

COVA- ICAN- Youth TRAC
Compassionate Citizenship & Responsible Activism Project
Among Children and Youth
Project Overview

Our education system and society as a whole are oriented and geared to produce efficient professionals and not necessarily socially aware beings that understand and are sensitive to different social issues and subscribe to moral and ethical values required of a human being. Developing adequate social sensitivity and concern are essential conditions for imbibing moral and social values and promoting positive social engagement to address the problems and ills affecting any society to make it humane and just.

Goal:

To sensitise people, especially school, college, university students and young professionals to social issues and concerns to inculcate in them understanding and compassion required of a good human towards fellow beings, society and the ecosystem and enlist their commitment to address social problems and issues to make society humane and just .

Objectives

1. Social Sensitisation and Amenability to Inculcate Compassion and Empathic Values

The First Objective of the **Compassionate Citizenship & Responsible Activism Project** is to provide a systematic and sustained sensitisation to a range of social issues and concerns to school, college and university students, corporate youth and professionals through Extension Lectures and exposure visits to enable them to develop empathy and sensitivity to different social issues necessary to inculcate compassion and empathic values required of a good human being and enlist their commitment and equip them appropriately to address these issues.

2. Global Perspective

The Second Objective is to inculcate a global perspective, especially among students and youth by facilitating their interactions with foreign nationals staying in Hyderabad or on a visit or through lectures and interactions on Skype from Thought Leaders from different countries of the world to enable the students to interact with world class minds and understand issues and perspectives from across the globe.

3. Constructive Engagement with the Government

The Third Objective of the Project is to dispel the general impression that nothing happens by complaining to or approaching the government for redress of issues by equipping and providing platforms to the students to engage with the government in appropriate manner for successful results.

4. Activism for Positive Social Transformation

Finally motivate and train the students to undertake micro level engagements to address and resolve small issues and problems in their localities and communities to understand social change is possible by individual initiatives and thereby embark on the path of activism for positive social transformations in society.

Activities:

1. Extension Lectures:
2. Exposure Visits:
3. Global Walks
4. Social Activism
5. Project Work on Social Issues
6. Summer Activism Program
7. Koshish Theatre Group

Expected Impact

The Compassionate Citizenship & Responsible Activism Project is expected to create necessary conditions for inculcation of compassion and values of empathy and introduce children and youth to different dimensions of responsible citizenship to propel them to undertake systematic understanding of different social issues and problems and endeavour for social transformation for a just and peaceful society.

Compassionate Citizenship & Responsible Activism Project

The Program

1. Extension Lectures on Social Issues- Personality Development- Life Skills:

COVA has compiled a list of over 100 Resource Persons in Hyderabad with collective expertise in a range of social issues like poverty; social exclusion and discrimination; child, gender, animal, human and citizenship rights; environment; economy; taxation; conflict and peace, international relations etc. Besides, many experts and prominent personalities from other parts of India and from other countries also intimate to COVA about their visits to Hyderabad enabling the opportunity to organise their lectures.

Besides, lectures will also be organised on personality development and life skills in collaboration with IT and other professional to equip the students to develop a holistic personality that can facilitate overall success in life.

Core Aim is to not just make them competent professionals but also sensitive human beings

2. Exposure Visits:

COVA has found that exposure visits of students, youth and professionals to different communities affected by extreme poverty, communal conflicts, child labour and other social deprivations and issues provides a direct first-hand experience of the real life situations, inculcates sensitivity to the magnitude of the problem and motivates involvement at personal levels for addressing the issues.

3. Global Walks

Many foreign nationals reside in Hyderabad many others come on visits. From 2019-20 it is proposed to organise Skype Lectures of Thought Leaders from different countries to provide a global exposure to the students.

The Global Walk Program consists of regular live or skype presentations to students, youth and professionals by representatives of different countries on the themes of history, culture, political and social processes in their countries including the problems faced and solutions attempted. This will broaden the horizon and perspective of the participants to enable them to develop better understanding and empathy with people of other countries and provide some innovative approaches to deal with their own problems by gaining insights from similar situations in other countries and successful strategies being used there.

4. Responsible Social Activism

Most interventions with students and youth are limited to inputs for personality development or awareness generation on some social issues but do not extend to enlisting their involvement to address the problems through activism. COVA has been involved in orienting and enabling school students and college / university youth for social activism by providing regular training on gaining systematic understanding of different social issues and formulating strategies for their resolution through community mobilisation, representations to elected representatives, political parties, officials; use of media; employment of non-violent agitation options, recourse to courts of law etc.

5. Summer Activism Program

Enable systematic engagement of school and college students with specific social issues and training in advocacy. The objective of this program is to enable students to understand

principles and practice of activism and make them responsible citizens. These trainings involve Sessions on communications skills, leadership development, sensitisation to social issues, and principles and practice of social advocacy. There will also be action research, interviews and field exposure visits to give students firsthand experience of social problems and prepare them for better participation in advocacy interventions to transform society for the better.

6. **Sambandh**, an annual event organised by COVA between 6th and 9th August to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. This program aims to orient and sensitise students to the theme of going beyond war and violence for the creation of a just world through the medium of cultural and literary competitions.

7. **Project Work on Social Issues**

To promote an understanding of action research, COVA facilitates around 200 students from member schools and colleges to undertake systematic study of selected social issues and produce project reports detailing the problems and suggesting strategies and solutions for their resolution. The Project involves introducing the students to research methodology of social sciences through training of their teachers and covers using libraries and internet for research, field work including face to face interviews, group discussions, transact walks etc, preparing representations to officials, elected representatives and media, and preparation of Project Reports following scientific principles and documenting advocacy initiatives and achievements. These Project Reports along with models are displayed at a One Day Project Display Exhibition. Subsequently, the students concerned are encouraged to address the problems they have studied through continued activism.

Themes selected for the Project Work on Social Issues during the past years were:

1. **2011-12:** Environment, Child Labour, Issues of Government Schools, Health and Sports and Recreation.
2. **2012-13:** Heritage (historical but neglected monuments of Hyderabad), Understanding the making of the Mindset of a Successful person, Endangered Species (flora & fauna), Bio-diversity, Nuclear power.
3. **2013-14:** Parks and Playgrounds, Garbage Disposal, junk food, child labour and government hospitals.
4. **2014-15:** Global Warming, How to Make India Litter Free, Citizens Charters and their Functioning, Speed Driving and Understanding the issue of Begging and its Solutions.
5. **2015-16:** Care for Elders, Swatch Hyderabad, Corruption and Eve Teasing.
6. **2017-18:** Participatory Budgeting, Exploring Cultural Commonalities of South Asia, Citizen's Charters of GHMC, Water Works and Electricity Department.
7. **2018-19:** Fake News, Government Hospitals, Public Transport, Child Safety, and Problems Parents Face in Educating Children.

Conclusion

The **Compassionate Citizenship and Responsible Activism Project** is expected to provide an introduction to children, youth and professionals to different dimensions of compassionate citizenship and propel them on to engage in initiatives for social transformation for justice and peace.

For Details Please Contact:

Mohammed Abdul Kaleem

Programme Officer

COVA, Hyderabad

Phone: 040 - 24442984, Mobile : +91-8712806553

Email: kaleem@covanetwork.org & covanetwork@gmail.com