



Students for Students

One Pager



Introduction

Students for Students, a registered not-for-profit organisation, is an attempt to transform the way students interact and learn, irrespective (and inspite) of their privileged or less privileged backgrounds. SfS aims to bridge the gap between primary and middle school students from disparate socioeconomic strata of society - by bringing the two sets of children together in a close-knit, interactive environment, and having them learn from each other, with the key belief that this diversity and hand-holding amongst children creates something extraordinary.

The Problem

Today, students from (usually) private schools and adults volunteer to teach 'underprivileged' students in schools. However, these efforts tend to be short-term, sporadic and disorganised. There is no continuity between volunteers and what they teach - teaching styles may vary, as well as the content taught. Furthermore, there is usually a one-way flow of knowledge (assuming this flow is effective) and there is a perception that volunteers are out there to 'teach', and that they are not gaining as much as they are giving.

There is also the problem of stratified society and its consequent conditioning, reflected in students' upbringing.

What needs to be done?

Our core belief is that volunteering is most effective when it is not merely a short-term project, but when it involves building a relationship with students over years.

We believe that there is huge under-utilised talent in the student pool, and that students, working together (if not anything else, due to sheer numbers and ease of mobilisation) can make huge changes. Furthermore, the playing field of students and volunteers needs to be levelled, with the acknowledgment that both sets have much to learn from each other.

There is a gap that needs bridging within the student body. There are currently disparate sets of students who understand little of each other; neither of them will be true representatives of Indian society when they are future leaders.

The SfS Programme

SfS consists of school pairs. Each pair has a traditionally 'privileged school' (usually private), and a government school (commonly viewed as 'underprivileged' due to a lack of resources and facilities). While we acknowledge that there are differences, there is also a lot that both sides can learn from each other. We intend to do away with this terminology of 'privileged' and 'underprivileged', and replace it with 'Left-side' schools and 'Right-side' schools respectively, to show a balance.

Our programme is as follows:

- Left-side Students from Grades 7 are paired with Grade 3 students from the Right Side School, Grade 8 with Grade 4, and Grade 9 with Grade 5. A two hour session is held at the Right-side School roughly every two weeks, resulting in 15 sessions every academic year.
- Each session will consist of maths or science activities, games and discussions designed by the SfS content creation team, which includes Oxford students.
- A question that we are often asked is that of the language barrier. In our experience, we find that students may initially struggle, but are eventually able to communicate through a variety of languages and teamwork. This improves the local language skills of the Left-side students and the English of the Right-side students, reflecting our belief that language is best learnt 'in the field'.
- Students from Left-side schools which are a part of the SfS programme sign up to the programme for a minimum of 1 year (and up to 3 years or more), with an emphasis on commitment to the initiative.
- When the left-side and right-side students graduate, they continue to work with each other the next year. For example, when Grade 7 and Grade 3 graduate to Grade 8 and Grade 4, they will continue to work with each other on new content, saving a lot of time and effort.

The idea is not to replace the school curriculum in any way. Sessions are designed to provoke thoughts, questions and curiosity, and increase confidence of the students, especially those on the Right-side.

What we've done so far

For the academic year 2017-18, our first year, we worked with two school pairs - National Public School Koramangala and GKLPs Ramesh Nagar, and Sishu Griha and BGMS Vidyalaya. In addition to the above two school pairs, SfS is working with Oakridge International School and GHPS Varthur.

SfS is also the parent organisation of Towards A Green Education, an ongoing initiative started by our student members when they were in high school. TAGE collects recyclable paper which is used to fund SfS kit materials and stationery for children.

Overall, for the academic year 2018-19, SfS has 600 active students from both Left and Right side schools across Bangalore, India.

For more information visit www.sfs.org.in or facebook.com/SFSorg, and facebook.com/goTAGE.