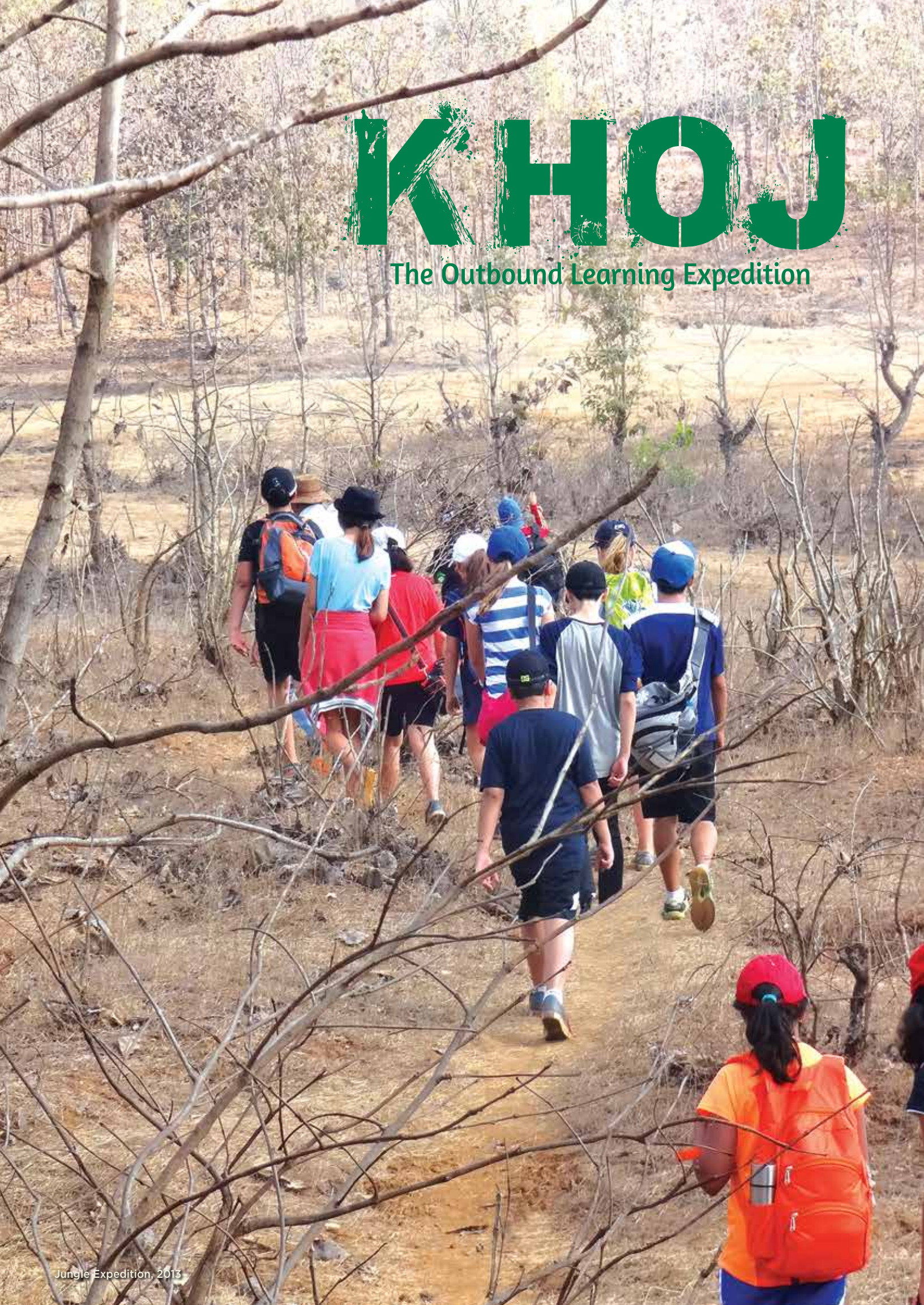


KHOJ

The Outbound Learning Expedition



A photograph showing three cyclists from behind, riding away on a dirt path through a forest. The path is unpaved and appears to be made of dirt and small stones. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees. The cyclists are wearing helmets and backpacks. The text 'Expeditions prepare children for life through life...' is overlaid at the bottom of the image in a stylized, orange-outlined font.

**Expeditions
prepare children
for life through life...**

Khoj is a Journey into the Unknown...

Khoj is an expedition in wilderness, where both children and teachers explore, experience and learn together about the world outside the school. In Khoj, we use adventure, crew work, reflection, working with the community and service to overcome physical, emotional and cognitive limitations in children and help them in seeing and experiencing the abundance in self and the world around.

During Khoj learners set out to explore the challenging unknown as a crew and in the journey, they rediscover and re-connect with themselves and the world around. The important aspect of the expedition is that it has the elements of curiosity and creative anxiety at every step. It helps the learner experience and understand how he/she navigates the unknown challenge and develops his/her capacity further. How one navigates the unknown is one of the important life skills.

Kurt Hahn, the co-founder of Outward Bound, employed challenge, adventure and service not as an end in itself, but as a method of inculcating perseverance, skill, teamwork, leadership, compassion and taking responsibility for the common good in the students of Gordonstoun, a school in Scotland that he founded in the 1930s. Through challenging expeditions, he developed among students, a sense of moral commitment to the community and empowered them to take personal responsibility for physical fitness, craftsmanship and self-reliance.

Inspired by the vision and work of Kurt Hahn, the purpose of Khoj expeditions is:

- a. To develop character and capacity to see and experience in children through challenge, adventure, crew work and service
- b. To impel them to achieve more than they ever thought possible
- c. To show compassion for others
- d. To actively engage in the world around them.

In Khoj learners are nurtured and guided with care and compassion; their individual differences and needs are acknowledged and addressed, this in turn unleashes their capacity to learn, relate, create and act.

The word expedition is derived from the Latin verb ‘expedire’, which is complex in its meaning. Its first meaning is “to free something”. In an expedition, we leave behind old habits and thinking, and break out for the new.

Experience as a source of learning

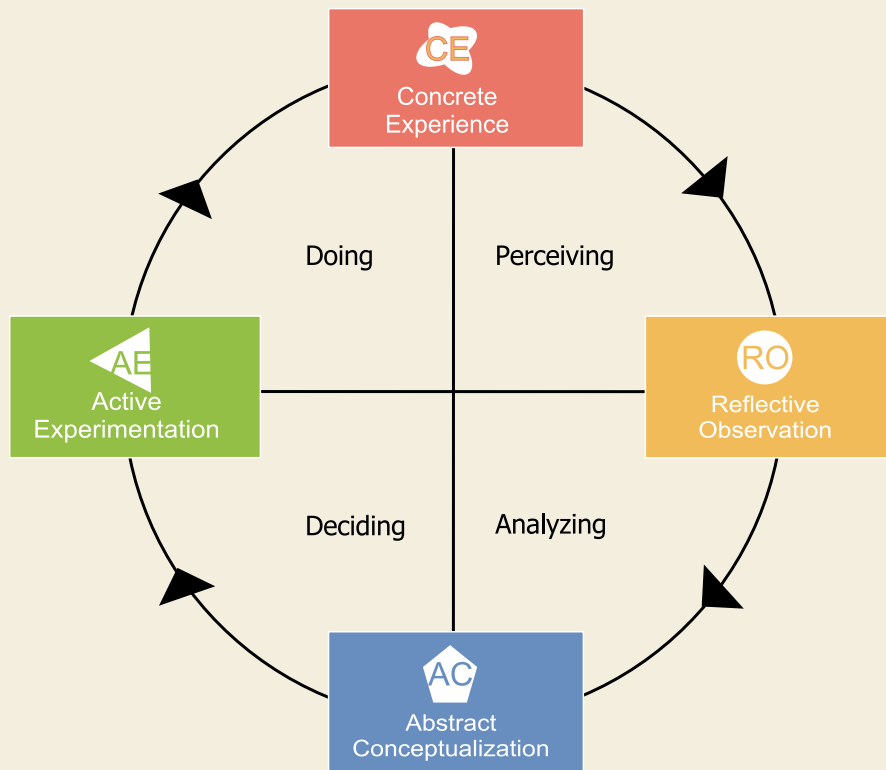


Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning

Learning is a process where knowledge is derived from and continuously modified by the experiences that a learner goes through. To learn is not a special province of a single specialized realm of human functioning such as cognition or perception. It involves the integrated functioning of the total being i.e. thinking, feeling, perceiving and doing. For effective learning to happen one needs four different kinds of abilities- concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualization abilities (AC) and active experimentation abilities (AE). This means, one must be able to engage oneself fully, openly and without bias in new experiences (CE). He/she should be able to reflect upon and observe his/her experiences from different perspectives (RO). He/she must be able to construct conceptual understanding that integrates his/her

observations into logically sound theories (AC) and he/she must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve real life problems (AE).

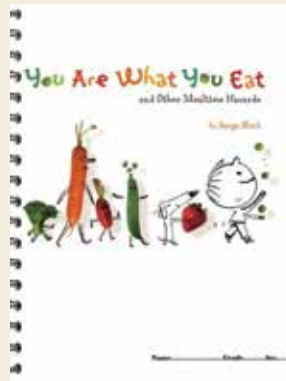
Learning is a continuous process grounded in the personal experiences of the learner. It involves transaction/interaction between the person and the environment and both get essentially changed during the process of learning. The process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world i.e. the conflict between concrete experience and abstraction and the conflict between observation and action. When we use both the concrete and the abstract modes to experience our experiences and when we both reflect and act on our experiences, we expand our capacity to learn.



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

“The aim of education is to impel young people into value forming experiences.”

Kurt Hahn, Founder- Outward Bound



Food and Farming Expedition

In a quest to understand the connection between our food, farming and healthy living, grade 6 students go to an organic farm for Khoj.

The big ideas for this expedition are:

- We are what we eat. Organic and healthy eating leads to a healthy body, mind and spirit.
- Organic farming is sustainable and viable.
- Working with hands build confidence and capacity for self-reliance, which are important life skills.

To work towards the above big ideas, we have the following guiding questions:

- What is healthy food? How does it taste like, smell like, feel like, touch like?
- How is healthy food grown? What is organic farming?
- How does it feel to work on a farm? Why is it important to work with our hands?
- How can I contribute towards healthy living in my community?

Once the students had built an understanding of how organic farming & food leads to a healthy living, they create a street play to build an awareness for healthy organic food and farming. They do this awareness campaign in their local and school community. Students also rework on the school lunch menu and give suggestions for healthier options.



Khoj Expedition Design Framework

Khoj is much more than a collection of activities. It is an integrated experience that focuses on holistic engagement, development and learning of the child. Inspired and guided by Outward Bound (www.outwardbound.net) principles and pedagogy, it has the following elements and strands as part of its design:

a. Skill Building

The first part of Khoj focuses on building skills that children will use during their final challenge. The idea is to prepare them for the final challenge.

b. Working in Crews

When we are on a Khoj expedition, we explore and navigate in crews. The idea is to help children learn how to build on each other's strengths and create a synergy in the group. They need to experience the power of diversity and inclusivity – and how it dramatically increases the richness of ideas, ability to solve problems and capacity to act. As the expedition unfolds, crews will be expected to take more and more responsibility for the navigation and decision-making. This is important, as it will ensure that the skills learnt before the final challenge become tools for success during the expedition.

c. Final Challenge

Expedition will include at least one big challenge like doing a social campaign, climbing the peak, earning your own meal, repairing the trails, working with the community on a specific social issue, etc. These challenges push crewmembers to find strength that they did not know they had. During the final challenge, the leadership is real and the success is theirs to keep.

d. Reflection and Sharing

Solitude, reflection and silence replenish our energies and open our minds. It is during the reflection that learners make a connection with experiences that they go through during the expedition and their real life. It is time to relook at their beliefs, construct new understanding and most importantly, to re-invent the self.

e. Service

During service, learners are encouraged to work with communities on real life issues, which gives them an opportunity to apply their new understanding built during the expedition. It also helps them to learn how to contribute meaningfully towards the larger community causes and experience the joy of working selflessly. Children get a first hand experience to empathize and connect with issues of change, equality, justice and denial. The important aspect of service is to experience one's true and abundant self.

“I regard it as a foremost task of education to ensure survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity; an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial and above all, compassion.”

Kurt Hahn, Founder- Outward Bound

The Khoj Curriculum

The Khoj expeditions are designed for children of grade 4 to 12 i.e. children within the age group of 9 to 18. The expeditions are designed based on the curriculum needs, life skills that need to be developed and the habitat in which Khoj takes place. The curriculum has the following strands:

1. Adventure/Physical Challenge
2. Systemic study of the Habitat
3. Case study of any one element from the habitat
4. Life skills
5. Service
6. End product/ performance

The curriculum grid below gives an idea about how different strands flow from grade 4 to 12. It is the basic curriculum framework, which we customize and rework according to the specific needs of the school curriculum, life skills to be developed and children's interest.

As part of the Khoj expeditions, we do pre and post work in schools. The pre-work sets the context for expedition during which we build background knowledge, share the broad design and listen to children's' expectations from Khoj. During post-work children work on the end product/performance, consolidate their learnings and learn how to use it in their daily lives.

Grade	Expedition	Adventure / Physical Challenge	Systemic Study	Focused Research / Case study
IV	Birds and Wetland Expedition	Nature walks, Boating, Rickshaw ride, Tonga ride, Cycling	Wetland as an eco-system	Focused research on any one bird- its characteristics, uniqueness & habitat. How it has adapted to its habitat? The relationship between form and functions. What and how we have learnt from nature?
V	How a Historian works Expedition	Treasure hunt, Historical walks	Studying a historical monument- its structure & design and constructing the history of that period through the monument	Studying different parts of the building like pillars, terraces, doors etc as a source of history
VI	Food and Farming Expedition	Farming- Plowing, Sowing, Weeding, Mulching, Harvesting, etc.	What is healthy food? How it is grown? What is natural/organic farming?	Different types of seeds and their benefits. Why we need to conserve our local seeds?
VII	Desert Expedition	Climbing sand dunes, Orienteering and Endurance run on sand dunes. Riding camels and camel carts. Cycling.	Studying the desert village as an eco-system	Focused research on children's rights in villages
VIII	Himalayan Expedition	Rock climbing, Rappelling and Trekking	Understanding the mountain eco-system	Architecture of the houses in mountain village
IX	Jungle Expedition	Jungle trek, Cycling and High rope course	Jungle as an eco-system- studying the interdependence that exists in the jungle	Research on different species and the function they perform in the jungle eco-system
X	River Expedition	Rafting, Raft making, Floating, Guiding the rafts through grade 1 and 2 rapids and Kayaking	Understanding the river dynamics i.e. how rapids are formed, the current dynamics in the river, the flora and fauna of the river system	Research on different landforms of the upper course of river and making their models with sand
XI	Crafts Expedition	Working with craftsmen. Cycling.	Studying different crafts. The challenges faced by the craftsmen. Why crafts are dying? Why is it important to conserve crafts?	Studying different crafts and their uniqueness
XII	AMUL Cooperative Expedition	Working with farmers in their dairies, milk collection booths and at milk plants, etc.	What is a cooperative? How does it work and what are its strengths? The history and future of cooperative movements in India. The role of women in cooperatives.	What made AMUL a success?



Life skills	Service	End Product / Performance
<p>Leave no trace i.e. how to go on a nature trail without disturbing the eco-system. Observation and listening skills i.e. recognizing birds by their sounds. Making connections and synthesizing. Working in crews.</p>	<p>Cleaning of the nature trails in the sanctuary. Creating awareness through street plays for the conservation of birds and wetland.</p>	<p>Making flash cards on birds for grade 2 students. An awareness campaign for the conservation of local birds and their habitat in one's own community.</p>
<p>How to study buildings as an important source of history? What are the other sources of history around us? Listening to stories and songs and how history was passed on to generations through them. Drawing and illustrating different parts of the building to observe and understand in detail and also what the engravings & patterns on them tell.</p>	<p>Working with the local staff on cleaning/upkeep of the monument</p>	<p>Designing postcards/guidebook with pencil illustrations of parts of the monument & stories they tell. Tourist and other people who visit the monument can use these postcards. Working for the maintenance of a historical monument in one's own city.</p>
<p>How to grow healthy food? How to cook healthy food? Cleaning one's own utensils. Working with hands in fields. Eating balanced and healthy diet. Recycle, reuse and repair.</p>	<p>Working on field with local farmers</p>	<p>Creating an awareness campaign in one's school and community on healthy food. Participating in campaigns against the corporatization of farming and importance of saving our local seeds.</p>
<p>How to survive in the desert i.e. clothing, food & water? How to use maps and compass to find direction? First aid in the desert. Experiencing diversity and inclusivity- and its importance. Learning a local craft. Solo time- the power of silence.</p>	<p>Street play on children's rights in the village</p>	<p>Writing a persuasive letter to local authority/district magistrate on children's right in one's local community/society</p>
<p>How to set a personal goal? What does it takes to achieve it? How to pitch a tent? How to pack a rucksack and other essential items for the wilderness? Cooking in the wilderness. How to keep oneself warm and hydrated? Learning about basic knots.</p>	<p>Working in the local village school/hospital</p>	<p>Making habit cards on personal mastery and positive habits for junior children</p>
<p>How to plan and prepare for a jungle trek? Taking responsibility. Cooking in the jungle. Learning how to study a jungle- looking for signs around and discussing them. Different techniques of counting animals e.g. camera trapping, etc. Casting pugmarks. Learning how to conduct biodiversity surveys.</p>	<p>Working with a local NGO on wildlife conservation. Doing a campaign on jungle conservation in the local village school.</p>	<p>Guide book on jungle eco-system and its parts for junior children</p>
<p>How do I learn a skill? What enables me? How to nurture courage? What does it take to act from courage? How to navigate the unknown? Working as a crew and how to guide a crew. Discovering personal inspirations and aspiration. Solo time.</p>	<p>Cleaning the river beaches</p>	<p>Designing a guide book/habit cards on 'how to act with courage?'</p>
<p>Why self-reliance is important? How working with hands lead to self-reliance? What is creativity? How working with hands lead to creative living? Learning a local craft. What enables me to create? What blocks me?</p>	<p>Designing the profiles/ brochure of craftsmen and their work</p>	<p>Writing a position paper/essay on working with hands, self-reliance and freedom. Reading Gandhiji's writings on crafts and why crafts are important for our villages. Supporting local craftsmen.</p>
<p>Discovering personal vision. Making a self-development plan. How to conduct appreciative inquiry? How to discover root cause of success? How to make a difference? How to create social organizations? Systems thinking skills.</p>	<p>Working on some of the problems/challenges that the cooperatives are facing and making a presentation to the stakeholders</p>	<p>Creating a documentary on 'why cooperatives'. Making habit cards on sustainable and community living.</p>

What is important in KHOJ?

In KHOJ, the safety of the child comes first.

When we say safety, we mean the physical, emotional and psychological safety of the child. We provide a safe and secure environment for the child. We believe a child needs to feel safe and secure during the KHOJ because only then will he/she be able to enjoy the experience.

The second important aspect for us in KHOJ is hygiene.

The whole environment -place of stay, food, water, travel, toilets, clothes, etc -should be hygienic. Personal hygiene is very important -one can only learn and enjoy the process of learning when he/she feels good about self and the environment around. The whole experience should be refreshing and alive.

Once the safety and hygiene aspects are in place, Learning begins...

The learning experience should be meaningful, challenging and joyful for the child.

Safety and Support at Khoj

a. Outdoor Instructors and Equipment: Keeping our high standards and concerns for safety as the first & foremost requirement we have certified outdoor instructors from the best institutions of the country like The Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi and Mountaineering Institute, Manali etc. All our equipments are of best quality by world standards and go through regular quality checks.

b. Medical Support: The Medical support at Khoj is provided by doctor on call & wilderness first-aid certified instructors by NOLS. We also have tie-up with local hospitals at all our camp locations & an emergency vehicle is stationed at the camps at all times.

Reflections and Sharing at Khoj

SEARCHING FOR THE LIGHT

While the stars twinkle through the night,
 We keep moving to the end, with all our might.
 Be it cycling on and on or climbing up ropes,
 Nothing can dampen our spirits or lessen our hopes.
 Being patient, determined and building confidence,
 These are values we shall remember whenever times
 Khoj has brought out things we did not know
 we had.
 It has helped us bring ourselves up when sad,
 Living among the wild, appreciating nature,
 Khoj has indeed taught us to be
 conundred creatures.

By- Pratyusha D.

A1) The one thing that has^{is} really
 been exciting for me was when I went
 to the border and saw the fencing
 which divided a piece of land forever.

A great change is that he has started
 drawing and drawing good. (Something hidden in
 him has come out)

PARENT'S FEEDBACK

Pratyusha learnt how to ride a bicycle during Khoj and after that she did almost 90 kms in three days. She wrote her feelings and thoughts in a form of poem.



A3) The thing I take with
 me is COURAGE to do
 something.

A1) One thing I discovered
 about myself was
 that I am capable to
 do things which I never
 imagined of.

How was the KHOJ experience for your
 child?

KHOJ, as always, is a much longed-
 for event and this year, as per Shreya,
 the KHOJ experience was truly amazing!
 In her own admission, she re-counts
 two outstanding and worth noting "experien-
 tial learnings" that she had add i.e. :
 • "Fear is only in the mind" (while
 rope-climbing exercise, initially she was
 overcome with fear, doubt and self-denial
 that she was incapable of doing it but
 she overcame her apprehensions and DID IT!
 • "You can achieve anything if you
 think you can" I feel the lesson that
 "I think, therefore, I am" has been driven
 convincingly in her psyche.

PARENT'S FEEDBACK



A4) I discovered that if I
 push myself and am
 determined to do something
 I can definitely do it.
 And you that you always
 have a choice to do
 what's right.

"One's destination is never a place but a new way of seeing things"

-Henry Miller

**“A mind that is stretched by a new experience
can never go back to its old dimensions.”**

Oliver. W. Holmes



Food and Farming Expedition, 2013

Disha India Education Foundation is striving towards redefining education and learning based on the principles of Experiential Learning, thereby facilitating the reinvention of schools and our country's education system at large. The big idea is to construct a theory and practices of Experiential Learning and design an integrated experiential curriculum that uses real-life experiences from the child's local context as a pedagogic medium for developing knowledge, skills and character. The underlying assumption is that learning through real and contextual experiences has the potential of truly becoming a personalised learning for each and every child. Secondly, teaching through real life experiences leads to an integrated and systemic understanding which prepares children for life.

Disha India's work involves designing integrated experiential curriculum and pedagogy, educational leadership development, teachers' capacity building, designing learning expeditions for children and designing how to bring change in schools.

For the last fifteen years, Disha India has worked intensively with The Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Gurgaon on the design and implementation of the experiential curriculum and pedagogy in the elementary program. We have designed integrated learning expeditions that use experiences from the local context of the child as a source and pedagogic medium for learning and development.

Disha India is engaged in an action research to understand the Gandhian principles of Nai-Talim in today's context i.e. how to use productive work as a pedagogic medium for teaching and learning in schools. We are working with Anand Niketan, a Gandhian school, in Sevagram, Wardha to design an integrated experiential curriculum that uses farming and crafts as a pedagogic medium for teaching and learning.

Disha India through its open program, Courage to Lead - a certified program in Experiential Education, works with educators and organizations to develop their capacity to design and implement experiential curriculum and pedagogy in their context. Courage to Lead was launched in the year 2008. Every year around 50 educators and organizations from all over India participate in the program and Disha India works with them intensively. The vision is to build a community of EL practitioners.

Disha India designs and facilitates KHOJ Learning Expeditions for children, based on curriculum needs, children's interest and life skills. Every year around 1200 students experience KHOJ as part of their curriculum. Some of the schools that have participated in KHOJ are The Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Gurgaon, Bombay International School, Mumbai, American International School, Chennai, Daly College, Indore, DPS Surat, etc

Disha India Education Foundation is a non-profit social organization registered under section 8 of companies act, 1956.



disha india
सा विद्या या विमुक्तये

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