Filix School of Education

A Nanritam Initiative

The Nanritam Story

- **NANRITAM** is a non-profit social welfare organization started in 2001 by a few like-minded professionals inspired by Swami Lokeswaranandaji Maharaj of Ramakrishna Mission and Swami Vivekananda's ideal of service to mankind
- 2001 - A small Health Care unit for slum dwellers in North Kolkata
- 2004 – Started providing basic health care services in Para, a remote village in Purulia district of West Bengal.
- 2006 – Started Monthly eye clinic in Para
- 2008 – Started a Small Eye hospital in 1200 Sq Ft single storied Building – 300 cataract surgeries in the first year
- 2010 – National Rural Health Mission assigned eye care of Left wing extremists affected blocks to Nanritam run hospital - Sustainable Agriculture initiative started with farmers in 10 villages which extended to 33 villages by the end of the year
- 2011 – 8000 cataract operations, 600 retinal diseases and 500 Glaucoma cases treated by the hospital – Agricultural Activity expanded to cover animal vaccination and skill training
- 2012 – Government of West Bengal Sanctioned funds for upgrading the hospital to a 100 bedded super speciality Hospital – Agriculture activities linked with government programmes
- Jan 2014 – 100 bedded super speciality eye hospital starts functioning at Para

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Why Start a school in the area we serve?

- Over the years, English has emerged as the language of choice for commerce, economic growth and social mobility in India
- Teaching their children quality 'English‘ has emerged as one of the top expectations of majority of parents.
- Nanritam accepts the reality that teaching English as a language has become a key determinant for future success and mobility of a child
- Researchers now provide enough evidence that socially integrated schools benefit all students. When a school reaches a stable level of about 30 percent middle-class students, the lower-income students achieve at higher levels and the privileged students do no worse.
- In a class discussion or on a problem-solving team, bringing together different viewpoints and experiences makes everyone think harder and provide better evidence for their opinions. Given the right atmosphere and guidance, students in diverse classrooms can build cross-cultural friendships, achieve greater levels of empathy and have a chance to work on all-important social and emotional skills.
- Having a Modern Thermal power station run by highly qualified professionals at one end of the area served by us, and the remaining areas being largely rural with inadequate social infrastructure, provided us with an unique locational opportunity to actualise these research findings and enable children from all sections of these areas to realise their full educational potentials.
- We started the Filix School of Education with a view to helping the community we serve in meeting their educational aspirations

The challenges of an English medium school in a remote rural setting

- Inadequate teacher - training courses exacerbated by the fact that English is not the language of transaction in rural India, thereby giving teachers very little chance of practising what they have learnt.
- While English is seen as the path to growth as a student and as an earner, it is not necessary for students in rural areas as a language of communication.
- The translation method is widely used in rural areas. It helps the learner to understand the content of the text, but impedes learning of the language. The main purpose of teaching the language is ignored and the teaching of content and theme is given importance.
- Emphasis on homework given to children focuses on repeating what they have done in class, thereby adding little value to the child from a learning perspective besides practice.
- Given that the rural milieu provides little opportunity for children (and teachers) to practice the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing English as part of their daily lives, it is important to continuously develop and use affordable tools to help facilitate this.

Our Quest for answers to these challenges

- Our quest for answers to these questions has been driving us to visit schools in other countries confronting (and overcoming) these challenges. These include

- The University of British Columbia (UBC) Early Child Care Centre in Vancouver, Canada, in May 2014.
- Enders Elementary School, at Springdale Street, Garden Grove California in May 2015. This is one of the largest public schools in Los Angeles, USA.
- Bridge Grove international school at Vancouver Canada in June 2015
- North Bay Christian Academy in San Francisco in June 2015

The School infrastructure

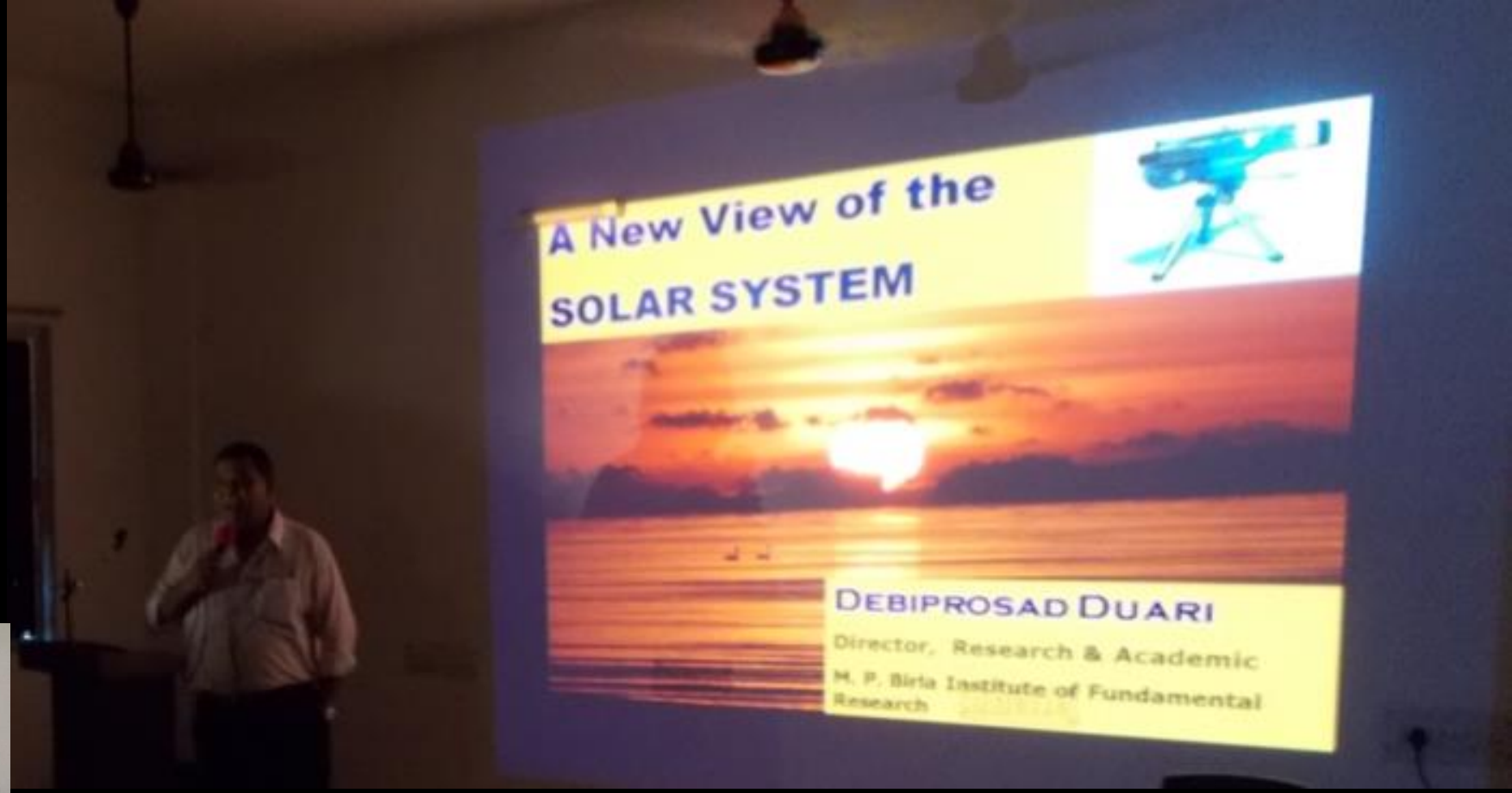
The Classroom

Children's Park

Outdoor Play Area

Kindergarten Math Centre

Computer Lab



Audio Visual Room

Teaching Methodology

Our Curriculum Structure

The curriculum structure of the school is inspired by the global teaching methods which aim to:

- Make learning fun through use of various creative teaching materials, exercises, worksheets, dance, drama, music, Games and sports.
- Use innovative new-age teaching technology like audio-visual aids.
- Prepare children to be disciplined and self-dependent from a very tender age. Special focus will be laid on basic hygiene training.
- Provide individual attention to all children. The stress is on allowing children to learn and progress at their own pace.
- Lay less importance on homework and more importance on classroom activity and participation.
- Ensure regular monitoring and provide detailed quarterly report on progress of child to parents.
- Provide opportunity to interact with international Volunteers from time-to-time.

How we teach : Properties of Metal STD IV

- Substances expand or get bigger when they are heated up. They contract or get smaller when they are cooled down. This property has many applications such as the thermometers which work because the liquid inside them expands and rises up the tube when it gets hotter or Metal parts that are fitted together without welding usually shrink fitting.

- Here we have Ahana Mukherjee of STD IV of Filix School of Education demonstrating with an iron wire loop and an iron ball that solid expands on heating and contracts on cooling.

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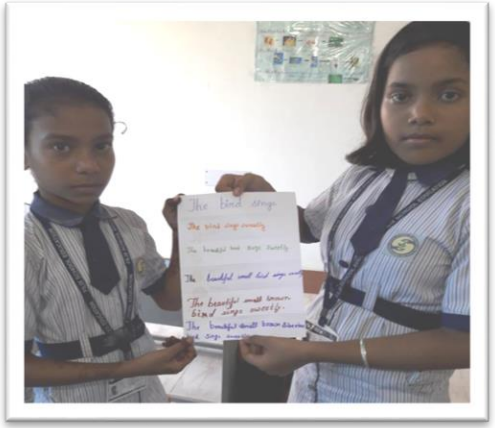
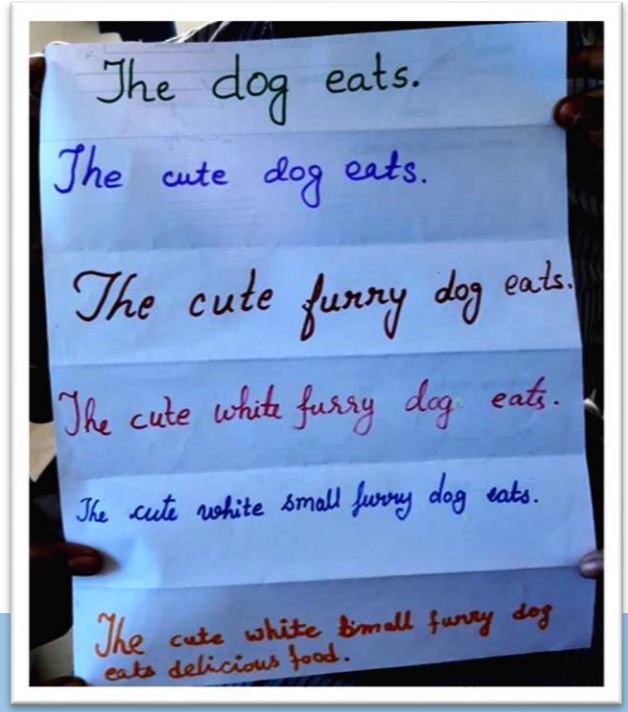
How we teach : Grammar STD V

- Grammar can be boring and therefore difficult at times.
- In order to add some colour to the monotony of dry grammatical rules, we need to come out of the text book and do something different.
- For example, Once students have an understanding of what an adjective and an adverb is, we ask them to brainstorm by challenging them to think of a word that they need to describe and an adjective describing that word.
- They explore how many additional adverbs they can come up with to describe either the adjective or the word itself.
- We encourage our students to try to make the longest adverb chain possible to describe the subject at hand. STD V students were given an activity where they had to expand a given sentence using adjectives and adverbs which they really enjoyed.





How we teach : Creative Writing STD IV

- We asked the students of Standard IV of Filix School to imagine themselves to be a 50 years old Neem tree and share their experience of a 50-year life span.

- This piece by Alolika Mandal happens to be one of the many interesting pieces that the children came out with.

I was hanging on my mother neem's branch with my brothers and sisters and also I was a little seed. One day in the rainy season all my brothers and sisters and I went to different places by the effect of the storm. I went to a place where there was a house in front of me. After the rainy season I was a little scared when my mother nature came and made me understood everything. Then I was brave then she went. Slowly I grew bigger and bigger day by day. Gradually I grew into a new tree and also I learnt how to make food from sunlight, air and water from other different trees. After 6 years one night my children came out from me and hanged. That day I was very happy. After some years in the rainy season the same things happened with my children whatever had already happened with me. After some years I was very old tree.

—Alolika Mandal

How we teach : English Word Games STD II

- Teaching English is quite a challenging work for the teacher. **First,** it has one of the biggest and trickiest vocabulary there is. **Secondly,** the spellings are idiosyncratic, meaning that it's often difficult to guess how to spell an English word based on how it sounds, which impedes the learning process. **Thirdly** the language is also littered with idioms, which don't always make sense to those learning English.
- We keep on experimenting with various methods to make things easy for the Children. Here's an hands-on method for Standard II.
- The alphabet were spread out in a random manner and the class was divided into two halves. A student gave a word challenge to another student from the other group. He/she found out the alphabet and joined them to form a word. The game continued thus. The group with the maximum correct spellings became the winner.

How we teach : Hands on Horticulture for KG II

- Reading about how vegetables grow in a text book and growing them with one's own hands are completely different experiences.
- Our KG II Children visit the vegetable fields, sow seeds of okra and ridge gourd in their own little patch of land under the guidance of our Agriculture department. Their Environment Science teachers, Tanusree and Poulami Ma'am helped them in this activity.
- Their next visit is after 10 days when the seedlings have appeared.
- Subsequently, they would visit at various stages to see how a seedling grows into a plant and finally how fruit appear from the flowers.

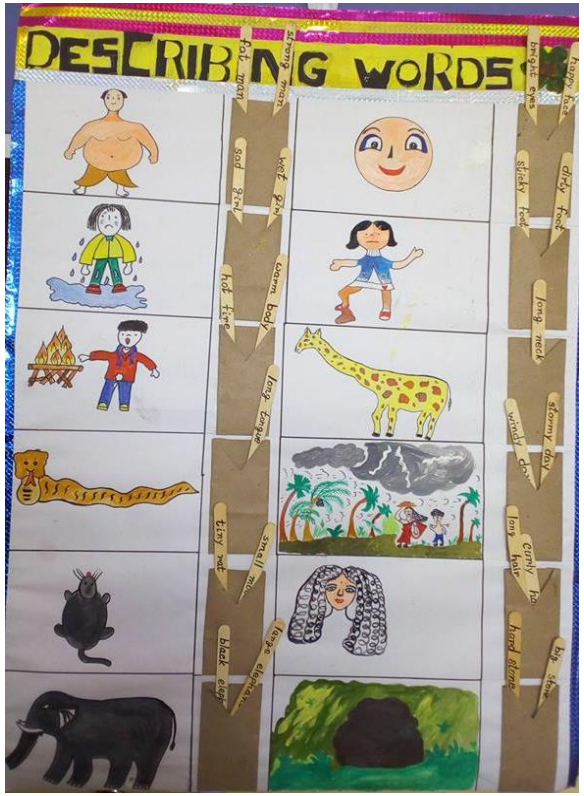
How we teach : Concepts of Addition KG II

- Before the children of KG learn to count with their hands we try to teach them the concept through other games, Here for example are the students of KG II learning addition practically with balls.

- The teacher has used waste boxes and two glasses to make a magic box as in the picture. In one glass they are putting 5 balls made of the dough and on the other glass, they are putting 4 balls of different colours. Finally, when they open the door of the magic box they count the total number of balls.

How we teach : Naming Words become describing Words STD I

- Children find it difficult to understand how a naming word becomes a describing word.
- The teacher had a chart prepared with various kinds of pictures and based on those pictures, phrases describing them were written on the ice cream sticks. The phrases are a combination of a naming word & a describing word.
- By seeing those pictures and reading out the contents of the ice-cream sticks her students get the idea that when some sort of description is added to a naming word, it forms a describing word. They have to match those sticks with their respective pictures.
- The children enjoy this activity immensely The ultimate outcome has been that now whenever a passage is read the children can immediately differentiate the naming word & the describing word.



How we teach : Fun in Vernacular - Std II and III

• Children of Standard II and III have a unique way of revising old lessons in the vernacular class – the lessons are revised through a game of snake and ladder.

• The students are handed over questions from old lessons in small slips of papers the answers to which will have to be written by them on the board.

• If the answer is correct, they climb up the ladder. If it is not, the snake pulls them down.

• The children also get to know the vernacular numerals while playing the game.

How we teach : Early acquaintance with tools of Science

- Filix children of STD IV, enjoying to have a look at their finger prints, coins and leaf veins through a basic microscope.This was followed by a lesson on how the microscope works and its parts and functions

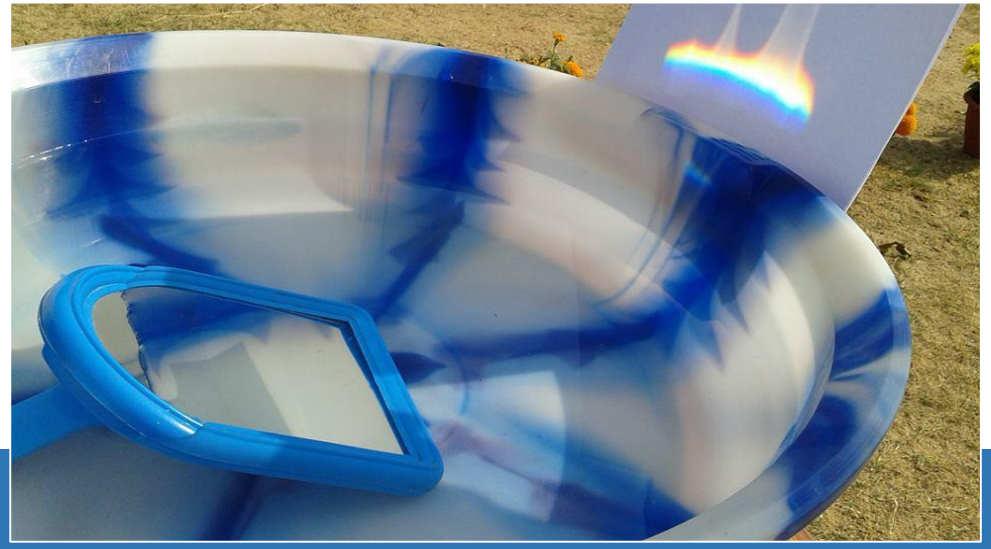
How we teach : Understanding the Science of Food

- Food is best understood by children, by making (and eating) a dish of balanced diet, containing all the nutrients (proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals), roughage and water.
- The children of the schools have made their own food and categorized them under a) Body building food,(mostly protein) b) energy giving food (mostly carbohydrate and fat) and c) protective foods (mostly vitamins and minerals).

How we teach : Following in Newton’s steps to understand Rainbows - STD V

- Sir Issac Newton (1642-1726) was the first to understand the rainbow — he refracted white light with a prism, resolving it into its component colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet.

- Repeating the experiments of great scientists is useful in explaining scientific phenomenon to students. Here the students of STD V are trying to focus a rainbow on a white sheet from the sunlight reflected from a half - submerged mirror and eventually succeed to have a beautiful rainbow on the sheet. The sunlight reflected from the mirror breaks into seven colours while passing through water. This is exactly what happens in nature. When we have sun and rain at the same time, the sun rays passing through the rain drops break into seven spectra and form a beautiful rainbow on the other side of the sky. The rain drops act as prisms to break up the sunlight into its seven components.



How we teach : Fun with Maths for Kindergarten

- In Filix our teachers try to focus on developing core numerical skills that focuses on four major factors:

  (1) symbolic and non-symbolic number sense; (2) understanding mathematical relations (3) counting skills (knowledge of number-symbols, number word-sequence, enumeration with concrete objects); and (4) basic skills in arithmetic (arithmetic combinations, addition and subtraction skills with number symbols)

How we teach : Art and activity for Nursery

• Art is important for children, especially during their early development. Research shows that art activities develop brain capacity in early childhood. Art engages children's senses in open-ended play and supports the development of cognitive, social-emotional and multi sensory skills.

•Here are the Nursery kids of Filix engaged in Vegetable painting. They're using carrot and lady's finger to do this. And after they had enough of it, they're happily taking up the Sunflower Activity.

•The kids are spontaneous, jolly and love these experimenting with creative materials.

How we teach : In harmony with nature

• "We may become powerful by knowledge, but we attain fullness by sympathy. The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence." - Rabindranath Tagore

• Filix children of STD I are watching a Chrysalis or Pupa, the 3rd stage of metamorphosis in the life cycle of a butterfly.

• The process of watching is the first step in living in harmony with the world.

How we teach : Learning to take responsibilities – STD II

• Children who take responsibilities at early age also learn how to become better citizens, better leaders/managers as well as better parents later on in their lives.

• At Filix we believe that the school has to invest in developing this sense of responsibility specifically.

• The children are provided with a potted plant with their names written on them and are asked to take proper care of their own plants.

• The teachers are happy to see the concern of the children about their plants as they take permission to water their pots when they are done with their class assignments.

• Children are also seen to be helpful to their friends as they water the plants of their friends who remain absent on any day.

Other Creative Activities

Life Skills

Our children, their stories

What we believe

- Studies have shown that socio-economic diversity in classrooms leads to a win-win situation for all concerned. Students in such schools are likely to have higher test scores, less drop outs, more college enrolment, reduced achievement gaps.
- They are also better in critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. It's yet too early for Nanritam to make any specific claim on these achievements but the trends indicate that all these are likely to be achieved by students of Filix school as well.

Md. Asim

- Md.Asim is the son of Sk. Tabrez Alam, who runs a shop for recharging mobile phone connections in Gurguria, and his mother is Nusrath Parween. None of them could complete school, but from what has Asim told us about what religion means to him, we are sure that his parents are certainly "educated" in the true sense of the term.
- Asim wants to be a footballer when he grows up. His ambition is to put India on the top of the list of best football playing nations.
- In Filix we are committed to work with children like Asim, imparting real "education" which according to Swami Vivekananda, is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

https://youtu.be/HyH0Cz3Fb9Y

Kripa Modak

- Kripa Modak lives in a village named Dubra with her father Sankirtan Modak and mother Mamta Modak. Kripa is in standard 1 in Filix School. Her father has a small shop, but Kripa is not very sure of what all is available there, except that it also stocks chocolates, and she manages to get a daily quota of this wonderful stuff. But she does brush her teeth after taking them.
- Listen to this beautiful child talking to us.

https://youtu.be/QMRV2Okj0Ik

Syeda Eiram Rowshan

Syeda Eiram Rowshan, a student of STD I of Filix School, lives in the village Para. Her father works as an assistant to his elder brother who is a gas distributor in the locality.

Unlike her close friends in the class, Syeda Eiram Rowshan doesn't want to be a Maths teacher. Her favourite subject is English and she practises her teaching skills on her mother, sister and her grand – parents. According to Eiram, her mother, Syeda Nazia Sultana knows English but doesn't speak so well.

https://youtu.be/bg9r2dk29cQ

Encouraging Innovations

In Filix our teachers constantly encourage children to think and try out things for themselves, and their efforts are amply rewarded by the students.

Sujal Tewari and Rupam Majhee of STD 3 Electric Circuit

- Sujal Tewari and Rupam Majhee of STD 3 tried an innovative idea of making a simple circuit. Here they are explaining what they did. Having gone through the Electricity book from the school library they were inspired to try this on their own.

- This was soon followed by a science workshop in the school in collaboration with Maker's Loft, Kolkata where they learnt how to make circuit with a vegetable like potato. Children were so excited, they tried to make simple circuits at home with various types of vegetables like carrots, tomatoes, lemons, cucumber and actually succeeded to produce enough electricity to light a tiny bulb. Sajal and Rupam could inspire their friend Chirantan Gayen of STD 4 too to attempt to make a simple circuit at home.

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Teachers’ Day Gifts by the Children’s own hands

- Filix children had a gift for all teachers to mark Teachers' Day. We present only some of them here acknowledging our gratitude to them for making us feel so happy and proud as teachers.

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Ayush Singh of Standard IV and his “Steadiness Testing Tool”

- Thomas Alva Edison believed that “To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.” Ayush Singh of Standard IV of Filix School of Education has sure imbibed his spirit.
- He had to two cars, in badly run down condition and they were about to be thrown away when he had the idea of using their parts into making a "steady hand" game. He took out the circuit board from the broken toy cars and fixed it on a thermocol board to add some music to his game. Then Cut a long piece of wire and made a ring on top to form a wand. Ayush took his father’s help in bending another bare wire into a series of curly loops. He fixed the loops on thermocol board.
- The steady hand assessment ring is supposed to be carried along by the person whose steadiness is being tested over these loops, but without touching them.
- The bulbs would lit up the moment the person taking the test became unsteady and the ring of the wand touched the bare wire loop anywhere.
- His car music played on as soon as the game is turned on.

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Sabyasachi Goran of STD IV and his amphibious car

Sabyasachi Goran of STD 4 is an ambitious young scientist who doesn't want to change vehicle when he comes to a waterfront. So he has designed an amphibious vehicle which can travel over both land and water.

Video link

https://youtu.be/9Sj2Tw

Distinguished Visitors

Prof. Kaushik Basu former Chief Economist and Sr. Vice President of The World Bank

- Prof. Kaushik Basu our Chief Mentor ad visited our campus in Purulia on a few occasion before he Kindly consented to guide us.
- On 27 Dec 2016 he wrote on our visitors book "Visiting Nanritam in this remote corner of Bengal was a most heartening experience. It's outstanding hospital services and facilities, and the school, Filix School of Education, have to be seen to be believed. These facilities are run with dedication, 21st-century efficiency, and compassion. You can sense these in the faces of the school children. This creates optimism, not just for the children of the school and the patients of the hospital, but for India. Other institutions all over can learn from what can only be called "The Nanritam Model".

Prof. Kaushik Basu

former Chief Economist and Sr. Vice President of The World Bank

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KAUSHIK BASU
Chief Economist and Senior Vice President

Phone: (202) 458-1076
email: kbasu@worldbank.org

September 27, 2016

Nanritam is one of the most impressive social welfare organizations in India. It began as a health support unit in a North Kolkata slum and has subsequently expanded to diverse areas such as education, computer training, sustainable agriculture, and agricultural extension work.

My visit to Nanritam in Purulia was one of the most moving experiences I have had. It is testimony to how much you can do for the poor and the marginalized if you combine organizational skill with moral commitment. Nanritam's Eye Hospital in Para Block of Purulia is as busy as any Indian city hospital; in addition, it is spotlessly clean and equipped with the latest technology. The new school that has been started by Nanritam is in the same tradition of modernity combined with tradition, and with a genuine effort to bring the best education to rural children.

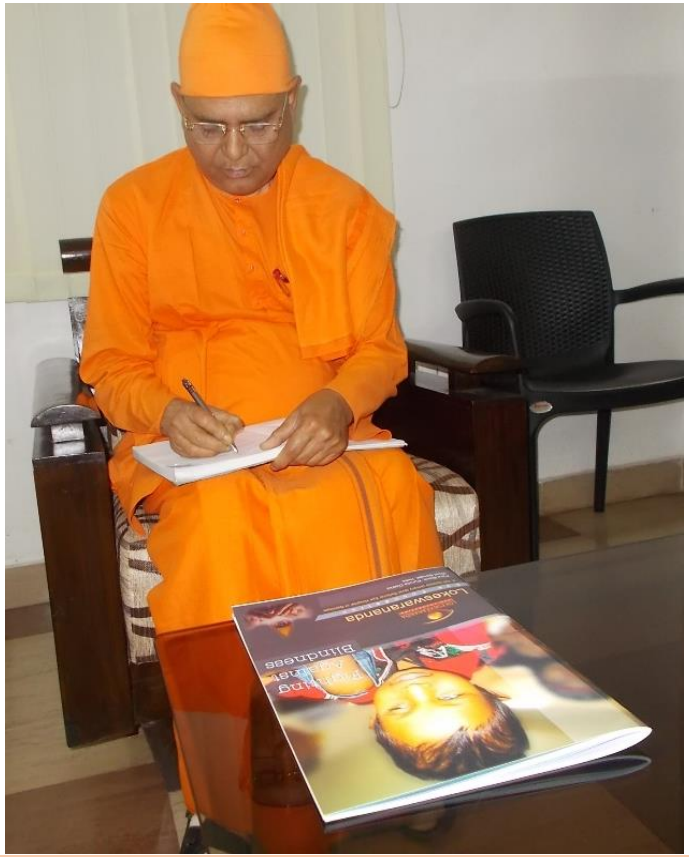
K Basu

Kaushik Basu

Prof. Alaka Basu, Cornell University, New York USA

- "You have created something magical. The school compares with the best and most expensive private and public school anywhere in the world. The model you have developed needs to be taken to other parts of the state and the country. It is not just what you are doing with the students; to have such a group of imaginative and motivated teachers as well says a lot about your management and creative skills. I would love to spend some more time here and to learn how to develop such a positive learning environment."

Swami Subiranandaji Maharaj, General Secretary Of Ramakrishna Math and Mission



- "Here whatever I saw is excellent. Keep it up and also march ahead. Absolutely splendid - a hall mark of dedication and service imbued with the flavours of the soul! Hats-off to organisers of NANRITAM. I salute the hallowed memory of Swami Lokeswarananda. I pray to our mother – Holy Mother Saradadevi to bless all those associated with this great mission. Well done!!"

The support we need

- Filix is situated on a 13-acre campus of which 3 acres have been earmarked for the school building and children's play area. The vision for the school is a building with 3 floors, each floor covering an area of 12,000 square feet.
- The first floor with 12 rooms, and half of the 2nd floor with another 6 rooms has been completed.
- The present infrastructure of the school includes a Computer Lab an Audio-Visual Room and an Indoor game complex. All the classrooms are equipped with modern teaching aids.
- The target is to complete the construction of remaining half of the 2nd floor by end of February 2018 and complete construction of 3rd floor by end of February 2019 in all respects including interior setup, furniture, fixtures, fittings, etc.
- Apart from completing the basic infrastructure the school looks forward to build and run a Filix School of Education "Tinkering Lab" for students of the school that may serve the needs of other schools in the vicinity.

Thanking you