

Winter Camp under Skills Training for Employment Preparedness Programme in Haridwar, Uttarakhand

Government Girls Inter College (GGIC), Haridwar organise a Winter Camp as a part of its academic session during October-November every year. This year, it was organised after the completion of the Half Yearly examinations, from 3 to 10 November, 2022. The opportunity to spend extra time with the children, while their subject teachers were occupied with reviewing their test papers, was provided via this camp for NGOs operating in the school. Development Alternatives (DA) has been engaged in the upliftment of girls of classes 11th and 12th at GGIC under its Skills Training to Employment Preparedness (STEP) Programme.

The Winter camp is designed to provide girls a break from their regular lessons while also giving them the chance to improve their academic performance through participation in a variety of interactive activities and creative seminars. Development Alternatives focused on academics of classes 11th and 12th during this camp. Students were provided expert workshops on career counselling in the domains of aviation, hospitality, beauty and wellness, and the medical sector. The experts who shared their knowledge and experience in these fields gave the students sector-specific information and guidance about admission requirements in different government and private institutions, employment opportunities, and ways to improve their knowledge to pass government examinations.

A series of activities and sessions were planned for the Winter Camp. An **Alumni Meet** was organised as part of the camp on 9 November, 2022. The alumni who had previously been connected to various livelihood opportunities under the STEP programme were invited to share their experiences with the students. They talked about their first job interview, difficulties adjusting to the workplace, opposition from their parents for working in distant locations, and other experiences.

In this camp, students also had the chance to show their talent through displays of their creativity, craft, and ambition in many ways. They were given this chance through a showcase, where each NGO had a booth where the students were requested to exhibit their work. At DA's stall, students displayed their handiwork in the form of exquisite artwork, a wall hanging fashioned from waste materials, a water dispenser model, etc. These youngsters spoke about their aspirations in front of Ms Sana Patel, the Program Manager for the WPP India Foundation, Mrs Poonam Rana, the Principal of GGIC, and other teachers. Some students also showcased a business model of their own venture and discussed how they planned to cover the costs.



Students showcasing their artwork during the Showcase event

Ms Sana also interacted with the students and shared the vision of WPP India Foundation to see these girls rise in their careers. She also provided a ray of hope to students who have shared their reservations about pursuing their dreams because of a lack of financial stability and family support by sharing that they would provide financial support to students in dire need.

On 10 November, 2022, a special webinar was organised by DA on **POCSO Act and Legal Awareness**



Students were awarded prizes during the Winter Camp

for classes 11th and 12th girls with the goal of educating them about the numerous legal provisions that are crucial to their safety. Our expert for the session was Ms Anita Singh, District Child Protection Officer, New Delhi. She gave students in-depth knowledge of the Juvenile Justice Act's various provisions, child trafficking, the different kinds of children in need of assistance, children who are in legal trouble, and various organisations they can contact for assistance, including the District Children Protection Unit, Child Welfare Committee, and Child Helpline.

Throughout the camp, **Academic Sessions on WASH, Happiness Sutra, and Gender Empowerment** were also held. Students were requested to provide feedback at the conclusion of Winter Camp and were also asked what expert sessions they would like to attend in the future. Most of them said that they would like to take up teaching and air hostess sessions. The camp gave students and the DA team, who constantly wants to give students opportunities for career progression, tremendous learning opportunities. Ms Poonam Rana appreciated the work done by the NGO partners in the school and remarked, "We are forever grateful for all you do. Thank you so much for being such an impactful partner and for motivating our students to strive for success daily. Your input on our after-class learning programme has really brought students and teachers together. Thank you for setting such a welcoming and positive environment, creating a wonderful example for other teachers and staff members. We are forever grateful for your impact on this school, keep up the great work!"



Ms Poonam Rana, Principal, GGIC School, Haridwar appreciated the students artwork during the winter camp