

Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyothi (SSSVJ) Program

Frequently Asked Questions



Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations, India

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1 Document History

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3 Section 1: About SSSVJ

3.1 *What is the vision & purpose of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyothi Program?*

The vision of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Jyothi (SSSVJ) program is “Inspiring the Children by Empowering the Schools”

It is an EduCare initiative of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations where in the Samithi volunteers lead by youth shall bring in systematic transformation in select existing semi operational, makeshift, dilapidated zilla parishad, municipal and tribal schools schools by building vibrant eco system such that the students can get wholesome education and become ideal children in line with Bhagawan’s teachings, for self, their families and the society at large.

3.2 *What do we mean by inspiring children?*

Inspiring children would mean seeding in them a positive and creative instinct through various activities and opportunities, which eventually would inculcate practice of values and thus bring in a change in their behavior, both in the classroom and off the classroom. The behaviour change over a period of time will develop into a positive attitude, which will finally result into a good character. While on one side they acquire knowledge through the education system, the volunteers as part of the program shall also provide value education to the children so that they become ideal children over time and a responsible member of the society eventually.

3.3 *What do you mean by eco system?*

By the word Ecosystem we mean to say that the total learning environment for the child. This includes the school, the village and also the home. In SSSVJ, we are having activities that touch all these three areas.

As the school is the most important learning environment, we focus most of our attention on it. For instance, we talk about building libraries, build better relationships with teachers, cleaning it, giving the school teaching aids, sports equipment etc.

Home is also a great learning environment. This is where homework is to be done. This is where studying should happen. As parents – who themselves may be illiterate – may not know the importance of the learning environment, we offer door-to-door discussions to educate them on this topic. We also involve them in some of the school activities so that they too create a learning conducive environment for the child.

Also, the village itself is seen as an important learning space. Here we use Grama Sabhas, meetings with Panchayats to ensure that villagers too understand their responsibility towards the school and the student. By holding cultural meetings we show the value of the school to the village.

Another component of the Ecosystem are the 7 stakeholders. The Stakeholders we focus on are: Child, Teacher, Parent, School, Villager, SSSSO, Govt. In SSSVJ we have multiple activities, which are especially focused on these stakeholders.

3.4 *The project looks very big; but our samithi is very small. Can a small team do this project?*

YES. The format of the program is, the Samithi members become core of the activities and they should involve more Youth & adults from colleges and neighborhoods who are

not in the mainstream of the Organisation. These new youth & adults need not be the devotees but must have basic discipline and wanting to do something for the nation. We should try to get people who are known or our friends. If each of one gets 5 friends/relatives, suddenly we can see our Samithi growing as well. Such growth can make a good-sized team for the program. Further, this program should be driven by a team consisting youth, SevaDal volunteers and bal vikas gurus. So the whole organization should be working as one team with youth given more opportunities (to learn).

Let us not worry about the size of the program. Not that every school will require everything from the program. Select school according to the team's ability to serve. Let us have faith in Bhagawan and His omnipresence.

3.5 What do we mean by stakeholders? Why are they important?

Stakeholder here means, (1) those impacted by the program and (2) those who can impact the program. The stakeholders for the SSSVJ include, the children, their parents, the teachers, the school administration, the villagers, the government and SSSSO volunteers. We focus on these 7 in our planning and documentation. Each of them can positively impact the program by their active participation and in the process can also get benefitted. Rather, their participation is critical for the success of the program and could be counterproductive if not engaged appropriately.

3.6 What is the expected outcome and goals of SSSVJ program?

In all, 900 schools across India are planned to be adopted under this program. This shall have cascading positive impacts by way of;

- Over 1,80,000 children getting directly benefitted through value education and increased opportunities
- Over 3,60,000 parents of the adopted-school children and their sibling getting inspired and benefitted by the conduct of the above children
- Over 5000 teachers getting benefitted through various empowerment activities meant for teachers
- The villages where these schools are located to get new center of values and character building

3.7 While we understand the SSSVJ program related goals as mentioned above, what is the organizational (SSSSO) goals for doing SSSVJ?

Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations (SSSSO) has undertaken this program for two important reasons: One, to increase sadhana-oriented **Engagement** through a common program at national level. And, two, for increasing **Outreach**, especially of new youth. These are its organizational goals.

SSSSO has many Sai centers/Samithis spread all over the country. Within these Samithis there are also many vibhags like mahilas, youth, men sevadal, Bal Vikas etc. These various centers and vibhags have all done wonderful work in their own silos. The hope of this SSSVJ program is to use it as a tool to create and also increase the collaboration, interaction and engagement of the existing SSSO members. Note that by integration we are talking about integration of project plans, objectives and focus. We are not expecting or suggesting that there should be gender mixing either in meetings or on the field. The general discipline with respect to gender interaction in Sai Org can be retained.

The message of Bhagawan is invaluable and priceless. It has helped millions. The intention of this objective is to share these treasures with as many people as possible. Our goal is not “missionary” in that there is no concept of conversion of anyone into some exclusive

group or org. Bhagawan's mission is universal. Instead, our intent is to reach out to as many different segments of society to spread the messages of Bhagawan. The best way to communicate and share the message of Bhagawan is to provide the world tools and platforms to explore and become aware of His messages and all involved eventually get transformed. SSSVJ is a tool for existing volunteers to gain deeper insights and for new comers to become aware of the various deep insights Bhagawan has shared with all of us.

4 Section 2: Program design and conceptualisation

4.1 *Is it important that we follow the steps of Energise, Empower, Equip and Evolve in the sequence*

Yes. These steps have been created with some inherent logic. For example, unless the stakeholders are spoken to, whole heartedly accept and show the enthusiasm, the program cannot take off. So Energise has been kept as the first step. Unless, all the other ingredients such as aids/tools and teachers are set right, creating infrastructure will be of no use. So these steps need to be followed in sequence. Sometimes some of the schools may not require either one or more step as they are already self-sufficient in those areas. For example, energizing the parents and villagers may not be required incase of a village where SSSSO has been doing gram seva successfully for many years; there will be ready acceptability for any program we propose. Similarly, in some of the schools, the state of infrastructure would be adequate that we may want to skip Equip phase. In most of the places, Empowerment would start early and run in parallel to Equip. Idea is to move sequentially and reach the stage of 'Evolve'.

4.2 *What happens if we skip any of the step and go to next step?*

The results of such act would not be the same like what we wish. For example without engaging the stakeholders and securing their buy-in for the program, if we do any act, we will face resistance at every level. The amount of effort required would be much more and success might be impinged. More than that people who have not understood this program will conclude in many other ways and sabotage our efforts. Similarly, without empowering if we do infrastructure, we might be taken for granted as government substitutes or the appreciation of the investment won't be there and this may also generate other unreasonable expectations within the villagers or beneficiaries. We can skip the step only when we are sure that the school is already self-sufficient and satisfies the ideas for that step. Thus, it is very important that we carry out this program in the sequence / phases / steps mentioned.

4.3 *Since infrastructure creation needs money, is it necessary to create infrastructure?*

Infrastructure is an important element of a good eco system for a school project. Unless the basic necessities of roof, water, toilets etc. are fulfilled, there won't be any motivation for the children to come to school. Rather in many places, poor infrastructure is one of the primary causes for school dropouts. However, samithis, based on their capabilities, can select schools with relatively better infrastructure (but lacking in other aspects). At overall state level, the focus on infrastructure intense schools should be equally distributed along with energizing and empowering.

4.4 *What do we mean by changing the policy? How can this be done?*

Each of the state has its own standards and education policies. One area we can work as a team at national level is, bringing the best practices in one state to other states by liaisoning with local government. The policy initiative could also relate to schools' specific

needs in terms of teachers availability or budgetary allocation or special needs of the school. There are some student related issues such as dyslexia or slow learning which need policy level changes. But these issues will be highlighted by the adopting team and addressed at the state level by the state office of SSSSO.

4.5 We do not know anything about school functioning or academics of a school. How can we plan and implement a school project on our own?

SSSVJ is nothing to do with school functioning or curriculum. We must always remember that we are neither getting into the academics nor creation of a new school. Our focus is creating a conducive environment for learning by meeting their infra needs apart from providing value education through Bal Vikas and honing the soft skills through training. Since the types of needs will be mostly common across all the adopted schools, the state/district organization of SSSSO and the SSSVJ national team will undertake following steps to make the adoption easy for each Samithi;

- a) Detailing of each and every step in the adoption including detailing of the process involved in the seva activities for each stakeholder
- b) Creating content for various common aspects of the project e.g value education syllabus
- c) Creating regional resource teams for specialized activities of the program eg. Teachers soft skill enhancement training (to be done by district SSSSO)
- d) A critical support group at national level to help the teams who are stuck at a point for some unique reasons
- e) A communication protocol where everyone can share thoughts and put questions and the national team will answer all the doubts
- f) A information dissemination system of best practices where we shall share the innovative ideas adopted by other states team for some specific aspect of the program

These are some of the initiatives already planned by the SSSVJ team. So in a way, no team is alone. We are all working together as one team of Bhagawan.

4.6 Are we going to get involved in the academics also?

No. The program is about creating conducive environment for learning and providing value learning. We shall not be getting involved in academics of the schools.

However there are some Seva projects, which could have some close relation with academics. One of this could be teacher's soft skill training. We could also be assisting the teachers to get trained on understanding the children behavior, educational counseling to children etc. However these seva activities are enhancing the experience of learning and not necessarily about curriculum or lesson plans. Similarly we could at times, based on availability of resources, conduct special coaching classes for the children (after school activity) through the educated married women from the village. Here again, our scope is limited to creating the opportunity and process and not get involved in curriculum or impacting a lesson plan directly. We could also help providing various aids for learning the academic portions etc. So our intention is to enhance the learning environment and add the "values" dimensions to it.

In fact, there is another program called Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini which is fully focused on curriculum, pedagogy and lesson plans. As it has Sai emphasis, they too talk about values and they too introduce them to the child. However, they integrate them into the lesson plans and also tightly couple it within the curriculum.

In SSSVJ, we are working outside the curriculum and lesson plans. It is also suggested that the schools that are chosen for SSSVJ should offer us these possibilities to focus and upgrade the school environment, the villager & parental understanding of education etc.

Both Vidya Jyothi and Vidya Vahini projects are thus seen as complementary to each other.

4.7 *Is provision of infrastructure critical requirement in selection of schools. What if we are not in a position to take up large school or take up infra projects?*

No issues. Each school has some challenges or lack in some areas. The scope of the SSSVJ program would involve evaluation of gaps, meeting the gaps and creating the appropriate learning environment and delivering the purpose (value education). Let us pick up schools where there is a need and the team can fulfill the need. There has to be a match between what is required and what can be delivered. Let us not take up a school where we cannot fulfill the needs. There could be schools, which might have all infrastructures, but all aspects of the program other than infrastructure is missing. Nevertheless, as said before, money cannot and should not be the criteria.

5 Section 3: School selection

5.1 *What type of schools should be selected?*

As part of the survey process, we have identified about 38 selection criteria and these decision driver questions will help to select the school. However, the school so selected has to be zilla parishad or municipal or tribal or Sri Sathya Sai School. Further we shall be focusing more on primary schools or primary cum secondary schools. Only secondary or high schools with out primary should be avoided.

5.2 *How many schools should be selected per state?*

There is no compulsion on the number of schools to be adopted per state or per district. Each state has its strengths and challenges. So it is for the SPs, VPs, DPs and Youth members to decide jointly. It is pertinent to note that even a small Samithi can adopt a school. What they need to do is to rope in their non-devotee friends by pitching that this program as a nation building exercise. Very soon 5 will become 25 and so on. This program format involves reach out to new youth and adults from outside the organization. So, the number of school to be adopted in any state is a function of number of committed teams in that state. However each such adopted school should be mapped under a Samithi. A Samithi is functionally responsible for adoption and implementation of SSSVJ program in a school.

Finally, money should not be the criteria or basis for selection of number of schools. As we all know, every good project will get funded through some source. In this regard AIP's office intend to work closely with state trusts, resourceful members and your team to find some solution in case of lack of money. Let us have the faith in Bhagawan and His omnipresence.

5.3 *Can two or more Samithis get together adopt a school?*

YES. If some Samithis feel that they may have limited manpower resources, then such smaller Samithis can work with other Samithis to adopt a school under SSSVJ program. However, one Samithi amongst the group should take the responsibility for the adoption.

All Samithi members should work together as one team and share the overall responsibilities. At the Samithi level they can take decisions with regard to formation of teams and distribution of responsibilities.

5.4 *What is the scope for Samithis from a city or large towns?*

City based Samithis can adopt municipal schools in their locality or government schools in the suburban localities. At this moment, we plan to restrict ourselves to schools under Government sector only. City based samithis should focus on larger projects involving funding. They can also assist or work with other village or town level samithis on finance and other aspects of the program. One of the objectives of the program is integration of various vibhags and team based working.

5.5 *Can a private school be adopted? Why private schools have been excluded?*

Private schools normally thrive on donations and hefty fees. Bhagawan's mission has been to provide education free. Normally, private schools would love to have us providing infrastructure support or spending money for them. However they may not be the deserving school needing our support. Also, since they are managed privately, there is no accountability on their conduct. As we are not equipped to assess them or know the true intentions, it is better to avoid private schools. However ashram shalas in remote locations or some select private schools in very bad conditions, can be taken up for adoption on case to case basis, provided the Samithis adopting these schools are aware about the background and genuinity of the school. So, while as a national policy we propose only the government schools, the final decision of adopting a private school rests with the state administration of SSSSO.

5.6 *How do we do the survey of a school?*

All the Samithis interested in adopting school under SSSVJ program, should refer to the survey process document SSSVJ Doc#5 released in March 2016. The process along with selection criteria and survey form template are provided there in and they are self-explanatory. Please reach out to sssnycind@gmail.com incase of any doubts / need clarifications.

5.7 *Which type of schools should be avoided or not permitted for adoption under SSSVJ?*

Apart from private schools, following type of schools should be avoided under SSSVJ program;

- a) The village or the school is adopted by other NGO/Spiritual/Religious organization
- b) The school is affiliated to a particular religion or caste or political party and promote particular religion /caste based students
- c) The head master is not inspired with SSSVJ program and not keen to let the school be adopted
- d) The school is not reachable in less than 60 minutes of travel time from the samithi intending to adopt

5.8 *What are the important conditions for the survey and guidelines for shortlisting and selection, after the survey?*

A Minimum of 5 schools needs to be surveyed for adopting one school.

- Survey Eligibility: There are some mandatory requirements for adoption listed in the survey form and they need to be compulsorily met by the school. Even if one

of the questions under this part has negative response, that school should be dropped from further survey process.

- Shortlisting eligibility: For a school to become eligible for being short listed, both of the following conditions must be satisfied., viz. (i) atleast 2 questions from each of the 7 dimensions to be evaluated must be positive and (ii) the total number of positive responses for all dimensions taken together should be more than 25 (20 in case of municipal schools or city based schools)
- Selection eligibility: The final selection of ideal school from the shortlisted schools, shall be done by the team, based on the team's level of confidence and comfort but unanimously as a team.

6 Section 4: Implementation

6.1 *In all how many individual activities are planned in SSSVJ program?*

In all, there are 81 seva activities identified and listed sofar.

- Energise phase - 13
- Empower phase - 49
- Equip phase - 11
- Evolve phase - 8

If the above 81 seva activities are reorganized/sorted based on the beneficiaries i.e. stakeholders of the program,

- Child-centric - 34
- Teacher-centric - 9
- School-centric - 16
- Parent-centric - 5
- Village-centric - 4
- SSSSO-centric - 8
- Govt.-centric - 5

6.2 *What can we expect from the SSSVJ guidelines document released recently? What does it not cover?*

SSSVJ guidelines document provides guidance to volunteers and SSSO members on various SSSVJ activities. In the first part, there is overview of 3-4 pages of high level intent and summary of each of the seven beneficiary centric/stakeholder seva activities. The second part contains the information on each of the 81 activities and their details such as summary, dos-and-don'ts, who is to be involved, when it should be done, with what intent, where it should be done, how often it has to be repeated, the resources that are needed before / during / after execution etc.

There is content section in the middle which has compilation of Swami's quotes, china kathas that link to this activity. Our intent is to help the volunteer and the organizer understand the real intent and expectation of each activity within the group of activities.

What is not covered in the document is content for delivery. The volunteers are expected to work on two fronts. One, for each activity research and arrive at Bhagawans messages (some are already given), values that can be taught and activity related content. Activity related content means factual information for the activity. For example, if patriotism is the session, the team needs to work on the freedom fighters to be discussed, their history, facts etc. Similarly, if an essay competition needs to be conducted, topics for the essay etc

need to be decided. The second front the team needs to work on is the mode of delivery & resources for the same; whether it shall be by way of AVs, role plays, posters, displays etc. Such materials / resources need to be created by the team. National team also will supplement more content as SSSVJ execution is going along. More members will be co-opted for this exercise.

6.3 How is SSSVJ seva activities different than what we have been doing so far?

The foremost and important difference between SSSVJ seva activities and other seva activities is, in SSSVJ, emphasis shall be on values to be learned alongside delivering the seva. The beneficiaries are expected to not only get benefitted from the seva activities but also get opportunities to learn some human values alongside. Hence these are not mere activities but sevas, as each of these sevas should teach some values to the beneficiaries. The SSSVJ volunteers should always keep exploring and looking out for related values and use the opportunity to teach the related values. For example, while conducting dental check up (which itself is a seva), apart from oral hygiene, the volunteers should teach the children importance of hygiene in speech i.e. speaking truth and speaking lovingly. While conducting sports, children should be taught to handle success and failures and how both are not permanent. Each and every seva activity should be done with some related values connected to that seva being taught to the beneficiary.

6.4 In the list of seva activities, there are some sevas which require technical expertise. Our Samithi don't have these specialists or skilled resources. How do we handle this situation?

It is quiet natural that all the Samithis may not have all the necessary human resources especially skilled people to deliver all the sevas covered under SSSVJ. So, the district office of SSSSO has been asked to play a pivotal role in implementing SSSVJ in the Samithis of their district. SSSVJ project creates great opportunities to appeal and co-opt many eminent resourceful people in respective districts. In normal conditions, our routine activities may or may not inspire so many new resourceful people. A challenging project of this size, will make the entire Sai Org stretch & operate beyond the comfort zones. This is what is one of the main intents of SSSVJ which is Organizational Expansion and muscle building. The district office of SSSSO, apart from monitoring the progress of the program in their adopted schools, shall also be responsible for organizing many of the district level sevas. There are many sevas identified to be done using regional resources. Towards this, the district administration of SSSSO shall be creating a regional resource group. Regional resources are those, who are scarce to find at Samithi level or highly qualified / technical in nature. Such resources can be found by reference of active workers (from their acquaintances/friends/relatives), in college meets, through new youth (through their acquaintances) or from existing resource pool. Some of the specialists, part of regional resource pool are Doctors, Educationists, Trainers, Motivational speakers, Sports coaches, Event managers, Child counselors, Education counselors, Diagnostic Center Technicians, Engineers, Water specialists etc. The process of creating regional resource group and the utilization is detailed in the guidelines document.

This was done intentionally because of the Outreach objective of SSSVJ program.

6.5 What shall the Samithi convener do as the first step for implementing SSSVJ program?

Each of the adopted school under SSSVJ will be the responsibility of one identified Samithi. There cannot be a school without a specific Samithi being responsible for it. So the Samithi convener becomes the centre point of responsibility. He shall convene a meeting of all the office bearers and constitute a committee consisting of himself, service

coordinator (or his nominee), Bal Vikas coordinator (or her nominee), mahila coordinator (or her nominees) and the Youth coordinator. These 5 member team shall be overall responsible for the SSSVJ school to be adopted by the Samithi.

The SSSVJ Activity Guidelines document goes into detail about the next steps (see section 4.5).

6.6 *What specific teams are required to do the SSSVJ program? How will the delegation of work happen?*

The SSSVJ Activity Guidelines gives directions on how teams can be formed at the Stakeholder level. Chapters 5 and exhibit 2 of Chapter 9 are good references.

Essentially we would need to have some members focus on each stakeholder. There should also be a group that is focused on the overall outcomes and flow of the project. All vibhags should be involved. Also, involve external non-devotees as needed. This is a great opportunity to create good outreach. Do not burden one set of active workers with multiple responsibilities.

The committee formed by the office bearer shall work more like a governing body for SSSVJ program in that Samithi. The actual implementation shall be done by smaller teams to be created based on beneficiaries / stakeholders. Each of this team shall be responsible for all the sevas to be conducted for those beneficiary / stakeholder. They become the organisers and coordinators for that beneficiary at the School. They shall pool the volunteers from time to time based on sevas to be delivered. A detailed suggestive process of team formation is given as Exhibit 2 in Appendix of the Guideline document. However the Samithi committee is free to organize the teams in their own way. Kindly ensure continuity of people is maintained such that goodwill and rapport can be created over period of time.

6.7 *Do we need to create village team as well? Who shall be the members of village team of SSSVJ?*

It is very important to create a village level teams sooner we start the program implementation. Such teams shall be formed for each of the major sevas to be performed. The purposes behind forming such teams are (a) they assist us while we deliver the seva and (b) they get trained and become the resources & self sufficient for implementing SSSVJ in the next academic year. The village teams should consist youth boys and girls, young adult and married women from the village. Ideally, the village should become self sufficient in implementing SSSVJ under the remote guidance of the Samithi, for future years. Each of these adopted schools under SSSVJ may become our Balavikas & Youth centers in years to come.

6.8 *Emphasis has been given for sharing of experience. Why and how it should be done?*

We as devotees are implementing this program across India for the first time. Each team will innovate at some level. Each would gain some important learnings. Some would devise interesting strategies for some common challenges. Is it not our responsibility to share these with our other brothers and sisters in other Samithis. Likewise, we can also learn from others experiences. Why to reinvent the wheel everytime?

So exchanging and sharing needs to happen at three levels. At first level let us share the experience with fellow team members. After every seva, meet as a team and exchange/share/internalise the learning. At second level, let us share the experience with

people whom we know but not yet part of the team. This shall motivate them and enhance the team size. At third level, let us inform, exchange and share the experiences with national team through SSSVJ blog/email. District level sharing meetings can also be held to proliferate some good practices and local tips. Each data and seva should be converted into a story and key learning/innovation/new ideas should be highlighted. Make narrative of every transformational success achieved with photographs to be uploaded in the SSSVJ blog for others to read and benefit from them.

6.9 *How can we do this seva especially by youth & sevadal, as they have office to attend during week days and on week ends schools are closed? Where is the common time?*

We had a detailed deliberation with some of the teachers, to understand the school operations and how can the program be implemented with out disturbing the curriculum and overloading of teachers with additional work due to SSSVJ. Based on the suggestions, we have zeroed in Saturday post lunch session, as the time for implementing SSSVJ program in the school. We would need approximately 90 minutes for Bal Vikas program and another 60 minutes for group activities with the children. So post 2 pm, till 4.30 SSSVJ can be implemented in rural schools. Further, there are many seva activities such as medical camp, parenting sessions, school infra upgradation etc that can be held on Sundays when the school is closed. Some of the sevas like independence day celebrations, or festival celebrations can be conducted on public holidays. So, in rural set up, the program can be implemented between Saturdays and Sundays.

However challenge will be for certain urban locations where schools are not working on any of the Saturdays. The only possibility for such schools will be evening sessions (last period of the day) in the school. The activities need to be distributed between multiple days for smaller duration, unlike rural schools where it shall be concentrated between Saturdays and Sundays.

As such, for implementing the seva activities, one of the strategies proposed is to get volunteers from the nearby colleges. These youth normally have 3-4 hours of college time and can spare time even on working days. They can be lead by senior devotees from the organization. Another strategy could be to distribute the seva activity responsibilities in such a way, that no one person is loaded with more than one or two sessions in a month. So he/she should reorganize their schedule accordingly.

So the skill is in making a calendar of seva activities meeting the school children availability and volunteers availability.

6.10 *How actively should we engage with the government?*

Since primary education is the responsibility of the state governments, each state has its own education policy and ways of empowering the government run schools. The requirement of permissions and approvals for SSSVJ program or its seva activities in any school would vary as to each state, district or school. In some instances while the school authorities might take the necessary approval themselves, in some cases they might ask us to get the approval for implementation of the program in their school. Some school authorities might insist for higher officials approval for specific areas such as infra works and in some instances, the school authorities might take their own decision. In view of the above, our engagement with government will be based on what the school authorities insist for. We shall be engaging with the government in limited way; only to the extent it is required and not seek any permission if not insisted upon. The decision for approaching the government has to be taken by the district office and state office of the organization only. We are not supposed to solicit or use any funds given by the government. We can

utmost liaison with the government authorities for any approvals needed on behalf of the school. Any policy level changes, we need to engage with state government's education department in the state capital but only through the state office of SSSSO.

6.11 What is Sai value content? How shall we use them?

Sai value contents are messages, instructions, quotes and stories as told by Bhagawan in various discourses and interviews, relevant for the seva activities listed in the document. These messages, quotes and stories become the core message or human values to be delivered to the beneficiaries as an undercurrent of every seva activity. They are the life line of these seva activities. We have tried to list them down as much as we could do. However, it is an ocean and what we have listed out is few nectarine drops. Each of the implementing team should do their homework in finding out more such content and ensure they are delivered as part of the seva.

Remember, our intention is two fold: One, to proliferate and make Swami's transformational messages heard by the beneficiaries. Two, we ourselves become aware and get transformed reminiscing these nectarine Swami's messages while we are executing SSSVJ. For both these reasons, we need to study Swami's literature and may even want to have discussions with other sevadal around some important value based topics. In the process of proliferating Swami's message, care should be taken so as to not come across as missionaries who are interested in converting children into some new cult. We are here to talk about values and spiritual topics, not to convert anybody. So, use Swami references wherever they are valued and respected.

6.12 What is the seva calendar? How do we draw the calendar?

Calendar is one of the important activities in planning. After concluding the survey and selection of school to be adopted, the team shall prepare the list of need based sevas to be performed in the adopted school. Simultaneously, they shall prepare the resources available in the Samithi (alongwith the days and time they are available) and list of new resources required. Based on these two inputs (sevas needed and resources available), the team shall prepare a detailed weekly calendar of sevas to be performed for the entire academic year. The calendar should be such that it optimizes the resources, distribute the workload evenly yet complete all the planned seva activities within the academic year. Adequate care should be taken to consider the availability of the beneficiaries and their convenience of time. Mid-course corrections may be done to the calendar, based on onsite reality checks. The final calendar should specify the day, time and the seva to be performed. Based on these, respective teams can do the preparations for the seva, ahead of time.

There is a sample calendar that is given in SSSVJ Activity Guidelines document. Weekly calendar is given in the Child Centric Activity Overview section (section 5.1) and the overall calendar is detailed in Chapter 7.

6.13 We have been informed about SSSVJ blog/website? How this shall be useful to us?

As said, exchange of information between the teams shall be one of the key strategies for learning from others. Moreover, some of the teams might need specific inputs from national team / other teams, on certain unique challenges/issues they face. Reading inspirational success stories shall be the tool for motivation and learning for every one involved. To achieve all of these, the SSSVJ national team is planning to create a blog/website dedicated for SSSVJ. This is under construction as of now and will be notified sooner once it is up and running. This shall be made user friendly for uploading and downloading information. All the teams shall be encouraged to share information on their adopted school. However, all the teams through proper protocol, shall continue to do the reporting as per the requirements of the state organization. The blog / website is

not a substitute for the reporting as may be required by the state organisation. WhatsApp is also a good tool to communicate and coordinate. However, know its limitations. 1) it is shared with only those who have WhatsApp, 2) it is temporary reporting, 3) it lacks details. For our project, reporting should go beyond a message on WhatsApp.

6.14 Can we be part of the content creation or other work for the project?

Yes. Certainly. In fact we would request all those who have experience and can contribute to the program in creation of the content (on each of the seva activity) to do so and share their contents (topic wise) in the blog/website for others to download. We would encourage teams to shoot videos based on short stories on various value topics and upload in the blog/website for others to use. Ensure you do not post anything that has copyright protection. The national team requires huge amount of resources in the content detailing and creation of regional resources for common seva activities. More than this, each of us should indicate names of people from our samithi or region, irrespective of whether they are devotees of Bhagawan or not, so long we feel that they do have the experience and can contribute positively to the program, to your district office. The district team will reach out to them with your reference.

The SSSVJ Activity Guidelines document focuses on the process and the intent of activities. It gives detailed advise and flow. It does not cover the material to be shared during some activity. For example, the document talks about having to do parental counseling. It also details when to conduct this activity. The document does not cover what to say (in detail) to the parent when the sevadal meets them. The material about what to say to the parent is what we are calling Content.

6.15 Can non-Youth / Seva Dal participate in the program? How?

Yes. Every member of the organization can and shall participate in this program. While Youth shall be given leadership roles wherever feasible, all the members of the organization shall participate based on their area of interest and level of commitment. This is not a Youth only program or project, but it is a youth friendly and youth empowering project to ignite the fire and make them learn and contribute to the core objectives of the Organisation such that they can undertake critical responsibilities in the Sai mission in the future. With vision, Sai Org should invest in its youth so as to ensure the grand legacy of Mother Sai across future generations, and also to ensure the perennial flow of His saga of Love and Service to humanity. All the vibhags of the organization such as Mahila, Bal Vikas, Sevadal and youth shall be an integral part of implementation team.

6.16 Can girls & Mahilas be part of the program?

Yes. The schools being adopted, shall be served by both Gents and Mahilas. However the activities of Mahilas and Gents will have to be segregated and both cannot do a particular Seva together at the same time and same place by mixing up. We propose that all vibhags should integrate and focus on one project with common goals. But, this can be restricted to planning or focus only. We are not suggesting that genders need to be mixed. Normal discipline of Sai Org must be followed. Infact, Bal Vikas gurus – who usually tend to be mahilas -- have a huge role to play in SSSVJ. Efforts should be made by each Samithi to arrange for suitable transportation and security every week for these Mahilas to commute to the adopted schools without any hesitation. Gents Sevadal and Youth can all be in the village and school on Sat and Sunday, but they may be doing different tasks parallelly.

6.17 *Should the Youth who are part of this also participate in other samithi activities?*

Yes. All the Sai Youth from the organisation shall continue to participate in routine organizational activities like before but greater emphasis and focus needs to be given to the national project taken up across India by SSSO.

However, the new Youth who are being brought into for this program will not be compelled or forced to participate in other activities of the organization in the initial days unless they choose to do so. Over a period of time they should be inspired to take active part in His mission.

6.18 *Once the project detailing is finalized, how to plan the financing of the project?*

Once the project detailing is finalized, the detailed financing estimate has to be arrived with help of experts within the organisation.

The Samithi Convenor (in charge of the program) shall have to discuss the budget for his adopted school with the district president and identify possible sources of financing. At first level, each project should be attempted to be self-sufficient. There could be devotees willing to voluntarily fund the program by donating materials in kind. Use sharmdan of the villagers for reducing the man power cost. However don't force any devotee or volunteer. Also it is prohibited to solicit funds openly for the program.

The funding process shall be similar to other seva programs of the Samithi without any compromise on the discipline laid down by Swami. Open soliciting of funds and announcements in Sai centers may be avoided as per the Divine dictum. The funding activities should always be anonymous and should be discreetly managed without affecting the devotional sadhana environment of Sai Centers. In special cases, the matter may be escalated to state office of SSSSO for guidance.

Under no circumstances, monetary donations should be given to any school either directly by any devotee or through know sources.

Please note that it is by design that the SSSVJ program does not try to financially over burden the Samithi. Most of the activities enlisted under empower, energize do not need much cost. In the design, more focus is given to Energize and Empower phases. Equip can only happen based on need and capability of a Samithi. If 10 things are needed by school and only 6 are within our budget, then will list all 10 but only do those 6 that are within our scope and within the need of the school. We will strive to fulfill the needs (not demands) of the school through other channels but we should acknowledge and know our limitations as well. The idea is to inspire the child and not necessarily to give expensive charity.

6.19 *What is the program duration? What will happen to these schools after 1-2 years of our work?*

As mentioned, the program is divided in 4 phases. These shall be targeted to be completed by end of academic year 2016-17. The benchmark is that the adopted school should become in line with Sri Sathya Sai Schools. The village team will continue to implement the program year after year, with the guidance from the Samithi. So technically the program is open ended and the association with these schools are permanent. As per the SSSVJ objectives, these schools will eventually become our Sathya sai Balvikas centers, Youth centers etc and the school teachers will become our Sai Org ambassadors promoting and spreading our Divine mission to the nook and corner of India.

What happens if any school cannot complete the program before end of academic year?

Nothing to worry! Each school to be adopted will have its own set of challenges and each team will go through its own learning curve. We shall endeavor to complete the program implementation before the end of academic year 2016-17 and offer it to Bhagawan. However, the team who miss the deadline can continue further and complete and achieve the targeted deliverables at the earliest possible time post the deadline and not discontinue under any circumstances.

6.20 *What would be the role of office bearers towards youth?*

The primary role of the office bearers is empowering the Youth team and to empower & nurture leadership in the Youth. They shall create leaders at the bottom of the pyramid and mentor these young leaders, groom them over a period of time.

They shall also guide the team in selecting the schools and provide guidance and leadership on the program planning and implementation. They shall keep a watch over the progress and be available as a guide.

They are advised to provide freedom to the youth in execution so that creative innovative ideas and energy of Youth can be fully harnessed within discipline laid down by the organization.

7 Section 5: Miscellaneous

7.1 *What are the next steps of the program? Where do we start from now?*

Please refer the SSSVJ activity guidelines –Next steps (Section 4.5)

7.2 *What is the purpose of calling Youth conferences?*

The purpose of calling Youth conference is to make the Youth aware of the national seva program take up by SSSO across India, its scope, and outline and to appeal to them to participate in this Seva with a national spirit and a sense of responsibility towards mother India. The organising team shall also identify potential young leaders from these meetings and inspire them to join the sacred seva mission of SSSO India.

The conferences can be held at district level or regional level involving 2-3 districts together. Topics should take into consideration the Sai exposure that the audience have. If devotee youth are gathered, then Sai human values topics may also be covered. Its important to explain the importance of 1. Why should one do Seva? 2. Why one should have human values and good company in life. The project provides them an opportunity to do all of these to help them grow.

7.3 *What is the plan for the Youth (including new Youth) after this program?*

Sai Youth are always integral part of every Sai Samithi and are to be groomed for more responsible roles and active participation in the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisations.

The new youth, who become inspired and motivated as a result of SSSVJ, should be guided and helped blend into the mainstream of the organization. The process should not be rushed into. We should allow these youth to assess and appreciate the real intent of this great organisation. Sai Org should be chosen by them naturally and heartfully.

There cannot be any compulsions from the organization side. The team should provide and facilitate a transition path to such Youth so that they can join the Samithi for long term.

7.4 *Why should the youth get involved in this Seva?*

On Spiritual side, amongst all forms of sadhana, Swami always said that in seva alone, there is an element of Self Sacrifice involved in it. This will make volunteers engaging in seva very deserving to earn His grace. Loving and dedicated seva, can wash away mountains of bad karma that one may have accumulated over many births provided the seva is rendered without any pomp and show and is rendered with a spirit of servitude.

On practical side, SSSVJ is a great opportunity to sharpen our soft skills. It provides opportunity to youth in practical training on management and leadership development such as team working, communication, negotiations, time management, project execution, group dynamics, cause and effect theories (causal loops), problem solving, crisis management etc. which will help the youth to stand out above all others in their respective companies / industry. In real life, even by paying thousands of rupees one will not get this experience easily. Above all, it comes free and with added benefit of His grace, which is priceless.

And most importantly, Swami has often focused on Youth and Education. This SSSVJ program is in keeping with that focus that Swami has shown in the past.

We must remember that, each of one of us has been chosen by Him to be part of His team. This is a golden opportunity for us to improve our sadhana, our capabilities & character and serve Him and also our nation.

Jai Sai Ram!