



## Gramin Shiksha Kendra

### Concept Note – Ranthambhor Shiksharthi Fellowship Programme

#### About Gramin Shiksha Kendra

GSK was registered in 1996 as a response to poor quality of education in the government schools situated in Sawai Madhopur especially in the area surrounded by Ranthambhor National Park. In 2004, GSK initiated a school education programme, known as the Uday Community Schools by setting-up schools in the Sawai Madhopur district to demonstrate their idea of quality education to the rural parents' community. GSK named the school as *Uday Samudayik Pathshala* in alignment to their belief that schools are integral part of their communities and therefore, the community must

actively

#### Outcome of Vistaar

- Improved regularity of children in schools
- An external evaluator highlights a significant improvement in the participation of parents and SMCs in our intervention schools.
- 88% of these SMCs are holding meetings as per the RTE norms.
- 85% of the parents are raising issues during these meetings.
- Teachers feeling more accountable towards the parents.
- Much better learning-supportive environment including better teacher-children relationship, inclusion, and interactive teaching methods in the government schools.
- More participation of children in Sports and co-scholastic activities.

#### Teaching and learning at Uday Schools

- Uday schools follow the Rajasthan State Education Board curriculum.
- Focus right from the early childhood education
- We follow the multi-grade multi-level teaching methodology which support the children to learn at their own pace.
- The Uday Schools function on the democratic principles.
- The schools also focus on a healthy relationship between teacher and child.
- Innovative and contextual teaching and learning material (TLM) and processes are important component of the learning process.
- Co-scholastic activities (pottery, theatre, carpentry, kitchen gardening, cooking, etc.) are integrated into the regular curriculum.
- Morange - A bi-monthly magazine published by children from Uday Schools.
- The schools maintain a gender ratio of nearly 50:50.

participate in their governance. GSK established three Uday Samudayik Pathshalas to work with the children and the parents' community, and eventually spread their idea of quality education in the government schools.

The Uday Community Schools programme, over the years, has successfully demonstrated the idea of quality school to parents and government-run schools for ensuring the holistic growth of children.

Our outreach programme - *Vistaar* has brought a significant reform in the way, the education is perceived and imparted in government schools.

Our intervention has encouraged the community and the schools to work closer to ensure a conducive learning environment for the children. An external evaluation by a reputed group of our programme indicates a significant improvement in the learning levels of children studying in our intervention government schools, and the participation of parents in the functioning of schools.

Uday Community Schools were also recognized as the Change-maker Schools by Ashoka Foundation. Nearly 390 children from the school have been graduated so far. The alumni from the school have opted for various occupational fields such as – engineering, defense, theatre and arts, entrepreneurship, commerce, government services, etc. to build their career. The alumni boys and girls of the Uday Community Schools tend to continue their school education and also pursue higher education. The alumni of the schools continue to engage with their alma mater and also participate in the school meetings – a key indicator of their willingness to contribute back to their school and community.

### **GSK's focus on the adolescent girls through *Umang* programme**

GSK has been working with children and adolescents for more than a decade. Through our tailor-made curriculum and evolved child-centred pedagogy, we have been able to ensure holistic education through an evolved set of scholastic and co-scholastic activities. The alumni especially the girls graduated from Uday Schools have evolved into confident learners who have excelled in various areas in their career and act as the role-models for their younger siblings. To be more focused and realizing that the girls in their adolescence are more vulnerable owing to patriarchal norms and gender disparity, GSK took a conscious decision to work with them through Umang programme.

In 2016, GSK piloted a programme with a cohort of 29 adolescent girls enrolled in government school and were selected on basis of their poor academic level and weak socio-economic background. We named this programme – ‘the *Umang*’. The name – *Umang* signifies the enthusiasm, which indicates expressions, and potential and desire to fulfill their aspirations, which they do not often find spaces for, in their surroundings.

Umang programme was launched in four hamlets- Khawa, Chharoda, Ranval and Khandoj. The girls were chosen following a household survey in the area and those who were at highest risk of falling out were selected for the cohort.

The course was aimed to reduce dropout rates in class 9th by engaging the girls through an intensive training of academic subjects as well as of life skills, which was designed to suit their context and learning needs. We continued our support to the girls in the subsequent year making sure that the girls pass grade 10 board examination.

As a result of the intervention, all the girls cleared their secondary and senior secondary examinations and are currently pursuing higher education. These young girls have immense potential to be the role-

models for their community, especially to their younger siblings, and need a platform to thrive and utilize their skills to bring a social and political reform in their community.

### **Key challenges to address**

1. Need for an improvement in scientific temperament and critical thinking among children
2. Children in government schools struggle in acquiring key skills in English.
3. Need to improve participation of parents in the functioning of schools
4. Limited focus on Sports in elementary school education ecosystem
5. Untapped youth potential to improve the ecosystem of education in village communities
6. Need to provide an institutional support to the youth, especially the girls to thrive
7. Need to work on the foundational skills of children owing to the school lockdown since March 2020.

### **GSK's Response**

GSK has planned its intervention to improve the eco-system of education in the government-run schools of Sawai Madhopur by actively engaging the youth in the process. The *Uday Community Schools* will continue to act as fish-bowl which will encourage the community and schools to work together to ensure child-centered education in the area.

We plan our intervention with the government schools with the following objectives –

- i. To help children getting engaged in learning at their age-appropriate level
- ii. To support the school teachers to adapt child-centered activities in their classrooms
- iii. To strengthen the parents' collectives so as to help them play a key part in the functioning of schools
- iv. To provide a platform to the youths so they can contribute in ensuring quality education to the children.

We plan to work with the government-run schools with the help of the youth individuals from the rural communities, to support children to get engaged in learning at their age-appropriate levels. We plan to offer a fellowship to the local educated youth.

GSK will also support the government school teachers to help them improve STEM education through an activity-based approach. Simultaneously, the programme also aims to empower associated parents' communities and the School Management Committees (SMCs) to play an active role in ensuring the smooth functioning of schools so as to also make government schools accountable to the promised standards of quality.

### **Ranthambhor Shiksharthi Fellowship Programme:**

**Objective:** The programme will help children enrolled in the government schools to engage in the activities as per their age-appropriate learning levels, by systematically engaging the youth from the local communities. Through the fellowship, we aim to provide an institutional support to the youth, especially the adolescent girls.

It has been highlighted through various studies that due to lack of institutional support to the youth especially the girls, they tend to drop-out of education after class 12<sup>th</sup>. The village youth from Ranthambhor region are neither equipped with the necessary skills nor have access to right information to make informed choices in their career. Through the fellowship programme, we will mentor them so they do not discontinue their education and can have multiple opportunities for their growth.

The key objective of the programme is to improve the learning level of children enrolled in primary grades of the government-run schools by providing them supplementary academic support. The programme will help children overcome the learning gaps as a result of the poor quality of education in the government-run schools. Our work will also improve the learning deficit which the children have faced owing to the pandemic-induced school lockdown for the past 1.5 years.

We plan to systematically engage the motivated youth members from the villages around Ranthambhor National Park, to work in their respective communities with the children and engage with the parents' community for ensuring their active participation. The fellowship programme will also provide a platform to the youth volunteers to meaningfully engaging with and understanding their communities.

The one-year fellowship will also engage the youth in assignments and activities which will help them develop a critical understanding of their society and polity, and to gain necessary life-skills and exposure to be capable of taking-on responsibilities in future and making informed decisions pertaining to their lives.

These youth would have passed class 12<sup>th</sup>, and been attending under-graduation course this year. The name of the fellowship has been thought to be the ***Ranthambhor Shikshartha Fellowship Programme (RSFP)***.

The fellows will work with children attending primary grades (classes 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>) by conducting supplementary classes within the village communities. Throughout the duration of fellowship, the fellows will undergo capacity-building programme across various domains including teaching methodologies, which will help them building a perspective towards their society and polity and develop an understanding of the Education required for the development of their society.

The fellows will be selected through a screening process which will test their skills and attitude required to work at the grassroots and grow. The first batch comprises of 29 young fellows from the local village communities among whom 21 are the girls.

The fellows will also receive on-field support by our resource teachers. The fellows will be provided mentorship support and a honorarium to help them continue their education and thrive.

The programme will meet the following objectives -

- i. With children:
  - a. To help them engage in learning according to their age
  - b. To create space for children to promote creative expressions and life-skills among them.
- ii. With youth:
  - a. An institutional support to the youth to encourage and help them continue their education.
  - b. To provide a mentorship support to the youth to help them pursuing their aspirations and making informed decisions
  - c. An improved understanding of progressive and child-centered education theories and praxis.
  - d. A grassroots experience which will result in better critical understanding of their society and polity.
- iii. Community:
  - a. Through supplementary classes, we continue to engage with the community in order to encourage them to actively play an active role in the education of their wards.

The performances of the fellows will be assessed on the basis of the improved learning level of children, their role in improving the participation of parents in the education of their wards, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills during the programme. This will be assessed by the programme team.

A supporting system will be in place to provide the fellows a need-based and timely on-field support.

### **Capacity building and On-field Support to the Fellows:**

After the selection process is complete, the fellows will undergo a capacity building programme organized by Gramin Shiksha Kendra which will help them build understanding on working with children and core life-skills crucial for their growth. The training programme will be implemented in a phased-manner to cover the necessary elements of the fellowship programme.

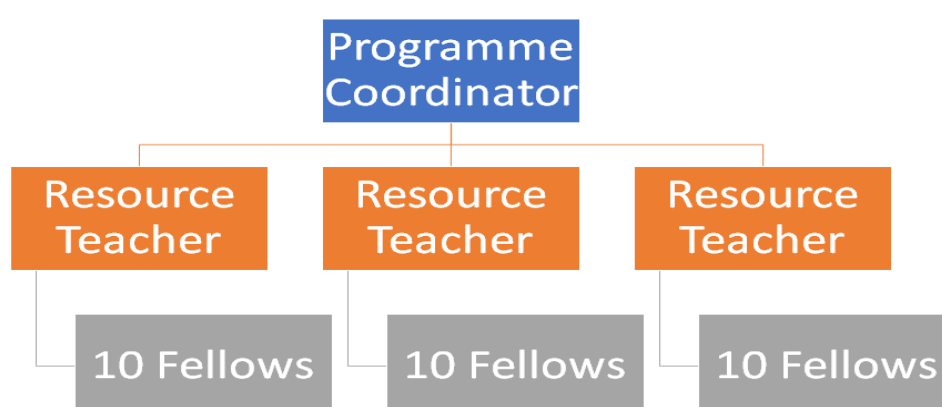
The training programme will be designed to capacitate the fellows on the following components –

1. Philosophy of education - values, aims, pedagogy
2. Working with children- methodology, ethics, child protection, inclusion
3. Classroom processes - organizing groups, managing classrooms, transaction process, planning and evaluation
4. Subject-specific activities and planning - Language and Mathematics, Arts, Environment Science, Sports

5. Civic engagement: participation of SMCs, engaging with panchayats, looking at entitlements-scholarships, support etc.
6. Research and methodologies
7. Career planning, Time management, Gender sensitization, Digital and Media Literacy, Financial Literacy, Gender

**Monthly meetings with fellows:** There will be monthly planning and review sessions conducted with the fellows which will focus on addressing the challenges faced by fellows during their work with children and community.

**Programme Organogram:**



**Academic Support to the Government Schools**

GSK's resource teachers will be providing on-field support to the fellows to address the challenges to be faced by the fellows. The resource teachers will also be responsible to work directly with the government school teachers to improve the environment of STEM education in the government-run schools by demonstrating and supporting the teachers in implementing effective teaching and learning methods with children.

Our resource teacher will visit a government school in 2 weeks (twice a month). During the visit, (s)he will facilitate the classroom sessions with government-school teachers.

**On-field activities:**

The fellows will be engaged on the field almost 3.5 hours a day. There will be 2 hours of supplementary academic sessions with children who are enrolled in primary grades of government schools. The classroom sessions will be followed by planning and evaluation and community visits.

**Research Work:** The fellows will be expected to complete a research project in a duration of 3 months. The research objective will be assigned to the fellows by GSK, who then are supposed to conduct a study in their respective village community.

**Enhancing Community Participation Using Forum Theatre - Theatre of the Oppressed:** In order to strengthen the community collectives (SMCs), we will work through Forum Theatre, to create spaces within the community for dialogue among members, geared towards helping them question the existing state of affairs in the education ecosystem and act to resolve the problems causing poor quality of schooling.

For the same, we have partnered with *Jana Sanskriti* (<http://jana-sanskriti.letsendorse.org/>), a grassroots theatre collective and global leader in Forum Theatre to help us build a team of youth from the local community of Ranthambhor to work on the issues related to Education.

**Monitoring and Evaluation framework:**

	Objective	Indicators	Means of Verification	Remarks
<b>Children</b>	To help them reach at an age-appropriate learning level	Grades in the academic assessment conducted through the CCE.	Portfolio of children	
		Improvement in learning level in comparison to baseline academic results	Grades in the baseline assessment	
		Focus on thinking and learning as opposed to rote learning	Planning and execution of academic sessions	Planning can be assessed with the help of planning register of fellows; the execution of lesson plans can be assessed through observation by the programme team.
	To create space for children to promote creative expressions and life-skills among them	Number of co-curricular sessions with children	Programme Report	
		Participation level of children in co-curricular activities	Portfolio of children	Participation Level: (A: Self, B: With support, C: No participation)
		Creative work by children	Portfolio of children	

<b>Fellow</b>	An institutional support to the youth to encourage and help them continue their education.	Fellows completing their Bachelors and enrolled for the Masters	Alumni Database	
	To help them pursue their aspirations in their career and make informed decisions.	Fellows opting for the career they choose for themselves	Alumni Database	
	An improved understanding of progressive and child-centered education theories and praxis	Conducive learning environment at the centres	Observation; Attendance and participation of children at the centres	
	A grassroots experience which will result in better critical understanding of their society and polity.	Change in the perspective of fellows towards the development of their community	Interviews with the fellows	
		Fellows opting for their career in development sector	Alumni Database	
	<b>Community</b>	Participation of the Community in the education of their wards	Regularity of children at the centre	Attendance Register
		Attendance of the parents during SMC and parents' meetings	Attendance records of the meetings	
		The kind of issues raised and followed-up by parents	Minutes of SMC and Parents meetings	



	Participation of School Management Committees	Improved participation of SMCs in the functioning of schools	SMC-based RBM tool	
	Participation of the community in the Forum Theatre performances	Number of interventions by spect-actors	Intervention Register	

### **Fellowship – A platform for the institutional growth of adolescent girls**

One of the objectives of the Fellowship programme is to create a platform for the adolescent girls who have graduated from senior secondary schools and are willing to continue their education in pursuit of fulfilling their aspirations. One of the important criteria for the RSFP is to have a strength of girls in a fellowship batch a minimum of 50%.

The fellowship will provide an institutional support to our alumni girls to develop critical thinking about their society and polity in order to challenge and overcome the oppressive forces hindering their growth. There will be 21 girls in the first batch of the RSFP. Out of these 21 girls, we will also have three girls from our first batch (2016-17) of the *Umang* programme who have now cleared class 12<sup>th</sup> exams and currently pursuing their Bachelors.