

A Point Made



Slam Out Loud: Art that teaches children the meaning of life



Slam out loud is an organisation which believes in art education. This organisation uses art form to help children understand themselves and the world around them from their point of view. Art based education is a significant part for those students who can't express themselves by academic learning. Naman bhaiya said "I have used storytelling as an art form in my class. Most of the children who never listened to anyone started listening to each other and respecting others voices". It always becomes a piece of cake if children's want to do something they want, like if they want to express themselves by writing stories, poems or drawing.

Sometimes we don't have any words for expressing our feelings but we have a creative side like making drawings through which other people can know about your feelings. " If I tell a child to write something, what happens in your home last day? Maybe he can't write it but if I say , draw a picture of the activities which took place at your home last week?

Then he/she might draw anything through which we can understand something". Said by Maridula.

Slam out loud organizations use art forms for building up social emotions learning in a child. The fellows always observe the child's growth in a classroom and in a society. They believe in four parameters which are



curiosity, critical thinking , imagination and communication.

They do many activities to develop curiosity in children like giving a blank circle to every child and giving them time to make anything they know from that circle.

It is not compulsory for being all rounder in every space of life. Some students are extremely creative and imaginative but they can't read or write and SOL is doing such work where they recognise these students. They not only mobilize students to feel free at the space but also they mobilize teachers to be more supportive.

They always motivates their colleagues for house visiting of their community from where children belong through which they can understand the problems which are facing by childrens.

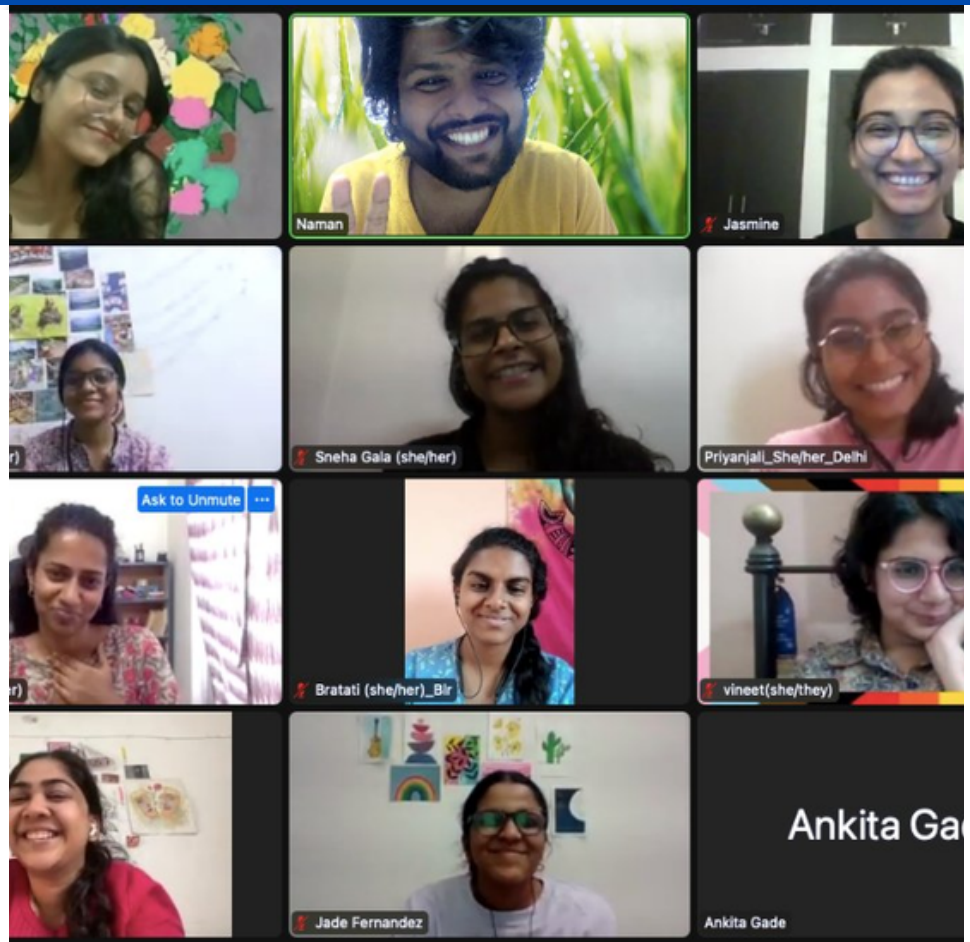
To start, Slam Out Loud is a large company, but what if a person wants to start something like SOL? Well, people from SOL stated a few ways to do exactly that! One thing you can do is, join them! Joining them would help you in many ways and also just being a part of them, they look for motivated and driven individuals who understand the transformative power of arts or have experienced it themselves. Or, if a teacher wants to let their students explore through socio-emotion learning and arts, and wants to introduce them to these, SOL has a ton of freely available resources like lesson plans, scripts, PPTs, videos, etc. not only on their website but also on their youtube channel! Though, While you take part in all of this, you learn one side of it, what about the one where there are a few hurdles and speedbumps in your way? What if a stakeholder doesn't agree with you or isn't with you? The 3 main external stakeholders are parents, school teachers/leaders and the community. For parents, the first step can be enhancing and growing their relationship with their children by providing them with resources and tools for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). By taking notes from these activities with teachers we will be able to implement these workshops in more places and collaborate with school teachers and leaders to organize well-being circles and best practice sharing circles to foster a conducive learning environment for all students. And, once you make these art projects you must showcase the art projects at the school level to involve teachers and leaders in celebrating the achievements of the students and community, where teachers and communities can both see the improvement and skills themselves.

With something as big as SOL, some hardships you come across, like collaborating and functioning with the stakeholders. Now, for that, SOL conducts meetings and feedback sessions with parents, teachers and students to understand the needs and expectations from their perspective and to get their reviews. They also make the parents experience the things their child is, by curation and facilitating activities for parents and teachers. While all of this is there, during events, where many stakeholders are present, they have open mics and showcases from the stakeholder's perspectives. They aim for stakeholders to acknowledge their commitment to empowering children and creating platforms where their voices are heard and valued. For that, they design their events that create a space for stakeholders as well to express and feel valued so that the stakeholders have the same inclusion their students/children do.

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Behind the Scenes of the people at Slam Out Loud: Here is what Mridula says



“Toddlers, aged 1-2 years old, sing before they speak, draw before they write and dance before they walk. Art is natural to human existence and if restricted, will find its way through any medium,” said Mridula with a powerful voice while sharing about her journey of working in SoL. Mridula Reddy is a Senior Program Manager & Program Lead, for the Jivivisha Fellowship in Slam Out Loud. She has been working in the education sector for 6 years and has been a part of SoL for 2 years. She works on designing and implementing the Jivivisha Fellowship across 4 cities (Pune, Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore). She's working with Fellows and different

stakeholders with a mission to empower children and create safe space for self-expression. Her journey is a demonstration of the power of art as a medium which can transform lives and the world as a whole. Mridula's journey of working in SoL is indeed inspiring and impactful but her experiences from her childhood and TFI fellowship

tells a lot about her decision to join Slam Out Loud. Mridula shared that, she had a close contact with violence and everything she had faced brought her to engage in art forms like dance, drawing and singing, which helped her in navigating these difficulties and not to lose her mind during tough times. By that time, she realized the impact of art on



emotional resilience. Reflecting on her own struggles, she emphasizes, "I do see the value that art brings and how it gives you a voice to say things and be able to express them."

Her role as a TFI fellow, in making transitions in the lives of 70-kids for two years, has uncovered a lot of systemic issues that were faced by her students. She shared that her students were not able to read or write and faced difficulties with literature. Some of them have supportive parents while others do not. While sharing about her student's journey, she added her personal experiences from school. She shared that, "When she was a kid, she wasn't doing great in school and her teacher thought that she wasn't working hard or maybe didn't want to. People didn't have that sensitivity to understand and support her with what she was going through".

While she shared about her experiences, she shared her motive behind joining SoL and designing and implementing programs. "Being able to design and implement programs that lead to children being able to express themselves and creating safe spaces for them in the classroom, at school, at home and in the community- is extremely fulfilling. It is something that makes me sleep peacefully at night and also makes me feel like the painful experiences I went through were not for nothing. They are helping me create spaces that cater to the varying emotional needs of children today." she shared with a proud smile on her face.

As we dived more into the challenges she has been facing, she shared a lot of things regarding stakeholder alignments, measuring progress of socio-economic skills, differing cultural context among the states, schedules and timelines between cities to cities and from school to school, and Decentralized program.

"Aligning a program between what a child needs, what fellows can offer, what we are capable of doing and what the donor expects is often a delicate balance to strike. There are times when one of the factors is prioritized more than the other. While running a fellowship, it is important that every individual (student, parent, teacher, team mates and donors) are involved, engaged and motivated.", she shared. "As it takes a village to raise a child, we must take every angle into consideration.", she added.

"Socio-emotional skills are difficult to measure and there is always an error margin (due to limited reading comprehension, literacy and limited logistical bandwidth/ time to work on possibilities such as oral assessments). There is a lot of progress that goes uncaptured. If a parent and child have a different relationship/ way of speaking to each other, how much of that can we attribute to ourselves and how do we measure something like this?", She added.

"While the context of different cities is different, it is important to reach the same results which at moments are not the same. The difference is not just between the cities but the classrooms as well. Running a cross-city program is understanding that school practices, timelines, exams schedules and holidays differ for each city, which means the schedules are not all the same. This also requires us to equip each city lead to be the decision maker for their city.", She said while sharing about how she takes every angle into consideration.

While she deeply told us about the challenges she has been facing, she has also shared how she has been working on them. “Something that I really care about is ensuring that each city lead is represented in decisions made nationally. This means that we meet every week to talk about tasks of the week, decisions that need to be made locally/nationally. We make decisions in a way that all cities follow a similar outline but each one gets to customize it based on their city’s context.”, shares Mridula.

As Mridula shared about her learnings from her journey, she said that she can now understand the difference between “Tell v/s Show”. Expressing ourselves through words and expressing ourselves through art forms and by showing them has a lot of differences and they matter. Mridula while working in SoL has realized that every person on-ground in a team should have a seat at the decision-making table. She also said that, “Everyone should have a voice: How the team functions.” to ensure diverse perspectives.

Mridula Reddy's journey from adversity to advocacy shows transformative power of art through which we can change the world and express ourselves. Through her incredible efforts in Jijivisha Fellowship, she's not just designing programs but the lives of 50,000+ young children. As she says, "In our education system, children are equipped with knowledge to navigate this world but not the skills in which they will be able to express themselves and feel good about themselves." Her hardwork in the designing and implementing the programs are big steps to transform the education system. For Mridula, the satisfaction lies in knowing that her efforts creates safe spaces, where children can find their voices and, in turn, find peace – just as she does before every night