Community projects, not just the icing on the cake

The “whole” idea behind community projects at TOS
Key objectives

• To fulfill the CBSE agenda – life skill education, sexuality education, and real life orientation.
• Schools core responsibility is to develop “whole system thinking” by demonstrating that society consists of groups and sub groups but they are all part of one universe.
• To develop the attitude that whole system development benefits all, hence impacting minds for future.
• To provide the whole picture of the society our students live in.
• To develop an attitude of gratitude (for what they have got):develop respect for people unlike us.
• To see the connection and interdependence between social situations.
• To help them learn skills to relate to people from different social backgrounds.
• To provide experiential learning programs, with the “community as the laboratory” for real life learning lessons in actual situations.
• Make learning “REAL”, provide a space to take their learning beyond the four walls of the class. Integrated project approach to our curriculum-SSC, math ,language, art, economics, critical thinking ,analysis and..........................
• To help students develop communication-both verbal and non verbal skills.
• Provoke questions that challenge our assumptions and minimize our prejudices and stereotypes.
• Prepares the Orchid team for up coming RTE agenda.
Studies have shown.....

- “Yes, reading and math are important. But what matters most is what kind of human beings are reading the books and doing the math!”
- Young people are often the ones who renew the CONSCIENCE of a nation.
- When students experience the theories, the learning becomes relevant.
- Rich educational experiences will enable our students to become active citizens in a democratic society.
- NASSCOM talks about employability of graduate students going higher when they have had a social exposure.
- Graduate schools tie up with Teach For India in a variety of ways, offering admission deferrals, assistance with loans and scholarships, recognizing Teach For India as valid work experience, and even reserving seats for Fellows.
Core agenda

- To ground learning
- To resonate the power of relevance
- To build social capital
- To build leaders
- Create civic habits of the heart
- Re-instate the courage to care
- Allow democracy to become a habit as we go back and forth between living it and studying it, over and over.
Student Voices: Some perspectives

**Class V-Twinning with a neighboring school.**

- “They could understand our language, but we couldn’t understand theirs—their language was very rich!”
- “I then began to feel comfortable—because I connected with people.”
- “People matter, not place—we can make ourselves comfortable anywhere.”
- “It is not necessary to speak English or study in a big school to be educated.”
- “When we understand people, we don’t judge them eg— if we go other countries, we’ll try and understand instead of insulting.
- “When we grow up maybe we won’t have fights between rich and poor..because we learnt that we are the same”.

Some realizations

Class VI - Looking beyond the world as we know it - building awareness, sensitization and partnerships with TARA mobile crèche.

• .....I learnt that everyone is equal. I realized that they knew a lot of things and had a lot of knowledge too. If I become a builder or politician, I would see to it that there are crèches in every construction site. All the citizens of Pune should encourage builders to help these children of laborers.
• ......They spoke different languages, but still we were able to understand each other.
• .....I had expected that those children would not be able to interact with us. Most of all I expected to be quite bored. But I was proven wrong. Over there I learnt that all of us are equal and we can play and interact with different people we have never met. Due to this experience I have found out how other people live and the difficulties they have. ...all construction sites should have such centers.”
...and some profound clarity

Class IX-Comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) Visit to adoption homes, BSSK and SOFOSH

You can expect from us…….

• “We will handle and discuss sexuality in a mature way.”
• “An understanding that there is more than one way of looking at situations.”
• “We will hear your perspective about our life and decisions as well”.
• “Studies are an important part of our life. We will try and balance work and fun in a responsible manner.”

And, we expect from adults…….

• That you understand the need for having CSE in school.
• Be open about discussing sexuality and questions related to it at home.
• Understand our feelings and support us whenever we go through problems.
• Understand that falling in love in not bad. Help us strike a balance
“Should I speak in Hindi or English?”
“People matter, not place—we can make ourselves comfortable anywhere”
“Thank you for wearing a seat belt. You deserve to be appreciated!”

SELF CONFIDENCE & SELF AWARENESS