



Leaderess

2023 Dec-2024 Jan



*“A leaderess builds a harmonious
Family to create a sustainable world for everyone”*

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AIRD-WEP Leadership Academy
Provides holistic development for first-generation women college students through
Scholarship, Capacity Building, and Career Guidance.

EDITORIAL

Greetings Everyone!!



Greetings all, this is Vijayalakshmi and I am excited to extend my warm New Year wishes to you for a year filled with abundance and success. I am thrilled to share the news that the Academy project, which has been one of ILAKKU's most successful programs, has made a significant impact on students in a very short period. It has been an incredible journey to witness the transformation of the students. In December and January, we welcomed numerous visitors to our organization. They were interested in partnering with us to offer career-oriented programs that would be beneficial to their business operations, mutual learning opportunities, expertise-sharing sessions, fun learning activities, and impact assessment services.

As a team, we meticulously reviewed the programs that we have planned for the upcoming academic year 2024-25. We had fruitful discussions with the students, who provided us with valuable feedback and insightful suggestions for new initiatives to enhance the program's effectiveness. We made sure to address all the challenges that we have encountered and worked together to come up with practical solutions. We also had constructive conversations with the parents to explain their vital role in our organization and how they can support their children's development through our programs. Furthermore, we selected capable individuals to represent both the student and parent federations, who will work closely with us to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process. We are determined to stay united and committed to the growth and success of our organization.

A.Vijayalakshmi
Academy Director

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STUDENTS MEETING



December 3rd, 2023, we held a meeting with our students to discuss their commitments and responsibilities as members of our community. During the meeting, we also addressed some of their concerns, recognized scholarship recipients who received their second payment, provided residential training on gender, culture, and society, discussed upcoming programs and initiatives, and concluded with a vote of thanks and a certificate ceremony to

acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our students. It was a productive and engaging session, and we're proud of our students' achievements and contributions to our community.

MEETING WITH PARENT



As part of our routine, we conduct meetings with the parents of our students to discuss their progress, challenges, and commitments. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to meet the parents of one of our students. She is a single mother who works at a high-end store and has a strong desire for her daughter to become an IAS officer. Despite facing numerous obstacles in her job, she remains dedicated to supporting her daughter's dream. The mother was proud of her daughter for being responsible and committed to her studies.

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CERTIFICATE CEREMONY



Recognizing and rewarding individuals who exceed expectations can have a significant impact on their motivation and self-esteem. This approach is particularly effective in recognizing and celebrating success and hard work in a student's academic life. Although certificates and awards may seem like just another item to add to a student's collection, those who are truly appreciated view them as a great honour and a source of pride. Awards and accolades play a vital role in a student's life by highlighting their achievements and setting them apart from their peers. Recognizing

students with awards and certificates can inspire others to work towards similar recognition, creating a culture of excellence and healthy competition. Even a small gesture of appreciation can serve as a great motivation for students, encouraging them to work harder and more diligently. At our institution, we regularly evaluate our students' performance in each subject and recognize their accomplishments with certificates and awards to celebrate their hard work and dedication. Course and recognize them with certificates.

MEETING WITH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES



I met with the Student Representatives for the 2023–24 academic year. We discussed the Student Federation, which was created to provide a space for students to voice their needs, share their thoughts on their studies and careers, and suggest and implement programs. Every year, representatives are selected to represent the students' interests. These representatives lead the Federation, organize events for students, and provide support for various programs.

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STUDENT FOLDER CREATION



As part of our program, students have access to three distinct types of folders. The first is the Student folder, which contains their documents. The second is the Assignment folder, where they can find their workshop and webinar assignments. The third is the Club Assignment folder, which is dedicated to club-related assignments. To help them improve their writing and creativity skills, students are expected to complete these assignments after each

workshop, reinforcing the knowledge they have gained.

MEETING WITH ALUMNA



Our female graduates (alumnae) frequently visit us for different reasons. During their visits, they discuss their career challenges and accomplishments, express their interest in sharing knowledge with current students, express their willingness to participate in academy programs, and introduce new students to the program. Recently, Ms. Ammu, one of our graduates, visited us and expressed her desire to teach Hindi-speaking skills to the students.

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MS. ASHA MEAGHER'S VISIT



Ms. Asha Meagher and her mother visited our institution and had an interactive session with the students. Ms. Asha is an expert in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) research. The United Nations set 17 SDGs to transform the world, which include No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and

Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life On Land, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships for the Goals. Ms. Asha is specifically researching the Gender Equality goal.

She presented her research results by using two criteria: 1) the percentage of women and girls aged 15 and above who have ever had a partner and have experienced physical, sexual, or psychological abuse from a current or former intimate partner within the past 12 months, categorized by the type of violence, and by age. The survey measures the prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls aged 15 and older by someone other than their partner over the past 12 months, categorized by age group and location. Students had a wonderful experience with Ms. Asha. They also shared their experiences at the academy, social issues, and dream jobs with her and her mother. Ms. Asha and her mother asked many questions and were greatly impressed by the students' answers.

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DR.DIKSHA MISHRA'S VISIT



Dr. Diksha Mishra and her husband from the US visited us to learn about our program. Students interacted with her about academy experience, Education, Career, community problems like Lack of bus facilities, Drinking water facilities, and Challenges they face. Dr. Diksha is from Calcutta, and her husband is from Gujarat but settled in the US. Both of them have the aspiration to support young women in India.

BASIC COMPUTER- FINAL EXAMINATION



The computer has become an essential part of our daily lives, making various operations and activities much easier to perform. It is an electronic device that receives, stores, retrieves, and uses data in a useful manner. Computers can process different types of numbers and solve complex mathematical equations with high accuracy. They were invented in the second half of the twentieth century and have now become an integral part of our lives. Today, we conducted the

final examination for our Basic Computer students who completed our 30-hour package. The course covered Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and basic internet skills. A total of 21 students benefited from the program.

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ONLINE MEETING WITH MS. MEDHA KRISHNAN



We had an online meeting with Ms. Medha Krishnan from TAN90, a young start-up focused on providing equal access to high-quality resources for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education. They aim to encourage learners to think critically and develop a scientific temperament rather than memorizing information. TAN90 creates

PHYSITAL solutions for students to learn Science and Mathematics through hands-on learning experiences available both online and offline. The program was attended by students from both Madurai and Ramnad Academy who showed a great interest in this initiative.

MEETING WITH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES



On the afternoon of December 31st, 2023, which was the last day of the year, we convened with our esteemed student representatives. These individuals play a crucial role in our academic program and are known for their exceptional commitment and leadership skills. We discussed various important matters during the meeting, including a warm welcome speech, updates on upcoming programs, the students' resolutions for 2024, the responsibilities of students, an

assessment of their commitments, and program planning for the upcoming year. It was a productive meeting, and we concluded it with a heartfelt vote of thanks.

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RESIDENTIAL TRAINING ON “GENDER, CULTURE AND SOCIETY”



On the evening of December 8, 2023, at 7:30 pm, our group arrived at Sacred Heart College in Kodaikanal for a two-day residential training program on Gender, Culture, and Society. The program was attended by 36 students, including 19 students from Madurai and 17 students from Ramnad. The training was facilitated by Ms. Parvatha Varthini, a distinguished feminist and social activist, who brought her extensive knowledge and expertise to the program. Throughout the two-day program, the students were under the care and guidance of three academy staff members to ensure their comfort and safety.

During the residential training program, participants engaged in discussions on a wide range of topics related to gender, society, and culture. The training covered important issues such as family dynamics, patriarchy, gender roles, and stereotypes, and how these impact individuals and communities. Participants also explored the prevalence of gender bias, discrimination, and violence in society and learned about strategies to combat these issues. Additionally, they discussed how to promote sisterhood and break down gender stereotypes, as well as the importance of gender equity, rights, and justice. The training also included sessions on manners and etiquette in different cultures and societies, and how these influence relationships and interactions. Lastly, participants delved into healthy relationships and how to foster sisterhood in action.

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PARENTS MEETING



During our meeting on December 31st, 2023, we had the privilege of conversing with our esteemed parent representatives. Our meeting was highly productive and we had fruitful discussions about various aspects of our academy, including our students, program, and challenges. We covered a range of topics during the meeting, including a warm welcome address to kick things off. We also provided an update on the academy program for parents, outlining the latest changes and developments. Next, parents shared their resolutions for the upcoming year, expressing their hopes and aspirations for their children's education and personal growth. We also spoke about the critical role parents play in

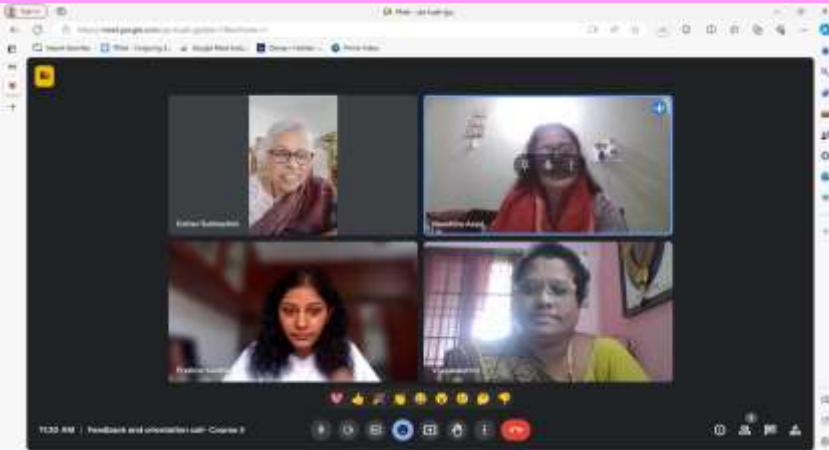
the academy, highlighting the importance of their involvement in their children's education. One crucial aspect of the meeting was the election of parent representatives for 2024. We are confident that the representatives selected will serve as a valuable link between the academy and the parents, helping us to build even stronger relationships and partnerships. We also enjoyed hearing from parents about their experiences and their daughters' impact on the academy. It was inspiring to hear how our program is making a real difference in the lives of our students and their families.

Finally, we closed the meeting with a vote of thanks, expressing our gratitude for the opportunity to have such a meaningful discussion. As we approach the end of the year, we are grateful for the chance to come together and collaborate with our parent representatives to ensure the success of our academy and our students.

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CURRICULUM REVIEW –ONLINE MEETING



Four accomplished women, Ms. Vijayalakshmi, Ms. Esther, Ms. Nausina, and Ms. Pratima, recently held an online meeting to discuss the curriculum for the upcoming residential training program on Leadership Spark. During the meeting, they meticulously went through the curriculum topics, warm-up exercises, and time constraints to ensure

that everything was planned to perfection. Each participant shared their thoughts and reflections on the curriculum, leading to fruitful discussions. Their dedication to ensuring a successful training program was evident throughout the meeting, and their clear plan of action promised an exceptional learning experience for all the participants.

ETHNIC DAY 2024



On 13th January 2024, our academy celebrated Ethnic Day. Our students attended the event dressed in their traditional outfits, bringing along with them traditional food. They explained the medicinal properties of the food and performed traditional dances. The main objective of this program was to revive ethnic culture among the younger generation and raise awareness about its importance. On Ethnic Day, students were encouraged to wear their ethnic outfits and bring

ethnic recipes to exhibit at the center. Each student explained the preparation method of their ethnic dish and the health benefits associated with it. The aim of exhibiting these ethnic food varieties was to encourage students to learn how to cook and appreciate their traditional recipes, understand their medicinal properties, reduce the consumption of fast food, revive cultural food practices, and lead healthier lives.

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RESIDENTIAL TRAINING ON “LEADERSHIP SPARK”



On 6th and 7th January 2024, AIRD-Madurai Academy organized a two-day residential training program named "Leadership Spark" to help students enhance their leadership skills. The training was conducted by Dr. Suresh Kumar and the team from Yellow Pond Counseling Center. A total of 32 students from Madurai Academy and Ramnad Academy participated in this program. The students arrived at CESC on the evening of January 5th, where they were warmly welcomed with dinner. Later, they were introduced to each other, and the facilitators briefed them about the training schedule and guidelines for the upcoming days. The program was designed to cover various aspects of leadership, which included topics like Leadership Within and Around You, Leadership Styles and Learning from the Lives of Exemplary Leaders, Creative Problem-Solving, Decision-Making, Delegation, Ethical Goal-Setting, Having A Vision, Creative Thinking, Brainstorming, Active Listening, Articulation, and Voicing Opinions. The training sessions were productive, interactive, and engaging, where students learned and shared their experiences. Overall, the program was a great success, and the students left with valuable insights and skills to become better leaders.

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WORKSHOP ON “LEADERSHIP WITHIN AND AROUND YOU”



We had a workshop on "Leadership within and around you" which was conducted by Ms. Prasanna Priya, a psychologist from Yellow Pond. During the session, she discussed various aspects of leadership. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), leadership involves processes like organizing, directing, coordinating, and motivating the efforts of a group or organization toward achieving specific goals. Leadership is reciprocal, meaning that both leaders and followers can influence each other.

Leadership can be broadly classified into five types: transformational leadership (authoritative), Delegative leadership (LAISSEZ-FAIRE), autocratic leadership, transactional leadership, and participative leadership.

WORKSHOP ON “FINANCE- LEDGER CREATION



We recently attended a workshop on "Finance: Ledger Creation" organized by Mr. Ariaravelan. During the workshop, we learned the basics of accounting and how to maintain a cash book in the first part. In the second part of the workshop, we discussed Ledger creation and the double-entry system.

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READERS CLUB



A new Readers club has been established in our academy to review and analyze current events and news stories from daily newspapers. We have subscribed to two newspapers, namely Dhinamani and The Hindu, to provide our students with a regular supply of news and to encourage them to develop the habit of reading newspapers. The primary goal of this club is to enhance their analytical skills and promote critical thinking.



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SCHOOL VISIT



We have begun advertising our program in schools and colleges to reach out to girls in need. We met Ms. Mary Anita at Kasturiba Gandhi School. She is an amazing person whom we consider a sister and friend. She has a noble character, and we felt positive energy from her in the morning. She is truly a wonderful soul". We understand the importance of sharing personal stories, which is why we always invite alumni students to share their experiences with School students and teachers and the impact our organization has had on their lives. We hope that these stories will inspire and motivate others to join

us in making a positive difference in the world.

MR.JAGADISH BABU, SAATHIYA ACADEMY'S VISIT



We had the pleasure of hosting Jagadish Babu Vishwanatham, Senior Program Manager, at our organization. Jagadish is an experienced business leader with over 28 years of expertise in management, technology, and social impact areas. Before joining SAATHIYA, Jags worked with renowned organizations like Infosys and the National Institute for Smart Governance, and he also co-founded a start-up aimed at integrating the healthcare ecosystem to help save lives during emergencies. His passion for social impact has

brought him to SAATHIYA, where he will be responsible for creating new partnerships with NOs, associations, and state governments to build channels for students to access SAATHIYA. Mr. Jagadish conducted an orientation session for our students on hospitality and careers in hotel management.

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STUDY SKILL WORKSHOP



On January 26, 2024, we began offering study skills workshops to our Academy students. Our students come from Tamil-medium backgrounds in their schooling, and when they transition to college, they often struggle with adapting to an English-based curriculum. To assist them with this transition, we are providing study skills workshops that cover a range of topics including Learning in English Medium, Understanding Learning Objectives, Listening and Note-taking, Vocabulary and Language Learning, Methods for Reading Comprehension, Questioning and Communication, Using Library References, and Academy Writing. These courses are primarily intended for freshmen. The first session, "Learning in English Medium", was led by Mr.

Ariaravelan and took place on January 26, 2024. During the session, Mr. Ariaravelan explained the difference between studying and learning.

He explained the challenges that students face in handling their subjects in English and how to overcome them. He also highlighted the importance of studying in English for higher education.

During the participatory session, the students were highly engaged. A total of 29 students benefited from the session.



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STUDENTS MEETING



On January 28, 2024, a meeting was held for students to discuss various important topics. The meeting began with a warm welcome to all attendees. The first item on the agenda was the evaluation of scholarships for the second payment of the year 2023-2024. This was followed by a discussion on how to strengthen student clubs and their activities. The next item on the agenda was the planning of the program schedule for the year 2024-2025. The participants discussed the various activities that could be organized during the

year to make it more engaging and productive for everyone involved. The meeting also focused on how to advertise the program in schools and colleges to reach out to more students who could benefit from it. This discussion was followed by the Any Other Business item where students were free to raise any other concerns or suggestions they may have.

Finally, the meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks to everyone who participated and contributed their valuable insights. In total, twenty-five students attended the meeting, making it a productive and informative session for all involved.

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JEWELLERY WORKSHOP- ONLINE



Ms. Ava and Ms. Zinat, students from the US conducted a highly successful jewellery workshop for our students at the Madurai and Ramnad academies. This online program was met with great enthusiasm as our students learned to make bracelets. Some of our students even showcased their entrepreneurial skills during the workshop. It was a highly effective student-connect program that left a lasting impact on all attendees.



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CASE STUDIES



Ms. Prasanna Priya Nagarajan is an alumna of WEP. She joined WEP during her undergraduate studies in 2008 and received a scholarship to complete her graduation courses. She pursued her post-graduation in Mathematical Economics and earned her Ph.D. from Madurai Kamaraj University, Nagamalai Pudukkottai, Madurai-21. Currently, she is conducting research on Employment potential in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) receiving companies in Tamil Nadu, with a focus on analyzing the socio-economic conditions of FDI-receiving companies' employees and the production and investment output of FDI-receiving companies.

Ms. Prasanna Nagarajan is currently married and has a baby boy. She works as an economics teacher at Pole Star Matriculation School in Chennai, where she teaches 11th and 12th-grade students. In addition, she runs her enterprise called "Sri Enterprise".



Hello, my name is Nalina. I want to share my experience with the Women's Education Project (WEP), which has been a valuable resource for me. When I started college at Meenakshi College in 2004, I had very little general knowledge. It was through my college that I learned about WEP. Education has been a guiding force in my life, and my college directed me towards WEP. I think it's important to note that WEP has provided me with more than just financial assistance. Before joining WEP, I was hesitant to express my doubts, feelings, and opinions, and I struggled to interact with others. But through WEP, I not only received a stipend but also valuable encouragement. I even learned computer skills through their workshop programs. I developed my vocabulary with help from friends at WEP and used their library extensively while preparing for my SBI competitive examination.

With their support, I successfully completed my PG degree through Distance Education. After finishing my UG degree, I worked at Tata Motor Finance Ltd for three years, and then at Adinn Advertising Service Private Ltd for 2 and a half years. In 2013, I spent the entire year attending coaching classes and preparing for the TNPSC examinations. I was eventually appointed as a Junior Assistant in the Indian Medicine and Homeopathy Department after passing the Group IV examination. I worked at the Collector's Office, Theni for two months before being promoted to Assistant after passing the Group II examination. Currently, I work as an Assistant at the Homeopathy Medical College and Hospital in Thirumangalam. I regret that I wasted six years without any awareness of TNPSC, and I believe

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that WEP can help others avoid this mistake. WEP is committed to women's education and welfare, and I hope that they will conduct coaching classes for competitive examinations to create awareness among WEP students.



T. Patham Priya, an engineering student, has a long history with WEP. At the age of 16, Priya began her time at WEP, and at the age of 20 is still assisting with workshops and much more. As someone who took all of the classes offered, and utilized the library facilities, she was able to gain skills necessary to be an engineering student. She has finished her Electronics and Communications Engineering at the Sethu Institute of Technology. As one who became

better at English through WEP's programs, she feels comfortable about finding a job after graduation. However, she knows that there is no other option for her. With her father deceased, and a mother who makes very little, she wants to get a job to be able to support her younger brother, including his education. A selfless girl, Priya hopes she can help her family to leave the "poor state" that she has always remembered them in. To Priya, WEP is a place where she can vent about these problems. There are people to talk to and friends who she describes as sharing everything. Priya said that the "Life Skills" workshop was one of her favourites, as it allows the girls to find solutions to real-world problems. She is working as software Engineer in Vuram Technology Solutions, Chennai.

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Ms.Lavanya's story in her own words:



Hi, my name is Lavanya Devi and I am from Achampathu, Madurai. I got to know about Mrs. Zoe Timms in 2002 when her father conducted a Time Management and Goal-Setting workshop. Even today, the lessons I learned in that workshop are useful to me. In 2003, I worked as an Administrator for the WEP program where I taught Basic Computer Training and Desktop Publishing. In 2004, the WEP Organization supported me in studying my graduation program at Madurai Lady Doak College, where I studied 18 sciences. Mrs. Zoe Timms also taught me, Spoken English classes, at Level One and Level two, which helped me improve my spoken and written skills. Thanks to the support of our board members and Mrs. Viji Akka, a staff member at WEP, I was able to attend a PG program in Sociology at Madurai Kamaraj University. Later, Mrs. Viji Akka recommended me for a job as a Magazine Designer at the Gandhi Museum in Madurai. It was a nice and creative job, and the place was very secure for me. In 2007, I got married and now have two children - R. Rajpriyan, who is in tenth standard, and R. Santhosh Raj, who is in eighth standard. My husband, R. Rajamani, works

as a shared auto driver. Though I was busy with my family, I continued to work with WEP and attended the DTP Program for college students in the evenings. Since October 2023, I've participated in various sports programs, including weightlifting where I won the second-prize Silver medal at Chennai Damparam Stadium in December. In February 2024, I participated in the State level Para Sitting Volleyball Competition at Erode, Sri Rajiv Gandhi Polytechnic College ground, where nine districts participated. The Madurai team secured the third prize of a cup and a cash award of 5000 rupees, and I was thrilled to be a part of it. It was my first time participating in such a competition, and I found it both challenging and interesting. In every district, three players were selected for the National level competition camp, and I was one of the twenty women players selected. The final list of twelve players for the match will depend on performance, so I hope to cut. Apart from sports, I've also attended various skill-based programs, such as Dehydrating Fruits and Vegetables, Soap Making, and Candle Making. With this knowledge, I've started my own business selling home-made products that are based on pure natural ingredients with no added chemicals. I feel like a new entrepreneur now and am achieving something in life. I hope that other students in the WEP program will also do something special in their lives. Thank you, my dear friends.



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RAMNAD ACADEMY

WORKSHOP ON DIGITAL LITERACY AND CYBER SAFETY



During the workshop held on December 30th and 31st, 2023, Er. Washith Ali, LLF from Learning Links Foundation (LLF) in New Delhi discussed several digital literacy, technology, and cybersecurity topics. The topics covered were as follows:

1. What is digital literacy and its importance? 2. The evolution of technology. 3. The use of smartphones. 4. The Industrial Revolution 4. 5. The Internet of Things (IoT). 6. A list of social media platforms that can be used to gain knowledge and stay updated. 7. Software and AI platforms that can be used for personal development. 8. The pros and cons of AI. 9. An overview of what cybercrime

is. 10. Case studies on cybercrime reports. 11. How to safeguard our privacy when using digital equipment and what information to share and not to share. 12. How to report a cybercrime. 13. Conclusion.

SPOKEN ENGLISH CLASS



During the Spoken English Class, participants were introduced to various topics like the basics of spoken English and interactive ice-breaking activities. The class covered fundamental grammar concepts such as tenses, and students practiced their skills through role-play and

telephone conversation exercises. Additionally, a lively debate was held on the usage of "this," "that," and "Wh-" questions, providing an opportunity for students to engage in critical thinking and improve their language proficiency.

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LET US GROW TOGETHER!!

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