



BALA JANAAGRAHA

Janaagraha believes that the quality of citizenship is driven, nurtured and sustained by having a guiding moral and social compass. Therefore, key influencers such as family institutions and educational institutions have a duty and responsibility to instil such values.

The Bala Janaagraha program is a flagship program of the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy which is a uniquely designed, carefully thought out civic education program conducted for Grade VIII students of government, aided and private schools in Bangalore and other urban centres. It aims at transforming the children of urban India into informed and active citizens with a sense of civic responsibility and good citizenship values.

The focus is taking a look at everyday civics from a more local aspect. It stresses the need for citizen participation in local governance. In doing so, the program aims to create a new generation of change agents – the custodians of our future communities. Thus, the program aims to transform today's children into active citizens of tomorrow.

In the curriculum designed for the program, the student becomes the primary actor and catalyst for change. This is reflected in the teaching methodology, which promotes creative thinking, problem-solving and open-ended activities with its primary focus on the local community.

The idea of sustainability, equitable provision of solutions forms the basis of the new resource book 'I Change My City'. The aim of the program is to promote and sustain active citizenship and change. Any change in the behaviour of students because of the Bala Janaagraha program must be sustained over time, through the future actions of the individuals and the presence of a platform such as www.ichangemycity.com

At the end of the implementation of the Bala Janaagraha program, a student acquires the skills of explaining quality of life in the context of local governance of their cities, active citizenship, identify those who implement policies, and apply this knowledge in a practical manner.

The final objective would see that students taking part in the program would be more informed and involved in active citizenship and participatory democracy than those who did not. As an ancillary outcome, it is hoped that through this knowledge building initiative, the youth will be emboldened to take first steps towards active citizenry. In the long run, a possible multiplier effect will lead to the creation of youth leaders, who will be agents of change in their homes and in their neighbourhood, by being catalysts for civic participation.

Since inception, the program has reached out to more than 30,000 students. As has been the practice followed by Janaagraha, any new idea is always piloted and then scaled up after a year of testing on the ground. In 2013-14, the program has scaled up to 11 cities (Bangalore, Hyderabad, Patna, Pune, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, and Nagpur) and has reached out to more than 16000 eighth graders in the 233 schools (all types- government, aided and unaided) partnering with Janaagraha for the program.

The program is administered by a team of Facilitators who are ably assisted by Bala Janaagraha Mitras (BJMs) who are volunteers (community, corporate or specially identified school teachers). Each facilitator handles a group of 10 schools.

The program runs from the start of the academic session (June/July) to January/February and is comprised of in-school as well as out of school activities. There are 4 main components:

- i. **The revised curriculum** designed by the Janaagraha team, encompassed in a resource book titled “I Change My City” (currently available in 3 languages. Telugu, Tamil and Marathi versions are being planned)
- ii. **An e-module** which is a computer-playable game modified to complement the new curriculum and consisting of various activities that help reinforce the learning from the curriculum sessions.
- iii. **A civic project** –the introduction and in-schools discussions of a practical project in which students apply what they have learnt in the classroom to one aspect of urban India in a practical, tangible way. In addition, there is a out- of- school element also where the students inform, involve and engage in the exploration of civic issues directly related to their community and neighborhoods and wherever possible, propose innovative, simple and practical solutions while working with the elders, teachers, classmates and officials of various departments as well as the elected representatives,
- iv. **The civic fests-** a platform at which, students present their work and views from throughout the year and are recognized for their efforts accordingly. Cluster level competitions at Facilitator level (Mini Civic Fests), then City level and finally the National Level Civic Fest are conducted .

In addition to the above, a baseline survey is conducted before the launch of the program in the schools to capture the civic literacy levels prevalent amongst the students and also get an understanding of their civic engagement. A post program survey is conducted at the culmination to understand the change in the civic literacy level over the baseline for each school.

Similarly, qualitative targets to capture effectiveness of program delivery based on student learning and instructor effectiveness to ensure the program is of the highest quality are set internally. To arrive at this score, the Bala Janaagraha management team conducts feedback surveys with key stakeholders – students, Principals, volunteers (Bala Janaagraha Mitras) and facilitators. This also helps to assess the health of the program.

The program for the year finally culminates with the annual Principals’ meet-a seminar at which select Principals share their thoughts on various civic education /awareness related themes and teachers and other educationists participate whole-heartedly to discuss these thoughts.

While the focus of the program is a well- executed curriculum delivery, last year changes were also made to the methodology for delivery of the same. Each unit and sub unit is introduced thru games which help the students assimilate the concepts of the unit / sub unit. This is then followed by discussions on the content.

Bala Janaagraha has been supported by various donors, both at the Program corpus level as well as for specific cities where the program is piloted and has been running successfully over the past year.

The program team aims to reach out to 481 schools spread across 25 cities (including the 11 from last year) for the year 2014-15. The new cities are: Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar,



Chandigarh, Cochin, Dehradun, Delhi+Gurgaon, Indore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Raipur, Ranchi, Surat and Thiruvananthapuram.

Some Important links:

1. Janaagraha website: www.janaagraha.org
2. Bala Janaagraha on I Change My City: <http://www.ichangemycity.com/groups/bala-janaagraha>
3. Our face book page: <https://www.facebook.com/BalaJ.Page>
4. Link to the e-version of the book: <http://janaagraha.org/files/I-Change-my-City.html>

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

Team Bala Janaagraha plans to engage the employees of the donor organisation(s) as volunteers as follows:

1. Program component (activity) related volunteering:

The 3 components of the program are: Classroom sessions (for curriculum and e-module delivery as well as Civic Project discussions); out-of-school, on the ground Civic Project related work, and Civic Fest(s) (Mini Civic Fest or cluster level fest and City level finals).

A volunteer could sign up (ideally with a buddy-colleague / spouse/sibling/ friend) to help with all of the above mentioned in partner school or could volunteer by adopting a partner school where they would help the Bala Janaagraha team to deliver just:

- a) the curriculum during the stipulated Bala Janaagraha class. There will be 12 curriculum delivery sessions per section per school between June and December.
- b) the e-module during the stipulated Bala Janaagraha class. There will be 4 e-module sessions between July and December.
- c) Mentor the students while they work on their Civic Projects during end-July/August and October. There would be 4 in-class sessions.

A partner school provides for a 40 minute period for the program in the timetable itself. If a school has say 3 sections, depending on the strength and feasibility of clubbing the sections, classes are allotted accordingly, else, each section is handled individually.

If none of the above mentioned is feasible, the volunteer could help with the organisation of the City Level Fest.

2. Other activities:

- a) Donor organisation employees could use their IT skills to help the children practically apply the lessons they have learned during the Bala Janaagraha program. One appropriate collaborative activity would be helping the students develop brochures or flyers on practical solutions to civic issues (water/electricity conservation etc), using software like MS Publisher. These could then be printed by the students and distributed in their own communities the following day – a practical use of the relevant skills of donor organisation staff and Bala Janaagraha students. By supplementing students' civic knowledge with IT and presentation skills, they would equip students to be change agents in their communities.



b) Students could also post their work online via:

- i. The Bala Janaagraha page on ichangemycity.com – Janaagraha’s social networking platform for civic change.(applicable to Bangalore)
- ii. The Bala Janaagraha Facebook Page – <http://www.facebook.com/BalaJ.Page>
- iii. Any relevant online platform (if desired by the donor organisation team).

c) Waste segregation systems –

To create lasting impact, volunteers could coordinate with the schools to institutionalize waste segregation systems for their campuses. If they wished, they could be responsible for maintaining the systems via quarterly check-ups. The initial segregation awareness campaigning as well as installation and maintenance would provide considerable volunteer hour opportunities for the volunteers.

d) Data coding of citizenship survey impact assessment –

The citizenship surveys and impact assessment are an integral part of the Bala Janaagraha program’s self-assessment, and are both labour intensive activities. There are considerable opportunities for volunteers to help out after the data entry is done with codification of the data entered (responses of the students). These days will be concentrated around the beginning, and end of program delivery (July and February). Briefs would be given to volunteers to ensure they understand the significance of the data, and the assistance they would be giving to the program.

e) Visits by students to Donor organisation location/setup Facilities –

- i. Volunteers could take the students on a tour of the donor organisation’s facility explaining the work done and also talk about life at work and the work they do.
- ii. The students could also be taken to visit work areas of the volunteers (share their workspaces with the students) who use technology who could give the students advice on career choices, presentation skills, and IT skills.
- iii. Students could also be taken to the site(s) where the donor organisation is actively working on other projects which can be connected with the topics covered in the curriculum, e.g., conservation program/ projects which will give an insight on say water conservation and accordingly create awareness amongst the children.

The benefits of the above mentioned activities are manifold:

- i. These activities would help catalyse interest in the Bala Janaagraha program among Volunteers, and also create awareness of the program’s goals which would be done in a manner that is convenient for volunteers in terms of time and travel. This should lead to greater and deeper engagement in future.
- ii. These activities will also catalyse interest among Bala Janaagraha partner schools and students, many of whom would otherwise not have the opportunity to visit facilities like that of the donor organisations, or interact with professional staff of this caliber.

The time commitment:

Activity	No . Of Minutes	No. of sessions
Conduct of Baseline survey	40	1
Curriculum delivery and end-of-unit assessment	480	12
E-module delivery	160	4
Civic Project guidance and other activities	160	4
Conduct of post program survey	40	1