

CARVAAN 2008



NAVNIRMITI

A TRUST FOR QUALITY LEARNING

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SUMMER CAMP

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(What a big word!)

This summer camp would not have been possible without the 1500 children who participated through three weeks exciting weeks. A big thanks to all the children who came to the 15 camps and made it fun.

Huge thanks to all our teachers who taught us everything from crafts to theater, dance and drawing. Thank you for teaching us with patience.

To all our 300 didi's and sir's who stood by us every step of the way - guiding us, playing with us – Thank you too. We wished the camp never ended, it was great to be with you.

To our Tai's who prepared and served such tasty food everyday - Thank you.

Plenty of 'behind-the-scene' people too made this possible. Many individuals donated money so that there could be materials for the camp.

BMC schools and institutions like NITIE and IIT provided the space to learn.

NGO's like DHRISTI helped out in million little ways. Big companies like ONGC and L&T supported the idea and helped the camp be a great success. Huge thanks to all of you.

It's been great this year. We look forward to coming back to the summer camp next year too



We inaugurated the summer camp by lighting a lamp, and remembering the struggles of those who fought for education. In the past many families did not let their daughters go to school. Then pioneers like Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule brought education to millions of girls. It is because of the efforts of people like them that we all go confidently to school today.

We had been waiting expectantly for the summer camp since schools closed for vacation. We were excited, full of plans, and hopes. "Will my friends come?", "will we get to do something new?", "what would the menu be?"...these thoughts ran around our heads before we even stepped into the summer camp space. But knowing our didi's and sir's, I knew they would have planned something special.

As the days unfolded, we really got to know just how special and exciting it was.



Astronomy

So you thought that there were nine planets in our solar system? Well, as things stand today, Pluto is no more a planet.

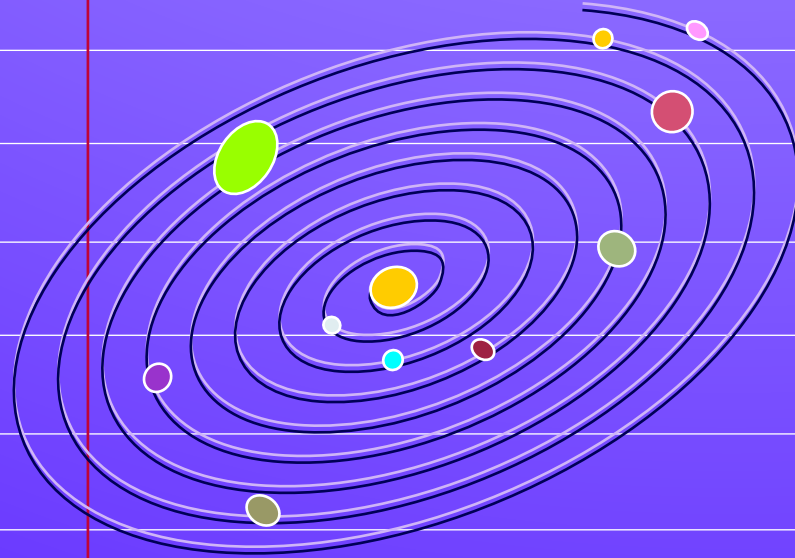
These were some of the starry facts I learnt in the summer camp. Did you know that Neptune had 13 moons? Or that Saturn's rings are actually made of ice and rock particles? That's astronomy. Learning all about celestial objects like stars, planets, and comets.

Even though I see the sun and stars everyday, there were plenty of things I did not know about them. Didi showed us the sun-spots on the sun by converging the image of the sun on paper through a telescope. We also used special glasses to look at the sun in broad daylight – an impossible and dangerous thing to do otherwise.

Didi also said that we too can look at the stars and make our observations about the constellations. We could all find out why does the moon sometimes appear larger to us, or we could even spot the pole star!

They say that astronomy is one of the oldest sciences. From the earliest man, people have been looking up at the skies, and trying to make sense of the position of the stars, the movement of the sun, and the waxing and waning of the moon.

Indeed, there is so much to learn!



Leave extra-large holes for your eyes
*Use light materials
*Feathers, stones, ribbons, beads add glamour to masks



We got to learn how to make a mask from a simple paper plate. Sir told us how to carefully cut out shapes from the mask for the eyes, the mouth and nose. "Make sure that the eyes-holes are large enough for you to see", he said.

Didi then helped us colour all the masks. Bright black outlines for the eyes, deep reds for the lips, and some glitter around the ears. We also stuck some strips of colored paper for the hair. How attractive did it look! Everyone got to draw their masks in the way they wanted.

It was fun to walk around, wearing a colourful mask. People looked at you, and smiled. The only problem was they could not make out if you smiled back.

Mask Making

I used to think that only super heroes or bandits used to wear masks. Batman wears a mask, and so do all those bandits in films. But actually masks have been used from ancient times for everything – celebrations, funerals, dances and theater – for play or protection.



Masks are used for fun, play, for protection and disguise. Comic super heroes like Batman & Robin have made masks quite popular.



Paper Making

Add colors, husks, or dried leaves to get some interesting patterns on paper

Everyday we generate much waste, and it all keeps piling on our earth. Unless we all take action and stop filling the earth with waste by refusing, recycling and reusing.

This year we learnt the method of recycling paper. All we did was drop bits of paper in water and stir till it was all soaked. Using a strainer, we gently pulled out soaked pulp, drained off the water, and put it out in the sun to dry out completely. Some time later, our brand new recycled paper was ready!

We also added bits of dried leaves, some colored paper, and glitter too. Our new recycled papers looked wonderful with its bits of green, blobs of red and a dash of shine.

Making our own paper was really fun. Now I plan to borrow strainers from my mum, and get down to making my own brand of fresh, new, recycled papers!



Dance Dance

This was for the movers and shakers. We actually had music in the class room, and everybody was shaking themselves in all ways possible. We all had always been dancing in our own ways at home, in school, or whenever we felt like it. But this time, Didi showed us some really cool moves that we could all do.

In India, we have lots of classical dances like Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Oddisi and Kathak. They are very graceful to watch, and require a lot of training and hard work.

In contrast, our dance at the summer camp was free, uninhibited and fun. Didi also told us how dance is not just moving, but a fun way of expressing as well. We moved to the beats of the song, following its rhythm, tapping our foot, and clapping our hands as we moved along. That's when I realized that dancing made me happy. Yes, I rather dance all the while.



Nature Trail

Could it be that one day the sea would suddenly come rushing into our city? It would have happened long ago if not for mangroves. Mangroves form a protective barrier between the land and sea, holding back its waters and saving us from being flooded every year.



This summer camp we went out to the largest patch of mangroves in Mumbai. It's spread across 1,750 acres and maintained by Godrej. This large patch of greenery contains various types of mangroves, with their salty leaves, and roots sticking up in the air. They also have more than 207 types of birds, snakes, mongooses, wild pigs, and even jackals. I have to admit though I did not spot one.



I came away with the realization that it was quite important to protect and conserve our trees, plants and mangroves. Not just for us, but for all the birds and animals that make their homes in such places.

Our other trails that lead to lakes and wooded areas in Powai also stressed on the same facts. I came away with a much greater appreciation of nature and its gifts around us, and with a promise to protect and conserve them.



stay fit!

- * Eat lots of fruits & vegetables
- * Drink plenty of water & milk

Our Health

Running, jumping, skipping, hopping – this is what I do most in a day. Mother used to think that I was wasting my time. After the summer camp, I told her that it's good to play, because they help our body remain active and fit. Now I have all the more reason to go out and play. That's how useful the camp was.



stay fit!

- * Play a lot
- * Reduce your TV time

Did you know that your meals could be colorful too? Red beetroots, orange carrots, green spinach, and white radishes. The more colorful your plate, the better is your health.



stay fit!

- * Brush your teeth twice daily
- * Take a bath Daily
- * Keep your eyes & ears clean

A bit of exercise daily is great for health. Everybody learnt a few simple exercises that could be done at home – a bit shake and stretch for all muscles of our body. I think it was fun for everyone to exercise together. And now I am planning to do it everyday.



Waste Management

A few days after the summer camp, I checked up all my old school notebooks, and pulled out unused, blank pages off it. Then I took it to the binders, and made myself a brand new book. I was just trying out one of the lessons I learned at the summer camp on reduce, reuse and recycle.



Did you know that given the amount of waste we generate, the earth is in real danger of being weighed down by garbage? One way to make a difference is to separate all our wastes into wet and dry. Leftover food, potato skins, banana peels can all go into your wet waste bin, while plastic and metals can make way to the dry bin.

At the camp we tried finding ways in which most things could be recycled. Bottles can become bookends, old clothes can be stitched into rugs, unusable CDs can become decorations and toys can be shared.

* Separate all wastes into dry & wet wastes

* Dispose of waste like broken glass and rusted metals safely

Wash bucket's here



Unattended pipe here

Water wasted here

And here is what we all can do. Turn off lights when not in use, turn off the water while brushing, and plant a small tree and watch it grow!



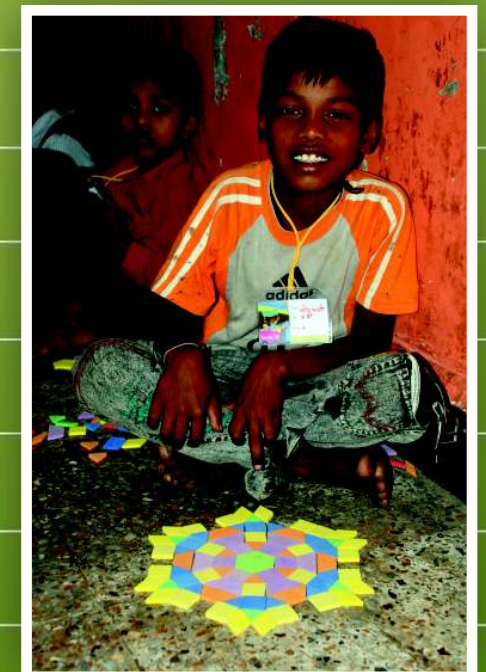
FUN WITH MATH

Americans call it math. The English call it maths. But whether it is mathematics or *gannith*, most of us are worried or scared about it. But fact is, it's one of the most interesting and logical things in the world.

Much before the summer camp, maths used to rate among my least liked subjects. But at the summer camp we played with shapes of various kinds. Triangles, pentagons, hexagons, squares and quadrilaterals; we were trying to create new forms by fitting in these different types of shapes.

We were trying to do the same things that leaves and flowers do all the time - evolve shapes in such a way that it takes the least space. We were also trying to fit in our triangles and squares to form a shape that was closely fit.

If someone had told me that I was trying out the theories of a mathematician called Fibonacci, you could have stuck me down with a feather. But that is how simple it all is. We were trying out mathematics all the time with materials like straws and shapes. And it was not at all scary! I think I might begin to like math after all.



Theater

"Dekho re Dekho
Natak Dekho..."

On that bright sunny morning, all of us came to the camp with great excitement. We were all going out to different places that day to put up our play. We had practiced the whole week, thinking up a story, putting in dialogs and acting out our roles.



As we walked in groups, friends whispered of the slight fear they felt in the stomach. We began by moving in a circle, clapping out to people to come and watch us. With each clap, our fear began to disappear, and our lines came rushing back to the mind. The play had begun, we were all actors, and we were doing our best.



We told different stories - on child labour, on silly TV channels, and even on *chor*-police. Our play had jokes, songs, some dance, and even action. I could see that parents and elders watching us could not believe that we had made the play ourselves. But they all clapped a great deal in the end, and we were all so happy.

If I had been asked to make plays alone and perform it, I would have been hard pressed to come up with any line at all.

The difference was in doing things together. It was our play, we had come up with it, and so we had all the more fun acting it out. It was also the reason we did not feel any fright, but instead had a great time.



Story Telling

One of my favourite pastimes is to listen to grandmother's stories. She always tells it in such a way that the birds, the leaves, the flowers in the story come alive before our eyes.



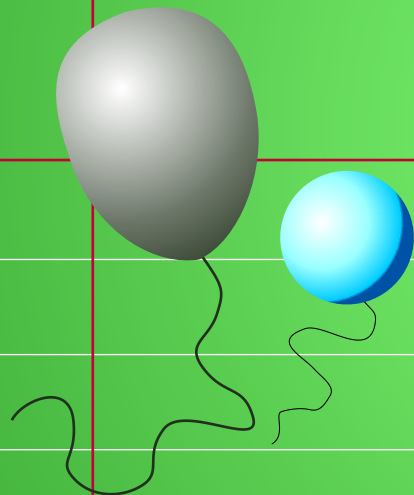
This time in the summer camp, our didi told us lots of wonderful stories. She told us that the world is full of stories, in all languages. There are stories in English, in Hindi, in Bengali. There are stories from the land of Arabia, China and Spain. And then, there are happy stories, stories with sad ending, stories about war, or about little children, or butterflies.

They say that before stories came into books and on TV, people used to tell stories to each other. Thus grandmothers would tell their children, and they in turn would tell their children of all the stories they knew. That is also how we have so many old stories from the time when there was no written word.

I got to hear some nice stories in the summer camp. I usually read stories alone. But hearing stories with my friends made it quite enjoyable.



Fun with Science



Here is a small experiment for you to try. Shut one of your eyes. Then raise your arms in front of you, point your index fingers at each other, and try to make them meet.

Could you do it? Ah ha! You couldn't? Well, you have just proved a scientific little fact that both our eyes look at things differently when alone, placed as they are on either side of the nose. Only together do they present a balanced picture.

This was just one of the many experiments that we had fun trying during the summer camp. I held a glass filled with water covered with a card upside down. Not a drop fell! We even did experiments using glass beakers, funnels, and test-tubes to my heart's content, without even breaking one!



The World of MAGIC

In my comic books, Mandrake the Magician always says, "magicians never tell!" But during the session on Magic, we were amazed to learn plenty of 'magical' secrets. Importantly, we also learnt that many things that we consider miracles are actually science at work. If people only knew the principles behind it, many of our superstitions would never hold water.



We also learnt this little card trick. Try it on your friends and watch them being impressed.



1. Before you begin, take a stack of cards and choose a number, say 3. Place it face-up, as the third card on the bottom of the stack. Close the stack, and you are now set.



2. Let your friend pick a card



3. Your friend has to remember the card.

4. He places it back on the stack

5. He cuts the deck

6. Place the deck below.



7. Flourish open the cards and choose the third card from your marker. Voila!

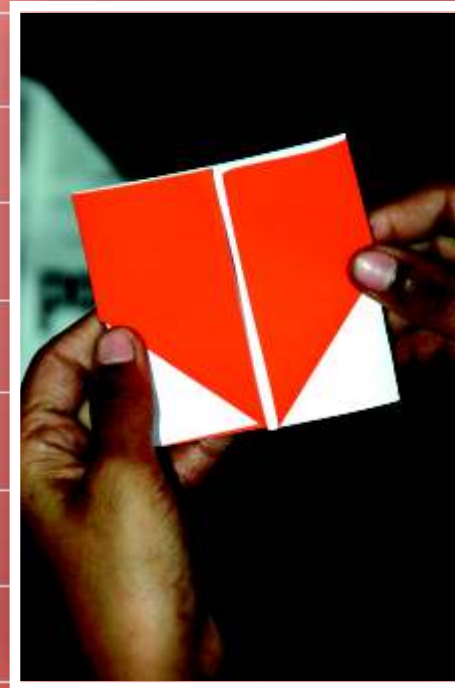


Origami

Origami is the Japanese art of making shapes with paper.

I never knew a piece of paper could be turned into boats, houses, caps, flowers, bird-beaks, shirts, photo frames, and so much more!

I had been making paper boats since childhood. But I did not know that I was actually practicing Origami, an ancient Japanese art of paper folding. Did you know that the word origami is derived from 'oru' which means folding, and 'kami' which is paper?



Origami allows us to fold paper in plenty of ways to create shapes and objects. The challenging and fun part is to make everything without ever using glue or scissors.

This summer camp I learnt how to make a hat, a plane, a shirt, a flower, a heart-shaped photo frame – all in one session! What's more, I also made a paper basket, folded and creased, to carry everything that I had made. It was simple and loads of fun.



Here's what we did. We got a few square pieces of colored paper. Step by step Didi guided us through each fold and crease. In case we missed a step, she would help us out by starting over again. Slowly, under our very fingers, the paper began to take shape. This was certainly a fun and creative skill to learn.



Mime



If you can talk without using words, if you can express yourself through actions and expressions, you can mime! Before words were formed, and much before the first script was written, people used to mime. When you shake your head, roll your eyes, or widen your smile these are bits of mime that you do everyday. Today miming is an art form, with mime artists using their bodies to enact a story.



On that day, in the summer camp, we all became mime artists for some time. Our eyes, our hands, our entire bodies became the medium to communicate. A girl became a puppet, the rest of us became different toys in a toy shop and soon enough, we had managed to stage a play. If we use makeup, costumes, music, sounds and light, we can greatly enhance a mime performance.



Tobacco

Tobacco kills 8 lakh Indians every year. And each day 55,000 children in India start using tobacco. This is what a global group called World Health Organization says. I also have been seeing many children around smoking away. Not openly of course. Most hide it from their parents. But don't they know that smoking is dangerous to health?

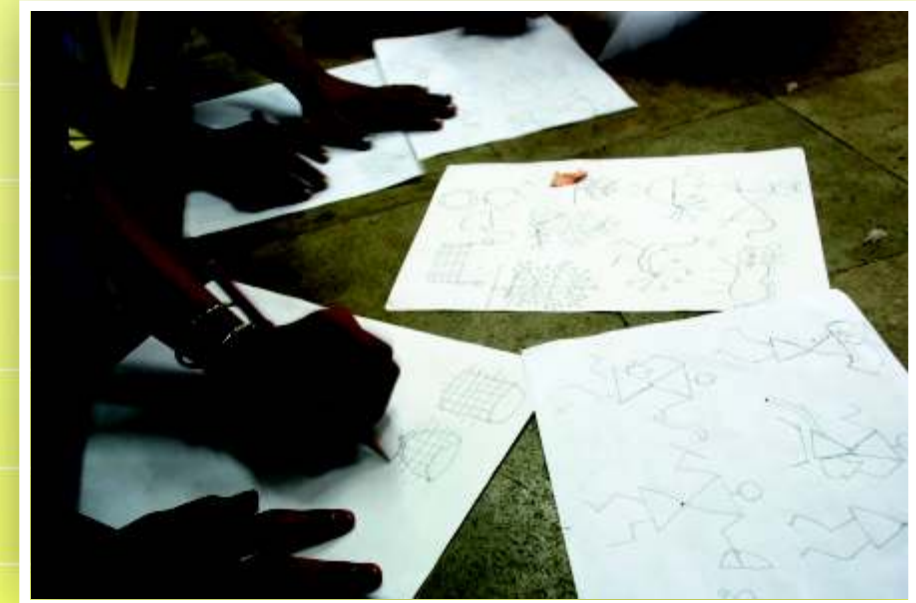
Sir told us how tobacco – whether it is in cigarettes, beedi or gutka – injures our lungs, our teeth and gums. There are many children between the ages of 8-14 who use gutka and paan-masala. Dentists also say that eating such items regularly will slowly erode our gums and make them cancerous.

I strongly feel that we should be telling all our friends at school and outside how dangerous tobacco is. We should also be talking to those elders who use gutka regularly. It's the only way we can protect our friends from being addicted to tobacco.

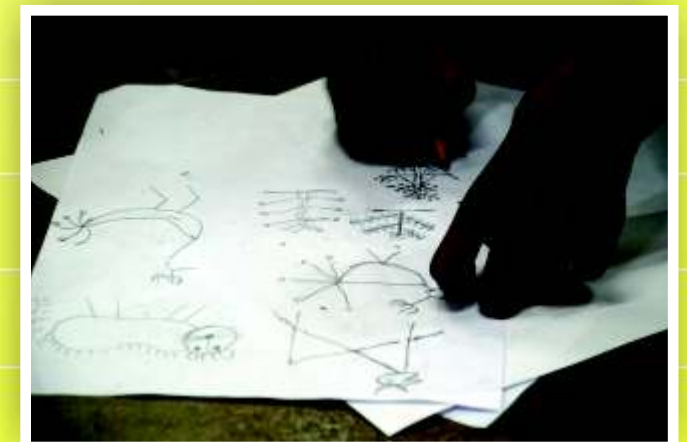


Warli Painting

Warli painting is the art form of the Warli tribe of Maharashtra. People from the Warli community have been decorating their houses with this art form for ages. They usually portray their daily lives, their dances, their forests, homes and cattle. We were also told that drawing about their lives was also a way to record and pass their stories from one generation to the other.



I usually do not draw well, but I found this style quite simple to follow. Two triangles, one on top of each other, a circle for the head, two sticks for arms, two sticks for legs, and voila! You have drawn a man. What could be simpler?



The original art is usually done on mud walls with white paint. There is a method to drawing men, women, dogs, houses, and baskets. Sir drew each object while we practiced it on paper. We drew traditional houses, wells, cats, and trees. I do think that with a bit more practice, I could begin decorating the walls of my house too. Till then, I think it's best to stick to paper.



What else we did!

Calligraphy

There were so many activities being done, I almost missed writing about some of them. In one of the sessions, we tried our hand at Calligraphy. It's the art of writing well, and stylishly. Writing is not just holding a pen or a pencil and scribbling away. Even a cockroach dipped in ink can do that. Calligraphy on the other hand is all about loving letters and giving it shape and direction. We tried our hand at following different styles of writing, in different fonts, and sizes. Never knew that the simple pen could transform regular letters into something so beautiful and attractive.

Sports

On some days we did not "do anything". That is, if you consider playing sports as "doing nothing". But Sports is a great activity, and all of us tried our hand at football, handball, and even kho-kho. As girls we rarely get to play cricket. We had only seen cricket on TV or the boys playing in the distance. But this time, we took up bats and stumps, and tried our hand at bowling and batting. Yes, now we got to know why cricket is such a fun game.

Film Screenings

We also watched a few films during the summer camp. For that few hours, we forgot everything else, and remained glued to the screen. We watched Charlie Chaplin and his antics, and some nice children's films that you hardly ever get to see on TV. Friends, and good films! What a nice way to spend a summer afternoon.



We did not have enough of the summer camp. Climbing trails, checking out mangroves, making recycled paper, miming, putting up plays...oh! How time flew! It seemed as if it was just yesterday when we had all got together.

We wanted to have one final bash. So the three weeks of summer camp ended with an exciting celebration. All of us who had prepared their plays staged it once again. The rest of us decided to display our dancing and singing skills. Even our didi's and sir's pitched in with some performances.



What will remain with me is the memory of those three incredible weeks. For three weeks, I was in and out of classrooms, sitting in sessions, performing on the streets, walking in open spaces, or listening to stories. At times I did experiments with funnels and beakers; else I would be making octagons and tetradecagons. At other times I had been busy identifying teals and quails or looking out for sunspots on the sun.



I think the best part of this summer camp was that I did everything without once carrying a notebook. That.. There were no books, or exams. Instead, there was sharing, learning, talking and having fun. So when is the next summer camp coming up?

Navnirmiti

Navnirmiti works in the field of universalization of quality education. The organization believes in 'Quality education for All' - especially for the very large numbers of disadvantaged children who are otherwise deprived of it. An effort to contribute to this constitutional mandate was initiated with the aim of strengthening the national agenda of 'Right to Education.'

The organization work in the field of elementary math and science has evolved a number of alternative ways and systems, creating world class educational aids and reaching them nationally and internationally. The organization is a self-reliant social enterprise, defining its work, and its income through independent, self-sustaining activities without compromising on the organizational principles and objectives. As a policy Navnirmiti does not accept foreign funding.

Navnirmiti believes that bringing about changes in education is essential to bringing about a larger social change for promoting equality. Navnirmiti's current work in the tribal pockets of Powai in Mumbai is a testimony to the integration of linking education and the community. Community Learning Centres for children of all ages, integrating the best of educational methods, with active local participation is bringing in perceptible differences among the community. The teachers are sourced locally, women have come together to provide nutritional support to children, parents and the community had provided support and space to build and grow the learning centers. The process has brought education out of the classroom, and is making an impact not just on the children but on the larger community as well.

The idea of organizing a summer camp for BMC children began a few years ago, and has, with this year reached out to 1500 children, through 3 weeks of activities organized in 15 camps across S-ward of Mumbai. The process was supported by more than 300 volunteers, expert resource persons, schools and institutions, and corporate sponsors.

This process has once again reinforced the organization's belief that quality education for all is possible and achievable.

Right to Education:

Navnirmiti works towards the achievement of the national goal of 'Right to Education' while also focusing on Quality Education for all. The annual summer camps provide children with a fear-free, fun environment with hands-on learning experience. The process is supported by a strong and committed team of resource persons, and volunteers who bring in the perspective of quality education for all.

Summer Camp 2008 began with a training of volunteers on the Right to Education, progressing to a campaign reaching out to students and parents.

Navnirmiti currently works in the tribal pockets of Powai in Mumbai on the issue of Right to Education. Community Learning Centres provide academic support to children from the community, from Balwadi to class 10th, with active participation from the community.

Activists

Navnirmiti is committed to provide the best science and mathematics education to all who otherwise cannot afford or access it. The organization seeks to acquire, innovate, and adopt best practices for quality education. Navnirmiti's programs for schools to improve 'Math and Science Learning' focuses on conceptual understanding through games, exercises, and educational kits.

Other activities include:

- Popularizing science events among schools children and the public
- Research and development of innovative teaching tools, learning methods and materials
- Teacher's skills training workshops
- Production and dissemination of low cost learning tools

Navnirmiti's work in the area of education is based on its core ideals of quality for equality. Navnirmiti believes in self reliance and therefore funds its work through resources generated by its activities. Development of education materials like Universal Math Kit and Jodo Blocks, along with creative games like Tangram and Telescope Kit provide women and youth with viable employment opportunities.

An Invitation

Navnirmiti would like to invite you to be part of its activities. There is a range of possibilities for the interested volunteer; from research and development, to teaching, training and promotions. Do get in touch with the organization to work out ways in which you could contribute.

Sessions

Resource Persons

Astronomy	Ms. Geeta Ladi
Bird and Nature Presentation	Mr. Jitendra Bhatia
Calligraphy	Mr.Gandhale
Dance	Ms. Sanyogita Shinde,Mr. Rajesh Padwale, Mr. Tushar Wategaonkar
Diet	Mr.Ramesh
Film Screenings	Mr. Rajesh Natarajan
Fun with Math	Mr. Purushottam Tripathi, Ms. Soni Yadav
Fun with Science	Mr.Anand Ghaisas
Health Talk	Mr.Vijay Jawlekar
Magic	Mr. Siddharth Prabhakar
Mask Making	Mr. Mukhim Tamboli
Mime	Mr. Mukhim Tamboli
Nature Trails	Mr. Hemant Karkhanis (Soonabai Pirojsha Marine Ecology Centre), Mr. Anand Pendharkar & Team (SPROUTS)
Origami	Ms. Chitra Mehendale, Ms. Leena Barve, Mr. Himanshu Aggarwal
Paper-Making	Mr.Anand Pendharkar & Team (SPROUTS)
Science Experiments	Mr. Sanjay Kanse, Ms. Soni Yadav, Ms. Nivedita, Ms. Manjula
Sports	Mr. Rahul Jadhav
Story Telling	Ms. Rucha Joshi
Theatre	Mr.Amarjeet Amle & Team (Spandan Parivar Cinema Movement), Mr. Sanjay Rathod (Umang Theatre Group), Mr. Manjul Bharadwaj & Team (Experimental Theatre Foundation)
Tobacco	Salaam Bombay Foundation
Warli Painting	Mr.Abhay Sathe
Waste Management	Mr. Ramanand Kowta

Credits

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