

11th April, 2023

∫ VINAIYŪKKIKAL: A STUDENT LEADER COLLECTIVE



SUPW Project Report for 2023-24

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ABSTRACT

This is a report on / Vinaiyūkkikal, the one-day leadership workshop we conducted for grade 8 students at **TKS Higher Secondary School**, on **11th April, 2023**. This report covers the our journey before the workshop, the structure of the workshop and the outcomes of the workshop.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Leadership is the art of motivating, influencing, and directing people so that they work together to achieve the goals of a team or broader organisation.

It asks individuals to speak out, make difficult decisions, create and articulate clear visions, establish achievable goals and equip team members with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve those goals. And these are skills that benefit every aspect of one's life: education, science, entrepreneurship, sports, social work, and many more.

It's thus important for students to experience leadership opportunities during their schooling to improve their self-awareness, social-awareness and interpersonal skills.

We all know that there exist multiple new ventures that teach leadership and innovation skills to students to provide the much-needed leadership opportunities and bridge the evident gap in leadership in the current world. However, these programs are very expensive and students from all backgrounds cannot afford them. This project of ours attempts to solve this problem by taking leadership courses to everyone.



/ VINAIYŪKKIKAL

/ Vinaiyūkkikal (meaning integration of the catalysts of tomorrow) is a one-day, interactive, activity-based leadership workshop designed for students who can't access and/or afford other leadership skills development programmes. In order to make the workshop as efficient as possible for them, it is designed for batches of not more than 35 students.



OUR VISION

To empower all young minds with the opportunity to understand and master the art of building relationships within teams by creating a culture of ownership, collaboration and community amongst them.

OUR STUDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

We believe that, in order to survive in the 21st century, everyone needs to learn how to be effective leaders. Our workshop is specially designed to cater to students who:

1. don't have access to existing leadership programmes in the market.
2. can't financially afford to take part in other leadership programmes.
3. belong to grades 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, the years when development of a growth mindset and leadership skills are very crucial.
4. can't afford to spend more than a day on extra-curricular workshops.
5. can only understand the regional language.



CURATING THE WORKSHOP

Here's how our curative journey up till our first leadership workshop looked like:



November, 2022 – December, 2022

Research & Ideation

The first and foremost step we undertook was research. To create and conduct a workshop on leadership, demanded immense knowledge on this topic. We, thus, explored the existing theories of leadership and the core competencies of leadership. Being privileged, we have attended a couple of leadership skills development workshops ourselves, and we developed ideas using our knowledge from there as well as from a thorough research on techniques used in renowned global institutions like the University of Michigan.



December, 2022 – February, 2023

Designing the Workshop

After our research on leadership, we together designed the most effective and interactive one-day workshop that we could and attempted to cover all the core competencies of leadership we identified during research. We also worked on identifying the tools and frameworks used in the workshop and in designing the activities. We worked on improvising the workshop until we conducted our first workshop and intend to keep doing it.



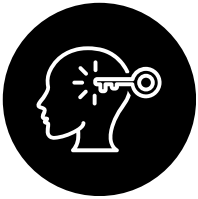
January, 2023 onwards

Reaching Out to Schools

Next, we stepped out to identify the school where we could conduct our first workshop. After presenting our proposal with over 4 schools, we collaborated with **TKS Higher Secondary School** who graciously accepted our proposal and let us conduct our workshop there.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Here are the core competencies exercised by the students during this workshop:



No. 01 – **Self-awareness**

Identifying, understanding and being mindful of one's own values, thoughts and emotions.



No. 02 – **Self-Management**

Building visions and setting short-term and long-term goals in order to translate awareness into desired outcomes for oneself and their team.



No. 03 – **Social Awareness**

Understanding and empathizing with others, particularly with people from different backgrounds than one's own.



No. 04 – **Responsible Decision-making**

Making caring and constructive choices about how to behave, based on consideration of ethical standards as well as relevant social norms and safety concerns.

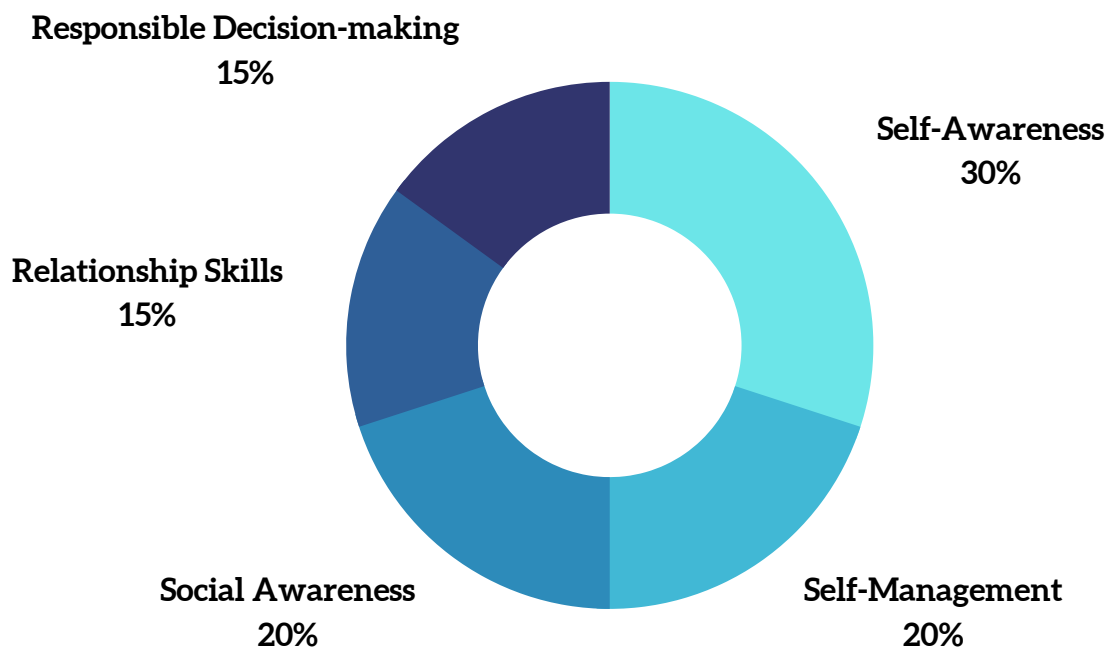


No. 05 – **Relationship Skills**

Building positive relationships, especially with diverse individuals and groups, using a variety of methods such as active listening, and communication and conflict resolution.

WORKSHOP DAY

We hosted a group of 32 students on 11th April, 2023 at TKS Higher Secondary School. The workshop was structured such that there was a comprehensive coverage of all the five core competences a leader needs to develop. It involved activities based on practicing core skills including active listening, self-reflection, creativity, vision building, goal setting, decision-making, conflict resolution, etc.



Participants reflected on where they are in their own journey, built a vision of where their journey has to lead to, and learnt how to set goals to achieve their vision and simultaneously be a leader and better communicator who is socially aware, and responsible.

“Leadership is much more an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do.”

CHECK-IN

We started off with a silent minute to help the participants become mindful of their surroundings and be in the present. We then started off with a round of check-in. Starting with us and then the participants, we went around the room saying our names and then what animal we are and/or felt like.

Everyone's personality or mood can be matched with that of a certain animal. Self-reflecting on what animal one feels like was one way that made them mindful of their character and current emotions. Each student brought forward a different animal and it helped themselves and us understand them better. Here are some animals they felt like:



ICE-BREAKER

We then did a round of hot-seat questions as an ice-breaker to help the students loosen up and get to know us better. The students came forward to ask us some questions on our personality, likes and dislikes. Some of the questions we answered include:

1. Do you think people can change?
2. Have you ever been on a cruise?
3. Do you believe in ghosts?
4. Have you ever lied to your parents?
5. Have you ever met a celebrity?
6. Have you ever been to a mirror world?
7. If you could gain magical powers but lose one of your six senses, would you do it?
8. Do you believe in aliens?
9. Have you ever been in surgery?
10. Would you ever ditch a person in a haunted house?

PERSONALITY WHEEL

Adapted for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations and the Spectrum Center, University of Michigan, the Personal Identity Wheel is a worksheet activity that encourages students to reflect on how they identify outside of social identifiers.

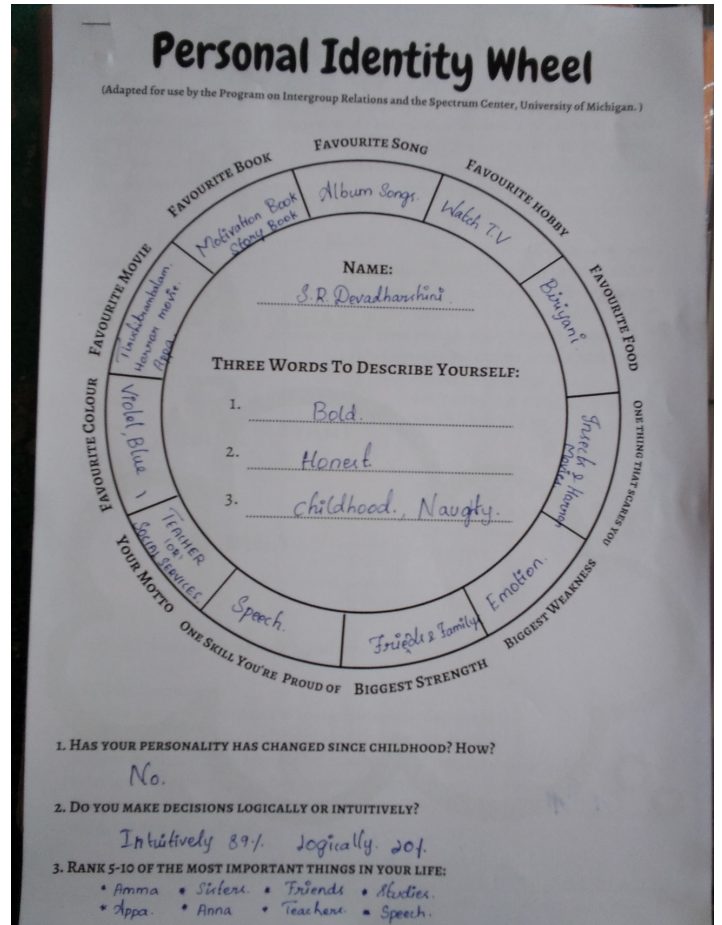
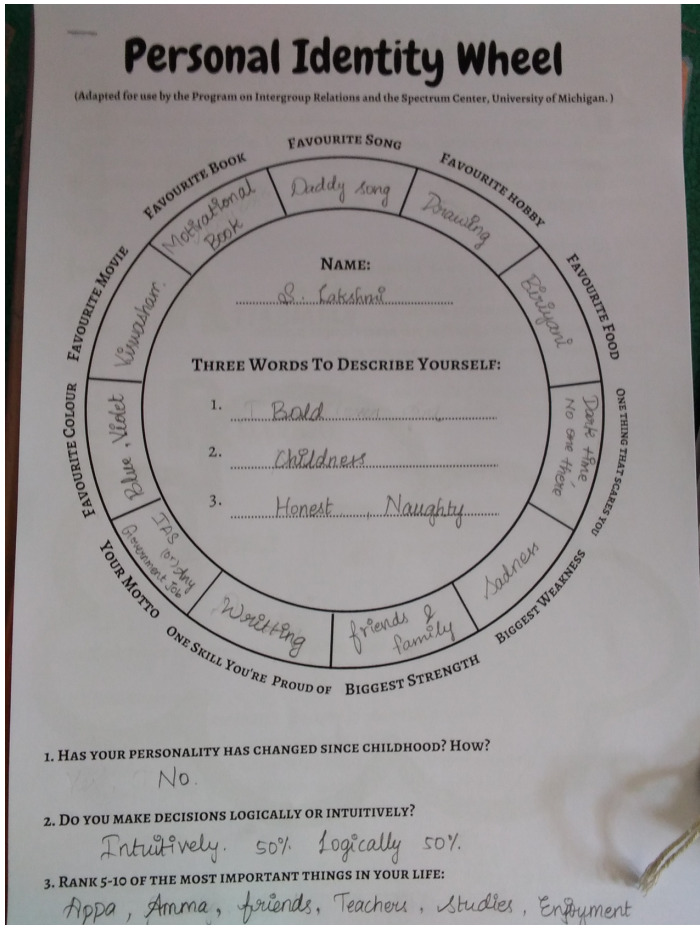
The worksheet prompts students to list adjectives they would use to describe themselves, skills they have, favorite books, hobbies, etc. It is an excellent way to encourage students to reflect on the relationships and dissonances between their personal and social identities.

The personality wheel is an activity we adapted to help students understand self-awareness.

Why is self-awareness essential?

- 1. Self-awareness helps you understand yourself, your strengths, your weaknesses and things that affect you:** Behaviors and choices come from thoughts, feelings, values, goals, and biases. To succeed in life – either personally or professionally – understanding that root is important. The more self-aware you are, the deeper your understanding is about yourself, your strengths, weaknesses and other things that affect you.
- 2. Self-awareness improves your critical thinking skills and decision making skills:** When you're self-aware, you're able to identify the subjective parts of yourself – like your feelings and opinions – and do your best to not let them play too big of a role in your critical thinking. This and you knowing your strengths and weaknesses guides you to make better decisions as well.
- 3. Self-awareness improves your listening skills:** Active listening is a rare skill. Most people are half-listening to the person talking and half-listening to their own thoughts, preparing a response. People who lack self-awareness are often the worst listeners because when you don't listen to yourself and don't understand your own thoughts and feelings, it's very difficult to do that for others. Becoming more self-aware stretches the same muscles it takes to be a better listener. Self-aware people are also good listeners because they can recognize emotional triggers and biases that affect communication.
- 4. Self-awareness makes you a better leader:** Self-awareness is one of the most desired traits for leaders. As we've learned, self-awareness leads to other skills like active listening, critical thinking, decision-making, and empathy. These are all traits that good leaders possess.

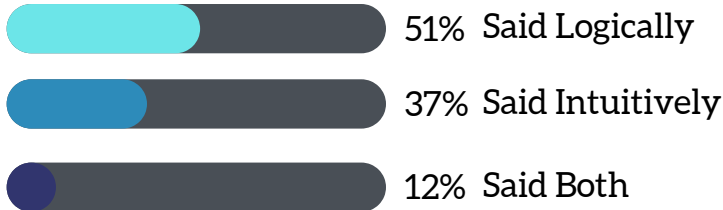
Here are some excerpts from the personality wheels filled out by the students during the simulation. They reflect the various unique personalities they all possess:



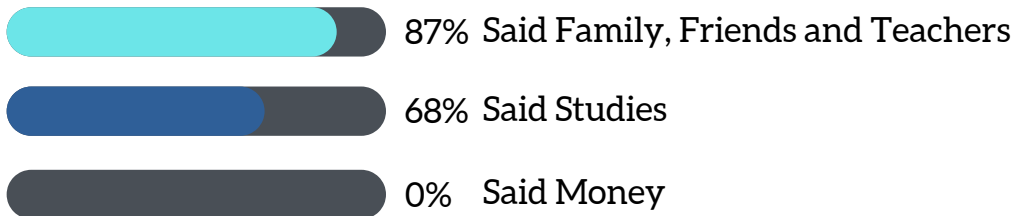
Has your personality changed since childhood?



Do you make your decisions logically or intuitively?

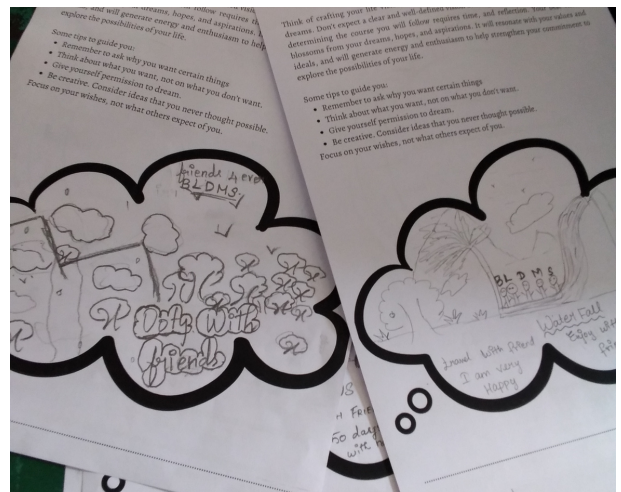
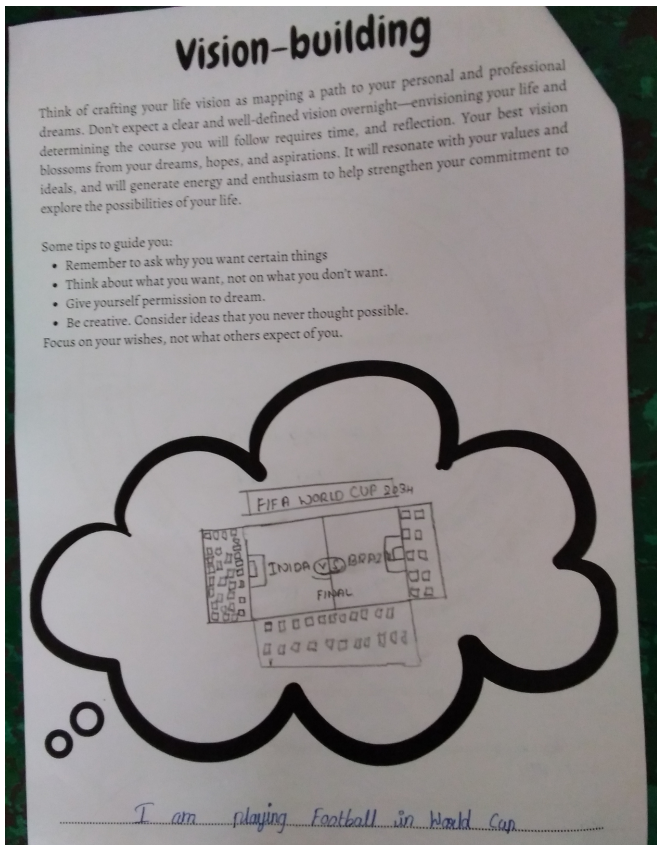


Rank 5-10 of the most important things in your life:



VISION BUILDING

Having a vision provides a sense of purpose and direction for an individual and/or business. After they finished reflecting on their personality, we asked each student to draw a picture of (or write in words) what they ideally want their life to look like in 10 years. As the examples below illustrate, students reflected a range of visions, from becoming an international football player to going on a trip and becoming a CBI officer.



Vision-building is an essential skill for human beings to define what their short and long-term goals should be. While one's vision may constantly evolve with time, exercising this skill will help reflect on one's dreams and values and generate energy & enthusiasm to help strengthen one's commitment to explore the possibilities of life and leadership.

“ Good leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion. ”

GOAL-SETTING

After the vision-building exercise, we had a discussion on goal-setting to realise the visions developed by the students. We introduced the concept of SMART Goals and how setting small-term goals that achieve larger, overarching goals can help in realising visions. The students were then tasked with creating their own SMART goal when they go back home.



“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”



RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Responsible decision-making is a skill every leader needs to have in the 21st century. We, thus, discussed responsible decision-making with the students. We introduced them to a 5-step decision-making key with a bonus tip to guide them into making better decisions. We covered individual and social factors that affect leaders during the decision-making process including personal goals, ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms.

SOCIAL-AWARENESS

The next part of our workshop focused on the social spheres of leadership. We discussed social awareness, the art of being connected with your community. We discussed active listening, taking others' perspectives, empathizing with others and being respectful of diversity in individuals. We also introduced them to the golden rule of social-awareness: **Live in harmony, and treat others the way you would like to be treated, for we are all related.**

“Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu: A person is a person through other people [OR] I am because you are.”



RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

In extension with social awareness, we also touched into relationship skills. We talked about how social awareness skills can help forge positive relationships with people. We talked about effective communication and ran through 5-step conflict resolution plan with the students. The plan included a graph that can be used as a guide to identify what kind of an approach can be taken to identify neutral grounds.

“The art of communication and conflict resolution is the lifeline of any relationship. And relationships are the lifeline of any leader.”

TREASURE HUNT

Designed to make students apply the competencies of social-awareness, relationship building, conflict resolution, and decision making all the while displaying teamwork, this activity involved students solving a set of scenario-based problems to win a treasure. Here are some questions from the hunt:

You have a goal of making handicrafts in two weeks given to you by your arts teacher. You also have an important maths assignment to submit. Your maths teacher is okay with late submission. In this situation, what will be your first priority?

Kate has a meeting with the principal. She has been chosen as the best student of the year. She is supposed to make a presentation to 15 teachers along with the principal. What skills do you think Kate needs here?

Your best friend has stolen a book from the school library. He really wants to keep the book. What would you do?

If you find out that a fake account of your name and image has been created by someone, what would be your first response?

Someone that you know very well tells you that you are short and also dark in complexion. He teases you that you are unattractive. What will you do?



REFLECTION

As the final activity, we had students come out with their reflections on the workshop. We asked them to reflect on their favourite part of the workshop, what they will take home from the workshop and one word that they will always remember. We also asked to rate their experience and if they would have done anything differently. Here's what they told us:

MY MOST FAVOURITE PART OF THE WORKSHOP WAS:

Vision-Building **Personal Identity Wheel** **Goals**
Ice-breaker **Your style of explanation**
Relationship Skills **Activites** **Decision-making**

I'LL TAKE HOME:

Vision-Building **Relationship-building**
Goal-setting
Social Awareness **Decision-making**

ONE WORD I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Vision **Specific** **Timely**
Decision **SMART** **Intuitively** **Logically**
Achievable **Special**

RATING FOR THE EXPERIENCE:



TESTIMONIAL

We also asked the teacher of the class who was with us throughout the workshop to tell us what they thought about the session. Here's what they told us:

The workshop was very useful for our children.

All the topics covered especially:

- **decision making**
- **goal setting**
- **relationship skills**

will be very helpful for us and our children.

Thank you for your wonderful session."

- Mrs. M. Veni

PHOTO TIME!

As we wrapped up, we and students gathered together for one selfie:



HANDOUTS

Here are the handouts of that we gave out to the student as a part of the workshop:

Personal Identity Wheel

(Adapted for use by the Program on Intergroup Relations and the Spectrum Center, University of Michigan.)

NAME:
.....

THREE WORDS TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF:

1.
2.
3.

1. HAS YOUR PERSONALITY CHANGED SINCE CHILDHOOD? HOW?

2. DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS LOGICALLY OR INTUITIVELY?

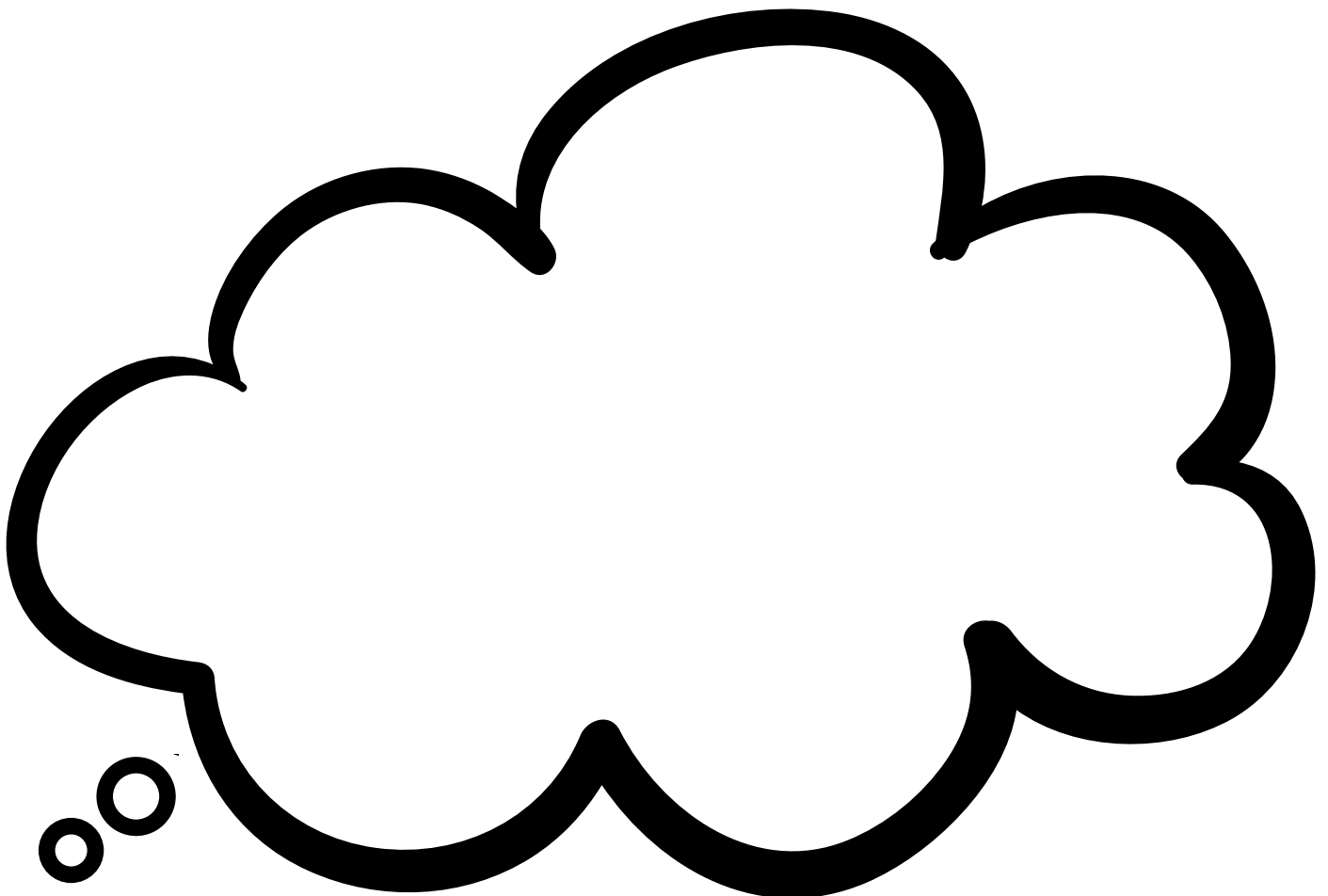
3. RANK 5-10 OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE:

Vision-building

Think of crafting your life vision as mapping a path to your personal and professional dreams. Don't expect a clear and well-defined vision overnight—envisioning your life and determining the course you will follow requires time, and reflection. Your best vision blossoms from your dreams, hopes, and aspirations. It will resonate with your values and ideals, and will generate energy and enthusiasm to help strengthen your commitment to explore the possibilities of your life.






Some tips to guide you:

- Remember to ask why you want certain things
- Think about what you want, not on what you don't want.
- Give yourself permission to dream.
- Be creative. Consider ideas that you never thought possible.
- Focus on your wishes, not what others expect of you.



.....

S.M.A.R.T GOALS

<p>SPECIFIC </p>	<p>Specific means that your goal is detailed and exact. It can answer the questions who, what, where, when, why, and which.</p>
<p>MEASURABLE </p>	<p>Measurable means you can track your progress and know exactly when your goal is met. It usually involved numbers.</p>
<p>ATTAINABLE </p>	<p>Attainable means that your goal is a reasonable one. It is not completely out of reach, or too easy for you.</p>
<p>RELEVANT </p>	<p>Relevant means that your goal is worthwhile. It is something that is actually important to you right now.</p>
<p>TIMELY </p>	<p>Timely means that your goal will be accomplished in a set time frame, such as two weeks, three months, or one year.</p>

EXAMPLE:

Simple Goal: I want to be more in control of my emotions.

SMART Goal Components:

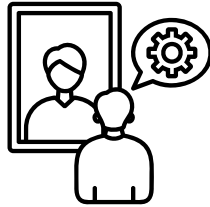
1. **Specific:** I'm going to meditate to be more in control of my stress.
2. **Measurable:** I'll follow the Headspace app to track my meditation.
3. **Achievable:** I only have to set aside ten minutes to meditate; I can easily find the time.
4. **Relevant:** Being able to control my stress will make me happier and more productive.
5. **Time-bound:** I'll start next week and will meditate every day for six months, at which time I will assess how far I've come.

Complete SMART Goal: I'll meditate at least ten minutes per day, every day, for the next six months. I'll track my meditation time with Headspace and will assess my results in six months.

SELF AWARENESS

Self awareness is the ability to consider and understand your own emotions, thoughts, values, and experiences, and how these can influence your actions. It helps you identify your individual strengths and weaknesses in a range of areas.

- Be honest with yourself.
- Be mindful about your feelings and emotions.
- Recognize your strengths and weaknesses.
- Work towards growth.
- Feel good about yourself when you do positive actions.



VISION BUILDING

Think of crafting your life vision as mapping a path to your personal and professional dreams. Envisioning your life and determining the course you will follow requires time, constant reflection and tweaking. Your vision will reflect your dreams and values and will generate energy & enthusiasm to help strengthen your commitment to explore the possibilities of your life.

- Remember to ask why you want certain things.
- Think about what you want, not on what you don't want.
- Give yourself permission to dream. Describe your ideal life.
- Be creative. Consider ideas that you never thought possible.
- Focus on your wishes, not what others expect of you.



GOAL SETTING

Set short- and long-term goals for your academic and personal goals. Reach your goals by believing in your potential, having courage to try, turning problems into opportunities and persisting. SMART Goals are:

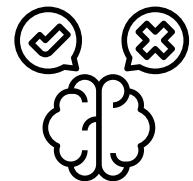
- Specific: Well defined, clear.
- Measurable: Have a specific criteria that measure your progress.
- Achievable: Reasonable to attain.
- Realistic: Within reach, realistic, and relevant to your life purpose.
- Timely: With a clearly defined timeline - start & end.



DECISION MAKING

Responsible decision making is the ability required to make positive and constructive choices based on individual and social factors like personal and academic goals, ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It requires you to consider the consequences of different potential actions, understand your strengths and limitations, and to know when to ask for help when needed.

- Identify the problem.
- Analyze the situation.
- Brainstorm solutions and solve the problem.
- Consider ethical responsibility.
- Evaluate and reflect.
- Ask for help whenever required and don't be afraid to go back to older steps.



SOCIAL AWARENESS

The social awareness competency is about improving skills like your ability to empathize with others, your ability to take the perspective of those in different situations than you, your awareness of other diverse individuals and groups, and your ability to make sure you are treating others fairly.

- Listen actively.
- Be open to opinions and growth.
- Respect diversity in individuals.
- Put yourself in their shoes.
- Show empathy and compassion.
- Treat others the way you would like to be treated.
- Be aware of who influences and supports you.

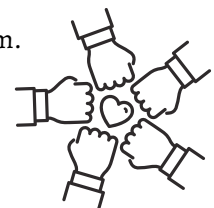


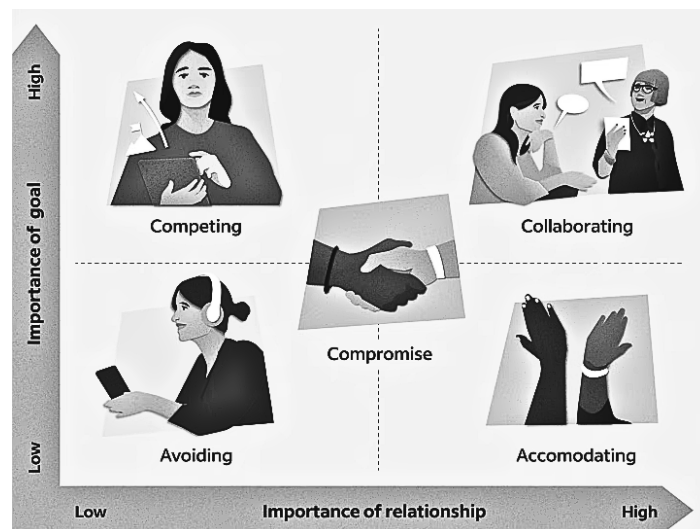
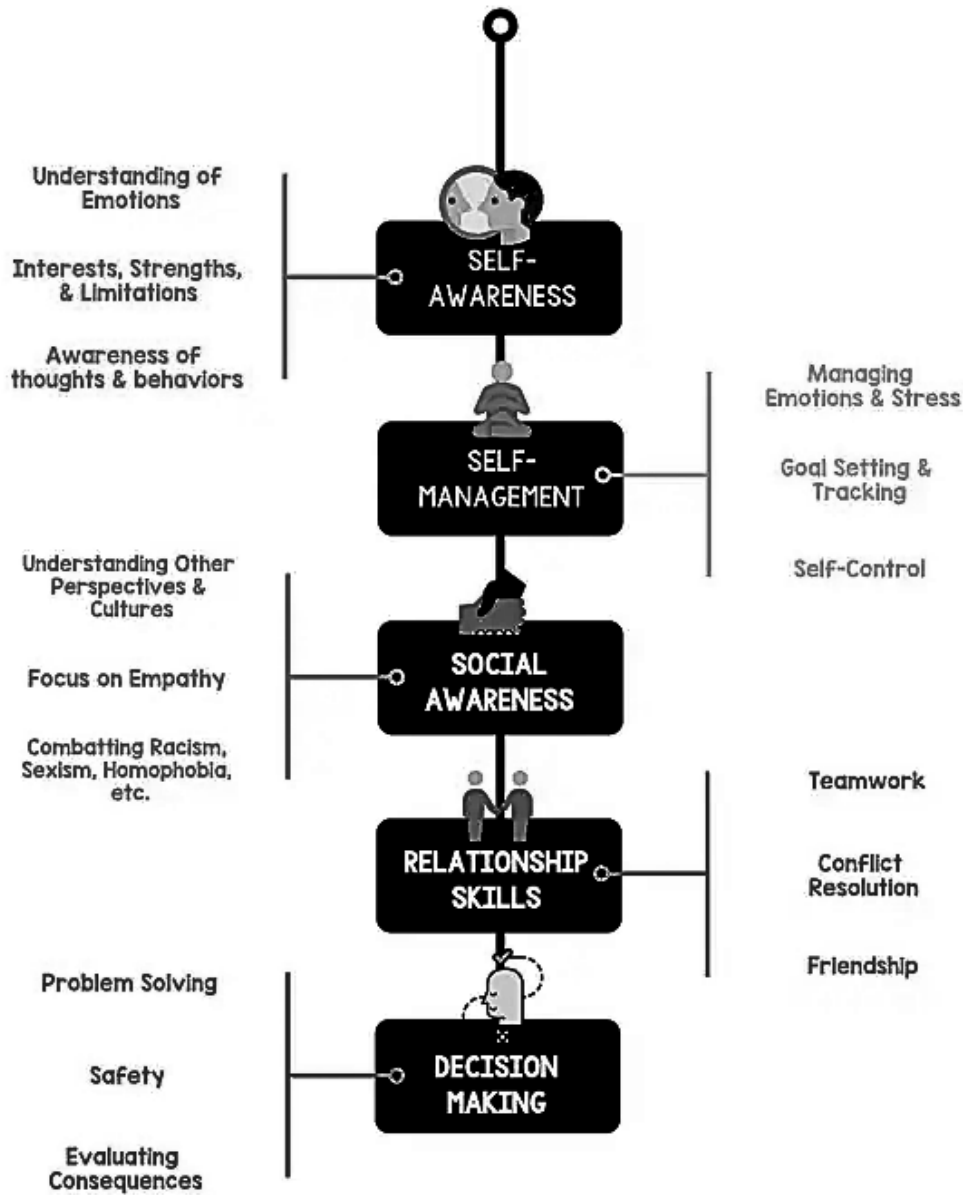
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

The relationship skills competency concerns your ability to make positive connections with others, as well as your ability to take their emotions into account in different situations and social interactions. This also includes skills like listening well, communicating effectively, empathizing, understanding appropriate and inappropriate social behaviors, and your ability to compromise and resolve conflicts.

5-step conflict resolution:

- Clarify the source of the problem.
- Go beyond the conflict and identify other barriers.
- Explore solutions.
- Let everyone have a say.
- Meet on neutral ground.





CONCLUSION

“All leaders are learners. The moment you stop learning, you stop leading for leadership is not an expertise, it is a continuous learning process.”

Leadership is a continuous learning process. There is always an area where you can grow or evolve in. There is always something new way to learn, lead and live!

∫ Vinaiyūkkikal is only the start of the journey of exploration, growth and leadership for the students we met at TKS. We could, by the very nature of their interaction, see how excited they were to learn and we truly believe their enthusiasm will take them forward and far in this journey of theirs.

Their enthusiasm was contagious and it has added to our determination to give vulnerable kids a safe space to explore leadership. We sincerely hope to continue spreading impact through ∫ Vinaiyūkkikal in the small way we can and help spark the formation of more, young leaders.

“Let's keep finding new ways to learn, live and lead!”



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As we finish writing this report, we are overwhelmed with gratitude towards all those who have helped us in designing and executing this workshop. We would like to take a few sentences to acknowledge all the wonderful forces and souls behind this project.

We would like to thank the Universe for everything. We would like to express our special gratitude to our SUPW mentor Mrs. D. Gayathri as well as our principal Mrs. Sasi Priya for giving us the opportunity to work on this project. We would like to thank both of them for their support throughout the conception and execution of our project.

We would like to pay our special gratitude towards TKS Higher Secondary School for giving us the opportunity to conduct our first workshop there.

We would also like to thank our parents for being our strong support system and having faith in us, through our highs and lows. Last but definitely not the least, we would like to thank our friends for always having our back and being there for us despite their busy schedules and many commitments.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED

SUPPORT IN OUR EFFORTS TO

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR COMMUNITY!