



Wipro Applying Thought in Schools

A compilation of the annual updates from various partnerships within Wipro's Education Initiative

annual
update
2013-2014



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ANNUAL UPDATE 2013-2014

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Wipro Applying Thought in Schools

introduction

Wipro Applying Thought in Schools is a social initiative of Wipro's that aims to build capacities for school education reform in India. This report is a compilation of annual updates of all the projects within this initiative. However before we get into the details, here is a brief account of our vision, objectives and the focus areas that come out of this.

Our work in education is driven by the belief that education is a key enabler of social change. We believe in a social vision of democracy where each citizen is not only capable in an individual sense but also sees the ethic of equity, the essentiality of diversity, the ethos of justice, and is thus driven by social sensitivity. Schools have to be spaces that nurture these principles, capabilities & values.

This means a dramatically different kind of school and a significantly revamped education system. Schools and education systems do not change overnight. We believe that a sustained effort is required and our projects are attempts to bring about a change of this kind.

three key needs

Towards this, we have identified three key needs in our education system

- We need organizations capable of bringing about quality education by working in different parts of India and in different knowledge areas
- We need good quality educational material and literature to aid in this effort
- We need educationists, parents, government etc. to think and act in an informed manner to make this happen.

our focus areas

These determine our focus areas:

- **Organizational capability building and partnerships in the education space**
 - » to address the scarcity of organizations and people in this space
 - » for sustainable impact
 - » to build a network of orgs that can learn and collaborate
- **Developing educational material & Literature**
 - » to address the scarcity of good material for children and educators
- **Public advocacy**
 - » to create greater awareness and understanding on important educational issues

We have also decided to focus on a few knowledge areas as themes: ecology and education, social sciences, language, affective education and the school environment. The reason for this is that while these areas are integral to the vision of a good education, they are often some of the most neglected areas within education.

These focus areas and themes increasingly determine the specific projects that we partner in. Our projects are implemented through partnerships with educational and knowledge-based organizations across India. In the sections below we have presented an annual update of our projects in the year 2013-14.



2

ECOLOGY & EDUCATION

introduction

Our work in Ecology and Education is inspired by Wipro's commitment to ecological sustainability. The educational work started with a dedicated Partners' forum on Ecology & Education in 2009. Our core concerns in this area have been previously articulated in "Our Concerns on School education in India" as below:

"The earth is made up of interconnected systems, cycles and processes. Our educational endeavour should develop in the student a good understanding of these aspects. One of the approaches to do this within Ecology & Education is of following the trails and connecting the dots. It has to often be outside the classroom and span multiple subjects. This raises issues with the 40 minute period structure of schools today and demands interdisciplinary skills from teachers.

Further there is a tendency of environmental education to be bracketed with individual contributions like reducing plastic usage and recycling etc. Many of these conceptualize the child as a consumer but fail to bring out the aspects related to the child as a future citizen. A citizen's contribution to society is not only limited to controlling one's own consumption but also in participating in a democracy at various levels including the local level to influence the production-oriented organization of society itself."

Over the last few years, we have expanded our work to 4 projects in different areas within ecology and education:

- A project to instill the scientific spirit and connect with nature by going outside the classroom and being with trees: SeasonWatch with National Centre for Biological Sciences and Nature Conservation Foundation
- A project that makes children aware and active about their ecological footprint on land, water, energy etc starting from the school campus: Green Schools Program with Centre for Science & Environment
- A sustainability education program which awards entries from schools and colleges and takes the winning institutions through a three year engagement which aims to deepen sustainability education in these institutions
- A project that tries to bring localized knowledge created through conservation activities into school education and also aims to answer questions on the effectiveness of conservation/ environmental education. This is a project with Nature Conservation Foundation

The idea is to work on different but related areas within this theme and then slowly integrate these into a connected learning experience on ecology and education.

2.1

SeasonWatch www.seasonwatch.in

background

SeasonWatch is an India-wide programme that studies the changing seasons by monitoring the seasonal cycles of flowering, fruiting and leaf-flush of common trees. Designed as a citizen science programme, SeasonWatch involves active engagement with and participation of volunteers (citizen scientists) who monitor and document the above mentioned phenological changes in about 100 species of select common trees.

objective

- To record and analyse changing seasons across the country by monitoring the flowering, fruiting and leaf-lush of individual specimen of select tree species across the country
- To collect data in large scale across the country and make it available freely online so that patterns in these changes across geographies and/or time can be studied
- To engage with schools using this as a platform to bring about meaningful and insightful ecological education that are driven by action and curiosity
- To increase the interest and awareness levels of the citizen scientists (individuals or school children) who collect this data

SeasonWatch grew to include 124 participants and 302 schools observing 2880 trees. Participants have made 49245 observations.

annual update

The Kerala Chapter – The Mathrubhumi Partnership

SeasonWatch continued to grow in Kerala through the partnership with Mathrubhumi's SEED Programme. In Kerala:

- SeasonWatch reached 257 schools. Children from these schools made a cumulative total of 45078 observations on their trees.
- ~ 6000 Teachers attended SEED – SeasonWatch training
- 5000 SeasonWatch CDs were distributed
- 24 teachers from the best-performing schools from

Kerala were invited to NCBS

- One Day Camps were conducted for rural schools in different parts of Kerala
- Direct school visits were conducted to an average of 10 schools in each of the 38 education districts
- Schools were evaluated and plans are in place to award Three State Level Awards to the top three schools
- SeasonWatch was covered in the news by Mathrubhumi.

rest of India

School & Educational institutions through government agencies

The Government of India runs two major initiatives to promote environmental awareness in schools. One is managed by NCERT and SCERTs – this is curriculum based. The other is activity based and is managed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The activity based programme is called the National Green Corps and has about 1.2 lakh member schools across the country. The Programme is administered by the Ministry through State Nodal Agencies which are state level government offices.

And, last year Seasonwatch partnered with the following agencies:

- Himachal Pradesh - Himachal Pradesh State Council for Science Technology and Environment
- Madhya Pradesh – Environmental Planning and Coordination Organisation
- Maharashtra – Social Forestry Department
- Karnataka – EMPRI
- Andhra Pradesh – State Pollution Control Board
- Tamil Nadu – Department of Environment

- Pondicherry – Department of Education
- Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti – Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

There are plans in place to train 3900 school teachers through above partnerships during the next year. A training programme for master trainers from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka was conducted in Bangalore. 937 teachers and 350 students have been trained so far.

Schools & Educational institutions through private agencies, NGOs

- ~1600 public schools were solicited to participate in Seasonwatch in July 2013 (400 through Earthian programme and 1200 by SeasonWatch).
- A partnership has been forged with WWF India to take SeasonWatch to the members of their nature clubs in schools.
- The DPS society has also agreed to make SeasonWatch a part of their teacher training programmes during the summer vacations of 2014.
- Conversation is ongoing with Gyan Sethu, a volunteer programme that focuses on capacity building of children in the tribal belts across the country.

Adults through public agencies and NGOs

Two workshops were conducted through the Neralu Tree Festival in Bangalore.

Website work

Our website is now faster and better. The dashboard and homepage is now being modified to provide the users with more information and resource.

Products

Two versions (Kerala and rest of India) of certificates for teachers, letterheads and buttons for students have been produced. Our handbook, The Calendar of Nature, is being reprinted.

plans for the next year

SeasonWatch SEED programme for schools in Kerala

- One day SeasonWatch camps have proven effective so there are plans to conduct them extensively.
- Plan to hand out more collateral in the form of poster to 6000 schools informing them of SeasonWatch.
- School visits and follow-ups have been planned.
- High performing teachers from the past year will be invited to NCBS again this year.
- Active school children will be identified and taken on a one day nature camp in Kerala.
- Certificates, appreciation letters and badges will be handed out.

Rest of India

- Focussed work to muster one school, one individual and one civil society organisation for SeasonWatch in every district of India.
- Continue to partner with Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan to enrol schools across the country.

- Enrich the SeasonWatch programme by creating more resources and returns for participants.
- Make the SeasonWatch website more interactive for users and visitors.
- Partner with Civil society organisations and corporate agencies.
- 'Gamify' SeasonWatch by introducing levels that participants can progress through and increase our level of engagement with them as they reach higher levels
- Introduce fresh concepts and activities for children to engage in to keep them interested
- Introduce processes to ensure efficiency
- Bring new expertise on board to evaluate the impact of SeasonWatch on learning and values; and to design on-ground activities that maximise these impacts.

2.2

Nature Education, Nature Conservation Foundation

background

The Nature Conservation Foundation is a non-governmental organisation with a focus on scientific research and on-ground action pertaining to understanding and conserving wild nature. Its headquarters are in Mysore, but it has offices and field stations in various places, including Bangalore, Valparai (Tamil Nadu), Spiti (Himachal Pradesh), and Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh). In conjunction with its conservation implementation projects, NCF has done extensive work in nature and conservation related outreach and education, both to the general public, and focused on schoolchildren. NCF and Wipro have agreed to partner in this project to take the benefits of creative intersections of work at NCF and school education to the school community and larger audiences. This work is carried out by the Education and Public Engagement Unit at NCF.

programme objectives

- Consolidate and make available existing content on nature education and outreach available with NCF
- Build on existing education and outreach activities at NCF
- Further NCF's efforts in Public Participation in nature-related science projects, with an emphasis on school participation
- Explore how nature education can be effectively brought into mainstream school curricula

annual update

As of March 2013, we had consolidated all NCF's existing education and outreach materials, and archived all available digital files. These include 5 books and booklets, 32 posters and pamphlets, 5 activity books and workbooks, 3 educational videos and films, 2 field guides, 28 reports, and 3 EcoQuest exhibitions (with posters, activities and games). We had reprinted the Himalayan Teacher's Activity Handbook (used in Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh) which is used by schools throughout the district. A booklet of the fungi of the southern Western Ghats had been published. An exhibition was set up on the lesser known species of the Western Ghats at the Society for Conservation Biology, Asia chapter conference in Bangalore 7-10 August 2012 – for which much new material was developed. We opened a new branch of EcoQuest in Coimbatore

in partnership with the NGO Siruthuli, and upgraded the EcoQuestcentre in Ooty. We also began a weekly column in the schools edition of The Hindu newspaper.

On the Citizen Science front, Ashish Shah took over as Programme Manager of SeasonWatch, and his efforts, together with those of others in the team, led to a redesign of the website and an expansion in participation. Participation in MigrantWatch jumped by a large degree, as results from the first five years of the project were put together into a summary document that was distributed to participants. A collaboration with the Bombay Natural History Society to collect information on sparrows through Citizen Sparrow yielded a huge amount of new information on sparrow distribution and abundance.

progress and achievements

Outreach through the media

- Our association with the schools edition of The Hindu continues, and columns written by NCF staff and students have appeared almost every week in the past year. These columns all have a nature-related theme, but are of different styles and approaches. The most straightforward are informational, but the most popular columns are in the form of a story – told either from the point of view of a person or that of an animal or plant. Some columns also weave cultural aspects into the topic at hand.
- We have tied up with Chakmak (published by Ekalavya) for them to choose from among our columns in The Hindu, translate into Hindi, and publish in their magazine. Nine issues of Chakmak had translated articles from us between March and December 2013.
- We entered into discussions with The Hindu and the children's science magazine Brainwave, to produce a series of themed nature activities for children with the intent of encouraging children to spend time outdoors and explore the natural world. The tasks were to be divided as follows.

NCF's EPE to conceptualise the series, and to produce the content for each activity; Brainwave to illustrate and to re-write content for a young audience; and Brainwave and The Hindu in Schools to publish the activities. The current status is that the conceptualisation is done and content is being developed. Content is available for 10 activities; once we have content for 25 activities, we will proceed with the next steps. At a later date, we intend to publish a compendium of these activities as a book.

Location-based outreach and education

- EPE staff collaborated with the Forest Department of Arunachal Pradesh to design and set up an Interpretation Centre at the Pakke Tiger Reserve aimed at both visitors as well as local people and children. This involved the design, content generation and production of 44 posters, two electronic games, four interactive exhibits and several activities for children.
- EPE staff also advised on exhibit design and content for the Agumbe interpretation centre project (for the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust).

Citizen Science

The two flagship public participation projects run by NCF (in collaboration with NCBS) are *SeasonWatch* and *MigrantWatch*. Significant progress has been made in both. In addition, we were part of one-off project on the House Sparrow.

A summary of SeasonWatch progress is given in a previous report. Briefly, we are focussing on increasing the attractiveness of the project to participants. This is being done by a new e-newsletter, increased recognition for participating schools, teachers and children, and creating more resources (including web resources) for schools to use.

The *Citizen Sparrow* project generated a lot of new information; in an effort to disseminate that information back to participants, we created a non-technical summary in the form of a poster, which was printed and posted to participants who requested it. A more detailed technical report is also ready, and will soon be made available on the Citizen Sparrow website.

The largest changes have occurred in the MigrantWatch project, and the broader endeavour that surrounds it. MigrantWatch was designed in 2007 as an entry-level project for birdwatchers in India to contribute their

observations of birds to a meaningful information-gathering effort. Because it is extremely simple, the information gathered has severe scientific limitations. Based on the success (in terms of participation) of MigrantWatch, we thought it the right time to begin to encourage birdwatchers to take the next step in terms of more detailed and systematic observation. This is also facilitated by the global bird listing platform, *eBird*, which is run by the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University. We initiated discussions with Cornell in January 2013, and since then have worked closely with eBird to make the platform more friendly and useful to birdwatchers in India. As a consequence of this partnership, the number of records of Indian birds on eBird had jumped from c.60,000 in August 2013 to c.300,000 today. We are now putting together a consortium of organisations and partners to promote bird listing and sharing of observations under the umbrella '*BirdCount India*'. We hope that this will lead to an exponential leap in information on the distribution and abundance of Indian birds. As part of this, we are creating material for local bird and nature groups to monitor their bird populations; and for schools and children to be introduced to India's bird diversity.

plans for the next year

- Our new website will soon be functional, following which, our educational materials such as books, booklets, activity books, posters and others will be made available for the general public.
- We plan to begin our partnership with The Hindu In School and Brainwave about the weekly nature activities described above.
- We will produce educational and introductory material for young audiences about birds – both their ecology and their diversity.
- We plan to produce a pilot set of short videos about biodiversity and nature, aimed at a young audience. These will be set in a clearly Indian context – one that is missing from the vast majority of such material already available.
- We will conduct a workshop on evaluating the outcomes of nature education material and activities. In this, we will invite practitioners to share their experiences, as also researchers to discuss formal methodology.

2.3

earthian Sustainability Education Program of Wipro

background

At Wipro, we have endeavored to work on both the educational challenges in schools and colleges and on ecological sustainability issues, both, within our organization and outside. From our work in these areas came the realization that sustainability issues require greater attention in schools and colleges. This was the genesis of the earthian annual program, the first edition of which was launched in April 2011. In the first phase of the program schools and colleges submit an entry on a

theme within sustainability and the 10 best entries receive awards. Subsequently earthian and its partners engage with the winning schools as a part of the Continuous Engagement Program (CEP) to increase the space provided to sustainability education within the school. We also facilitate internships for students of the winning Colleges with our partner organizations around the country. This report, however, primarily focuses on CEP for schools.

earthian award

In the 2013-14 edition of the program, the school teams undertook a set of structured activities based on the theme of water followed by a well-reasoned, analytical essay. College teams had to apply critical thought and write essays on various themes – by looking at issues through the lens of different socio economic contexts and exploring interrelatedness of issues. In this edition, over 650 schools and colleges participated in the program. The 10 best entries from schools were

selected by an eminent jury with varied experience in academia, research and civil society organizations. The program culminated in the earthia award event in January 2013 which also served an experience sharing platform for the institutions involved.

CEP (Continuous Engagement Program)

The 10 earthian winning schools from the earlier 2012-13 edition have been engaged in the Continuous Engagement Program (CEP) offered in association with Wipro's partner ecosystem in education and sustainability. The core focus of this engagement is of driving sustainability thinking and action through the learning process. These provided school teachers with rich and diverse experiences within sustainability. A brief description of the 4 partner organizations and what they covered is given below:

ATREE

An organization that does research and grassroots work with local forest communities that combine livelihoods mainly deriving out of the natural resources with conservation efforts. ATREE's Community-based Conservation Centres provide a platform for such engagement in forest and rural locations. The rationale of the module with ATREE is to understand the human-nature and other interconnections across water, biodiversity, agriculture, climate change etc. better and also learn some research methods in the process. This is an experiential learning module that was attended by 8 teachers from the winning schools. This was transacted through workshops, visits, few lectures and hands-on work at their field research station in BR Hills.

Centre for Science & Environment

Schools are brought on board their Green Schools Program which involved a 'survey' of the school done by its students on its environmental practices. It could be thought of as an audit of the school environment - the students form teams and go around the school on an exploratory journey and find out what's happening - to the water, energy, land, air and waste in the school. This activity facilitated by teachers will help them understand the footprint of their school on the local ecology better. Many of the winning schools are already GSP certified. So, our engagement on this was customized as per the schools current standing. For schools which are not GSP certified yet, we organized a workshop to help them join GSP. And for schools already into GSP, we facilitated the next steps along the lines of GSP, which takes the footprint reduction activities within the school further. In future we will also try to make this a more widely participated and educative activity within the school, possibly by integrating this with the curriculum.

Centre For Learning (CFL)

Is a school that has practiced a radically different curriculum and pedagogy for ecological education, which can be called "place based education". The

focus within this is on connecting to the locale around the school using an interdisciplinary approach that looks at land, biodiversity, geology, agriculture, people, livelihoods etc. Our effort was to provide teachers and educationists an exposure into this way of teaching and learning.

Bangalore Little Theatre

Is working on integrating the novel concept of 'Theatre in Education' (TIE) within sustainability education in schools. As a beginning a few schools worked on the production of a play. They have also been working on a fresh pedagogy models with a unique approach towards disseminating information in the educational space, and in this case, with specific focus on sustainability education. In this regard, BLT will be setting up Methodology Development Labs in 2 schools in and around Bangalore.

evolving ideas

CEP has also in the meantime undergone a structural and conceptual shift that looks to address two key things:

Institutional buy-in: in a major departure from earlier years, the engagement will now be undertaken primarily on the school premises, rather than off-site. This is to ensure that we have a larger audience and the management's engagement and involvement is deeper

Phase-wise integration of sustainability education: the need to develop concrete deliverables, outcomes and document the impact

Each school works within a context shaped by its heritage, its current vision and development plans, aspiration and physical environment. earthian's 3 phase continuous engagement program's (CEP) primary objective is to devise means of deeper, more meaningful engagement

with earthian awardees for whole school whole system development. This would require changes in institutional thinking processes, initiate action on sustainability issues and help them build institutional capacity on an ongoing basis. In short we want to- initiate, challenge, commit, and transform.

An educational institution would need engagement through the ethos, pedagogy, community, management and curriculum. Any lasting transformation would require

innovations and changes in all the dimensions. In practice, this would mean that a school encourages active and participatory learning.

The 3 phases:

- Introductory conceptual workshops on core sustainability themes.
- Curricular intervention through CCE slots, educational material, delivery tools.
- Advanced/experiential field immersion.

objectives of CEP

- Creating multiple levels of engagement post awards.
- Furthering conceptual understanding of sustainability amongst stakeholders in a school context.
- Developing a pedagogy model for education for sustainability – whole school & whole system approach.
- Training of teachers and providing them the tools to deliver sustainability content in the classroom.
- Strengthening curricular interventions using project-based learning.
- Document the learning through action research.

2.4

Green Schools Programme II Centre for Science & Environment

background

The past year, 2013-14, has been a particularly significant one for this programme. Stock taking between the two partners--Centre for Science and Environment and WIPRO Apply thoughts in Schools--has led to a substantial shift in perspective. While the foundation of the new plan is based on what has been done in the first two years, it was developed taking into account performance of all the GSP II schools

on the ground, in practice and policy. It was decided mutually by the two partners that instead of scaling up in terms of number of schools, focus should be on helping current GSP II group to make in-depth and long term changes in their school. Given that, the programme objectives were altered to suit the new initiative.

programme objectives

- To conduct customized workshop on embedding GSP in curriculum in 5 selected schools with whom both the institutions have been working to identify better environmental practices within the school campus.
- To strengthen them and build their capacity so that they can also motivate the rest of the school community.

Some of the past elements remain same:

- To set up practical, achievable 'green norms' for the schools
- Help the schools enforce the norms on the ground as green policies, to be practiced by students and teachers not only in the school but also at home and in the neighbourhood
- Help the teachers to connect the GSP 2 activities with the main curriculum.

overview of the programme

In the second phase of the partnership, in order to be more effective and relevant in the present contexts, the programme would concentrate on moving on to a broader canvas and to create a larger

platform for itself. It would aim to be in a position to influence the curriculum in a structured manner; and intervene in the teaching learning process; and not seen as an 'extra-curricular' activity.

what has happened over the last year?

19 GSP II workshops were conducted totally in schools of Delhi, Sikkim, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Pondicherry in the year 2013-14. GSP II workshop for 2 Delhi schools was conducted in the month of May 2013 which also marks the beginning of a new academic year. Nine GSP II workshops were conducted in the month of June. Green Schools Awards ceremony is organized on World Environment Day every year in Sikkim for all the green schools. Hence GSP II workshop for 2 Sikkim schools was conducted in the month of June 2013 around this day. GSP II workshop for 3 Jamshedpur schools, 1 Gujarat School, 1 Madhya Pradesh school and 2 Maharashtra school was also conducted in the same month.

GSP II workshops for 3 Pondicherry Schools were conducted in the month of July. Workshops for 2 Delhi Schools were conducted in the month of August; for 1 Punjab school and 1 Himachal Pradesh schools in the month of September and for 1 Delhi school in the month of October.

CSE consistently supported the schools in the form of contacts, information and expertise required. Regular follow-up were done with 20 selected schools for report on progress. CSE supported the schools with documentation of their success stories in terms of data, objective and measuring achievements. CSE also monitored and counseled the schools which were trained in the year 2011-12 (first phase of GSP workshops) to gauge progress made and changes initiated.

what is planned for the next year?

So far GSP has been practiced widely and in large scale, due to the growing demand for 'eco club activities', which are now graded. But it is yet to become a part of the mainstream curriculum that ensures every student in school is exposed to and is influenced by it. In other words, impact of GSP on curricular and educational changes within the schools has been limited.

Considerable thought needs to be given to setting the objectives for Environmental Education at the school level, and in translating this into syllabi, textbooks and teaching-learning processes. Responding to this, GSP II would

now focus on providing the methods, tools and learning processes to facilitate:

- Curricula intervention
- Resource materials development
- Teacher preparation (Capacity building)
- Creation of an effective evaluation/assessment system
- Using the school habitat as a demonstration of the environmental values that the education system aspires to establish



SOCIAL SCIENCES

introduction

This is a new area of work for us, though Social Science has been an important part of many of the earlier projects. We have articulated our basic concern within this theme as follows:

“Unlike Natural Sciences, matters here do not fit into formulas nor is any one theory able to explain across time and space any significant aspect of societies. There is a multiplicity of ways of seeing the world and this can be very confusing and needs an attention of a different kind. In line with the NCF 2005 social sciences education has to shift out of either a nationalising frame alone or as a tool of narrow identity formation and accommodate the ‘multiple ways of imagining the Indian nation.’”

This is of course just one of the more important concerns. However, it is also true that it tends to be a neglected subject in many schools compared to Mathematics or English. We also held a Partners’ forum on History and education in 2010 and it brought out the various aspects of History as a discipline and how this can be learnt in schools.

The work we began in partnership with Vikramshilain in 2012 was keeping in the mind the concerns and limitations mentioned above. As part of this, Vikramshila has been able to consolidate on what they have done in the past in Social sciences and come out with tangible curricular material which is interdisciplinary and project-based.

We intend to expand our work in this area in the coming years.

3.1

Integrated Approach to Social Sciences Vikramshila

background

Vikramshila Education Resource Society, since 1989, has been working towards the goal of providing quality education to all children. It strongly believes that quality education will help the children to develop as responsible and transformative citizens. They must be enabled to understand social issues which tend to threaten the basic attributes of democracy. The NCF 2005 also emphasizes the role of Social Science in developing children's understanding of the social context and social realities. According to NCF, the main objective of Social Science teaching is to develop a just and peaceful society. In West Bengal, traditionally History and Geography have been the two subjects under Social Science, and Civics has remained a neglected area, as a result of which many important topics are not taught in schools. This, as well as the general approach of teaching Social Science in a compartmentalized manner through information loaded textbooks has led to gaps and overlaps, as a result of which students fail to acquire a holistic world view or a nuanced understanding of the social context and reality. Attempts to introduce separate subjects such as Environment Education, Life Skills Education, Peace Education, to bridge these gaps, leads to further burdening learners but falls short of addressing the real issue, as emphasized in NCF 2005.

The Social Science Project of Vikramshila was conceptualized in the year 2012 in collaboration with Wipro Applying

Thought In Schools against this background, with the objective of developing a Social Science curriculum that would adopt an interdisciplinary approach.

The first year of the social science project started with series of consultation meetings with educationists and subject experts, to understand the significance as well as nature of social science and the reason for bringing about change in the existing school curriculum. This was followed by a review of available social science textbooks, both national and state level. Some chapters from NCERT text books were chosen for translation and contextualization. These were then used for field testing at various schools to understand children's perception of society and to design appropriate materials and adopt a suitable pedagogy of social science teaching based on students' responses.

The second phase witnessed engagement of teachers who wanted to play a pivotal role in any kind of transformation. Along with the text chapters and activity books for students, additional resource books were prepared to help teachers conduct similar sessions with ease and confidence. Some consultation meetings were planned for them to build up a larger discourse on the pedagogy of Social Science and also for state level intervention.

updates

Resource Materials Developed

Chapters on themes like 'Gender' and 'Diversity' were prepared keeping in mind children's need to understand natural and social environment. The 'Gender' chapter discusses- gender roles in society, gender stereotyping in professions, gender as a social construction with emphasis on gender stereotyping, gender discrimination in family, breaking stereotypes and gender roles in different societies. This chapter was prepared to be tried out with the students of class VIII.

The chapter on Diversity emphasizes upon various concepts like- identification and appreciation of diversity in our immediate surrounding and larger country context, diversity and discrimination focusing upon prejudices, stereotypes and inequalities. The chapter also talks about diversity and constitutional and human rights. This was prepared for the students of class VII

Preparing New Resource Materials

Development of chapters on new themes like 'Market' and 'Governance' is still in process as we are planning to organize various workshops with Ekalavya and other

educationists to decide upon the concepts to be covered. The class level segregation is yet to be decided.

Resource Packages of 'Gender' and 'Diversity' chapters are yet to be prepared for the teachers. Pilot Surveys need to be conducted in more schools for preparation of resource packages.

Work with students and teachers

Working with schools continued with an objective to observe awareness and responses of the students about the chosen concepts. The prepared chapters on 'Livelihood' and 'Media' were tried out in both Bengali and English medium schools with diverse background like Kishore Bharati, Konnagar Rajendra Sriti Vidyalaya, St. Georges and Loreto Day School. Most of the students expressed their inquisitiveness, actively participated in various classroom activities and answered the critical questions quite efficiently. But a very few of them took time in overcoming their initial inhibition in responding in the class. In total, the project reached out to 391 students. On the basis of these experiences and responses of the students, the resource packages were prepared. The resource packages were prepared for providing hand holding support to the teachers to conduct the classroom procedure.

Chapters prepared on 'Gender' and 'Diversity' was tested at schools. These chapters were tried out at Government aided school, Giribala Sirkar Balika Vidyalaya and Konnagar Rajendra Sriti Vidyalaya. Students' perception about gender stereotype came out through various activities and they identified male domination in every sphere of their life from their experiences. Toward the end of the session, their views on equal status of men and women in the society was portrayed through various activities like pictorial representation, preparation of skit, poster making etc.

Responses of the students about the Diversity chapter was mixed as various concepts like Stereotype, Diversity and Discrimination turned out to be difficult for the students of Class VII. Students lacked conceptual and analytical competence required for understanding the above mentioned heavily loaded topics. Thus it was decided to conduct more pilot surveys in various schools in and around Kolkata to understand whether the chapter needed any further modification.

The list of the schools is given below:

No.	School Name	Type of School	Number of Student	Student Profile	Class	Topic
1	Kishore Bharati	West Bengal Board	30	Middle class	VIII	Media
			50		VI	Livelihood
2	St. Georges	NIOS board	52	Street Children	VIII	Media
			48		VI	Livelihood
3	Loreto Day School	CBSC board				
4	Giribala Sirkar Balika Vidyalaya	West Bengal Board	100	Upper and Middle class	VIII	Media
			81	Middle class	VIII	Gender
5	Konnagar Rajendra Sriti Vidyalaya	West Bengal Board	30	Middle Class	VII	Diversity

Working with government systems

This initiative was taken by Vikramshila to involve more teachers to start a new discourse on Social Science Pedagogy. Thus consultation meetings were organized in collaboration with the DIET in Hooghly district, the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education and a group of enthusiastic teachers from government aided schools in Birbhum, to share the interdisciplinary, activity based and analytical approach of Vikramshila which encouraged use of various learning tools like class cards, video clippings, and newspaper cuttings in the classroom situation. Our objective was to encourage the stakeholders to follow these principles during curriculum and textbook revision, classroom teaching, training etc. whenever they have a scope to do the same.

Birbhum Workshop

A one day workshop was organized in Santiniketan to talk about the role of the teacher in a culture where examination and text books play a dominating role. In this forum Bratin Chattopadhyay discussed how a teacher gets trapped in a system which keeps eroding his or her authority. The teachers were quite vocal and shared their experiences and limitations in a class room situation. They were asked for their feedback on the mode of participation in the process of development of resource packages. Towards the end of the workshop they expressed their wish to remain associated with the process and requested to organize such meetings on a regular basis.

Workshop at DIET Hooghly

DIET Hooghly organized a consultation meeting on Social Science in collaboration with Vikramshila. Prof. Paromita Chakraverti (Director of School of Women's Studies, Jadavpur University), Dr. K.A.Sadat, Principal of DIET Hooghly and Tulshi Das Bandhopadhyay, Headmaster of RajendraSmriti High School along with representatives from Vikramshila and Wipro briefly addressed the teachers and highlighted the significance of social science teaching and the objective of the Social Science Project undertaken by Vikramshila. They were asked to give their suggestions on the developed resource packages developed by Vikramshila under the project. They were also encouraged to try out the resource package in their respective schools.

Workshop at Madrasah Board

A sensitization workshop was organized at West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education to build up teachers' opinion on social science discourse. Mr. Md. Fazle Rabbi (President of Madrasah board), Ms. Sabana Samim (Assistant Secretary of Madrasah board) were present in the workshop. A majority of them came from the districts of North Bengal, where the PTR is quite high on an average. But in spite of that they showed interest in implementing the process in their schools. A follow up meeting was held on 24th March 2014 to distribute the materials.

achievements

- The project is currently reaching out to nearly 8000 students through 82 teachers who have attended our workshops and have shown interest in implementing it.
- The teachers attending the workshops at DIET, Hooghly and Madrasah Board were eager to know more about the social science project. All of them expressed the necessity of incorporating more activities in the classroom process to make the learning process interesting not only for the project, but in general. Teachers gave valuable and pertinent feedback on the resource package as they worked in groups. Teachers, in spite of being the persons responsible for implementing any curriculum are seldom given scope to critique things – here, this experience helped to develop a sense of ownership.
- In the schools where we have directly taught the lessons, we found students enthusiastic about the interactive, activity based classroom sessions and were excited about engaging themselves in various learning activities such as mind mapping, interviewing people, preparing skit, making road map, drawing pictures, participating in debate etc. Their responses were quite interesting and innovative. The process of asking probing questions enabled students to be more reflective and come up with their best possible answers and we found some of their responses to be quite sensitive. The project enabled them to share their own perceptions without feeling inhibited.

challenges

- Our facilitators, sometimes, faced difficulties in conducting an interactive classroom session in large sized classrooms. Group activities often led to a chaotic situation. This is a common situation in high schools in the state and is likely to be one of the constraining factors with teachers in spite of their enthusiasm and eagerness.
- A few of the teachers lacked confidence in conducting a classroom process following an interactive method. Some were skeptical about the students' understanding level and analytical competence and felt that the concepts were somewhat difficult for them.
- The available window for teaching and for carrying out innovative activities is too short due to the academic calendar of the school and disruption of regular classes due to examinations, events and unscheduled holidays. This concern was expressed by teachers and was also experienced by us while implementing the project – sometimes it becomes difficult to match the project time lines with the school calendar.

Activities	April	May	June	July	August	September
Working with schools						
Field testing of newly developed chapters						
Sharing Meeting with teachers in project schools						
School level intervention by Government teachers						
Developing Chapters based on the matrix :						
Consultation Meeting with experts for developing new chapters e.g. Market and governance etc						
Governance						
Market						
Consolidation of chapters/ resources developed : Gender, Diversity						
Meetings with experts for validation						
Finalization after validation						
Feedback meeting with Madrasah Board						
Workshop for material distribution with teachers of DIET Nadia						
Feedback meeting with DIET Hooghly						
Sharing meeting between DIETs of Hooghly and Nadia						
Meeting with government officials in Tripura						
Workshop with teachers in Tripura						



LANGUAGE

introduction

Over the years, we have supported a number of language education related projects run by our partners. However, recognizing the severity of the challenge in this space in terms of both the capacity of actors involved in language education, as well as the dearth of high quality content, we have made language education one of our key focus areas. We have articulated our basic concern within this theme as follows:

“India is a country with diverse cultures, educational contexts and languages. To be able to create a good learning environment, it is imperative that children are able to engage with the language (not just spoken in class but also the environment in the school). Multilingualism is seen as one possible method to overcome this issue. There could be other pedagogical methods too.

Beyond this, there are issues with the politics of languages and the dearth of good literature on any subject in languages other than English. This politics is something a school faces on an everyday basis. And these have implications not only in teaching language but in other subjects also. How do we engage with these problems in the school and in the classroom?”

To explore ways of addressing some of these concerns, we have begun focused work in this area in partnership with Eklavya and Muskaan on a multilingual language education program based in Bhopal.

4.1

Language Education Using Multilingual Approach - Eklavya

background

The Language program in Bhopal has evolved out of Eklavya's experiences in pre-primary and primary language curriculum development. Its objective is to develop at least bilingual proficiency in Hindi and English, in the multilingual context of urban classrooms for deprived children. The program is being supported by Wipro and began in 2012.

Language is a major issue of access – it can act both as a facilitator and a barrier. It has been found that the home language of children is neither the school language nor used as a resource to teach the school language. The culture of children is also not reflected in the classroom. This creates a great barrier to the learning of the school language and of English, and in understanding what is taught in school. This is the reason that the language focus group papers of NCF 2005, both for English and Hindi, have focused on using both the children's own language and culture as classroom resources. However, concrete programs in different language contexts are not available.

This project is designed to address this issue in the urban context, where a lot of migration of the deprived takes place and creates a genuinely multilingual, multicultural context. We have begun work in about six sites with varying socio cultural and linguistic backgrounds of participating children and teachers. This program is an action research program from which learning for incorporation into policy and dissemination are to be drawn. This requires not only work on the field sites but also continuous reading and reflection and application into work and reflective documentation. The academic areas needed to be tapped into are linguistics, sociolinguistics, language acquisition in different languages, reading and writing development, socio cultural aspects, literature etc. The task is indeed multipronged and challenging and requires a gestation period.

The plan is to formulate an approach for multilingual education and work on materials and pedagogy in community centres, established around the school sites that we have selected.

summary and update

SUMMARY AND UPDATE ON THE YEAR'S WORK (April 2013 – March 2014)

The selection of schools and sites was finalized and broad profiling of their teachers and students done. The following schools and sites were selected:

Habibia: Government Higher Secondary School - Co-ed, situated near the station within the Muslim dominant, gas affected area. An old Bhopal government school (primarily Hindi – urduised variety, some Bundeli, Chhattisgarhi)

SevenHills School: A private school that caters to a basti with Marathi, Chhattisgarhi, Nepali etc.

Aaranya: A pardhi (pardhis are considered criminal tribes – notified – denotified) tribal hostel.

Raja Bhoj: A government coed school where the pardhi students are enrolled and there are Chhattisgarhi, bundeli and Bhojpuri speaking children too..

Maharani Lakshmi Bai School: A girls only government school in the BHEL township with Bihari (they call it this), Bagheli and Marathi.

OASIS: Museum School for underprivileged children from different bastis with different language backgrounds.

A **2 day capacity building workshop (4, 5, October 2013)** was organized (September 30 – October 6, 2013) which focused on Phonetics and Phonemes specifically and on some

strategies of how to collect linguistic data on field was also discussed.

Preparation for intensive data collection and School Visits, School profile was worked out and school visits started in December. Continuous school visits were done by the team in all the sites and student's profiles and language profiles were prepared by the team. There has been a lot of disturbance in school visit plans because of winter break and teachers were also pulled out of schools for examination duties and election duties. In government schools primary classes were not held because the rooms were occupied for elections.

Language-based activities in classrooms were done to identify presence of languages other than Hindi. The main languages found in different schools are nimadi, bagheli, bundeli, pardhi, gondi, malwi from Madhya Pradesh and Languages from other states include chattisgarhi, Bhojpuri, Marathi, Gujarati, Marwadi, Odiya and Tamil.

Selection of good literature for children from different publishers for using in the classroom and also for translations.

Recce of communities around school to develop resource centers and work with parents and surroundings of students.

common observations

Common observations about schools and the Program

We have collected basic school information in all the sites. Each classroom has a number of languages but they are not utilized as resource. No specific pedagogy apart from reading the textbook is employed in the schools for language teaching. OASIS is making some effort in working on different pedagogy as the teachers are open to learn and have undergone one round of training from Eklavya. Some of the active teachers have been identified in all the locations. These teachers are

not using very different pedagogy but are open to new ideas and make extra effort. Some of the teachers who are ready to do something new and different in their classes are also very hesitant in doing anything because they are not supported by the Head Master/Mistress.

Teacher's participation in the process has not been much in government schools but other locations like Oasis and Seven Hills we have been able to engage with teachers.

reading and discussion

The group has collectively done some readings also in last 3-4 months and discussions have happened around it.

The team has done following readings till now:

- NCF 2005 - Position paper on Indian Languages
- What is Language?
- When a school Principal does not believe in the impossible:

from multilingual explorations to system-wide assessment by Kathleen Heugh.

- New ways of Learning Old rules by Ramakant Agnihotri.
- Hindi - By Ramakant (1-5 chapters)

collection of local resources

Some secondary resources have been collected and some Hindi books and stories have been translated in classroom. Such as;

- Pardhi: 4 short stories.
- Marathi: 2 Books and 1 Poem.
- Bhojpuri: 3 books

Completion of first draft of English Beginners' module

The module being developed for adult learners (primary school teachers) of English was reviewed by Dr. AL Khanna in a three day workshop at Bhopal in April. One

batch of 4-5 students which had been continuing from the Oasis animators, continued for two months in the July August stint. After November, work on the English module was suspended till the team got to speed.

children's profile

In all the sites we are working with the underprivileged children but one of the most interesting communities is Pardhi community. Pardhi community is one of the de-notified nomadic tribe which was notified as criminal tribes in Criminal Tribes Act (1871, 1911, amended in 1924). And now according to new amendment Bail Pardhis are in general category because of which they cannot avail the reservations which are assigned for Schedule Tribes. These children come from different parts of Madhya Pradesh and speak Pardhi which is close to Gujarati. They are doubly marginalized in the classroom because of their language and also because of social stigma that is attached to them because of the criminal tag as they are branded by law as criminals.

Another site around MLB school has interesting composition as most of the migrants in this community come from different states (Bihar, Eastern U.P, Tamil Nadu) which makes the intervention all the more difficult because languages are very different from each other viz. from Indo-Aryan and Dravidian linguistic families. Children do speak their own languages at home but are very hesitant to do that in schools as they are identified as Biharis which is a negative tag for the child.

Even the exploratory processes that have given space to children's own languages have brought about a marked change in the participation of children. However, questions on the part of the teachers have also started coming in where they are uncomfortable with the different languages being brought in. We will be taking up these issues in the next phase.

next year's plan

Community centres: Looking at our experience in schools, we feel that the time available for language and multilingual processes would be very limited. Also the involvement of parents and community is very important to develop language abilities with the community's repertoire. Hence we are preparing to start community centres in each of the vicinities.

Summer camps – May - June 2014 There will be 4 one-month long children's camps based on language activities in four different sites. The venues of the camps will be finalized with an aim to convert them into resource centers to work in the communities in the long run. The camps will also act as an orientation and training program to the newly-recruited team members.

Baseline - As the new academic session begins, primary and pre-primary students will be engaged in activities for doing a baseline.

Resource collection – Variety of resources will be collected during and after the summer camp from the communities, different regional books and resource persons.

Development of the curriculum and pedagogy program – With the help of background readings, resources collected and other materials, a tentative curriculum plan and pedagogy will be developed for the community centres and the schools and reviewed periodically with the advisory group. A framework of documentation will also be developed with the advisory group and regular documentation will take place in that framework.

conclusion

The non-existence of a multilingual pedagogy for Indian languages in the Indian context, unavailability of corpuses of language and stages within the target age group in Indian context are some of the hurdles that need to be overcome. We are optimistic that with a new team we will be able to overcome some of these hurdles.

4.2

Language Education Using Multilingual Approach - Muskaan

background

Muskaan, based in Bhopal, has been working in education since 1998. Positioned within specific vulnerable communities, Muskaan's initiatives respond to health, microcredit needs, food entitlements, and domestic violence amongst other area/community-specific issues arising due to gender, class or identity. One of the organization's main efforts has been on providing relevant education opportunities to children of marginalized communities through experimenting in what education should be and what is meaningful for them in its process and the end. Muskaan also works with the public

school system through interventions at training-level and in the schools directly to improve quality of education.

Taking into account the understanding of effective multilingual pedagogy that has emerged over the last two decades and based on Muskaan's own experience of working intensively with specific communities residing in slums in the essentially multilingual context of the city of Bhopal, Muskaan has partnered with Wipro and Eklavya (see previous update) to develop a program for language education using multilingual approach.

highlights

The highlights of the work during this year have been –

- Expansion of multilingual classrooms from 2 centres (Harshwardhan Nagar and BanjariBasti) to 4 places (BaghMughalia and Rajiv Nagar in addition to the previous two). We are initiating multilingual classrooms with the understanding that we are not using any one language for teaching. The classes are infused with the languages known to the kids and the teacher.
- English teaching is being carried out in a multilingual manner, with the support of materials developed in-house;

the content in these materials and discussions is drawn from children's experiences and culture. Some glimpses of the classes are shared here:

In Savita's classroom, the teacher reads out this small text or a statement modulating her voice, body expression and including some phrase or sentence (in Hindi/ Gondi) as a precursor to the English sentences or post expression in English. This is not a translation but a flow of the content. The children add to the content through a discussion on the same theme (word / topic) in their own

language (Gondi / Pardhi / Hindi). The focus word/sentence is written out on the board and a wall poster with children adding to it in different languages. This process is exposing children to more than one new language in a natural way.

Maya, in her class, has asked children to think of what they would like to ask of anyone. The children are encouraged to frame questions in the language they usually speak. So the questions flow in. The questions differ on the complexity in content as well as sentence structure as 'why is Kavita, a 15 year old girl also coming to study amongst us', 'why were you crying on Wednesday', 'how does the police woman feel when her colleagues beat up people?', 'who has not come to class today?'. Writing down the questions on the board in the language they come, the children are facilitated to discover the concept of a 'question-word'. Building on the understanding that each language has a set of question-words, English would also have some words that frame a question. Based on what the children want to ask, she categorizes the questions around specific question words and in English. The class is obviously not completed without actually responding to the students' questions.

- Involving community adults in different processes has been conscious and is showing a positive response.

The poster documenting Pardhi history has been used in community meetings during this year. The content had been put together in consultation with one community and when used in another Pardhi settlement, it generated a lot of discussion and curiosity in how does the 'read' world know so much about us. A copy of the poster was folded and kept in

the community because often people would want to show it to their visitors and relatives coming from the village.

In another area, specific women have become the stars for story-telling in a baalmela. Rooprani acted out a folktale of how a woman got caught with two monkeys demanding equal portions of three sugarcanes from her. They would not let her break the third cane but still wanted equal portions. Children and youth circle her waiting for the climax in how will the problem be resolved.

The newsletter (discussed below) was read out in different bastis. KochaiAaji in Ganga Nagar basti was quite shaken up to hear about the struggles of contractual labour in automobile industry and wanted to support their struggle in some way. A rape survivor's article publicly speaking about the crime inflicted on her generated discussions on the whole conspiracy to see it as a matter of shame for the woman.

- During the year, we have tried to document the processes in the classrooms and the interactions and responses from the children and parents while using their first language in classrooms. While this area needs further strengthening, some insights are being consolidated.

Neha, a 12 year old girl does not come to the learning centre regularly as she has household work responsibilities and also goes out to earn through

waste-picking. Not having sat in the classes, she is restless whenever she comes as she is not used to mentally concentrating or working around literacy. When Rekha, her teacher, asked her to tell her a story which she would write down using Devnagri script, she took a while to say out an incident from her life when her mother sold satin threads and gave her money to save for the food. Neha and her friends, Sukanya and Rahulya asked Rekha to read out what she had written. When Rekha read it out, they were excited that it was just the way Neha had earlier narrated it. It seemed that it was the first sense of building an understanding of the reading action, realizing that yes, what is said can really be written and that every other time when someone 'reads,' she does not speak from her mind but 'reads.' Since then, Neha keeps coming back with new stories and anecdotes and asks her teacher to write them out for her.

As Rekha herself is not a speaker of Pardhi, she has to depend on the children to prepare materials and note anything in this language. There is thus a reversal of roles and the children have to 'teach' her to make sure she gets it right. This has led to children feeling more important and needed in the classrooms. Many a times, the children have to speak clearly, stressing on the syllable correctly so that the teacher does not get it wrong in writing. There have also been occasions when the children need to discuss to suggest what word would be appropriate. This implies constructive discussions within the children, as they try to capture the nuances of their own language, trying to explain why this word and not the other.

- Stories have been continuously collected from the communities through interactions with children and elders. While some are anecdotes, some fall in the category of folktales. Two stories reflecting the Pardhis ease and relationship with animals have been developed as single booklets and are ready for print. There are other stories that are in the process as being edited or given for illustration.

We also took out two newsletters bringing forth articles in a language comfortable for neo-literates and covering information and news of people's issues and struggles based on gender, caste and class so that there is a flow of information to the marginalized communities. We also included a story from available subaltern literature. This was prepared in Hindi and Gondi.

- The program team participated in two national seminars on multilingual education to present experiences and learnings of the multilingual education efforts. National Multilingual Education Resource Centre, Zakir Husain Center for Educational Studies, JNU had organized a seminar to enhance critical understanding of the role of children's languages in making school education equally accessible to all children in India. The second conference was called by ICICI Foundation to promote multilingual education in Chhatisgarh schools. Called in collaboration with the SCERT there, the seminar put forth different ongoing experiments to make a case for MLE.

planning for the next year

- Promoting children's expression in writing, story-telling, theatre through periodic workshops and events.
- Classroom based documentation to be enhanced to be able to draw learning for a larger audience from the efforts.
- We plan to use this opportunity of multilingualism to enhance children's learning by analyzing and deciphering the syntax of their own language to and use this concept in the learning of the second or third language. This will thus be done in two steps.
- Books, worksheets and materials in context of the communities would be generated for a) use in classrooms for enhancing literacy and b) documenting people's histories and lives.
- Newsletters in Hindi and Gondi would be developed quarterly for enhancing access to information around issues of equity and justice.



SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT & AFFECT IN EDUCATION

introduction

Our school education reform work has significantly focused on bringing about changes in the school environment, be it making the environment more safe and friendly for the child, bringing about a sense of responsibility in the child for the matters at school etc. Our concerns on this span a wide array of issues:

"The most important issue is that of the freedom that the school system provides to all stakeholders.

- *How much free time does a child get to play, read or just "be" within our education system? How often does the child choose what she should learn or do and the pace of learning? ...*
- *How much freedom does the teacher have in shaping the curriculum, teaching approach and assessment?"*

"Do democratic values like the children engaging in open dialogue on some topic happen often enough in the school? Is it integral to the environment of the school?"

Equally important is the area of affective education. This covers a wide range of elements that are different from the subjects like science and mathematics: attitudes, beliefs, values, feelings, emotions, interpersonal relations etc. There are many ways in which such areas can be dealt with and we are currently working on two different approaches. The Teacher Foundation is working on a research project that draws on existing literature/work in this area and attempts to arrive at a framework and learning standards in this area. In a radically different approach, there is also work going on which draws on the Kabir project (a project to document mystic poets and poetry) and create resources for teachers and schools to bring the richness of this mystic poet to the classroom.

We find school environment and affective education to be closely tied to each other much more than any other specific subject. This is the reason to have a combined theme for these two areas.

5.1

Learning with Kabir The Kabir Project

background

The Kabir Project team continues to focus its efforts entirely on the hugely ambitious online webduniya dedicated to mystic poetry and music, called AjabShahar. The project continues to take the energies of the entire team, and struggles with coding and web development remain.

While editing the core content of the archive has progressed in great measure, the commensurate pace on coding the site is not happening. The Trivandrum-based web firm has been slow in their work pace and we at the Kabir Project are now considering canvassing for another web firm to handle this project.

Meanwhile, the team has been working steadily at editing, translating and finalizing the content for the web upload in

anticipation of the same. We also took the strategic decision this month, of not waiting till the site is coded and ready, but creating an AjabShahar YouTube channel with a tie up with OKListen for digital pay-and-download facility for song tracks, and to begin uploading our content on YouTube right away. Our original conception was to launch all our edited video material along with the website, which would provide a lot of written content, photo stories, links and additional materials to contextualize the videos. However now we feel that at least the process of sharing core edited and sub-titled video content should begin, so that our labor over the last several years, begins to see the light of day, and starts getting shared with our audiences. This content consists of 450 song tracks and about 150 reflections.

ajab classroom

AJAB CLASSROOM (Section of AjabShahar web archive) The reflections under edit include interviews and documentation of presentations by teachers, educators exploring thoughts on pedagogy and the challenges of taking mystic wisdom into classrooms, such as Vishakha Chanchani's presentation of her work at the Learning with Kabir workshop in May 2011, Jyoti Sahi's presentation of visual motifs in Kabir's poetry and children's intuitive grasp of these ideas, Linda Hess's presentation on ideas for educators from the vibrant oral living traditions of Kabir, in a workshop organized by Nirantar in Bangalore in 2010, and

the Valley School play put up by children inspired by Ulatbansi, facilitated by Vishakha in partnership with other teachers.

The clay-workshop conducted in a government school in Malwa, by Vishakha in partnership with Eklavya and folk singers Kaluram and Narayanji in 2010 – the materials of this experience are currently being put into a web story narrative format, richly illustrated with photos, videos, activities and impressions. This would be shared in Ajab Classroom.

books

We have made beautiful progress meanwhile on the creation of the children's book based around a Kabir song, which tells the story of a brave parrot who puts out a forest fire titled One Tree, One Parrot/ EkPed, EkTotaa (originally titled 'Totanaama' in our proposal). This book is a result of the exchange between Vishakha Chanchani and the children of HBP School in Bangalore where they produced an original script, picture scroll and dance-drama inspired by this story. Smriti Chanchani has adapted the Hindi script written by Vishakha into English, and worked with the children's illustrations to tell the story in this book. The process of the workshop, 'The Story behind the Story' which appears at

the end of the book has been edited and also translated into Hindi.

We've also held a meeting with Ms. Geeta Dharmarajan of Katha Books to explore the possibility of this being published by Katha, and she has expressed keen interest.

The original books proposed by us around the ulatbansi theme called "Laawaris Topi" and the idea of impermanence called "Lapataa Patte" are under review by our team. Today, we feel less confident of the visual materials/illustrations that accompany these ideas,

to create independent stand-alone books. We feel more confident of uploading these poems and illustrations along with other materials into the Ajab Classroom section sharing experiments by educators/artists with mystic poetry. Similarly, the experiences that would have been put into the Resource Book written by Vishakha, we are crafting into stories/narratives for sharing online.

However, we have developed a new book idea for children, and are taking this forward with new creative energies infused in the team by writer Vipul Rikhi. The basic idea of this book is to write and illustrate children's stories, fabulous and magical, which take off from the complex ideas in the poetry of Kabir and other bhakti poets. There would possibly

be 5 stories, with about 10 song texts and translations (to which the stories refer), and beautifully rendered illustrations. 5 stories have already been written in their first draft stage. These have been circulated amongst some illustrators to get them on board to collaborate on this book. We would also be doing some story telling with these stories in some groups of school children, to get a sense of their reception amongst children, and have discussed this with Creative School in Bangalore.

The strength of both these books is that though they are being developed keeping a children's readership in mind, we feel that they can be read and enjoyed equally by adults too.

new collaboration

We have been approached by Katha in New Delhi to provide video content for a set of DVD materials being produced by them in collaboration with Encyclopaedia Britannica for use in the curriculum of Indian schools. In the section on music, we would be curating a set of songs from the oral traditions (representing as much diversity as possible featuring singers from Malwa, Rajasthan, Kutch

and Baul tradition from Bengal) and developing simple write ups to contextualize the poetry and songs from the oral traditions.

In the future, we may also collaborate with their teachers, to help them develop a curriculum that works with bhakti, Sufi and Baul poetry and songs.

future work plan

We will work in earnest to complete the following activities, aiming for a closure by March 2015, and during these 10 months work on the following:

1. Finalizing EkPedEkTotaa and finding a publisher for the same
2. Finishing video edits of reflections on education/Valley school play
3. Crafting narratives bringing together text, photo and video to share learning experiences & school experiments, and organizing the materials gathered for BoondSamoonD, UlatPulat and GhatGhat into shareable stories.
4. Finding a new web development partner to deliver the website (this may not finish by March, and seems difficult to predict as of now)
5. Developing the children's book of fables inspired by mystic poetry written by Vipul Rikhi, getting illustrators on board and readying that for publishing.
6. Taking forward the new collaboration with Katha, developing new materials for school curriculums through interaction with their teachers, and crafting content and materials for them from our resources.

5.2

Standards for Social & Emotional Learning The Teacher Foundation

background

The Standards for Social and Emotional Learning (SSEL) study is a 2.5 year long exploratory one, looking at the field of social and emotional learning in Indian schools and its global prevalence. The study focuses on developing age relevant indicators which would guide practitioners in ways to provide opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional learning.

objectives

- To identify the key Social-Emotional competencies (based on literature and field study) that need to be developed in each child
- To develop SEL outcomes/indicators for these competencies across age groups
- To assess the understanding of stakeholders from different schools in India on age appropriate social emotional development
- To establish a SEL framework that will enable the teachers to facilitate the Social and Emotional Learning in students across grades.

expected outcomes

- A comprehensive literature review and research report on existing understanding of the affective domain in schools
- A set of **Guidelines** that describe the context in which SEL can take place successfully in a school (eg: having a caring school and classroom environment, positive teacher-student interactions etc)
- A comprehensive **Indian SEL Framework** comprising age relevant indicators for facilitating SEL amongst Indian children
- A **Compendium of Best Practices** that are currently being implemented by different schools in order to facilitate social and emotional learning among their students.

outline

An outline of the work carried out so far

I. Compilation of the Literature Study. It includes:

- An understanding and definition of the affective domain, relevance of social and emotional learning as mentioned in our National Documents.
- Definition of learning standards and their relevance in schools.
- Theoretical underpinnings of SEL –Different theories in the areas of cognition, personality, intelligence, metacognition and learning
- Existing models and frameworks for SEL - Nationally and Internationally
- What TTF therefore attempts to develop through a research based approach

II. Indian Framework Study – Phase 1 – Analysis and Findings

Early last year, Phase 1 of the Indian Framework Study was launched to understand the Indian perspective of SEL as the literature search did not reveal any formal studies on learning standards for social emotional development done so far in the Indian context. The study looked at gathering inputs from 2 respondent groups: specialists (psychologists, child development specialists and school counselors) and school practitioners (teachers) on their perspectives regarding

the age-wise prevalence of certain social and emotional behaviors in children. Approximately 200 respondents (teachers + specialists) participated in the study from different locations in the country.

2 questionnaires were used for the study –

- **Questionnaire A (Milestones)** examined the ages at which certain social and emotional behaviors begin to naturally appear in a child.
- **Questionnaire B (Learning Standards)** examined the ages at which certain social and emotional skills could be developed as part of a SEL curriculum. The premise here being that learning standards for any competency can be implemented only after the corresponding milestones has been achieved.

Analysis

Analysis of Questionnaire A& B involved mapping the results on to each other in order to ascertain when children are developmentally mature to learn different social and emotional skills.

Findings

Results from Phase 1 indicated the ages at which specific social emotional learning would take place amongst

children in the Indian context. These findings would feed into modification of the framework and tools for Phase 2 which will then be taken subsequently across the schools for further inputs.

III. Indian Framework Study – Phase 2

1. Development of Tools

The next step was to develop the tools for the larger study, Phase 2. This involved validating the constructs developed for the study :

Awareness: Current knowledge of teachers about social and emotional skills. This construct gives information on current levels of understanding amongst teachers and hence tells us how ready they are for a framework.

SEL framework: Revision of the existing framework based on prevalent behavioral issues within the schools and contextual adaptation of the age bands based on the development of an average healthy child as observed by teachers.

Practices: Current practices adopted by schools to develop and assess Social and Emotional skills in children. This will contribute towards developing a compendium of best practices in SEL across schools.

This would primarily be gathered through secondary research and inputs from schools as well.

Validation of the Constructs: The constructs and their sub constructs were sent out to a group of experts in the field of psychology and child development to validate on the parameters of operationalization, relevance to the objectives of the study and contributing towards achievement of one or more outcomes of the study. Similarly line items to be used in one of the tools that focus on capturing age related patterns in social and emotional learning were also sent out for validation in terms of their clarity (in terms of language, number of ideas expressed per item), cultural bias and comprehensiveness.

Pilot Testing the tools

The tools once developed were piloted out in 3 schools of different categories – Private low, mid and high end schools. Once the respondents (teachers and students) filled up the questionnaires, a set of structured questions were put forth to them in terms of which questions were difficult to understand or answer and why across the different sections of the questionnaire. The feedback received helped refine the tools further.

our way forward

Launch of the study

The field study would focus on gathering inputs from teachers and a section of students from both Private and Government schools in 15 cities across the 5 zones of India – North, South, East, West and North-East. The study will also include government schools from the rural areas (taluks) adjoining each city.

The data would be gathered through:

- A set of questionnaires focusing on the above mentioned aspects which would be administered to a sample of teachers from across grades 1 to 12 in each school. This should take about an hour for them to complete.
- Structured Interviews would be conducted with a small number of teachers, parents and students

Analysis and Findings

The findings from the study would then feed into developing the Indian SEL Framework, the Process guidelines and the Compendium of Best Practices in SEL across schools.

Pilot testing of the Framework

The developed framework would then be piloted out across a selected number of schools from different categories for an academic year. Inputs emerging from the pilot would then feed into revising the final Indian SEL Framework.



6

ORGANIZATION SUPPORT PROGRAMS

introduction

One of the core purposes of Wipro Applying Thought in Schools is to support organizations working in education in building and expanding their capabilities and expertise in different areas within school education – be it curriculum development, pedagogy, content development, teacher training, assessment, advocacy or community/other stakeholder involvement in the school system. Over the years, we have supported a network of organizations engaged in this work.

In the case of established organizations, this has helped them gain new experiences in working with schools or with issues they have not previously engaged in or to improve or build competencies within a team. We have also supported newer organizations doing work aligned to our strategy in establishing themselves in the initial years and gaining field experience. The organization support programs don't always stick to the focus theme areas like ecology or language alone. However, a commitment to the ideas and sensibilities reflected in National Curriculum Framework 2005 is something that we look for in the projects and organizations we work with.

6.1 Vidyabhawan

background

VidyaBhawan Society attempts to promote democratic citizenship and strengthen the possibility of equity in terms of opportunity for those from the weaker sections of the society. The organization aims at providing opportunities that would open new doors and broaden the horizons of the students who come into its care.

The focus of this joint project with WATIS is to further the work of holistic school development. This has various components which include pedagogical transformation, teachers' capacity building, institutional vision building, financial viability and extending the learning beyond VidyaBhawan schools.

The objectives of the project for the period starting from October 2011 to September 2014 are:

- Work with VidyaBhawan Schools in a holistic manner
- Carrying out studies related to issues in language and mathematics education in schools; share the findings of the studies with others engaged in similar work
- Material development and dissemination of the same based on the studies and intervention; using the material in the field not just in Udaipur but in other states where VB is working as well.

objectives

- Include more teachers in leadership roles
- Organization of capacity building workshops for VB teachers
- Compilation of worksheets in Mathematics for primary and upper primary classes.
- Initiating a research study on the conceptual understanding of teachers in Hindi and Mathematics

update

What has happened over the previous year:

Including more teachers in leadership roles

This year we had ten Principal-Teacher forum meetings. Outcomes of these meetings are as follows –

- Preparation of annual plan with action points for upcoming session.
- Continuous sharing and review of progress and steps taken for further work.
- Preparation and presentation of vision plan by the school heads and teachers for the next five years. This includes Vision for the schools, Targets & Activities to achieve it, Budgeting etc.
- Four sub-committees have been set up to ensure increased teacher participation in decision making processes at various levels. These are-
 - » The faculty development committee - It consists of representatives from all VB institutes (one from each). It is meant to explore and plan for all possibilities of competency enhancement of VB staff as per their needs.
 - » The sexual harassment committee - As sexual harassment of woman at workplace (prevention

prohibition and redressal) act 2013 has come into force and this act is also applicable to all education institutions, a sexual harassment committee has been constituted in all institutions of Vidya Bhawan. These committees are supposed to deal with such kind of cases in their respective institutions.

- » Website design committee - It consists of two representatives from all VB institutes. It is meant to develop the website of each institute. The representatives will draft content for their institute and will be responsible for their regular update. The website development is in process.
- » The RTE committee – A seven member committee to deal issues related to RTE has been constituted. It includes four members from the VB schools. The committee went through the RTE document, identified the gaps between policy and implementation and has drafted a letter to VBS with their queries. These queries were communicated to the concerned government officials who are taking appropriate steps.

Capacity building for VB teachers

- A five day comprehensive workshop for the entire VB school staff had been organized from 20-24 May 2013. 53 teachers from all three VB schools participated in the workshop.
- A five day Workshop on reading and writing was organized for the VB school staff. Three follow-up workshops on the same subject have also been organized. Various issues related to reading comprehension were addressed in these workshops and participants were also given feedback on their writings. In addition, 4 teachers from the VB schools also participated, along with the faculty from the STC college, in a workshop on report writing organized on 26 December 2013. Details are as follows-

Workshop on reading and writing	20-24 June 2013	63 teachers (all VB schools)
Follow-up workshop	27-28 July 2013	47 teachers (all VB schools)
Follow-up workshop	31 August 2013	66 teachers (all VB schools)
Follow-up workshop	30 September 2013	51 teachers (all VB schools)

- One day workshop on effective use of library was organized on 8th September 2013, as part of a module being developed by VB for library workers across the country. Two VB teachers participated in this workshop.
- One day workshop for primary mathematics teachers had been organized on 4th September 2013. It focused on analyzing children's error. Teachers from the primary sections of all three VB school participated in it.
- Three teachers & three librarians (One teacher and one librarian from each school) have participated in a six month duration course on capacity building of library educators (developed by joint collaboration of VBERC & SRTT).The course included three contact periods, three assignments and a field project. (from Sep,13 to Feb, 14)
- Half day workshops were organized in all the VB institutions to promote awareness on prevention of sexual harassment of woman at workplace. The details of workshops organized for the VB schools are given:

VidyaBhawan senior secondary school	17 December 2013	39 teachers
VidyaBhawan Public school	19 December 2013	17 teachers
VidyaBhawan Basic school	24 December 2013	22 teachers

Compilation of worksheets in Mathematics and Language for primary and upper primary classes

- Workbooks in Mathematics and Language were developed. (Class 4 and 5 are ready and being used, while class 3 workbook is ready for printing). These are aligned to the syllabus and focus on difficult area for children. The VB schools have decided to use these workbooks as supplementary material along with textbook in the coming session.
- The process of developing EVS worksheets for class 5 is in process. Some (9 out of 22) of the worksheets were first trialed with children and have been finalized.

Initiating a research study on the conceptual understanding of teachers in Hindi and Mathematics

- Piloting of tools has been completed. For piloting, 50 teachers were chosen from govt. and private schools of Udaipur.
- Detailed analysis of the data is in process.

Challenges/learning from the pilot study

- On the basis of piloting it was felt that there is need to make changes in the initial proposal with regard to scope of data collection and also in the methodology.
- In the initial proposal, the sample was divided subject wise (Language and mathematics). But during work it was found that though the available document (RTE, 2009) advocates subject specific teachers in Upper primary classes but the scenario is quite different. It is assumed that teachers of elementary level can teach all subjects and in most schools the same teacher is teaching both subjects. Accordingly changes were made in the strategy and instead of collecting separate data for mathematics and language both the subjects have been clubbed.
- On the basis of preliminary discussion, some of questions will be changed in order to get more specific details of teacher's understanding.

what is planned for the next year

- Organization of monthly principal- teacher forum meetings
- A comprehensive workshop (10 days) for school teachers is to be organized during 20-30th May 2014. Module design for the same is in process.
- Workbooks for class three are ready for both the subjects and will be sent for printing. For remaining classes the process of identifying and developing worksheet is in pipeline. For these classes selected worksheets are clubbed together for use according to the need and level of children.
- Resource compendium for teachers – Selection of appropriate readings is in process. It is also planned to document the understanding and experiences of working with teachers. (drafts are ready need to be organized)
- To complete the study and submit report before the current phase ends.

6.2

Education in Dil Se Homes Centre for Equity Studies

background

Dil Se has four homes in Delhi where about 320 former street children are being cared for to re-build their lives. The homes or Sneh Ghars are non-custodial and voluntary where children are provided comprehensive, long term care. The buildings in which the homes are located are provided by the Department of Education, Government of Delhi under the SSA programme. Dil Se plans and manages the systems and processes of care. The processes are rooted in the principles of democracy, secularism, child participation,

empathy and respect. Khushi and Kilkari are two homes exclusively for girls, Ummeed is for boys between 6 -18 years and Unnati, which has about 20 children is for older boys. The girls who have crossed 18 years of age in the last couple of years are continuing to stay in the homes. The invaluable support of WATIS ensures critical education arrangements in all the homes as well as overall coordination.

mainstreaming

Almost all children in all the homes are now in mainstream schools. The only children now in bridge classes are the few who are new or who will be admitted in the current year. In the last year, there is a perceptible change in the children's attitude to school going. Earlier it was a struggle to get them started every morning to prepare for going to school and inevitably there were some who evaded going on some pretext or the other. The home coordinators now report that children are getting ready on their own and the attendance has vastly improved.

Children go to a few private schools who have an affinity with the ideology of Dil se – Jamia School, St. Mary's School and Balwant Rai Mehta School – but the numbers are limited. We have consciously admitted most of them into government schools and worked to sensitise the schools to the children and provide strong learning supports to them at the homes in areas where the schools are unable provide such as computers, English and extracurricular activities. The result has been encouraging. The children are able to cope with their studies and feel in control. It shows in their self-confidence and the other strengths follow. The schools are also responding – slowly but steadily.

academic performance

Earlier, the fact that children are able to pass in their classes was a matter of celebration. Now, the children are also aiming to perform better in their studies. All the homes have reported a small number of children who are achieving 70% - 80% and the average performance ranges between 50% - 60%. There is an increased interest in school and in studies and they need much less supervision for preparing for school in the mornings. Several factors have contributed to the changes in attitude and motivation. The desire to be educated is strongly evident to the school personnel which they admit. The children learn dance and music in their extra-curricular activities in the homes and seem to have an exceptional flair for these skills. When they display these

talents in schools, they are much appreciated and recognised which raises their self esteem considerably and school is not such an insufferable place anymore!

We are still struggling with some children who are in age-appropriate classes but do not have the required learning levels. The RtE rules requires them to be in the right class. Heads of school are aware of the problem but don't know how to deal with it. We have negotiated for the children to remain admitted in school registers but to remain in the home till their learning levels are brought up. It's an informal agreement but works for all.

learning enhancement

The school learning of children is enhanced through several home-based initiatives – computer skills, library-based activities, English proficiency. We have an extremely committed partner who has established Aseem's Library in all three homes with a dedicated librarian and also facilitated the donation of a set of computers for the homes. Children are trained to use the computers and work on them and the schedule ensures time for each child. The libraries and the activities therein have been instrumental in increasing children's interest in reading and story-telling/listening/story-writing, puzzles, games, and in general knowledge

through quiz competitions which impact overall learning and awareness. Project-based learning suiting different learning levels has been taken up in all three homes to develop data-gathering, critical analysis and presentation skills. Children engage in facilitated film viewing which involves discussions centred on issues or concerns raised in the storyline of the film and a guided process of critical reflection with the intention of inculcating values. The children are naturally smart and are now responding positively to structured, formal learning processes.

children with special needs

Six girls with learning disabilities from Kilkari home are going to study at Amar Jyoti School at Karkarduma. All the girls are in the Non formal Education (NFE) system. All the girls engage in the vocational classes like beauty culture, art and craft and jewellery making and classical dance classes.

Vocational classes have been given according to child's interest. One girl has shown exceptional talent in races and has won medals in state championships in Rajasthan.

extracurricular activities

Dance, music, theatre, art/craft and sports are pursued by the children in all the homes through resource persons. The children have a natural inclination in these areas and participate with enthusiasm. The boys from Ummeed are regularly called upon to perform in social forums and earn high appreciation. Apart from these activities, organisations like Pravah, Shiksharth and VishwaYuvak Kendra and corporates like Deloitte and Bain & Co. undertake

programmes on leadership and sensitisation to social issues for the children. Deloitte undertook painting of the premises in which the children also participated. All important days throughout the year are observed and the children are explained the significance of the day – Earth Day, Women's Day, Environment Day etc. All festivals and occasions of achievements are celebrated in the homes.

community participation

Persistent efforts to initiate and improve community relationships have slowly resulted in increased participation. The SHO of the Mehrauli Police Station regularly visits Ummeed with his family, provides help and attends

celebrations in the home. In Khushi, the library has become a centre of attraction for the children in the neighbourhood and they come in twice a week to read and issue books.

transition planning

The homes have been functioning since 2005-06 and children who were 10 -14 years old at that time have now become adults. As per the rules of the JJ Board and CWC guidelines the older boys have been shifted into separate premises. They are being prepared to undergo skill development and take up employment. An integrated

preparation programme is being developed. Discussions have been initiated with Ambedkar University to evolve a process of young adults helping each other to understand society and negotiate a smooth social transition to responsible adulthood.

life skills programme

A comprehensive life skills programme to meet the needs of children in the homes has been developed in-house under the guidance of a well-known social activist. The Programme is being rolled out in all the 45 homes running in six cities across six states. The process of orientation to the programme involves a 10-day training conducted

in two sessions of five days each, followed by two days for implementation support and feedback on the relevance and usability of the programme. At the end of the trainings the life skills modules will be refined as per feedback received.

education management

The education processes in the homes are planned and managed by a core team comprising of the three home coordinators, two education consultants and a full time non-academic coordinator. This core team ensures the Individual Education Plan of each child, teacher training and support, planning and executing all the learning programmes for

children such as debates, talks, film screening and discussion, project based learning, Quiz, talks by eminent personalities. The teachers participated in a 5-day training programme conducted by SCERT-Delhi on transacting the bridge course.

The non-academic coordinator manages all SSA documents, the extracurricular activities, coordinates the life skills implementation dialogue, admission processes and maintains relationships with the schools. The team maintains extensive networks of resource persons and agencies that are called upon to provide a variety of expertise for different needs.

The implementation team in each home comprises of two permanent, full time teachers and a panel of part time

teachers for specific needs such as subject teachers for upper primary and secondary classes. In fact there is one teacher in each home who has been with Dil se since its inception. The librarians and computer managers provide invaluable support to the processes. We also have a rich volunteer base of short term and long term volunteers who have been well-oriented and are crucial for many activities and education support.

future focus

The approach and the basic structure seems to be working but we need to concentrate on improving the quality of education in all its aspects and see its impact in the quality of life that children experience.

6.3

Teacher Empowerment Programme Digantar

background

“Teacher Empowerment Program, Phagi” is a research program in primary education initiated by ‘Digantar’ from April 2013. This program is conceptualized as a participatory action research (PAR) which calls for voluntary participation of primary teachers of the government schools of Phagi block of Jaipur district. This program is conceptualized to

explore the potential of teaching portfolio and peer dialogue to promote reflective practices and thereby empower the teachers. The program intends to study how teacher portfolio writing and critical peer dialogue among teachers help in sustaining and improving an endogenous process of reflective practice.

plans for 2013-2014

Major Tasks planned for the Year 2013-14

As the research is visualized to be conducted over a period of three years from 2013 to 2016; a detailed yearly plan was made with major tasks to be accomplished during the first year so as to move towards achieving the objectives of the study, and consequently efforts were made in that direction.

- Negotiation with state level education officials to get permission to execute the program for three consecutive years from 2013 to 2016.
- Selection of the team members
- Induction program for newly recruited team
- Establishing and setting the office at Phagi
- Negotiations and rapport building at Block level with education officials
- To develop criteria for selection of participant teachers
- School visits for the selection of participant teachers
- Research Proposal development
- Development of portfolio format
- Expert Committee Meeting
- First large group meeting with teachers
- Establishing a resource centre (library) at TEP office
- Developing a format of the biannual news-letter
- Monthly meetings with teachers including all the required steps and processes
- Analysing the data and preparation for follow up meetings
- Publishing 1st issue of the News-letter
- Preparing annual report of the Program

progress of the program

The program has completed its one year journey from April 2013 to March 2014. During this period significant time and energy was devoted to negotiating with the education system, both at the state and block level on the one hand; and setting the programme on ground with a team well-equipped and motivated to take the task forward on the other. This was followed by sharing with teachers on the one hand and getting ready with proposal and other required documents on the other.

Initial two months (April and May 2013) were invested to negotiate at state level education system which includes more than one meeting with SSA Commissioner and Joint Director, Pedagogy of Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education (RCEE). These meetings were meant to share the program – its nature and implications, to get the required permission and support at block level to work with primary teachers for three consecutive years. A presentation was made to share the program and its details with the RCEE commissioner and the proposal was sent to the commissioner RCEE for a formal approval of the state which was finally obtained.

During the same period the negotiations at block level was also taking place with an intention to pave the way for smooth running of the program. May and first week of June was dedicated to the selection of the team which resulted

in the recruitment of all the four members (one project co-ordinator/senior researcher, two associate researchers and one office assistant) for TEP Phagi.

Induction program was planned for recruited members to get an understanding about the program and its conceptualization and meanwhile also help them to get an idea of responsibilities and expectations for such research. This rigorous induction program started from June 18th and continued till July 29th 2013. The induction was visualized in two phases, firstly to understand the educational research, its various dimensions, different research methods, ethical issues, to understand the nitty-gritty desired to develop a research proposal and citing resources in any such proposal; another phase was related with the core idea of TEP to explore the potential of portfolio writing and peer group dialogue to help teachers to evolve as reflective practitioners. During the period of induction team members were expected to read one book on educational research, another on research methodologies and research proposal and third on citing resources. One binder of relevant articles and papers was also used to help develop understanding about the core of the program which covered readings on reflection, essentials for reflective practice and portfolio writing. During the process two fellows from TARU and two senior

members joined the hand together with Phagi team and this orientation emerged as a process of collaborative learning combined with reading, sharing, discussion, individual and group presentations which finally ended up with the 1st draft of research proposal and its presentation.

August and September were occupied by the tasks related to establishing the programme office at Phagi, including finalizing the place, minor renovations according to the need, purchasing and arranging the required equipments for the office. Simultaneously rapport building with block level education officials was also in progress. Meeting with BEEO and BRP, sharing the copy of order issued by RCEE and presentation about the program were part of the process. During the period TEP team discussed and developed plan for coming months, which was also shared with TARU members in a full day meeting at TEP. September was devoted to scavenging piles of documents from BEEO office with details

of primary schools at block and different nodals and teachers appointed in those schools. This information was necessary to develop criteria for selection of participant teachers and planning the school visits. During the same period the second draft of the research proposal was also prepared and shared within the team and with TARU members.

School visits were planned for October which actually started from October 9 and continued till October 25 in which the team members visited schools and interacted with the primary teachers of the block. The purpose of school visits was to share and communicate the basic idea of the program to the teachers and seek their voluntary participation. Visits were regularly followed by routine sharing among the team members, writing memos and preparing individual reports of the school visits.

School visits at a glance	
Total Nodals in Phagi block	31
Number of Nodals visited	31
Primary schools in Phagi block	167
Total number of schools visited	84
Number of teachers showed interest to participate	46
Number of female teachers	18
Number of male teachers	28

As we were determined to get participation from all 31 nodals to ensure the geographical representation of the entire Phagi block, we planned for the 2nd phase of school visits. There were 8 nodals out of the 31 where we needed to explore the possibility of teacher participation again. We went through the 2nd Phase of School Visits from November 22 to December 10, 2013. The processes like sharing experiences, memo writing and preparing individual report were followed as was done in the 1st phase.

A consolidated report of school visits with all the details was prepared and shared with TARU members during the period. The report included the details of both the rounds. We had to put some efforts again in rapport building with the new BEEO as the BEEO of the block got transferred, and shared with him the nature and progress of the programme. TEP team read articles/papers on reflection in connection with developing our proposal further in the light of suggestions received. Efforts were made to prepare and finalise a list of books, magazines and news-letter for the planned TEP resource centre and process of placing orders for books, magazines and news-letters were initiated during December. The team also planned for its own capacity building and started presentations in the team on their respective areas of interest, which resulted in 11 presentations during the period between December-February. Throughout this period the team was reading and revising drafts of the proposal continually.

February was the month of preparation for Expert Committee Meeting (ECM) with all the stakeholders. TEP team with three TARU members sat together to plan and discuss for

ECM and its arrangements including negotiation for dates with all the three members of expert committee, inviting all stakeholders from state to block level, preparing presentation and sharing project and research proposal with all in advance. A representative of the TEP team also participated in the Partners' Forum 2013 organised by WATIS in Bangalore.

As ECM was planned for 5th March, the first few days went into preparing for the meeting and after the ECM considering and discussing the comments and suggestions to decide upon the necessary changes to be made in the proposal and planning for large group meeting with teachers of the block. ECM was held on March 5th with participation and representation of all the stakeholders - three members of EC (Professor Rohit Dhankar, Professor Manish Jain and Ms. Geeta Menon); representative of WATIS; ADEO, Jaipur; Faculty, DIET Goner; BEEO, Phagi; BRPs Phagi; Director, Digantar; TEP team and members of TARU, Digantar. The meeting was an endeavor to share the final draft of the research proposal with all and seeking their suggestions/comments on the conceptual and practical aspects of it to improve and finalize the draft proposal that was shared with all well before the meeting. The ECM served its purpose as we received important suggestions on the draft proposal from EC members and other participants on its conceptual framework, support from system, research question and practical issues which need to be considered for smooth running of the program. Suggestions and feedback were discussed among the team members in which three members from TARU also participated on 8th of March with an intention to plan further steps accordingly, which included

planning for large group meeting after finalizing the date at Block level, incorporating the comments and finalizing the research proposal and preparation for the coming meeting, etc. Rest of the month saw efforts towards giving a final shape

to the TEP resource center as books were selected and purchased; meanwhile individual reports of the ECM was also prepared by the team. The month being the last one of the financial year significant amount of time went into annual appraisal and other budgetary affairs.

major achievements

- Satisfactory job of liaison with government officials at the state, district and block level.
- Establishment and setting up the office at Phagi.
- Visiting 89 primary schools out of a total of 167 schools covering all the 31 nodals of the block and getting the desired number of participants.
- Developing and sharing the research proposal with the expert committee and other stakeholders.
- Documenting the experiences of school visit on regular basis in the shape of individual memos and preparing a consolidated report of the same.
- Establishing a resource center for teachers at Phagi office.

challenges/ limitations

- Team constitution itself proved to be a difficult task as it required finding suitable members with not only an understanding of school education and research methodology, but also willing to stay and work in Phagi with its limitations.
- Induction Program planned for new team was crucial as it not only provided opportunity to understand the

idea behind the research, but also helped in developing a common understanding about educational research, reflection, portfolio writing and peer dialogue. The process also helped the team to understand each other and the team dynamics. The induction programme which was planned to continue for 15 days got stretched to 42 days which delayed the processes of establishing the programme office at Phagi that were to be followed.

- The development of research proposal and getting the suggestions and comments from all the stakeholders as well as the expert committee was one of the important task for grounding the program as while its conceptual framework will anchor the programme throughout and practicality of the processes and their compatibility to the system will ensure its smooth functioning. We started our efforts towards proposal development during the induction phase but the finalization of the proposal took more time than we had expected.
- School visits were planned to make primary teachers familiar with the program, participatory action research, expectation from them and how the program visualizes portfolio writing and peer dialogue as mechanisms to nurture and promote collaborative learning and reflection. Meeting with teachers to ask for their participation for consecutive three years was a real challenge, as there isn't any evident extrinsic reward/benefit which could motivate them to get ready for participating in a program which demands lot of engagement from them. We received a mixed response from teachers: some seemed puzzled, some curious but unwilling, others complained about the last program. Through all this the team kept it's spirit high and was able to get the desired number of teacher volunteers for the program.
- Some primary schools of the Block are engaged in piloting CCE (continuous and comprehensive evaluation) and teachers from those schools were not willing to participate as CCE already demands a lot of documentation. It is a matter of concern for us, as from next year all the schools will be implementing CCE.
- Experiences and learnings of the SSP played important role in the conceptualization of TEP, but teachers in the field are expecting and even demanding for the same kind of support that was provided by SSP instead of launching a research program with an entirely new mechanism. It was difficult for them to realize the difference in the nature of both the program and their execution. We need to be conscious of this desire for on-site support on the part of teachers.
- State assembly elections and preparations for parliamentary elections were two other elements that affected the progress of the programme by making teacher participating difficult as they were appointed BLOs and were assigned other election related duties. We could not have our first large group meeting that was planned for March end as teachers were either busy with elections or with board examination duties.

school visit and some experiences

- We could not meet all the teachers in our 1st visit as some of the teachers were either deputed to BEEEO office/election duty or on leave.
- Acceptance of participation from female teachers was less and most of them showed their unwillingness due to personal reasons.
- Teachers seemed less curious about the research aspect of the program.
- Teachers were ready to participate in meeting but seemed hesitate to express their experiences in a written form.
- Some schools are still single teacher school; on the other hand few schools have more teachers than required.

Plan for 2014-15

Plan for 2014-15 (Yet to be finalized)

- Large Group Meeting with Teachers and other Stakeholders to finalise the 30 participants and share the nature and essential features of the programme.
- Developing a suitable framework for portfolio writing and organizing a workshop for teachers to develop an understanding about PAR, their role, portfolio writing, etc.
- Regular monthly meetings with all the stakeholders including all the required steps and processes. We are planning to organise 6-7 meetings in this year.
- The process of material development will go simultaneously with the regular monthly meetings and suitable materials will be developed by the teachers and the TEP team along with support from TARU as required.
- Expert Committee Meeting to share the progress and challenges in work done so far. We hope to conduct 2 ECMs this year – one in the month of October and the other in the month of March.
- A framework of the news-letter as conceptualized will be developed and it's 1st issue will be published in the month of October.
- The data being collected in the process will be regularly analysed using the criteria to be developed for the purpose and regular feedback will be received on it from selected members of the TARU team.
- Sharing the final Research Proposal with all the stakeholders and the expert committee.

6.4

Bridge Education Project NEEV

background

This project was started in the Bribhum district of West Bengal in the academic session of 2012- 2013. The main rationale was to provide learning support to the children who passed out of the primary school without being adequately enabled to cope up with the academics demands of standard 5. The upper primary schools were unable to take responsibility to remedy this lag in academic learning due to the increase in Pupil Teacher Ratio since the RTE mandated compulsory promotion of all the children into upper primary. NEEV agreed to provide a teacher per 30 children in each of the 10 selected schools so that these children could get extra time and support to fill the gap in their previous learning. NEEV also provided extra learning material which matched the level of the children. The project called Vidyasagar Pathachakra had to be however closed down due to the extreme disturbances in the school session during the Panchayat elections.

update

NEEV now plans to continue the program to enable a smooth transition of the children from primary to upper primary, in 10 model schools of Rajasthan in Jaipur districts. The project will be facilitated on the ground by BODH Vikas samiti which has been working in the same schools for last few years to provide support to implement CCE systematically. A baseline survey of the children is underway to understand the learning gaps among the children who have been enrolled into the upper primary classes in the government schools of Rajasthan. NEEV will subsequently design workbooks for the children and the program will be started in July once the schools reopen after summer break.

6.5

Language Learning Resource Centre Shikshamitra

background

Shikshamitra is an open learning space and a resource center for children, teachers, parents and education practitioners, primarily focusing on the age group of 8 to 15 years. The organization began as a school in 2005, catering to the first generation school goers, and also as a resource center (books, films, teaching-learning material, teacher trainings, and information center). It was an experimental school, trying out different curriculum and a different syllabus for different learners using different methods, instead of one syllabus and the same method for all. In 2011, the school closed down. Thereafter, it took shape of an organization and moved into teacher education, popularizing specific programmes like library, language, mathematics and art; the focus was also on developing teaching-learning materials.

things we want to do and achieve through our programmes

- To address issues of literacy and learning, focusing on classroom practices of reading and writing and basic mathematics.
- To deconstruct the conventional notion of 'reading'; advocating the holistic role in the school curriculum and in education at large.
- Helping teachers look at subjects and textbooks through reading and language instead of treating language learning in isolation, or limiting it to only literature.
- Providing access for teachers to books, material and other pedagogical support.
- This space intends to be a forum for teachers to meet, for a diverse community of teachers to bring their experiences together, which is likely to help them in dealing with their classes.
- The Right to Education Act, 2009, had recommended that libraries are mandatory in every school. At present the libraries (in most cases) are a cupboard, kept under lock and key. A focus of our work would be to help schools set up a library and include its programmes in the classroom.
- To contribute to contemporary Bengali texts through our publication.

things we've done over 2013-14

Teacher Education and trainings

School visits at a glance	Bengali	English	Mathematics	Art	Class Management	Library Orientation
Government	8	20				
Non-govt.	23		13		50	20
Children			70	130		110
Mothers	11		11			

**the figures denote the total number of teachers who have received our training over 2013-14*

Consultation for teachers, parents and other organizations has been a constant outreach support of Shikshamitra. In the last year, many parents came to us for teaching support for their children. Also, consultations with Anjali, a mental health organization, to help women in their government homes spend quality time with themselves. A significant programme was mothers' awareness programme in early childhood education with the Neotiacsr group.

Library

Our library started on a Saturday afternoon of November, 2013. We chose Saturday for the library since it is a half day for the government schools and hence children would be able to come from 2pm to 4pm.

What we have been focusing here:-

- Getting children acquainted with books and to read on their own for at least a brief while.

- Connecting art and stories
- Introducing various expressions of imagination
- Self-discipline

Publication

This year, we have re-told stories in Bangla for children which are in English and other languages. These are primarily for early readers. On the other side, we have Sudeshna's book on equity pedagogy. Our 3 publications of the year are –

- Munia Pakhir Galpo
- Khude Deshlai Kathi
- Banglaye Onyo Mukh, Onyo Chahida

Documentation

- Documenting the interactive programme on Language: Home and School – an in-house discussion on issues of socio and psycho-linguistics related to education has been prepared. This is a documentation of each day's content. It also contains a few reading material.
- Documenting the Basic English Programme
- Shikshamitra's Library: A document on Shikshamitra's library through school and its emergence as an independent unit.

Research study

'Errors' as they call it – looking at children's writings and tracing logic for what is considered 'wrong'. A few districts and ethnic groups across rural and urban Bengal have been identified for the study. This has begun in March, 2014.

New recruitment

- Sajahan, who studied at Shikshamitra School has joined Shikshamitra from November, 2013. He brings to the organization alternative approaches to learning. He is interested in mathematics, language and art and takes a deep ownership towards the library. He is one of the librarians.
- Gopal Mandal joined the Shikshamitra team. He is our mathematics teacher and helps develop materials. He brings to the organization his 18 years of experience in working in primary education.
- Taufique Riyaz, artist from Kala Bhavan, is now a part of Shikshamitra. He is our illustrator.

thoughts and plans for 2014-15

- Consolidating our art training programme
- Continuing with our ongoing work
- Consolidating materials for publication – early readers, documentations, reflections
- Structuring further and taking forward our library

6.6

To Enable Learner-Friendly Education Shiksharth

background

Shiksharth is a registered not-for-profit organisation based in Delhi. Its objective is to further collaborative learning about relevant and appropriate educational practices for children from Nursery to Class XII. The organisation works with four core programmatic areas:

- facilitation of a shared community of educators and institutions to define and examine learner friendly educational practices through professional dialogue and debate
- documentation of context specific voices and experiences of stakeholders with the objective of facilitating deeper engagement with educational leaders
- transaction of modular courses in Educational Leadership to enable development of a cadre of educational leaders committed to sustain learner-friendly practices in educational institutions
- facilitation of learner-friendly practices in government and private schools and educational programmes run by NGOs

the year 2013-14

Shiksharth Collective Series: Research, Advocacy and Dialogue

Shiksharth began its activities and engagement with the public through its flagship advocacy programme, the Shiksharth Collective Series. Following the impetus received from the Shiksharth Collective I in August 2012, Shiksharth facilitated two subsequent Collectives in the year 2013.

The primary objective of the Shiksharth Collective Series is to bring together education leaders from government schools, private schools and educational programmes run by NGOs. The purpose is to draw upon collective wisdom from diverse

backgrounds about relevant educational experiences for children from Nursery to Class XII.

With the range of changes in education because of new players and the Right to Education Act 2010, traditional demarcations between formal and non-formal education are increasingly blurring. Similarly, there is need for learning across educational institutions, whether government, private or NGO led. The purpose of the collaborative dialogue with education leaders from different backgrounds is to work beyond the artificial divides created between institutions and educators working

from government schools, private schools and educational programmes run by NGOs.

As preparation for each Collective, the Shiksharth team has spent considerable time and effort on conducting research amongst the key stakeholders of the education system. Since the first collective, Shiksharth has facilitated research amongst 17 education leaders, 136 high school students and 75 high school teachers. Presently, the research team is triangulating its research with teachers through direct interviews of high school teachers.

Research experiences of the last one year have provided meaningful opportunities for the research team at Shiksharth and participants of the Shiksharth Collective Series to engage

with notions of research design, research relevance and aims of research, particularly 'action-based research'. This has also led the participants of the Shiksharth Collective III to actively engage with and contribute towards the development of investigation tools for the Parents' Interaction Programme.

Shiksharth aims to complete the full cycle of its research amongst the stakeholders of education by also conducting research amongst parents of high school students and education professionals involved with the field of education either as academics and/or in the space of policy and training.

It is envisaged that the findings of the research facilitated by Shiksharth will be put together in the form of a publication for distribution amongst schools (government and private), NGOs and university led educational programmes.

documentation & dissemination

Deliberations during the Shiksharth Collective Series have repeatedly emphasised upon the fact that many educational terms used in everyday language mean different things to different people. Not indicative of plurality of thought, multiple interpretations of key educational terms often results in contradictory educational practices and immense confusion in the way schools are led.

Contradictions exist in the way educators perceive fundamental notions of child-centered education, skills-based education versus constructivist education, formative vs summative evaluation etc.

Naturally, this has implications in the way curricular practices are visualised, the content of teacher training and methods used to evaluate children's progress. Participants of the Shiksharth Collective Series have suggested the need to develop succinct and context specific material to help explain key educational terms. The Shiksharth team began with the task of writing concept notes on key educational terms. Two out of three concept notes are in the final stages of editing before publication. These are: 'What is Learner-Friendly Education?' and 'What is Inclusive Education?'. The third concept note, 'What is Experiential Education' is presently in draft mode.

Research and review of literature for the preparation of the concept notes has led the team to identify relevant readings for uploading on the proposed website. Shiksharth aims to publish these concept notes, along with the resource material, in the proposed publication and the website. Shiksharth is also working to create a website to further public exchange in the space of Education Leadership in the year 2014-15. The team is presently preparing relevant backend material for the website and studying potential interactivity models.

Modular courses on Education Leadership: Collaboration with Ambedkar University

After several months of dialogue with the university, Shiksharth entered into a collaboration with the School of Education Studies at Ambedkar University, Delhi to initiate an elective course on Educational Organisation and Leadership for the M.A. in Education Programme offered by Ambedkar University.

The Shiksharth team, led by Sunil Batra facilitated the course in the fourth semester, from January to April 2014. This course was audited by Amita Kaushik (and partially by Sunita Jain) of Shiksharth wherein she also assisted in the preparation of course material and conducted two classes independently. The intent is to create a cadre of educators who would engage with academic and practitioner-level constructs of Education Leadership.

The School of Educational Studies (SES) at Ambedkar University, Delhi (AUD) is expected to launch a Master's level course in Early Childhood Education in 2014. SES plans to include a modified version of the course on Educational Organisation and Leadership facilitated by Shiksharth for the new M.A. Programme. SES, AUD and Shiksharth are presently in dialogue to visualise the modalities of a proposed Certificate Course in Educational Organisation and Leadership for practicing and aspiring educational leaders working in Delhi with government and private schools, and educational programmes run by NGOs.

Sunil Batra has provided significant time in the year 2013-14 as Mentor for the National Centre for School Leadership (NCSL) initiated by NUEPA under the aegis of the MHRD, Government of India. Sunil played an important role in helping develop the initial design for introduction of the NCSL mandate through state consultations and development of the curricular modules for training in education leadership at the state levels. Sunita Jain and Asmita Bhutani also contributed as members of the National Support Group (NSG) of the NCSL, NUEPA.

Engagement with government run institutions as mentors, advisors and academic trainers has helped consolidate the credibility of Shiksharth as an organisation committed to work in the area of Education Leadership.

Potential Collaborations

Shiksharth is in dialogue with potential collaborators to initiate and consider possibilities of working with a collegium of education leaders on a sustained basis and to facilitate enduring intervention programmes with government and private schools, and educational programmes run by NGOs.

Possibilities of collaboration are being explored with university led programmes, CSR related initiatives and government reform programmes. These possibilities are in the early stages and will require substantial conceptualisation clarity before they are ready to be implemented.

Proposed Plans for the Year 2014-15

Shiksharth visualises the year 2014-15 in three directions – consolidation of research activities; collaboration for field engagement, and convergence of academic and practitioners' experiences.

Consolidation of activities:

Shiksharth aims to close the research loop initiated with the Shiksharth Collective Series with completion of the second level of research with high school teachers, followed by research with parents of high school students, and education leaders (academics and policy level educators).

Following completion of this research loop, Shiksharth will initiate a publication that will make overt linkages between

research findings and the range of questions that have emerged from the research experiences.

Shiksharth will also aim to initiate and manage its website with specific reference to documentation and dialogue in the space of Education Leadership.

Collaboration for field engagement:

Shiksharth aims to work directly with a group of schools and education leaders for sustained dialogue and collaborative learning about relevant educational practices for children from Nursery to Class XII.

Shiksharth is in dialogue with practitioners to develop appropriate models for field related engagement.

Convergence of academic and practitioners' experiences:

The primary objective of Shiksharth is to initiate and facilitate sustained work in the space of Education Leadership to enable relevant educational experiences for children from Nursery to Class XII through advocacy, academic engagement, research, documentation and field engagement.

Shiksharth visualises initiating different platforms for academic training and sharing of practitioners' experiences in collaboration with Ambedkar University in Delhi.



EDUCATION MATERIAL & LITERATURE

introduction

Quality education literature helps create an environment conducive to thinking about good education and the ability to weave better activities in schools around children's books and thus take education beyond just the textbook. Our initiatives in this area have been very diverse like supporting development of a new children's book by Tulika containing mythological stories on the theme of water from around the world or supporting the Good Books Trust to review and publicize good children's books. We had earlier supported publishing of a book ('What did you ask in School today' by Kamala Mukunda) that draws from contemporary literature on child psychology and presents this to practitioners. Work is also on to translate the book into two other languages.

Apart from supporting work on good books, we also support other medium of content for children, parents, educators and researchers in education. We support the educational journal Contemporary Educational Dialogue, a bi-annual publication on various areas related to education. From the last year, as part of our work with Eklavya, we have also started providing partial support to Chakmak, the children's magazine in Hindi brought out by Eklavya.

7.1

goodbooks.in A children's literature review website, GoodBooks Trust

background

Wipro's partner in this initiative, The Goodbooks Trust, has in the past, worked towards increasing the availability of children's books produced in India. Together, Wipro and The Goodbooks Trust have created a website that serves as a database for good children's literature by using the archives procured from The Book Review. TBR is a literary journal that has since the 1970's, published reviews of children's books in its special editions. While these archives serve as the backbone, the site also features reviews of new books being published in the market today.

objectives

The Goodbooks website hopes to fulfill the following purposes:

- Create a space that is a one stop for educators and parents to find good books through the reviews
- Make information about children's books and the issues involved accessible to all interested through articles
- Encourage discussion, debate, and sharing on children's books amongst all those interested- parents, publishers, academicians, writers, illustrators, and anyone else
- Influence the quality of children's books being produced by providing critical feedback and review

current status

Tech issues that were identified were resolved and the site was launched in December 2013 and has since reviewed several new children's books across age groups, genres, and publishers:

- 42 titles in the 3-6 years age group
- 50 titles in the 6-8 age group
- 47 titles in the 8-13 age group
- 8 titles in the 14 plus age group

Publishers have responded well in general and have sent us books for review. New additions to the list of publishers who send us books for review include Tara Books, Duckbill, Happy Squirrel, Ponytale Books, and Snuggle with Picture Books.

The homepage is updated once a week, with a selection of newly uploaded reviews appearing on the homepage slider and chosen pieces from the TBR archives appearing below in the specific locations.

The Goodbooks blog, which features news and events from the world of children's books, has so far covered children's books events like Bookaroo, Junior Writer's Bug, Bookalore, carried interviews with people from the industry, and also book lists that are of relevance.

A new feature on the blog – New on the Rack – carries book details of soon-to-be-released titles from publishers. This helps publishers promote their books before they hit the market and also encourages them to send us review copies.

The site is promoted on Facebook 3-4 times a week. Reviews and blog articles are also shared by the people we interview/ reviewers/ authors/ illustrators/ publishers on social media.

Team

An Assistant Editor, Kavita Velu, has joined the team. A new tech team has been identified and updates are going on to improve site performance.

future plans

- Improve site traffic. Currently, about 600 visitors visit the site every month. Most visitors are from India and are from the 20-30 years demographic.
- Encourage more publishers to send us titles for review, especially for the 14 plus segment in which we don't have many books.
- Introduce new features on site like Reviews of the Month, Rating system, Subscription etc
- Explore collaborations with print media
- Explore possibilities to conduct on ground events like workshops and participate in book/publishing fests
- Explore possibilities of giving awards for Best Book, Best Librarian etc

7.2

Contemporary Education Dialogue Journal Education Dialog Trust (EDT)

the aims & objectives

- To publish our Journal, Contemporary Education Dialogue (CED), for a dialogue among researchers and practitioners to engage with each other's ongoing work so as to promote a critical engagement with issues which are of concern to Education in general and to Indian and South Asia education in particular. The Journal would serve as a space for discussion for groups and individuals to communicate with each other.
- To promote publishable writing and reporting of research and field innovation in education through activities such as workshops, seminars and fellowship and grants for this purpose.
- To engage in any activity that will further the development of the discipline and practice of education.

our activities

During 2013-2014, Contemporary Education Dialogue CED 10(1) and CED 10(2) were successfully published by Sage in the months of January and June, 2013. We received seventeen papers during this period, out of which five were published in the two issues of our journal, eight were rejected, and the rest of them are still under the review process.

During this period, we held our Trust, as well as Editorial meeting, at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, on August 06, 2014. The major points of

discussion and decisions of the meetings are the following: Prof. Rama Kant Agnihotri has been replaced by Prof. Padma M. Sarangapani as President of Education Dialogue Trust (EDT). Prof. Sadhna Saxena continues to be the Managing Trustee of EDT. Prof. Geetha B. Nambissan, as review editor, and Prof. Amman Madan and Prof. Padma M. Sarangapani, as editors, stepped down from the editorial board of the journal. They are now members of our advisory board. Prof. Nagis Panchapakesan will continue to be review editor for

next one year. Prof. Poonam Batra, as editor, will continue till 2015, and Prof. Sarada Balagopalan till 2014. We discussed the current status of the subscription to our journal.

We have requested Sage to provide easy and convenient accessibility of Indian version of Sage website, displaying Indian subscription rates and the process of subscription and e-payment of subscription. We also discussed

developing a suitable online platform for article review process, in collaboration with Sage and further requested them to pursue and make a suitable arrangement with Eklavya, in order to enhance our accessibility to the readers and promotion of the journal. In the next year, 2014-2015, we plan to get our CED volume 12 (1) and 12 (2), published, as per the usual Sage schedule.

7.3

Chakmak Children's Magazine in Hindi from Eklavya

about Chakmak

Chakmak was launched in May 1985. Till now 333 issues of Chakmak have been published. Chakmak was conceived as a science magazine for children in the 11 to 14 age-group - the best years of life - the formative years. The lessons learned in these years remain with them throughout the life, shaping the person they will become.

In year 2007 Eklavya took upon the task of reconceptualising the entire magazine in the context of the widespread changes taking place in the outlook of children and society. Some major initiatives were the expansion of the pool of contributors by persuading well known Hindi writers to write for children; introducing

new content that were more contemporary, like films, travel and music; increasing the number of pages devoted to poetry, short stories and similar children's literature; and limiting the once overwhelming science presence to a couple of smaller articles per issue. Yet Children's activity columns are retained in the refurbished Chakmak and also the emphasis on children's original contributions are kept up. Most importantly, an all four-colour publication has given the magazine a totally new and contemporary look. There is much anecdotal evidence to suggest that Chakmak helped children think in new and innovative ways and go beyond the confines of tradition and provinciality.

objectives of Chakmak

- To spur the creativity and curiosity of children, encourage and inculcate in them a reading habit and make learning and the acquisition of knowledge a process of fun and enjoyment.
- To provide original material on diverse subjects, genre in Hindi. To increase their horizon, a fair amount of good literature from within the country and outside is also being introduced to children
- To evoke 'scientific thinking' and analytical and rational thinking in children.
- To build up a base of local talent both for writing and illustrating.
- To make the reader sensitive about its surroundings. To make readers cautious and sensitive about social stereotypes and to encourage them to raise their voice against them.
- Make a space for alternative children literature and influence mainstream work in this field.

contents of Chakmak

Fiction

Stories, Picture stories, Poems, Travelogue, Diary, Folk tales, Folk songs, Children writing and illustrations, much emphasis is given on various art forms

Non-Fiction

Mostly original articles on diverse topics and in different genre, Activities, Puzzles and Brain teasers, Interview, Excerpts from best seller literature, Biographies, Memoirs, Articles or activities on various social issues, Science Experiments, Articles on art appreciation- Film, Music, Photography, Theater, Art, Sports

Salient Features

- Chakmak helps children become more aware of themselves, their feelings, emotions, wishes, ambitions.
- Puzzles and brain teasers and many do-it-yourself

columns awake the creativity and problem solving abilities of children.

- Children are encouraged to send in their poems, writings and drawings and several pages are devoted to publishing their contributions.
- Chakmak focuses on language skills, imagination and creativity.
- Over the years, Chakmak has been able to identify and create a pool of writers and illustrators. This has been a significant achievement.
- 'Scientific thinking' is the edifice around which the content is structured.
- Many voluntary organisations have found the magazine useful in their non-formal education efforts.

achievements

Achievements in the last year (April 2013-March 2014)

Some new columns took shape during this period

- BoliRangoli – In this column noted poet Gulzar writes a couplet every month which is illustrated by children in the way they understand it. We are getting an overwhelming

response from children all over the India for this column.

- Shezari – To give our readers a flavor of good children literature from vernacular languages is our mandate for a long time. We know that good literature is being written in languages like Marathi, Bangla and Malyalam. This year

we got a breakthrough and started Shezari (Neighbor in Marathi). Have given 10 fiction and non-fiction write-ups in this time period by well-known Marathi writers. Unique Features, Pune is helping us out in identifying the Marathi matter. We are in contact with some organizations for such a help in Malyalam and Bangla literature also. We hope that a Malyalam column will also start from July 14.

- In collaboration with Nature Conservation Foundation have started a column where translated articles developed by them for Hindu (Young world) are published.
- Well known writer Jitendra Bhatia is doing a Bird series for us in which children are introduced to the birds, their habits, food etc found around them.
- Worried by the ever growing waste and its harmful effects on the environment as well as our health, a column Meri Diary is introduced. This column talks about waste management in a much do-able way.
- Art appreciation has been one of key areas of Chakmak. In column Kala basic elements of art like colour, form, lines, texture are introduced.
- In Poetry and idioms/proverbs meaning rests not in the words used but somewhere else. And beauty of it can be felt only after reaching there. But this journey is hardly undertaken in schools. With the result children are unable

to enter a poem and explore it. By remaining at the shallow level of it they only enjoy the literal meaning of it – not the deeper, hidden, obscure meaning. Hence the idea of Poetry orientation came to us. And out of this emerged Kavita Ki Khidki column. In this a poem is given along with its explanation in a much comprehensible way.

- A series of articles on language acquisition.
- To explore new subjects and to get to know about our surroundings and be sensitive towards it some Non regular columns are introduced like Mera Ek Din, Shabdon Ka Safar, Memoirs, a traveler's diary.
- Diversity is one of our major thrusts – be it in textual or visual presentation. Variety in fiction and non-fiction was maintained by publishing matter in many genres like – Diary, Letter, Travelogue, Memoirs, Poetry, Stories, Cartoons, Facebook posts, Picture stories, Folk stories, Folk songs, Articles, Activities.
- Some columns which ended in this period like Biksu (A true story of a class 9 student in Bhojpuri language. Illustrations in picture story form are in Madhubani style), Month series, Travelers series, Iktara Bole, Kala Ke Ird-Gird are given to our Publication wing. They are considering it for publication as standalone books.

plan for the year 2014-15

- To enhance observation skills we intend to publish a student's diary this year. This will have some pages marked for every month having some small indications related to that particular month which can be observed and documented in the page.
- To make a common platform for discourses on different issues of Children literature we will contact some organizations. We wish to make it a vibrant place where Children literature from various regions is discussed.
- Mera Panna has been a constant and very popular feature of Chakmak since its inception. To spur the creativity and curiosity of children entering the teenage years they are encouraged to send their writings and drawings for this column. Now after publishing 333 issues we have a huge collection of immense creativity of children.
- Some question we have been continuously facing since

almost the first published Mera Pannaare:What does one see in a child's artwork? How do you rate it? Is it really a piece of exemplary artwork? To address this we have selected some 100 artworks published in Chakmak in the last 30 years. We will be sending it to a selected list of writers, artists, painters, art critics who will be writing their views on them. This will be published in coming issues of Chakmak.

- Chitron Ki Bhasha a column which attracts our attention to various aspects of contemporary and non-contemporary artworks has been planned to be refurbished.
- Diversity in Chakmak will be maintained.
- We will increase the writers and illustrators pool of Chakmak.

circulation

- Total Print Order of Chakmak is 15000.
- Most of our subscribers are institutes like Schools, Colleges, Institutions and Libraries.

bound volume

- Soon after twelve annual issues are published, these are put together as a bound volume of the year. Bound volumes are used as a reference material.

online Chakmak

- Chakmak issues are also available on the website of Eklavya: www.chakmak.eklavya.in
- Table of Contents of each issue is also available.

7.4 Tulika Books

background

Wipro Applying Thought in Schools has supported Tulika in bringing out books in the past. "The Water Stories from Around the World" and "Why the Sky is Blue" are some examples. We continue to collaborate on opportunities of mutual interest to bring out books for children.

Update 2013-14

Water Stories from around the World

Edited by Radhika Menon and Sandhya Rao, illustrated by Nirupama Sekhar

The first edition of Water Stories from Around the World, was published in 2010 in colour, in a large hardback format. The response to the collection was very good. The book has been recommended for various reading lists not just in India but abroad too. Stories from the book were used in interesting ways for various projects and events.

- The book was included in list of water-themed books recommended by **papertigers.com**, an online library resource of multicultural books. The United Nations had declared 2013 as International Year of Water. The recommended books was used for schools and community programmes in different countries throughout the year.
- E-book used in a municipal school as part of their Environmental Education project work.

In December 2013 we reprinted the book in two-colour, in a soft-back smaller format in order to bring down the costs. This edition is priced at Rs 150. The interest in the book continues to be widespread -

- Stories from the book were told at Green Bazaar's Catch Every Drop edition in Bangalore in view of World Water Day, 22 March 2014
- Puttenahalli Neighbourhood Lake Improvement Trust conducted a **session** around 'Who owns the water?' in January 2014 to 56 children and their parents as an initiative to spread the idea of taking care of their neighbourhood and its resources.
- Indiawaterportal.org featured the book along with an **interview** of one of the editors.
- Discussions going on with a Guatemalan publisher who is interested in buying rights of the book.

Why the Sky is Blue

By Dr. C.V Raman, Chandralekha and Dashrath Patel

28 pages, 10.5"x8.5", soft cover, 8 years and above

English, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali, Rs 150

- The book was reprinted in 2013 and continues to fascinate readers young and old.
- The Telugu edition of the book was taken by Room to Read, Hyderabad for their libraries.

First Look Science Series

by Shubhangi Goel, Sankhalina Nath, Rajasee Ray, Anushka Kalro

28 pages, 7"x8.5", full colour, soft cover, 6 years and above

English, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Rs 95

The set of five books in the series are Bhoomi's Story: Space, Boondi's Story: Water Dhooli's Story: Air, Gitti's Story: Earth and Beeji's Story: Seed. The books introduce basic science concepts to young children through the fantasy adventures of Bhoomi, Boondi, Dhooli, Gitti and Beeji. Rich visuals enrich the stories with a summing up of science facts related to the stories given at the end of the book.

A quote from a recent review on Goodbooks.in brings into focus the value of such a series.

"What a great way to open up the mysteries of the world that we inhabit to young minds and to ignite their curiosities further! The inviting titles of the books deserve special mention - they

are very well thought out. Many elements of Nature and concepts about our Earth, Solar System, Space, Air and Water are discussed in the books in a playful manner. The illustrations ably complement the adventures of the protagonists in each of these books."

Schools in Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Nasik, Surat, Varanasi and Tapi have taken the books for use as supplementary readers in the classroom through school distributors like Scholastic and Mindworth.

Books in the different languages have been taken by various non-government organizations –

- English: Avalokitevara, Leh; VKV, Dibrugarh
- Hindi: Room to Read, Delhi; OELP, Delhi; Jan Sahas, Ajmer
- Marathi: Room to Read, Mumbai; NG Naralakar Foundation, Pune; Khelghar, Pune; Quest, Mumbai;
- Tamil: Hand in Hand, Kanchhipuram; NivInfotech, Coimbatore; Asha for Education ViswaBharathiVidyodaya Trust, Nilgris
- Telugu: Asha for Eductaion
- Gujarati: Asha for Education
- Kannada: Community Development Foundation for Disability, Gulbaraga; Community Learning Centre, Bangalore; Asha for Education

In addition to the above, four new books were identified and written this year and other preparatory work is currently on; to publish these titles in 2014. A brief description of these books is provided below.

Forthcoming Titles 2014

Tulika proposes to publish titles this year under the Wipro grant. The first book, *Mara and the Clay Cows* was developed by the author with the support of Wipro. The other three titles have gender sensitivity as the focus. Each book has a different approach to the issue and is aimed at a 10+ age group.

Mara and the Clay Cows

by Parismita Singh

Age group – 10+

Parismita Singh's graphic novel, *Mara and the Clay Cows*, is a retelling of a Tangkhul Naga story. Inspired by traditional folklore from the region of Kokrajhar, it tells the story of two forest children and their unexpected adventures. Filled with magic and suspense, it is simultaneously grounded in the ecological concerns and in the political instability of the region. The protagonists of this novel, two young people, in this environment of political instability and adversity, take the help of various characters from folklore and the traditional and current day stories, in their search for solutions and survival.

Damsels To The Rescue

by Sowmya Rajendran

Age group – 10+

Fairytales are often a child's first lessons on differentiating between the good and the bad. But this also means that these stories define what should be considered good and bad in the first place. Popular versions of fairytales have stock characters

who have similar characteristics even if the plots might be different. Princesses are always fair and beautiful. Princes are always handsome and brave. Stepmothers are always evil. Ugly people are always cruel. These gendered stereotypes, when reiterated in story after story, make a lasting impression on the child reader and socializes him/her into believing this to be true rather than just a flawed interpretation of the truth. They are part of the clamor of voices that expect girl children to be damsels in distress and boy children to be their rescuers. As children grow older, they may stop reading fairytales altogether but the lessons they learned from there are likely to stick with them. But what if these older children are given a chance to read a familiar story rewritten to invert the stereotypes that they've been conditioned to accept? There is a possibility that such a reading will be liberating for both, boys and girls. The differences between the two versions may also encourage them to see why the story has been rewritten the way it has – and lead to an introspection on their own ways of thinking.

Big Hero Size Zero: Gender Talk

by Sowmya Rajendran and Anusha

Age group – 12+

With the government, the courts, the public, and the media taking an active interest in gender and gender-based issues, there has been a lot of conversation on how gender equality can be achieved in the country. Much of this discussion and debate is in the realm of the adults. Children, though curious

and interested, are not as involved because many of the topics that such a discussion could lead to are considered taboo for them. But gender identities are constructed from a young age and by the time a child grows into an adult, his/her notions and perceptions about gender are so ingrained that it becomes hard later on to un-learn these ideas. Gender is a complex subject but it's also a subject very relevant to adolescents as they are discovering themselves, their bodies, and what it means socially and culturally to belong to a certain gender. Adolescents conform but also rebel – a book that encourages them to think about the various factors that influence their thought and behaviour may help them pick their battles with better information. Engaging with adolescents is an important step to achieving gender equality and the book seeks to contribute to that effort.

Being Boys

edited by Deeya Nayar and Radhika Menon

This is a collection of writings that overturns the stereotypical notions about boys. The theme is about growing up as a boy under the tremendous social pressure of living up to an ideal of masculinity. The book questions ideas of heroism, of tall-broad-muscular manly looks, the nature of courage; that values equality, kindness and gentleness; it deals with the fear of not fitting in and of being different from the gang. Aimed at ages 10+ when these ideas begin to get embedded in young minds the book will have a variety of writing styles – a mix of fictional or real stories, fantasy, myth, anecdotes, excerpts from biographical/ autobiographical writings, translations and poems.

7.5

A Publication on Alternative Directions in School Education

background

Across India the movement of 'alternative' schools, and the various child-friendly philosophies they experiment with, appears to be growing. The term 'alternative' indicates that, unlike the 'mainstream' schools, they do not propagate the outdated and increasingly stressed factory model of schooling. Although they vary widely in their core philosophies, a common thread appears to be their agreement that learning should be a joyous experience for children. Yet these schools, in spite of the wonderful work they do, are not very well known outside their immediate small circles. The reasons could be several-fold, the most obvious being that they are so busy creating and walking on their new paths that they have no time to tell their inspirational stories. This project aims at telling the stories of some of these pioneering practitioner schools in an attempt to increase the space they occupy in the popular imagination. It is also an attempt to see if, in some small way, putting all these stories in one place helps catalyze the movement.

'Alternative schooling in India', a book edited by Sarojini Vittachi and Neerja Raghavan, in its appendix, lists 130 alternative schools across the country. This project features around 30 randomly chosen ones out of this much larger list. There are two types of write-ups being done for each school. These can be broadly classified under the headings of 'Impressions' and 'Details'.

The 'Impressions' give a unique, personal perspective about the schools and are newspaper-article-like, short pieces that are designed to get the reader interested enough in the school and its journey to want to learn more, and read the second more detailed write-up. The interested reader could then read more 'Details' which would include school philosophy, administration and classroom practices, links to all online material etc. These write-ups will initially be put on a blog till project completion. The material collected here could later be published as a book.

update

What has happened over the last year

New directions: A discussion with Eklavya Bhopal about the project brought out the following points: The project appeared to focus more on urban elite schools. It was suggested that adding some schools catering to the rural sector and teaching in the vernacular medium will bring richness to the project. Some additional names were suggested by Eklavya which have been incorporated in the list of project schools. It was also indicated that with the new school list, Eklavya may be interested in publishing these write-ups as a book

School visits: Most of the schools on the list have been visited over the last year and the material to finish the write-ups has been collected. Schools visited last year include: Pallikkoodam, Kottayam, The Aurobindo school, Pondicherry, The Learning Community, Auroville, Al Qamar Academy, Chennai, Abhaya, Hyderabad, The Integral School, Hyderabad, AmanSetu, Pune, Aksharnandan, Pune, Pargat Shikshan Sanstha, Phaltan and Karmyog Gunakul, Kolkata.

what is planned for the next year

The broad points for the time remaining on the project are: visit the remaining schools on the list and revisit schools where needed; research all school details and complete the write-ups and upload them on the blog; discuss with Eklavya about publication in a book format.

7.6

General Update on Education Material and Literature

background

WATIS had supported Kamala Mukunda, a teacher at Centre For Learning (CFL), Bangalore, through a fellowship in writing a book on child learning titled “What did you ask at school today?” which was published by Harper Collins. The book distils 30 years of research in child psychology and presents it in a lucid and accessible language for parents and educators. The English version of the book was very well received and it is currently being translated in different Indian languages. The Hindi translation was completed last year and an agreement had been reached with Eklavya, Bhopal to publish 5000 copies of the book in 2014-15; and distribute it through various channels, including the District Institutes of Education and Training.

A book by Parismita Singh, based on a Tangkhul Naga folktale, is ready for publication and has been accepted by Tulika. It will come out in 2014-15, as mentioned in a previous update. A book on Philosophy of Education meant for educational practitioners and field-workers, which was being written by one of the Fellows has been postponed indefinitely because of the author’s other engagements.



8

PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Educational thinking is driven by various ideas that are held by educationists, parents and the public in general. Different segments of people may hold different views and sometime there isn't enough interchange of ideas or original research that challenges current understanding.

With this in mind, we take up projects to advocate the cause of good education. These projects also provide means to schools, educators and educationists to understand a specific area and how it could be dealt with in schools.

Our objectives in this area are:

- To provide radical stimulus to public thinking on education
- To address lack of awareness on important educational issues

This is achieved in different ways including:

- drawing on the knowledge and experiences among our partner organisations that have worked in school education for decades and
- generating new knowledge through original research on matter of importance to school education

We had carried out a Quality Education Study in 2011. A large scale public advocacy initiative was launched in 2011-12 to take the findings and learning from this study across the country and was widely covered by the media. The active campaign ended in 2012-13 but the study continues to inform research and debate in different settings.

In 2013-14, many of our projects received regular coverage in English and vernacular media, such as the SeasonWatch program (in Malayalam) and the GoodBooks initiative (in English). We also organized an exhibition on 'Textbooks in Colonial India' during our partners' forum which was very well received.

We plan to intensify regular outreach with media and will focus on that in the coming years. We will also take up studies as well as other advocacy initiatives that inform the debate and public opinion on good education. Towards this end, we plan to support a research study and will explore the possibility of taking up an advocacy effort (online and offline) around good school textbooks in 2014-15.

GENERAL UPDATES

Overall, 2013-14 saw the consolidation of some of our projects within the focus theme areas as well as the initiation of some new projects. We formed four new partnerships over this year and initiated a new Fellowship, as described below.

The 14th Wipro Partners' Forum on Textbooks and Education was successfully organized at the School of Ancient Wisdom in February, 2013. The Partners' Forum is an annual gathering of all the organizations that Wipro partners with in its work in school education. The participants included around 75 people from civil society educational organizations, government institutions such as SCERTs, science-based organizations interested in education, academia etc. The knowledge sharing sessions included the following:

- A brief, contemporary history of textbooks in India
- Sharing of experiences of textbook development by various organizations such as VidyaBhawan, Eklavya, HBSCE and the state SCERTs of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Bihar
- A discussion on textbooks, knowledge and the relationship between the two

- Discussions on a comparative study of presentation of concepts in state and private textbooks; as well as on various frameworks for textbook analysis
- A session on textbooks through the teachers' perspective
- A session on use of textbooks in Nai Talim Education
- A session on other learning resources

There were quite a lot of discussions and sharing of work and experiences that happened outside the sessions as the Partners' Forum is as much a space to connect and reconnect with others in the education space as it is a space to share knowledge and learning. This has been a conscious effort of Wipro's to build and nurture such a unique network of organizations and people to strengthen the cause of systemic educational reforms in India. A set of short video documentaries on the sessions, as well as the Proceedings are being developed.

9th edition of the Digantar Certificate Program in Foundations of Education, supported by Wipro, was held successfully. The course included 4 workshops that

cover a wide set of areas within school education. They include the different perspectives like philosophy, sociology and psychology and the nature and pedagogy of different subjects like language, mathematics, sciences and social sciences. Along with enabling more people to attend this course, an objective of these scholarships is also to enable people from our partner organizations to benefit from this course.

This year we initiated a new partnership with Punarchit for developing a course and curricula for integrated learning for rural youth, especially in the Chamrajnagar area of Karnataka. We have also extended support to Anand Niketan, a school based in Wardha, Maharashtra, that draws inspiration from Nai Talim, to document their best practices around 'work and education' and to build their capacity to act as a resource center for other schools in the region; as well as to

NammaNalandaVidyapeeta, a school run by The Concerned for Working Children, to strengthen their pedagogic capacities for working effectively with marginalized children. Another project supported by us this year, called BioBlitz, engages school students in around 20 schools in Kerala, in doing a biodiversity census. The learning and documents stemming from this project are expected to serve as an example in other contexts and regions as well. Finally, we also supported a new fellowship this year to study social inclusion in Indian schools – focusing, especially, on inclusion-related experiences of teachers and students' as well as the processes and methods followed by successful schools and teachers.

