



Learning Space Foundation

Community Connect

at Learning Space Foundation (LSF)

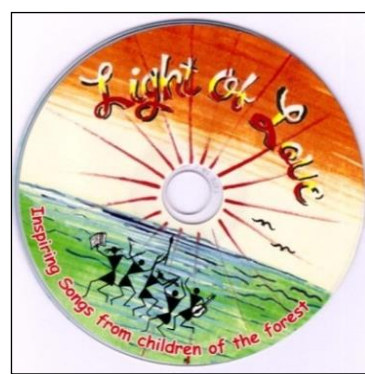


Learning Space Foundation (LSF) as an NGO devoted to rural development through quality education, has associated for the last one decade with various organizations to bring students, corporate employees as volunteers from different parts of the world to the beautiful countryside of the **Tansa River Valley**, situated on the outskirts of Mumbai, in the Thane-Palghar districts of Maharashtra in India.

From the very inception of the **Learning Space** project in 2005, volunteers coming from various parts of the world and connecting with native children and the community, was weaved into the fabric of this service for bettering educational opportunities in the village area of the **Tansa River Valley**.

One of these volunteers, a pop musician from Australia, **Michael Turner** did well with the children, writing simple songs in English and singing with them. A young man from Nasik, **Manish Dhiman**, versatile in his talent in music & singing also spent time with the children, playing his guitar in a soulful manner, as they began learning the language of music.

The consistent efforts of the duo of **Michael Turner** and **Manish Dhiman**, over several years, resulted into their writing an album specially for all village children titled '**Light of Love**', which consisted of inspiring songs in English and Hindi. The album contained the theme and essence of Learning Space, as a way for all village children to learn creatively, acquire useful skills and look forward to a life of abundant self-expression.



The varied programmes of connecting urban students, Corporate employees, volunteers from different parts of the world resulted in hundreds of success stories over a decade of selfless service through the Learning Space project; here are two of the charming stories of this Community Connect, exemplifying the value addition & benefits to rural and tribal students through this programme at LSF;



Monika Talwar – A village girl brought up by a single mother, who joined the supplementary learning center in 2005 at the age of 11 was supported with wholesome learning by volunteers from across the world. In 2012, she was supported by LSF to get into a University degree course in Hospitality Management, and be recruited by a top 5 star Hotel company in Mumbai. Recently in March 2019, Monika joined an International Cruise as an Assistant Chef and is very happy with her new job and the beautiful places she can travel to, all over the world.



Ganesh Jadhav – A village boy from the native community, at only 13 years of age had to help his family earn their livelihood by working in farms and at other places. Ganesh was supported with wholesome supplementary learning at the LSF center by volunteers from across the world. In 2012, he was supported by LSF to get into a Computer Software course at a private Institute, and soon after the course he joined LSF as a computer teacher. In a span of 5 years, Ganesh leads a large outreach project of imparting basic computer literacy to native children in middle level schools in remote locations in the Palghar District, and emerging as a community change-maker with his leadership skills.

In the recent past and currently in the year 2019, the following groups of visitors have been playing a significant role in the Community Connect Programme at LSF;

A. Management Students and Company Executives from ISL, Japan.

For the past 5 years, LSF has been supported by **Think Education** to usher students of **ISL (International Strategic Leadership Programme)**, bringing 100's of young Japanese Management students and company executives, to participate in village developmental programmes run by LSF, and to interact with members of village community, especially the farming community.

So far, LSF has hosted 7 different batches of the ISL students between 2014-2018, to villages in the **Tansa River Valley**, to preprimary and primary schools and organic farms as well as guiding the international students to build a perspective on rural development in India.

These village exposure visits have been organized as full day/half day programmes that cover a pre-devised itinerary and schedule for deriving maximum exposure for the visiting students.



B. International Schools in Mumbai associated with Learning Space

LSF associated with the **Jamnabai Narsee School**, Juhu, Mumbai in the year 2012-13 and the school's Principal (then) **Mrs. Josephine Vas** along with the founder of LSF, **Mr. Nitin Orayan** chalked out a day-long village volunteering and exposure programme for CAS students of 8th and 9th grade. These village visits were made during the Jan-Feb months of every year and the students visited the government run primary public schools in the villages around LSF in the Tansa River Valley area.

The urban students devised teaching programmes for village students for classes 1st to

4th in English language learning and creative activity like dancing, storytelling, craft and others.

At the end of the day, all urban students gathered at the hall of Learning Space center to interact and share the experience and learnings of the day.

In 2014-15 LSF associated with the **Dhirubhai Ambani International School (DAIS)** for extending the same CAS volunteering opportunity to secondary school students, and many day-long visits have been conducted for a valuable experience of exchange between urban and rural students.

The **Xavier's College**, Mumbai has also conducted visits of International student visitors from many countries to Learning Space in the past 5 years, where students from South Africa, UK, USA, Germany and other parts of the world participated in day-long programmes with beneficiaries at Learning Space, organic farms, preschool and primary schools, and enjoyed learning traditional art and dance forms of the native populace.



C. Corporate Employees' Volunteering and Exposure visits to LSF programmes

LSF is associated with major corporate donors who have directed their Corporate Social Responsibility teams to not only align their objectives with LSF social work programmes and support them financially with annual funding grants, but also lead their employees to volunteer in the programmes.

In the past 5 years, major Corporate entities like the **Deutsche Bank Ltd, Edelweiss Capital Ltd, Voltas Ltd**, and others have sent their employees to sensitize with the village environment & community, as well as the LSF projects and their benefits in rural education and development. The Mumbai chapter of Deutsche Bank Ltd led a regional volunteering trip of their employees from all over Asia, especially Honkong, Singapore and Indonesia to the

Learning Space programmes, and the organic farm over a weekend consisting of two days and a night's stopover.



Given below is the Annual Activity Table that covers most verticals in engaging with native community and their children.

Sr.	Activity Name	Activity Description	Favorable Time	Age Group
Learning about Nature				
1	Tour of Organic farm	A tour on feet to the organic farms to learn about the farming process.	July to Feb	10 years Onwards
2	Farming Rice Cultivation Vegetable Farming	Participate in cultivating of Rice with native community members. Participate in cultivation of vegetables at different stages and learn all about the process.	. June to October . November to March	10 years Onwards
3	Camp fire (For overnight stays)	Have a comfortable experience in the night after dinner gazing at the stars and stay warm.	November to Feb	No Age Bar
4	Yoga Sessions	Center your body and mind through the Practice of light Yoga & meditation and experience calmness	Throughout the Year	10 years Onwards
Art				
1	Painting	Get your hands colorful by indulging into different kinds of painting like Block, Warli, Stone, Bottle, Lamp and painting on T Shirts. Make your own team and participate in competitions relating to all art activities and help children win little prizes as well.	Throughout the Year	6 years Onwards
2	Pottery	Try your hands on the clay and wheel and take a souvenir with you	November to Feb	10 years Onwards
3	Origami	Participate and make creative items with paper and help small children make them too.	Throughout the Year	10 years Onwards

People & Places

1	Watching Fireflies	Experience the vibrant color of fireflies glowing in a pitch dark night	Early June	10 years Onwards
2	Visit to Schools	Visit, spend time and interact with tribal children in rural schools	June to Feb	10 years Onwards
3	Visit to Anganwadis	Tell and describe a poem to little toddlers in the pre primary or early primary schools of the villages	June to Feb	10 years Onwards
4	Outdoor Sports Activities	Turn the basic exercises into outdoor sports and recreational activities that would help you not only stay fit but also enjoy the process.	Throughout the Year	10 years Onwards

Interpersonal Skills

1	Movie Screening	Sit amongst the children to discuss the morale of an interesting Movie and share your learning	Throughout the Year	10 years Onwards
2	Story Telling	Tell an interesting story to a group of kids in English by engaging them with your modulation and actions to impart basic English language skills.	Throughout the Year	6 years Onwards
3	Puppet Making & Shows	Make small puppets with group of children, draw a story and do a puppet show with them. It would again attract them towards the English language and add value to their lives.	Throughout the Year	6 years Onwards
4	Computer Skills	Teach a child how to hold a mouse and the basics of operating a computer and arouse them to learn more in the future.	Throughout the Year	10 years Onwards

D. Exploring the beautiful locale of Tansa River Valley (Eco-Tourism)

The Learning Space Trust office and Learning Center are situated on the outskirts of Mumbai city, in the pristine natural habitat of the Tansa River Valley, with its rich cultural heritage of mountain peaks, temples, shrines, lakes, nature trails, hot water springs, and a native community that has been living in the area for several generations over hundreds of years.

LSF has led many groups of students, social club members and Corporate employee

visitors to the varied sites in the Tansa River Valley, as part of the Eco-tourism & exposure to the locale programme.

Here are some pictures of the beautiful nature surrounding and the local community, much of LSF's mission to transform lives of children, youth and women of the native community.



Village Primary Public school students



Village Primary and Middle Level school near LSF center



Classroom Wall painted with environmental water conservation chart



Learning Space Center at Village Kelthan



Learning Space Hall



The indigenous block for learning creative art and expression at LSF center



The village well as main water source for community



The native childrenen enjoying a monsoon evening



A local women's self-help group conducting session on making home food products

The Community Connect Programmes at Learning Space Foundation are managed by **LS Creative Unit**, a social enterprise launched by **Mr. Nitin Orayan, Author & Educator**, to facilitate local entrepreneurship, home stays, conservation of traditional art, organic farm produce and such other local enterprises for sustainable livelihood among native community members.

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