



Opportunity Campus – Handicraft

Opportunity Campus is an innovative project that targets young adults with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 14–35 to achieve independent living. Opportunity Campus is run in two centres. The agricultural farm in Kariamanikam village of Mannachanallur taluk and the vocational training center on the Intact Special School (ISS) campus in Trichy.

The vocational training centre at ISS was founded in 2012 to provide training in handicrafts and non-agricultural vocations for women and men from urban background. All products, including grains from the agricultural campus, are made available for sale on campus.

A young woman's story

Jeya is a tribal girl born from Kalrayan Hills. She was born with a mental retardation problem and her mother passed away during the delivery. Jeya's father abandoned her when he remarried and she was left in the care of her grandparents. When Jeya was still a child, her grandfather requested that ISS take over her education so that she would receive the best care possible. She came to the ISS as a live-in student at the age of 14 and is now part of the vocational training programme learning how to make paper envelopes and artificial jewellery with minimal support. Once a month her grandparents travel for 6 hours to come and visit her.



Methodology

Days are filled with a mixture of education geared toward teaching independent living skills and work.

The training process attempts to identify simple, safe and profitable vocations and handicraft products suitable for the target group. The method of "activity & rest" is followed, in addition to Yoga and relaxation activities. Task analysis is applied to simplify and segmentise training activities to make the learning process as effective as possible.

Handicraft Products

- Envelopes of various sizes are made from different



- types of paper including fine, handcrafted paper.
- Various paper products, such as paper boxes, office files and shopping bags.
- Paper mache is produced from waste paper, clothes and handmade paper to create paper products.
- Candles of various sizes, shapes, colours, perfumes.
- Artificial jewellery is created using a variety of different fine materials including paper.
- Garlands are made from woollen threads.
- Toilet cleaning materials are produced and bottled.
- Food, e.g., rice, tamarind, pulses are purchased wholesale, cleaned and repacked for reselling.

Raising Awareness and Creating Acceptance

Seminars and workshops are periodically conducted for 'stake-holders', such as parents, special educators, NGOs, faculties of social work and rehabilitation professionals to achieve social change.

All beneficiaries are also provided with self-advocacy training to enable them to speak for themselves and others who are unable to make their voices heard.

About Intact

Intact, a non-profit, charity organization, was established in 1992 by Thomas Ebenezer who, by helping those in need of food, shelter and a sense of security, is living his dream.

Intact works to empower marginalised individuals in society, with focus on people with intellectual disabilities, mountain tribes and poor women, by creating opportunities for independent living.

We want to achieve a society where everyone, regardless of caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, colour and ability is accepted and given the opportunity to develop to their full potential – without discrimination.