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Aikiyam school is a wonderful place for me, a place for teaching and learning, a place for development and exchange, for progress and joy.

I worked one year as an assistant teacher in the 4th grade and really enjoyed each day being in Aikiyam school together with all the teachers and the students.

I still remember my first day, when I entered my classroom and 25 children were smiling at me and gave me immediately the feeling of being a part of the big „Aikiyam family“. I am so thankful about the students' lightheartedness and happiness every single day, which gave me the opportunity to learn a lot about Tamil culture and language. Being together with these children was a huge chance for me to understand more and more about a completely different culture. Although I just worked as a volunteer, the school (especially the principal and my class teacher) gave me a lot of opportunities to develop myself. I helped teaching in English, Math, Science and Social Science. After a while I concentrated on teaching through games or any other physical activities, because I recognized how it increased the children's interest in learning, as well as their motivation and enthusiasm. I prepared different kinds of games for this reason, games for starting the lesson to get the children's attention, games for introducing new topics (e.g. partner-memory with adjectives), focussing on certain problems (running dictation) or just for fun and relaxing.

At least once a week we tried to play a game, which supports the team spirit. We were also eating together once in a month, where everybody brought food for sharing with the others.

When I started teaching in Aikiyam all the student were sitting separately, divided into boys and girls. Now after one year working on this „problem“ (sometimes students refused to work with the opposite sex) through games and a „buddy-system“ (always one girl and one boy are sitting together and working as partners) the students from my class mingle during class and mostly at break time as well.

At this point I tried to work with the teachers, because I wanted to show them that they are the role-models for the students and that they may have to change first themselves before teaching new principles.

At snack time all the teachers sit separately as well. All male teachers sit at one table and all female teachers at the other. Although most of the teachers recognized this and try avoiding sex separation in their classroom, they are helpless with their own working colleagues. So some of the teachers and I started a snack duty, where every day another teacher would bring some special snacks for everyone. After a while more and more teachers came and joined the „special snacks-table“ until all the teachers were sitting together. This was a really nice moment for me to see that small steps can bring a huge result.

And this is a point as well, that Aikiyam taught me: That small steps are always a beginning of something bigger.

Furthermore I worked on the concept of individual learning. Instead of teaching what they have to learn, I tried to teach how they can learn, how they can work on their own. We reduced the „teacher-centred teaching" and tried to let the children be the main part of the lessons. To support this concept we invited all the parents into individual meetings to talk about general school information, their child's academic skills and individual problems. Often the parents shared something from their home or family background, which helped us to understand the learning level of their child.

During my time at Aikiyam School, I have gained a lot of experiences and for this I really want to thank and appreciate the whole staff. It was a wonderful year!