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Child Protection and Safety

As we increasingly include outbound education as a core value add in the learning process, we also need to ascertain for ourselves the safety components within. Increasingly children are emboldened to achieve far greater than their parents have or could have imagined, thus we are also exposing our children to areas where the comfort zones are challenged. We are pushing boundaries. One of the key elements to be looked at in this is to question how safe is my

Generally speaking your child is safe, since the child is almost always in a group and under adult supervisors and teachers. However a child predator is hard to identify. The statistics are far more frightening when one reads that children are molested more by known individuals who have managed to get their confidence. Thus, near and dear ones, maids, drivers neighbours, friends of the family, educators can be the predator.

Trailblazers takes these aspects critically. To understand it better and to be able to recognise this as an open threat we conducted a training session for Team Trailblazers who lead the camps. They have now been trained to recognize and understand predatory signals and to take appropriate action should such an emergency be perpetrated. The learning itself

was indeed a revelation as we realized how little we all knew about it. To be able to determine from the child's behaviour that something is amiss and how to secure the child with the help of teachers and parents was an eye opener. Trailblazers educators were sensitized on how they must behave with children and teachers in the outdoors and how they must be aware of potential offenders and victimized children. As a responsible organization we have put in place a Child Protection Policy for Trailblazers. Although safety training is part of an ongoing mandatory training, it is for the first time that we provided training on Child abuse and exploitation to our team which was immediately followed by the yearly

Children are both vulnerable and sensitive therefore child abuse can be physical, emotional, and verbal and may take many forms. It is important that we brief the children when they go on outbound programs to read the signals. A briefing is done on the subject by Trailblazers instructors in all our outbound camps and we urge the teachers and the parents also to warn their children. Caring for children and keeping them safe is a shared responsibility.

intensive First Aid Training.

I follow the scout motto always "Be Prepared". Having said this, we should not throw the baby along with the bath water. Caution is required but not to ban outbound education for fear of something happening. A good school prepares the child to face the world not run away from it as I see sometimes.

Internationally this subject has been on the priority list with United Nations and all countries. Australia recently celebrated the National Child Protection Week which invites all Australians to play their part to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people with the motto "Protecting children is everyone's business." The campaign aimed to provide communities and individuals with practical information on how to 'Play Your Part' and to embed primary prevention messages into social discourse. It also provided a platform for communities to be empowered and mobilised to take action at a local level. South Africa is another example where child security is taken very seriously as it is a critical subject. Recorded levels do not accurately reflect the full extent of the problem because many cases go unreported. Violence has long-lasting consequences for children, with strong evidence of a link between childhood violence and adult mental health disorders and substance abuse.

Violence against children is all too often unseen, unheard and underreported, said UNICEF India. Under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international treaties, all children have the right to be protected from harm. The Government of India has formed the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) to create a protective environment for children through the improvement and expansion of services for children in need of care and protection. However lots more needs to be done, lots more can be done.

> **Ranjan Biswas** Editor ecotrail@trailblazersindia.com

On the Brink ...

The Indian humpback Dolphin or Indo-Pacific humpbacked Dolphin (Sousa plumbea) is a coastal dolphin that can be found along the coast of Africa, India and Australia. The dolphin is considered to be a resident species across Malabar Coast and is commonly sighted in coastal areas of Konkan and Mumbai. It is listed as Schedule II species of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act 1972, the highest protection possible for a marine species in India and is also listed as Nearly Threatened in IUCN Red List.



Image courtesy: Avinash Bhagat

Humpback dolphins are characterized by the conspicuous humps and elongated dorsal fins found on the backs of adults of the species. 4 subspecies are identified under genus Sousa.

Newborn calves are a cream whereas the adults have a more dull off-white coloring from the tail to the snout. Their flanks are dark gray, and their stomachs are a lighter gray. Adults can reach from 1.8 - 2.6 mt (5 ft 11 in - 8 ft 6 in) and weigh in the range of 100 - 139 kg.

The humpback dolphin's main diet consists of mullet, sardines and other fish found in plenty in tropical waters of Mumbai coast, though the feeding habits are widely unknown, as this animal is not widely known itself. Major threat to this species of Dolphin across India and other countries are over fishing of mullets and other groupers in open seas which is the basic feed of this dolphin species, apart from this most often this dolphin get stranded on beaches as they come close to shore for hunting, fishing nets is another major threat to this species.



Cabbage Kindness

At 9 years old, Katie Stagliano donated a massive cabbage she grew from just a tiny seedling to a local soup kitchen. Little did she know that her simple act would end up feeding 275 people and start a movement.

"When I donated my 40-pound cabbage, I was able to see for the first time the faces of hunger and homelessness" said Katie. Inspired by that experience, she started Katie's Krop, a nonprofit that has started 100 youth gardens around the country, with kids from ages 9 to 16 growing and donating fresh produce to feed the hungry in their

community. Now at 17 years old, she is the youngest recipient of the University of California Global Food Initiative's 30 Under 30 Awards, which recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to food access and security, education, health and sustainability. She's also the youngest recipient of the Clinton Global Citizen Award. "I've learned the power of youth and youth service," said Katie.



Katie now at 17 years



Katie at 9 years

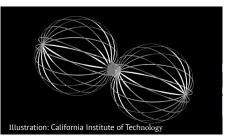
Reef Fish



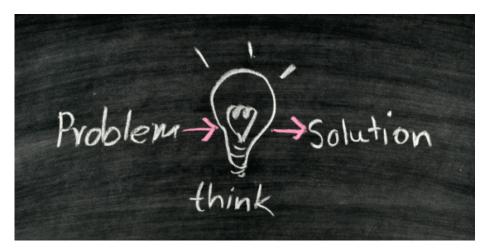
The University of Queensland's Researchers have established that Coral reef fish see colors that humans cannot. Some reef fish, such as the anemonefish 'Nemo' and other damselfish can see the UV wavelengths we protect ourselves from. Their colour tasks are blue-biased, as they live in a blue ocean. "Ironically, as the colours of the reef change and disappear because of climate change, we are just beginning to understand how reef inhabitants see and experience their vibrant world," said Professor Marshall, one of the researchers.

E-Glider

One of the biggest constraints on exploration of the solar system is fuel. Propulsion systems like ion engines and electrospray engines can use small amounts of fuel very efficiently, but only postpones the problem of limited reaction mass as opposed to solving it. Fortunately, some very smart people are working on alternative means of fuel-free propulsion; one of the least crazy ones has been funded NASA as part of its Innovative Advanced Concepts Program. It's called E-Glider, and it uses electrostatic fields to surf through.



10 ways to Teach Innovation



One overriding challenge is now coming to the fore in public consciousness: We need to reinvent just about everything. Whether scientific advances, technology breakthroughs, new political and economic structures, environmental solutions, or an updated code of ethics for 21st century life, everything is in flux—and everything demands innovative, out of the box thinking. The burden of reinvention, of course, falls on today's generation of students. So it follows that education should focus on fostering innovation by putting curiosity, critical thinking, deep understanding, the rules and tools of inquiry, and creative brainstorming at the center of the curriculum. This is hardly the case, as we know. In fact, innovation and the current classroom model most often operate as antagonists. The system is evolving, but not quickly enough to get young people ready for the new world. But there are a number of ways that teachers can bypass the system and offer students the tools and experiences that spur an innovative mindset. Here are ten ideas:

Move from projects to Project Based **Learning.** Most teachers have done projects, but the majority do not use the defined set of methods associated with high-quality PBL. These methods include developing a focused question, using solid, well crafted performance assessments, allowing for multiple solutions, enlisting community resources, and choosing engaging, meaningful themes for projects. PBL offers the best method we have presently for combining inquiry with accountability, and should

be part of every teacher's repertoire. See my website or the Buck Institute for methods.

Teach concepts, not facts. Concept-based instruction overcomes the fact-based, rote-oriented nature of standardized curriculum. If your curriculum is not organized conceptually, use you own knowledge and resources to teach ideas and deep understanding, not test items.

Distinguish concepts from critical information. Preparing students for tests is part of the job. But they need information for a more important reason: To innovate, they need to know something. The craft precedes the art. Find the right blend between openended inquiry and direct instruction.

Make skills as important as knowledge. Innovation and 21st century skills are closely related. Choose several 21st century skills, such as collaboration or critical thinking, to focus on throughout the year. Incorporate them into lessons. Use detailed rubrics to assess and grade the skills.

Form teams, not groups. Innovation now emerges from teams and networksand we can teach students to work collectively and become better collective thinkers. Group work is common, but team work is rare. Some tips: Use specific methods to form teams; assess teamwork and work ethic; facilitate high quality interaction through protocols and critique; teach the cycle of revision; and expect students to reflect critically on both ongoing work and final products. F

Use thinking tools. Hundreds of interesting, thought provoking tools exist for thinking through problems, sharing insights, finding solutions, and encouraging divergent solutions. Use Big Think tools or the Visible Thinking Routines developed at Harvard's Project

Use creativity tools. Industry uses a set of cutting edge tools to stimulate creativity and innovation. As described in books such as Game storming or Beyond Words, the tools include playful games and visual exercises that can easily be used in the classroom.

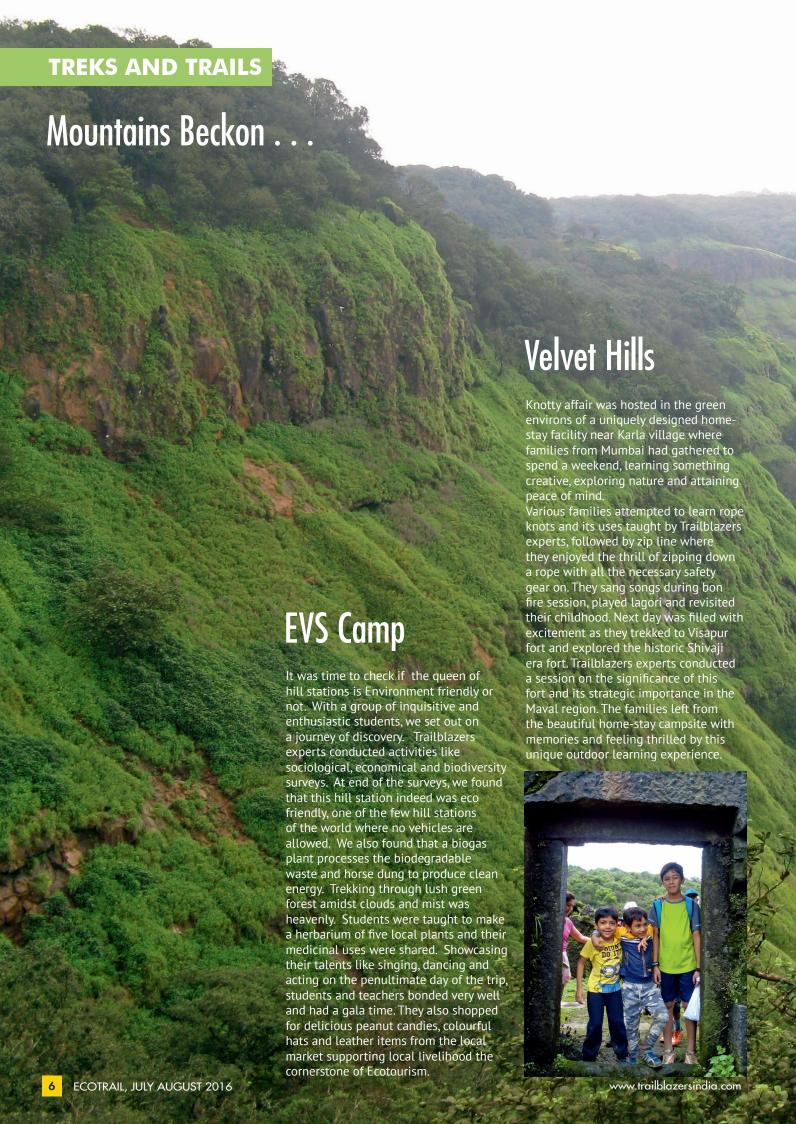
Reward discovery. Innovation is mightily discouraged by our system of assessment, which rewards the mastery of known information. Step up the reward system by using rubrics with a blank column to acknowledge and reward innovation and creativity. I call it the Breakthrough column. All of the rubrics on the PBL Tools section of my website have a breakthrough column.

Make reflection part of the lesson.

Because of the coverage imperative, the tendency is to move on quickly from the last chapter and begin the next chapter. But reflection is necessary to anchor learning and stimulate deeper thinking and understanding. There is no innovation without rumination.

Be innovative yourself. This is the kicker, because innovation requires the willingness to fail, a focus on fuzzy outcomes rather than standardized measures, and the bravery to resist the system's emphasis on strict accountability. But the reward is a kind of liberating creativity that makes teaching exciting and fun, engages students, and—most critical—helps students find the passion and resources necessary to design a better life for themselves and others.

This post originally appeared on Thom Markham's blog. Thom Markham, Ph.D., is a psychologist and school redesign consultant who assists teachers in designing high quality, rigorous projects that incorporate 21st century skills and the principles of youth development. www.pblqlobal.com



Cave Trail

It was an excited lot of students waiting to board the convoy of buses outside the school. They boarded the bus as soon as they got a green signal from Trailblazers experts and teachers. The bus ride to Kondane was a visual delight for students as they enjoyed the beautiful monsoon views.

starting point of the trek, it became even more spectacular as they rode along the playful Ulhas river on one side and paddy fields on the other. All these at the backdrop of students singing songs and pleasant monsoon breeze was a sensory delight making it an unforgettable experience of a lifetime. Trailblazers experts shared information on Sahyadri's fauna and flora. As they hiked up, they were greeted by pink blossoms of balsams and wild sesames with boulders decorated with mosses, ferns and begonias. As they reached the caves, a silver shower of waterfall welcomed them. History of Buddhist caves along with its various structures like stupas, chaityas and viharas was shared with the students. After enjoying the stay at top, they climbed down and boarded buses for a sumptuous lunch to a nearby resort. The students drove back to school refreshed and happily sharing their stories of the trip.



Karvi Trail



It was an opportunity of a lifetime - our first time to witness the spectacle of Karvi mass blooming. Even before we started our trail, we were sure that we will be seeing a great deal of wild life as we were blessed with the sightings of a barking deer as we drove towards the starting point of trail.

As we began the trail we were awestruck with the patch of purple flowers and pink buds in the forest. Bees and butterflies were fluttering over it and playing hide and seek with the purple bells of Karvi.

Karvi (Strobilanthes callosus) blooms en masse every eight years. Plants that bloom at long intervals like Strobilanthes callosus are known as plietesials. Generally the bloom lasts between 15 and 20 days, its mass blooming usually extends from mid August till September end.



After Karvi finishes blooming its dried sticks are used locally for making thatches by villagers. Karvi honey is a popular delicacy. Along with the splash of purple the forest was dotted with pink flowers of wild turmeric (Curcuma aromatica), white flowers (Costus speciosus) or wild ginger, orange flowers of Indian



screw tree (Helicteres isora) and blue flowers of rat ears (Commelina benghalensis). Spotting of The Great Orange Tip Butterfly caterpillar (Hebomoia glaucippe) and the colorful fungoid frog or Malabar Hills frog (Hydrophylax malabaricus) on the lower vegetation of forest was icing

The trail ended by the gurgling brook as we enjoyed a cool splash of mountain water on our faces.

-Team Trailblazers

A Colorful Day at Zilla Parisad School, Mahuli



"Desire is the key to motivation, but it's determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek." -Mario Andretti

This is the mantra that Trailblazers Foundation stands for..... Commitment to a small village in Maharashtra is on work map of Trailblazers Foundation from year 2014. With a purpose to understand this village better, we conducted a socio economic lifestyle audit and a baseline survey. Needs of the villagers were identified and a long term plan was developed on how to address these issues and initiate positive change in village life. Keeping youth education and employability in mind, students of grade 10 and 12 were given a Vocational guidance session last year. Experts were taken from Mumbai to the village to talk to them. In continuation of this

initiative and many follow up visits, a drawing competition was held recently which was one more step to explore and enhance the talent within these children. Trailblazers Foundation funded and organized a drawing and coloring competition for 220 students who live in villages and hamlets that come under Group Gram Panchayat on 16th September. Sarpanch Shri. Pradeep Agilave and the School In charge were most co operative. Students from grade 1 to 10 were divided into five groups.



Group one of grade 1 and 2 being smaller grades were to be tested on colouring skills only. Group two of grade 2 and 3 had to show their excellence in designing a neckline of a frock, border of hand kerchief or a vase. Group three of grade 5 and 6 was challenged for still drawing skills, Group 4 of grade 7 and 8 were scheduled to do memory drawing on subject of Shahapur Bus Depot Or Asangaon Railway Station. And the eldest

of the lot, Group 5 of grade 9 and 10 had to draw the theme 'My village-Ideal village' or 'My Family-Happy Family'. These themes were communicated from Trailblazers Foundation to the School in charge Mr.Shelvale and from him to all other schools. The teachers were so enthusiastic that they prepared their children under respective categories. Practice sessions were conducted a week before!

On day of competition the entire Zilla Parishad Education team was present and involved. Judges were teachers from guest schools. The excitement was palpable! The event ended on a high note with prize distribution at the hands of teachers, parents and Sarpanch's parents. This initiative was deeply appreciated by one and all. We felt a wave of happiness and fulfillment when children asked our Foundation's Sarala and Prathamesh when they would return to do similar activities! We left with a lump in our throat.... and plans in our minds for the next project.



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Motivational Thoughts

Mrs. Vandana Arora Principal of Nahar International **School**, a strong believer in the Rudolf Steiner philosophy of education has a unique way of communicating with her students and parents by sending a letter to them at the beginning of the year.

Below is an inspirational poem penned by her which was sent to the students and parents. She strongly feels that we have to develop young minds who are not only empowered to take their own place in an ever-changing world but are also ready to enquire into and reflect on social and global issues independently as well as collaboratively...and No matter what happens, Positive I'll stay.



No Matter What Happens

No matter what happens Positive I'll stay

Every failure makes me reflect And I will turn it into a learning I will embrace the learning and grow every day And then with this learning I will move further and forward And all the people will move forward

No matter what happens Positive I'll stay

I believe that I can

with me

And will make people believe that they I will then bring a change Yes, a positive change I will change those things that need to What the world still needs, I'll fight hard to sustain I will evolve everyday and with me will develop the world

No matter what happens Positive I stay

I will stand for my belief and will make people rise I will take charge and take the first step I am the leader And will lead the world towards a better future

No matter what happens I stay positive in my thoughts, beliefs and in actions

Vandana Arora **Principal Nahar International School**



my workers. They will problem, like Lions.

BIRDING TRAILS

Bird Watching

What are birds?

Warm Blooded, Egg laying feathered vertebrates.

- Migration of birds is according to the season favoring them for better adaptability and accessibility of food.
- In birds, males are more attractive than the females.
- Extant birds range in size from the 5 cm (2 in) Bee Hummingbird to the 2.75 m (9 ft) Ostrich.
- Indian Subcontinent has around 1280 species of birds with many Passage and Winter visitors

So what is Bird Watching? Why birds only?

- Bird watching can be defined as practice of watching or observing birds in their natural environment as a hobby.
- Birds have always delighted people all over the world because of their beauty and their power of flight.

- Today, modern science still uses birds as a kind of oracle. Changes in bird populations can reflect the health of the environment.
- Some birds are indicator species, like arrival of Pied Cuckoo means arrival of Monsoon season. They forecast environmental conditions. The knowledge of birds can help us plan a better, more sustainable relationship with nature.

Who watches birds?

People of all ages watch birds. It's an activity you can keep doing all your life, in any part of world.

What's in it for me if I start birding?

- Fun. Big fun. A connection is made with the immense beauty of nature.
- Satisfaction. Birding is the perfect sport for the 21st
- Health. It gets you outside

- and walking. But it's effortless, because your attention is on the birds.
- Family. By taking up birding, parents or grandparents can introduce their children to an interest in nature that will stay with them all their lives.
- Companionship. Birding is the ideal social activity. A birder need never be lonely and because birders love to share their knowledge, newcomers are always welcome.
- Solitude. Birding is also the ideal solitary sport. Birding is a sport of many moods, and it serves the causes of companionship and solitude equally well.

KNOW YOUR BIRD

Purple rumped Sunbird

The sunbirds are very small birds that mostly inhabit forested areas; however, some subspecies occur in urban areas also. Unlike hummingbirds, sunbirds rarely hover while feeding but instead perch on the flower stalk. Sunbirds are most numerous in Africa & Asia but occur eastward to Pacific islands too. Many of its species have a very colourful plumage with iridescent colours with Males more bright & colourful than females which are drab in colour. Like hummingbirds and honeyeaters, the sunbirds are nectar eaters and they share some physical

similarities, but they are not related. The resemblances are due to convergent evolution.

Around 13 species of Sunbirds are seen in Indian Subcontinent and Purple Rumped Sunbird is one among them. It is a widespread resident species seen in Central & South India. It is 10 cm in size with males showing a narrow metallic breast band with maroon colour in head region and back, metallic green shoulder and forehead areas, yellow in the belly region with a long down curved slender dark bill while the females are dull coloured with grey in breast area and yellow in belly with olive green body.

For Birding trails connect with us on: sachin@trailblazersindia.com, prathamesh@trailblazersindia.com (M) 9820333744 (O) 022 25891513, 25891490

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