

**Yerala Projectys Society**  
**Yerala Bhavan, Miraj Road, Sangli, India**

**“Understanding rural people and working to solve their difficulties”**

Many donor organizations from North support the social initiatives taken up by the NGOs from south. Many donor organizations have their own development agenda which they want to implement in south. There are very few organizations which support those programs which are needed by the target groups! “Yojana, Netherlands” is one of such organizations.

Yojana is not just a funding organization, but it is an organization which tries to understand the difficulties faced by target population, analyse the difficulties, consult international experts, get their experiences and expertise share with the implementing organization on the ground and use the selected ideas which are suitable in the local conditions for the development of the targeted people!

When we were sharing our experience of “the students lack in expressions”. In a way it is a difficult question for people from north to understand the real problem. Because except children with special needs, almost all the children in north are quite expressive. Yojana found out a Scottish couple, Doris and Paul, who have studied this particular problem and have invented methods to address it and have practiced this in quite a number of schools. When this couple came to train our trainers and teachers in India, it was amazing to learn that this is exactly the way to improve the expressing capabilities of children!! We are practicing this “Philosophy for Children (P4C)” tool since one year and we are experiencing that the students are able to form their opinion, express what they want to say and that too logically! In rural area where we work, we can now easily make out that those children who have gone through P4C have bettered in expression skills!

In India it is considered indecent to speak about the domestic violence or uncomferts faced by children at home. It was quite difficult to know the mental condition of children. We discussed this difficulty with our partner in North, they shared with some experts, Mr. Kersten’s group came to help in this. This group has used puppets as tool, children are taught to express their difficulties through the puppet shows. Teachers are trained in de-coding the expressions of children! Expressions through puppets is proving very helpful in improving quality of education, this has helped largely in improving the child and teachers relationships as the teachers can better understand the emotional status of children.

At the secondary level (age group 14-17 yrs) mainly because of the physical changes takes place within them, girls and boys play games separately. As there is hardly any communication with opposite sex there is very less development of understanding and co-ordination between boys and girls. As a result of this in the future life boys play a dominant role and girls play secondary role. The difficulty was how to bring the boys together so that they can understand each other, they and co-ordinate better and work together to achieve common goal by paying equal respect to each other. Yojana again shared this problem with experts. The advise was to involve the girls and boys in such games which are promote gender equality. Korfball and Judo were identified as useful games. A sports trainer from Netherlands visited India to train young boys and girls in Korfball and Judo. Now the boys and the girls play both the games together. Though it will take some time to get visible difference, but when we see girls and boys playing together , talking to each other, discussing on strategy, decoding body language we surely get the assurance that we are on the right path of bringing gender equality especially among tomorrow’s generation!

We can share similar stories about Prof. Jaap and Drs. Erny inputs on “project based learning”, Sabine suggested program on Reading To The Smallest (RTTS).

We learn a lot from the experiences and expertise of the people from North. This “different” initiative of Yojana is helping in bringing better change in the lives of people of Jalihal .

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