

Quality of Education Grant – Project Proposal Form

Part A: Information to be filled by Project Partner

1. NGO/project objectives [be very brief.. one paragraph is adequate]

ETASHA Society provides career guidance, employability skills & vocational training and placement into reputable companies in the organised sector for young people from disadvantaged communities in Delhi/NCR and increasingly across other states in India. The objectives of the current project are to train young people from weak socio-economic communities with hard and soft skills and place them into work. One of the employability skills taught in the three month program is Spoken English.

2. Quality of Education proposal

a. what 'quality of education' issue is the proposal addressing?

Spoken English is a critical employability skill for jobs, particularly in the organised service sector. The retail and hospitality industries insist on a basic level of understanding of the language as a minimum entry criterion. ETASHA students have been educated in government schools where the quality of English taught is not high, and the focus is on learning grammar rules by rote, with little or no emphasis on speaking

Learning to speak a new language is challenging for any learner but second language acquisition is more difficult for young adults from weak socio-economic backgrounds. For such Indian students English is also written in a different script from their mother tongue, which for ETASHA students is predominantly Hindi. Although all students have a basic knowledge of the Latin alphabet, it remains a script they rarely, if ever, use to read or write in their daily lives.

ETASHA's methodology is highly interactive and independent evaluation has found that trainees are appreciative of and stimulated by the methodology, which they recognise as being hugely different from the teaching methods they have been used to in government schools. However, one issue that has constantly challenged us is how to attempt to replicate aspects of our methodology outside the classroom in order to hold our students' interest.

Historically worksheets and assignments have been distributed as homework after each Spoken English session but their completion depends entirely on the motivation level of the student. Less 'academic' students are less likely to be engaged by a worksheet, and are far less likely to complete the worksheet/assignment. Our current reliance on written homework as the method by which classroom learning is reinforced can alienate students who may otherwise be very engaged in class where the focus is on speaking and listening. When the focus is shifted to written work attention is often lost.

In addition, learning correct pronunciation is difficult outside of class as students do not live in communities where English is used and their families are unlikely to accommodate their requests to watch / listen to English language TV stations /radio stations.

b. how does the proposal address the issue?

ETASHA would like to supplement the current home-worksheet-assignment system with audio content that reflects and reinforces each session in the curriculum. Each trainee would be given a low-cost tape-cassette player for the duration of the program and a library of cassettes which would be pre-recorded with the content of each session, listed by session number and session focus. The structures, vocabulary, dialogue, including translations where relevant, would be recorded sequentially on the tapes. All our content is context-based to reflect the trainees' life experiences and aspirations, and was designed to incorporate situations, language structures and vocabulary that the trainees would find useful moving into careers in the organised service sector.

Our experience has shown that trainees are more engaged when using technology and are more receptive to audio and visual stimuli than the written word. The portable nature of the cassette players also means trainees can be studying while on the way to work or school, while outside and at home in bed, and are able to listen to and practice relevant structures, rather than only read & write them.

Language learning requires repetition and reinforcement and this method lends itself to both the circumstances of the students and to language learning in general.

c. how do you define 'success' for the proposed initiative? how will you measure the effectiveness of the proposed initiative?

Success would be measured by the degree of improvement compared to earlier baseline groups. Currently there are several methods we use to determine the success of our Spoken English module / programs:

Before and After Video

All students are interviewed on video camera on the first day of the three month program. They are engaged in a conversation designed to illustrate their ability to understand and respond to basic vocabulary and language structures in English; the interviews combine questions that should demonstrate their competence in areas such as verb conjugation, tenses, prepositions of time and place, use of adjectives and adverbs etc. A similar process is repeated toward the end of the program after which students are played back both their recordings. Facilitator and student will both give feedback on the recordings, which generally show a vast improvement over the three months.

Assessment / Feedback

Each month students take part in a written test based on the previous month's curriculum. Areas of development and improvement are discussed with other facilitators before

being presented to the student in a formal recorded feedback session. The Batch Coordinator will gather feedback from all facilitators involved in the students' program and present it to the students, a process in which the student is encouraged to give feedback on both their progress and ETASHA's performance as a training provider. This provides a valuable insight into students' perceptions of their development, including their progress in speaking English.

Worksheet Results

Worksheets and assignments are marked and continually assessed for improvements and areas for development for the student.

Comparisons of the later groups' videos, monthly assessments, worksheet results and the students' own perceptions of their progress having had access to the audio technology would be made against an earlier baseline group, or other groups undergoing training simultaneously, but without access to this supplementary tool.

d. how does the proposal address requirements/concerns/interests of (a) children (b) teachers (c) parents (d) community?

a) **Children** - Our trainees come from poor socio-economic communities, which create several barriers to effective learning, including:

- Parents who are uneducated and unable to help with studies / homework
- Parents may not be interested in the student's studies
- Inability to afford tuition fees
- Likelihood of having to work around the home and/or take odd jobs
- Cramped and noisy living conditions
- Infrequent access to power

Their experience within government schools has not been conducive to fostering a love of learning; trainees often have a low boredom threshold and need to be engaged in creative ways in order to hold their interest outside the classroom. Use of audio equipment provides free of cost supplementary learning which requires no assistance, can be used irrespective of local power supply, is free of cost, and is portable thus enabling study away from the home environment. Lack of opportunity to listen to 'quality simple' English has always been a concern of our students which this scheme also addresses; it also facilitates learning regardless of the literacy level of the student.

b) **Teachers** - Facilitators need teaching aids that engage students and there is a recognition that the current system often fails to achieve this. The students lack of access to quality spoken English has also been a concern and the use of audio recordings would both supplement the current system and provide a source of simple quality spoken English in a contextually relevant setting. ESL audio material currently available in the market is not contextually relevant to the profile of ETASHA students.

- c) **Parents** - Though parents are usually supportive of their children's participation in the programs, this rarely extends to active participation or involvement because parents are unable to provide intellectual or financial support. Even requests by ETASHA faculty to provide access to English language TV/Radio programs at agreed times are usually not met, due to demands of family members. Personal audio recordings require no financial or intellectual input or inconvenience/accommodation from family members.
- d) **Community** - ETASHA's main objective is to make young people from disadvantaged communities employable and to place them at the start of careers in the organised sector. Job-seekers from these communities with English skills have greater access to a greater number of higher paid jobs than those without any English language skills. Any scheme that facilitates the process by which young people from under-served communities can gain access to better paid jobs has a direct impact on their families and their communities. Young people who join the organised sector have higher salaries, have better long-term earning potential, may enjoy benefits such as medical insurance, (which in some of our placements extend to family members). Their spending power is increased, and a good part of their salaries are usually spent in their local communities. The education, nutrition and health levels of families in the community increase dramatically with doubling of family incomes (majority of the better trainees get starting salaries which are higher than the total family income!!!)

3. Budget

Please list itemized budget request for the proposal above, that you are requesting Asha to fund. If the overall budget is above \$1200 (~INR 55,000), please suggest which specific items you would want funded for upto \$1200 (INR 55,000)

No.	Item	Costing assumptions	Cost in Rs.
1	Script writing	45 lessons with an average recording of 20 minutes per lesson requires an average 1.5 hours writing time per lesson (or 10 working days) of one Senior Language Specialist@ Rs.2000 per day	20000
2	Recording	45 lessons with an average recording of 20 minutes per lesson requires an average 1 hour per lesson recording time or 6 working days each of 2 Pronunciation & Diction experts for recording the dialogue @ Rs. 2000 per day each	24000
3	Dictaphone	one player for Rs.1500	1500
4	Portable Cassette Player	20 cassette players (to cover 1 batch of 20 trainees) @ Rs.500 each	10000
5	Cassettes	20 sets of 10 cassettes each @ Rs.25 each	5000
		Total	60500

or \$ 1344

Part B: Information to be filled by Asha chapter that is recommending this proposal to be funded.

1. Meeting minutes for discussion of the proposal. (please include chapter comments on project's response to QED questionnaire: such as aspects of quality that project is already addressing well, and those that can be improved)
2. What is your view on success of the proposed initiative? How will the chapter evaluate the effectiveness? If successful, is your chapter willing to fund this initiative after 2 years?
3. Do you intend to continue funding the project for next 2 years? Can a site visit be arranged between June 2011 and Dec 2011?
4. How is this proposal different from other proposals? (in case your chapter received more than 1 proposal for this grant)