

PROJECT SANGAMAM KANINI - CASE STUDIES

Background

Asha Chennai has been supporting government schools in the Poondi block of Thiruvallur Dist in Tamilnadu for over 10 years. In the last year, with support from Oracle Foundation, Asha has been able to undertake quality improvement at these schools through the use of technology. A primary component of this is empowerment of the teacher Asha has appointed to these schools by providing them a laptop, Internet connection and also training them on how to use these. Further the computer labs in these schools have also been made functional by repairing the computers as well as enabling them to connect to the Internet via a Wifi-3G hotspot provided to the Asha teacher.

The following interviews for the case studies were conducted at Nemiliagaram. This is an interior village that is about 5 Kms from the Thiruvallur Thiruttani Highway. It is a 2 teacher school with about 35 children. The school also gets an additional influx of some 15 students every year from January to June from the nearby Brick Kilns. The children from the brick kilns come to this school when their parents migrate to this village.

The school did not have any computers. Asha also donated one laptop to the school for the school use. The HM and the other government teacher knew only a little bit of how to use the computers and were not comfortable with them.

Asha has been supporting the school from 2006. However we stopped support for the school between 2011 and 2014 since the number of students dropped in this school as the government opened another school nearby. We once again started supporting them when the number of students climbed back up to 35 with the additional students coming from the brick kilns. Asha teacher Tamilselvi has been going there since June 2014. She was given a laptop in December. She has been using that for the last 4 months. Since the school had no computer we gave them an additional computer from the excess money we had remaining in the project budget.



Talking to the Students

There were several students ranging from classes 3 to 5 waiting to talk to me. I talked to the students in the school.

About the Students

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| Aishwarya | Studying 5 th Std., Parents are working in farming. They have studied 8 th and 9 th std resp. |
| H. Mithra | Studying 3 rd Std. Mother works at Good Leather Shoe factory. Both her parents have studied till 10 th std. |
| S. Abhishek | Studying 5 th Std. Mother works as a tailor. Parents have studied till 10 th and 8 th Std. |
| T. Nisha | Studying 4 th Std. Father works in a welding shop. Both parents have studied till 12 th Std. |
| Sumithra | Studying 4 th Std. Father is a wood cutter. Parents have studied till 9 th and 8 th Std. |
| D. Deekshana | Studying 3 rd Std. Parents work in farming and cow herding. They have studied till 8 th and 11 th Stds. |
| A. Navin | Studying 4 th Std. Parents work in farming. He was the most outspoken of the lot. He is the only one who said they owned some land. But the teacher clarified, his family is also only doing tenant farming in someone else's land. His parents have both studied till 10 th Std. |

A. Vinisha Studying 5th Std. Her parents are working in farming. They have studied till 8th and 7th Std.

Madhumitha She was studying in Kamarj Matriculation School till 4th std. and intends to join the government school in the coming year. She had heard from her neighbours how the school is doing well and is teaching with computers. That is the reason for the shift to this school. The school is expecting to increase the strength by 5 to 10 students. Our assisting the school with computers is a big factor! Her father is working in water can delivery. Mother is working as a coolie.

J. Shankarguru Studying 5th Std. Father works in a nearby brick kiln. Parents have studied till 8th and 9th std.

D. Dheena Studying 4th Std. Her parents are working in farming. They have studied till 8th and 10th Std.

V. Supriya Studying 4th Std. Her parents are working in farming. They have both studied till 10th Std.

M. Keerthi Studying 4th Std. His parents are working in farming. They have studied till 8th and 10th Std.

None of the children's families own any of their own land. All the children come from the Nemiliagaram village and live within a few minutes walk from the school.



Exposure to Computers:

Other than the school none of the children had any exposure to computers. Even the new girl from the matriculation school had any exposure to computers. They do not know anyone or any shop in the village with a computer. Some of their friends in the village go to convent schools. They do not know if they have computers in their schools.

Now they are able to use the desktop computers in the school as well as the laptop with the Asha teacher. Asha teacher has been teaching them how to use the computers.

What do they do on the Computers?

1. TuxPaint – They like that a lot. Even when I entered the classroom they were doing various things with Tuxpaint.
2. Open Office – In particular they have been using Impress to create presentations.
3. They have used the Asha Kanini App to access several other contents. I was happy to note that they were familiar with the Asha Kanini App and that they access the contents through that. They have been using various English games in OneStopEnglish, seeing various Rhymes & Stories, seeing videos in StarFall and E-Speak, playing some games in PhET etc.

Note that the Asha teacher does not teach these students since she teaches only classes 1 and 2. However she has made the time to show these children also all these things in the computers.

When asked the question if they enjoyed learning through the computer, the answer was a very strong yes. All the children are thrilled to be using the computers!



Talking to R. Tamilselvi the Asha Teacher

Tamilselvi has been working at the PUPS Nemiliagaram school since June 2014.



About her family ...

She grew up in a place called Meiyur which is a remote village nestled inside the forest near Seethanjeri. Her father and mother depend on the government NREGA employment. She has an elder

brother and elder sister. Her brother works at a welding shop and her sister is a housewife.

She married and moved to Vidaiyur a little bigger village. Her husband also works in a welding shop. She has two children a 10 yr old boy and a 7 year old girl. Both of them study at St. Mary's convent that charges about Rs 4000 a year. She is considering moving them to a government school.

About her education and work ...

She didn't study or work for several years after her 12th standard. She took up her DTED only after marriage and after her children were a little older. During her DTED, she had coming to Kuppammal Chathiram school for her training in 2011-12. She came to know about Asha at that time. After finishing DTED she contacted Asha for a job.

What was her exposure to computers before getting the Asha laptop?

She had absolutely no knowledge of computers before coming to Asha. She has never touched one and didn't even know anyone who had a computer.

How is she using the laptop and computers now?

Tamilselvi was extremely thankful for getting the opportunity to learn and teach with computers. She enjoys doing that and felt the children also enjoy learning through the computers. She has also taught her children the basics of computer science. She has also been showing her own children what she has learnt and is using in her classroom.

The computer teachers at Asha and volunteers have taught her all the things with computers. She feels she has learnt a lot these last couple of years. She has been teaching the children Tuxpaint and OpenOffice. She uses the Asha Kanini App every day to access various contents including,

- OneStopEnglish.
- Various rhymes & stories.
- E-Speak
- English Lesson Recordings – She listens to these a couple of times at home before coming to school. She has improved her diction with this.
- Maths Instructions.
- StarFall.
- Khan academy videos.

She finds it convenient since the contents are available mapped to the lesson/subject she teaches.

Does she have anything to say to Asha and Oracle?

All the things she has learnt about computers and even about how to teach has been through Asha. She was almost in tears when she thanked Asha and Oracle for giving her this opportunity.