



Progress Report and Plan of Action

August 2020

Virtual Classrooms Project

Implemented by Ramakrishna Mission, Visakhapatnam, AP, India

Prepared by: Dr. G. V. V. Rao

Virtual Classrooms project being implemented by

Ramakrishna Mission,

Visakhapatnam, AP, India

Progress Report and Plan of Action

I. Introduction and Progress to date:

In October 2019, Swami Atmavidanandaji, Head of Sri Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Visakhapatnam, AP, India (RKM, Vizag) proposed (see Attachment I) establishing Virtual classrooms to provide quality instruction to children attending rural schools which are notoriously under resourced, including lack of well qualified teachers. The proposed project is patterned on the proven experience in a similar project already in operation under the auspices of Vivekananda University at Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters at Belur Math, West Bengal.

Balavikas agreed to fund this project and sent \$25,000 in October, 2019 (see Attachment II) to cover expenses to initiate the project at 3 centers, with a plan to expand it to a network of 10 centers as the project gains experience and funds become available. RKM established the main center at Vizag Ashrama and 2 satellite centers covering rural areas near Vetapalem in East Godavari District and Bhavanipadu in Srikakulam District. The network of 3 centers was inaugurated by Swami Gautamanandaji, Vice President of the Ramakrishna Order, on March 1, 2020. The network went live, and instruction started in right earnest, with about 150 students participating, in Science, Math, English, Sanskrit and Yoga. Professionally qualified teachers have been volunteering their time to prepare and teach from the Vizag main center. The communities served were quite enthusiastic and, in addition to the classes, started live Bhajans on Sundays with occasional interactive lectures by Swamiji from Visakhapatnam. See photos of the event by clicking: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1h_vAVCVg1TIUNMpBsfDzMtOKUCY3YyLY?usp=sharing

The network functioned quite well until it was locked down due to government restrictions in connection with Corona Virus control. It is expected that the network will restart as soon as the restrictions are lifted.

II. Phase II:

Apart from occasional reports, I have been speaking with Swami Atmavidanandaji to keep updated and to assure him of Balavikas's interest to continue funding completion of the full network of 10 remote centers, and also to help establish a Trust Fund, interest from which may be used for operational costs of the full network thus ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project. On July 27, 2020, Balavikas sent \$23,500 to RKM, Vizag, to help pay for equipment and set up of 7 new centers, thus completing the 10 network centers planned (see Attachment III). Swamiji informed me that several Ramakrishna Seva Samithis operate, in several districts in Northern Andhra Pradesh, under the guidance of RKM, Vizag. Many of these Samithis are in rural areas or are easily accessible to rural areas. Despite travel restrictions etc., under the Covid lockdown, Swamiji is proceeding to identify possible locations for the 7 new Virtual Classroom centers. Swamiji recently invited the Samithis (Attachment IV) to submit proposals to host virtual classroom centers. The main criteria will be availability of reliable electricity and dependable WiFi connections. He hopes to proceed expeditiously to establish the 7 new centers as soon as possible now that the funds for equipment and installation are available.

III. Long-term sustainability of the project:

Very soon the complete network of 10 Virtual Classrooms will be fully operational. Considering the fact that this project was conceived less than a year ago, the speed with which the project is partially operational, and well on its way to completion, in spite of the intervening Covid lockdowns, is a testament to the integrity and efficiency Ramakrishna Mission is well known for. Inspired by the spirit of service, which is the bedrock principle of Ramakrishna Mission, well-qualified teachers and others are volunteering their time and talents to this project. This ensures provision of quality enrichment courses to deserving students in rural areas, thus laying critical foundations for them to achieve their God given potential equipping them to contribute to the development of India in general while personally escaping the inevitable poverty cycle of a rural uneducated, low skilled person. This is indeed a transformative project worth investing in.

Now, it is important to ensure the long-term sustainability of this project. Based on the estimate provided by RKM, Vizag, the Annual Operational Expenses (AOE) for the complete network of 10 Virtual Classrooms will be Rs. 465,000.

At the current interest rate of 5.72% from Banks in India, a Fixed Deposit (FD) of Rs. 8,129,370 will yield sufficient interest to cover these annual operational costs.

At the prevailing conversion rate of \$1 = Rs. 71.70, we will need to raise \$115,000 to fund the necessary Fixed Deposit. See Attachment V for detailed computational basis for the figures above.

IV: PLAN of ACTION

Goal: Our current goal is to raise \$115,000 by the end of the year 2020 to fully fund the Fixed Deposit (FD) of Rs. 8,129,370.

My wife Suryakumari and I will start this fundraising effort by pledging to contribute \$10,000 to the fund.

Others interested in joining us and contributing to this deserving cause may send their donations (checks made to BALAVIKAS noting Virtual Classrooms in the memo) to: Balavikas, c/o Dr. G. V. V. Rao, 20416 Oyster Reef Place, Ashburn, VA 20147. Balavikas is an IRS recognized 501C (3) charity - ID: 26-3946436. Donations made to Balavikas may be tax deductible.

Pledges may be E mailed to: drgvvrao@gmail.com or Rao@balavikas.org. Please feel free to share this report to others who may be interested in donating to this worthy cause.

Opportunity to double the value of donation through matching grants:

Balavikas is recognized as a designated charity by several companies including: ADOBE, ICF Kaiser, Fannie Mae, Freddy Mac, Sales Force and Verizon. Under certain circumstances, these companies match (100%) donations made to Balavikas. This will be a great help in reaching the goal. Please call me at (703) 425-7866 for details of this matching grant program. Please also reach out to me if you can get Balavikas recognized for matching grants by other companies.

Respectfully submitted,

G. V. V. Rao
Balavikas of Fairfax
Tel.: (703) 425-7866
E mail: drgvvrao@gmail.com or Rao@balavikas.org

Attachment I: Original Proposal by Swamiji



RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA

Ramakrishna Beach, Visakhapatnam 530003, Ph: 2562561

Website: www.rkmissionvizag.org E mail: visakhapatnam@rkmm.org

19 October 2019

Dear Dr. GVV Rao,

We are happy to receive your letter dated 18th October and to know you are planning to send another donation of \$ 25000/- . Many thanks for the same.

We are planning to start a new project the our line of the same is as follows:

ICT Network Based learning centers: Using the modern technology of Internet etc, to help our children in rural areas, A base Centre will be established at Visakhapatnam Ashrama, and class room/s may be located at vizag or at distant places. Initially students of classes 8 and 9 who are getting coaching in English, Science and Mathematics, and who are attending a coaching classes at distant place will be covered. Students will assemble for an interactive class with a competent teacher/s from Vizag or from other places. We will conduct classes as per the predetermined time table. Some salient points regarding the classes:

1. Through this initiative, classes on Science, Maths and English will be conducted initially for students of classes 8 and 9 in rural/semi Urban areas where devotees groups are running Ramakrishna Seva Samithis (private centres)
2. It is desirable a subject teacher should be present at the learning centre during the classes.
3. It is desirable that the students are from Telugu medium.

4. Class strength may be around 15 to 30.
5. There should be regular power supply in the centre.
6. Internet connectivity of 50 MPS is essential.

Such a centre under the title **Viveka Disha** is already functioning at Vivekananda University, Belur Math with main centre at the university, and 17 centres in different places in West Bengal. We shall be replicating their model.

We are working out the other details like equipment, identifying the seva samithis with who are working for education etc. We shall share more information in the near future.

If you (Balvikas) agree, part of the above donation we may use for the setting up of the above infrastructure and rest keep as Permanent fund for running of this new scheme.

Happy to know about the ensuing visit of Dr Seetaramayya (Ram) Nagulu to Visakhapatnam and the Ashrama on November 7th. They are most welcome. But, unfortunately I will be out of station from 4th Nov to 14th Nov for programmes in Hyderabad, Mumbai, Rajkot etc. Just for your information I am giving the itinerary during that period. If by chance, we happen to be in the same place some day some where, we can meet. Other wise also our Ashrama will take care of them. Please advice them to ring Swami Yogishanandaji (office swami) 9603452595. If they can spare some time they can see our activities also.

What ever is needed with regard to the formalities of the MOU will be done at this end, as and when we receive the same.

I am leaving for Belur Math tomorrow (20th) for some meetings and shall be back on 26th Oct.


Praying to The Holy trio for welfare of you all.,

With best wishes and Namaskars

Yours in the service of the Lord

Swami Atmavidananda

Attachment II: \$25,000 Donation in October 2019


**RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA**
(A Branch centre of Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah, West Bengal - 711202)
Ramakrishna Beach, Visakhapatnam - 530 003.
Phone : 0891-2562561

No. **11234** Date: **23/10/19**

Received with thanks from **Balavikas de Fairfax**
Ashburn, Virginia, U.S.A.

the sum of Rupees **Seventeen lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Nine hundred and Ninety**
towards **Endowment fund and movable property**

by Cash / Cheque / D.D. No. **Credited on 23/10/19**

Rs. **17,67,977** Received by  Secretary

Donations to the Ashrams are exempt from Income Tax under section 80G (5)(vi) of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
Vide Order No. **DIT (E) / 848** dated 12-01-2009, which has been further extended in perpetuity
BE / 109/69-70
by letter No. **DIT (E) / 2923** dated 26-09-2011. Our Income Tax PAN is AAAAR1077P
BE / 109/69-70
Under Schedule 1 Article 53 Exemption (b) of the Indian Stamp Act, Charitable Institutions are not required to issue any stamped receipt for amounts received by them.

UNITED BANK
14048 Parkways Circle
Suite 100
Chantilly, VA 20151
UNITED BANK

Attachment III: \$23,500 sent on 7/27/2020

FUNDS TRANSFER NOTIFICATION

07-27-2020

BALVIKAS INC
20416 OYSTER REEF PL
ASHBURN, VA, 20147-5512

To: BALVIKAS INC

In accordance with your instructions, we have DEBITED your account # *****8331.

Wire Amount: \$23,500.00 Date/Time: 07/27/2020 at 17:16:04

Sender Name: UNITED BANK
Sender ABA: 055004445
Sender Reference: 200737142945M/GPB
IMAD Reference#: 2020072716B74K C000763

Receiver Name: UNITED BANK INTL
Receiver ABA: 036005093

Beneficiary: RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA
RAMAKRISHNA (R.K.) BEACH,
VISILAKAPATNAM AP, INDIA
AC: *****0101

Beneficiary Bank: BANK OF AMERICA, N.A., NY
ACCOUNT TO CREDIT #6550921730
FW - 026005593

Originator: BALVIKAS INC and AC - *****8331
Info: 20416 OYSTER REEF PL
ASHBURN, VA 20147-5512

Originator Bank: -
Info: DONATION

Bank to Bank Info: (6500)IFSC CODE AMDB000 047*

Please contact the Wire Transfer Department at wirerequest@bankofamerica.com for information on how to receive this notification in an e-mail.

Visakhapatnam Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama

DOORA SHIKSHANAM, by RKMission Vizag. Using ZOOM internet virtual platform.

Main points

- 1) On line classes will be conducted from Vizag.
- 2) timings between 5.30 and 7.00 pm for 6 days a week two periods of 30 mts each, daily.
- 3) Subjects covered - basic English, maths, science and sanskrit.
- 4) Three days Group A classes 3 and 5, three days Group B classes 6 and 8. three days
- 5) On Sundays between 9.30 to 11.30 am. Combined Bala Vikas prgs which will have Yoga/Games, Vedic/Gita chanting, Bhajans, story telling, samskrita subhashita etc.

Requirements at DOORASHIKSHANAM centres:

- a) fairly large room. with electric supply. b) internet connectivity with good speed. C) A volunteer to take care of equipment and be near when programmes are conducted.

RKMISSION VIZAG will provide all the needed equipment like computer, projector, screen etc.

Attachment V: Dollar funds to be raised to assure long term sustainability of the project

Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Visakhapatnam, AP, India

Doora Sikhanam (Virtual Class Rooms) Project

(Sponsored and supported by Balavikas of Fairfax, Ashburn, VA, USA)

Annual Operational Expenses (INR)

S. No	Item description	Cost per center	No. of centers	For Teachers	Total Annual cost in Rupees	Remarks
1	Program Coordinator honorarium				₹ 120,000	
2	Internet Connection charges (main centre)				₹ 12,000	
3	ZOOM Video conferencing charges(Main Centre)				₹ 14,400	
4	Internet charges etc. (Rs 9000/- per teacher for 10 teacher points			10 * 9000	₹ 90,000	
5	Operational costs at each center including internet	₹ 8,000	10		₹ 80,000	
6	Teacher traveling expenses, books etc. 800/-per Teacher	₹ 9,600		5	₹ 48,000	
7	Annual maintenance of equipment and travelling etc	₹ 5,000	10		₹ 50,000	
8	Contingencies	₹ 2,600	10		₹ 26,000	
	Total Annual Operational Cost for 10 centers				₹ 440,400	

One Time Investment						
1	Teacher Equipment (Webcamera, Headphones) One time Investment 5000 each for 10 Teacher points			10 * 5000	₹ 50,000	
2	Laptops 2 numbers			2 * 32000	₹ 64,000	
	Total				₹ 114,000	

Grossing up Total Annual Operational Cost by 5% to include one time charges

Say Rs. 465,000

At prevailing interest rate of 5.72%, Fixed Deposit needed to yield Rs. 465,000 Annually

465,000/ 0.0572

Rs.81,29,370

At prevailing Exchange rate of \$1 = Rs. 71.70, dollar value of funds to be raised will be

Rs.8, 129,370/ 71.70

\$113,380.00 Say \$115,000