

The Visual Horizon

-The Sentient Being initiative

Report

The story of the workshop began when Mitra Swayamdeep was invited to conduct a drawing and painting workshop at Pitesur Village. With no predefined structure, the workshop initially served as an opportunity not only to introduce children to art but also to refine the teaching methodology itself. However, the core vision of *'The Visual Horizon'* emerged during the third workshop.

Spanning from 2022 to 2024, these workshops aimed to cultivate artistic skills and creative thinking among rural children while fostering their observational abilities. Conducted in different locations, including Pitesur Village and Bhimsen Nagar, Dabha, the workshops adopted a structured approach to accommodate children of varying age groups and skill levels. Each session focused on progressive learning, covering fundamental drawing techniques, perspective drawing, creative exercises, and potential career pathways in the field of art.

The First Workshop (May 2022, Pitesur Village)

The first workshop was a 15-day program organized for rural children at Pitesur Village, initiated by Anuradha Bele, who provides free academic education to children in the area. The participants were divided into two groups: Stage 1 (below 5th grade) and Stage 2 (above 5th grade), each with distinct curricula tailored to their age and learning capacity.

For Stage 1 students, the focus was on introducing fundamental drawing elements, such as different types of lines, basic shapes, and methods for constructing objects. As they progressed, they learned to draw simple animals, landscapes, and vehicles while exploring basic coloring techniques.

Stage 2 students were introduced to more advanced concepts, including 2D and 3D perspectives, line precision, and color theory. They practiced sketching objects in perspective, worked on proportions for drawing human faces and bodies, and engaged in creative exercises. One such exercise involved storytelling and poetry creation using the *'spin-a-yarn'* concept to enhance their imaginative thinking. As a final challenge, students were assigned complex illustrative tasks, such as depicting festival celebrations or market scenes. Additionally, they were introduced to the possibilities of pursuing art as a career.

The Second Workshop (April 2023, Bhimsen Nagar, Dabha)

Encouraged by the success of the first workshop, a second program was conducted in April 2023 in Bhimsen Nagar, Dabha, where Niketan Jambhulkar—who runs free academic classes for children—invited Mitra to replicate the initiative. While the overall structure of the workshop remained consistent with the previous year, additional elements were incorporated to build upon the students' existing knowledge.

Stage 1 students once again focused on fundamental drawing skills, while Stage 2 students explored advanced shading techniques, light flow, and cityscape drawings from a bird's-eye view. New artistic techniques, such as thread painting, spray painting, and pencil shaving art, were also introduced to diversify their creative experiences.

A visualization exercise was implemented, where students were provided with incomplete images and asked to complete them using their imagination. To further challenge their skills, an art competition was organized. Stage 1 students were tasked with creating scenic compositions featuring boats, oceans, and birds, while Stage 2 students were given three topics—Mother's Day, a bus stop, and a railway station—from which they had to illustrate one.

The workshop concluded with a closing ceremony, where prizes were awarded to the winners and participants. Students also shared their reflections on the experience, and discussions were held on the contributions of social reformers. To provide additional exposure, an educational visit to the '*Alag Angle Community Art Center*' was arranged, where students explored various fine art forms, including sculpting.

The Third Workshop (April 2024, Bhimsen Nagar, Dabha)

The third workshop was conducted at the same location in April 2024, with a mix of returning students and new participants. Given the presence of first-time learners in Stage 1, the curriculum remained the same as in previous years to ensure a strong foundational understanding.

For Stage 2 students, who had already acquired basic skills, the focus shifted towards observational drawing exercises. Each student was assigned specific locations within the workspace, where they observed and sketched portraits, electrical boards, and street scenes.

A new exercise challenged students to design architectural blueprints of their homes and imagine shopfronts in perspective, including medical stores, garment shops, and street vendors. With this exercise, students were pushed to imagine a dream house by creating its blueprint. They were also introduced to typography, where they designed their own creative names using alliteration. Another imaginative exercise required them to visualize and create a treasure map.

During this time, an art competition at '*Beejotsav: A Seed Festival*' in Nagpur was announced, with the theme '*The Greener Future.*' To help students conceptualize their ideas, brainstorming sessions were conducted. As a result, nine Stage 2 students participated in the competition, with four securing first and second prizes. To further enhance their exposure, students were taken on a visit to the Raman Science Centre.

As the workshop neared its conclusion, students prepared for a Mother's Day play, rehearsing outside class hours. During the closing ceremony, they performed the play, delivered speeches on social reformers, and shared their experiences, bringing the workshop to a meaningful conclusion.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite the success of the workshops, several challenges were encountered. The workshop was funded by the organizers such as Anuradha Bele and Niketan Jambhulkar. However, the main challenge was to maintain decorum in the classroom. Handling Stage 2 children was comparatively easier than Stage 1, as they were very mischievous and were in constant need of being taught. Another major challenge was the participant limit. These workshops were not structured, and students would just give their names to the organizers; thus, it was difficult to maintain a record of participation and any other documentation. Initially, the plan was to just teach for 1 hour, but due to the strength and two stages of students, it was difficult to conduct sessions in 1 hour; thus, a minimum of 3 hours was allotted for the workshop.

Budget

The workshops were conducted on a minimal budget, relying primarily on organizers and community support. The major expenses included art materials, and allowance and travelling arrangements for the facilitator. The first workshop was conducted in the center established by the organizers, while the other two workshops were conducted in Buddha Vihar at Bhimsen Nagar, Dabha.

Budget Breakdown				
S.No.	Item	Quantity	Unit Cost (₹)	Total Cost (₹)
Art Material				
1	A4 Size Bundle	1 Bundle	₹300	₹300
2	Pencil Sets	3 Sets	₹30	₹90
3	Sharpener	3 Sets	₹100	₹300
4	Eraser	3 Sets	₹200	₹600
5	Color Pencils (For Stage I)	5 Sets	₹20	₹100
6	Crayons (For Stage I)	5 Sets	₹20	₹100
7	Water Colors (For Stage II)	5 Sets	₹10	₹50
8	Double Tape	4 pcs	₹35	₹140
9	Sketch Pens (For Stage II)	5 Sets	₹20	₹100
Sub-Total				₹1,780
Facilitator Sponsorship Breakdown				
1	Honorarium			₹7,000
2	Travelling Allowance			₹1,500
Sub-Total				₹8,500

Total Budget Summary (Per Workshop, Approx.)	
Category	Amount
Art Material	₹1,780
Facilitator Sponsorship Breakdown	₹8,500
Total	₹10,280

Future Plans and Recommendations

Given the positive impact of these workshops, plans for future sessions include:

- Develop a structured registration and attendance system.
- Design separate curricula for different age groups.
- Increase facilitator and volunteer support for better management.
- Secure consistent funding for materials and facilitator costs.
- Extend workshops to more rural areas with proper planning.

Conclusion

The Visual Horizon workshops have successfully introduced rural children to the world of art while fostering their creativity and observational skills. Over the past three years, the program has evolved into a structured learning experience that not only teaches artistic techniques but also encourages creative thinking and problem-solving. With continued support and expansion, these workshops have the potential to inspire and empower even more students, helping them explore the limitless possibilities of artistic expression.