

Siragu site visit report by Dr.Elayanambi Sundaramoorthy (elayanambi@gmail.com)

Wings that can carry your dream forward.

“Siragu” so aptly reflects what it does. In a small non-descript village tucked away from the big city of Chennai, India. Siragu(for wings in tamil) is well on its way to take flight. A Boarding school for street kids seemed like a queer idea but it definitely has stood the test of time. Started with humble beginnings and voluntary teachers, the school now caters to 300 odd kids and is run to perfection by a group of 20 teachers. With their infectious enthusiasm and quest for doing something big in life pushes these kids to forget their past and take up academic challenges which were beyond their reach earlier.

Most of the education takes place outside under the shade of leafy trees. The classrooms that are woefully inadequate are impeccably maintained and are decorated from top to bottom with kids’ artwork and science posters. A huge kitchen caters a healthy food program and includes a reverse osmosis water treatment plant. The foundation trustee states we can never compromise anything for health’s sake. Understandably, ill health among kids can result in higher dropout rates given their family background.

The kids have taken education as their key weapon and it reflects in the fact that a few of them are even competing for international exams to prove their merit. Money, it seems, is all that stands between them and their dreams. A few more of that and they could push even harder says the lead man there in his mid twenties. These kids have seen tougher side of life and it’s in life biggest lessons they draw inspiration for a better future. It seems well that this is one of the most important lessons that are never taught to better off people. Siragu has learned to stand on its feet from shaky beginnings, it hopes it can carry it forward to its maiden flight and how much would I love to see it in action.