



## **Sri Ramacharan Charitable Trust**

### **Final Social Accounts - SRCT**

**1st April 2011 - 31ST March 2013**

115, P.S.Sivaswamy Salai,  
Mylapore, Chennai 600004  
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## Social Audit Network, India

### Social Audit Statement of Sri Ramacharan Trust

The Social Audit Panel has examined the draft social accounts submitted to us and discussed them in detail with Ms. Latha Suresh and the trustees at the Social Audit Panel Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2013. We have examined the revised social accounts which were prepared following the Social Audit Panel meeting and have taken into account various points discussed at the Social Audit Panel Meeting. We also examined a sample of the data and the sources of information on which the Social Accounts have been based.

We believe that the process outlined above has given us sufficient information on which to base our opinion.

We are satisfied that, given the scope of the social accounting explained in the revised draft and given the limitations of time available to us, the Social Accounts are free from material misstatement and present a fair and balanced view of the performance and impact of Sri Ramacharan Charitable Trust as measured against its stated values and objectives and the views of the stakeholders who were consulted.

We have identified some important issues to be taken into consideration during the next social audit cycle. In particular we would refer to the following:

- i. Revisit the stakeholder group and include Govt. teachers and members of the School Management Committees.
- ii. Articulate the values statement to all stakeholders and get their feedback
- iii. Report on all the children passing out of the Nursery section on their academic performances over a period of time.

Further, the Audit Panel is of the view that the following areas require strengthening;

- i. Documenting the progress of children after leaving the Nursery section. Introduce follow up procedures.
- ii. Identification and involvement of children with special needs.

The Panel places on record its appreciation of the pioneering efforts taken by the Sri Ramacharan Charitable Trust to introduce quality in pre-primary education system.

The members of the Social Audit Panel were:

- a. Mrs. Girija Kumarbabu.
- b. Ms. Geetha Ramaseshan.
- c. Mr. S. Madhavan.
- d. Mr. Krishnamurthy Vijayan

*Girija Kumarbabu*  
Ms. Girija Kumarbabu

Chair of the Social Audit Panel

25<sup>th</sup> June 2013

## Acknowledgements

SRCT has drafted its first set of social accounts and this has been made possible with the help of the CSIM Chennai team – Ms Latha Suresh and Ms. Marie Banu. We always knew that we were doing a small revolution by taking Montessori education which was available only to the elite classes so far, to the underprivileged children. We wanted to capture it into a report and analyse our work objectively and this led us to draft this social accounts.

We are in the process of creating a second line leadership and I think this process has made all in the Board to understand the relevance of each and every activity handled at SRCT. I am extremely satisfied that I have built a wonderful team of staff who have taken the initiative to independently and voluntarily handle all the activities of our Trust and demonstrate leadership in their own ways.

I thank all my very supportive donors who stood by us through thick and thin in carrying out pioneering projects which by their very nature and area of operation could have had mixed results. I thank them for their invaluable contribution through which SRCT has been able to reach out and provide Montessori methodology of learning to hundreds of children.

Padmini Gopalan  
Founder Trustee, SRCT

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## 1 Introduction

Sri Ramacharan Charitable Trust (SRCT), a Registered Public Charitable Trust, came to know about Social Audit in a meeting organized by CSIM (Centre for social Initiatives and Management). We always believed that SRCT is creating positive impact amongst underprivileged children, but we didn't have a proper method to measure the impact. The Management committee was convinced that social accounting would be a reliable tool to measure the effectiveness of the organisation, whether the organisation has fulfilled the purpose for which it was formed. This would also help SRCT to understand the expectations of the stake holders from the organisation which will help in charting the future course. Hence it was decided to document the social impact and go for a formal audit.

## 2 History and Background

### The Organisation

SRCT was started on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999 by a group of 5 women all office bearers of a renowned social service organization called the Monday Charity Club. SRCT is spearheaded by Mrs Padmini Gopalan. A need to carry out a project connected with primary education for under privileged children and to focus on young children of an impressionable age was felt by the SRCT trustees. The Trustees thought that there was enormous scope to reach out to underprivileged children and make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided by the Corporation. SRCT wanted these children to be given proper education coupled with good self confidence and self esteem. The result was the introduction of the Montessori Method of Instruction. SRCT has successfully established the Montessori Method in Balwadis and Corporation School units across seven centers in Chennai which has so far catered to 2100+ children.

SRCT was conducting tuition classes in the VP koil street Corporation middle and primary schools with the permission of Mr Vagheeswaran who was the then HM of the middle school. Impressed with the dedicated work of SRCT, Mr Vijaykumar, then Commissioner of Chennai Corporation gave permission to introduce Montessori method in the Kindergarten sections of VP Koil street Primary School

### Timeline of SRCT Activities

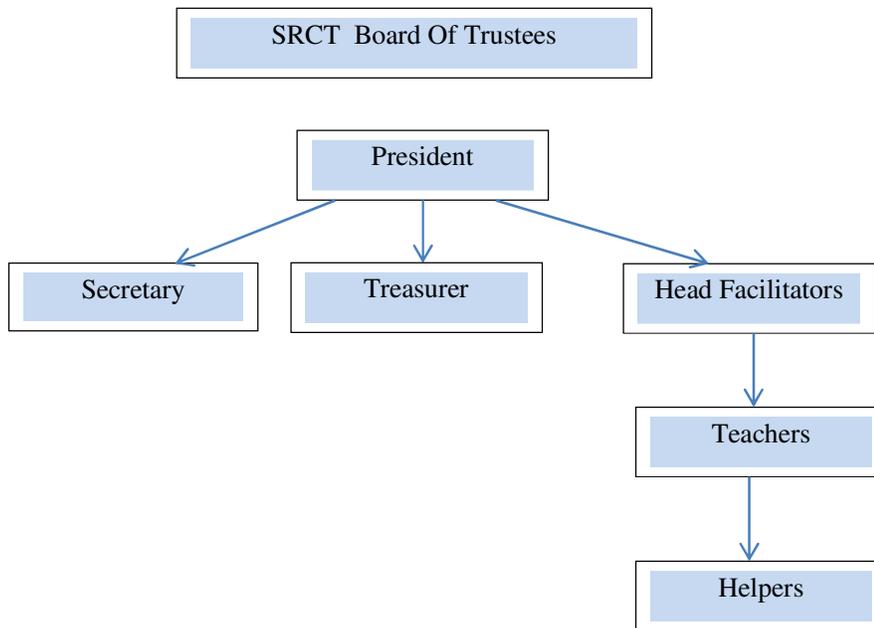
Birth	April 1999 - Project - Interest free loans for school fees and women run micro enterprises. <i>(Most of the borrowers availed loans for paying school fees for their children studying in private schools.)</i>
First Step	December 1999 - Started Tuition centers for students of class 6 at Raja Muthiah Boys School, Rani Meiyammai Girls School & V.P.Koil St Corporation High School <i>(We were not satisfied with the exam oriented system of education)</i>
2004	Encouraged by Child Vikas International (CVI), USA, shifted focus to cater to the educational needs of Elementary Schools of Chennai Corporation.

- 2005 Started Two Montessori Centers for Kindergarten at Corporation Primary School, V.P.Koil St, Mylapore
- 2006 Started 2 Montessori centers at Corporation Primary School, Kotturpuram
- 2007 Started 8 Montessori centers at Saidapet Corporation School for Girls  
*(Realising the impact on children, Chennai Corporation decided to adopt the Montessori Method in all its 30 Primary Schools which had nursery classes)*
- 2007 Started Montessori centres in 2 Balwadis at Luz avenue
- 2008 Started one Montessori center each in Marundheeswarar Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur & Foreshore estate, 4 centers in Balwadis attached to Corporation Girls School, Saidapet.
- 2009 Started 3 centers in Villiwakkam Balwadis, one at the Balwadi in Valmiki Street, Thiruvanmiyur and 3 centers at Balwadis in Mettupalayam, Saidapet.
- 2011 Operations in VP Koil Street were handed over to the Corporation School teachers themselves as they were by then well trained in the Montessori methodology. SRCT donated the Montessori materials provided to them
- 2011 Exited operations in Villivakkam and Mettupalayam Balwadis  
*(SRCT had to exit from these Balwadis due to excessive admission in these Balwadis and resultant lack of space to effectively conduct the Montessori classes.)*
- 2011 Handed over operations in Balwadi at Valmiki street, Thiruvanmiyur to another NGO who were impressed by SRCTs work. SRCT encouraged them to continue the work and donated the Montessori materials.
- 2012 Started Remedial classes for primary school children  
*(Stung by reports that many children studying in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> standards are not familiar even with the alphabets, SRCT started tuition centers to specially coach them through the Montessori method. Currently around 300+ children – identified by their class teachers as needing help, are given remedial classes by Montessori trained teachers at Saidapet and Kottur Corporation schools)*

Organisational Structure

*SRCT comprises of a small team of committed individuals and follows a very simple organisational structure.*

The Board of Trustees are volunteers and do not draw any salaries. The staff are paid monthly salaries depending on their expertise and experience. SRCT sources donations from various donors to manage the activities of the Trust.



***Financials for the period 2011-2013***

S. No	Details	Receipts 2011-2012	Receipts 2012-2013	Payments 2011-2012	Payments 2012-2013
1	Foreign Donations	690,297	324,929		
2	Local Donations	653,850	857,133		
3	From Investments		500,000		
4	Interest income	225,000	225,000		
5	Saidapet KG Salary			656,400	559,200*
6	Saidapet KG Helpers Salary			48,000	43,400
7	Saidapet KG Project Rep Expenses				36,197
8	Saidapet Balwadi Salary			200,400	258,600
9	Saidapet Balwadi Helpers Salary			48,000	50,200
10	Saidapet Balwadi Materials				12,171
11	Balwadi-Mettupalayam			37,050	
12	Project Expenses(all above units)			40,860	
13	Balwadi-Luz Salary			38,400	46,200
14	Balwadi Luz Helper Salary			26,400	24,300
15	Bal-Luz-Project,Rep,Materials			25,238	20,602
16	Marundeeswar Balwadi Salary			100,800	111,700
17	Marundeeswar Balwadi Project Exp			5,300	7,260
18	Balwadi-Valmiki Ngr Salary			20,500	
19	Tuition centres-Sal for 6 months				173,000
20	Tuition centre-Notebooks & Pencils				8,603
21	Teachers Welfare				237,700
22	Scholarship to students			43,600	163,730
23	Donation in Kind			17,700	10,000
24	Library Project			5,850	9,338
25	Summer camp Salary				28,000
26	Summer camp Materials				4,250
		1,569,147	1,907,062	1,314,498	1,804,451

\* decrease in salary as Montessori Consultant and her assistant left in 2012 to pursue higher studies

### Registrations & Exemptions

SRCT is a registered Public Charitable Trust. It has donation exemption status under Sec 80-G of Income Tax Act and can accept foreign donations under Foreign Contributions Regulation Act, India.

SRCT is majorly supported by Child Vikaas International (CVI), USA. CVI is a registered 501(c)(3) publicly supported charity organization in the US which works with underprivileged children in India. SRCT is one of CVI's chief partner projects in India. Contributions to CVI are normally exempt from federal and state income taxes in the US.

### The Social Audit

The prime objective of conducting the Social Audit for SRCT was – to assess the impact of the Montessori methodology of teaching on one of its key stakeholder – underprivileged children. This exercise was also done to understand the impact of SRCTs work on its employees, supporters and partnering organisation – Chennai Corporation and ICDS. The other important factor for undergoing this social audit process was to report the triple bottom line performances of SRCT.

### **Social Audit framework**

For the purpose of Social Audit, a Social Audit framework was designed to evolve the Mission and subsequently a set of four objectives were identified in consultation with the Board members. The various activities of the organizations were aligned with their respective objectives. The qualitative and quantitative indicators for these activities were also derived. The Social Accounts was prepared based on the Social Audit framework of Mission, Values and Objectives of the organisation.

### **Social Accounts**

Ms Jayanthi Karthikeyan and Ms Radhika Sasankh took the main lead in initiating the Social Accounting and Audit process for SRCT. The Social accounting process was facilitated by Ms. Latha Suresh, Director of Centre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) and an accredited social auditor registered with the Social Audit Network, UK.

Details about the process and the need to do a social audit were shared with the Board and Jayanthi and Radhika took the responsibility of co-ordinating the social accounting process. There were frequent meetings of the group and all the members were updated on a regular basis. The data collection strategies and tools were decided collectively by the group and questionnaires and feedback forms were developed by CSIM. They were further ratified by all the members of the core group.

The secondary data was culled out from the existing records. The primary data collection, collating of primary and secondary data was done by CSIM and the report was drafted by Ms Latha Suresh and the SRCT team.

### **3 Mission, values, objectives and activities**

#### **Vision**

Social change through quality primary education

#### **Mission**

Creating a positive role in shaping the personality of underprivileged children, in accordance with the Montessori Philosophy.

#### **Objective 1**

Fostering an enveloping development for the underprivileged pre-primary children to evolve into socially responsible citizens through Child centric approach

Activity 1 - Imparting a Montessori based learning environment in Chennai Corporation schools and Networking with the kindergarten sections in other corporation schools to offer Montessori based learning systems.

Activity 2 - Imparting a Montessori based learning environment in ICDS run balwadis

#### **Objective 2**

Creating a pool of facilitators for imparting Montessori Method of teaching in Corporation schools through

Activity 1 - Sponsoring facilitators and teachers to learn the Montessori method

Activity 2 - Monitoring and facilitating the efficient application of the method in all the intervening centres

Activity 3 - Networking with Montessori training centres

#### **Objective 3**

Establishing literacy centers during school hours within the school to facilitate after-school teaching and strengthening skills amongst children through

Activity 1- Remedial classes at the school premises for primary school children under Montessori methodology

Activity 2- Computer centres and libraries within the school (in the planning stage)

#### **Objective 4**

Enable beneficiary children to continue with their higher education through

Activity 1 - Activity 1 - Identifying sponsors to pay the school fees for deserving children who passed out of our Environments and joined Private Matriculation Schools.

#### **Values**

1. Learning environment
2. Discipline
3. Transparency & accountability

## 4 Stakeholders

The SAA gave an excellent platform to identify stakeholders who were directly and indirectly contributing to the growth of SRCT. We had identified the following stakeholders during our initial SAA deliberation meeting.

Stakeholders	Total Number	No. Consulted	Tool Used
1. Children studying in			Observations and Interviews
a. Kindergarten	300	300	
b. Balwadis	200	200	
c. Tuition classes	312	312	
e. Children passed out of Kindergarten, Balwadis	2100+	105	Feedback by teachers
2. Parents	2100+	50	Focus Group Discussion/ Interviews
3. Teachers			Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions
a. SRCT Facilitators	26	26	
b. Govt. school teachers	8	5	
c. Balwadi teachers	7	3	
d. Helpers	5	4	
4. Principal	2	2	Interview
5. Chennai Corporation Authorities/ICDS		2	Interview
6. Centre for Montessori Training - Chennai(CMTC)		3	Interview
7. Donors	25+	9	Questionnaire through Email
8. Board of Trustees	9	7	Questionnaire through Email
9. Vendors / Suppliers	2		Not Consulted

## **5 Scope and methodology of the social audit**

### *Methodology*

The first social account covers the time period from April 2011 to March 2013. All primary stakeholders were consulted on all organizational objectives with the help of relevant consultation tools.

### *Omissions*

This second activity under the third objective is still in its planning stage and hence not reported upon. Vendors not consulted

### **The Social Accounting Process at SRCT**

On March 5th, 2013, a workshop was conducted by the SAN India team to evolve the Mission, Values, Objectives and Activities (MVOA) of SRCT. After deliberations with the SRCT Board, the MVOA and scope of the social accounts were finalised by March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The next step of drafting questionnaires for the various stakeholders commenced from March 15<sup>th</sup>.

All the secondary data that appears in the report was entirely taken from the records maintained at SRCT. Focus group Discussions were organised with the parents of Saidapet primary school, Corporation school kindergarten teachers, SRCT facilitators which were coordinated by the CSIM staff.

Feedback forms were distributed and collected from the donors and the Board members. The entire data collection from all the stakeholders was completed by the second week of April, 2013. The data entry of the questionnaires and analysis of same began from the third week of April, 2013.

All the data was collated and the social accounts was drafted by April 25<sup>th</sup>

## 6 The Report on performance: analysis of the Social Accounts

### Values

SRCT evolved 3 values during the SAA facilitation. They were

1. Learning environment
2. Discipline
3. Transparency & accountability

Some of the stakeholders were asked to rate the values of SRCT on a scale of 1 – 5 with 5 being the maximum. The SRCT facilitators and the Board were asked to rate the values through a questionnaire. The Parents were asked to rate the values during the Focus Group Discussion

	Facilitators	Parents	Board
1. Learning environment	5	5	5
2. Discipline	5	5	5
3. Transparency & accountability	5	5	5

It is evident from the table that SRCT lived to its stated values as it has received a full score from the 3 groups of stakeholders.

### Objectives and activities

#### **Objective 1**

Fostering an enveloping development for the underprivileged pre-primary children to evolve into socially responsible citizens

Activity 1 - Imparting a Montessori based learning environment in Chennai Corporation schools and Networking with the kindergarten sections in other corporation schools to offer Montessori based learning systems.

#### **About the Montessori Method**

The development of a human being begins at birth and the child has a mind able to absorb knowledge. The child growing up speaking his parents tongue naturally along with all its grammatical complexities and right intonations proves this. This kind of learning is not only natural, but also indefatigable and joyous.

The Montessori method is based on this natural capacity of the child to develop his knowledge, of the world around him, by himself. The method aims not at teaching but rather in providing a rich environment in which the child can explore freely and construct his intellectual and psychic personality.

The didactic materials used in the Montessori environment are designed in such a way as to help the child experiment, observe and teach him/herself. After the teacher has 'presented' the material, she restricts herself to observing the child without interfering, and guides only when necessary.

The child is allowed the freedom to move around in the environment and choose any material he wants and work with it for as long as he wants.

The materials can be broadly classified into four groups.-

Exercises of Practical Life (EPL) - These involve practical life activities like, cutting carrot, pouring water from a jug etc. By performing these activities the child exercises his hands, improves mind-eye-hand co-ordination, and becomes independent.

Sensorial - Here the materials are designed not merely to sharpen the senses, but to make full use of the senses to refine knowledge.

In Arithmetic, quantities and symbols are presented and experienced separately. Then they are comprehensively merged.

The method for learning the English language is primarily based on phonetics. The scheme is cleverly devised, and it is interesting to see the children break into writing and reading.

The child enjoys the privilege of having his own little workplace ie., the workmat on which he sits, with the material of his choice. Furthermore, each child respects the space of the other child.

Impact on the child

1. Early impression of school is important for a child and under the Montessori method the child is eager to come to school.
2. Relationship with the teacher is fearless, trusting and close and facilitates effective communication.
3. Self esteem comes from sense of achievement and the way the child is treated with respect.
4. Social skills like waiting for your turn, gentleness in action etc develop.
5. Child develops love of orderliness and takes pride in perfection of ones work
6. Independence
7. Increased attention span
8. The values learnt under the Montessori Method get internalized because of the impressionable age of the child when these values are exposed and the nature of the system. Therefore the child exhibits the same values in other environments like home, neighborhood and society at large too.

It can be rightly said that the success of Montessori method of learning is due to a system that is based on the innate qualities of child.

Maria Montessori, the founder of this methodology has rightly said

*“Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment.”*

Betrand Russell on Montessori Methodology

*“I had always understood that Madame Montessori dispensed with discipline and I wondered how she managed a room full of children . . . On sending my little boy of three to spend his mornings in a Montessori school, I found that he quickly became a more disciplined human being . . . The pedagogical discoveries involved have required genius but the teachers who are to apply them do not require genius. They require only the right sort of training, together with a degree of sympathy and patience, which is by no means unusual. The fundamental idea is simple: that the right discipline consists not in external compulsion, but in habits of mind, which lead spontaneously to desirable rather than undesirable activities. What is astonishing is the great success in finding technical methods of embodying this idea in education. For this, Madame Montessori deserves the highest praise.”*

Barack Obama on early childhood education

*“Every dollar we invest in high-quality early childhood education can save more than seven dollars later on, by boosting graduation rates, reducing teen pregnancy, even reducing violent crime. In states that make it a priority to educate our youngest children studies show students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, form more stable families of their own.”*

Mahatma Gandhi’s observation to Maria Montessori

*I had taken care to learn something about these little children. I had a foretaste of what I saw here, in Birmingham , where there is a school between which and this there is a difference. But I also saw that there also human nature was struggling to express itself. I see the same thing here and it was a matter of inexpressible joy to me that from their childhood the children were brought to understand the virtue of silence, and how, in response to the whisper from their teacher, the children came forward one after another in that pin-drop silence. It gave great joy to see all those beautiful rhythmic movements and, as I was watching those movements of the children, my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself as my heart went out to those children, “Is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system, to those children”?*

### **SRCTs role**

Montessori schools have excellent success rates; but at a cost that is oftentimes expensive. Corporation schools offer free education. Corporation schools also have excellent success rates. The drawback with traditional systems of education is that the

child's individuality is discouraged, as there are set limits, and a demand to learn at the same pace as other students in the class room.

This results in some children being unable to cope with what is taught and dropping out of school at an early age. On the other hand, Montessori schools believe in nurturing the individual child. Classrooms are designed to allow each child the necessary time and equipment to grow and learn. Children are encouraged to become individuals and to learn at their own pace. It is believed that all children have an inherent drive to learn and that learning will happen naturally. Traditional schools encourage children to become one as a unit. Everyone in the class is expected to learn at approximately the same rate. Individualism is discouraged as there are set limits, and a demand to learn at the same pace as other students in the class room.

SRCT through the trust teachers have implemented the Montessori system in kindergarten sections of LKG and UKG in Corporation Primary schools, along with Corporation KG teachers who have also been trained in the Montessori system of education. As the age group of 3-5 is a very impressionable age and the learnings imbibed at this age lasts for life, SRCT wanted to expose this methodology to the kindergarten sections. By this the writing, reading and learning skills of the children could be enhanced and applied in their higher classes.

In 2005, SRCT started Two Montessori Centers for Kindergarten at Corporation Primary School, V.P.Koil St, Mylapore.

SRCT provides the following Montessori learning materials

Preliminary:

Inset board (shapes,Animals,Birds,etc),  
Puzzles  
Beading kit

EPL (Exercises of Practical life):

Channa pounding kit  
Carrot cutting kit  
Chappathi rolling kit  
Funneling set

Sensorial:

Cylinder blocks  
Pink tower  
Brown stairs

Language:

Charts  
Books  
Cards - Story sequence cards, First next cards, Pairing cards  
Sand paper letters

Arithmetic:

Number Rods  
Spindle box  
Cards and counters  
Sand paper numbers

**Role of the SRCT teachers:**

The Trained SRCT employed staff complement to the existing KG teacher appointed by the Corporation. The Montessori teacher's goal is to guide and facilitate the children, not force her/his own ideas of what children should learn, and when. Acting as a guide for the children involves more than using certain words and a particular tone. It also involve s awareness, attitude, body language, and actions that reflect the principles of the Montessori method.

Working as a guide and facilitator, the SRCT teacher creates a well-prepared Montessori environment at the schools. It is an atmosphere of learning and inquisitiveness designed to move children from one activity and level to the next. The SRCT teacher often steps back while the children are working, allowing them to learn from their own discoveries and draw their own conclusions. Rather than supplying children with answers, the SRCT teacher asks them how they would solve the problem, actively engaging children in the learning process and enhancing critical thinking skills. In most cases, children learn directly from the environment and other children, rather than the teacher.

On seeing the visible impact it made on children's learning skills at VP Koil street, the Chennai Corporation, requested SRCT to expand its activities in **all its** 8 centers at Saidapet Corporation School for Girls.

The timetable for the Kindergarten children in these Corporation schools is as below

9.30am	Prayer
9.30 - 10.00	Collective activities - handled by both the teachers (Rhymes, Stories, Songs, Card reading, etc)
10.00 - 11.15	Montessori learning activities
11.15 - 11.40	Snacks Time - distribution of biscuits given by Corporation of Chennai
11.40 - 12.00	Stories and Songs
12.00 - 1.00pm	Lunch
1.00 - 2.00	Montessori learning activities
2.00pm	End of class

Children who underwent Montessori learning in Corporation school Kindergarten

S.no	School	2011	2012
1	VP Koil street, Mylapore	40	40
2	Saidapet	230	237

In 2007, Chennai Corporation decided to adopt the Montessori Method in all the 30 Primary Schools where nursery classes are functioning and give Montessori training to all the 90 teachers employed there.

This exercise lasted till 2012. Then in 2012, the Chennai Corporation provided one set of Montessori materials to each of these 30 schools. The Corporation has requested SRCT teachers to facilitate the Corporation school teachers to set the Montessori environment in their schools. (see Annexure 1 for the list of schools where Montessori environments have been set up)



**Children in action at the Corporation school Kindergarten, Saidapet**

***Interesting Observations of Children at the Saidapet Corporation School***

- ❖ There were no children found crying or upset at the Kindergarten Section
- ❖ Between 10 - 11am, when the children were involved in the mat activity, there was absolutely no noise in the facility as the children were engrossed in their activity and enjoying every moment of it.
- ❖ The children had a sense of belongingness with the place and thoroughly enjoyed coming to the School. This joy was evident in the eyes of all the children.
- ❖ On finishing one activity, the child would go to the shelves where the other materials were neatly stacked, place the activity he/she had finished in the right place, decide and choose what would be the next activity that he/she wanted, pick it up and retrace his/her path back to his place, carefully ensuring that they do not step on other's mats.
- ❖ The child would approach the teacher when he/she wanted to convey something or had a doubt. The teacher would immediately respond to the child. The child ensured that he/she was not very loud and also would not disturb the teacher if she was busy with another child and waited to be heard.
- ❖ The child had a sense of curiosity to understand what was happening around him but was not impatient or unruly.
- ❖ The rate of absenteeism was around 15%. The major reason for the child being absent was due to the inability of the parent to send the children due to their personal reasons. Children, even when sick, wanted to attend the school.
- ❖ The cleanliness in the classrooms was impeccable.
- ❖ Each and every play material was also clean and in very good condition despite the constant use by the children
- ❖ The children had placed their bags and slippers neatly at the shelves provided outside the class.

- ❖ There was not a single child found with a leaky nose or a dishevelled look.
- ❖ All of them were neatly dressed either in their uniforms or coloured clothes.
- ❖ The toilets were extremely clean and had no stench emanating from them.
- ❖ The children were toilet trained to maintain good hygiene and cleanliness
- ❖ Most of the parents were very enthusiastic to know the progress of their children and came every day to leave/pick their children from the school.
- ❖ Chennai Corporation has appointed 7 teachers and 5 helpers for the KG sections
- ❖ In matters of hygiene and cleanliness the children carry the values learnt in the Montessori environment back home and spreads it in their neighbourhood which creates an impact of larger social learning

#### Feedback from Parents

Over 60% of the parents who attended the FGD had studied only upto 10<sup>th</sup> std. They were all very happy to have enrolled their children at the Saidapet School. All the parents observed that the following skills in their child had vastly improved

- a. Reading skills/habit
- b. Speaking skills
- c. Understanding concepts in Maths
- d. Drawing / Painting
- e. Craftwork

They also said that the children never wanted to miss schools and their motivation to attend school was admirable. Their concentration levels and general Academic performance were commendable. Punctuality and Discipline were ingrained in their children and it was reflected remarkably at home too.

*"My son would ensure that I put my plate in the sink after I finish my dinner. If I do not listen to him then it would hurt him so much that it pains me. So now, I have to behave well and follow rules at home." –*

*"I wanted my son to get the best nursery education in the city and so shifted my house near the Saidapet school. I did a research on all the primary schools within Ashok Nagar, KK Nagar, T.Nagar, Saidapet etc. before enrolling my son here. This was the best school and I am extremely glad that my son got admitted here"*

*"The children apply all the good values and discipline that is taught here in the classes at home too. None of us are allowed to speak loudly, we have to ask gently and place things back in its place, otherwise my daughter would be offended"*

#### Feedback from Board

*"In the beginning we only thought this was a good project and simply trusted Padmini's instinct. Later, down the years, seeing the impact of the Montessori Method on the children, we are convinced we could not have chosen a better project".*

Feedback from Board

*"We would like to quote from the experience narrated by the Montessori trainees who say that the method seems to have reached these children more effectively than the children in elite private Montessori schools."*

Feedback from Teach For India Volunteers

Teach For India, is an NGO that appoints interns to teach in Corporation Schools across India to fill in temporary vacancies in schools. The Saidapet Corporation school had 3 volunteers handling the primary classes for subjects like English, Science and Maths.

*"There is a definite difference in the comprehending skills between a child who has learnt the Montessori way in his kindergarten in this school and a child who is a new entrant to this school. I am amazed by the way they read confidently and also by their helping tendency. They help their friends in learning and make them understand. We have started referring the children who cannot manage in these classes to the remedial program of SRCT and I am amazed at the improvement within 3 months"*

Feedback from Corporation School Teachers

*"We are fortunate that SRCT is working along with us. We have also been trained in Montessori system now and we find a remarkable difference in the knowledge levels of the children now. Earlier, the children were not exposed to this kind of environment and only rote learning was practiced. Now the children have become responsible and learn in a joyful and practical way."*

*"In the traditional system followed earlier, we did not enjoy this kind of rapport with the children. Now we feel very happy that the children communicate with us without any fear."*

*"The moment the child enters the classroom, it feels attracted to it, because there is no desks or tables to inhibit their movement and child recognizes this freedom to move about. The materials attract the children immensely".*

*"At the end of a working day, we feel happy and peaceful. I think this is because we derive great job satisfaction, seeing the children learn without us having to din it into them".*

Feedback from Saidapet School HM

*"This is a rare opportunity for poor children to get exposed to this sophisticated learning system. I am extremely happy that my school has this facility. I joined in June 2007 and in September, 2007 we implemented this system with SRCT. It has brought in a definite change in the attitude of the children"*

Feedback SRCT facilitators

When the SRCT facilitators were asked to rate the development of the children in Balwadis and Kindergarten in a scale of 1 - 5, where 5 was the maximum, the average rating is as below

Skill	Developments	Rating
Cognitive	a. Reading skills/habit	4.6
	b. Speaking skills	4.8
Emotional	a. Developing a positive attitude toward school	4.8
	b. Helping each child develop self confidence	4.9
	c. Fostering inner security and sense of order in the child	4.8
	d. Motivation to attend school	4.9
	e. Attendance during rainy seasons	4.6
Intellectual	a. Assisting each child in building a habit of concentration	4.8
	b. Fostering an abiding curiosity	4.6
	c. Developing habits of initiative and persistence	4.7
	d. Understanding concepts in Maths	4.7
	e. Drawing / Painting	4.1
	f. Craftwork*	3.5
	g. General Academic performance	4.5
	h. Decision making capacity**	5
Social	a. Participation in discussions	4
	b. Team spirit	4.7
	c. Personal hygiene	4.8

\*There is an activity called “exercises of Practical life” which includes the concepts and advantages of craftwork

\*\*The child is encouraged to make decisions for itself in all its activity based work of Montessori. In this system the values practiced in the class room get internalised. This is the case for decision making capacity as in Hygiene, cleanliness, gentleness, keen awareness of the environment etc.

It was found that craftwork received the lowest mark as there was very little craft activity being taught to the children.

All the teachers rated Decision making capacity as 5.0 which proves the point that all the children take responsibility for themselves and grow towards becoming independent of their parents.

Email Feedback from Mrs. Uma Shanker, Director, CMTC,

Smt. Padmini Gopalan, President, Sri Ramacharan Charitable Trust came to Centre for Montessori Training , Chennai in 2005, first to find out if the Montessori Method could be applied in the Chennai Schools, Corporation of Chennai. When she understood that the Montessori method was for ALL children, she quickly asked whether we had teachers who would work for the Trust.

After completing the course that year, Ms. Nithya Kalyani and Ms. Shobhana applied to SRCT and started work at the VP Koil St, CMS of Corporation of Chennai. From the beginning the Trustees and the teachers worked with single minded dedication to implement the method following its principles with rigour and adhering to the spirit of the philosophy. The results were amazing and all stakeholders- the Trust, the teachers and parents were stunned by the changes in the children who were seen to be self motivated learners and self disciplined in keeping to the rules of the environment.

When SRCT moved to Jones Road, Saidapet, it was a repeat of the happenings at Mylapore in more environments. The teachers continued to implement the method efficiently and with lessons learnt from previous experiences were able to help the children become independent learners and assist them in their development.

The neatness of the classrooms, the maintenance of the materials, the quiet that prevails as children work, the child centered approach of the teachers, the precision with the presentations of materials have been done by the teachers have all caused all visitors to the school to express their admiration and marvel at the work done by the children and the teachers.

The work of SRCT has been impressive and a source of inspiration to other like minded NGOs.

## **Activity 2 - Imparting a Montessori based learning environment in ICDS run Balwadis**

Psychologists say that the toddler years (0-6 years) are when a child learns the most. It is during these years that the child's mind is working overtime--taking in everything and processing information at a faster pace than they will a few years down the line. Psychologists say that this time is of great importance because this is when children learn to socialize and process basic learning skills. In this way, early childhood education is the foundation for continued learning. Child psychologists and teachers for early childhood education point out that there are many benefits including: internalizing the experiences learnt, the child being ahead when they start formal education, having a good foundation for continued learning, having a grasp of peer relationships, having higher self esteem, and better enjoyment of the learning process.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme is a Government of India programme to provide services to ensure proper growth and development of pre-school children 2-5 years of age in rural, tribal and slum areas. ICDS runs several Balwadis (Anganwadis) across the country targeting children 2-5 years of age. The children attending these Balwadis generally hail from the lowest socio-economic sections of society.

As the pre-primary years are when children make great strides in development, SRCT wanted to offer the children in Balwadis an opportunity to explore and learn with the help of a very child friendly method of education. SRCT wanted to offer the Montessori method of learning to these children as this methodology allowed children to develop according to their inner laws of development.

SRCT has added value to the existing system by introducing a holistic system of education with the help of trained staff for the purpose and providing suitable materials.

Thus SRCT chose to implement the Montessori method in these Balwadis catering to the children from lower socio-economic strata of society because of the following

- ❖ It is a Unique learning methodology for children and not just academic.
- ❖ It gives 'Hands on experience' in learning concepts through study materials.
- ❖ Children learn without being taught and so the child "wants" to come to school and further kindles a life long interest in learning in them.
- ❖ Their concentration power increases and they are more focused.
- ❖ They learn to take care of the materials themselves and generally become more responsible.
- ❖ The method boosts self esteem, self confidence and thinking ability amongst them.

SRCT approached the Balwadi authorities and with the approval of the ICDS, piloted the first "montessori" Balwadi in the Luz avenue. Thus in 2007, SRCT launched two Montessori environments in the Balwadi in Luz, Chennai after getting the sanction of the ICDS.

SRCT provides the following to each Balwadi

- A Montessori based learning environment
- All the learning materials & Mats
- A Montessori trained teacher, assistant teacher and a helper

The following was observed about the SRCT facilitators during the visits to the Saidapet Balwadis and Balwadis in Luz and Tiruvanmmiyur.

- The SRCT facilitators acted as a **dynamic link** between children and the Prepared Montessori Environment.
- They **systematically observed** their students and interpreted their needs.
- They **prepared an environment** meant to facilitate children's independence and ability to freely select work that they find appealing and keeping the environment in perfect condition.
- They **observed and evaluated** each child's individual progress.
- They **respected and protected** the students' independence. They knew when to step in and set limits or lend a helping hand, and knew when it is in a child's best interests for them to step back and not interfere.
- They were very **supportive**, offering warmth, security, stability, and non-judgmental acceptance of each child.
- They **facilitated communication** among the children and helped them to freely and fearlessly communicate even to adults.
- They **interpreted** the children's progress and their work in the classroom to parents, the school staff, and the community.
- They were **role models** for the children, following the ground-rules of the class, exhibiting a sense of calm, consistency, grace and courtesy, and demonstrating respect for every child.

The Balwadis in Luz and Thiruvanmiyur have received excellent appreciation from visiting authorities and dignitaries.

In 2008, SRCT started working with the Marundheeswarar Nagar Balwadi, Thiruvanmiyur, and 4 Balwadis attached to Corporation Girls School, Saidapet.

SRCT supported Balwadis

S.no	Year when launched	Location of Balwadi	No. of Balwadis	No. of SRCT Facilitators
1	2007	Luz avenue	2	2 teachers and one helper
2	2008	Marundeeswarar nagar, Tiruvanmiyur	1	2 teachers
3	2008	Corporation girls higher secondary school, Saidapet	4	5 teachers, 2 helpers

Children who underwent Montessori learning in Balwadis

S.no	Location of Balwadi	2011	2012
1	Luz avenue	50	56
2	Marundeeswarar nagar, Tiruvanmiyur	25	29
3	Corporation girls higher secondary school, Saidapet	110	125
	TOTAL	185	200



Group activity of children at the Luz Balwadi

Feedback from Corporation Balwadi teachers

*"I am extremely fortunate to be a teacher in this Balwadi. I have taught in other balwadis too but my experience here is the best. The Montessori methodology is so useful for the children and I regret not having put my children in a Montessori school when they were young. The children come here and get transformed into responsible individuals with a mind of their own."*

Tiruvanmiyur Balwadi teacher

*"The implementation of Montessori environment in the Balwadi is a boon to the children in this area. Now, there is no need for us to campaign for children to enrol in the Balwadis. We are now always having excess children and it is all through referrals from the parents."* - Luz Balwadi teacher

Feedback from SRCT Facilitators, Thiruvannamiyur

*"The joy in the face of these children when they learn new things is something immeasurable. Many of the children have joined LKG in the reputed private schools in the area"*

Feedback from an CMTC Intern who proposes to launch this method in his school for Adi Dravida and tribal children in Tindivanam.

*"Traditional teaching is Teacher centric whereas this is a child centric method and we can easily understand the needs of children. I used to just enjoy playing with children before, after this training, I respect children and am bewildered at their immense capacities"*

-Mr. Shanmugham

Feedback from Parents

All the Parents appreciated the Montessori methodology and were extremely happy with the impact it had on their children. This is what some parents said..

*"My son could not even talk when I sent him here last year. He was two and a half years old and we thought he would have speech problems. Now he has become a chatterbox and we owe it to the Trust teachers and their skills in systematically training the children."*

*"Though I am a Non-tamilian, my son speaks and understands Tamil and English after joining the balwadi"*

*"I get constant feedback about my child's developments from the Trust teachers. It makes me feel very proud of my child. My elder son also studied in this Balwadi and is faring very well in 2<sup>nd</sup> std. in a private school."*

*"My son has been coming here for 3 years. He has now been selected in PS Matric School for LKG after an interview in which he fared very well"*

Learning from this Objective

The child has an innate liking to learn, be good, gentle and organized. The Montessori Method favors the intensification of these qualities. The environment encourages meticulous, concentrated, structured work through free activity.

Good qualities are inculcated in the children and extended through them to their homes.

**Objective 2**

Creating a pool of facilitators for imparting Montessori Method of teaching in Corporation schools

**Activity 1 - Sponsoring facilitators and teachers to learn the Montessori Method**

SRCT has under its rolls, 22 facilitators working at 15 centres. SRCT selects teachers with the right aptitude, give in-house training in the existing centres and in order to empower them, SRCT sponsors their formal Montessori training in the Institute.

**SRCT Staff Team**

S.no	Balwadi	Centres	No. of Facilitators	No. of Helpers
1	Saidapet - Balwadi	4	6	2
2	Saidapet - Kindergarten	8	12	2
3	Luz	2	2	1
4	Tiruvanmiyur	1	2	
	TOTAL	15	22	5

SRCT has employed 5 Teachers with diploma in Montessori. The other facilitators have educational qualifications varying from 12<sup>th</sup> to graduation and some have finished only 10<sup>th</sup>. All these teachers have been trained in the Montessori system hands on by a senior Montessori teacher. The guiding philosophy at SRCT is to employ persons with aptitude rather than formal qualification. Three of the teachers had sent their children to these Balwadis prior to joining SRCT. Having experienced their child's interest to learn and all round development through the Montessori learning environment, these parents wanted to join SRCT as they were in total sync with the methodology.

The Teachers with Montessori diploma start with a salary of Rs 5000/per month. An increment is given every year. So far the maximum salary has been Rs 6900. The rest of the teachers get salaries ranging from 3000 to 4500.

**About the facilitators**

- *5 of the facilitators joined SRCT after seeing the Montessori methodology and their child enjoy school.*
- 3 facilitators enrolled their children after joining SRCT
- It was the first employment for 55% of the facilitators.
- 60% of the SRCT staff had attended the Montessori training program at CMTC
- Though almost all of them have economic needs, they however expressed extreme job satisfaction working with the underprivileged children through SRCT.

**Activity 2 - Creating teachers to take ownership of Balwadis**

SRCT's work culture follows the principle of ownership thinking. When the SRCT facilitator understands her role in managing a Montessori environment, and is informed

of what is going on and takes responsibility for the outcomes, then she is able to perform better. They become better leaders for they want to engage and contribute, and feel much better about themselves when they have the opportunity to do so and realise that they have the capacity to do so. This work culture at SRCT has resulted in all the teachers being highly work conscious and performing above the expectations of the Board. Their sensitivity to social problems has also improved and they are able to handle all the problems they face at the centres independently.

SRCT has appointed a senior teacher in charge of the Saidapet school and Balwadis. But there is no need for close monitoring as all the SRCT teachers are totally dedicated. The system inspires them. They also appreciate the freedom and trust that they enjoy working at SRCT. They feel part of a movement for a social change.

**Feedback by Board member**

*“By practicing Ownership Thinking, it is reassuring to me as I know that our staff are making decisions and taking actions that are aligned with SRCT’s mission and I never worry about the daily running of these centres” - Padmini Gopalan*

**Feedback from facilitators**

Around 55% of the staff felt that meeting the Board once a month was sufficient as they were able to manage the centres without constant monitoring.

*“I am totally responsible for running this Balwadi. In case I need a new kit or mats, I talk to the parents or local organisations and raise the required money. I do not depend on SRCT to fund all the requirements. I only depend on them for my salary” - Tiruvanmiyur Balwadi facilitator*

*“As far as possible, I try to sort out all the day to day problems amongst ourselves without depending on the Board for answers. They fully believe in me and encourage me to work independently”. - Saidapet facilitator*

**Activity 3 - Networking with Montessori training centres**

Centre for Montessori Training- Chennai (CMTC) propagates the Montessori Method of education through a host of training and refresher programs. Many of the SRCT facilitators have been trained at CMTC. CMTC helps SRCT in the following ways.

1. Offer Fee concessions upto Rs.8,000/- to the SRCT facilitators
2. Identify teachers
3. Send trainees for observation
4. Agreed to train one candidate, recommended by SRCT, free of cost
5. General guidance and information sharing

CMTC also sources SRCT teachers to set up Montessori environments in new schools.

CMTC encouraged SRCT to implement the Montessori method in Corporation schools and provide this learning to underprivileged children. They support SRCT whenever needed.

SRCT sponsored the training of 3 teachers. Premalatha, Jayashri, Aswini. Premalatha and Jayashri are not working with us now. At present eight teachers - Rani, Devi, Hemavathy, Mary Latha, Gilda, Esther, Udayakarthika, Tamizharasi - are being trained through SRCT sponsorship. There are 5 Montessori trained Diploma holders within our staff. They are Selvi, Karthika, Aswini, Arulselvi and Nithya.

#### Learning from this Objective

By creating a sense of ownership amongst the facilitators, the SRCT Board is able to concentrate on the Management of the Trust and not worry about the daily activities at each centre. Our experience is that, those with similar objectives should work together in tandem for better results. Also, by constantly appreciating and recognising the work of each facilitator, their motivation and confidence levels have greatly improved.

### **Objective 3**

Establishing literacy centers during school hours within the school to facilitate after-school teaching and strengthening skills amongst children
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Activity 1- Remedial classes at the school premises for primary school children under montessori methodology

Some children studying in these Corporation schools lag behind in studies for various reasons. They include -

1. Domestic disharmony
2. Relocation
3. Medical reasons
4. Lack of awareness towards continued education.

These children when they miss out on the lessons are unable to cope up and keep pace with the class again. To solve this problem and bring everyone on par, SRCT has initiated to have remedial classes within the Saidapet school premises during the last working hour of the school. This was extended to the Kottur School.

The class teacher identifies the children who need supplemental class and enrolls them for the remedial class. The SRCT facilitators handle classes between 2 pm - 3.30 pm as the Kindergarten section closes at 2pm. *This falls within the normal working hours of the school and each teacher handles only 10-12 children.* They use the Montessori methodology to learn the basic concepts in Maths and Language.

These Remedial classes have proved to be a positive environment for students suffering from low self-esteem, as they encourage students to ask as many questions as necessary to understand a subject, rather than feeling pressured to learn everything immediately.

Students enrolled in Remedial classes

Class	No. of students	No. of Facilitators
1	63	5
2	72	6
3	36	3
4	75	6
5	70	5
TOTAL	312	25

Feedback from students

*"I have started to pass in all the tests"*

*"I got "very good" for my last assignment"*

*"I now know how to read without stammering. I can read and understand the words now. Earlier I just read without knowing the meaning"*

Feedback from SRCT teachers

*"A few students in class 3 and 4 did not know alphabets and basic phonetics. Now they have learnt to read and comprehend what they read. It was a big challenge initially, but all it needed was a few kind words and understanding of their problems"*

*-Teacher at Saidapet school*

*"The gypsy children would be so untidy at the beginning of these classes, but now after listening to our talks they come in well dressed and groomed. They used to be the first ones to run at the strike of the bell at 3, but now they complete their work, chat with us and then leave along with us"*

*-Teacher at Kottur school*

Remedial class in progress at Saidapet



Activity 2- Computer centres and libraries within the school (in the planning stage)

This activity is still in its planning stage and hence not reported upon.

Learning from this Objective

Children need to be constantly guided during their school days to motivate them to develop a quest for learning. Their problems in the classroom need to be understood and resolved at an early stage to prevent them from dropping out of schools. School life is made painful and difficult for many children who for variety of reasons unable to cope up with the rest of the children. This situation has to be attended to and rectified urgently.

**Objective 4**

Enable beneficiary children to continue with their higher education
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Activity 1 - Identifying sponsors to pay the school fees for deserving children who passed out of our Environments and joined Private Schools.

SRCT identifies donors to directly sponsor the school fees for a few deserving children who hail from the lower socio economic strata. Connecting sponsors with needy children and giving them a feedback on the child's progress has made donors very happy.

Criteria for identifying children are -

1. Studied Montessori under SRCT
2. Passed competitive entrance tests conducted by Private schools
3. Economically backward

As of now 6 children are benefitting from this sponsorship and we hope to increase the number. They include

- 4 children who passed out of the Montessori classes conducted by SRCT at V.P.Koil Street Corporation School are now studying in M.P.Anand Matriculation School, Mylapore. They are
  1. Vignesh .T 8<sup>th</sup> std.
  2. Madi Dileepan 7<sup>th</sup> std
  3. Shalini - 7<sup>th</sup> std
  4. Karpagam - 7<sup>th</sup> std .
- children who attended the Montessori method at Luz Balwadi and are now studying in P.S.Matriculation School.
  1. Sakthi - 2<sup>nd</sup> std
  2. Yuga - to be admitted in 1<sup>st</sup> std

Feedback from Sponsor

*"Sri Rama Charan Trust helped me. I am happy to now help another child through them. I am very confident they identify the deserving children". - Mr.Srinivasan*

*"I put milk packets for a living. On days I am not well, Shalini helps me without even being told. She also studies well. She is so responsible and cares for everyone. Whereas even her older sister is not like her. I think this is because of Shalini's Montessori training. I am so happy that because your Trust is helping her education, I need not worry about her life. She will definitely become somebody big later in life".*

- Shalini's mother

*"They are very popular with our neighbours, and pass on the values learnt in Montessori to their siblings and other relatives. They are also clearheaded"* - Vignesh's mother

Feedback from children

*"I want to become a software engineer"- Vignesh*

*"I want to become a good teacher and just like Ramacharan Trust, want to help needy children so that there is no inequality". - Shalini*

Feedback from Class Teacher of M.P.Anand Matriculation school.

*"These children are disciplined, perform well and have leadership qualities".*

Teacher from P.S.High School

*"Sakthi takes responsibility, has sharing tendency with other children, has self confidence and studies very well."*



Beneficiary Children with Mrs.Padmini Gopalan

**Learnings from this Objective**

It is worthwhile to connect donors with deserving children who show very good potential

## 7 Other views of stakeholders

Board Members views:

The Board was administered a questionnaire and were asked to rate the performance of the activities on a scale of 1 -5 (1 - very unsuccessful & 5 - very successful)

Most of the activities received a score of 4+. This is a very good indicator and proves that the Board has worked on its strategic plans based on the mission of SRCT

### Strengths of SRCT according to the Board

1. Strict adherence to Rules and regulations
2. Total transparency within the Board
3. The devotion and dedication of the trust teachers
4. Consistent support from CHILD VIKAS INTERNATIONAL
5. Walk the talk approach in the functioning of the trust
6. All decisions are taken after discussion and getting consensus
7. Proper utilization of funds

### Areas of improvement according to the Board

1. Sound strategies for fund raising and identifying and implementing a self sustaining module.
2. Our activities are restricted to very few schools and balwadis. We should be able to expand and reach out to many more children without compromising on quality.
3. We need more volunteers to work for the cause.
4. More contacts to get help from the Govt. and raise funds.
5. Spreading awareness about the work carried out by the trust, considering the imminent need.

### Feedback of Mr Venkatesh, Joint Commissioner - Education, Chennai Corporation

“It is a good fortune for the Corporation to network with SRCT and provide quality education for the kindergarten children of Corporation schools. I wish they could work in all our 40 centres and not only in Saidapet”.

### Feedback from Individual Donors

I took help from them when I was doing my college. I feel it is my duty to say thanks to them by donating. - Srinivasan,

Under Privileged Kids getting Montessori Coaching is appealing and this is what motivated us to support SRCT - B.Rajagopal  
Getting the impressionable minds inculcated with the right values and arming them with the skills required to uphold the values through life is the right step toward building a good society. This is the commendable job the trust is upto. Keep it up! - Rudy

Feedback from Institutional Donor, AID India, Director, Balaji Sampath

**Teachers:** Teachers are very resourceful, patient, and friendly to the children. I find the children are quiet attached to the teachers when it comes for clearing the doubts in the learning process.

**Materials:** They have plenty of self learning materials and teaching learning materials. The children have the freedom to choose what ever material they want to learn with. Materials are child friendly and are easily accessible to them. Materials are arranged on the low wooden racks within children's reach, so the teachers don't waste time distributing the materials, even the children's preference given the high priority. It was exciting to see children handle the learning materials so confidently, and keep it back in place where it belongs.

**Children:** Children are very happy, and confident; they follow strict discipline, orderliness.

This type of intervention will surely help children in the long run, but the only problem is scaling the program may not be feasible/very challenging due to cost involved.

## **8 Environmental impact**

SRCT does not have any specific environmental policy but adheres to a few environmental norms like

### **1. Paper**

- We reduce the amount of paper used in the office and most of the documents are maintained as electronic data.
- All print-outs and photo copies are double sided
- Most of our correspondence is through e-mails only

### **2. Energy**

- Computers, lights, fans and other electrical appliances will be switched off when not in use

### **3. Office Supplies**

- We use long life products over short life ones especially the Montessori equipment.
- We purchase materials in large packs to avoid excessive packaging
- We purchase eco-efficient or “green” products

### **4. Sanitation**

- Children are trained to use toilets
- They observe that the toilets are kept extremely clean and special efforts are taken to maintain cleanliness
- Washing of hand becomes a habit for the children
- The premises are kept litter free and children carry this meticulousness in other environments also
- Children carry home the values of hygiene, sanitation and clean environment.

## **9 Economic impact**

Over the last two years, SRCT has reached out to over 700 children through its various activities. All these children hail from the lower economic strata of society and over 70% of the parents have not completed 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

SRCT has spent Rs. 12, 47,168 for 315 children studying in the kindergarten and Balwadis of Chennai in 2011-12 and Rs. 13, 42,830 for 437 children in 2012-13. The cost per child has been Rs.3,959.26 and Rs. 3,072.84 for the two years. It is interesting to note that the cost per child has reduced and the number of children impacted has increased between the two years. The amount spent for imparting

the Montessori methodology for these children will ensure that all these children would internalise good values and continue their quest for learning throughout their lives.

SRCT has spent Rs.1,81,603 in 2012-13 for their Remedial classes programme which reaches out to 312 children over the last six months. By spending Rs.580 per child in the last six months, it has ensured that 312 children will not drop out of school and continue their education with renewed zeal and interest.

By sponsoring Rs.1,20,000 for 12 teachers to undergo the Montessori diploma courses at CMTC, SRCT has facilitated in creating Montessori professionals.

By sponsoring the fees of Rs.43,600 and Rs.1,63,730, SRCT has ensured that deserving children pursue their school education. This has also resulted in creating new donors as 2 individuals who received the sponsorship during their school days, have now started to sponsor a child's fees.

SRCT has spent Rs.11,75,950/- for 23 teachers and 6 helpers in 2012 and Rs.12,66,600/- for 26 teachers and 5 helpers in 2013. The entire staff force are women. The average earning potential for these individuals is around Rs.3,000 – 5,000. Over 70% of the staff have taken up a job for the first time. Due to this intervention, the local economy has gained over ten lakhs in a year. This money generated would be targeted towards improving the local economy, savings in the local banks, thereby leading to an improvement in the socio-economic profile of these women and their families.

This entire amount spent has also complimented the Government run initiatives and has created a sense of Trust about Government educational institutions in Chennai amongst the parents.

SRCT has also sponsored Rs.80,000/- towards the fees of the children of their staff.

## 10 Compliance

### Key Aspects Check-list for Social Accounts

<b>1 Human Resources</b>		
<b>1.1 Number of employees</b>	<b>Y/ N /NA</b>	<b>Date/Details/Comment</b>
Full-time	22	
Part-time	5	
Consultants	2	
Volunteer	Only trustees	
Contract Employees/ Outsourced	Nil	
<b>1.2 Number of members/shareholders (For Cooperatives/Companies etc.)</b>		
<b>1.3 Policies and Procedures in place</b>		
Employee contracts	No	
Employee job descriptions	No	
Staff appraisals	No formal appraisals but informal observations	
Provident Fund		
Health Insurance		
Life Insurance		
Grievance procedures	Yes	
Disciplinary procedures	Yes when needed	
Equal opportunities	Yes	
Safety protocols		
Other		
<b>1.4 Consultations</b>		
a. with paid employees	Y	
b. with volunteers	Y	
c. with families of employees	n	
<b>1.5 Facilities</b>		
Crèche		
Transport		
Travel Allowance	Only case based	
Medical Allowance		
Subsidized Meals		
Children's Allowances	Yes	
Staff Outings	Yes	
Other		

<b>2 Good Governance and Accountability</b>		
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Y/N/NA	Details

<b>2.1 Legal form of organization</b>		
<b>Constitution (tick appropriate)</b>		
Sole trader		
Partnership		
Company limited by shares		
Section 25 Company		
Registered Society		
Registered Trust	Y	
Other		
Please describe		
<b>2.2 Appropriate annual return filed</b> <i>[please state to which regulatory body]</i>	U	
<b>2.3 Annual General Meeting held</b>		
<b>2.4 Regular Board/Management Committee</b> <i>[please state number of meetings in year]</i>	Every month	
Number of Board Members	9	
Composition of Board		
<b>2.5 Advisory Council</b>		
Number of Advisory Council Members		
Composition of Advisory Council		
Frequency of Advisory Council Meetings <i>[please state number of meetings in year]</i>		
<b>2.5 Annual Report published</b>	Yes	
<b>2.6 Membership increased/decreased</b> <i>[delete as appropriate]</i>	Increased from 5 to 9	
<b>2.7 Social Accounts prepared</b>		
<b>2.8 Social Accounts verified by Social Audit Panel</b>		
<b>2.9 Social Accounts reported to Stakeholders</b>		
<b>2.10 Consultations</b>		
a. with members of the organisation		
b. with members of the Board or Management Committee		
c. with Advisory Council members (if appropriate)		

3.1	<b>Annual Accounts prepared and filed</b> <i>[please state with which regulatory body filed]</i>	Y	
3.2	<b>Balance sheet strengthened/weakened</b> <i>[please delete as appropriate]</i>	Y	
3.3	<b>Profit/loss for year</b> <i>[please delete as appropriate and give figure]</i>		
3.4	<b>Plough Back/Reinvestment</b>	A corpus of RS. 25 lakhs has been created	
3.5	<b>Distribution of profits</b>		

•

4. Environmental Sustainability		Y/N/NA	Details
4.1	<b>Environmental policy in place</b> <i>[please attach]</i>	N	
4.2	<b>Reports on environmental practices available:</b> <i>[please attach reports if available]</i> a. energy use: heat and light b. energy use: transport c. consumption of materials d. waste disposal	Yes	
4.3	<b>Carbon footprint calculated</b> <i>[please attach]</i>	Not applicable	

5. Economic Impact		Y/N/NA	Date/Details/Comment
5.1	<b>Purchasing policies defined</b> <i>[please attach]</i>		
5.2	<b>Report on effect of purchasing policies available</b> <i>[please attach]</i>		
5.3	<b>Local multiplier effect of organization calculated</b> <i>[please attach]</i>		
5.4	<b>Other:</b> <i>[please describe]</i>		

## 11. Financial information

<b>SRCT - Income and Expenditure Statement for 2011-2013</b>						
<b>SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENSES</b>						
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2011 - 2012</b>	<b>2012 - 2013</b>		<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2011 - 2012</b>	<b>2012 - 2013</b>
Foreign Donations	690,297	324,929		Saidapet KG Salary	656,400	559,200
Local Donations	653,850	857,133		Saidapet KG Helpers Salary	48,000	43,400
From Investments		500,000		Saidapet KG Project Rep Expenses		36,197
Interest income	225,000	225,000		Saidapet Balwadi Salary	200,400	258,600
				Saidapet Balwadi Helpers Salary	48,000	50,200
				Saidapet Balwadi Materials		12,171
				Balwadi-Mettupalayam	37,050	
				Project Expenses(all above units)	40,860	
				Balwadi-Luz Salary	38,400	46,200
				Balwadi Luz Helper Salary	26,400	24,300
				Bal-Luz-Project,Rep,Materials	25,238	20,602
				Marundeeswar Balwadi Salary	100,800	111,700
				Marundeeswar Balwadi Project Exp	5,300	7,260
				Balwadi-Valmiki Ngr Salary	20,500	
				Tuition centres-Sal for 6 months		173,000
				Tuition centre-Notebooks & Pencils		8,603
				Teachers Welfare		237,700
				Scholarship to students	43,600	163,730
				Donation in Kind	17,700	10,000
				Library Project	5,850	9,338
				Summer camp Salary		28,000
				Summer camp Materials		4,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,569,147</b>	<b>1,907,062</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,314,498</b>	<b>1,804,451</b>

## **12. Main achievements and recommendations**

The outcomes of the social accounting & audit process suggest that most of the activities have achieved their objectives to a large extent. Some of the key achievements are highlighted below

### **Key Achievements**

- SRCT has reached out to over 2100+ children studying in Government run Balwadis and Kindergarten by creating a child centric, child friendly atmosphere.
- It has strengthened the functioning of the Balwadis and the Kindergarten sections where they network.
- The children develop into self confident individuals and develop decision making capacities at a tender age.
- A high degree of commitment from all the Trustees
- Good leadership and teamwork
- Remedial Classes have improved the reading and writing skills of children and give them the confidence to go to the High School.
- In matters of hygiene and cleanliness the children carry the values learnt in the Montessori environment back home and spreads it in their neighbourhood which creates an impact of larger social learning

### **Recommendations**

- SRCT should scale up their activities and extend their services to all the Corporation schools.
- They need to evolve a sustainable fund raising strategy and also develop a bigger volunteer base
- An advisory panel to be set up for supporting SRCT
- Work more towards Visibility of the Trust and popularise the efforts taken
- A structured internship program to be evolved for drawing volunteers
- Financial planning to meet the expansion plans of the Trust.

## **13. Strengths and weaknesses of the Social Accounting Process**

This process proved to be a platform for the Board of SRCT to understand the stakeholders and their needs in a professional. The importance of feedback from the stakeholders was understood by all the employees of SRCT

## **14. Future plans for the next Social Accounting Cycle**

SRCT would draft its social accounts every year. All the recommendations suggested in the current set of accounts would be implemented in the next cycle and reported upon.

## **15. Dialogue and disclosure**

The present report shall be condensed into a summary version and shall be shared with the Schools, Donors, Employees and Board members. The entire report shall be uploaded on the SRCT website for the general public to view it. The soft version of the report shall be sent to individuals on request.

The recommendations that have been evolved from the current set of accounts would be discussed at length during the next strategic planning session of *SRCT* to ensure that all the recommendations are incorporated into the annual plans/targets of the organization for the next accounting year.

ANNEXURE 1 - Questionnaires

### Questionnaire for teachers

Name of the teacher:

Name of the School:

Age:

Educational qualification:

Date of Joining:

1. Have you been teaching prior to joining this school?
2. According to your experience, how would you describe the academic level of the students in the class you handle?
  - Above average
  - Average
  - Below average
  - Level varies greatly

3. Have you attended the Montessori training program? Yes/No

If yes, Feedback on the training program

4. List the trainings that would be of use to your role as a teacher/assistant in this school?

5. Are you content with the salary paid to you? Yes/No

6. If offered a job in another Montessori would you consider taking up the assignment? Yes/No

7. Do you interact with the SRCT Board directly? Yes/No

8. Would you like to interact with them
  - a. Once a week
  - b. Fortnightly
  - c. Once a month
  - d. Never

9. Please rate the following developments in the child on a scale of 1- 5 as a result of the Montessori based education

- a. Developing a positive attitude toward school
- b. Helping each child develop self confidence
- c. Assisting each child in building a habit of concentration
- d. Fostering an abiding curiosity
- e. Developing habits of initiative and persistence
- f. Fostering inner security and sense of order in the child
- g. Reading skills/habit
- h. Speaking skills
- i. Understanding concepts in Maths
- j. Drawing / Painting
- k. Craftwork
- l. Participation in discussions
- m. Motivation to attend school
- n. General Academic performance
- o. Team spirit
- p. Personal hygiene
- q. Attendance during rainy seasons
- r. Decision making capacity

14. Your feedback/opinion on how to improve your work

Quality of care and support

Quality of environment

Quality of staffing

Quality of management and leadership

Do you think SRCT adheres to its Objectives / values mentioned below. Please rate them on a scale of 1 -5 ( 1 min and 5 max)

	Rating
<b><u>Vision</u></b>	
Social change through quality primary education	
<b><u>Mission</u></b>	
Enabling children to internalize the Montessori culture of learning and create a positive role in shaping their personality	
<b><u>Objective 1</u></b>	
Fostering an enveloping development for the underprivileged pre-primary children to evolve into socially responsible citizens through	
<u>Activity 1</u> - Imparting a Montessori based learning environment in Govt. balwadis	
<u>Activity 2</u> - Networking with the kindergarten section in government schools to offer Montessori based learning systems	
<b><u>Objective 2</u></b>	
Creating a pool of facilitators for imparting Montessori Method of teaching in Government schools through	
<u>Activity 1</u> - Sponsoring facilitators and teachers to learn the montessori method	
<u>Activity 2</u> - Monitoring and facilitating the efficient application of the method in all the intervening centres	
<u>Activity 3</u> - Networking with Montessori training centres	
<b><u>Objective 3</u></b>	
Establishing literacy centers during school hours within the school to facilitate after-school teaching and strengthening skills amongst children through	
<u>Activity 1</u> - Tuition centres at the school premises for primary school children under montessori methodology	
<u>Activity 2</u> - Computer centres and libraries within the school (in the planning stage)	
<b><u>Values</u></b>	
1. Learning environment	
2. Discipline	
3. Transparency & accountability	

**Questionnaire for Board Members - SRCT**

1. What would you say is the larger purpose of SRCT?
2. How do the activities conducted by SRCT fit into that picture?
3. What are the three strengths of SRCT?
4. Are there any major problems that need to be addressed immediately at SRCT?
5. What are three areas of improvement in your opinion?
6. Do you think SRCT adheres to its Vision, mission, Objectives and core values mentioned below. Please rate them on a scale of 1 -5 ( 1 min and 5 max)

	Rating
<b><u>Vision</u></b>	
Social change through quality primary education	
<b><u>Mission</u></b>	
Enabling children to internalize the Montessori culture of learning and create a positive role in shaping their personality	
<b><u>Objective 1</u></b>	
Fostering an enveloping development for the underprivileged pre-primary children to evolve into socially responsible citizens	
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Creating a pool of facilitators for imparting Montessori Method of teaching in Government schools	
<b><u>Objective 3</u></b>	
Establishing literacy centers during school hours within the school to facilitate after-school teaching and strengthening skills amongst children t	
<b><u>Values</u></b>	
1. Learning environment	
2. Discipline	
3. Transparency & accountability	

