Age appropriate enrollment in government/government aided schools in Kolkata

**Background:**

About 4.3% of children in urban areas are out-of-school. These include children in slums, children on the street and working children. The tracking of urban out-of-school children is often a major issue due to shifting of slums, and frequent migration. Prioritization on urban planning, replicating good practices on urban based intervention, adopting flexible approach on setting up alternative education centres, involving NGOs and civic authorities and coordinated effort of education departments and municipal agencies have been the main strategies in addressing the issues relating to urban out-of-school children.

In Kolkata, this urgency to enroll all children in school and provide them with 'access' to education resulted in a citywide survey in 1999[[1]](#footnote-1) that included interviews with parents as well as an assessment of the number of spaces available in existing government educational institutions (government schools and non-formal education centres). In the 141 wards surveyed there were 44,646 out-of-school children in the 5-9 age range. Among other things, parents were asked to give their reasons for no sending their children to school: their responses commonly focused on their inability to meet school related expenses (books, uniforms, etc.) and that school was 'boring', but they rarely said that schooling is irrelevant.

Although several steps are being initiated by the state government to impart primary education to all, the annual status report on education shows that the state’s average dropout rate is worsening the condition of education in the state. Records from state government shows that from **120 million** children aged between 6 to 14 years who are going to school in the state, **60 million** out of them drop their school education before reaching 10th grade. This makes the **dropout rate of 50%**, which is very high and needs immediate attention .

**Present scenario of Govt. schools:**

* Poor quality education leads to irregular attendance and eventually to dropping out.
* Improper student teacher ratio.
* School teachers often get involved in different activities like census and election.
* Poorly trained teachers provide passive learning, they preferably encourage rote learning.
* Despite laws still children experience corporal punishment.
* Though RTE ensured continuous comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)but teachers are not trained enough to execute that properly, as a result children are affected due to improper evaluation.
* Lack of parents’ participation in monitoring and governance is another hindrance to improve the delivery of primary education .
* School teachers with large classes engage only with those children sitting at the front of the class and ‘clever’ students. Students, who attend school but are not in age proper competency level become ‘silently excluded’. They find it difficult to cope with indifference from teachers and little or no support for learning at home.
* Humiliation and insults, and many grow to fear going to school. Children are not dropping out of school, they are being literally pushed or beaten out of school.

Considering the problems faced by students of Kalighat and Lockgate area Tomorrow's Foundation (TF) started a collaborative intervention in the year 1994 – 1995, with KMC. The collaboration was possible because it was a strategic partnership on a ‘win-win model’. Under this model TF offered need-based manpower support, qualitative improvement in teaching by training of the KMCP teachers, free mid-day meal for the students and community linkage for reducing the drop-out rate. In return, TF sought permission for conducting evening tutorial classes for the KMCP Students in a KMCP school in Kalighat known as Dharmadas Trust Model School (DTMS). The experiment undertaken jointly by GO-NGO Partnership at DTMS, proved to be effective. In 1999 UNESCO declared Tomorrow’s Foundation as a model organisation in West Bengal. In 1994 DTMS had only 17 students, today it has 255 students, 95% of them regularly attend their classes. Mid day meal was pioneered by TF in DTMS. It has shown very positive results. Today the school is with full strength, attendance and punctuality has improved to its desired level. After initiation of SSA, KMC mid-day meal was started in all KMC schools.

**Present Proposal:**

Providing Resource Room Teaching to 3 Govt. School. . Students up to Class V who are not in proper competency level as per their age will get the service. To minimize the dropout rate ,develop required skills and enhance the retention rate students have been assisted with bridging methodologies .Teachers also have been capacited with learning tools and techniques.

**Highlights of the present proposal:**

* The proposal is based on 14 years of successful and much appreciated intervention.
* Instead of running parallel education centers the intervention proposed intends to compensate the efforts of Government so as to establish sustainable and quality institutions for the poor.
* The long term impact of the proposed project would bridge the gap between standards of education provided to the well offs and poor.
* It is expected that a successful replication of a 14 years old experiment would result into macro level policy decisions benefiting the education of urban children from deprived background.
* Instead of “reinventing the wheel” the proposed intervention would ensure that the learning of 14 years and successful models from all over the country would be used effectively.
* Teaching learning processes to be adopted under the proposed project would focus on developing the basic skills for those students who are not in age proper competency level in primary stage so that the students face fewer challenges in the higher classes.
* School teachers will be capacited with different tools and techniques so that in future they could continue resource room teaching for the needy ones.
* Regular sharing with parents would increase their participation in monitoring and governance to improve the delivery of primary education .

**Following preparedness of TF will realize the above said intervention**:

* **Teachers’ manual prepared on activity based learning** .- On activity based learning methodology manual has been prepared by teachers. Training team also has experience of conducting trainings for Chattrishgar govt. porta cabin teachers as well as various in house trainings.
* **Learning tools prepared** – On the basis of minimum level of learning tools has been prepared on language and numeric by teachers. Those tools also applied on huge no. of student from Chattrishgar govt. schools to identify the learning levels and also report shared with state education dept.

* **Activity based learning methodologies applied in Tomorrow’s Foundation Model** **School:**  The Model School is a Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) recognized school, where innovating and play way methods are used, to educate deprived children.Model  school uses child-friendly educational aids to foster self-learning and allows a child to study according to his/her aptitude and skill. Special curriculam based on ABL is designed for the children so that education to them does not seem to be drudgery but something to look forward to and enjoy. As a result retention rate for last two years are 100%.

**Intervention Strategies:**

**Teaching Learning:** Teaching learning practiced in Govts chools are poor as any other government school of the country. The children hardly enjoy their day in school. As a result very little actual learning takes place and children do not even acquire basic skills like reading, writing and comprehension properly. Teaching learning processes to be adopted under the proposed project would focus on developing the basic skills right from primary stage so that the students face less challenges in the higher classes.

**Joyful Learning:** Apart from being focused on developing basic skills joyful methods will be adopted for teaching, learning and evaluation. Group and peer learning, group evaluations, continuous positive reinforcements will be organized to encourage willful participation.

**Implimenting bridging techniques**: Students those are not age proper competency level will be identified through learning tool application. Identified groups will be assisted through bridging tools and techniques to minimize the learning gap with in 7 months.

**Active Involvement of Parents:** Parents will be involved in activities like monitoring of progress, attendance and monitoring

**Involvement of Teachers:** School teachers will be involved in the programme.Point teacher will be selected from them ,regular sharing will be done with help of her .Monthly meeting will be organized to share the outcomes. By 3rd year they will be capacited with tools and techniques .

**Advocacy:** Advocacy will be started with Govt/KMC from 3rd  year to acknowledged by Govt. as Resource Centre.

**Project Activities:**

1. **Meeting with headmaster & other teachers:** Objectives of the programme will be shared with them.They will be requested to submit a list of target group .They will be asked to allow the same premises for resource teaching during day/evening time.If necessary permission will be taken from CLRC or Chief Education Manager (K.M.C).
2. **Teacher selection & training**: For language and mathematics required no. of teachers will be selected on basis of experience and qualification. Handholding will be done on bridging techniques.
3. **Baseline study on present achievement level:** Baseline study on present achievement level of enlisted children not in age appropriate class will be conducted. As per the results targets and strategies will be fixed for each learner.
4. **Learner wise Planning:** Learner wise planning will be prepared so as to facilitate the process of accelerated learning and mainstreaming in time. The planning document will be monitored every week and remedial step is to be taken immediately.
5. **Periodic Evaluation:** Apart from weekly verification of achievements vis-à-vis learner wise planning monthly evaluations will be conducted to understand the progress made by the learners. Accordingly, remedial steps will be taken to achieve the objectives of children from the older age group.
6. **Periodic sharing of progress with concerned school teachers:** School teachers will be gradually involved through periodic sharing of student’s progress. They will be informed about the progress in monthly meeting.Point teacher will be selected from them and regular sharing will be done through her.
7. **Placing children in age appropriate class:** As per learner wise planning after achieving the age proper level children will be placed in proper class. Records will be be maintained properly.
8. **Application of learning achievement tools :** In 3rd year advocacy will be done on basis of previous 2years achievements for application of learning achievement tools on other Govt. schools in that locality & report sharing with concerned authorities.
9. **Advocacy:** Advocacy will be started with Govt/KMC from 3rd  year to acknowledged by Govt. as Resource Centre.

**Plans for Sustainability:**

The project aims at capacity building of Govt. teachers, creating positive environment in the targeted school, creating a strong rapport between the school and the beneficiary community. The sustainability of the project precisely depends on these aspects.

Participation of teachers in the programmes through regular sharing as well as handholding, change in teaching learning process, adoption of good practices, timely and appropriate remedial actions would ensure that a culture of serving the students in appropriate manner is established in the school.

A strong rapport with the school and community would ensure that all children are enrolled at the right age, they attend schools regularly and their problems are addressed both at school and in their homes. Regular parent teacher meeting, , sharing of plans, counseling of parents and students would help in creating this rapport. This process will also lead to improved faith of the community towards the targeted schools and this improved faith would ensure that the initiatives taken in the schools are continued for a longer period of time or beyond the project period.

**Cost estimate for one year:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cost Heads** | **Total Unit** | **Frequency** | **Unit cost** | **Total cost** |
| Teacher salary | 6 | 12 | 4000 | 288000 |
| Travel Expenses | 3 | 12 | 200 | 7200 |
| Total Programme Cost |  |  |  | 295200 |

1. Education Regimes in Contemporary India: By Radhika Chopra, Patricia Jeffery, Helmut Reifeld [↑](#footnote-ref-1)