

V O L I I I | O C T - D E C | 2 0 1 5

the
Village Voice

Village Reconstruction Organization – India

Together We March

Coming together is good, talking together is better
and working together is best.

Fr. Windey

My dear friends and partners in building villages for a better world,
At the outset let me wish you all a merry Christmas and Joyous and grace-filled New Year 2016.

Looking and experiencing the immense reality of the universe, human beings have always been looking for the original mind and power that made it all. We looked for it in the stones, in the water, in the moving things on earth, in the voice and light of the sky, in reptiles and birds, in golden beetles and golden calves, and human heroes but also in the invisible world of thoughts, energy, and love. It was the sky above, that impressed human beings most of all: as the eyes and the hands of an all-seeing, all-powerful Creator. And so the astronomers, the builders, the worshippers looked up there as “the heaven” – “the home of God”. So temples and statues were made, jewels and lambs were offered to Him, as symbols of our thoughts. It took a long time for humanity to discover that God’s mystery and nature was in His invisible power of love, a relationship between Him and us, more attractive than magnetism, more light giving than the Sun or electricity. We have no word for this; other than “love”, because that Word is for us still the most unifying, creative of all. No wonder then that “Jesus/Emmanuel” repeatedly said that to “love one’s neighbor as oneself, is equal to loving, honoring, serving God”. This is the message that Jesus lived out fully until his death. This is the message you and VRO are living out by extending our hands in partnership to the poor to transform their lives and building relationships based on love.

I wish and pray that we all grow in building relationships based on love and ultimately reach our goal “Building villages for a better world”. God bless you all.

Love and prayers

Peter Daniel sj | Operational Director, VRO.



Children in Action

The children were not just beneficiaries who are provided with academic support, they have become change agents who respond and act to the situation. A couple of incidents that proved the ability of children to respond to the situation are mentioned below:

Children planted trees

Theory is taught at the class but the result of learning through theory can be identified when it is put into practice. The children of molleru and tankbeedi village planted trees in their village after an intervention of taking care of Mother Nature during one of their daily evening classes. Our volunteers supported the children in identifying the place, digging the pits and planting.



Children observed Gandhi Jayanthi

The children of vengauapurram village took initiative to clean the statue of our father of our nation – M. K. Gandhi. by the local political party and is neglected after the political clashes. The children took initiative to clean the statue and observed the birthday of M. K. Gandhi on October 2nd, 2015. The local village leaders and VRO volunteers were called for the event and it has been a colorful and blissful occasion to watch children in action.

The statue is erected

Children worked to keep their school free from drunkards

The children response towards keeping their school clean has shown their attachment to their learning environment. Drunkards to have their drinks in the evening used the school premises of Sagarapet Colony of Rajapudi village. The students need to spend lot of hours in cleaning the premises before starting their day. This was identified and reported during an evening study. The community worker suggested children

to report to president. When reported by children, the response from the president was not welcoming and hence children decided to stay in front of his house until he responded to the incident. After 3 days of peace strike before president house, the issue was discussed in the panchyat and everybody was informed not to enter school and anyone who spoils the premises will be punished.

Children conducted sports and events

The children, using children fund were able to organize the event and purchase prizes for the winners.





Neighborhood Festival

Annual Volunteers cum Families Get Together

As said by our founder director, Fr. M. A. Windey, coming together is good, talking together is better and working together is best. Unlike yester years, this year the family members of volunteers participated in neighborhood festivals during which semi-Christmas celebrations were observed. The festivals were organized from Dec 20th to 22nd in all the regions i.e. Gonasika, North Odisha, South Odisha, Kothakota, Rajahmundry, Guntur, Hyderabad, Nellore and Tamil Nadu.

During the festival, the volunteers’ families shared their experiences and the children of our volunteers performed play-lets, dance and sang songs. Apart from children, the volunteers too performed play-lets. The trainees of LLCs of all the regions also participated in the festivals and

performed cultural programs. The local government officials were called as guest of honor. The volunteer presented the progress of the VRO projects to the participants.

At the end of the festivals, our Operational Director, Fr. Peter Daniel SJ, communicated his message on building ownership for the upcoming year, which was announced as the theme of year. The theme for the year 2106 – 2017 is announced as building ownership and the volunteers made a promise stating that they will promote and enable people to be the owners in every aspect.



Katrapalli Village Inauguration

The village rebuilding program at katrapalli was started with 24 houses in its first phase. In the first week of June 2015, Mr. Warner Brix and Thomas who are part of the donor group supporting the project inaugurated one model house. After an intense work of villagers for 6 months, 22 houses and 1 community hall was completed.

In the month of December 2015, Mr. Brix and family visited the village after completion of 1st phase. They inaugurated the village in the presence of village leaders, local panchyat president, and government school coordinator – Banspal. The villagers welcomed the donor with flowers and a meeting was organized during which the donor expressed his happiness to see the effort of their group is able to bring smile on the people here in India.

Later, Mr. Brix inaugurated the completed houses and assigned the houses to the villagers. He is also doing a documentary to spread the good news that poor people are working for their own development and transformation. Mr. Brix interviewed a couple of villagers to know about transformation that has taken place in the village since the arrival of VRO.

The 2nd phase of construction was also started and it is expected to be finish by March 2016. A total of 16 houses are allocated as per the project plan.



Exposure Based Trainings

An effective way to learn Social Work Interventions

Training has been an integral part of work at VRO. Monthly and quarterly meetings also act as a platform for the volunteers to re-brush their skills of social work. Apart from meetings, Volunteers are encouraged to attend seminars, workshops and trainings that are conducted by the external training centers/experts.

A series of trainings were conducted for the volunteer over the course of period and we have been using different strategies to train the volunteers. Out of such moves towards professional excellence, we have organized two exposure-based training to our volunteers.

Exposure Training for Community Workers

This year, we have brought in more than 100 young girls and boys from rural villages to support their own community viz., community workers (CW). The community workers play an important role in Supportive Assistance for Children (SAC) in organizing children parliaments (CP). In order to provide them an insight on Children's Parliaments, an exposure visit was organized to Navajeevan Bala Vikasa Kendram, Vijayawada. The CWs were provided with a chance to interact with CWs of Navajeevan that enabled them to know the role of CWs in more detail. They were also provided with study materials on rights of the children and children's parliaments.

Exposure Training for Volunteers

It is very vital for volunteers to understand different perspectives that enable organizations to frame their interventions as per the vision and mission. In the month of Dec 2015, volunteers visited ASSIST - India, Chilakaluripet. The two-day exposure helped the volunteers to understand the social situation of stakeholders, project framework, implementation and administrative structural difference of organizations.



Village Reconstruction Organization

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Theme 2016 – 2017

Building Ownership

Ownership is not an entity that is passed over from one to another. It is a process of attaining control over education, employment, cultural, social, economical, environmental and political living conditions. As volunteers working for the development of the rural and tribal population, we should let family members, co-workers and people to be partners and take responsibility through letting them do:

1. I will let my family, co-workers and people **to speak out** because I believe that their contribution generates a better solution
2. I will let my family, co-workers and people **to take chances** because I believe that trial and error teaches a better way
3. I will let my family, co-workers and people **to clarify** because I believe that open and transparent manner shows a better big-picture
4. I will let my family, co-workers and people **to see beyond** because I believe that providing opportunity to learn brings a better result
5. I will **respect** my family, co-workers and people because I believe that equality and diversity are essential for a better life.