

Name of Media	The Hindu
Date of Article	14 September 2011
Title	Promoting public health through theatre
Project Name	10th Asia-Europe Young Volunteers' Exchange: Health on Stage
URL	http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Bangalore/article2450589.ece



Promoting public health through theatre

By Special Correspondent

A group of 21 youngsters from 14 countries are using forum theatre as a medium to enhance awareness on public health issues, importantly on water-borne diseases in Bangalore and Mysore.

Health on Stage is a joint initiative of the Asia-Europe Foundation and the Coordinating Committee of the International Voluntary Service.

Hosted by the Field Services and Inter-Cultural Learning (FSL India) in Bangalore, Chennai and Mysore, the group's tour started on August 20 and concludes on October 1.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

"The first phase of the project has just been concluded and, during this phase, volunteers familiarised themselves with the public health concerns of local communities," FSL India president Rakesh S. Soans said.

"Water-related diseases are common to all the three locations — Bangalore, Mysore and Chennai." Working in three groups, volunteers will visit slum-dwellers in Bangalore, workers in an industrial belt in Chennai and villages in Mysore. They will explore hygiene and sanitation-related concerns in these locations. By closely interacting with the local communities, the volunteers will raise awareness on the main public health issues. "Who knows? Perhaps by the end of their performances, the local communities may arrive at their own solutions for mitigating their problems," Mr. Soans said in a press note.

IN BANGALORE

The three groups of volunteers will converge in Bangalore on September 26 to review their experience in the field. They will make recommendations on how to make the best use of forum theatre to promote dialogue within local communities on water-related diseases for improving their living conditions.

Volunteers have been trained in inter-cultural learning and introduced to the methodologies used in forum theatre. "With this necessary knowledge and skill, they will organise theatre performances with and for the local people," Mr. Soans said.

Direct interaction with local communities and creative performances will take place during field implementation — started on August 26 and continues till September 26.

Between September 27 and October 1, they will evaluate their experiences and make recommendations on how to make the best use of forum theatre in promoting dialogue on water-related diseases.