



॥ गुरोर्हितं मम करणीयम् ॥

GURUDAKSHINA FOUNDATION TRUST[®]

Teacher Empowerment Program

www.guru-dakshina.org

॥ गुरुः तु दीपवत् मार्गनिर्देशकः ॥

The teacher is like a lamp that lights up the path

Gurudakshina with a motto गुरोर्हितं मम करणीयम् aims to create self-sufficiency in teachers, because teachers make students self-sustaining. In this teacher empowerment program, the teacher becomes personally vibrant and professionally productive. Simply, a teacher becomes a better teacher.

Background:

Gurudakshina Foundation Trust is the brain child of a number of individuals who want to give something valuable back to society. The focus is on the education sector, specifically the primary education sector. Also, the focus is to work in rural areas and to the extent possible not to work in the major metro centres.

Philosophy:

There are initiatives that are underway in the primary education sector and a number of individuals and organizations are already doing exemplary work. The philosophy of Gurudakshina Foundation Trust is to work with other organizations and make them stronger rather than “re-invent the wheel”.

Area of Focus:

Within the area of primary education, Gurudakshina Foundation Trust is focused on the teacher, as there is no doubt that the teacher is the pivot on which the entire edifice of the education system rests. If we do not take care of teachers, they cannot take care of education.

While it is important for educational institutions to have good infrastructure for learning, what is more important is the teacher, it is clear that a great teacher does not really need any infrastructure to impact on students. The teacher is the key. Everything else is an aid.

Gurudakshina Foundation Trust's Operating Model:

1. Identify a school to work with and adopt the school
2. Evaluate the current average salary of the teachers of the school
3. Identify a target average salary for the teachers in the local area
4. Help the school reach the target average salary in about 5-7 years. This would help the school in getting the best of the teaching talent in the local area
5. Once the best teaching talent is available in our adopted school, demand for education in the school increases
6. The school can then charge "market tuition fee" and ensure that the school runs on a strong economically viable foundation
7. The school can also include "subsidization" of tuition fee for the economically and socially backward within this "market fee structure"
8. Gurudakshina Foundation Trust exits the school as the school is economically independent
9. Gurudakshina Foundation Trust would also like to extend this to individuals. In this case, the individuals would have to be strong, academically oriented individuals who do not have the necessary economic strength to pursue a career in academics. Gurudakshina Foundation Trust would support them completely in their pursuit of an academic career. However, in return, we would want them to teach in one of our adopted schools. What this achieves is that we are able to support one individual but at the same time, that one academically oriented individual would be a teacher in our adopted school, thus helping hundreds of students in the school
10. Get external faculty who can train the existing teachers in pedagogic skills to make them better teachers

Activities of the Gurudakshina Foundation Trust:

It took almost a year for the members of the trust to identify a school to work with. We encountered a number of problems in identifying the school. We found that the management of some schools were totally focused on "money making" and hence did not want to support them.

Surprisingly, we found resistance in schools run by well-known charitable institutions. These institutions wanted our money but did not want us to impose our conditions on them. We had to reject these institutions as well.

We were able to finally locate one school in Devadurga Taluk of Raichur District. The school is run by a trust and on the basis of our due diligence we were convinced that the trust was not in this for profit-making, but for service.

We found that the average salary of the teachers was just 1400 INR. Starting from the academic year 2012-13, we have increased the salary of all the teachers by 500 INR. We have consistently paid the amount without fail.

We also conducted a training program for the teachers of the school. This program was conducted by people adept in that sphere, for a period of three days and cost us 15000 INR.

In addition, we have been working on putting systems in place to ensure that we do not falter when we scale. In particular, we are focusing on the following:

1. Developing necessary IT systems to ensure contributions are properly accounted for
2. Developing a methodology to evaluate the program. In particular, we want to answer the question: "Does increasing teacher salaries necessarily improve the education standards of the school?"
3. Developing a Knowledge hub
4. Developing criteria to adopt schools
5. Developing a process to identify individuals who can be part of the program

Milestones:

During the year 2013-14, the Trust achieved a few milestones. We wish to highlight some of them.

1. We received approval under section 80G(5)(vi) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 on 11th March 2013. All donations received from 01st April 2014 would be eligible for deductions under the Income Tax Act.

2. We have completed two years of operations with Vagdevi Vidya Mandira in Devadurga Taluk of Raichur District.

3. Some of the significant highlights of our contribution have been:

a. When we began our work with the school, the average monthly salary of the teacher of the school was Rs. 1,386/-.

b. As at the end of the academic year, we were able to increase this average salary to Rs. 2,444/-.

c. For the academic year starting June 2014, the average teacher salary will increase to Rs. 3,408/- per month.

4. While contributions from GURUDAKSHINA FOUNDATION TRUST were on average Rs.5,000/- per month during the previous academic year, this will significantly increase to Rs. 14,800/- per month from the current academic year.

5. As a percentage of revenues, the contribution of the school to teacher salaries decreased from 36.34% to 28.8%. We have requested the school to ensure that they DO NOT decrease

their contribution. The school is currently working on ensuring their contribution increases as well. With this, we hope that the average salary would go up from Rs. 3,408/- as stated above to further up.

As you will observe, we have taken up significantly increasing our contribution from Rs. 5,000/- per month to Rs. 14,800/- per month. We look forward to your continued support.

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Contact details of the school we are currently working:

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Principal and Administrator, Vagdevi Vidya Mandira

Basaveshwara Oni, Devadurga, Raichur, Karnataka - 584111

All the donations to Gurudakshina Foundation Trust are eligible for Income Tax Exemption under 80-G