

DIPHU, 2019

KIDS METAMORPHOSIZE FROM ADDICTION TO AMBITION- MUSICAL CAMP FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS OF HILLTOP CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, DIPHU

Assam/North-East India:

At the end of an intensive six-day camp held for the students of Hilltop Christian School, Diphu, Assam, from 3rd to 8th February 2020, a successful musical performance of "JOB- Where are you father?" marked the highlight of the programme. During this time, the children and youth proved their individual, valuable set of talents in numerous group sessions, workshops and daily activities. "Most students come from small villages outside of town. Parents place the entire responsibility for character formation upon the school and us teachers, taking little to no responsibility themselves. Among the teenagers from 13-14 years on, consuming drugs, smoking marijuana or alcoholism is a huge problem", explained the teachers. They wanted their students to be inspired to find ways out of their addictions.

Much like the participants' display of belief in themselves, the biblical figure Job is a role model for living through a difficult fate in tested times. Both the teenagers' and Job's transformations were made possible by their ability to stand up against challenging circumstances and not giving up their belief despite negative past experiences.

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These parallel storylines were the motivation for the Upper Room team to write a musical based on the book of Job, which the boys and girls rehearsed in concentrated practice sessions in just a few days, before excellently performing it in attendance of the director of the school, Nicole Esther remarked, "Your performance today is a testimony that one does not give up in life. Your story is an inspiration to the youth in the farthest villages of our districts," she spoke after the show. A growing section of the youth in this region are victims of substance abuse. At the early age of 11-13, they pick up addictions to marijuana, SBD, alcohol and tobacco-chewing. „Through interactive sessions and the musical, we tried to create a room where we could find a common language with the students, identify their problems together and equip them to discover possible solutions”, explained Anson Samuel, co-founder of “The Upper Room”. Talks and workshops that formed a crucial part of the module focussed on living a transformational school-culture that centred around appreciation, gratitude and leadership. Replete with counselling sessions, experimental theatre and group games, the programme also consisted of ‘sexual awareness and meditation’ and ‘how to plan my study time’.

There’s a ME that’s MEant to lead’

“The students’ motivation and commitment showed that they reacted positively to the camp’s message ‘There’s a ME that’s MEant to lead’”, Anson recalls. The smallest kids - some of them being only three years old - enjoyed puppet-theatre shows. The elder ones were guided to reflect about their own potential and explored ways to make the most out of it.

The team ensured that teenage girls felt empowered through a workshop about menstruation and personal hygiene – especially important in a surrounding where teenage girls are forced into marriage and ill-informed about sex education.

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A musical in five days? Challenge accepted!

A highlight of the week was the musical performance in front of parents and friends of the students. “The days were packed with fun moments - and hard work. To get a musical going in just five days is a true challenge. But the students have given their absolute best and it was a pleasure to see them grow“, quipped Alisha Ribeiro, one of the team members who volunteered for the project, joyfully.

„The best time to start a new beginning is now“, says Victor who played God, “I especially liked the challenging role and felt encouraged to implement concrete changes in my life.“ Mrs. Esther thanked “The Upper Room” for the last few days. Now, as the school routine goes back to normal again, the planted seeds will grow – slowly but steadily. echtssystemen der Jahresbericht im Unternehmensregister erfasst sein.