Centre for Education Development Action and Research (CEDAR)

ESTD. 1994

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



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Established in 1994, CEDAR in its first 20 years of existence, apart from rescuing and rehabilitating child labourers, engaged in community actions that would reduce vulnerabilities of families prone to child labour. Our work largely happened in Virudunagar, Tuticorin and Tirunelveli districts, the traditional child labour belt of Tamilnadu. In this endeavor, we reached out to 144 child labour prone villages. By 2010 when fulltime child labour got nearly eradicated, Tamilnadu Government declared the match belt child labour free. However, CEDAR had to continue working for the prevention of school dropouts. In that process, CEDAR also changed its slogan from 'right to education' to 'RIGHT TO TOTAL QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL.' Since then, we have been experimenting with different methods and strategies in 'alternative pedagogy' and 'community action.' Our aim has been to facilitate maximum creativity, critical thinking and problem solving in children coming from the marginalized communities.

Vision

A world where the rights of every child and young person is protected

Purpose

To inspire and enable children and young people to express their creative potential

Mission

To use art and alternative media to transform the lives of marginalised young people

We believe…

- *all children are creative and are the future*
- *in a world free from poverty, discrimination and violence*
- *in living in harmony and nature*
- *In the inclusion of the marginal*

Our Values

Creativity
Excellence
Accountability
Empathy
Inclusivity

ACTIVITIES OF 2019-2020

The year 2019-2020 is a year of scaled up activities. Joe Homan Charity, UK sanctioned two projects, one for Madurai, **Project for Articulating Agency in Children, Youth and Women (in Urban Deprived Areas)** and the second one for Kovilpatti, **Community Action for Total Quality Education**. CEDAR assuming responsibilities as the **Nodal Agency for Joe Homan Charities, UK.,(Later Paper Boat Charities UK.)** it had to involve in partnership management. On the whole, 5 separate proposals had to be placed before Joe Homan Charities and sanction obtained.

Table-1: Proposals Made and Amounts Sanctioned

Sl. No.	Name of the Project	Nature of Holding	Amount Requested (INR)	Amount Sanctioned (INR)
1.	Project for Articulating Agency in Children, Youth and Women (in Urban Deprived Areas)	CEDAR's own	21,65,100	21,64,451
2.	Community Action for Total Quality Education (Kovilpatti Area)	CEDAR's own	19,68,980	19,67,033
3.	Nodal Office Project	CEDAR's own	14,76,500	14,75,851
4.	Support to Residential Care of HIV Positive Children	Dindigul Aids Control Society (DACS)	25,00,000	25,00,000
5.	Evening Study Centre Programme	Society for Poor People Development (SPPD)	10,07,500	5,22,000
	Total		**91,18,080**	**86,29,335**

Planning and Budgeting

CEDAR believes in a bottom-up and highly participatory approach in shaping project proposals and finalising budgets. The Madurai Urban Deprived Area Project was in fact finalised as early as March 2019. The major part of the month of April, was spent for planning and budgeting. In finalizing CEDAR's budget, not only the managerial staff but also the entire field staff were involved in discussions and decision making. The staff were oriented to using **Result Based Management (RBM)** frame work. In a similar vein, the partners were also invited to come to the nodal office at Madurai for joint discussions and consultations, before their proposals and budgets were finalised. The Board of Trustees of JHC, finally accorded sanction to our proposals on 23rd July 2019. (See Tble-1 above).

Setting up of Children's Resource Centres (CRCs)

CRCs or Children's Hubs are creative learning spaces for children in the community. It acts as the fulcrum for every other community action. The minimum physical infrastructure needed is a safe place for children to congregate. The community hall is normally made available to us by the community. As a rare exception, a space is rented. Each hub is anchored by a community volunteer called the facilitator.

CRCs Under Madurai Deprived Area Project

The idea of CRCs was quite new to Madurai Deprived Area communities as the project itself was launched only during the last quarter of 2019-2020. The field staff and creative leads had to do a lot of preparatory work before the communities could accept the idea and send the children. Identifying committed and capable facilitators from within the community also became a challenging task. Taking into account the nature of challenge posed, we realized the need for a full time Field Coordinator with considerable grassroots experience. Mr. Jayakumar with more than 15 years of organizing experience took up responsibilities in August 2019. By the end of March 2020, five communities could have their CRCs or Hubs.

Table-2: Children Resource Centres (CRCs) in Madurai Deprived Areas by the End of March 2020

S. No.	CRCs or Children's Hubs	No. of Children
1	Meenambalpuram	35
2	Jawaharlalpuram	40
3	Panangadi	25
4	Tallakulam	40
5	Ambedkar Colony	35
	Total	**175**

Special CRCs at Government Madurai Samagra Shiksha Centres (SA Centres)

Tamil Nadu Government under Samagra Shiksha Scheme, is running Residential Special Training Centres (RSTCs) for chronic dropouts and children who are under institutional care. In the month of September 2019, CEDAR was invited to work in two of its centres in Madurai. Of the two, one is exclusively devoted to Narikuravar community (gypsies), one of the most marginalized and itinerant communities of Tamil Nadu. The dropout rate of children from school, is the highest among the children of this community. CEDAR's Creative Leads have been using Alternative Art

methods to motivate these children and creatively re-engage in formal studies. This is the first ever effort in Madurai to work with a Government agency.

Table-3 SSA Hubs

S. no.	Special CRCs or Hubs	No. of Children
1.	Kadachanenthal SS Centre	84
2.	Kalmedu (Narikuravar) SS Centre	48
	Total	**132**

CRCs Under Kovilpatti Project

Originally it was in Kovilpatti region the CRCs were experimented and developed over a period of about 20 years and where we have better community support. At the end of March 2020, there were 12 centres functioning.

Table-4: CRCs in Kovilpatti Region

S. No.	Place	No. of Children
1	Thalavaipuram CRC	38
2	Pungavarnatham CRC	40
3	Manjanaickerpatti CRC	42
4	Keela Eral CRC	45
5	Narkalaikottai CRC	37
6	Ettaiyapuram CRC	39
7	Viswanathadas Nagar CRC	40
8	Koosalipatti Centre 1	41
9	Koosalipatti Centre 2	39
10	Thomas Nagar Centre 1	43
11	Thomas Nagar Centre 2	44
12	Valluvar Nagar CRC	33
	GRAND TOTAL	**481**

On the whole CEDAR operated **19** Children's resource Centres during 2019-2020 directly reaching out to **788** children coming from marginalized communities.

Weekly schedule normally followed at Each CRCs:

- Monday – **Storytelling by facilitator**
- Tuesday – **Storytelling by children**
- Wednesday **– Indoor games and brain teasers**
- Thursday – **Drawing and Painting**
- Friday – **Film viewing**
- Saturday- **Art Camp/ Special Art Training**

Why these Activities? The Concept of Alternative Educational Experience Extended by CRCs

CRC activities are meant to provide children with what we call 'Alternative Educational Experience.' It has five dynamic aspects. **First,** the artistic exposure children undergo has no strict pedagogic rule to follow. Joyful participation takes precedence over method. **Second,** the exercises given to children, on their own, open up cognitive pathways for self-discovery. **Third,** the texts and narratives children produce as in artifacts like paintings and sculptures, performative expressions displayed and linguistic-literary creations made, on their own account make truth value. This means that what children create provide a great deal of insight into their world. **Fourth,** in representing their inner reality, the children spontaneously choose their own dialects, colloquialism, religio-cultural metaphors and symbols and traditional art forms as a means. These are normally art form which the mainstream sees as 'folk' or 'low' but the 'folk' and 'low' get valorized in the collective consciousness of the marginalized children. In other words, the children develop an alternative cultural syntax which give them new meaning, rootedness and inclusive identity. And **fifth,** experiences drawn from civic actions they involve in through collectives, collecting and discussing current news, and children led journalism they practice, without fail, infuse their consciousness with civic and political meanings. It helps them understand the working of micro power structures and their larger matrices.

Summing up we say:

1. **Joyful** Participation
2. **S**elf-discovery
3. **T**ruth Value
4. **I**dentity
5. **C**ivic-political Self

[JOYSTIC]

Weekend Art Camps for Children



Parai Music



Hand printing



Stick Dance

Art camps are organized as an extension of CRC activity. Children have the unique opportunity to meet the Creative Leads and other senior artists and spend a day informally interacting with them. Children can choose from a wide range of artistic activities like theatre, folk performances like *'Karagam'* and *'Oyil'*, singing folk songs, creative photography and drawing and painting. There is no hard and fast rule to get admitted to a particular session. The nature of training is also very unconventional. It is participation rather than technical rigor. Children meeting senior artists and interacting with them, breaks several psychological barriers that come in the way of learning art. At times, highly focused trainings are also organized depending upon the need. Art camp exposure puts our children far ahead of other children in schools especially when they get opportunities to demonstrate their talents say, during a school day celebration. This is very impactful in changing the perception of children by parents, teachers, school authorities and community leaders. The camps are normally organized centrally in a village chosen and children from other villages congregate. We keep changing the village. Socially, the act of congregating in one place, involving in collaborative activities and performing in groups, greatly break caste and gender barriers among children.

Table-6: Details of Art camps

S. No.	Name of the Village	Date	No of children participated
1	Thalavaipuram	September 15th, 27th	96
2	Narkalaikottai	September 29th, 30th	84
3	Thalavaipuram / Kannakattai	November 9th, 10th	75
4	Narkalaikottai	February 23rd, March 1st	62
5	Thomas Nagar	March 14th, 15th	88
6	Madurai Jawaharlalpuram	February 1st, 2nd	70
7	Madurai Jawaharlalpuram	February 8th, 9th	53
		Total	**528**

Children's Collectives (CCs)

Children's Collectives are another extended activity of the CRCs. CCs are voluntary associations of children above the age of ten. CCs meet once in a month to discuss issues directly affecting children. The membership is not strictly restricted to CRC children. Each CC elects its own President and Secretary. The minutes of the meetings are kept by the children. CC members attend periodical *Gram Sabha* (Village Assembly) meetings where they preset their issues. When need arises, they petition the local civic authorities in order to solve issues facing them. The CCs are federated and each CC is represented by two members in the federation. The federation meetings are held once in three months at Kovilpatti. The Children's Federation also have their office bearers elected. Ms. Karapagalakshmi of Thalavaipuram CRC is the current President, Ms. Sathya from Narkalaikottai, the Secretary and Maheskumar from Manjanaickerpatti, the Treasurer. The CCs have been raised freshly this year, and need further strengthening. CCs not only instill civic selves in participating children but also serve as strong platforms for articulating child rights. CCS are yet to be formed for Madurai communities.

Parent Collectives (PCs)

In every community we establish a Children's Resource Centre, we organise a Parent Collective (PC) which is a voluntary association of parents. Mostly young mothers of children attend our PCs also. Men too are part of it. In our community action strategy, parents are the vital stakeholders, and without involving them very little could be achieved. In Kovilpatti project area, in all the villages we work with, without fail, we have PCs. PCs are yet to be established in Madurai project area. PCs meet once in a month and discuss the issues and concerns parents have about their children. They normally revolve around school attendance, performance of children at school, special behavioural issues and child rearing practices. CEDAR uses this forum as counselling cum capacity building forum for parents. They are also encouraged to assuming handholding responsibilities with CEDAR. The PC meetings are facilitated by the Senior Field Coordinators.

Child Rights Monitoring Committees (CRMCs)

These are community platforms CEDAR has raised, to monitor child rights violations and also provide safeguards. CRMCs should not be confused with the "Village Level Child Protection Committees" set up under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) of the government. The latter committees are either non-existent or non-functional. CEDAR's CRMCs have volunteers who are parents, women Self Help Group members, youth volunteers, civic body members and teachers living in villages. In Kovilpatti area, this arrangement is largely helpful in preventing child marriages, occurrence of child labour and school dropout. Further strengthening of CRMCs are slated for 2020-2021. However, CRMCs are yet to be formed in Madurai.

Engal Kural

CEDAR for long, has been encouraging Children led journalism. The first such children's journal published by CEDAR was, *Thiran (*Capacity). The publication had to be given up a few years ago for want of finance. This year with the support of Paper Boat, we could revive the activities. *Thiran,*

is now renamed as *Engal Kural* (Our Voice), and the first publication came out in February. Children from all the CRCs were encouraged to submit poems, short stories, pictures they drew and painted, the photographs they took and interviews and comments. An editorial team was formed choosing 20 children. They were trained by the Creative Leads through special workshops. The team under the guidance of the creative leads, collected, sorted, chose and edited the works of children. The exercise was not simply an early training in journalism, but an exercise motivating children to carefully observe, deeply listen and creatively represent both their immediate world- both from within and from outside. The range and variety of materials that ultimately reached the print, will stand testimony to this.



Engal Kural Release

Truly speaking it is not our voice, but the noise you make about us children that fall on our ears. So much is talked about our safety, our rights, our education, our future and our health- at home, at school, in the media, in the legislature, even in the United Nations. Plans and schemes too are made. Yet we are not free from suffocation. "Unless you become either a doctor or an engineer you don't have a future" says a loud voice. "If you don't take that highest grade you are not worthy of being a child" another lament you hear. Every day we carry a sac load of home work from the school. By the time we finish them, the morning arrives! With whom to talk? With whom to laugh with? And with whom to share our dreams? Along with children we invite you adults, to read our magazine. From now on let our voice ring in your ears.

(First Editorial- Translated from Tamil)



Engal Kural Editorial Team – 2020

Madurai Children's Festival







'Madurai Children's Festival' was celebrated at Madurai, on 16th February 2020. Apart from the children of five communities of Madurai area- Meenambalpuram, Jawaharlalpuram, Tallakulam, Panangadi and Ambedkar colony, children representatives from Kovilpatti also participated. On the whole, more than 200 children participated. The idea of organizing Children's Festival is not only to make the children come together and demonstrate their talents to the general public but also to contest for a 'child-centric space' in the public sphere. Children supported by the staff, planned, organized and led the grand public show of their creative presence. De Nobili matriculation School at Madurai, threw open the school premises for the children free of cost. The celebration was led by child Arjun. Child Pandi Meena welcomed the gathering. The parai music set the tone and dominated the air. Theatre, traditional dance, singing, and martial art performances were the highlights. A photo exhibition with photos taken by children during the year was also organized, and it received a lot of attention and acclaim. The guest of honor was Gomathi an alumnus of CEDAR.

Gomathi was rescued by CEDAR from child labour in mid 1990s who then went to complete her school education and later joined the constabulary as a police woman. She resigned the job later and became an officer in a government owned bank. She recalled her journey as a child with CEDAR and underlined how important it is for the society to ensure healthy and happy childhood for all. Apart from parents, three senior government officials joined the celebration. Mr. Thirugnanam, Assistant District Coordinator for Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan felicitating the children, said that the occasion had completely demolished the popular notion of celebration

and had given a new meaning to the aesthetic expression by children. Dr. V. M. Vijaya Saravanan, the Chairman of Madurai District Child Welfare Committee (CWC) during his address said that it brought him awe and wondered how an NGO on its own could manage to do it. On his part he said, he could reach out to children after all with the government support. Officials of the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) also facilitated the children and wished them well. Another highlight of the occasion was, the release of the Children's magazine *Engal Kural* (our Voice). Veteran Journalist and researcher Mr. Gokulvannan (formerly with 'The New Indian Express'), received the first issue from the Child Editor. Children honoured their guests by presenting them with mementos which were the art works they made, during the year. Kovilpatti Children's Festival was planned for March 2020, but had to be withdrawn due to the arrival of the pandemic.

Capacity Building for the Facilitators

The effective running of the CRCs largely depends on the capacity and the commitment of the Facilitators. They only provide the most vital interface between the children in the community, and the CEDAR programme staff. Facilitators have to have a dual existence- as members of the community as well as change agents motivated and prompted from outside. A Facilitator is a community volunteer, a teacher committed to an alternative world view, an artist and an art instructor, a counsellor, a bridge between children and parents, a community organizer and much more- all rolled in one. Commitment apart, the facilitator needs to develop versatile habits of mind and action. CEDAR as a policy, thinks that it is important to invest in the training and capacity building of the Facilitators.



Training workshop for Facilitators

1. **Creatively Engaging Children:** This training workshop was aimed at introducing basic aspects of alternative pedagogy. Dr. Meenakshi, an activist-academician and Ms. Glory Debora a child care professional were the resource persons. This one-day workshop was held on September 11th 2019 at Kovilpatti.

2. **Communicating from the Field:** The purpose of this workshop was to orient the facilitators on how to record and communicate information on CRC activities and children's responses and reactions, to field office. Ms. Mariammal and Michael, the two Senior Field Coordinators, acted as resource persons. The workshop was organized at Thalavaipuram village near Kovilpatti on 17th October 2019.

3. **Story Telling as Performing Art:** This workshop was led by the well renowned activist artist Dr. Kaaleeshwaran who is the Coordinator of Art and Literary Unit of Loyola Students Support Services, Loyola College, Chennai and a Senior Consultant with the Alternative Media Centre, Chennai. The workshop underlined how story telling could be used as an alternative pedagogical tool. The workshop was organized at Madurai. Facilitators and staff from both Kovilpatti and Madurai attended. This was on October 21st 2019.

4. **Workshop on CEDAR's 'Children's Story and Song Book':** CEDAR's Creative Leads and staff, jointly put together 11 stories and 5 songs in Tamil in a book form to be used in CRCs. The idea also was to inspire the Facilitators and children to write their own stories and songs in the hubs. This book was introduced to the facilitators through a workshop. The Creative Leads were the resource persons. Mr. Jayakumar, Field Coordinator, Madurai led the workshop.

5. **Child Rights Workshop:** Mr. Krishnan, a child rights activist and an independent trainer from Chennai was invited to conduct a workshop on child rights. Along with the facilitators, members of CRMCs from the villages, parents and staff participated. Don Bosco College, Keela Eral, extended support by allowing us to use their seminar hall for the purpose free of cost. This was on December 14th 2019.

Safeguarding Against Sexual Abuse: *Karpom Karpipom* (Learn and Let Learn) is an organization well recognized for its professional competencies imparting skills of 'safeguarding against sexual abuse.' Its trainers are young volunteers drawn from different walks of life including students pursuing Social Work education. Their presence was really inspiring for the young participants. The workshop was on a TOT model. Along with the Facilitators, programme staff also participated. This workshop was held on 25th of January 2020. *Karpom Karpipom* has expressed its willingness to collaborate with CEDAR on a long-term basis.

De-ghettoization of Older Children and Youth in Urban Deprived Area Project

A rapid assessment conducted during 2018-19 by CEDAR, in an urban Deprived Area (UDA) in Madurai, revealed that there was serious alienation in senior children (16-18) and youth (18-24). This was indicated by dropping out of schools, entering dead end jobs, drug abuse and drug pushing and getting into criminal gangs. CEDAR chalked out a programme supported by Paper Boat to overcome the infirmities of the 'UDA sub-culture' by developing a youth training programme. This was aimed at i. bring out their inherent talents and creativity, ii. help developing capacities for participating in a market driven economy by either getting employed or self-employed and iii. help them re-engage with their own communities as change agents breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and alienation. CEDAR using its inhouse expertise, developed a special training curriculum in i. Photo and video editing, ii. Creative and Commercial Photography, iii. Art and Craft for Livelihood and iv. Event Management. The creative leads took the lead role in teaching and training, using our training facility at Madurai. On an average, 108 hours of training inputs were given.

Table -7: Mobilisation, Enrollment

Batch	Period	No youth Applied	Enrolled	Completed
Batch- I	June - Sep 2019	54	40	19
Batch-II	Oct- Dec 2019	57	42	35
Batch-III*	Jan-March 2019	32	32	32*
Total	-	**143**	**114**	**86**

- Batch III training could not be completed effectively and placement planned because of the pandemic and lockdown.



Training in different trades

Though initially the youth programme had to face a lot of challenges because of the resistance from the UDA youth, it ultimately brought out very positive results, in no time. By January 2020, 54 youth had successfully completed the training. Of them, more than 20 youth had either got employed, or self-employed. The details are tabulated below:

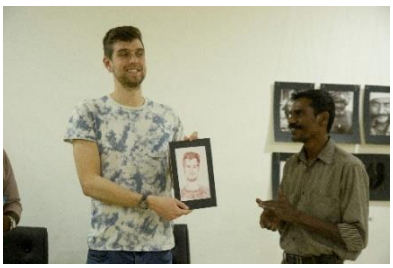
Table-8 : Placement Details and Course Completion

Si. No.	*Name*	*Social Back-ground*	*Status At the time of Admission*	*Placement after the Youth Training*	*Income per month*
1.	Rajesh	MBC	College drop out. Father daily wage earner	Designer cum Video Editor Employed by a local church	Rs. 6,000/-
2.	Pandi Selvam	BC	Graduate. Father casual labourer	Employed by a studio as wedding Photographer	Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 15,000
3.	Mayil Raj	MBC	Diploma in Computer Eng. Father: Casual labourer	Photographer cum Album Designer in a studio	Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 15,000
3.	Muneeswaran	BC	College drop out. Mother: Street hawker	Works for Hello Madurai Media Outfit as Videographer	Rs. 10,000/-
4.	Rajkumar			Works for Hello Madurai Media Outfit as Videographer (two placements given)	Rs. 10,000/-

5.	Sonaimurugan	SC	College dropout. Father: Coolie	Started a studio of his own taking wedding orders	Rs. 12,000/-
6.	Rajapriya (F)	SC	Studying in college. Hails from Tallakulam inner city deprived area	Joined CEDAR as facilitator and works in Tallakulam Slum	Rs. 3,500/-
7.	Nagaraj	SC	Graduate. Fish vendor. Hails from Jawaharlalpuram Deprived area	Received a scholarship from MMFSA to do one year Diploma in Filmmaking. Has joined CEDAR as Creative Lead (Trainee, part-time)	Rs. 8,000/-
8.	Karthick	SC	BBA Unemployed	Received a scholarship from MMFSA to do one year Diploma in Filmmaking. Has joined CEDAR as trainee Creative Lead (part-time)	Rs. 5,000/-
9.	Sowmya Banu (F)	Minority	School dropout. Father: Tea Stall owner	Has started her own art and craft business at home	_
10.	Hajira Begum (F)	Minority	Studying. Mother: Tailor	Has started her own art and craft business at home	-
11.	Shankar	SC	Had completed school. Father: Cook	Joined Madras School of Fine Arts in the Graduate Programme	_
12	Rajkumar	SC	BE. Unemployed. Father: Coolie	Started a Studio joining a friend	_
13.	Annadurai	SC	B. Com. Unemployed. Retired govt. employee.	Started a studio and a YouTube Channel	-
14.	Vijayakumar	SC	Diploma. Unemployed. Father: Petty Shop	Started own studio- Vijay Media. Goes for Model shoot.	_
15.	Praveen	SC	College drop out	Rejoined the college after completing the youth training. The college has recognized his creativity and appointed him as 'designer' of official invitations, posters and publicity material.	-
16.	Praveen Raj	SC	Graduate. Unemployed. Father: carpenter	Sculptor	15,000/-
17.	Dhanasekaran	SC	BE Unemployed	Has joined a studio as a photographer	15,000/-

18.	Phelomin Raj	BC	School final. Could not continue college education.	Employed. Specific details not readily available	-
19.	Mahima			Has started her own studio,	_
20.	Kittu	SC	BE. Father: Lab Technician	Apprentice as Assistant Director in Mainstream Film Industry	Should earn 15,000 apprentice money

- These placements/employments happened <u>without much lapse of time</u> after the completion of the training.
- The incomes declared (or calculated in certain cases) suggests a <u>promising beginning</u> for the youth irrespective of their educational qualifications: graduates, school educated and drop outs- all come to a <u>level playing ground.</u>
- Most of the youth who succeeded came from debilitating subcultures of the inner city. 13 candidates were SCs (*dalits*), 2 Muslim girls, 2 MBCs (Most backward castes) and 2 BCs. Going by their fathers' income, almost all of them came from families which were not placed safely above the poverty line, if not below the poverty line.
- In Indian cities where even college graduates including engineering graduates, hopelessly get employed in unskilled jobs, manual work and other dead-end jobs, above job placements prove that **<u>a purposive and meaningful skill-based training given over a few months can do what years of college education cannot do- breaking the poverty cycle.</u>**
- Where the salaries/incomes recorded show economic promise, the nature of jobs/self-employment initiatives certainly suggest unlimited potential for creative **<u>exploration and self-direction and growth</u>.**


Certificate Awarding Function

Beyond employment, at least three youth demonstrated higher level motivation and commitment to further train themselves in alternative media education. They are Muthuraman, Karthik and Nagaraj. They were admitted to a **university accredited Diploma in Filmmaking** course run by MMFSA totally free of cost. The three in turn, took up various responsibilities voluntarily in CEDAR supporting CRC activities. Muthuraman was instrumental in organizing the CRC at Panangadi, the community to which he belongs. Nagaraj having trained himself in Art and Craft became an assistant to Gunasekar. (When Guna became sick he almost took over 70% of his responsibilities). Karthik took upon himself the responsibility of film screening and review of Children's films in CRCs for children. He visited one centre a day doing a 5-day weekly cycle. **Here we see a second line leadership emerging, ready to use media tools to create alternative learning spaces wherever they go.**

Apart from the above three who went into our one-year programme along with volunteering, Ms. Rajapriya who was still pursuing her studies in a city college and hailed from Tallakulam UDA, was became the facilitator in the CRC that operates in her community. Lakshmanan after completing his course was assisting Ponkundram in teaching Creative Photography. We have a second line of creative leads emerging.

It needs mentioning that Tom Wilkinson, Trustee from Paper Boat met with the second batch students in January 2020. He participated in their farewell function.

Social Enterprise Experiment

A small experiment on social enterprise was launched in Dec 2018 taking inspiration from Yellow Bag who in collaboration with one Mr. Meiyappan, a local community leader and a supporter of CEDAR was struggling to put up a tailoring centre at Meenambalpuram Inner City Deprived Area. That was the time CEDAR was conducting the baseline survey and trying to work out an entry strategy for launching the community-based work for children in Meenambalpuram. CEDAR helped Meiyappan putting up a work shed on the open terrace given to him free of cost by one of the community members. A small amount was spent towards repairing and overhauling the old sewing machines donated by JHC.

The unit took off very well. Yellow Bag was providing job orders on a very consistent basis in the beginning. We envisioned three possible ways of developing the centre: 1. Yellow Bag providing job orders till such time the unit the unit became viable, 2. The centre devising its own ways to take job orders from the open market and 3. The centre developing its own product and marketing it. This could happen only when there was money for further investments in new machines and for working capital.

Before investing further in this project, CEDAR raised the following five issues: 1. Nature of ownership; 2. Assurance of minimum wage for the workers; 3. Model of sharing of profit; 4. Mode of repayment of soft loan if given by CEDAR or JHC; 5. Percentage of reserves to be built up or reinvestment made to ensure sustainability.

Unfortunately, the other two parties were not very willing to share a common vision. Also, we discovered that Yellow Bag, in spite of all the embellishment as a successful social enterprise, was

paying such a low wage as Rs. 120/- per day to poor women. Wittingly or unwittingly, Yellow Bag had built its edifice on a sweat shop, which by no means was acceptable to CEDAR. At this point, CEDAR decided not to further collaborate with Yellow Bag on the social enterprise project. The unit is still running, giving employment to four or five women, however with very low wages.

Caplor Horizon July-Aug Visit: Strategic Planning Workshop

Ms. Lorna Pearcy, International development Expert and Co-Direct at Caplor Dr. Ian Williams, 'Strategic Change expert' and another Co-Director at Caplor visited CEDAR during July-August. They were also accompanied by Mr. Gareth Jones, veteran journalist, filmmaker and the first BBC staff journalist. The training-cum workshop started with New Generation Network Meeting on 30th July attended by DACS, SPPD, ISS, MSGH and a few other NGOs who could be potential partners. This was followed by Strategic Planning Workshop. In a three-day workshop facilitated by Lorna and Ian, CEDAR could revisit its vision, mission and strategies. Revised statements of vision, mission, core values and strategy were prepared and adopted. Gareth Jones conducted a half-day workshop on Videomaking and Visual Narrative'. JHC Director Kemal Shaheen and Trustee Arun Chinnaraj were here on business, and they also participated in all the workshops. The team went to Manjanaickerpatti on August 3rd for the children's function.


Lorna Pearcy and Ian Williams


Gareth Jones


Participants

Caplor Horizon November Visit: Organisation Building

Caplor workshop was held between 4th and 8th of November facilitated by Dan Bishop and Simon, two Organisational Development Advisers from Caplor. On the first day' Nov 4th, CEDAR organized an orientation session sharing CEDAR's experience of working with children. On Nov 5th and 6th the main "Team Building Workshop" was facilitated and led by Caplor Team. Apart from CEDAR staff, trustee Prof. Winfred Thomas, Mr. Pandiyan from Witness for Justice, Mr. Anbunathan representing MMFSA trust, Dr. Meenakshi, independent consultant and members of DACS and SPPD participated in the workshop. Jo Bowen of JHC who had visited India on business, also participated.

On the fourth day, 7th Nov, a workshop on 'CEDAR's Leadership Way' was facilitated by Simon. In the evening, Simon and Dan gave their inputs to the website design company CBRA which was developing CEDAR's website. On the fifth day, 8th Nov, was dedicated to branding exercise wherein Simon helped us to design 'CEDAR image' and gave suggestions for developing a new logo for CEDAR.

On Nov 4th evening, the JHC / Caplor was taken to Jawaharlalpuram CRC. Theatre and folk song sessions were on, and the visitors interacted with the children.

On 5th evening the team participated in film viewing session at Meenambalpuram. And on 6th evening after the training session was over, the team attended the CRC inaugural function at Tallakulam.


Dan and Simon


Jo


Participants

Paper Boat Visits

Director Kemal and Trustee Arun Chinnaraj visited India between July 29th and August 6th, 2019. Jo Bowen visited CEDAR between 4th and 9th of November. Tom Wilkinson visited between January 8th and 11th of 2020. They participated in workshops, visited CEDAR projects, visited partner organisations and held official meetings the details of which are given under Caplor Visit and Partner Relation.


Arun and Kemal


Kemal with parai


Jo Bowen


Tom

Nodal Office: Partnership Relation

CEDAR was appointed as a nodal agency of Paper Boat with effect from 1st December 2018 and was given the mandate to manage the partnership relation on its behalf in India. As per the condition set by Paper Boat, all the organisations in India receiving funds from Paper Boat were to reach a partnership agreement with CEDAR. Of the five organisations (other than CEDAR), three organisations- Society for Poor People Development (SPPD), Dindigul willingly signed Aids Control Society (DACS), and Madurai Sevashram (MSGH) willingly and signed the agreement within the deadline set by Paper Boat. Inba Seva Sangam (ISS) was reluctant and wanted to negotiate further with Paper Boat before it took the decision. Boys Town Society (BTS), the longstanding partner rejected the Paper Boat recommendation outright and refused to sign any agreement with anyone. Except SPPD and CEDAR, all the other organisations mentioned are Care Homes of Children coming under the purview of JJ Act and other statutory regulations in force.

The Paper Boat-CEDAR policy of partnership management can be summed up as follows:

1. Child-safeguarding child-protection standards must be fulfilled by all Paper Boat partners as required under JJ Act and as required by UK Charity Commission

2. Partner organisations audited by Safety Auditor Jim Dyson must immediately place action plan with time frame, for implementing Dyson's recommendations
3. Nodal Agency (CEDAR), should facilitate the process of further professionalizing partner relations
4. Paper Boat is committed to the Key recommendations to the UNGA Resolution on the Rights of a Child which call strongly for firmer action to prevent unnecessary parent-child separation and as such can only work with partners who understand, believe and act in line with the recommendations within it.

Dindigul AIDS Control Society (DACS)

DACS was founded in the year 2004. It started receiving financial support from JHC from the year 2012. Their primary objective is to provide residential care and support for HIV infected children who are abandoned, orphaned and otherwise could not be supported by families in poverty. The home which DACS calls 'Anbagam' has the capacity to accommodate 40 children.

DACS was highly cooperative, and from the beginning was willing to share the vison of Paper Boat. It also made an undertaking to implement the recommendations of Dyson on safeguarding.





Paper Boat sanctioned a sum of Rs. 25,00,000/- for the year 20119-20. Its strategy for 2019-20. DACS Stated its Strategy as follows:

- *To provide residential care that would ensure quality health and nutritional support to HIV infected children that would ensure zero mortality on a sustainable basis*
- *To further strengthen individual child's survival capabilities by providing appropriate education, social and vocational skills*
- *To reorganize care and support in the light of new safeguarding standards proposed by Jim Dyson and in terms of JJ Act*
- *To work towards sustainability of DACS as a care and support organization for HIV infected children*

As on March 31st 2020, DACS was supporting 39 children (25 girls + 14 boys) There is no mortality this year.

Table-9 : Admissions and Discharge

Year	Beginning of the year	New Admission	New Admission %	Children sent back to family / community	Child leaving %	End of the Year
2014-15	41	11	27%	10	24%	42
2015-16	42	11	26%	14	33%	39
2016-17	39	5	13%	6	15%	38
2017-18	38	9	24%	3	8%	44
2018-19	44	3	7%	10	23%	37
2019-20	**37**	8	22%	6	16%	**39**

DACS is a very conscientious organization that diligently follows statutory compliances. This year the Government of Tamil Nadu came forward to issue the "Certificate of Recognition of Fit Facility" to DACS, which is very rare.

As per our understanding, DACS does not compromise on the nutritional standards when it comes to feeding the children. The general health care provided to the children was found to be satisfactory. The health emergency system was in place and was well supported by the Government Hospital at Dindigul. There is no wonder that for the second consecutive year, the mortality rate is kept at zero. Formal educational needs of the children are taken care reasonably well. However, the creative needs of the children can be further augmented by exposing them to more inhouse artistic activities.

One of the major recommendations of Dyson was to provide a standard mattress to each child as provided by JJ Act. Paper Boat supported DACS by giving Rs. 1,81,000/- outside the budget. As per Dyson's recommendation, two staff members with professional qualifications were appointed during the period, again utilizing funds provided by Paper Boat. This has considerably improved the quality of services provided.

Another major strength of DACS is their ability to mobilise funds from other sources. Of the total money mobilized by DACS during 2019-20 was Rs. 37,91,793/-. Of this, Rs. 19,26,153/- (51%) was from Paper Boat. Apart from this, DACS also mobilized Rs. 7,65,050/- in kind. This also talks about the standing of the organization.

CEDAR on its part, extended on-site capacity building by orienting the staff on Result Based Management (RBM) and setting up of a proper accounting system. CEDAR's Media team visited DACS twice to shoot a documentary film which would help them on fund raising. Dr. Chandrasekaran, HIV specialist on the request from Rajadurai, visited DACS to extend professional advice. The continuing challenge for DACS was employing professionally qualified staff and retaining them for longer periods. The second major issue was re-integration of children past 18 years, back into the community with livelihood support. DACS certainly qualifies as a Fit Institution to serve children who need special care.

Society for Poor People Development (SPPD)

SPPD started receiving funds from Paper Boat from 2005. It was the first organization to sign the agreement. Among many of its objectives, SPPD cherishes the mission of improving socio-economic

sustainability of community by supporting the education of poor and marginalized children. SPPD had been running Evening Study Centres called ESCs in several villages even before Paper Boat stepped in. SPPD originally submitted a proposal (received by us on 5th April 2019) asking Paper Boat a total sum of **Rs. 14, 07,400/-.** They also proposed to extend their work from 10 villages to 20 villages during 1919-20. A joint discussion held at CEDAR Nodal Office on April 24, 2019. CEDAR emhasised on enlarging the scope of the Evening Study Centre (ESCs) in creating 'child-centred space' and 'agency' in children.

1. They will continue to work in 10 villages and not 20
2. They will reach out to 350 children
3. Create new structures to articulate child centered space
4. Capacity building for tutors, parents and community from child rights/child safeguarding perspectives
5. Developing programme monitoring strategies in consultation with CEDAR for course correction and for moving on to the second stage

The total outlay was scaled down from **Rs. 14, 07, 400/-** to **Rs. 10, 07, 500/-**
Everything went well with SPPD till the month of November 2019 by which time CEDAR started taking up with SPPD the need for the regular biannual audit as well the special 9-year audit which Paper Boat had made it mandatory. Initially SPPD was giving some excuses for postponing fixing of a date. Finally, it turned out to be its total unwillingness to allow financial audit of any kind. This CEDAR considered not only an lack of cooperation but also a serious case of breach of contract. CEDAR wrote to Paper Boat, and further transfer of money was stopped. (SPPD had received Rs. 5,22,000/- for the first two quarters). The stalemate continued till the end of March 2020. Now this must be followed by serving of a proper notice before we terminate the partnership.

Madurai Sevashram Girls Hostel (MSGH)

As is the case with the SPPD, MSGH also had been supported by Paper Boat for long. They also reached partnership agreement with CEDAR. However, Jim Dyson's audit pointed out to several lapses. Added to this were, some directions issued by Madurai District Child Protection Unit (DCPU). In spite of our continued effort as a nodal agency, MSGH did not take any positive effort to rectify these lapses. Quoting the report of the Partnership Manager is very pertinent:

1. Meeting the dietary and nutritional standards stipulated by DCPU: Though the weekly menu is changed on the card, no specific commitment has been made towards improvement of the nutritional standards. No tangible proof to that effect.
2. Meeting the minimum standards of bedding for children as per JJ Act: MSGH is not willing to provide beds to children as recommended by JJA and Dyson. They try to rationalise their attitude in terms of culture and children's preference.
3. Child safeguarding Policy: Total inability to appreciate the need for safeguarding which is a real concern for all of us. Besides, mentioning 'no serious problems so far' shows adopting a denial mode. Though they say "Shall be followed after consultation with JHC" there is absolutely no effort on the part of MSGH management to consult on this matter. I have told the Secretary as well staff members several times that the nodal office is willing to provide on-site consultation, we were not invited any time for help or advice of any kind. Their promise lacks conviction.

4. Serious Communication gap between management and staff: An organisation with heavy top-down control; No staff participation in key issues of governance especially relating to the well-being of children; **Dyson's report itself has not been shared among the staff team**; we find the organisational culture highly resistant to new ideas and adapting to change.

This was taken up with all seriousness with Dr. Kemal Shaheen and Paper Boat trustees. During their August 2019 visit, both Director Kemal and Trustee Arun, personally met with the representatives of MSGH. They made it clear that complying with safeguarding measures were vital, and Paper Boat as a policy would like to exit from funding for residential care. Paper Boat put forth a proposal for exit. They wrote to MSGH saying that after taking into confidence relevant stakeholders such as CWC and DCPU, Paper Boat would draw a plan for resettling the children so far being supported by Paper Boat. They wanted the governing board of MSGH to explore this option. It was quite unfortunate that MSGH Board wrote back saying that the option did not suit them. As on 27th February 2019, of the 48 children originally supported by Paper Boat, 21 had been sent home. 27 continued to stay with MSGH.

Inba Seva Sangam (ISS)

A safety audit was conducted by Mr. Jim Dyson in August 2018 at ISS. Dyson made several recommendations to ISS for implementing proper child safeguarding measures. In the partner's meeting organised on February 13, 2019 at CEDAR, Trustees Mr. Arun and Ms. Deborah explained in person to the ISS team headed by Mr. Patchamuthu, about the need for signing the partnership agreement with CEDAR. However, ISS for reasons best known to them remained non-committal on signing the partnership agreement with CEDAR.

Mr. Thangapandian took over as an Office Bearer at ISS, visited CEDAR along with Mr. Veluchamy and Mr. Mookuchamy on July 17, 2019, and expressed their interest to sign the partnership agreement with CEDAR accepting it as the Nodal Agency. But nothing happened. Subsequently, a team led by Dr. Markandan, President of ISS visited CEDAR on August 5, 2019, and made an appeal to Dr. Kemal and Trustee Mr. Arun Chinnaraj who had visited India, for interim sanctioning of funds. The matter of deinstitutionalisation was taken up by Trustee Arun and Director Kemal at that point.

Mr. Thangapandian on August 6th, made a request for sanctioning interim funds again.

On 25th September, raised 8 specific questions pertinent to their compliance with JJ Act which included their registration under JJ Act, yearly CWC orders for bringing children inside their home and CWC/DCPU inspection reports. Nothing positive in terms of compliance came out in response to this query.

Followed by that, JO Bowen of Paper Boat and Rajadurai visited ISS home on Nov 10th as part of Jo's visit to India. And during their visit, **they found out that the home was registered as the Residential School Hostel since 2009, and not under JJ Act**. This was never communicated to JHC/Paper Boat. The question of collecting fees from children was also viewed seriously. Though ISS agreed for the 9-year audit, matter came to such boil that by 2nd January 2020, Paper Boat decided to terminate the partnership.

Boys Town (BTS)

Although the Boys Town Society (BTS) refused to accept the new partnership arrangement put forth by Paper Boat, CEDAR was entrusted with certain administrative/liaison tasks by Paper Boat so as to enable Paper Boat to keep track of the fate of the children left with BTS, and also discharge whatever statutory obligations required of Paper Boat, in India. CEDAR not only kept track of the happenings in India but also represented Paper Boat before the Government Agencies on behalf of Paper Boat whenever necessary. Matters relating to BTS came to public knowledge first, in May 2019, when a section of alumni of the BTS sent a representation to Paper Boat management alleging mismanagement and sacrifice of the interest of the children. And closely followed by this, on 21st June 2019, during a public hearing in Tamil Nadu by the **National Commission for Protection of the Rights of Children (NCPRC), serious allegation of neglect of children in all the 7 units including deaths due to negligence of BTS**, were made by the same alumni association and the matter came under serious public glare. On 27th June 2019, Kemal wrote to the Chair of the Madurai District Child Welfare Committee (The Statutory Authority in India under JJ Act), expressing concern as well communicating the stand taken by the PB trustees. To quote: "… the Trustees of JHC-UK are fully resolved to commit the resources (financial and human) that we have at our disposal and work with our nodal partner (and appropriate stakeholders) to ensure that all children currently in the care of Boys Town Society (or any of our other partner organisations) are protected in line with the highest legal and moral principles in India." Following this, the CWC formally stated that it would institute an enquiry by DCPU on the issue of alleged child rights violations in BTS units. **As Boys Town doggedly refused to part with any meaningful information about 309 odd children supposedly resident in their facilities. CEDAR authorized by Paper Boat, during the months of January and February, tried to work with the CWCs and the District Administrations of both Madurai and Dindigul. The Collectors (District Magistrates) of both the districts were seized of the matter. On our enquiries we found that even after government intervention, BTS did not furnish any information as on date, to the relevant agencies. With the arrival of lockdown and change in priorities,this is going to be more difficult for government agencies to track the situation.**

New Generation Network

The idea of New Generation Network was developed through a long dialogue between Paper Boat and CEDAR on the issue of widening the scope of our influence in building communities where every child is protected. We came to the initial conclusion that this is possible only when we hold hands with other NGOs, civil society actors, communities, the state agencies and a whole lot of other stake holders committed to the cause of protecting and upholding the rights of children. As a practical measure we in CEDAR along with Paper Boat, wanted to identify a few likeminded NGOs in Tamil Nadu who would spearhead the movement. The first collaborative consultation was organized in August 2019 during the visit of Caplor. Kemal and Trustee Arun were also present. This was followed by another joint consultation in November by inviting a few NGOs, the prominent among them were People and Children Watch. A strategy paper was also developed wherein we stated three strategic goals.: 1. Strengthen Policy – we will carry out advocacy to improve state policy and we will work together to help ensure that policy is effectively implemented, 2. we will develop child hubs in 302 deprived areas in Madurai by 2030; in doing this we will generate a replicable model which we will promote widely, and 3. we will develop and integrate social enterprise initiatives in all of our activities to help inspire and enable young people to lead independent and resilient lives. In a meeting with Jo Bowen, Pandiyan of POPE and Raj and Tamil of Children Watch on Nov 8th, it was decided that CEDAR would function as the official secretariat of the New Generation Network.

Field Visit to *Kuravar* and *Irular* Areas

A visit to Thanjavur *Kuravar* villages was made by CEDAR team during Jan19-20 accompanied by Pandiyan Kamal, to acquaint with the kind of work Pandiyan had been involved in. The team greatly touched by the plight of the community, especially the plight of the children, decided to make a visual narrative of their woe. Then it enlarged into an idea of making a full length documentary film on the Kuravar community. We met not only with the leaders but also women, children and the elderly. This visit was shortly followed by another 3-day visit to Thanjavur with the purpose of shooting the documentary. This time, we visited several villages. We also met with Seema Nair of Fund for Global Human Rights (FGRH) in the field, and discussed the possible collaboration.


Kuravar Community


Children


With FGRH

This was followed by a 4-day visit to Kanjipuram *Irular* villages, where Children Watch had been active. We were taken to several villages and this time, with the specific purpose of making a rapid assessment of the issue of marginalization and bondage of *Irulas*. Documentary footages were also made. We were accompanied by Raj and Tamil of Children Watch. As a climax, we went to Mahabalipuram to be part of the great annual congregation of *Irulas* from all over Tamil Nadu. Before leaving Kanjipuram, an outline for writing a funding proposal was made discussing with Children Watch on the ground.


With irular children


irular child


At Mahabalipuram

Appointments

- Jeyakumar was appointed as the Field Coordinator with effect from August 16, 2019.
- Deepak was appointed as the Information Officer with effect from October 1, 2019.
- Muthupriya was appointed as the Accounts Officer with effect from December 2, 2019 in the retirement vacancy of Mr. Marimuththu, who served CEDAR for 25 years.

Other Activities

- Dr. Chinnaraj Joseph, CEO, CEDAR, attended one day Round Table Conference on 'Understanding challenges and Opportunities in Promoting Family-Based Care for Children in India' on September 20th at Delhi, organised by Udayan Care on behalf of Catholic Relief Services and UNICEF.
- Online Safeguarding Training by Jim Dyson on March 2nd was attended by Pandiyan, Ponkundram, Rajadurai and Tom from England.
- A team of consultants working for the National Commission for the De-notified Tribes visited CEDAR on 5th January 2020 to ascertain our views on the issue.
- Mr Jayakumar was invited to Delhi by Ms. Gunjan Vedha, the author of 'The Museum of Broken Cups' for her book release event on March 4th. at Delhi. She had invited Dalit Cultural Activists across the country. For that event, on behalf of He performed *Parai* to the audience.

The year 2019-20 was a very eventful year for CEDAR.

3rd Aug 2019

Dr. Chinnaraj Joseph Jaikumar
Managing Trustee