

THE LAUNCH OF A VENTURE generates change on many levels. It leads to change in the community, change in the participants whom the Venture engages, and personal change in the Venturer. This workshop, the fifth for this batch of Venturers and the first of 2009, focused on the power of stories to illuminate change.



The second session introduced four guests, each of whom has a story of success in a different sector. From the corporate world came **MV Subramanian**, Director of Axis Bank Foundation, and a resource for bringing the Ventures to the next level in terms of scale, budget, and management. **Shweta Chary** is Director of Toy Bank, a citizen sector organization that collects and distributes toys to needy children. **Prabul Kohli** is a Bollywood actor made famous by his recent starring role in ROCK ON!!!. **Alka Sesha** is Director of Magic Bus, an organization that helps develop slum youth into leaders through sports. The guests shared their own stories, yielding insight into what success means in different sectors. Afterwards, each engaged small groups of Venturers in intimate individual discussions. The Venturers were free to approach any of the speakers and seek advice, guidance, and ideas.



Priyanka tells her story

The day began with master storyteller Gomathi Balasubramanian explaining the elements of a compelling story. As an example, Priyanka told the story behind Pradushan Mukti, her high-impact environmental Venture. To launch, Priyanka had to

overcome her own self-doubt, bitter resistance from her father, and intense apathy in her community. Her story of struggle and success inspired the other Venturers as they reflected on the changes they themselves have created and experienced in the past eight months. Several reflection questions guided the Venturers in formulating their own stories. This was the first stage of the Most Significant Change process, a technique for elucidating personal growth that Youth Venture is now implementing.

The thrust of the workshop shifted from telling the story to capturing it. Madhusudhan is the Director of MAM Movies, an organization that supports independent filmmakers to create positive action in the world. Madhusudhan led a session on the basics of filmmaking, covering everything from camera



Madhusudhan with Flip camera

angles to script-writing. He taught the group how to use Youth Venture's two handheld Flip camcorders, which the organization will loan out to the Venturers on a rotational basis. Several Venturers excitedly discussed the idea of a core team that would create short films about the Youth Venture community; Madhusudhan enthusiastically agreed to be a mentor.

Ashiq Rizvi from Magic Bus and Venturer Ashok Rathod led the last session of the day, which focused on how to engage a group through participatory games. Each taught the Venturers several basic icebreakers and energizers, explaining how to effectively incorporate them into group activities. The Venturers had a fantastic time learning and playing.





The Halt Thal Team: Meera and Krithika

KRITHIKA: HALT THAL

Krithika's Dream: To raise awareness of thalassaemia minor, conduct blood drives, and provide psychological support for people with thalassaemia major.

The Problem: Few people know anything about thalassaemia, an inherited blood disease that is detected by a simple test. People with thalassaemia minor could live their lives without knowing they were carriers; however, if two carriers have a child, he or she will have thalassaemia major – a potentially fatal condition.

Accomplishments: Krithika has researched thalassaemia minor extensively. She and her Team have volunteered at blood drives and organized a stall at her college festival to spread awareness.

Personal Motivation: "Once individuals are aware of the consequences of being minors, we can reduce the occurrence of thalassaemia major in infants. Plus, voluntary blood donation in itself will benefit all those who are terminally ill or require blood."

RITIKA: EMPOWER INDIA

Ritika's Dream: For children of domestic workers to have access to high-quality education.

Accomplishments: Every Sunday, Ritika teaches the children of her society's domestic workers Maths and General Knowledge. A teacher from Cathedral High School has joined her to teach the children English. She has inspired a friend to join her team and plans to develop an "education-in-a-box" toolkit that she can spread her vision to other societies.

Personal Motivation: "The target group [the children of domestic workers] will be able to dream. They will be able to have a vision for themselves and society. It's meant to be a chain effect. We don't want to make leaders who will make followers, but leaders who will create future leaders."



Ritika in Chennai

WORKSHOP SURPRISES



During the workshop, Geeta, a Venturer turned facilitator, received a US\$500 scholarship. Our contacts at Virgin Mobile were so impressed with Geeta's Venture to educate basti girls that they decided to help fund her education. Geeta is the first Venturer to earn a scholarship.

The rest of the Venturers were (almost) as surprised as Geeta when they all received personalized business cards. The cards identify each of them as the founder of their Venture.

