

Workshop on Creative Self Expression

for MADURAI SEED Young People



Introduction

A workshop on creative self-expression was organized for Madurai Seed young people on 25th, and 26th of January 2016. We strongly realized the need for this kind of workshop. While Madurai Seed's most of the activities are based on creativity and self-expression, conducting a workshop on self-expression itself has a chance of maximum impact. The workshop helped them on how to and where to access inspiration to become creative and self-expressive. The workshop was conducted at CESCI campus, the tranquility and greenery of the place elevated the mood of the event.

Why:

Lack of inspiration, creativity, confidence and self-doubt hold back us from being expressive. Madurai Seed wanted to provide this workshop for the young people

- To remove their inhibition to communicate
- To boost their energy level
- To encourage originality, honesty, and reality in speaking
- To encourage positive hobbies
- To give awareness about mass media
- To introduce positive means for entertainment
- To introduce the taste of reading literature
- To build self confidence
- To prevent them from being just spectators and consumers
- To support them to react and create
- To help them feel unique and great

Facilitator's profile:

Mr. Prabahar: Professor of Tamil at The American College, Madurai and one of the pioneers in establishing the Visual Communications department in the college. He is a multifaceted personality as a music director, an author, an artist, a singer, a movie critic. He has just instituted "Kaleidoscope Center for Arts and Culture" at Madurai.

He is further accompanied by three of his former students.

Mr. Thirunavukarasu: Master's graduate in Tamil, studied at National School of Drama, New Delhi and now actively functioning in Theatre projects nationwide.

Mr. Vadivel: A research scholar doing his research in Trends in Tamil Modern Theatre, Graduate of Tamil, and performing arts

Mr. Anand: Master's graduate in Tamil and studied Theatre at National School of Drama's branch at Bangalore.

MASK MAKING: COLORING & SPEAKING

Are we true to ourselves?

It was the very first session. The participants were asked to cut the mask and color them. The only rule was they've to separate the mask into three parts according to their age level like 1 to 7 years old, 8 to 14 years, and 15 to 21 years old. They can use as much as colors in the mask. Later they've to relate the colors with their emotions, and unforgettable moments in the past.

Observations & Learning:

- Family plays an important role in shaping our character and the way we express things. As many of them have shared their love for mother, traumatic family events, and economic suffering.
- Expressing an emotion can be tough, but expressing it freely and truly was advised.
- **Speak your truth in the moment**



ART OF LISTENING: MUSIC

Are we open to listening?



Prof. Prabhakar has played some portions from "Laya Project". The participants listened to the local's songs and music from coastal areas affected by Tsunami. He emphasized on how Tamil's perspective of music was limited to only songs from cinema. We always want to see music than listening to music. Lyrical music is largely preferred over instrumental music. Then some instrumental music was played, participants listened first with eyes open and then eyes closed. Then they spoke about how they felt when listening to music.

Key observations & Learning:

- Most of them have the habit of listening to songs in mobile or TV. Everyone accepts that music is doing something to their mind.
- Music has no language. Music from any land has something to speak with us even we don't understand the meaning.
- **Gather new experiences**

Watched some of 'Celine Dion's performances later.

SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING: IMAGES

Are we really seeing?



Visuals are the powerful medium of communication whether it is a painting, photography, or video even body language. Every image in the world is created by someone for someone. Prof. Prabahar presented a PPT on "seeing, viewing, and understanding". We see lots of images every day. Images are communicating with us directly and indirectly. He spoke about how our thinking, culture, and everyday activities are decided by these images. He particularly spoke about gender and other stereotypes in advertisements.

Observations & Learning:

- Any idea that is constantly promoted by the images becomes our fashion.
- A fixation deprives our creative expression.
- We should equip ourselves to understand the stereotype, politics and direct and indirect motives behind an image.
- **Never let the stereotypes filter your self-expression**

PLEASURE OF READING: LITERATURE

What reading can do to you?

Prof.Prabahar read two Tamil short stories. The plots of the both stories are simple, and rely on day today things. Literature isn't something that detached from us. We all may encounter such events in our life, what you see and how you perceive matters. When reading as a story the events and emotions are even more powerful. He also read some Tamil free verses and haiku. The young people are introduced to the taste of reading short stories and poems.

Observations & Learning:

- Everyone likes listening to stories rather than reading and telling stories.
- We don't fake our emotions while reading. A good literature elevates and refines us.
- **Read, read and read**

ACT CREATIVELY: THEATRE

Three groups were divided like a family, friends circle, and a business. They were asked to make a small skit. The concept was if you got Rs.10, 000 how would you spend. No other ideas were given. They were free act like whatever they want. Then each team performed their skits. Professor.Prabahar, Karthik Anna and other facilitators gave their feedbacks.

Observations & Learning:

- Media and cinema affects our way of thinking. It limits our creativity not to see beyond.
- We identify intelligence with complexity, and mediocrity with simplicity. But, it should not be like that.
- We hesitate to speak our lives realistically. We tend to romanticize them.
- **Engage in creative activities**



OPEN UP: GAMES

We always like to return to our childhood, then why don't we play?

Mr.Anand, Mr.Thirunavukarasu and Mr.Vadivel conducted many games. The games are planned with the notion of "Learnjoyment". The games required quick action, reaction, body movements, sounds, keen listening, eagerness and above all openness.

Learnings:

When our mind hesitates and struggles to express our opinion or feeling, our body also becomes rigid, our voice too. The games concentrated on voice and body flexibility. Flexible body can improve a flexible mind vice versa. The games sharpen our senses. Playing shifts you from both physical and mental idleness and fills you with energy.



"Play energizes us and enlivens us. It eases our burdens. It renews our natural sense of optimism and opens us up to new possibilities." - Stuart Brown

Conclusion:

The participants were encouraged to speak a lot, to open their emotions, to ask questions. No opinion was discouraged. No verdicts were forced upon them. As it was the first workshop of this kind many inputs and questions were put before them as open ended which makes room for self-evaluation and exploration.

At the feedback session, Karthik Anna explained the importance of being self-expressive and how they can improve their skills with all the resources at Madurai Seed.

Director Elavarasi told that we, at Madurai Seed center are planning to continue the creative self-expression sessions and going to extend the same to children also. That will make them more expressive, live, innovative, true, kind and skillful.

From the participant's feedback, many of them are interested to read books and listen to music. Their understanding of cinema and media has changed from average. They've decided to utilize the opportunities and to discover the creative activities that are close to their self.

We don't say the objectives of the workshop are 100% achieved. But, it is an important step forward, an eye-opener towards vast opportunities and experiences.

Last but not least, **Thanks to the Kaleidoscope team and Prof.Prabahar sir.** Thank you.

