

Dream a Dream - Outdoor Experiential Camp

In a dynamically changing world, young people are and will continue to face very complex challenges and we as a society are not able to prepare young people for life through our current model of education. Dream a Dream believes that if we need to empower young people, building critical life skills is essential to enable them to lead productive, healthy lives.



Since its founding in 1999, Dream a Dream has been successfully addressing the needs of children and young people from vulnerable backgrounds by developing Life Skills using a variety of experiential programmes. One such programme is the Dream Outdoor Experiential Camp.

Dream Outdoor Experiential Camps

The Dream Outdoor Experiential camps are designed using the Creative Community Model developed by Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE Global), a Dream a Dream Partner. The model uses experiential techniques to understand the self, unlock the creative potential, and build supportive learning communities by learning through fun. The camp is a three and a half day residential experience designed to take the young people and the adults through a transformative journey of self-discovery and understanding each other as well as the communities which they are a part of using arts as a core medium of expression.

The camp focuses on four primary goals:

- **To understand ourselves**

Dream a Dream believes that through understanding who we are, what are our strengths, what are the different roles we play, we begin to discover an inner compass through which we can make better decisions and are able to lead lives that we are proud of. The camp provides the space for all participants to understand themselves, their own journeys and take that awareness forward.

- **To learn from each other**

Learning from each other encapsulates critical life skills of team work, empathy, listening and sharing. This is important as each of us lives in a social world where there is abundant possibility. To be able to appreciate and acknowledge each other and build on one's skills through a mutual learning environment, is a key component of the camp.

- **To learn to take leadership to build my community**



One of the key skills that is focused on within the camp through the experiential process is to take initiative and strengthen one's leadership skills. These are not only integral through the three and half days at camp, but important to take forward once the participants leave the camp and go back to their lives in their respective communities.

- **To have fun**

Learning through fun is a foundational goal that Dream A Dream believes in. By creating an environment of joy and sharing through creative experiences, learning remains life- long

Some of the Testimonials form camp participants

*This Camp has been constructive in churning the thinking and pondering in children. A fearless environment to share their feelings and thoughts outright was visible very much, also the camp demonstrated that provided an opportunity a real potential could be brought to light. Providing a creative control without any discrimination, treating everyone with equality, providing a greater guidance is very much commendable. Much gratitude to the organizers.- **Deputy Project Co-ordinator, Shimoga Distrcit, Karnataka***

*Organizing the activities in camp to have a room for children to participate in all of them, was extremely supportive and encouraging. All the activities were closer to the interest of children, as well as representing the regional arts and skills. Having projecting the initiative and managing skills of the participants in their family groups was very much likable It is of no suspect that organizing such camps for children will develop their creative potential to much of a larger quotient.- **Participant from District Institute of Education and Training, Shimoga, Karnatka***

STORY OF CHANGE (From outdoor experiential camp)

As told by Shilpa, Lead Facilitator who volunteered at the camp

The camp lead by two lead facilitators, Nilisha and Bopanna, was truly amazing and definitely set a benchmark the way camps can be lead. Every detail was kept in mind at all times to create a space where each of us felt encouraged to explore and nurture ourselves of our skills and talents. It was heartening to see how young people were open to express their thoughts and ideas and take creative risks.

During every staff meeting, the leads would talk about what they saw was not going good and how we could help get the group's energy up. Things like how zoombas

(camp volunteers) have to treat young people as equal, our need to come forward in gratitude circle and show how it is not only the big things that deserve gratitude, importance to push our learning edge and its effects on the young people, etc. It was also good to see how zoombas and leads worked as one team and were in sync.

Jayanth (a student attending the camp) said "it is difficult to get spaces like this where we can share freely." The grace and honesty in which he led the youth-led workshop with his friend Rakshith was amazing. He taught participants to make science models. The way he owned the group and took us step by step on how to make a rocket with simple and clear instructions was excellent. As a next activity, we had to make a solar system. He took ideas from each one of us on how we would want to do it and let us do the model.

The way **Maria Pradeep (a student attending the camp)** lead the workshop about life skills where he was constantly challenging the group to be together and keep calm and attentive, modified his instructions and took the group together to the goal. He conducted a reflection circle at the end to hear about the experience from the participants. Took what he felt was important and brought it to the group to know what others wanted to say. I was amazed to see how he had conducted the workshop and debrief of the same.

The way the quiet and shy girl **Nisha**, who is basically from Delhi, and has moved to Bangalore only this year, opened up, conducted a workshop on Mehendi design, and had drawn mehendi design using sketch pen on Pavan's palm. It was a real treat to hear her speak about her design with so much promptness, innocence, humbleness and satisfaction at the open Mic. She said, "I was very concerned when I started the design, I did not know what to put, but the way that Pavan was so enthusiastic, happy, and interested in getting the design done that the designs automatically started flowing through my hands"

It was also great to see how our family group, **Rainbow family**, came up with "Before and After" Skit for the Open Mic where each one of them said what they had learned and will change in them when they go back and I had already been noticing that they started to do everything that they said.