



Opportunity Campus – Agriculture

Opportunity Campus is an innovative project that targets young adults with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 14–35 and prepares them for employment and independent living. The project provides them with education and vocational training within agriculture and handicraft. In addition to self-sustainability the aim is to create acceptability in society and reclaim fundamental human rights.

The campus at Kariamanikam is home to 15 men above 18 with intellectual disabilities. They divide their days between agricultural training in the fields, animal care and education. The educational part is a combination of practical exercises for independent living and academic study of animals and organic farming. After completing two years of training the students are assisted with finding gainful employment.

Training

Training is provided in 3 areas: agriculture, producing organic manure and rearing farm animals. The task analysis method is followed to impart training. Tasks are devised to suit the trainees. Tasks are further segmented into simple commands and numbered training sites to make the learning process simple.

The Activity & Rest method is followed. Yoga and relaxation exercises are placed between training sessions to overcome fatigue.

Agriculture Farming

Farming is divided in two divisions: Natural farming (ecological) and modern farming separated by a buffer zone. Everything under natural farming is grown organically using vermicompost and natural growth promoters. Modern farming is newly introduced in order to train the young men in sustainable agriculture.

After tests & trials, suitable crops are identified based on criteria of high yield and low maintenance. Identified crops so far are: tapioca (cassava), ground nuts, onion, corn, eggplant, and mushrooms.

Fertilizer (Vermicompost)

Organic fertilizer is produced on the campus, which is



bought by farmers and used in their fields. The compost is kept in long, open containers with a coconut leaf roof and netting on top. The agricultural and animal waste is dumped in one specific location until it reaches a semi-decomposed state. It is then moved to vermi pits and earth worms are introduced. This is a very effective organic manure for plants in any type of farming.

Farm Animals

This project is based on an integrated farming approach. Agriculture produces fodder for animals – animal waste is converted into vermicompost – vermicompost is used as manure in farming.

Farm animals provide opportunities for therapeutic interaction while generating income: Local bred calves are procured and reared until they become heifers. They are then sold to farmers in the district. Goats are bought as teds and sold to farmers when they are fully grown. A nucleus animal group is kept as a backup. Country chicken are reared and sold to the people in the area.

About Intact

Intact, a non-profit, charity organization, was established in 1992 by Thomas Ebenezer who, by helping those in need of food, shelter and a sense of security, is living his dream.

Intact works to empower marginalised individuals in society, with focus on people with intellectual disabilities, mountain tribes and poor women, by creating opportunities for independent living.

We want to achieve a society where everyone, regardless of caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, colour and ability is accepted and given the opportunity to develop to their full potential – without discrimination.