



Doco number 41/1964
First floor, Piyollil road, Ernakulam North,
Kochi - 682 018
Ph: 0484 - 2369433, 2385188
E-mail: culturalacademy@gmail.com
Website: www.culturalacademy.org

Greetings from Cultural Academy for Peace

June 2019

Cultural Academy for Peace has continued our commitment flood recovery and rehabilitation following the devastation of August 2018.

With your support, we completed our co-ordinated community [home repairs in North Paravur and Chennamangalam](#) surpassing our target of 25 houses in flood affected villages.

Now these new structures are being tested by their first monsoon season, which began early this month.



Children practise sanitation at a WaSH event in North Paravur, 7th May 2019

Recognising that floods like last year's can cause outbreaks of water-borne diseases, Cultural Academy for Peace has installed [water filters](#) to 12 [schools](#) and distributed [hand wash kits](#).

To ensure better compliance, the importance of sanitation was underscored at [Water, Sanitation and Health \(WASH\)](#) training in Chennamangalam Grama Panchayat and North Paravur Municipality in April and May.

[Wellbeing camps](#) on the topic of Post Traumatic Stress management (PTSM) for children affected by the floods were also held. A total of 345 youngsters participated.



Water filter installation at North Paravur municipal area



Children play volleyball at Chennamangalam Grama Panchayat Post Traumatic Stress Management Camp, 11/04/2019

Cultural Academy for Peace is aware that despite Kerala's timely and inventive response to tragedy, rebuilding remains a monumental task. That's why we've built income generation into our recovery plan.



Children's Camp at Paravur Municipality, 7th March 2019

Over 80 learners took part in our one-day [entrepreneurship crash course](#). Its objective was to enable flood-affected adults of North-Paravur and Chennamangalam to establish or re-establish a small business.

Cultural Academy for Peace will continue all manner of support for recipients in the early months of their business until this project concludes in September.

All flood recovery projects were implemented in conjunction with local government.



Poverty is a barrier to education, with ill-equipped children struggling to participate. Without bags and books, they cannot keep up with lessons, and without suitable shoes, they may not even be able to attend class at all.

The growing children of Kudamkotta Island need new stationery, textbooks and school uniforms every year.

By sponsoring a child, you would be giving her the best chance at a prosperous future. The sponsorship amount for a mother and child per month is Rs.1500.

Kuramkotta Is. remains to a large extent cut off from the mainland, its only boat rickety and, during the rainy season, unreliable. CAP hopes to one day provide a regular, fully functional ferry.

More immediately, three workshops to boost islanders' quality of life will be held this month:

1. Parenting program
2. Menstrual hygiene for adolescents
3. Sanitation

Primary Health Centre doctors will be attending two of these workshops.

Cultural Academy for Peace was honored by a joint visit from long-time supporters Aide A l'Enfance de l'Inde et du Nepal, and Terre des Hommes, who dropped by one May afternoon to look in on the projects they had enabled.



A total of 25 houses were repaired and 94 livelihoods restored as part of the Flood Relief Project.

Shanthibhavan is besotted with its youngest resident, still too small even to be named. Bub's household numbered 20 boys and 11 girls over the summer break, which ended on 6th June.

One sister made her debut at the local preschool. Since the beginning of April, Shanthibhavan has seen 27 admissions. Eighteen housemates have been discharged by settling their issues, of whom 16 have returned to their natal home, 1 to her husband's home, and 1 to her job in another state.



Dishearteningly, intake assessments at Shanthibhavan continue to reveal women's reluctance to use the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, for fear of social stigma. In particular, they fear appearing to oppose their culture and traditions.

Family enrichment programs, legal aid and legal literacy training remain the bedrock of Cultural Academy for Peace counselling, and we aim at mainstreaming gender aspects.

Inhabitants of Shanthibhavan shelter home beat the monsoon to relish the breeze at Subash Park on Sunday 2nd June for an afternoon of yummy food, frolicking and giggles



On Saturday 22nd June, an oral health awareness camp was conducted by Dr. Aparna Mammen for all Shanthibhavan housemates, during which a dental check-up was done followed by a class on proper brushing techniques, self-examination and the importance of oral health. One young woman was found to need orthodontic work, so Cultural Academy for Peace has circulated a request for donation and keenly awaits a reply.



The dental check-up was followed by a workshop by Dr. Aparna and Mahashweta Banerjee on consent. Children learned the difference between safe and unsafe touch and emphasis was made on the importance of saying 'no'.

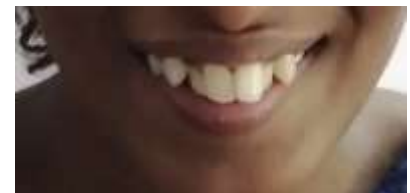
The workshop reinforces the message from group and legal counselling: **YOUR BODY, YOUR CHOICE!**

The residents enjoyed a movie after the session.

TESTIMONIES

Abuse comes in varied forms and proportions but they hit hardest when you are oblivious to their occurrence and yet feel the pain. Ann* was just a teenager when she was subjected to sexual abuse by people she trusted. She joined Nirbhaya home as a desolate young girl. It was quite a task to disillusion her but she proved to be a quick learner amongst many other things. She was smart and showed keen interest in vocational training so much so that decided to pursue a degree in fashion designing. Later, she was shifted to Shantibhavan from where she finally left for home again. During her stay, she took the initiative to tutor younger children who were still in school and had a pleasing demeanor that everyone loved. She now has a job at a boutique in the city and is married and well settled. All of us have incidents that defined our childhood and adolescence but some may not be as lucky as the others and could be left with scars. To let yourself heal from trauma and move on takes tremendous courage and we take immense pride in knowing that we were able to facilitate a recovery of that magnitude.

Nina* is a vivacious 21 year old who has been a part of our family at Shantibhavan since December 2018. She leads the women who live with her through activities that are part of their vocational training. She also teaches tailoring, something she picked up by merely watching others at work. Being a smart, young woman, she is not complacent and has ambitions. She aspires to be a motivational speaker for which she is gradually preparing herself through whatever means possible. Nina is also an avid reader, M.T. Vasudevan Nair being her favourite author. She was born to HIV positive parents and lost them at a very young age. She is yet to come into terms with her unfortunate fate and is reluctant to talk about her past. The details of her life before coming to Shantibhavan was made known to us only when we came into contact with her relatives later on. She now requires the fortitude and motivation to be independent to pursue her aspirations. **Her only other concern is that she requires orthodontic treatment for her teeth as they are causing her distress in terms of function and aesthetics. We would be grateful if a kind heart could come forward to help in this regard.**



Nina requires orthodontic treatment which would be crucial in building her self-esteem

*Names have been changed for security purposes

Vishu Celebration

15th April
2019

According to Kerala tradition, on the first day of the month of *medam*, everyone must open their eyes in the morning to behold a shrine to Krishna. Preparation of the shrine is the sacred duty of the eldest household member, who rises hours before dawn, thoroughly washes herself and lays out a lamp, rice, jackfruit and coins for the rest of the family.

Easter

Thematic songs, dancing and a feast comprised this year's Easter program. Christians always make up a significant proportion of Shanthibhavan residents, so celebrating their festivals as a whole group is a way to pay respect and promote group cohesion.

21st April
2019

Ramzan

5th May
2019

The Islamic month of fasting drew to a close on 5th May. It was celebrated with a banquet for all Shanthibhavan residents and a quiz created for the children. Questions encompassed Ramzan and general knowledge.

KOCHI

The month of June welcomes the monsoon season in Kerala. Despite an initial deficiency in precipitation, it seems that the rains are picking up their pace over time. It's been one year since the floods wreaked havoc across the state. So, we're hoping that the weather would be kinder to us this year. June is also when the academic year begins in India and it saw our children at Shantibhavan, amongst others, making their way to the first day of School. The Lok Sabha elections were held in April 2019 with the Bharatiya Janata Party emerging as the ruling party with majority votes. There has been a surge in crimes committed against women in the form of sexual harassment and assault, especially revolting is the high incidence rates of revenge killings. Recently, in Kerala, a female police officer was murdered and immolated by a colleague, simply because she rejected his advances through a marriage proposal. On a separate occasion, a woman was molested on a moving bus when she was asleep, by the bus conductor. To name all the instances of the violation of a woman's right to consent would be impossible. We, as a society, have become so entitled that we have forgotten to respect an individual's choices and their autonomy over themselves. Cultural Academy for Peace wishes to make a stand in conjunction with these women and solicit justice for the victims. We hope to bring collective awareness and participation through a demonstration in the following month. We also believe that an increase in such violence should only increase our commitment to the cause of providing our services including legal aid and promoting gender based learning.

THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY VILLAGE

Shantibhavan provides a home for women at a time when they are most vulnerable. This arrangement, despite its consistent efforts, poses a few drawbacks. Mothers are deprived of the opportunity to be with their sons who are over the age of ten. This causes distress to both of them and the aftermath of it may last a lifetime. Cultural academy realizes the importance of empowering survivors by sensitizing them while they merge into society with ease and enabling them to be self-sufficient. This has given rise to our aspirations to bring forth the concept of a community peace village. This will provide women with the chance to live as a family with their children in cottages as part of a gated community. The residents will participate in activities at a community level and will be taught life skills. They will receive occupational therapy and other services to make the self-contained. Other activities would include meditation, exercise, community gathering and interacting with nature. Our partners like Cultural Connections, Wheels for Women project and Ithaca college are working hard through fundraising activities to help us realize our dream. We understand that this project would require the combined efforts of all our partners to attain fruition and are grateful for the same.