Kalkeri Sangeet Vidyalaya

A School with a Difference...
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Kalkeri Sangeet Vidyalaya (KSV) empowers, supports and encourages children from socially marginalised and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to realise their full potential and attain a better life. This is done through an intensive and comprehensive educational program of academics and music which is undertaken in a peaceful rural residential setting.

In such an atmosphere the children learn many social skills and we ensure they receive a nutritious diet and adequate healthcare facilities. Care, love and compassion are fundamental elements of the whole process.

It is the fundamental right of all children to have access to education, adequate food, healthcare facilities and to participate in their community’s cultural life. Empowering disadvantaged children according to our mission statement gives them the opportunity to obtain qualifications in academics and music. Ultimately, this will enable them to find meaningful and well-paid employment which will have a positive impact upon them and their families.

Through their achievements at KSV the students will be in a position to attain more meaningful livelihoods, thus breaking the cycle of persistent poverty and creating a better future for themselves and their communities. Through their music the children will contribute towards the conservation and diffusion of India’s vast musical heritage.
Introduction

Founded in November 2002, KSV is located in a quiet valley near the city of Dharwad in Karnataka State, South India. Established on three acres of land a short distance from Kalkeri Village, the school consists of simple buildings made from traditional materials. In this peaceful setting, the children enjoy the tranquility necessary for their academic studies, music practice and other cultural activities.

KSV is traditional and modern in its educational approach at all times. Tradition is taught through the ancient disciplines of Indian Classical Music and Bharatanatayam Dance. The modern educational programme is based on the educational syllabus in Karnataka State, and great emphasis is put on teaching English as the main language of communication. Computer studies are also important to prepare the students to meet the demands of today’s rapidly evolving world.

The school provides a musical and academic education to nearly two hundred children. In addition, food, accommodation, health care and clothing are also provided, and everything is free. There are no fees at all.

The students are trained and taught by a team of experienced and motivated teachers, and many of the music teachers are professional and renowned musicians in their own right. A professional and dedicated team also looks after the children’s physical, psychological and welfare development.

In its early development the parents had doubts about the pertinence of their children learning music on such an intensive level, but with time our methods have proven effective and have yielded very promising results indeed.

The children have worked hard at all their studies and have given several excellent and highly acclaimed musical performances.

The school is now integrated with its environment and the waiting lists for admission to the school are testament to its growth.
Our students are aged from 6 to 20 years old and come from the many rural and urban communities in Northern Karnataka where access to holistic education is limited. This in itself creates a real cultural mosaic in terms of abilities and languages.

Firstly, students were chosen with regard to their origins and secondly they had to possess the will to undertake nine hours of study on a daily basis. This then resulted in accepting students who were genuinely motivated and passionate about music, but who above all fully understood the value of education. Cooperation with the students’ parents is vital in maintaining the children’s motivation as they progress through the school.

Children who have been at the school for at least three or four years possess a good knowledge of written and spoken English. Their hard work at their musical studies manifests itself in highly-praised performances at concerts throughout the region. All students sit government exams with great success; internal school exams are held on an annual basis to monitor their progress.

Cultural and educational visits are undertaken and these provide further worldly experiences for the students. Living and working on a daily basis over a period of years with local professionals and volunteers from around the world has changed the lives of these children forever.
Academic Studies

Students admitted to the school come with a variety of academic abilities. Some have attended Government Schools; some have been to Private Schools; some have had no schooling whatsoever. All these different educational backgrounds of our students ensure that we strive to give a singular direction to our educational programme for the benefit of all.

It is fortunate that KSV is a residential school so our students always attend their classes – maximum of 30 students - and teachers are able to ensure that each child gets close attention in all subjects and studies.

The medium of instruction is Kannada; English and Hindi are taught to a high level as second languages. Other subjects include mathematics, science, and social science.

Extracurricular activities include reading classes, conversational English classes, art classes, storytelling, moral education, library time, computer classes and games and sports.

As of 2011 KSV has had a 100% successful pass rate for students who have sat for their final SSLC matriculation academic examinations. All these students have now gone onto gain admission in various local colleges for Pre-University studies and Universities where they are studying various degree courses such as; B.Music, B.Arts and B.Education.
Our music programme is inspired by the Indian tradition of the Gurukul. The Gurukul is a place where a student comes to live with a reputed master in order to acquire traditional knowledge. In this way, the student is integrated into a lineage of masters and disciples creating a lifelong link.

At Kalkeri, the students learn vocals, harmonium, sitar, tabla, violin, bansuri or shennai. The girls also have weekly classes in Bharatanatayam Dance.

Each student is assigned a professional teacher for music lessons three hours a day, six days a week. In addition to these lessons, the students also practise hard every day for at least one hour. By assimilating music on an intense daily basis, the youngsters become accepted members of the musical lineage of their mentors. In turn, this new identity gives them access to the world of professional musicians. Students are also prepared for music examinations including Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board exams for music and Gandharva Mahavidyalaya examinations.

Kalkeri Sangeet Vidyalaya is probably the only residential school in India where, in addition to academic studies, students practise music four to six hours daily under the tutelage of highly respected and professional musicians.

We firmly believe that, by perpetuating the Guru-Shishya Parampara in the music field, KSV students will bring a noteworthy contribution to India’s culture and heritage. Some may become professional musicians themselves; others may choose a different path, but no matter which they choose, they will still retain aspects of the tradition and transmit some of this into their work or family life.
The personal and social development of each child is of the utmost importance in preparing our students for living and working in today’s world.

There are so many values involved in social development and KSV aims to integrate as many of these as possible into life throughout the school.

The main values underlining the entire ethos of the school are those of justice, non-violence, equality in every nature, sharing, cooperation, excellence and respect for people and one’s environment.

By implementing these values in all we do at the school, we believe our students are well-prepared for adult life and will become honest and responsible members of society who will serve their people and be a source of inspiration to their communities.

The health and welfare of our students is of primary importance. Diverse and healthy meals are prepared on campus and provided at the school three times a day, and eating is a communal activity.

A small separate medical unit at the school monitors the children’s health. In the event of a serious illness or accident, children are taken to the local hospital by a member of staff.

Healthy meals and regular exercise strengthens the relationship between mind and body. The school also organizes sports and games – volleyball, cricket, hockey, badminton, carom, kabadi, etc.
The academic and music members of staff are fully trained and experienced; this has created a motivated team of mentors for our students. This dynamic teaching team is well supported by the administrative team, a labour group and a band of willing volunteers. This mix of personnel ensures that our students live in an inspiring and favourable environment which in turn motivates them to learn quickly.

All of our music teachers are professional musicians; they have participated in prestigious musical performances on national radio and television. On the academic side, our teachers are blessed with many skills ensuring the continuing quality of our academic curriculum.

A residential school could not exist with just teachers. The administrative team and local labour force display many skills which are put to excellent use in general maintenance, building repairs and gardening tasks. The domestic department is a hive of activity preparing three meals every day for staff and students.

And last but not least, KSV welcomes a group of volunteers from all over the world. These people come for a minimum of four months and assist with teaching, office work and many other activities. They also help the children learn English and from the children’s point of view, this aspect of being around people from other countries opens their minds, arouses their curiosity and familiarises them with many different cultures — all important values in their social development.
Programs and Tours

Ur older students have now reached a semi-professional level in Hindustani Shastriya Sangeet and are able to give quality music concerts. They have mastered a traditional repertoire that they recite with confidence and skill during the many concerts they have had the opportunity to give at both regional and national levels.

These opportunities give these young people the chance to gain real stage experience which helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem.

The students have attended numerous concerts and have also participated to several music tours especially in Goa and Delhi.

Since August 2010, on the last Sunday of every month, KSV organizes a music concert in order to showcase the talent of the students and invites a guest artist to perform alongside our students and teachers. This monthly event strengthens the feeling of unity by involving the entire music and academic staff, develops the social and cultural network and opens the school to the world.

Moreover, the project allows the parents to see their children on stage. It creates a positive feeling that encourages the students and helps the parents understand the school’s ethos and to positively engage in their child’s education.
The origins of KSV were basic but clear: through the medium of traditional Indian music combined with academic teaching, the lives of disadvantaged children could be transformed. For many of these children no formal education was available, so the first step was to set up a teaching and learning environment for them. Teaching and guidance provided by a team of dedicated professionals then gave these children the ability and confidence to stand on their own two feet and in time become creative and resourceful citizens of the world.

From its humble origins, KSV has changed the lives of many children, so much so that the eldest students now consider themselves as musicians! They have developed aspirations to move on and pursue their talents. All the staff at the school can be immensely proud of these young people as they set out on their path of life.

None of this could have happened without the support and involvement of our benefactors for which we are eternally grateful. The dedication of all staff and volunteers has provided the rock upon which we were able to build on our dream. In view of the pace at which our students have been developing and learning and the dreams they now have, we believe our dream has come true.
Kalkerí Sāngeet Vidyalaya
A School with a difference
Kalkerí, Dharwad District,
Karnataka, 580007, India
Tel: 0091 (0)836-2786746

Find out more about our student’s performances and our organisation on;

www.ksv.org.in
info@ksv.org.in

Contacts

General Enquiries
Adam Woodward 0091-(0)8197959768 adam@ksv.org.in

Fundraising & Events
Charanraj Nuthalapaty 0091-(0)8105745596 charanraj@ksv.org.in

Volunteer Enquiries
Geraldine Massuelle 0091-(0)9945906721 geraldine@ksv.org.in