Asha Silicon Valley

Report on

Educational Activity Centers
(Project Foundation)
April 2021 - September 2021

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Executive summary

The Society for Door Step Schools (DSS) is an NGO working in the field of Literacy and Primary Education in the urban cities of Mumbai (1989) and Pune (1993). DSS has impacted the lives of more than 1 Million children across Mumbai and Pune since its inception by addressing 3 major challenges of our public education system-

- Children are not enrolled in school
- Children drop out of school
- Even if children are enrolled in school, they suffer from low learning levels or low quality of education

We address these problems through various innovative programs; Project Foundation being one of them.

Project Foundation was launched in 2003 to cater to the children (0 to 14 years) of construction site laborers to provide them with educational support and prepare parents for the continued education of their children.

Summary of Outcome from April 2021 to September 2021

4148 children were reached out through **70** Education Activity Centres.
295 children were enrolled in schools
1167 children were benefitted from the Lending library activity.
1742 parents were reached out for the importance of their contribution towards their child's education.

We Thank **Asha Silicon Valley** for supporting the implementation of Project Foundation 8 Education Activity Centres. This report presents details of the Centres funded by Asha Silicon Valley. **741** unique children were reached out from the period of April 2021- September 2021

I. Description of Class Types

Each Educational Activity Centre at DSS is divided into 5 class types:

Balwadi or pre-primary classes: These classes are run for children from 3 to 6 years of age group. Various activities such as, songs, stories, art & craft activities, activities using the teaching tools, monthly projects, free play, etc. are conducted for them at the centre that helps in their overall development. The activities are conducted with the objective of developing an interest in learning new things and developing a basic understanding of various concepts. For the children between 5 to 6 years, we conduct a school readiness program. This caters to the needs of preparing them for formal education.

Literacy classes (LC): As we are dealing with a migrant and marginalized population in this project, many a time children attending our centres are not enrolled in formal schools even though they are of the school-going age group. We run the literacy classes for these out-of-school children till the time we complete the process of enrolling them in the nearest government schools. Our centres operate to enroll the children within 20 days of them coming to the EACs. These classes act mostly as a preparatory step before admission to formal schools. We make sure that every child enrolled at the EAC seeks formal education and therefore these classes act as a stop-gap arrangement and support for the children.

Once the children from LCs are enrolled in schools, we count them into our Study Class.

Study Classes: Children between 6-14 years of age who are already enrolled in schools attend study classes at the site. They also maintain regular attendance in school. The objective of these classes is to provide study support. Children receive the necessary support to sustain themselves in school and gain interest in reading, studying, and other academic activities by attending these classes. Under the Right to Education act, children have to be admitted to school in their age-appropriate classes. This is likely to leave a gap between the expected level of knowledge from that child at that particular age and the actual knowledge they possess. The study support classes facilitate the bridging of this gap. Since we are working with migrant children, a lot of children might have had to move out and when they come back to our classes, they tend to forget what they might have learned before. The SCs help these children to revise their previous learning.

Reference Classes: These classes are run for children who are school-going and can read. In the study class, we use various teaching tools to teach reading Marathi to the children. One of the major objectives of the reference classes is to promote independent and self-motivated learning in children. Children come to the centres every day before or after their school timings. They complete their homework, read reference books, learn science experiments and participate in other activities or events conducted at the centre. They receive guidance from our teachers as well as from the plethora of volunteers coming to our centres.

Crèche: For the children between the ages 0 to 3 years we provide a daycare facility. This facility runs for the full day. The parents of the children from this age group are most concerned with the safety and security of the children. At our centre the children are provided with this safe and secure environment and constant attention and care. Children are also provided with toys and some other activities for supporting their overall development. One teacher is present to conduct the activities with these children.

2. Activities & Outcome

List of sites funded by Bitwise Foundation

Name of the EACs	Location	Status
Asthavinayak City	Manjri	Running
KRC IT Project (GGTT)	Hadapsar	Closed
Kumar Park Infinia	Phursungi	Running
Kumar Prospera	Hadapsar	Running
Manjri Green Annexe	Manjri	Running
Nirman Altius	Kharadi	Running
Prasun Sarvam	Kharadi	Running
Shree Venkatesh Graffiti	Mundhava	Running
Shubh Shagun	Kharadi	Running
SRA Project	Mundhava	Running
Unique Legacy Majestic	Mundhava	Running

Unique Beneficiaries at EACs

The below table shows the status wise and gender-wise number of beneficiaries attending the EAC from April 2021 to September 2021

Class Type	Boys	Girls	Grand Total	Continued	Dropped Out	Migrated
Crèche	99	109	**208**	103	1	104
Balwadi Class	86	76	**162**	76	0	86
Literacy Class	42	43	**85**	24	1	60
Study Class	51	43	**94**	59	1	34
Reference Class	4	7	**11**	11	0	0
Total	**282**	**278**	**560**	**273**	**3**	**284**

Out of **560** children, **284**(**50%**) children migrated either to their native places or to other parts of the city. The dropouts are the children who are still on the site however do not come to the EAC. Only 3 children from the 6-14 age group have dropped out.

2.1 Balwadi Class

Balwadi Activities was conducted for children between 3-6 years with the focus to ensure smooth physical, mental and emotional development in children and prepare children for primary education.

The below table shows the month-wise activities under the balwadi class. Altogether **162** children benefitted from this class.

Month	Topics
April	Activities on lower motor development, Identification of Marathi letters.
May	Creative Activities, Letter identification, Identification of school related items,
June	Concept of same & different, Hot & cold, revision f names of days
July	Language: Our body parts, Cognitive: Reciting the name of months, Listening and identification of sounds.
August	Language: sounds of animals, Cognitive: the concept of small & big, following patterns, Physical: Gross motor activities
September	Language: Identification of family members, Cognitive: identification of things through touch, concept of up & down, Physical: fine motor activities i.e. clay models, drawing a pattern

Learning Outcome

- Most children of age group 3-4 follow instructions given by the teacher & participate in various activities games, singing songs, performances & art and craft activities.
- Younger children demonstrate the ability to sort, match, and regroup.
- They can identify basic/generic sounds, major body parts.
- They can identify the sounds of animals by showing them the corresponding pictures.
- **27** children are from the 5+ age group, out of those **25** children are able to identify 20 Marathi alphabets and can prepare simple words from the letters.
- These children are able to understand the concept of family relations which was taught in the Monthly Project.
- We have observed that the communication of balwadi children has increased over a period of time.
- Teachers are finding easy to implement the activity because of the month-on-month user-friendly planning.

2.2 Literacy & Study Class

The primary goal of these study classes is to teach children Marathi using the 120 days' program. Other goals include providing children access to various books and study materials, providing guidance for the development of their scholastic abilities, and assisting in their overall academic development.

Progress tracking: Based on the experience Door Step School has worked out the number of days required for achieving a particular level while learning to read. Learning to write is also encouraged, however, the main objective is that each child should be able to read simple sentences with composite letters in 120 days. This is split into the following table:

Day-wise Learning Levels:

Level I: (1 to 25 Days): A child is learning Alphabets

Level II: (26 to 50 Days): A child learns all the 46 Alphabets by the 50th day and begins learning Matras

Level III: (51 to 70 Days): A child learns all basic Matras by the 70th day

Level IV: (71 to 90 Days): A child completes learning all Matras by 90th day

Level V: (91 to 120 Days): A child completes learning all-composite letters

120 Days: - A child is able to read

The attendance of the children is taken daily and performance is tracked weekly and reported back to the MIS team at the end of the month.

Coordinators analyze the data every month and take necessary corrective actions in association with the teachers and supervisors. Management review of the progress is part of the half-yearly review meetings/ presentations. The learning level is taken from Literacy and Study Class only. Below is the table from the Literacy and Study class only.

Days v/s Learning Level

Days	Learning Alphabets Level I	Alphabets Completed Level II	Learning Matras Level III	Matras Completed Level IV	Composite Words Level V	Composite words complete	Grand Total
1 to 25	41	16	6	9	8	0	**80**
26 to 50	9	8	4	1	3	8	**33**
51 to 70	0	0	15	5	6	1	**27**
71 to 90	1	1	1	4	7	4	**18**
91 to 120	0	0	2	7	9	3	**21**
Grand Total	**51**	**25**	**28**	**26**	**33**	**16**	**179**

Learning Outcome:

- This year we observed almost 42% of children are in the Alphabets learning group. This is due to the learning loss among children due to the closure of schools. Efforts are being made to bring them at par with other children.
- 16 children can read the newspaper fluently.
- Out of **179** children, **21(13%)** of children are in a below-expected category &**147(87%)** are in as expected and above-expected learning levels.
- Children who are in expected and above expected learning levels can prepare different meaningful words from the mulakshar, barakhadi & Jodakshar
- Older children from 7 EACs can write paragraphs from given words.

2.3 Home Lending Activity

Teachers distributed age-appropriate books to the children at sites. These books include books developed by DSS for children, storybooks, pictorial books, books related to science, etc. The teacher visits a bag of books to the community twice a week and distributes them to the children. A record of the books read by every child is maintained and the books are changed over time.

Class type	Boys	Girls	Total
6yrs.- 8yrs.	15	8	**23**
9yrs.- 14 yrs.	60	68	**128**
Total	**75**	**76**	**151**

Observations

- **151** children benefitted from this activity.
- On average 4 books, a month is read by all children
- Mostly fictional books & pictorial storybooks are liked by the children.

2.4 Community Classes

The closure of schools for almost 2 yrs. led to complete loss of learning among children, specially the underprivileged first-generation learners who are our focus group. To address the problem of learning loss, our teachers visit the nearby community of construction sites to equip children with basic learning skills. The methodology of teaching is the same as we do at Education Activity Centre.

Below are the latest progress of the children.

Learning Alphabets Level I	Alphabets Completed Level II	Learning Matras Level III	Matras Completed Level IV	Composite Words Level V	Grand Total
23	3	2	2	0	30

Observation

- Half of the number of children is between 3rd to 5th std.
- Most of the children are in the Learning Alphabets category. Teachers are making efforts to bring them at par with the class-appropriate learning levels.

3. Support Services

3.1 School Enrolment

At our EACs we work towards the goal of enrolling out of school or migrant children in a government school in their vicinity within the first 20 days of their admission at our Centres. The **objective** of this exercise is to make sure that the child is mainstreamed on a priority basis. This will in turn help in better-adjusted children in school, better retention in school, and better scholastic achievement of children.

51 children from **7 EACs** have been enrolled in Government schools. Out of those 1**2 children** have been enrolled from balwadi to std.1. They were part of the school readiness program. This year, parents themselves enrolled their children by visiting the school.

Their online classes from school are going on. Our teachers help all the children given the task by the school.

3.2 Migration & Tracking:

Since we are working with the migrant population, we track the children to know if they are enrolled in schools wherever they have migrated. This year we have decided to be in the contact with the children, i.e. teaching-learning language through online classes until they are enrolled in school.

Migrated children	Tracked children	Children enrolled in school
161	139	79

139 children benefitted from online teaching

4. Support Activities

4.1 Monthly Projects

One of the prime tools of teaching at the EACs. Every month a new topic is assigned for the project. The teachers are given the notes related to the topic at the beginning of the month and they are instructed to conduct the activities based on the notes. This helps in ensuring the uniformity of implementation of the activities. The activities include story-telling, songs, Art and Craft activities, simple experiments, preparing models, etc. This is done for all children from ages 3 to 14 years of age. Younger children did art and crafts, drawing, songs related to the projects, and children of Study, LC & Reference class prepared models, scrapbooks prepared stories related to the topics

Below topics were covered from April 2021 to September 2021

Month	Topic covered for Projects
April	Summer Season
May	COVID -19 Precautions
June	Rainy Season
July	Gardening & agricultural products
August	Animals & Their habitat
September	My family & festivals

Observations:

- Monthly projects are very useful in helping children understand in detail the various topics.
- Younger children enjoy getting new information, listening to stories, and singing songs.
- Children become aware of keeping the environment clean after the COVID -19 awareness project.
- Children prepared animal masks and narrated the stories during the animal project.
- Older children prepared their family tree by using photographs, names in the My Family project.
- We have seen that the parents also take interest in the topics discussed every month and they also inform us that their children relay the information to them.
- We have noticed that vocabulary has increased in children from Study and Literacy classes due to the monthly projects.
- The older children also show interest in contributing to the discussion and share the relevant information they have acquired otherwise.
- During the Gardening Project children of all EACs sowed seeds of vegetables and watched them grow.

4.2 Science Activities

The objective of this activity is to develop a scientific attitude in the children. This will be the basis of curiosity and inquisitive nature in the children. Children get hands-on experience with the equipment in the science box. The science equipment they get in the science box is provided by Quest Science and Mathematics Laboratory, Pune. The experiments are designed specifically for the children based on their syllabus and the things they see around them in their daily life. They also get a chance to invent and make models for the experiments related to the various scientific principles they learn in the class.

Month	Topics Covered
July	Dispersion of light, Air has pressure
August	The density of different substances, playing with magnets
September	Water lens, Beam balance

In June, all EACs had a session on drinking clean water. Teachers demonstrated & explained to the children about the traditional method of water purification.

Observation:

- These experiments help children understand the scientific principles about the things they see and use in their everyday life.
- By getting hands-on experience with the various experiments, children have become more inquisitive and pay more attention to the things around them.
- Children try and relate the knowledge gained in class to their real-life experiences.

4.3 Festivals & Celebrations

Throughout the year we celebrate various festivals, days and other important social and religious occasions in the centres. The objective of celebrating the festivals is to teach children about the diversity of Indian culture. This also gives them an opportunity to celebrate, gives them the feeling of inclusion. This year we also celebrated important dates as Ambedkar Jayanti, Environment Day, Yoga Day, Plastic freedom Day, Doctor's day & Independence Day.

Observations:

- The celebration of the festivals and other important events and days helps children understand the importance and context of these occasions.
- Yoga Day was celebrated in all EAC's . children performed Surya Namaskar and breading exercises. In some EACs volunteers guided then through google meet on account of Yoga Day.

4.4 Parents Meetings

Raising awareness amongst parents and improving parent participation in their children's education has always been a crucial part of all Door Step School Programs. We conduct monthly parent meetings in the third week of every month. For those parents who are unable to attend the meetings since both are probably working at the sites, we also visit their homes to appraise them of their child's progress and also to give them the information they might have missed at the meetings held at the Centre.

Below are the topics covered during this period.

- Information about RTE Act and online admission process & Ways to get involved with their children in studies
- Awareness of the importance of COVID -19 vaccination
- Cleanliness at home & surroundings
- Awareness of the safe environment in the community
- Nutrition to boost immunity.

Awareness of the importance of vaccination of COVID 19 was conducted with all the laborers and their family members at all the construction sites. We also coordinated with CREDAI (Builders Association) for the inoculation of the parents and laborers and help them in coordinating in vaccination drive.

- As a result, awareness of COVID appropriate behavior has been achieved.
- Parents, children, and the whole labor camp use mask when they are out and use sanitizer or wash hands regularly.
- All the parents of our beneficiaries received first shots.
- Parents are now more aware of their child's online studies as school classes are conducted through online media.

4.5 Volunteers Engagement

Volunteers support all our activities by giving their valuable time and skills. Various activities such as Storytelling, teacher's day celebrations, best of waste, Hindi divas, Independence Day, etc were conducted by the volunteers to motivate the children.

5. New Initiative this year

Online Classes for migrated children: In a drive to support the migrating young population with their education so they don't have to break their flow of learning process, we decided to continue their learning through online classes until they are enrolled in formal school in their respective hometowns. This is due to the pandemic and the advancement in technology, we have gained a new approach to the development in the learning process.

Bridging the gap in learning among children due to pandemics: This activity is also mentioned as community teaching. Due to the closure of schools amid pandemic and lockdown also the low accessibility in technology, there was a heavy loss in the school education among the children. To bridge this gap in learning, the teachers are reaching out to the communities to help them and be at par with their education.

6. Future Plans

- Continue with regular offline classes – We will continue with all the activities of the Education Activity Centre that ensures the child's safety and continued learning which helps in the overall development of the children.
- Continue with online classes for migrated children & Community Teaching – This activity will reduce the learning gap among children and will be at par with the school education once the Offline School will start.
- Structuring the Learning outcome for Balwadi activities – We are in the process of structuring the learning outcome through a data matrix for balwadi children.

7. Photographs

********** END OF THE REPORT **********