting children in the larger society with a legal backup. I am sure you will be happy to be part of this interventions in the larger context.

Alumni

The alumni of Vidiyal (former Vidiyal children) have set up a group and committee dedicated to improving the lives of the slum children and their communities. It was a joy to meet this group in July and to hear first hand of the real heart they have for these children. The future of Vidiyal is safe in their hands.



NewDawn India

We do not have alumni but we would love to see more people practically involved in the work of NewDawn India. We would be grateful for help in any area but particularly in fund raising and advertising to raise awareness of the charity. Contact Sandra Davies on 01473 311148 or s.e.davies10@gmail.com