



EUREKA SPARK

An Aid India Initiative

Newsletter Issue 1, Jun 2015

Number of Partner NGOs : 25

Number of districts : 14

Number of schools: 100

Partner Education Officials : 5

Number of teachers: 600

Number of children: 12000

Eureka SPARK (Skill Progress through Assessment and Remediation for Kids) is an Aid India initiative to provide technical inputs like training and educational resources to like-minded institutions working in education. The goal of the program is to ensure teachers from NGOs, Aided or Government schools become proficient in improving skill levels of children.

SPARK Planning meeting for 2015-16

We had our first SPARK planning meeting at ICOSA Centre on 19th Jun 2015. This time, we had asked the heads of NGOs to discuss in groups and come up with ideas to be implemented this academic year. Identifying master trainers from various NGOs, story cards emphasizing gender and caste inequality, Tamil & English writing skills and district-level learning events to show-case children's talents were some ideas that emerged from the discussion. Also, Manitham NGO was recognized for their outstanding work last year and for getting maximum Eureka tutor awards last year in that meeting. All the NGOs who conducted Activity Quiz events during April & May appreciated Eureka's efforts in organizing and enthusing children through fun activities. A special meeting was also organized for CIOSA partner NGOs supported by Wheels India, who have agreed on a quarterly training for their coordinators and monthly training to their tutors. They also made plans to achieve at least 70% of learning level improvements in their children.

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SPARK New Partners Update

After the successful Ennum Ezhthum campaign in which many partner NGOs participated, the following are some of the new NGO partners who have expressed interest in being part of Eureka SPARK:

- "Home Trust", an NGO working in Namakkal district, has appointed more than 3 to 4 tutors per village for Ennum Ezhthum campaign and had shown lots of interest in our program.
- "Sakthi Vidiyal", an NGO from Madurai, has taken photo copies of all the learning materials and given it to all the students in 10 of their centres. They had observed that children's enthusiasm had gone up considerably with these new learning aids.
- "REAL Charitable Trust", another NGO working in Thirukkazhukundram area near Chennai, has conducted a valedictory function for all the volunteers who took classes during Ennum Ezhthum campaign during June itself.
- Dr. Ravishankar along with couple of team members visited ACDS, an NGO working for child rights in Kancheepuram district, observed that many kids really enjoyed & were proud by earning "I can add" "I can read" stickers. ACDS has also requested for monthly trainings from our team.

LAlA Teacher's Training – Vedanthangal and Vandavasi

The June training with LAIA tutors had a different approach this time. Shankar and Gowri report that a lot of time was spent on getting feedback from teachers. For example, in Maths, they found that many teachers were able to solve the problems but did not understand the reason for certain steps. Even though many tutors knew the procedure for Multiplication & division problems, they had difficulty in understanding certain tricky problems such as “why are we getting 0 in the quotient when we divide 715 by 7?”, “Why are we multiplying from one's place for 2D * 2D problem?” etc. Also, a detailed discussion was held on how to do diagnose step by step when a child had difficulty with addition. It was heartening that the tutors themselves came up with several problems to assess and improve children's skills. All teachers took part actively & answered during English training session. They felt the new materials for English reading will definitely help students to pick up reading skills quickly. Tutor Lakshmi from Maruthadu village remarked that she has already been taking English reading classes using phonics methodology in her centre and felt that the new materials will strengthen it.



Rural Development Trust Teacher's Training

Rural Development Trust (RDT) has been working primarily to educate children of construction workers from Andhra, Orissa etc. These children live in temporary establishments until their parents complete the construction and then move onto different places. Most of the teachers don't know Tamil. Raghuchandran reports that it was a totally new experience to train these teachers. During the training, these teachers were divided into 2 groups to discuss the challenges in learning basic arithmetic by these students. To our surprise, they were able to narrate most of the common errors children make while doing addition, subtraction, multiplication & division. They really liked the English phonics video and our step-by-step approach to English reading. Since the learning aids are attractive, they are confident that children will enjoy & learn with these aids.

