

VOLUNTARY AGENCY PLACEMENT PROGRAMME (VAPP) 2016-17

Voluntary Agency Placement Programme (VAPP) at LSR was setup to provide a space for the passionate students of the 21st century to engage with socio economic issues, volunteer with NGOs working at the grassroots level and to actively participate in community development. An intensive experience of the social sector can give accurate reflections of people's needs. Being a part of the social sector, one gets to be a person who can change someone's life for the better. Keeping these objectives in mind VAPP organized a series of events throughout the academic year. One of the first events organized was a 'Student led Event (SLE)' by Ms. Vidushi Shukla. She shared with students, the experience of her internship with the Narmada Bachao Andolan that she acquired through the Pravah organisation. This was followed by another 'Student led Event (SLE)' by Ms. Swati Sahni. She is a Nehru Fulbright scholar at Harvard and has extensive working experience with UNICEF, World Bank and the Ministry of HRD under the aegis of Mr. Kapil Sibal. She discussed her experiences in the development sector after graduating from LSR.

In October, 2016 VAPP conducted a 'Sign Language Workshop by finger chats'. In a fun-filled session of learning on the Indian Sign Language (ISL) alphabet and other basics, Mr. Rajesh P., Mr. Saurabh Goel, and Ms. Riya Taneja from Finger Chat Delhi changed our minds about disability. We learnt that there are only 250 interpreters for 18 million deaf persons in India. This was followed by a talk by Pravah on mindsets. An introspective session called 'Hop on & SMILE' regarding their winter 2016 internship - YES Peace India SMILE Internship was conducted in the college premises by Ms. Shruti and Ms. Suruchi. The talk was interactive and enriching as students were encouraged to engage at the grassroots and challenge their perspectives while contributing to social change.

VAPP then conducted its first Placement drive of the year by inviting the Gandhi Fellowship Program on a pre-placement talk. The Gandhi Fellowship Program is a two-year Fellowship program for talented youngsters from India's top colleges. It is designed to provide the youth with the opportunity for personal transformation. We had Ms. Preeti and Ms. Geetanjali (From Kathkatha) talking about the programme and about how through self-discovery and exploration, students could contribute to the causes surrounding them. The placement talk was followed by a leadership workshop, organised by the Gandhi Fellowship Program. The workshop was rooted in the belief that as a nation it is important to develop a cadre of leaders exposed to the complexities of bringing change in social and public systems. Therefore a two day workshop was conducted by them through VAPP under the theme 'Social Entrepreneurship and Nation Building' to make the youth self-aware, exceed in life, dream, articulate values and indulge in collaborative work.

A three day Pottery and Jewellery workshop was organized by VAPP, during Tarang, 2017 from 3-5 February. These workshops gave students exposure to a diverse range of handicrafts and pottery. It was an impetus to appreciate the glory of lost Indian Culture. We invited artisans from different parts of the city to impart their knowledge and share basic skills with the students. A large number of students availed this opportunity interacting with artisans, appreciating their craft and getting first-hand practical experience. These workshops aimed at promoting rural development, women empowerment and social entrepreneurship.

In February 2017, a one day trip to Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary was organized by VAPP in collaboration with the New Delhi Nature Society. Two officers Mr. Verhaen and Ms. Geeta introduced the students to the need of protecting biodiversity and the importance of protecting native species. The session started with warmly hugging trees. Students also engaged in a tree climbing workshop. After this adventurous task, students planted native species in Butterfly Park. This was followed by a discussion on how students can contribute to environment and wildlife protection by voluntary action.

In March 2017, VAPP organized a Poverty Walk , a one day trip to Salaam Balak Trust which works for the upliftment of street children. Students were made aware of the reasons for urban poverty and how young children on streets are undergoing many hardships. Students were told about the routine lifestyle, eating habits and drugs pattern of a street child. They were explicitly told about the various ways by which a street child earns and spends money. Students also visited the shelter home of the Trust and interacted with the children. It was indeed an eye-opening session.

On 9 March, 2017 VAPP conducted a body shaming session with Iqra Qureshi who is a social activist and personality development trainer. Her goal is to train underprivileged Muslim girls and women to develop their careers for a brighter future. The workshop aimed at finding answers to questions like ‘What is body image?’ ‘Why is it important for all of us to feel good about our body, irrespective of its size and shape?’ ‘Why is there a need to develop healthy behaviour amongst people to respect each body size?’ The workshop was able to provide answers to all these questions.

VAPP also held a session with Pravah to facilitate the process of understanding the connection between the self and the society. It encouraged students to take ownership of the issues they are passionate about. The session also helped in understanding different social narratives and interpreting authentic narratives around any social issue.

VAPP’s final event was a ‘Student led Event’ by Ms. Mudra Shahi, a first year student of Zoology Honours at Hindu College. She shared her initiative of medicine drives in various colleges. This event also marked an end to VAPP’s medicine collection drive in the college premises. We received many donations from the students of LSR community.

VAPP has successfully been able to provide 12 challenges during this session: PRAVAH YES PEACE SMILE INTURN-SHIP (Winter), CHILD RIGHTS AND YOU (CRY), PROJECT DHARA, YOUTH FOR SEVA (YFS), ACTION INDIA, PARASPAR, MARG, EMPOWER INDIA, HELPING BRAINZ, SASHAKTIKARAN FOUNDATION, HEALTH DESIGN, PRAVAH YES PEACE SMILE INTURN-SHIP (Summer).