



Leadership Workshop Report 2018
Industrial Training Institute,
Selaqui, Uttarakhand
07 – 08 April 2018

Mentoring Young Tibetans has been at the core of Empowering the Vision Project’s (ENVISION) mission since its inception in 2007; and in the pursuit of the same, numerous workshops, conferences, school outreach/ exchange programme has been conducted. One regular programme for the past four years on ENVISION’s agenda is the Leadership Workshop for class XII students of TCV Selaqui and STS Poanta Sahib.

Leadership Workshop 2018 was held at the SOS Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Selaqui, formerly known as SOS Vocational Training Centre for Tibetans, on 07-08 April 2018. ENVISION focuses on developing inner leadership through self-exploration, creativity and other interactive and critical approaches; and purposely steer away from conventional methodologies. This year’s leadership workshop was no exception.

The two-day workshop began with a welcome dinner followed by an orientation programme in the evening of Friday, 6th April for 126 students. With an equal mix of students from the two schools including 12 students from ITI – selected and requested by the institute to participate in the workshop, the participants were then divided into four groups to foster interaction and engagement within themselves through the course of the workshop.

Day-I: Workshop Session on Self Awareness/Creativity/Critical Thinking

Bhuchung D. Sonam la, (Poet & Writer), Karma Sichoe la, (Tibetan Thangka Painter & Artist), and Tenzin Tsundue la, (Writer & Activist) invited by ENVISION as resource persons led a day-long workshop with the students. They were not only able to keep the students engrossed and absorbed with their narratives; but also help build a sense of accomplishment after engaging them in various activities.

In the first session, they spoke in a plenary about their experiences hitherto as an artist/activist, writer(s), their definition of art and leadership, the inevitable but subtle linkage between the two, their personal struggles, trials and triumphs that they had withstand to get their passion as artist (s), poet (s) and writers accepted by family and society.



Bhuchung D Sonam opened the plenary session, emphasizing on the need of space for discussion, debate and critique for any form of art to excel. Art for Bhuchung as he said meant, “breathing creativity and thinking/and or imagining beyond what is already constructed in the society. He highlighted Dhondup Gyal’s cutting-edge poem “Waterfall of Youth” (ལང་ཚོའི་རྒྱབ་ཚ་) published in 1983 and how it modernized Tibetan literature and had a pioneering influence for Tibetan writers, poets, and critics alike. He further added that a leader does not necessarily have to be someone holding a

key position but one who is free from emotional, mental and physical predicaments and ambiguities, someone who is creative, have clear understanding of self before parading others in/and under his/her leadership.

Karma Sichoe echoed Bhuchung's emphasis on the importance of understanding self and the need to establish confidence through self-awareness. Karma, a well-known Tibetan Thangka Painter and Artist himself recalled the stigmas that were attached to art/drawing when he was in school and how his passion for drawing/painting was considered outlandish but that did not deter his vision to pursue his passion even at the cost of leaving school. Karma further opined that education should not necessary be inclined to conventional methodology but also should involve students' participation in creativity, self-awareness and imaginative activities through artistic engagements. He expressed his apprehensions of competitive contests held in schools as these would dissuade or cage/prison a student's cognitive capability to think, imagine and create.

Tenzin Tsundue, shared with the students his gradual development of passion for writing poems. Saying that he is against the conventional education system in schools wherein "memorising/or competition is the norm and as such, withholds students' acumen for thinking beyond classroom curriculums." His innate love for storytelling and making people listen/laugh at random self-created stories empowered his artistic credentials and also acted as a shrewd tool against the structured academic system



at the time. Tsundue, however explained that the political and societal space for discussion and dissent has become liberally wider and acceptable compared to about ten-twenty years ago. This he believed is a positive development and something to be applauded in our community.

After the interactive plenary session in the morning, the students were divided into groups corresponding to their interest in Creative Writing, Art and Theatre. Student with interest in creative writing joined Bhuchung who harbored the students to the field of basic essentials of writing in the first session, and then grouped them



in the second session while making them read, discuss, write and present thereafter. Bhuchung patiently proof-read and edited students' individual writings one-to-one in the last session of the day.

Tenzin Tsundue spearheaded the session on theatre, writing and communication skills. He demonstrated through different plays the theatrical techniques of public speaking, importance of body and facial expressions, the need to connect with concerned audience by developing stage performance methods and the need of prioritizing the

contents of a communication. Students in his session were seen heeding to his call of expressing freely one's emotions/thoughts with speech or without speech i.e, through gestures, our eyes, and facial expressions.

Karma Sichoe led a session on art for the interested students. He made them draw anything that expressed their state of being at the time, first by using ordinary art ingredients and later by charcoal. It was delightful to see students immersing themselves completely into the world of art and using it as a medium for self exploration.

Day II: Career Exploration and Let us Make a Difference

During the first session, Mr. Vikram Dutt, President of Manovikas Charitable Society and Advisor to Udayan Care Delhi and Mrs. Vatsala Singh, Director of DPS Dehradun spoke on identifying career aspirations and goal setting, on education and leadership, on choosing a career path of one's own passion and through awareness. Mr. Dutt demonstrated by quoting examples of accomplished individuals while stressing that education is the foundation to any leadership responsibilities. Vatsala Singh in her interaction strongly argued the importance of inculcating/practicing true human values in day-to-day engagements and how to strive for a meaningful career or life.



The second sessions themed “Career Exploration Workshop” was jointly led by Vikram Dutt, Vatsala Singh, Manu Sabherwal (Lawyer), Stevie Phuntsog (Entrepreneur) and ENVISION Team. Engaging activities through Tempest, Johari Window and also personality assessment activity were conducted for the participating students in an attempt to understand their career aspirations and expectations.

The two-day workshop concluded with ENVISION’s “Let’s Make a Difference” (LMAD) session, wherein students shared

their commitment to making a difference by practicing some of the lessons from the leadership workshop, using the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) criteria. This session is one of the most important parts of the Workshop where we try to understand and analyze the effectiveness of the workshop. As takeaways from the workshop, the students’ commitment(s) varied from being less judgmental to reading two books a week, to writing down thoughts on a daily basis, to reaffirming self-potentials every night before sleeping.

During the feedback and evaluation session, students expressed how they could relate with the speakers, their “unconventional interest/passion,” the power to express self through drawing, writing, and theatre. Tenzin Yonten, STS Poanta at the session said “at first I thought this workshop would be like any other workshop, but I am glad it turned out quite unique and enlightening for me as I never knew the critical linkages between art and leadership”. Another student named Penpa Dolma, TCV Selaqui, expressed that the session on Career Exploration on day-two



has helped her with tools to understand her aspiration and how she could marry her passion with her skills (acquired and inherent) in pursuing a meaningful career.

The workshop for the school children of STS Poanta, TCV Selaqui and ITI, in short is a sincere effort on ENVISION’s part to inculcate in them the importance of self-awareness, creativity, critical thinking, identifying career options and goal setting. With the engagement of Tibetan Resource Persons - accomplished individuals from our own community - and reviewing the myriad facets of leadership through their understanding of

creativity and critical thinking, the students were made to explore and think out-of-the-box in leading their career and lives, one that is in tune with who they are and they want to be. Adding participants from ITI at their request meant that ITI students were also exposed to the learning and interactions at the workshop.

