



Arunachala Village School Trust

அருணாச்சலா வில்லேஜ் ஸ்கூல் டிரஸ்ட்

"Illuminating the lives of children through education..."



Annual Report of 2015 – 2016
(April to March)

Thank you friends!!!

Dear Friends,

Hearty greetings from AVS!!!

Aldis Jaspers planted a seed 17 years ago which today has grown up like a big Banyan tree!!! The past 17 years has been an amazing trip so far together with the children of AVS, but still there is a long way to go. 2015-16 was another successful and challenging year. Particularly this year there were many new ideas, which would definitely help us in the upcoming academic year. Children learned many things in this academic year and which gave them lots of fun and I am sure it is a great year for them and for us too.

The support of the donors, staff, students and parents is so great in this year and which made us to realize what we have planned to execute in this year. Particularly we are so grateful to our donors and supporters for their unconditional love and support all these times, which was the main reason behind this success!!!

Now we are heading for the new academic year with loads dreams, ideas for our lovely children.

With Love & Respect,
Madhan



Mission of AVS

“Love, trust and respect are the fundamental values of the education we provide. We foster creativity and common understanding for each other and the environment, we strive for empathy and harmony in all we do and we share the responsibility to care for what we build together: a learning community for children and people of the surrounding villages to create a bright future”

What is AVS?

Arunachala Village School (AVS) was started in 1999 by Aldis Jaspers with 42 children in Vedyappanur village, which is located 190 km from Chennai and 100 km from Pondicherry. The goal of AVS is to offer good primary education to the children from the poor economic families. Offering that in a stress freeway and making the school a joyful place for the kids and so they learn easily and happily is the main vision of AVS.



17 years of journey...

AVS completed 17 years in the education field and so many students have completed their primary education so far. In these 17 years of educational services we have witnessed many great challenges but nothing stopped the enthusiasm in serving the children. Many lessons are learned every day, which made the school what it is today here!!!



AVS @ 1999



AVS @ 2016

One big family...

In these 17 years we built more than a school, we built a family where everybody in it feels at home and can grow and explore their full potential in a family setting. This goes not only for the students but also for the staff, the management and even the surrounding villages are being involved and feel part of it. Also the volunteers who are helping us out every year say the same thing, they feel like they are adopted into a family. A family bond that is there to stay.



Growth curve...

It has in fact been a big growth curve over the years where we've been able to grow from 42 students to 210 students, from a small hut to a big campus.

Learning along the way we are trying to create the ideal environment for not only learning but feeling part of a whole and being respected for who you are and for what your individual qualities are. A great place for the students to learn, enjoy and have fun in their school life so they can reach their full potential and take that home to benefit from it and spread it to their surroundings.



As usual the children selection occurred during the summer holidays in April-May months. 30 children were selected (15 boys & 15 girls) for the lower kindergarten and also xx students admitted in other classes too. School started again after the summer holidays on 4th June with many great dreams and plans. Newly admitted children performed a special ceremony of "Vidyarambam". They sit on the laps of parents or teachers and written the first Tamil alphabet on rice paddy as a traditional custom here.



A student starting education by writing Tamil alphabet on rice paddy

Initiatives

- From this year onwards a, 15 students were allotted for the kindergarten and class 1 and 2. This gave us a more time and space to reach every single student in higher level and also the teachers are able to focus much more than the past since the student's count is down to 15 from 30. We tried out this as a test basis and it worked out very well finally. This new effort gave us great ideas for the future and many issues with the children are sorted out.

- To give the children a different learning environment in nature oriented surroundings, two new learning places (open air) were created this year. Children and teachers love so much to learn from these new classes.



- After seeing so much fertilizers used by the farmers around and the difficulties they face because of this, AVS decided to take part in this to give an idea to the parents and village people by teaching their children about organic farming at the young age. A beautiful organic garden was created together with the students and staff team. Each class was offered a small piece of land and with their class teacher they should decide what they would like to do there.
- Kids are so enthusiastic and so much fun to learn in the garden. Since all from the farming background, it is totally new for them not to use the chemicals and how are they going to manage the crops and plants! But soon they learned it very well what is important for a plant to grow. To give them a chance to taste some success at the beginning level, we tried various vegetables and it worked out very well and they harvested huge quantity of vegetables from the garden. This is initiated as a test level and now in the next academic year they are going to learn in detail about everything and also the kids are requested to spread about this in their families and neighborhood.



- For the last 3 years, our children were participating in the craft training program in another school (Marudam School), where more children were not able to participate in this training program. So to give this great opportunity to all our children and also the children from the Government schools, AVS organized a special craft week (Monday to Saturday) in October. Children from VEDIYAPPANUR Government schools also joined our students so it was a festival for the children for a week! They learned paper craft, pottery, terracotta, stone carving, papier-mâché, palm leave works, traditional “poikkal” and few more works. It was a great success at the end.



As a part of the life education, students are taken to various places such as Rameshwaram, Police station, bank and post office to get more idea about outside world.

For the first time, we took students for a two day trip to Rameshwaram. Many people helped for the accommodation and they enjoyed their time in the Rameshwaram Island. They got a chance to visit the Marine Research Institute, which gave them a great idea about the living beings in the Oceans.



Higher Education Support

During 2015-16 17 students were supported under higher educational support program. 11 students are studying in University courses, 6 are studying in high schools.

As usual this year also we have received a great support from the volunteers. Matthias Trüb, Beni Farkas, Renate Jaggi, Maria Grazia Beerle, Agata Wlodek, Sönke Triphaus and Patricia Moran have helped a lot at school in teaching English, sports lesson and painting the walls with themes.





Res Frei and Jeroen Jansen have created innovative play tools for the children from the throw away materials. A longtime dream of having a good computer network finally came true with the support of Sönke Triphaus and his company anykeyit.ch, Switzerland. Renate Jaggi trained the teachers for a month about teaching kindergarten and primary students in a creative way. Beni Farkas helped us to create a good vegetable garden together with Matthias Trüb.

Tough road...

There are challenges that we faced in this year, which made few difficult obstacles in our work. Particularly getting the right team with good teachers is a big challenge always. A few teachers quit within a few days. It is hard to bring the new teachers to the different teaching environment since they are used for the traditional teaching methods. But it took some time to turn them to our working environment. This caused great delay in implementing many good ideas and also few are postponed for the next academic year. Also Mrs.Uma resigned as headmistress, which was a setback but Mrs.Jayarani became a new headmistress from this year onwards. Parent's cooperation is also a challenge in this year too. But we are working hard to solve this issue in the next academic year.

Reason to love to send my kid to AVS...

I live in Vedyappanur and since my child was born I dreamed to send my son to AVS. Since he joined here I am so happy to see the progress in him. He is so happy at school, well disciplined and learning well at school too. I am so grateful to the teachers for their wonderful efforts!!! **S.Rajagopal, Father of Vimalraj, 1st standard**

Interview of Jayarani, Headmistress

In my 14 years' of experience I never seen a school like AVS, we work together as a family and there is no hierarchy which gives great feeling about working here. AVS makes sure that its children growing up with discipline, culture and moral values. Also it gives them the confidence that they can also achieve in this world. Learning environment at this school is great for the students as well as for the teachers too!!!



Impact...

The big success of this year was we could able to offer education to 210 children from the poor families and 17 for the higher education courses. The craft week organized at AVS helped the Government school children to learn many craft works, which motivated them a lot.



Finance:

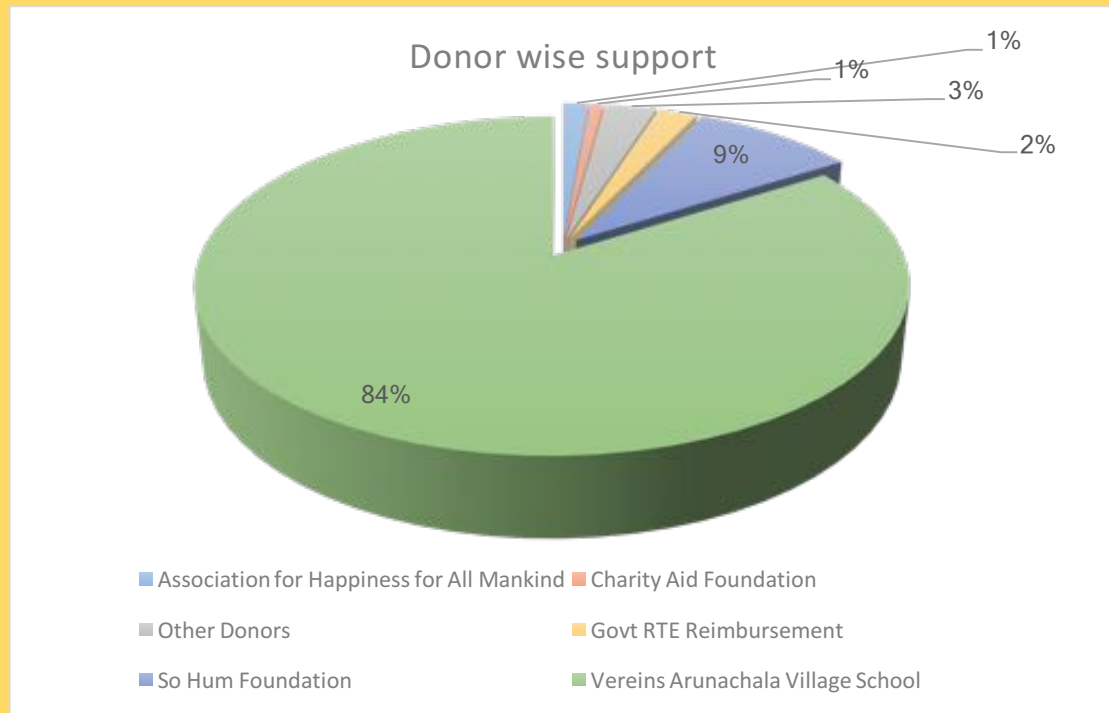
Financially this year went peacefully with the support of great support from our regular donors. Also much efforts for the cost control and cost saving.

Budget

The estimated budget for 2015-16 (April to March) financial year was Rs.32,47,015 (US \$ 50,934) inclusive of entire school operations and higher education support program. Cost estimated for one students in this year was Rs.15,462 (US \$ 243) including complete education, textbooks, notebooks, uniform and all other expenses for the whole academic year.

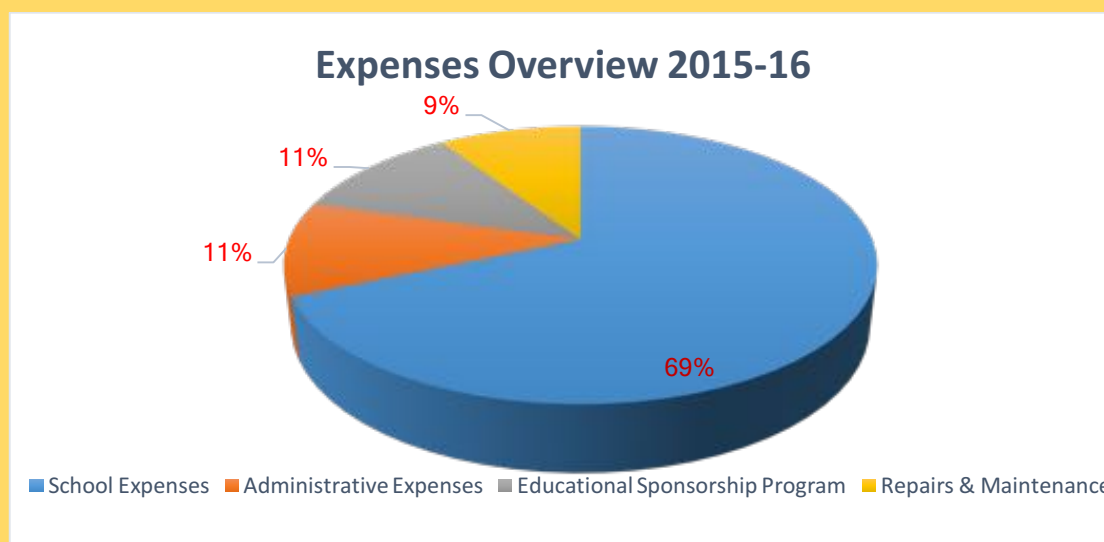
Donations

- Donation received from Microsoft India (through Charity Aid Foundation) has reduced to 1% of total donation received as compared to 9% in the previous year.
- Verein Arunachala Village School supported 84% of the total budget.
- This year we have received Rs.1,13,920 from the Government of Tamilnadu under the Right to Education Act.



Expenses

Reducing the cost has been the major challenge like every year, here at AVS. We have made great efforts earnestly and persistently to reduce cost by negotiating with our service providers but without compromising quality. Many steps taken reduce the cost of the projects with the support of the staff team and the vendors. Most of the purchases have been done after the negotiation and it helped us to save lot of money. Also the cash transactions were very much reduced in this financial year and most of the transactions have made through the bank only.



Admin Expenses

Increase in salary can be attributed for the slight increase in trend evident in the below graph. However, the percentage of admin expenses incurred remains at 10-11% over the years. It is heartening to note that admin expenses have been restricted to 11% as against 50% limit that has been authorized by Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

Legal Compliances

Audit for the year has been conducted by Sreevathson V Associates, Chennai and the signed financials have been submitted in the board meeting of AVS Trust. And also the same was displayed on the school notice board and the website too.

Income Tax returns was filed in May 2016 and FCRA returns have been duly filed before due date. Also the quarterly donation receipts details have been submitted through online to the Ministry of the Home affairs within the prescribed time.

Audited financial reports are available on our website and also can be provided on request through email.

Conclusion:

This academic year ended up with mixture of different experiences but noting stopped our dreams. Now we learned a lot during the year, which gave us a good lessons and this would definitely bring a great year for all of us in the coming academic year. Now we have fueled with many great dreams, ideas and 'corrected' plans for our beautiful students, which drives us towards our goal!!!



“illuminating the lives of children through education...”

On behalf the 210 children, hearty thanks to you all for your great support...

Arunachala Village School Trust,
371/1, Vedyappanur Village, Adi Annamalai Post,
Tiruvannamalai 606604, Tamilnadu, India

Tel. (+91) 4175 294 766 | Mobile: +91 944 330 83 73
Email: president@avstrust.org | Web: www.avstrust.org