

INAGURATION OF THE SIF PILOT PROJECT

Come April, 71 students from Sardal Vallabhbhai Patel School will not be enjoying their normal school vacation in the ordinary way – they'll be spending it in school. These students will be part of the pilot project for a Vocational Training Programme in the local Sarjapur community that is a joint effort by Indus International School and the Singapore International Foundation.

The Singapore International Foundation (hereafter termed as SIF) is a not-for-profit organisation established on 1 August 1991 to help Singapore's globalisation efforts. Since its establishment, SIF has been playing a unique role in actively engaging Singaporeans in international volunteerism, forging people-to-people links, helping to shape the national identity and forging a sense of what it means to be Singaporean in a borderless world. Indus International School, Bangalore (hereafter termed as IIS), had developed the core links with the SIF and is looking forward to strengthen its Community Service Initiative in partnership with the SIF.

This programme is the result of almost nine months of collaborative work between IIS and the SIF that started in June 2007 when the first specialist team visited to conduct a study on the feasibility of the project. This was followed up by another two visits from two teams to co-develop the curriculum for the programme.

The pilot was inaugurated in a ceremony on 6th March 2007 by chief guest Lt. Gen (Retd) Arjun Ray, CEO of the Indus Trust and guest of honour Ms Margaret Thevarakom, Assistant Director, International Volunteerism, Singapore International Foundation. Parents, teachers and students from both schools were on hand to witness the start of a programme that will equip the participants with spoken English, Information and Communication Technology and life skills to improve employability and potential for higher education.



Gen Arjun Ray, CEO, Indus Trust, Bangalore and Ms Peck

In his speech, Lt Gen (Retd) Ray emphasised the importance of education that occurs outside the classroom and showed how this programme is a “preview about what life is all about” as it would bring students and participants closer to what they would expect to see in the future. He was very encouraged by the enthusiasm shown by all in the programme and stated that this can be a model that can be replicated in other schools in the country.



Ms Margaret and Mr. Venkata Reddy, President, SVPES, Sarjapur

Ms Margaret Thevarakom underlined the importance of the collaboration and how the Singapore International Foundation’s main aim of building partnerships internationally was achieved through this project. She added that one key aspect of this programme is the ability of students from both Indus and Sarjapur to benefit from the learning that would take place in tandem.



Ms. Margaret and Mr. Ramaswamy Reddy, Secretary, SVPES, Sarjapur

Mr Ramaswamy Reddy, secretary of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Educational society expressed his pleasure at the programme's launch and hoped that such programmes could be expanded to reach a wider audience in the community.

The overwhelming attendance at the inauguration event which saw over 80 parents and members of the community underlined the interest and enthusiasm for the programme. When spoken to, student participants from Sarjapur were similarly enthused about the prospect of receiving the training and were looking forward to the start of the programme in April.

The Vocational Training Programme will depart from normal teaching pedagogies and will school the participants in self-directed, collaborative learning in preparation for the working or higher education environments. In addition, 35 students from Indus will be attached to the students as student facilitators to further support the learning of the participants as well as to expose our own students to the idea of learning while serving the local community.