

# Empowering Others

Prashant Mishra

We can all be honest, law-abiding citizens who are aware of our rights and responsibilities towards society and the nation. But being good citizens also requires us to contribute to society in ways that we can. Here's what I decided to do.

The core philosophy with which I started *Project Careach* was to care and reach out to those who need help and in ways that benefit them over a long period of their lives, ideally, lifelong. India has the world's largest child population; 95 percent attend primary school and only one in ten go on to do undergraduate degrees.<sup>1</sup> Having realised the magnitude of the problem, I felt encouraged to pursue this social cause. As Nelson Mandela once said, 'Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world'.

## How I started

The first task was to locate the beneficiaries. Based on my research and suggestions from my parents it was decided that I work with a government school. After meetings with the General Body of Kudlu Government School, Bangalore, the Management approved this project.

To align the interests of all stakeholders - parents, students and school administration - I conducted around 145 interviews and found that students were interested in English, mathematics and sports. A lot of them were also interested in co-curricular activities which I believe could be a result of exposure to television and other media. But from an academic point of view, English came up as the subject of greatest interest and therefore, I decided to teach spoken English to class V students (English is introduced in class V in government schools).

The school administration was also keen to get some development work done at the school. This required some funding and it took me some time to mobilise monetary resources, but eventually I was able to. The list included the following:

## Progress so far

1. A group of 54 students in classes V and VI are

being taught spoken English.

2. A crowd-funding platform, *Careach.in*, is operational, with presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We also campaigned door-to-door.
3. We created content for the sessions, which are interactive and have conducted 45 sessions so far.
4. We have already collected about 50 percent of our funding needs which has been used for purchasing a printer, green chalkboards, and some indoor games.

While I was making steady progress, COVID-19 brought things to an immediate halt and as things evolved, it became evident that parents and children were certainly going through hardships. So, I changed gears and decided to support the student families in whatever way I could. In my meeting with the school Principal, it emerged that it would be best if we could support the neediest 30 families with food and day-to-day supplies between August to November 2020. A list of beneficiaries was made in consultation with the school Principal. Extensive door-to-door and online donations were sought and I got a steady flow of funds to help these families.

## Work ahead

Beyond the other planned activities, the school needs extra toilet facilities. My quest to help continues and I am scouting for some corporate/CSR funding. The estimated cost is ten lakh rupees, which I am certain we will eventually be able to collect. But for now, my work of teaching only spoken English and helping with minor infrastructure improvement continues.

Recently, I was also able to help the school with a high-speed internet connection.

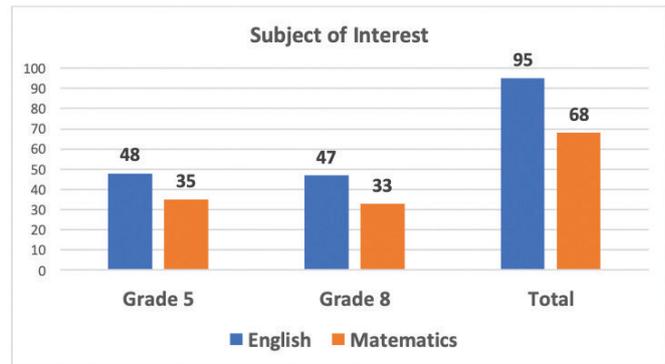
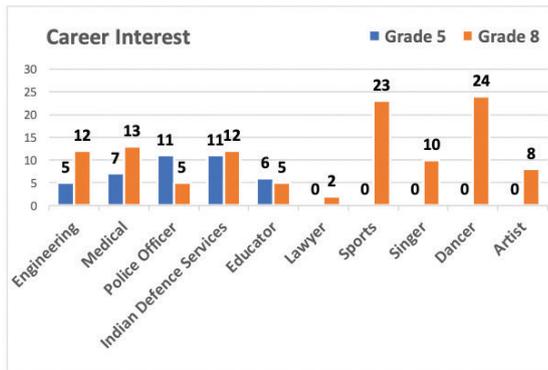
As citizens of democratic nations, it is the duty of every person to help make life better for everyone. Instead of choosing to do what is easy, we need to

take actions that are just. We need to work towards unconditional equality and not categorise our society based on irrelevant factors, such as wealth,

gender, caste, religion, etc. It is obvious that it will take time for this to happen, but the least we can do is to take steps we can. I am trying to do my part.



**Met a total of 145 Stakeholders = 124 Students || 11 Teachers || 10 Parents**



### Inside the classroom

- English text books  
Rs. 30,000.00
- Class library  
Rs. 120,000
- Green chalk boards  
Rs. 47,436
- Benches and desks  
Rs. 154,000

### Office & Building

- Photocopier  
Rs. 106,672.00
- Painting, artistic walls  
Rs. 150,000
- Indoor games  
Rs. 17,000

We are supporting one government school

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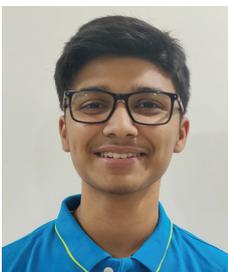
Estimated spend of **Rs. 617,618 (\$8,880)** with 10% contingency



i [https://www.cry.org/resources/pdf/Types\\_of\\_Corp\\_parts\\_sep11.pdf](https://www.cry.org/resources/pdf/Types_of_Corp_parts_sep11.pdf)

**References**

- <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2011/09/20/education-in-india>
- <https://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/India-Education-Report.pdf>



**Prashant Mishra** is a class XI student of The International School Bangalore (TISB). His favourite subjects are Economics and Mathematics. He also enjoys exploring areas that combine technological advances along with their economic implications. He wishes to pursue Economics in college. He can be reached at [mprashant@tisb.ac.in](mailto:mprashant@tisb.ac.in)