

Down to Earth - 2016

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Introduction

The report of the down to Earth summer camp, which was organized by thanal during the summer vacation of 2015.

The idea of camp sprouted during Thanal's monthly meeting of February 2015. Considering 2015 was the International Year of Soil, we decided to have "soil" as theme for the camp. and observed that today, children and elders are not mentally connected to the nature or the soil.

Aswini S, Sujatha S, Anishidha G V and Rakesh R were entrusted for organizing the camp.

Planning Phase

In the following months, planning for the camp began, and along with the help of Usha S, Sridhar R, and Shibu K Nair, planning for the camp proceeded. The camp was given the name "Down To Earth".

The objectives, procedures and guidelines for the camp were drawn. We decided to accommodate 20-25 students in the age group of 10-17 years. Advertisements were posted in Facebook and the news was communicated among allied organizations of Thanal, Thanal followers and friends of Thanal employees.

Considering the age of the participants, it was decided that the camp will be structured in such a way, so that the Morning sessions will include classes of serious nature, where the children will gather knowledge from the lecture classes, and the afternoon sessions would be practicals, where the child will get hands on experience on what they learned during the morning time. short, interesting videos will be shown towards the end of the day, which will keep the children engaged. This helped a lot to keep the camp lively and active.

Morning sessions are the time when children will learn new things, and includes slideshow presentations, lectures and brainstorming etc. The afternoon sessions saw videos, discussions.

There will be a recess in between the morning session and lunch break and also a recess during the tea break. During that time students are allowed to explore surroundings, plants at Thanal premises, or engage in games or read.

Marketing the camp

Out of the 22 children who attended the camp, 20 had come via referrals from various people and rest two, is assumed to have come by seeing our advertisement in Thanal's facebook page.

Objectives of the camp

Following were the main Objectives of the camp

1. Change of Perspective
With the information gathered in the camp, the children should get a new perspective about soil, and how their actions and choices affect the nature, and how everything is interconnected
2. Information about the Basics of Environment and Nature
Our Rivers, how they form, soil types, how agriculture is done etc
3. To gradually build, with follow up camps and activities, a group of youngsters who are strengthened with the knowledge of the nature they live in. and also the challenges it faces.

The Camp

Day 1 - Inauguration : Smt.Sugathakumari



Sugathakumari teacher is a famous poet and activist, had been associating with Thanal since its formation time . She asked few questions to students and prompted them to think and answer, like how rivers are formed, Sources of their pollution etc. She didnt forget to teach poems and tell stories to children. The spark she threw on students was a good start for the camp and it was alive till last day of the camp.

Session By Usha S - about soil

This was the first session of the camp. In it, the children were given basic theoretical information about soil, how they are formed, their types etc.

Experiencing Soil - Practical Session by Deepak R



This was a remarkable session where all students could interact and mingle each other and work as a team. Deepak, Program Officer of Thanal gave hands on training to prepare a soil bag and how to sow seeds. Childrens collected soil, organic manures and leaves, prepared grow bags, and then successfully planted seeds. They were advised to take care of the plants for all these seven days of camp.

Day 2 - Science behind Soil- P N Premachandran

Mr Premachandran, is the Director Soil Survey & Soil Conservation. In his class, he talked about the various soil types in kerala.

This was new information to the children.

Soil Museum: A novel experience



In fact many of them were unaware that there is a World class soil museum at Paroottukonam in Trivandrum. Children got a chance to see and feel different textures of soil and identify different types of soils across Kerala. They had exhibited at the museum, models of watershed, models to prevent soil erosion, soil guide maps and tools used in soil study. Ms. Shahana, Asst.

Director of the museum, took an interactive class for the children and showed a documentary video too.

Le Papillon:

A French film by [Philippe Muyl](#) which beautifully portrays the curiosity and innocence of an 8 year old child. This film was much appreciated by the children as a good movie

Day 3 - Dr. S Shanthi - Environmentalist

When it comes to children its all about stories and, music and visuals. Dr S Santhi, children's Shathi ammomma

spent 3 hours with them, indeed it was a beautiful journey of exploration through the nature.

Ms. M Veena- Eco Solutions



Ms Veena took the children to the world of oceans and the ocean life.

Her Picture exhibition of the wide variety of ocean life and coral reefs found in the kovalam vizhinjam area which is barely 20 km from Thiruvananthapuram city, was a new knowledge for the children.

It struck a chord with the children, when a video of coral reefs were shown, in which they could see for themselves the pollution caused due to the many plastic bags and covers of their favorite potato chips.

Day 4 - Prof. Khyrunnisa - Writer, (Author of Butterfingers series)

It was an interesting session, when the children got to meet the author of one of their favorite novel series(Butter fingers). The stories by Khyrunnisa Maam were very enchanting for the kids. Also she explained

how to write a story and how to make story telling interesting.

Prof. P Vijayakumar - HOD Dept. of English, Govt. College for Women's (Rtd)



Dr Vijayakumar Sir, with the help of poems (Daffodils, a famous poem by Wordsworth) and music show the children the importance of being updated about the world around them and the issues it faces.

Dileep - Soil Fauna

A scientific session handled by Mr. Dileep Kumar, Program Co-ordinator of Pesticide Action Network India, regarding the microorganisms in soil. He had exhibited microscopic visuals of soils and microorganisms.

Day 5 - Ente Nagaram Sundara Nagaram - Field visit to composting facility of Tvpm Corporation.



Visit to Erumakkuzhi waste composting plant at Trivandrum city was a fresh on hand experience for the children to realize and understand the amount of work done by Trivandrum corporation to efficiently handle the wastes of city. The surprising fact was the composting plant handling tons of wastes

without any noxious smell and atmospheric problems.

Farmer- Bhaskaran



The visit to Mr. Bhaskaran's farm (traditional organic farmer) at Kovalam indeed facilitated to inculcate the the idea of down to earth in children. Children clarified their doubts while interacting with Mr. Bhaskaran. They literally enjoyed the visit to the farm.

Session by Sridhar Radhakrishnan, Director, Agriculture and Food Sovereignty



The children had an interactive session with Sridhar Sir over a cup of tea.

Zero Waste Centre Experience



Ms Sujatha S talked about the necessity for careful use of resources and how to reuse. Following that, the children were given a hands on experience on how to make useful stuff with discard materials like newspapers (paper bags) led by Ms Sabeena, Tailor discards (pouches and bags) led by Ms Jubariah, and coconut shells (soap box) led by Ms Sheela.



Kovalam Beach

Following the visit to the Zero Waste Center, the children were taken to cool off at the Kovalam Beach.

Day 6 - Mullakkara

Rathnakaran (Former Minister for Agriculture)



Mr Mullakkara talked about soil. Following the session, the children were encouraged to ask questions and he answered them. He inspired the children through sharing biographies of famous personalities.

Raju - Birds and Soil

Mr Raju took an informative session on Birds. Pictures of various birds were shown to the children. The children got an idea of the vast biodiversity of birds that can be found in a small location. They learned how certain bird population was on the fall and certain ones on the rise due to urbanization. They learned the importance of local ecosystem, preservation of which are of paramount importance to birds.

Day 7 - Knowing our Food - Ms Sangeetha



For the last day, all the children got together to help make Lunch. Followed by a interactive session reflecting back on the camp experience.

Data From the Camp

Resource Persons of the Camp and Their remuneration

Sl	Resource Person	Cost Incurred	Contact Number
1	Ms. Usha S	nil	9447022775
2	Mr. Deepak R	nil	8281657687

3	Mr. P N Premachandran	Honararium worth Rs 450/-	9847138143
4	Dr S Shanthi	Honararium worth Rs 350/-	9745576124
5	Mr. Shibu K Nair	nil	9895182067
6	Ms Veena	Honararium worth Rs 300/-	9446102871
7	Prof. P Vijayakumar	Honararium worth Rs 450/-	8129190623
8	Prof. A Khyrunnisa	Honararium worth Rs 350/-	8129370102
9	Mr. Dileep Kumar	nil	9447340748
10	Mr. Sridhar R	nil	9995358205
11	Sri Mullakkara Rathnaakaran	nil	-
12	R Raju	nil	9400274760
13	Ms. Sujatha S	nil	0471 2487139
14	Ms. Sabeena	500 for Training Fee @ ZWC	0471 2487139
15	Ms. Jubariah		0471 2487139
16	Ms. Sheela		0471 2487139
17	ms. Sangeetha		nil

Identified Talents of Children at the camp

These are talents of the children, which we were identified during the 7 days of camp. More interaction with the children is required to understand more about their talents.

SI	Name	Age	Gender	Talents
1	Gowtham S	12	M	
2	Niranjana	16	M	
3	Niranjana	14	F	sing songs, writes poems
4	Kokila priya prasad	12	F	
5	Gopika Priya Prasad	14	F	draws pictures
6	Adityan Abraham	13	M	sing songs
7	Arunima Abraham	10	F	sing songs

8	Aysha Joyce	13	F	Sing english songs, acting, writes novels
9	Badhri Narayanan	14	M	sing songs, Gardening
10	Arjun K N	11	M	draws pictures
11	Ambareesh S	16	M	
12	Ananya S	16	F	draws pictures
13	Nanda Kishor	15	M	
14	Anuja S	12	F	sing songs, dance
15	Mathew	12	M	
16	Aparna	13	F	sing songs, dance, writes poems
17	Nandagopal	9	M	
18	Venu E	12	M	sings songs, writes
19	Jacob Vargghees	15	M	draws pictures
20	Nandhitha	17	F	interested in environmental activism
21	Aaaryamaan Banerje	15	M	sing songs
22	Shouryamaan Banarje	11	M	sing songs

Poster, Registration Form (soft copies and original files attached)

Poster

Down to Earth

April 16 to April 22 - 2015

"What you see depends on how you view the world. To most people, this is just dirt. To a farmer, it is potential.. "

- Doe Zantamata



Kids! on this vacation, come experience soil and the nature with Thanal!

Join us for a 7 day vacation camp!

Only limited seats! filled on a first come first serve basis

What is at the camp?

Technical sessions
Group Activities
Skill Development
Field Trips

Sign up today!
Contact - 9946850072

Camp Timing - 9:30am - 5:30pm
Age group 12 - 17
Fee - 500 Rs/-



Thanal Trust, 00-3, Jawahar Nagar, Kowdiar P.O, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 003 | 0471 2727150

Certificate



Registration Form

Registration Receipt



Registration Form
Down To Earth Vacation Camp

Name of the child	
Age/Gender	
School & Location	
Parent Name	
Address	
Contact no.	
Alternate Phone No.	
Email Id of Parent	
Profession of Parent & Office Address	
Any particular health condition of the child which we need to be aware of	

Declaration

Hereby Myself....., is willing to send my son/daughter/student/sister/brother to the 7 day vacation camp entitled "Down to Earth" organized by Thanal from 16-22nd April.

(Guardian Name)

(Signature)

DOWN TO EARTH
a vacation camp

HIGHLIGHTS:
INTERESTING CLASSES
FIELD TRIPS
EXPERIENCING ENVIRONMENT & SOIL IN DIFFERENT LEVELS
GROUP ACTIVITIES
FREETHINKING SESSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

SPECIAL INVITEES:
SMT. SUGATHAKUMARI
SRI. MULLAKKARA RATHNAKARAN MLA
SRI. P N PREMACHANDRAN (DIRECTOR- SOIL SURVEY & SOIL CONSERVATION TVPM)
PROF. P VIJAYAKUMAR (HOD DEPT OF ENGLISH, GOVT. WOMEN'S COLLEGE TVPM RTD.)
PROF. A KHYRUNNISA- WRITER (AUTHOR OF BUTTERFINGERS SERIES)
DR. S SHANTI- ENVIRONMENT SCIENTIST

Name:
Address:
Age: Gender:
Name of parent/guardian: Registration fee: ₹ 500/-
Signature:

Effect of Camp on Facebook Likes

As the camp was progressing, Images from the camp were periodically posted to the facebook page of thanal. As a result, The facebook page of thanal saw an increase in likes and activities like commenting and sharing of posts. During the span of the camp (7 days) , Thanals facebook page received 22 new likes.

This shows, that more people are willing to follow the page, if we can keep them updated about our activities. When people see the activities, they feel progress is being made by the institution.

Financial Report

Total Income : Rs 23,375/-

(i) Save Our Rice Campaign : Rs 12,375/-

(ii) Registration Fee of Rs 500/- from 22 Participants : Rs 11,000/-

Total Expense : Rs 23,375/-

SI	Particulars	Amount
1	Soil Meuseum Entrance Fee @ Rs 5 per child for 21 children	105
2	Soil Meuseum Entrance Fee @ Rs 20 per Adult for 5 Adults	100
3	Soil Meuseum Entrance Fee @ Rs 20 per Adult for 3 Adults	60
4	Print of leaflet	300
5	Salwa Dine - Food Expense (for last day)	3200
6	Parking fee @ kovalam Beach	40
7	Food @ Kovalam	694
8	Practical session - Organic Input	250
	Practical session - Organic Input - Agri Horticulture	90
9	Note pads for children	356
10	Petrol Charges	700
11	Organic Bazaar Groceries	1166
12	Organic Bazaar Groceries	91
13	Organic Bazaar Groceries	1441
14	Chair rent for 7 days	1000
15	Travel Expense	5000
16	Digital print house - Certificates	274
17	Zero Waste Center Expenses	3958
18	Design of Certificate	500
19	Miscellaneous	
20	Groceries	2550
21	Sweets	500
22	Honorarium to Mr Bhaskaran - Farmer	500
23	Travel	500
	Total	23375

Techniques that worked for the Camp

1. Stickers

Distribution of stickers was a nice idea to help children take the message of the camp to the outside world.

In future camps, we can give the children stickers (Name slips) or other useful stuff, which will help take the message of the camp to more people. This way, it would be easier for the children to be carriers of the message.

2. Practicals in the afternoon

whether it be preparing soil and making grow bag, or the field visits, or practical sessions at Zero Waste Center, the practical sessions of the classes were the ones which the children enjoyed the most.

From the feedback of the children, This was evident in the feedback session on the last day, when all the children mentioned the practical sessions as the ones which they enjoyed the most.

Close to the practical sessions were the informative and engaging videos that they got to see.

3. Variety Refreshments during break time.

The refreshments given at the camp were different, and it got the attention of the children. many were found asking for recipes of the days juice.

Prameela Chechi had made different combinations of juices for each day, and all were made from organic produces.

These delectable refreshments added to the overall experience of the camp

Camp Spinoffs

As a result of conducting the camp, we have the following new information / asset .

1. From the soil museum, we had samples of different types of soils found in kerala.
 - a. These can be used for future classes / exhibitions at Thanal
2. Talents of Children
 - a. Different talents of children which we observed during the camp were documented. These talents can be, perhaps later requested for Thanals projects.
 - b. A mapping of children who attended the camp and their talents has been made.
3. Bamboo Clock -
 - a. Sri Mullakkara did not accept gift from us. Hence the gift item for him was contributed to Thanal.

Follow up and Future course of Action

The long term goal of the camp is to raise awareness about environment and the need to protect it amongst the young generation.

In the future, we plan to provide a venue for children to gather for this cause, and to facilitate exchange of information.

A monthly meeting of the camp participants is planned, and the first of its kind will be held on 24th. During this interaction, the children will get physically involved in some activity, and will also get opportunity to interact with one another and also to learn something new about nature and ways to preserve it. on 24th April, the children will be taken to the Tsunami Park for planting some trees.

Winding Up...

The camp was well received by the children, and feedback from the parents to show that Camp, conducted with the support of various staff of Thanal, Save our Rice Campaign and Zero Waste Center, was a grand success.

Thanks To

Ms. S Usha (Executive Director) guided the camp by spending most of her time with children by singing songs, reading interesting articles, sharing experiences and giving important informations.

To be specially noted, is the support extended to the camp by Ms Prameela. The additional requirements of snacks and juices required for the camp and its related work had added considerable load her existing work. In spite of that, we got excellent support from her and the snacks and juices drew appreciation from one and all. It contributed to the success of the camp.

Ms Sujatha's contribution too was very valuable. Besides herself being a resource person and organizer, she had found time in between her busy schedule to assist in conducting the camp. Her previous experience with camps helped fill gaps in between the classes, by taking small sessions and this provided valuable guidance to the children.

Also to be noted are the contributions of Ms Anishida and Ms Nithya, Mr Deepak and Mr Ashokan. They were the helping hands of the camp. They were the much needed extra hands which helped us when we took the children outdoors. They also contributed timely whenever manpower was required. Sreekala and Manju extended their help in this regard.

Observations and Conclusion

The camp helped us learn a lot of things.

More time and effort for marketing the camp needs to be done, because we received feedback, that even more children would have joined had there be more time to spread information about the camp. (source : vijayakumar sir)

It shed light on the awareness level of children about their local environment. From their education, the children have information about environmental issues like greenhouse gases etc, but they could not see the interconnection between the various information they gathered, and issues in nature, the ecosystem around them etc. ie, they were not able to see the bigger picture. Also, they do not have much information about their local environment.

Since the theme was mainly soil, the children have gained much knowledge about soil and the harmful effect of fertilizers and weedicides.