



SUCCESSFUL BALA JANAAGRAHA TRAINING

A 2-day Bala Janaagraha Leadership Training was conducted on April 9 and 10 at Carmel School in Padmanabha nagara in Ward 55. The participants were 32 students from the tenth standard.

The sessions were made very successful, with the enthusiastic participation by all the students, the Bala Janaagraha volunteers and the class teacher, Mrs Usha Gopakumar from Navgati consulting, a corporate training

firm, provided some valuable debriefs. A few community members of the Abhyudaya also dropped in to view the sessions.

There were 6 modules in the training. Day 1 started with students understanding the need for leadership training, and pledging to observe the rules with integrity while maintaining an atmosphere of fun and cooperation. The first module was the Ice-breakers for the students to get to know each

other. This included games like Mingle where the students scrambled to form groups, like finding 4 other people who had the same favourite cricketer. This was followed by Team-building module, where the groups found repeatedly that it pays for the group to be good listeners. A favourite game was Knots, where the teams, in a tight circle, form a jumble of joint hands with each member holding the hand of someone else across from her. At the whistle, the "human

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CITIZENS COMPLIMENT BMP

Citizens belonging to 17 wards have complimented Bangalore Mahanagara Palike for exceeding the target of revenue collection and providing better quality information on financial affairs of the palike, to the citizens.

These citizens were attending a budget analysis session on Saturday April 12. This was the 4 quarter financial statements and they were very enthusiastic. They also felt that the quality of the data has improved and this time the BMP budgeted figures, % achieved.

Improved data and property tax collections

All of them were very happy that the BMP had exceeded the target in property tax collections. The citizens on the spot decided to send a congratulatory letter to the Commissioner.

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WORKSHOP FOR COMMUNITIES

For the past several months many Residents Associations in Bangalore have been interacting with the BMP officials and elected representatives in a structured and scientific manner. They have found it to be effective.

To make it more effective they will be trained by Community Development Services for Team building, Dispute resolution, Conducting meetings etc. Member

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TEAMBUILDING WORKSHOP FOR COMMUNITIES

MRM - MOST ENRICHING EXPERIENCE

Three weeks ago, I participated in my first Monthly Review Meeting (MRM) of my ward – ward 78. The two hours that I spent there with the engineer and other residents of my ward was one of the most enriching experiences that I have had during my 7-month association with Janaagraha.

The MRM is a process facilitated by Janaagraha, which enables interaction between the citizens of a particular ward and their representatives from the local government. During an MRM, citizens and government representatives sit around a table discussing the status of Ward Works in their areas using a simple and extremely well designed document known as the Work Analysis Document (WAND).

Over the course of the two hours of the MRM, the statuses of various works were discussed in an open and constructive manner. The way in which the meeting was

conducted highlighted vividly the importance of sharing information, in enabling citizens to participate in decision making as well as in building bridges between citizenry and government.

This was the first time, however, that I was participating as a resident of my ward, and the feeling of satisfaction that I got was tremendous. I understood what it means to be a “Citizen” and what it means to “Participate”, which together are the foundations of the idea of Democracy. It was wonderful to discover that the “doing of democracy” was so simple, so easy and that all it would take was 2 hours of my time every month.

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I would encourage anyone reading this to attend an MRM at your ward or at any other, it would be time well spent.

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After IT Revolution - Janaagraha

After the IT revolution the next big revolution to hit Bangalore indisputably, is going to be Janaagraha. It's easy to see why-citizens from every strata of the social order are 'Actually' going to be dictators to the Government, giving democracy a whole new connotation and understanding. Being associated with this revolutionary team makes me feel like an icon already.

Everyday at the Janaagraha office, it is amazing to hear the names of Government officials whom I already know through my father, who incidentally works for the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BMP). It's a role reversal of sorts, which I am thoroughly enjoying - me tracking the activities of my dad, rather than he tracking mine. I share the quarters I live in, with officials from the revenue, health and engineering departments of the BMP, its like I am monitoring all of their activities too! The

sense of empowerment that Janaagraha offers to the volunteers who want to be associated with it is incredible.

The ambitious plans of the organization have already gained so much momentum that any target that it sets for itself is not going to remain a challenge for too long. The activities that I am involved in i.e., the Proof Campaign, Technology and Ward Works

each in its own way have enriched my understanding of the functioning of the Government.

It has actually helped me not to be 'just another citizen'. Bangaloreans, this is your go at building a neighborhood, a city just the way you crave. Go grab it!

Ashwini K. Prasad
Volunteer- Janaagraha.

Preventing Accidents

Ignoring Traffic Rules and reckless driving by the youth on mopeds and motorcycles is one of the causes of scores of accidents that take place almost everyday almost everywhere.

But the worst would be the BMTC Bus drivers who drive with impunity making nonsense of all traffic rules. Unless they are brought in purview of the law and they would have the

consequences of thier being in the employ of the Government, this situation would not improve.

This is something that we need to work to get done with top priority. Apart from this, in each locality the citizens can meet the youngsters once in a while and advise them regarding the importance of responsible driving.

Janaagrahi
ward-55

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

Over the past 15 months, Janaagraha has been attempting to bring a different approach to the issue of public governance. What is this approach, and how do we propose to deliver on this?

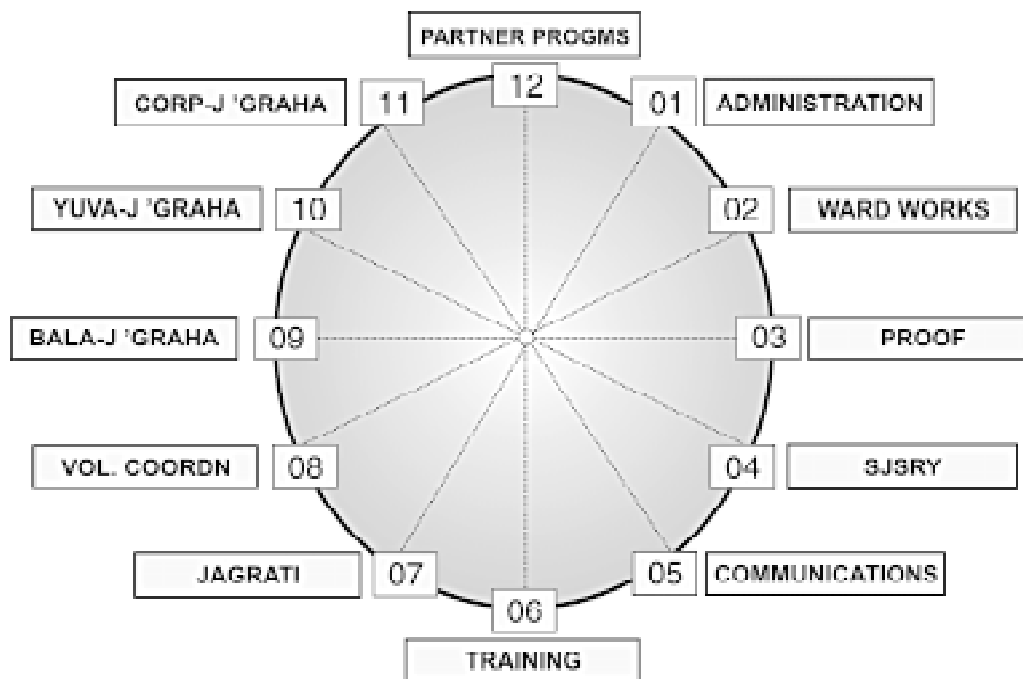
While many community members, volunteers and others may have a deep understanding of some aspects of Janaagraha, it is only recently that all the elements of the delivery structure of Janaagraha has been put in place: the circle is now complete. I would like to describe this circle in some detail.

First, however, what Janaagraha stands for. This is a simple 4-step outline:

citizens are to be partners, then a new space for such engagement needs to be created.

#4. CITIZEN COMMUNITIES: We hope to get citizens involved by strengthening citizen communities wherever they exist, and bringing citizens into communities wherever they don't.

For this, we want thousands of average citizens to participate, not just a handful of activists. This means that we must show a way where people can engage, while still keeping the rest of their lives in balance: their jobs, their families etc. We believe that this is possible. We think that the answer is for thousands of citizens to give a few hours



#1: IMPROVING PUBLIC GOVERNANCE: We want to improve the quality of public governance, primarily in our local governments. Our vision is to fundamentally change the trajectory of public governance in our country in twenty years.

#2: PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY: We don't believe that Representative Democracy can deliver this. This does not mean that we stand for direct democracy. We say that in the alphabet of democracy, we do not want the citizens to go from "E" to "F", that is "Elect and Forget". We want citizens to stay on the letter "E", that is "Elect and Engage". We believe that this actually deepens the roots of representative democracy.

#3. CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT: We believe that the way to do this is for the wheels of citizen activism to engage with the wheels of government. This is different from toothless collaboration, or mindless confrontation. If

a month, and we are building the structure to make these few hours valuable. We are confident that we can convince the average citizen that their time can indeed make a difference. We call this "Practical Patriotism".

The other side of democracy is voluntarism; we want to unleash the forces of voluntarism in our country. We are building the capacity for individuals to contribute to this vision, each in their own way, with their own sets of skills. However, we hold people accountable for the commitments they make. We call this "Professional Voluntarism".

Over the past 15 months, we have been working hard at building the foundation for this long-term vision. This is not rasna, or instant coffee, for us to mix and stir. While the IDEA of democracy is a romantic one – free elections, checks and balances etc. –

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COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

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the DOING of democracy is far more mundane: regular, consistent, organized action.

. These are the nuts and bolts of democracy.

What we have at Janaagraha today is a complete circle, almost like the face of a clock. There are 12 Activities that we currently run, each like one numeral on the clock face.

Each Activity has a coordinator who is responsible for defining and managing the resources to make the activity successful. What are these activities? Please use the circle to follow the brief description given below:

- **CAMPAIGNS:** Activities 2,3 and 4 (2 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock) are our campaigns: these deal directly with bringing citizens closer to government.
 - Ward works is about participatory budgeting, where citizens and their Elected representatives identify and prioritise their local requirements collaboratively
 - **PROOF** stands for Public Record Of Operations and Finance, and is about regular, consistent performance information from the local government; it is a campaign that was launched with 3 other partners.
 - **SJSRY:** This is a campaign focused exclusively on the urban poor. It is a pilot attempt in Bangalore to improve an existing government programme, and involves the government, the banks, the NGOs and the urban poor.
 - **VOLUNTEERS:** Activities 9,10,11 are the institutional volunteer channels:
 - Bala Janaagraha is for school children to get hands-on experience with the idea of participatory democracy, and work with their local communities
 - Yuva Janaagraha is similar to Bala Janaagraha for college students, with more opportunities for the youth to use the commerce, communication, software skills that they are learning.
 - Corporate Janaagraha is for companies that wish to have a grounded programme in Corporate Social Responsibility. In these volunteer programmes, we commit to delivering a high-quality output to the institution concerned, be it a school, college or company.
- In addition, individuals can walk into Janaagraha to volunteer their time.
- Activity 8 is about coordinating the volunteers, allocating them into appropriate activities, ensuring feedback etc.
- **COMMUNICATION:** There are various communication challenges, At one end, this involves reaching out to the average citizen, inform and excite her about what we do so that she becomes an active citizen or a volunteer; at the other end, it is about keeping the thousands of people who wish to be kept informed of our ongoing activities.

- **JAGRATI:** In any institution, the quality of information is driven by the quality of information. Given the level to which Janaagraha is promoting decentralization in public institutions, the information flows are substantial. Like many others, we see technology as a significant element of the solution. To make this happen, we have an activity called JANAaGRAHa Technology Initiative, or JAGRATI for short.
- **TRAINING:** One of the critical needs of citizens and communities, as well as for the BMP administration and Elected Representatives, is to work together in this new paradigm of participatory democracy. Ultimately, a citizen community begins as a disparate group of individuals who need to build an identity before they really take ownership over their neighbourhood. Our training programmes that we are customizing are an investment in the communities.
- **PARTNER PROGRAMMES:** Along the way, there have been institutions or groups of individuals who have expressed the desire to work with us on specific activities, and given us their human capital. As we grow, we expect the nature and scope of these partner activities to also grow. We look to carefully define such partner activities, so that there is a clear sense of mutual responsibilities and expected outcomes.
- **ADMINISTRATION:** None of these activities would work, or come together without a strong administrative backbone holding them together. The office, network administration, event management etc are all handled in this area.

In my last editorial I mentioned that we must take the trouble of looking into the engine room of democracy; I hope that this brief write-up has given the reader a sense of our own engine room.

With the completion of this circle, we have reached a milestone at Janaagraha. While we are pleased that the framework is now in place, we know that the real challenges are ahead of us. For myself, nothing could be more exciting!



Ramesh Ramanathan

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Q4 BUDGET ANALYSIS BY CITIZENS

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Dr. Vinod Vyasulu of CBPS in his opening remarks said that this is citizen participation at its best because so many of them had come on a weekend and some from great distances. He said that the PEC groups would be looking into the Namma Budget.

He also shared experiences of his visit to Mexico for attending a conference on Public Governance. PROOF was mentioned at the conference as one of the successful examples of community mobilisation.

He said that now with this external



monitoring we should perform better with more citizen participation. Even people from Porto Allegre wanted to know how PROOF is so dynamic.

Mr. Ramesh Ramanathan spoke

about the Annual Banking Conference for Development Economics (ABCDE) by the World Bank, which is conducted every year at Washington. This year it will be at Bangalore on May 21, 22 and 23. PROOF presentation will be on May 23.

He said that in the next year's public discussions the questions should come from the people. He said that the Ocean liner of the government should dock with the tugboat of the people.

The citizens broke up into 5 groups for Revenue, Capital and Fiduciary, Receipts and Expenditure. They came up with questions and suggestions for the BMP.

32 STUDENTS UNDERGO BALA JANAAGRAHA TRAINING

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knot" tries to untangle itself without breaking hands.

The third module was Respect, where the group discussed the hazards of stereotyping and the importance of a foundation of trust and respect in a group.

The activity on Self-respect, where each member stood up and told the group their strengths and unique talents was difficult but very satisfying. The fourth module was Group Problem-Solving and Decision-Making, which took team-work to the next level. Groups of 6 had to make and serve out rasna to each other, and put on their shoes and tie the laces, all with their hands tied to each other.

They found that the groups that were more careful in their planning and cooperative won at the end as in Flip, where a group of 6, standing on a mat had to completely flip the mat over, without anyone in the group ever getting their feet on the ground.

The next module was Creativity, which emphasized the need for risk-taking and positive-thinking. The games focused on being able to take a failure as a positive, necessary stepping-



stone to success; good attempts were viewed as the real success.

The 6th module was "Conflict-Resolution" where the students learnt the 6 steps to a win-win conflict-resolution. Each group of 6 then very creatively enacted a short role-play on how to resolve conflicts. The applause-winning act went to the group doing a scene in a India and Pakistan cricket match.

The last module was Communication which stressed the importance of being able to be a convincing salesperson to advocate your cause. The "What's-in-it-for-me" customer viewpoint was learnt in a game where groups of 6 had to come up with a 1-minute radio advertisement on selling the un-sellable, like selling "Chicken curry Masala to Vegetarians" and

"Typewriters to Infosys".

The session ended with groups putting their learnings from the 2 days into a song, set to the tune of popular Hindi songs.

The feedback from the students conveyed that the training was fun, provided them with valuable insights into team-work and inspired them to practice the skills learnt. The session ended with many enthusiastic new Janaagrahis wanting to stay involved.

The program was conducted by the campaign coordinator, Sunita Nadhamuni. Janaagraha volunteers Shunori Ramanathan and Divya Goenka assisted in the facilitation.

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SJSRY - ANKUR PILOT PROJECT

The SJSRY - ANKUR Pilot Project will be launched in the first week of May. The four stakeholders – the government, Banks, NGOs and the poor have been waiting for this for the last 9 months to implement this program in the grassroots level in Bangalore city. This model will be replicated in other cities if it is a success in Bangalore.

The NGOs and the government have signed a MoU for the formation and strengthening of 250 TCGs in 100 wards. Each NGO has agreed to form 1 unit (13) TCGs in one CDS. The government will compensate the partner NGOs.

The Project Management Consultant -IDF organized a meeting with the partner NGOs on April 9 to discuss the action plan for the pilot project. 8 of the 12 partner NGOs attended the meeting.

The Project Management team will conduct a 6-day non-residential training program for the NGO animators, Project officer and Community organizers of the SJSRY team.

The project has 2 phases. In the I phase the NGOs and SJSRY team will identify the wards and the Below

Poverty Line families. This task has been completed. They will also collect and collate information of the group members, expose them to other urban Self Help Groups, form the groups and name them and select the office bearers.

The Project management team will conduct the Capacity Building training for TCGs. . The topics included under this training are

- Conduct meetings
- Unity affinity among group members
- Planning, Resource mobilization, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation.
- Rules and regulations,
- Book keeping and auditing
- Conflict resolution
- Collective decision making
- Common fund management
- Linkages with other institutions
- Building credit linkages
- Gender relation

The office bearers of the TCGs will attend a Leadership Training program.

In the II Phase the NGOs will discuss various issues with the TCG members.

They are

- Discuss gender issues
- Discussion on issues such as health, child care, girl

education, AIDS awareness etc

- Discussion on fight against alcoholism, better living standards, prudent family financial; management, life insurances etc
- Convergence of other government or private social sector schemes
- Internal lending in the group for both consumption and productive purposes
- Proper documentation of financial transaction
- Credit linkage with banks.

The group spent a lot of discussing the time frame for each of the activities, which come under the two phases. Each of these activities has to be completed in the allotted to it as this is a 6-month project.

What is Ankur?

This is the third campaign that Janaagraha supports through its participation in the Alliance for A Networked Kinship with Under privileged Residents (ANKUR). This campaign is the most recent and most complex Janaagraha undertaking and requires volunteer support in the coming months. Its goal is to improve the economic condition for the urban poor in Bangalore. Increased self-employment with the help of training and loans will be a step towards sustainable economic betterment. The program helps groups of ten to fifteen people start small micro-credit and savings banks within their community. Because of the partnership with the government and NGO's banks throughout the city have committed to trusting more individuals with small loans. Many NGO leaders, officials from all major banks and representatives from government are working together for the common goal of helping the poor improve their own situation with a small but well-placed helping hand.

TRAINING FOR COMMUNITIES

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belonging to different associations from 6 wards got together to attend the first of such sessions.

Speaking to the gathering Ramesh Ramanathan asked to list out the key ingredients for better public governance. The list included

- 1) Citizen involvement in works
- 2) Response and accountability of government.
- 3) Transparency
- 4) City consciousness
- 5) Citizens requirement for infrastructure
- 6) Continuity
- 7) Awareness
- 8) Special attention to backward areas.

Most of them felt that working in a structured way gives better results.

Ramesh said that the energy and enthusiasm of the people has carried them to a certain point. We have only reached the bottom of the mountain and to reach the top we need a change in attitude he said. To reach the top we need larger teams of people, tools and skills and the teams should be world class. He hoped this training would provide that change

35 wards attended the first session and enjoyed the exercises they were made to go through. They participated in 5 exercises.

The CDS team will visit each of the wards and observe them conducting meetings and their working together as a team. There will further training sessions for the next 6 months.

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE
