

Open Learning Systems Visit Report

Project Saarthi led a team of volunteers to visit Open Learning System, Press Chhak, behind Rail Sadan, Bhubaneswar on 9th September, 2018, at 11:00am.

The visit started with all the volunteers meeting up and boarding a bus to reach OLS which was around 15-20 minutes away from the KIIT Campus. All the 30 volunteers present there were already guided about what to do and thus everyone was fully prepared, it was equally exciting for the new recruits as it was for the seniors who guided us well. This was the first and a demandingly new and provocative project which was an experience worth remembering for everyone. We boarded the bus at around 10:30 am and we made it there at about 10:50 am. The students had intellectual disability and cerebral palsy, thus keeping that in mind we were prepared, confident and knew the rules and regulations of the institution beforehand as of the regular meetings which guided us through the process.

The volunteers gathered around just to give a quick recap about who needs to do what, as we were assigned different tasks in groups. We then signed the register and walked in with smiling faces to greet all the lovely faces waiting for us. It was decided that every volunteer would handle a group of specially abled children and thus everyone would be engaged in doing atleast one activity at a time. The new recruits were a bit nervous at first ! About how things will work out, but soon a group of students surrounded us and so did the instructor.

We took turns introducing ourselves to them for a few minutes, this included walking about the closed hall and greeting each one of them, they we all very excited to see us and got familiar as well as comfortable with us in very little time. They showed friendly attitude and were very nice to us making the environment very hospitable.

All of the volunteers got divided and were provided with group of 3-4 students each where they played games like building blocks with paper cup, in which they would through a ball and depending on where it had hit, the cup would fall down ! They even blew balloons, while special care was taken so that the balloons don't hurt them in any case. They enjoyed playing around so much as they are confined to the four walls of the room and they do not get to meet many people in their regular life so seeing their smiling faces made us amiable.

We also conducted other activities like hand-painting, drawing as well as games like putting the ball in the basket. We distributed A4 sheets to all the children who wanted to paint and took special attention so that they don't spill the colour and it doesn't loiter around. As they had problem understanding, we took their hand and helped them paint at the beginning and after a few minutes, smart as they are, they got it themselves and painted some real amazing masterpiece, which was visible though the smile they had on their faces.

The visit ended with wonderful memories being clicked together and we distributed candies to all of them but unfortunately the time came to an end and we had to bid them goodbye.

Some of the children were so attached to our volunteers that they panicked when we were about to leave but they enjoyed a lot and so did the whole team of Project Saarthi. We had a lot of fun planning and executing this project.

In this visit we encountered very compassionate and apropos children, they were very interactive and never let us feel like outsiders. Inspite of several struggles in their life they still smile out of the dark and that was something that inspired all of us. Their vibrant smile made everyone immensely happy. And that's some qualities we should adopt from them.

Not just the children but the in-charge was also happy seeing us and we got a very positive response from her side. She wanted us to visit again so that we could execute more projects there, she insisted we come and visit them back to conduct many more of these colorful events in the coming days.

