

Mr. Jan Aren Neels, a teacher training student from Delft, The Netherlands came to KRIYA for 3 months internship from September to November 2010. He attended the Children festivals in those months. He did his research in two primary schools, Prakasaraopeta of Unduru in Samalkot Mandal and Dasarapadu of Ramachandrapuram Mandal. He gave a detailed feedback report to KRIYA, which is very useful and interesting. KRIYA already started implementing some of those suggestions.



His Report:

Dear members of KRIYA,

10 November 2010

First of all I want to thank you for the opportunity to do a research in your organization. You have taught me how the primary and the high-schools work in India. The missing parts of these schools you would like to improve by competitions. I'm very happy to see that so many people are involved in KRIYA. That means that you working of something that's noticed by a big group of people. The request of Jagu was if I would write down my experience of KRIYA and my recommendations. Before I'm going to do this I want to make clear that these opinions and suggestions are based on the Dutch education. That does not mean its better education!!! Although the suggestions can be used in your programs but that is a decision for KRIYA. Please don't get mad when there are some suggestions that are against your way of living.

First of all I really like the concept of KRIYA. I really think this concept can be used everywhere in the world. The mayor goal of KRIYA is to show the teachers and the schools that education can be more fun and better. These are my words but I think that is the basic concept. KRIYA is a very nice organization with a lot of expertise. My biggest suggestion for KRIYA is to act professional. The start is there and now it is time to look to the details. KRIYA is in the position to really change lives of the children let's fully using that opportunity.

In the beginning I didn't understand what KRIYA is all about. So I did what the new generation does, I went online. With the link of Raju I came on your website. The site did not give me any information about KRIYA. I saw some activities and a not clear history profile. The site is only useful when you already know KRIYA and want to see what they did the last month. Together with Jagu we made a concept website on paper. Whit this website it will be clear what KRIYA is and what people can do for KRIYA. I think it will be a big factor if you want to raise funds or want to be taken professional.

Another way to become more professional is the way you present yourself on the schools. Just shut down the mobiles and give the children 100 cent attention. KRIYA members who are talking with each other during performing actions is not the right way. The schools give KRIYA access to their school. The teachers have really worked hard for KRIYA. Make artistic activities, science activities, performing actions and make shore the children know their Math's, Telugu and English. All this in two weeks. The children have been practice a lot on the performing actions/singing and storytelling. Show them that we are interesting in what they have made. The children will take the KRIYA members as an example.

During my process of observing I was watching at the goals of KRIYA. These goals are not really based on the reality. The goals are very big but don't have to change the world. Make small but reachable goals so we can see that we are reaching these goals. Let's take a goal of drawing as example. In the goals of drawing we want to improve the creativity of the children to let them draw whatever they want. The last drawing activity I saw only 3 children of the school did something original. The rest of the children are just drawing what they see in the classroom or what they have practiced during the year. There is no creativity but only copying. During the KRIYA meeting we came to the conclusion that the drawing activity is just to let the children experience to draw with colors. This is a perfect goal! It is small and reachable. But even this goal is not reached at this moment. Children will open their colors on KRIYA FINAL DAY. I saw children in the group 1 and 2 just use 1 color and draw what they saw on the walls. The children did not practice before with the colors. They did not even use it. During the activity I told some children to use different colors. (Pick a different color and give it to them). Still they used only the two colors.

This can be improved by different ways. The first one and the most important one is to make sure the teacher knows about the goal. She can now practice with the children a drawing with a lot of different colors. This is one of the reasons why the goals should be small and reachable. If you tell the teacher that the goal is to let the children be creative how he or she will manage that?

The second one is to give the children a color plate where they only have to fill in the colors.

My suggestion is to watch at all the goals of KRIYA for the activities. Is understand that there are "dreaming goals". But if you never going to reach them it is like saying we are working for world peace. Make small and reachable goals so after the activities we can say that we reached them. It is visible for the children and for the schools.

For schools that we are going to visit the second time make new goals. To keep the activities fresh and fun.

Some suggestions per activity:

These suggestions are more some ideas I have what we can use for KRIYA in the future.

Sports

At this moment it is only running. There can be a program made to do more kind of sports. The problem is the small time we have to watch all the activities. But the children can do the organization themselves.

Put the children in groups of two and give them a paper with all the activities and space to put the score on in. Every activity will take 1 minute. All the children start at the same time with different activities and the stop at the same time. One child is counting and the other child is doing the activity.

So for example a couple of children are doing pushups. The teacher gives the signal to start the activity. One child is doing the pushups and the other child is counting. When the teacher say stop the children will write the number of pushups on the paper and change rolls.

All the other children will do other sport activities on the same way. Like running 10 meter distant, jumping with a rope, roles on the ground etc.

In this way you can do in one hour a lot of different sports. At the end the children will count all the points and we have the winners.

Cultural activities

My big research. I will make a big document for KRIYA when it is finished. At this moment I made some activity cards where the children will make their own activity. The activities are possible with the children. At this moment I need to make the cards easy to understand for all the teachers.

At this moment teachers will pick some children who can play very well and do an existing play. Most of these are nationalistic or historical plays. But the children like it very much. I believe that there is an opportunity to let all the children play in the activities and make some fun and joyful performing actions. My idea is that every class will perform an theater piece with the help of the cards. But there is still room for the regular historical or nationalistic plays.

Singing and telling stories.

When the children are singing or telling a story it looks pretty boring. Keep in mind that I don't understand any Telugu. This is what I have observed. One child is singing a song. Mostly very soft and standing like a robot. There is no fun or good atmosphere. It is not really reaching any good singing skill but more about knowing the words.

KRIYA can improve this by telling where they gone judge on. Not only of singing the song but also on presentation, loudness, in tune etc. Tell the teacher this so she can tell the children it is more than only singing a song. Its performing a song. It makes the judging also very easy cause there are some focus points.

There is also the possibility to make a competition during the classes. Just let one group win who sings the best together. Singing together is mostly more fun.

The same story is for storytelling. Tell the children where we look at. Using your hands while you telling a story. We listen if the children use any different voices etc.

Another way to involving the children is to let them judge. By giving applause. The hardest applause is winning.

Mathematics, Telugu and English

The test is just like school tests. That's not what KRIAYA is about. We are making happy and joyful education. So why not try to make a game of it with noticing the goals.

Let everybody sit on the ground with the writing boards. Give one sum to the children and give them 1 minute. After one minute everybody stops. The KRIYA member tells the right answer. Everybody who has the right answer is still in the game if you did make a fouled you're out and have to sit on a different place. Start with some easy sums so everybody can enjoy the game. In this way the school is also confronted with the mathematic level of everybody. Because when the children will fail in the easy sums it is not good.

Slowly make the sums more difficult till there is a winner. We can also let the two best children battle in front of everybody at the price giving.

In the same way we can do the Telugu and English competition.

Science activity (or telling stories)

With the science activities I am wondering if the children really did do some science experiment or they are just telling what the teacher told them during his or her presentation.

A solution can be science cards. Inspired by the snehabala cards only now the children can do a science activity on their own. Of course the teacher can help but in this way the children will see that they can do their own science experiment. Let them tell their results on KRIYA FINAL DAY. They may have totally wrong conclusions but that is good for the competition.

I made some activity cards but the problem is that the level is not clear to me.

KRIYA told me every school has a science lab. But when I visit the school of P. Schalam he needed to buy some materials for the activities. Is it manageable to buy the materials on every school?

Creative arts

The results are very nice of the creative arts. One of the existing problems is that some arts are made by the teacher. I don't understand how this is possible. They really make some arts and tell children that they made this. What can be the reason to do this? Bad reputation of the teacher or for the school?

I think this is a problem with communication. This is not the meaning of KRIYA. Of course confront them with the fact they never do this kind of activities but not with these results. In the explanation of the activities this should be clear for the teachers. We don't expect the world's famous arts. Just creativity from the children.

The judging of the activities is really difficult. Involve the teacher in the judging she saw the process of the children and the effort. In this way you also confront her cause the teacher will not vote for his own made arts.

Organization of KRIYA

I visit some meetings of KRIYA but I was really not familiar with the way the meeting was going. When it starts at 15.00 it exactly start at 16.00. So people are just waiting for an hour. Okay it doesn't really matter because it is a good company but it is maybe not so nice for the people who are on the right time. During the meeting the subject is going about a lot of things. But this is just the KRIYA culture I think. Ha Ha

There is no real reflection plan. KRIYA is changing the activities when it doesn't work. I think this can be improved by making a reflection plan. When do we reflect? How we are going to reflect? At this moment schools are writing their experience in a letter to KRIYA. Is this enough? Or would we like to know special details. It could be great if there was a reflection paper with some questions for the teachers about the activities and experiences. With these reflections KRIYA can work.

When KRIYA is going to schools the atmosphere should be the best. Serious when it is about the competitions but joyfull when it is possible. Now we are hanging the banner, greeting the teachers and wait till we can start.

I think KRIYA should be more active in this part. Start with all the children in one class or meeting place. Let KRIYA tell about what will be happening today. (Make the same atmosphere like when KRIYA is giving prizes.) It is very helpful for children if they know what is going to happen. Open the competition day official with a small act. Director presenting the judge to the children or cutting a red lint.

I think the opening will make it a total package for the schools. KRIYA is coming, opening, tests, small break and discussion about the winners, cultural activities, prizes and end of the KRIYA day.

Slowly all the test activities are integrated in the school time. The school is doing the sport by themselves and I heard the drawing test will also going to be during school times. If this is going on the KRIYA final day will be less interesting for the children.

So one full day with a good organization is my suggestion. A ceremonial start and pro-active members will make it an unforgettable day for the children. The great atmosphere during cultural activities can be during the whole day.

In every classroom there are some children who don't win anything. When it is a small school we give them also some presents because it is sad. But let us look closer to these children; we see that they are not winning at one activity. Are they really the weakest students? Can KRIYA do something for these children that they also have a great day? Maybe these children don't get along with the education on the primary school. Is there a way to motivate these children for the activities? I think there is a change if we make one prize for most motivated children. If the children do know this prize before the two weeks they will do their very utmost best during the weeks. This prize will be judge by the teachers. So if they show a lot of effort but they are not as good as the rest of the children the teachers can give them the most motivated children price.

I hope in the future you will receive more teacher training students in KRIYA. I have learnt a lot of the education in India. Like the writing and reading skills of the children at the age of 6. The snehabala looks really great. Working with really poor children and organize a school with only 5 teachers and 80 students. In the Netherlands the director is not giving any lessons but only running the school. Here he is like a superhero. Maybe this letter contains a lot of improvement and no positive signs. But I think you know that you are a great organization with a good fundament. Good luck in the future to improve the primary schools of the government.

Greetings,

Jan Aren Neels