

## Role of Themes within CL

Themes permit cross-disciplinary study while maintaining curricular objectives

**CL adds a multidisciplinary element to MS studies.** All 6th, 7th and 8th graders will have a time-period each cycle that is dedicated to CL. MS teachers also have a time scheduled to meet and discuss CL activities.

**Two CL themes will be highlighted every two months.** Some themes, such as Social Responsibility, will continue throughout the academic year.

**The themes either prepare the students** for the Experiential Portion of the trip or they relate directly to the overall objectives of CL: Self-Awareness, Understanding and Compassion.

The monthly **themes contain study material, hands-on learning and discussion.** Guest speakers and field-trips have been included where a specific expertise will enhance the students understanding.

The involvement of the MS teachers to **incorporate the themes within their curriculum** is essential and their energy remarkable. Even when the connections are obvious, it requires additional effort and planning to execute. One example is the 8th Grade plant biology and reproduction requirement. The vegetable garden will provide an amazing on-site lab with Annadana expertise available for consultation. A University level experience in MS!

## Themes for the Year

August / September

What is Contextual Learning?  
Social Responsibility: 40K  
Nature and the Environment

October / November

Choose which CL Program Suits You:  
On-Site or On-Campus  
Urban Planning and Development  
Creative Expression

December

Fundraiser for 40K  
Vegetable Garden Study

January / February

History and Culture of India  
Indian Science and Engineering

March / April

Prepare Research Projects  
Team Building

May / June

On-Site or On-Campus  
Reflection Week  
June 13: Come to CIS and see  
what the students have produced!

## Upcoming Activities for Students

- September 17th: 6th Grade field study at Annadana
- September 18th: 7th Grade field study at Annadana
- September 19th: 8th Grade field study at Annadana
- September 30th: 40K, Intro to Village Life
- October 18th: 40K, Brainstorm for Business Ideas
- October 25: Green Conference  
and Creative Writing Workshop
- October 28th: Creative Writing Workshop





## Soil Health and Food Production

Autumn 2013



*A trip to Annadana is scheduled for all MS students the 17th, 18th or 19th September*

## Growing Organic Vegetables at CIS with the help of Annadana

### Set up a vegetable growing patch at CIS using pure seeds and true organic techniques

Annadana is a not-for-profit Organization, based out of Bangalore, that believes in everyone's right to chemical free food.

Much of the variety of vegetables and fruits has disappeared from our platter, so it is time to take charge and revive indigenous

*from soil -  
to seed-  
to plate...  
Learn the Process!*

varieties that once flourished here in India.

Students will visit Annadana by grade between the 17 - 19 September: There they will follow a workshop that includes the Farm Trail.

Two ground staff of CIS have been trained by Annadana and will help set-up and maintain the CIS vegetable garden.

Each class will have a budget to select the seeds they wish to study and a row in which to plant them.

Only organic pest controls, growth mediums and compost will be used, unless the class decides otherwise.

Maintaining the vegetables will be done on a regular basis, with the trained ground staff as back-up during weekends and holidays.

### Statistical Analysis, from a bunch of Vegetables?

The vegetable garden presents an opportunity for the students to work with the soil and participate in the growing of food.

It also becomes a testing site where students can define and run experiments and record results. Each class will select their own project, discussing parameters and constraints.

#### *Possible Studies:*

- Calculate the germination rate, fruit production rate and seed generation of various species.
- Some rows can be run without the use of compost and pesticides. Calculate the new rate of fruit produced and the 'cost per fruit' taking into account costs not incurred in additives and time.
- An older group may create a comparative study using organic vs hybrid seeds. The regermination rates would be fascinating to compare. And GM seeds? Where do they fit in?

Annadana is a decade old, not-for-profit Organization, based in Bangalore



#### **Seed Savers**

Annadana is engaged with a mission to revive the dying art of seed saving by means of time tested research and organic integrated practices

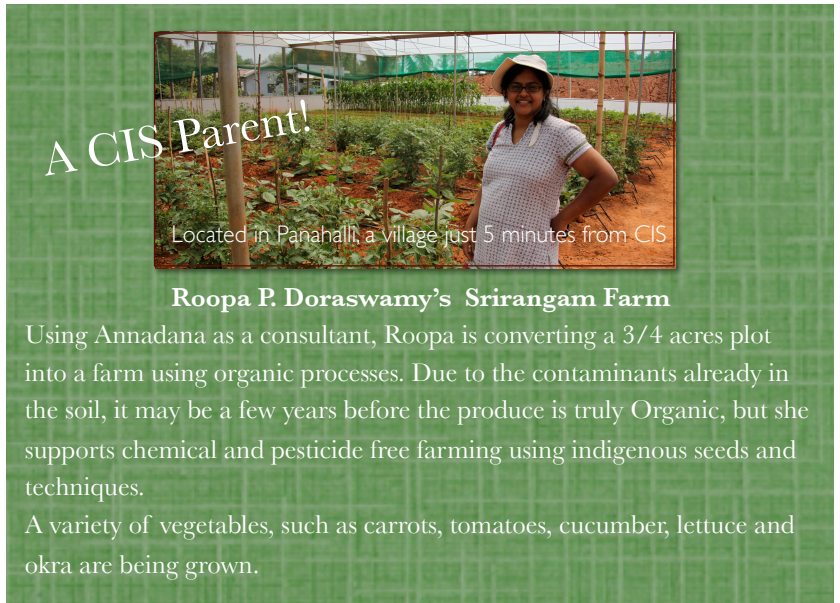


# Nature and Conservation

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## Vocabulary To Be Explored:

- Seed Bank
- Parent Seeds
- Soil Health
- Variety vs Species
- Hybrid Seed
- Genetically Modified Seed
- Eco-Science
- Water Harvesting
- Bengal Famine, and importation of hybrid seeds into India
- Pesticides: Endosulphin / DDT
- Kokopelli in France
- Dominique Guillet
- Define Organic
- Bio-Digester
- Flow-Form, dynamizing H2O



### Roopa P. Doraswamy's Srirangam Farm

Using Annadana as a consultant, Roopa is converting a 3/4 acres plot into a farm using organic processes. Due to the contaminants already in the soil, it may be a few years before the produce is truly Organic, but she supports chemical and pesticide free farming using indigenous seeds and techniques.

A variety of vegetables, such as carrots, tomatoes, cucumber, lettuce and okra are being grown.

## Ways Parents can get Involved!

## Food and Nutrition:

After the visit to Annadana the children will have been introduced to the concepts of organic food, and the cycle of soil, to seed, to plate. You can take your child to the grocery store or marketplace and discuss the various foods available, their costs, and your budget. You can discuss the choices you make and why.

**Jamie Oliver: Food Revolution**  
TED talk about poor nutrition and its links to ill health

**Food Inc.**  
Film about large scale food production in the USA. Alarmist.

**Forks over Knives**  
Film about the health risks of large dairy and animal product consumption

**No Eat Not Food**, by Rick Sanger  
Moonbeam Children's Award winning book for ages 8-12 about food and its origins, starring an alien...

**Annadana:** a family visit can be organized independently, contact [sangita@annadana-india.org](mailto:sangita@annadana-india.org) or the web site

Encourage your child to try local vegetables, fruits and dishes

# Contextual Learning Journals:

### Each student has been given a Contextual Learning Journal.

They will use these books for all work related to CL throughout the year. For this month, they have been kept at school as the children begin to use them.

The journals will be divided into sections, not by subject, but by concept:

**Who am I?**  
This includes a study of the student's background, their likes / dislikes and who and what they wish to become. Their personal thoughts and beliefs are placed in here.

**How do I relate to the World?**  
This section includes any work related to man's interaction with our planet. Annadana work will be placed in here, along with the vegetable garden studies. Animal, plant and environmental studies belong here.

**How do I relate to other People?**  
This is a chance to study our involvement with people from other generations, cultures, and socio-economic groups. Should we be involved? Why?

**India: Our host culture**  
Here we place history, culture, arts, and discoveries about India, with a focus on Southern India.

**Skill Building:**  
This section will include special skills that the children learn during the Contextual Learning module, such as First Response / First Aid and Techniques of Story Telling. These skills are taught in order to enhance the confidence of the child through increased knowledge.

The journals become a souvenir that the students keep. They will contain a snapshot of who the students are and how their ideas develop.



# Social Involvement

## CL will work with 40K to Build a Meaningful Project

40K and Contextual Learning have developed a specific program for the CIS MS students



### 40K has ten dynamic after school programs established for local village children of primary school age in and around Bangalore

The centers run after school for two hours each school day teaching literacy and numeracy (40K calls them Plus Pods). Local ladies are hired from the village to teach the program. The curriculum that is taught uses android-based tablets to encourage mastery and self-paced learning. 40K has built 118 educational modules (covering Math, spoken and written English) that have been turned into videos and installed on 7-inch tablets.

40K is aligning itself with 21st century technologies and building off the proven success of education pioneers such as Salman Khan (Khan Academy) but bringing it offline and into villages.

The videos allow the children to work at their own pace. They can watch the video as many times as they like, and they can pause and rewind it when they don't understand a concept. It might take one child one day to understand how to count to twenty, and another child three weeks. What matters is that the child masters the concept.



### How will 40K work with the CL students?

Both CL and 40K believe in Sustainable Social Involvement.

Plus Pods work to develop social businesses that generate enough income to cover their own running costs. The CIS MS students will help with this process. They will learn valuable skills while building a community asset. 40K has come to CIS to explain the purpose of Plus Pods and to begin a program of teaching Sustainable Social Involvement. This program will continue during the entire school year, and, we hope, involve the entire CIS community.

When both groups learn, they are both empowered. When they both acquire useful life skills, a sustainable exchange follows that builds on mutual growth.



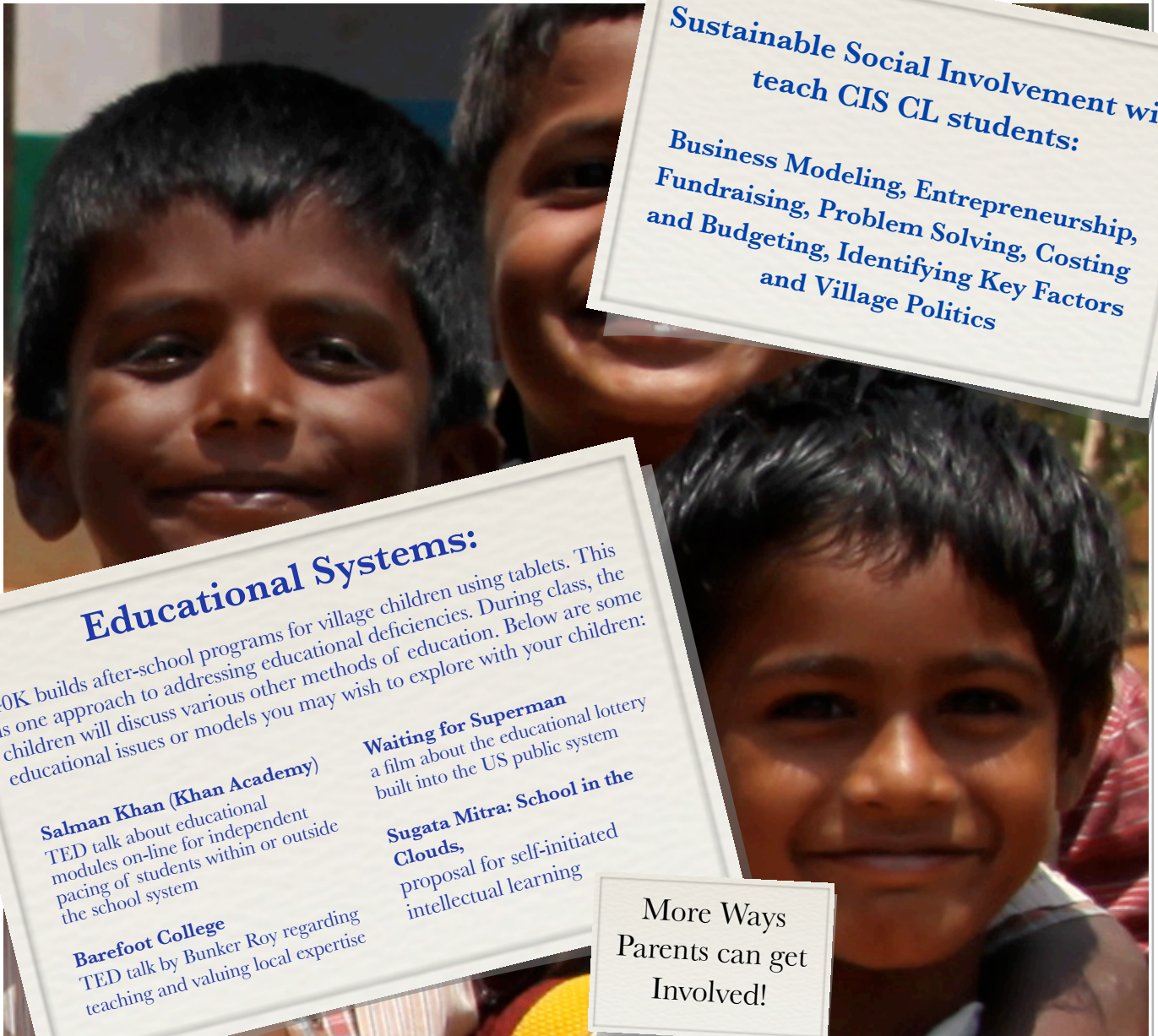
# Social Responsibility

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Community involvement is a great way to learn more about your connections with other people and different groups. It is a way to expand your knowledge of the links that make up society and the ways they are related. IB recognizes the importance of social responsibility with the required CAS hours, and Universities in America and elsewhere in the world stress its relevance in their admittance process.

Many of us at CIS have only recently moved to Bangalore and the complexities of assimilating can make the additional hurdles of selecting a worthwhile project for family involvement insurmountable.

Contextual Learning provides a chance to include community involvement from 6th Grade. The students will follow a project during their three years of middle-school; providing the time necessary for them to derive personal meaning from the experience.



**Sustainable Social Involvement will teach CIS CL students:**  
*Business Modeling, Entrepreneurship, Fundraising, Problem Solving, Costing and Budgeting, Identifying Key Factors and Village Politics*

Bimonthly Newsletter of CIS Learning at CIS

**Educational Systems:**  
40K builds after-school programs for village children using tablets. This is one approach to addressing educational deficiencies. During class, the children will discuss various other methods of education. Below are some educational issues or models you may wish to explore with your children:

**Salman Khan (Khan Academy)**  
TED talk about educational modules on-line for independent pacing of students within or outside the school system

**Barefoot College**  
TED talk by Bunker Roy regarding teaching and valuing local expertise

**Waiting for Superman**  
a film about the educational lottery built into the US public system

**Sugata Mitra: School in the Clouds,**  
proposal for self-initiated intellectual learning

**More Ways Parents can get Involved!**



# Questions Answered

## **Why should CIS include self-development as part of the curriculum? Isn't this the parent's domain?**

If education is only about imparting academic knowledge to students, then Contextual Learning has no place in school.

But we have chosen CIS for our children where the mission statement 'aspires to empower students with skills and knowledge enabling them to become independent and self-sufficient adults who will contribute responsibly in a global community.'

This goal reaches towards student's roles as adults, and preparing them for it. And if education is about a preparation for the future, then Contextual Learning can contribute.

"Contextual Learning is about making connections between what they, as students, are learning and how that knowledge will be used, and recognizing that learning is a complex, multifaceted process that goes far beyond drill-oriented, stimulus-and-response methodologies." (Mr. Kells)

## **Preparing students for the future implies knowing what future awaits these Middle School children. What will their future be?**

Predicting the future with precision is folly. But extrapolating from today's pace of change that the future will be different seems highly probable. Technology will most likely continue to advance, and the way we view and interact with the world will adapt. Computers will continue to replace people in routine jobs and in one-zero situations. The pace of change may even accelerate. In this era of information technology a hand held device ALREADY has access to more data than our children can hope to obtain before graduation. Imagine how fast and how powerful these digital devices will become in 10 years when our children are looking for work. What we can be certain of is a future that is different. So preparing a student for the future means raising adults that are flexible, adaptable, and prepared to view change as a potential positive.

## **How can a student be taught to accept change?**

By allowing the children to face change in small steps and 'succeed'.

CL has designed a program that brings the children into different environments and guides them through different methods of living and studying. Change is not something that is taught for itself. Change for the sake of change is pointless, but change for the sake of a higher goal such as Self-Awareness, Understanding, or Compassion makes sense. Change should be a tool, not a goal. It is the differences and opportunities that arise from change that are of interest. It is how we review the past in light of new perspective that is revealing.

CL has no religious or educational doctrine. It is here that the parents and family have a role to play. Larger topics such as social inequality, or man's role on earth may come to the dinner table. We hope that this is seen as an opportunity to consider, discuss, and investigate these topics as a family.