
Report on Institutional Visit and Outreach Activities at Sahyog Residential School for Specially-Abled Children

Community participation is a central component of the extension and outreach philosophy of Vallabh Government College, Mandi. The institution consistently encourages its departments to undertake socially responsive initiatives that promote experiential learning, civic responsibility and inclusive values. Through such engagements, students gain meaningful exposure to real-life contexts and diverse learner needs, strengthening the institution's commitment to holistic and socially relevant education.

In alignment with this institutional vision, two separate community-oriented events were conducted by two departments of VGC Mandi at Sahyog Residential School for Specially-Abled Children, Balh, Mandi.

1. An Educational Excursion organised by the Department of Education on 23 November 2024, aimed at studying institutional practices in special education.



2. A Skill Development Programme, coordinated by the Botany department of the college in collaboration with Rotary Club Mandi and Rotary Club Nerchowk, focusing on vocational training and environmental sustainability.

विशेष आवश्यकता वाले बच्चों को किया जाएगा प्रशिक्षित



शिविर के आरंभ पर रोटरी क्लब और प्रशिक्षक बच्चों के साथ • जागरण

संवाद सहयोगी, जागरण • मंडी : समावेशन, पर्यावरणीय स्थिरता और कौशल विकास की दिशा में एक प्रेरणादायक कदम उठाते हुए रोटरी क्लब मंडी और नेरचौक ने संयुक्त रूप से सहयोग और साकार विद्यालयों के विशेष आवश्यकता वाले बच्चों के लिए 10 दिवसीय कौशल प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम का शुभारंभ किया।

इसका उद्घाटन सहयोग विद्यालय में हुआ, इस विशेष कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत मानसिक रूप से मंद बच्चों को चीड़ की सूखी पत्तियों से पारंपरिक व पर्यावरण अनुकूल उत्पाद बनाने का प्रशिक्षण दिया जाएगा।

इस अभियान में वल्लभ राजकीय महाविद्यालय मंडी का वनस्पति विज्ञान विभाग भी सक्रिय सहयोग दे रहा है।

इस प्रशिक्षण का नेतृत्व कर रहे हैं प्रसिद्ध इको-उद्यमी संतोष

सचदेवा, जो स्थानीय मेलों, उत्सवों और प्रदर्शनियों में चीड़ की पत्तियों से बने उत्पादों को सफलतापूर्वक बेचती रही हैं।

इस अवसर पर रोटरी क्लब मंडी के अध्यक्ष हेमराज, सचिव कौशलेश कपूर, मंडी कालेज में वनस्पति विज्ञान विभाग की वरिष्ठ प्राध्यापक डा. तारा सेन, मंडी रोटरी क्लब की ओर से सुरेंद्र मोहन, एमएल गुप्ता, लता गुप्ता, धर्मेन्द्र राणा के अलावा रोटरी क्लब नेरचौक के अध्यक्ष अमृतपाल सिंह, सचिव, शिवकुमार के अतिरिक्त सहयोग व साकार विद्यालयों के स्टाफ सदस्य और रोटरी क्लब नेरचौक के अन्य सदस्य उपस्थित रहे।

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Together, these initiatives highlight VGC Mandi's active engagement with the community and its efforts to support inclusive educational development.

I. Educational Excursion by Department of Education

Objectives of the Visit:

The field visit conducted by the Department of Education aimed to:

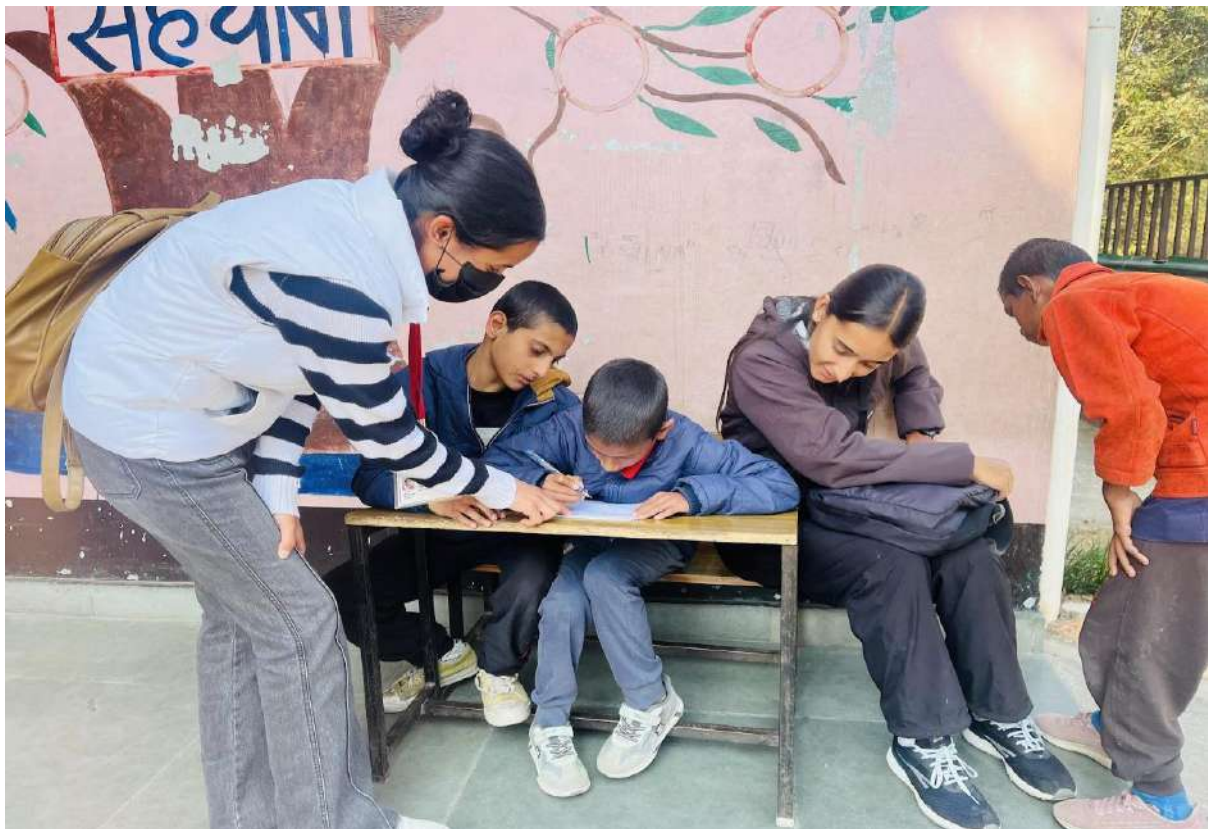
- Strengthen institutional commitment to social inclusiveness and community engagement.
- Provide students with an applied understanding of special education practices.
- Enhance empathy, sensitivity and awareness regarding learner diversity.
- Encourage student participation in activities promoting social responsibility and inclusive educational values.

Interactive Activities Conducted

To ensure meaningful participation, the department organised interactive activities for engaging with the children:

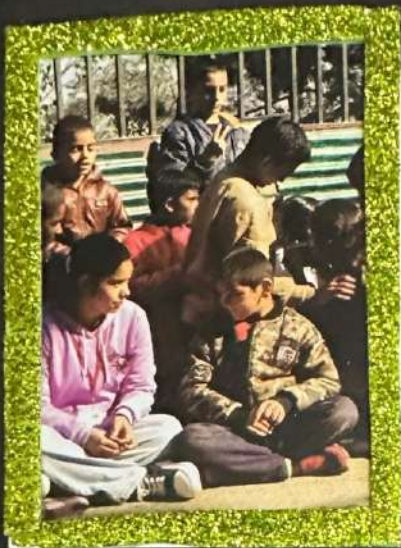
- **Communication and Social Interaction Activity**

A structured interaction session was held in which VGC students engaged children in conversation, expression exercises, and play-based communication. This activity helped students observe emotional expression, communication abilities and social behaviour patterns among learners with intellectual disabilities. This activity was followed by a detailed report writing by the students

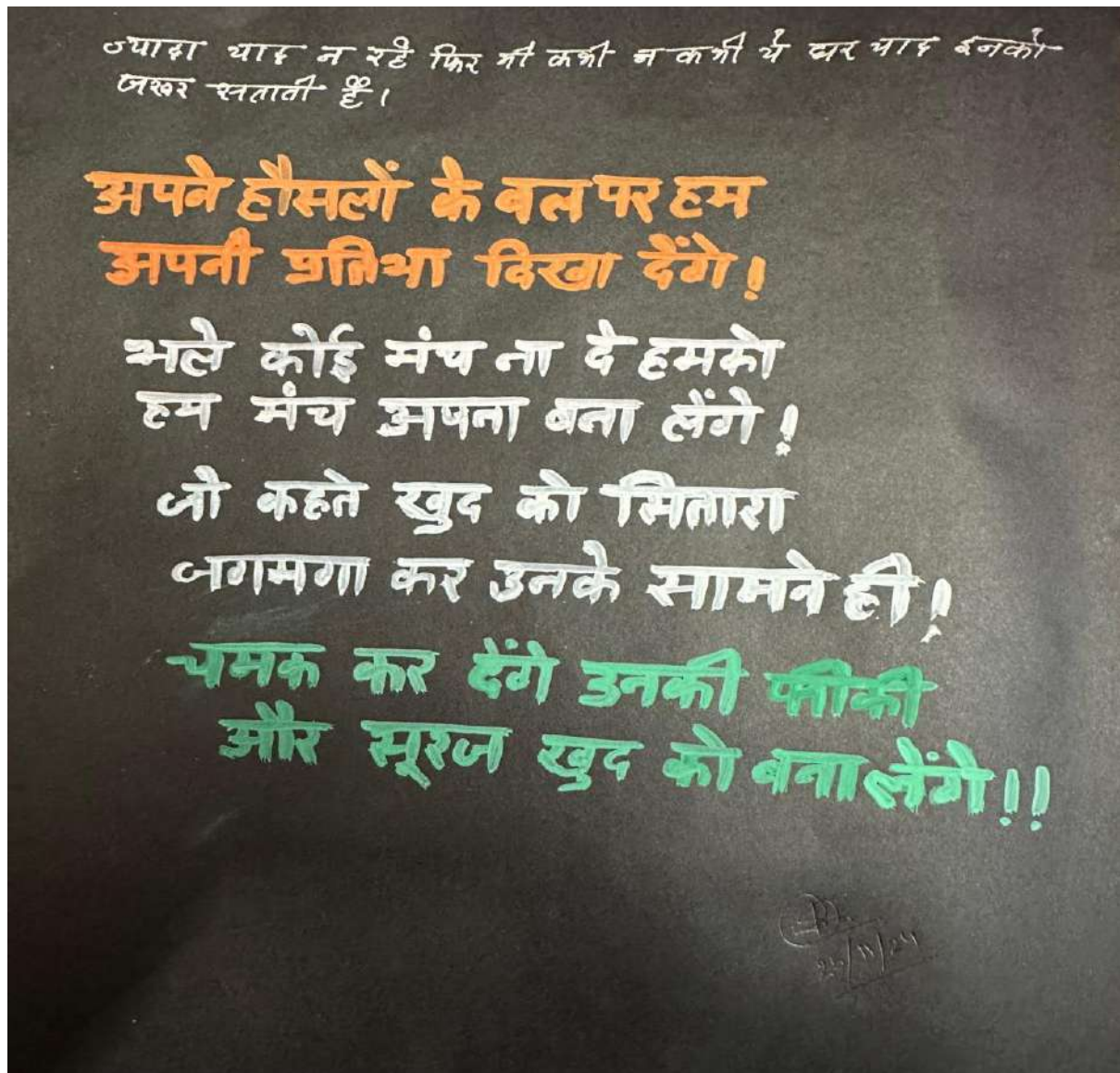




These participatory engagements enabled students to become active contributors rather than passive observers. This activity was also followed by a detailed report writing on the excursion. The entire group, comprising 33 students, submitted their reports in which they reflected not only on their academic learning but also on the valuable life experiences gained through interaction with the special children.



इन बच्चों को मिलने के बाद मुझे जीवन का वास्तविक अर्थ
 समझ आया। हम अपने छोटे से दुःख के आधारे परीने व
 पछतावा करने लग जाते और सोचते हैं कि दुनिया की
 सारी मुश्किलें सिर्फ हमारे ही जीवन में आ गई हैं।
 हम मुश्किलों से लड़ने के बजाय हार मान लेते हैं।
 किन्तु इन बच्चों को अपने खुद के बारे में ज्ञात नहीं
 है फिर भी हमेशा हमसे मुसकुराते रहते हैं।
 इसलिए हमें इनसे सीख लेने चाहिए, की जीवन में कितनी
 भी बड़ी मुश्किल क्यों न आ जाए हमें उसका सामना
 हैसते हुए करना चाहिए। मुझे इन बच्चों से एक अलग-सा
 उड़ाव महसूस हुआ। ऐसा लग रहा था मानों मैं इन सब में से
 ही एक हूँ। शायद एक अलग ही दिशा बन गया इन बच्चों
 के साथ। ये Top के पाठ मुझे हमेशा याद रहेंगे। हमेशा
 Improvement रहने वाली मैं इन बच्चों के साथ खुल-मिल गई
 थी। मैंने एक बात इन बच्चों में महसूस की वो बात थी
 एक उम्मीद। उम्मीद घर जामे की। शायद इनका ये बालें



Observations and Educational Insights

The visit helped students develop a compassionate understanding of children with special needs and the essence of inclusive education:

- Students realised that honouring each child's individuality through flexible, paced learning is an act of empathy as much as a teaching method.
- They learned how multisensory activities, gentle repetition, and simplified tasks help children feel secure, capable, and encouraged.
- They observed that therapies such as occupational, behavioural, and speech support nurture a child's dignity and independence.
- They understood that an inclusive environment grows from kindness, patience, and positive reinforcement, where every effort is valued.

Most importantly, students learned that each child expresses emotions and sociability in unique ways, reminding them that working with special children requires sensitivity, respect, and genuine human connection rather than sympathy or overprotection.

II. Skill Development Programme by Department of Botany in Collaboration with Rotary Clubs

Parallel to the educational visit, Department of Botany, VGC Mandi organised a Skill Development Programme at Sahyog School as part of a 10-day training initiative (From 6 May, 24 to 16 May, 2024) conducted in collaboration with Rotary Club Mandi and Rotary Club Nerchowk.

मानव्य टाइम्स
मंडी, 17 मई 2025, (शनिवार)
Postal No. RNI 68989/98 ज्येष्ठ कृष्ण पक्ष, पंचमी, विक्रमी संवत् - 2082 Contact No-89882 91309

चीड़ पत्तियों से सजे सपने: विशेष बच्चों के लिए कौशल विकास प्रशिक्षण का प्रेरणादायक समापन

रोटरी क्लब मंडी और नेरचौक की संयुक्त पहल से बच्चों को मिला आत्मनिर्भरता और रचनात्मकता का मंच

• संजीव शार्ली

सहयोग विद्यालय में रोटरी क्लब मंडी और रोटरी क्लब नेरचौक के संयुक्त तत्वावधान में आयोजित 10 दिवसीय पर्यावरण-अनुकूल कौशल विकास प्रशिक्षण का समापन समारोह आज उत्साह और प्रेरणा से परिपूर्ण वातावरण में संपन्न हुआ। यह अनुभूति पहल विशेष आवश्यकता वाले बच्चों को आत्मनिर्भर बनाने और उनके भीतर छिपी रचनात्मकता को उभारने की दिशा में एक प्रेरक प्रयास रही। इस प्रशिक्षण के दौरान बच्चों ने चीड़ की सूखी पत्तियों से कोस्टर, राखियों, टोकरियों, की-रिंग्स और पेन स्टैंड जैसे उपयोगी और आकर्षक उत्पाद तैयार किए।

समापन अवसर पर आयोजित प्रदर्शनी में इन हस्तनिर्मित उत्पादों को रोटरी सदस्यों और अतिथियों द्वारा सराहना ही नहीं मिली, बल्कि मौके पर ही उन्हें खरीदा भी गया, जिससे बच्चों का आत्मविश्वास दोगुना हो गया। इस अवसर पर बल्लभ राजकीय महाविद्यालय मंडी से डॉ. तारा देवी, डॉ. दीपाली अशोक और डॉ. नीतू पाठनिया ने बच्चों की मेहनत और गुणवत्ता की सराहना करते हुए कहा कि यह प्रशिक्षण सशक्त भविष्य की नींव है। रोटेरियन राकेश ने बच्चों के उत्पादों की तारीफ करते हुए भविष्य में सभी उत्पाद खरीदने का आश्वासन दिया।

उन्होंने कहा, “इन बच्चों में अपार प्रतिभा है, ज़रूरत है उन्हें सही दिशा और प्रोत्साहन देने की।” यह समापन समारोह इस बात का प्रतीक है कि जब सेवा संगठनों और शिक्षण संस्थानों की सोच एक हो, तो हर विशेष बच्चा सामान्य से भी अधिक विशेष बन सकता है।

Focus and objectives of the Programme

The main objective of this programme was to develop skills in specially-abled students. They were trained to make handicrafts using Pinus needles, which not only enhanced their creativity but also helped improve their concentration, focus and muscle control. Primary focus was on:

Training students to create eco-friendly products using natural resources such as pine needles, grasses and vajratantumala.

Promoting environmental sustainability and vocational self-reliance among specially-abled children.

Supporting skill building that could offer long-term livelihood relevance.

Empowering special children through skill training in Mandi

DIPENDER MANTA
JALIANWALA NEWS SERVICE

MANDI, MAY 5

In a heartening step towards inclusivity, environmental sustainability and skill empowerment, the Rotary Club of Mandi, in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Nerchowk, has launched a 10-day skill training programme, specially designed for children with special needs from Sahyog and Sakar Schools in Mandi district on Monday.

The inaugural session of the initiative was held at Sahyog School, marking a significant stride towards capacity building, ecological awareness and community engagement.

A spokesperson for Mandi Rotary Club said the programme focused on training intellectually disabled children in the art of creating eco-friendly products using pine needles — a locally available but often underutilised natural resource. Under the guidance of skilled trainers, students and vocational instructors would learn to craft aesthetic and functional items using pine needles, wild grasses, pine cones and Vajantimala beads.

"The initiative aims to nurture creativity, build confidence and promote self-reliance, while encouraging sustainable livelihoods and

Rotary Clubs of Mandi, Nerchowk launch 10-day programme

addressing forest fire prevention through the productive use of dry biomass," the spokesperson said.

The botany department of Vallabh Government College, Mandi, is actively supporting the initiative as part of its ongoing commitment to sustainable utilisation of forest resources. Renowned eco-entrepreneur Santosh Sachdeva, widely appreciated for promoting and marketing pine needle crafts at local fairs and exhibitions, is spearheading the training.

She has also pledged to purchase the students' hand-crafted products, creating a real-world value chain and enhancing the market exposure of their skills.

Speaking on the occasion, Sachdeva remarked, "There is a growing demand for eco-friendly pine needle products, but the supply often falls short due to a lack of skilled artisans and community awareness. Initiatives like this can address environmental challenges, generate livelihoods and empower children with special needs to become self-reliant and confident contributors to society."

The inaugural ceremony

was graced by dignitaries from both Rotary Clubs, including Hem Raj (president, Mandi Rotary Club), Kaushlesh Kapoor (secretary, Mandi Rotary Club), Tara Sen Thakur (senior assistant professor, botany department, Vallabh Government College, Mandi), Surender Mohan, ML Gupta, Lata Gupta, and Dharmender Rana (Rotary Mandi), Amritpal Singh (president, Nerchowk Rotary Club) and Shiv Kumar (Secretary, Rotary Club Nerchowk).

The programme also saw enthusiastic participation from staff members of Sahyog and Sakar Schools, along with other dedicated members of the Rotary Club of Nerchowk, who pledged their continued support for this cause.

Adding an academic dimension to the event, three BSc 1st year botany students — Heena, Yogita and Jitender — attended the programme as part of their exposure visit, gaining first-hand experience in community-based ecological entrepreneurship.

"This collaboration sets an inspiring example of how educational institutions, service organisations and individual change-makers can come together to build a more inclusive, skilled and sustainable society," said Tara Sen Thakur.



Rotary Club members attend a skill development programme at Sahyog School, PHOTO: JAI KUMAR

This activity proved highly beneficial in strengthening their overall abilities. Moreover, this handicraft training was an effort to make them more self-dependent and to help them take a meaningful step towards self-reliance.

This programme strengthened community linkages and demonstrated VGC Mandi's commitment to contributing to social empowerment and sustainable development.

Impact on Student Learning and Institutional Outcomes

Through these activities, students developed not only academic insights but also a stronger sense of social responsibility and human connection:

- They gained a deeper, values-based understanding of inclusive and special education, recognising it as a shared community duty to ensure dignity and equal opportunities for every child.
- Their practical exposure to differentiated learning and behavioural diversity helped them appreciate the importance of meeting each child where they are, with compassion rather than judgement.
- Students cultivated ethical sensitivity, empathy, patience, and reflective practice, realising that supporting children with special needs is fundamentally rooted in humanity and collective care.
- They developed a renewed appreciation for community collaboration and inter-institutional partnerships, understanding that meaningful inclusion can only be achieved when schools, families, and society work together.

These outreach efforts served as transformative experiential learning opportunities and supported the broader goals of the institute by promoting inclusive practices and community engagement.

Conclusion

The two outreach activities conducted by VGC Mandi at Sahyog Residential School—an Educational Excursion and a Skill Development Programme—collectively reflect the college's strong commitment to community participation and inclusive education. Through structured engagement, observation, and collaborative activities, students were able to understand diverse learner needs while contributing meaningfully to a special school setting.
