

## A Report on the E2E Foundation Course Convocation

### Background to E2E and the Foundation Course

The Education to Employability programme initiated by Vikramshila Education Resource Society is designed for high school students to bridge the gap between education, essential skills and employability. In order to address this challenge of aspiration-capability gap one of the key areas of focus of E2E is to ensure that underprivileged children approach the job market with confidence and necessary skill sets. It is in this area, that the IL& FS (ETS) provided necessary technical support to Vikramshila for implementing a Foundation Course for class ten graduates providing career oriented counseling in six schools in Kolkata, reaching 100 students.

To gauge the counseling needs, aspirations and expectations of the stakeholders, a survey with the children, parents, teachers and employers was conducted through one to one discussions and focus group discussions. After this needs analysis, A 120 hour course was developed covering the six broad areas: Personal Effectiveness, Social Effectiveness, Personal Work Habits, Workplace Skills, Entrepreneurial Skills and ICT education.

The training was conducted in a participative approach, in the form of mentoring, with the expectation that students would be equipped at the end of the programme to make their own career choices.

The content of the course was developed to include those specific areas where the students fell short of the employers expectations- it included, self image building, resume writing, report writing, motivation, communication skills, interpersonal skills, computer applications, speaking and social skills and overall personality development among others.

### E2E Convocation 2009- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Foundation Course in Education to Employability was completed in May and the participating 100 students, who undertook the course, were felicitated in a convocation organized by Vikramshila and the IL&FS-ETS on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June at Rotary Sadan, Kolkata.

The Convocation was graced by Mr. Tamal Sen, of Webel, Biman Mukherjee of Malcolm India, Ms. Nina Pau and Mr. Shourie Chatterjee of IL&FS, Mr. Saswata Chakrabarty of Bata India, Mr. Jayanta Banerjee, Ms. Sangeeta Dey and Mr. Debasish Mitter from MSDf, Mr. Sudip Mukherjee, and Ms. Shubhra Chatterjee of VERS, who were kind enough to hand over the certificates

The Convocation was attended by all the students who undertook the course, Head Teachers of the 6 participating schools, teachers of the schools, staff of VERS and IL&FS and representatives from the Press.

The convocation began by an address from the Director of Vikramshila, Ms. Chatterjee, who inaugurated the programme and welcomed all the guests. She gave a special and warm welcome to all the participating students and introduced the organization and the Programme E2E to the audience.

Ms. Chatterjee introduced Vikramshila as an NGO, which started 20 years back, with the intention of making quality education a reality for all children. They began by entering into teacher education – creating and applying new methods in the classroom to improve classroom teaching learning. In many ways then VERS is also a research organization. Gradually Vikramshila began expanding the scope of its work and entered into projects where they could work directly with children in the classroom.

A brief background of Naba Disha, an urban intervention aimed at mainstreaming out of school children into the formal education system, was provided. Details of the 20 centres of Naba Disha run with the

support of the Kolkata Police and the 2000+ underprivileged children benefiting from it were discussed. After 10 years of operation Naba Disha today has 14 children who have successfully completed their Madhyamik, with whom similar career oriented counseling will begin with a programme called SPEED.

She then gave a brief background of the rural school, a lab school, for VERS at Bigha, Burdwan. This project was funded by the MHRD, as an experimental school in 1997. Here too, a lot of children have completed their secondary and senior secondary examinations. A team from NCERT had come to do special study on the school and called it a good model of primary education. The government of West Bengal too sends its teams and guests regularly to the Burdwan and Naba Disha schools.

Another area of intervention of VERS discussed by Ms. Chatterjee was their work with Tripura government- on how to make systemic changes in the government system, where thousands of teachers have been capacitated.

The organization is constantly trying out innovative work in education, so that; quality education can be given to all children, particularly those who cannot buy education and are hence deprived of it. Ms. Chatterjee also pointed out, that with the fast paced and changing world, the system of education cannot afford to remain archaic and must also change. The system, the schools, the teachers and the delivery all needs to change. Vikramshila is a part of this worldwide effort to bring about such a change.

She thanked the government school head teachers and teachers who enabled the organization to work with them in this direction, following which giving a brief introduction of the E2 programme, a documentary on the project and its various components was shown to the audience. She

A short documentary of the E2E Foundation course was then shown which highlighted the need for the course and the course content. The IL&FS, who designed the content, met various sectors offering vocational courses and industries. They identified the aspiration-capability and the expectation-capability gaps, based on which the courseware was developed. A presentation on the making of the course content and its execution was shared by Ms. Nina Paul.

After this the guests handed over the certificates to the students of different schools amongst huge applause from the audience, cheering and motivating the children on stage.

Following the felicitation of the students and feedback from the different stakeholders, a vote of thanks was offered to officially announce the closure of the ceremony amongst heartfelt congratulations and best wishes offered by one and all to the 100 participating high school graduates.

#### Some Feedback from Teachers and Students

**Student from Baranagar Sri Sri Ramkrishna Vidyapeeth-** *"This year I have completed my Madhyamik examinations and participated in the E2E course. In the course, I have learned a lot of things such as effective communication skills and other skills in a very short span of time. If however, the course was a bit longer, we would learn even more. I thank the organizers and the trainers for mentoring us so well."*

**Principal, Kamarhati Sagore Dutt Free High School-** *"... I have visited the school even on holidays to see how the trainers, in this sweltering heat, were tenaciously working with the students... VERS has shown us the way to overcome the gaps in the education system, having done it so beautifully themselves..."*

**Student from Netaji Nagar Vidya Mandir –** *"... as we started the course our motivation and confidence increased... to face interviews and communicate in English..."*

**Ex-Principal, Baranagar Sri Sri Ramkrishna Vidyapeeth** – *“I have always noticed certain gaps in the education system and Vikramshila’s course content can help us overcome it. Today teachers feel they are on the upper hand as they are giving education to the child. The value of the one to gets education is greater than that of the one who imparts it. This is seen in Vikramshila’s programmes where children’s involvement is greatly increased...today we need ‘man-making’ education that will pave the way for employment opportunities.... the aspiration-capability gap is however more pronounced among Higher secondary graduates, as such I request Vikramshila to undertake similar course for class 12 graduates also”*

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