

## Lens turn students into storytellers

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HYDERABAD: Students of Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad of the advanced Fredric Roberts Photography Workshop spent the last week unearthing powerful visual stories on women Anganwadi workers in neighbourhood villages, and the repercussions of dramatic urbanisation in Hyderabad and its surrounding areas.

Using professional DSLR cameras, the dozen students from grades 10-12 were empowered to identify, critique, question and analyse fundamental global issues in their immediate environment through the lens of photography.

“This isn’t just a photography workshop – it’s a process of transforming young people’s lives through the use of photography,” explains Fred, award-winning photographer and retired Wall Street executive. “We teach the skills of photography and telling stories through photographs but it’s much more than this. It gives young people knowledge and perspective, and gets them to engage with their environment.”

Fred initiated his voluntary workshops for high school students in 2011 in Udaipur, and has since conducted them in several countries across the world including Bhutan, Nicaragua, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Portugal, Canada, and the US. With assistance from a faculty of world-class photographers, each beginners workshop trains a group of 20 students, an equal number of girls and boys, and half from lower-income families.



Through a unique partnership with the Aga Khan Foundation, Fred had his first beginners workshop at the Aga Khan Academy Hyderabad in October 2016 and has returned for a specially designed, intensive three-day advanced workshop for 12 of the previous graduates. This will be followed by the normal, one-week beginner’s workshop later with a group of new students, half from the Academy and half from the nearby government schools.

This model of learning integrates diverse socio-economic perspectives, and in the process forges a strong sense of connection and respect among the students. He also ensures sustainability by training staff who continue to mentor

the novice photographers once the workshop concludes.