



The Teacher Foundation

## **‘Shades of Our Schools’**

**A documentary by**

**Gautam Sonti**

***Produced by The Teacher Foundation***

**A series of short films** produced by The Teacher Foundation, that capture the nature of personal interactions in our schools and how they contribute or undermine the Social and Emotional Dimensions of Students’ Learning.

The Movie will be screened in various cities of India before being screened at the National Conference ‘**SCHOOLS THAT CARE**’ to be held from **NOVEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> –5<sup>th</sup> 2008 at National Institute for Advanced Studies in Bangalore**

### **Film Brief:**

- The film authentically captures the interactions that happen between teachers and students, students amongst themselves, teachers and teachers – in classrooms and on playgrounds, in school corridors and in staff rooms. The focus of discussion will be on the possible impact of these interactions on the social and emotional aspects of learning.
- The film showcases the perceptions of all the stakeholders in private (middle-rung and higher-rung) and government schools, in urban and rural schools.
- The ‘story line’ runs through 5-10 different kinds of schools as well as different levels of learning (i.e., Primary, Middle and High school)
- It highlights routine school practices through specific instances.
- It will be of 45 minutes duration.

The film will be viewed as a run up to the Conference in Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi. The audience (of predominantly school principals, teachers and the Media) will be asked for their response to the film, which in turn will be recorded. A summary of these smaller conferences will be shared at the National Conference - ‘Schools That Care’.

### **From the Film-maker’s Frame**

The Film has been shot in 8-9 schools who have given us permission Some of the short-listed schools, who have given permission, based on request letters that TTF had sent include top-end private schools as well as rural government schools – and a range of schools in between.

**Shades of our Schools** is a composite film comprising of a series of short films. Each film will centre round a theme rather than a school. Not all schools will feature in every short film.



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**Some of the themes are as under:**

- Language
- Gender
- Competition vs. Cooperation (or Individualism vs. Social Behaviour)
- Rewards and Punishments / Disciplining
- Establishment of Authority
- Disrespect shown to children
- Regimentation

The film has been shot in schools in Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur and Kolkata, with their permission.

**About The Teacher Foundation**

***The Vision of The Teacher Foundation:*** To make schools enabling environments for all students by empowering educators to become energetic, effective, reflective practitioners and life-long learners.

**The Teacher Foundation (TTF)** is a young organization managed by the **Shraddha Trust** that strives to infuse the school education system in India with energy, enthusiasm and expertise. In the past nearly 6 years it has worked in significant ways with several thousand teachers from across the country – in government schools and private schools. TTF provides sustained professional development programmes, school-based support for teachers and school heads and educational services in the areas of school development, improvement and research and evaluation. TTF's work has been recently supported by Sir Ratan Tata Trust, GE Foundation, Reach India, Wipro Applying Thought in Schools, Akshara Foundation and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

TTF in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi is organizing a national conference titled:

**Schools That Care**

*A Conference on the Social and Emotional Environment of our Schools*

The idea of the conference initially arose from our deep concern over a practice predominant in our schools and classrooms of “talking down to students”. This has very damaging impact on young people and the education system as a whole. We, at The Teacher Foundation, believe this problem needs to be addressed at a national level. The Conference **scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008** is our attempt to start the ball rolling. Titled ***Schools that Care***, the Conference would be a meeting ground of school principals, teachers and officials from the department of education all over India. The focus of the 3-day conference would be to create the need to embed students' self-esteem at the heart of all school curricula, especially in the primary years.

The Teacher Foundation (TTF) requested for collaboration **with NCERT** for the conference scheduled in November 2008. Initial discussions with Dr. Krishna Kumar, Director NCERT and his Curriculum Group have resulted in them express both interest in the conference and willingness to participate. TTF anticipates that the ***Schools that Care*** conference will help bring the neglected social and emotional aspects of learning centre stage in all our schools – both government and private.



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The Film – *Shades of Our Schools*, will serve as a run up to the National Conference (**Schools that Care**) that The Teacher Foundation is organizing in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. The focus of the 3-day conference would be to examine the importance of students' self-esteem as the basis for all school curricula, especially in the primary years. TTF anticipates the conference will help bring the neglected emotional and social domain of learning centre stage in all our schools – both government and private.

This film will be screened for educators across the country – to generate discussion, views and concerns.

### **About Gautam Sonti**

Gautam Sonti is the film maker of *Shades of Our Schools*.

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### **BRIEFLY**

I have been making educational (in the broadest sense) video films for many years. These have been on a variety of issues and aim to raise awareness and generate discussion. Many of my films have been of a collaborative nature - I have worked with social activists, educationists and researchers. I have also helped groups document their work on video and I have conducted video workshops to enable them to do so on their own. In the last few years, I have become interested in visual anthropology and my recent film series 'Coding Culture' has been screened at various ethnographic film festivals around the world. For more information, click on:

[www.codingculture.com](http://www.codingculture.com)

I have also been actively with the Bangalore chapter of Vikalp, a loose association of documentary filmmakers from different parts of the country. Amongst other activities, we have been screening films in Bangalore over the last three years. For more information, click on [www.vikalpblr.org](http://www.vikalpblr.org)