



Seva Mandir

Transforming lives through democratic and participatory development

**Ensuring Quality Education to Out of School Children
through
Shiksha Kendras (Bridge Schools)**



Proposal to ASHA Danbury

Seva Mandir | 2020-21

Executive Summary

ASHA Danbury has generously supported education of out of school children over the last few years. This proposal seeks a continuation of support to ensure education to over 450 tribal children in 2020/21 through Shiksha Kendras (Bridge Schools)

Shiksha Kendras provide access to quality education to children of age 6-14 years in tribal and rural areas of Udaipur and Rajsamand district in southern Rajasthan.

About Seva Mandir

Seva Mandir is one of India's leading development nonprofit organizations. It currently works with 4,35,000 people across 1,300 villages of southern Rajasthan, where over 70% of the population relies on subsistence agriculture and most people live below poverty line. For 50 years, Seva Mandir has worked in partnership with these people, to improve their material well-being, and to build stronger and more ethical communities.

Through its programs on governance, health, education, sustainable use of natural resources, women's empowerment, youth development, childcare and social enterprise, Seva Mandir makes a tangible and transformative impact. It reaches out to 47,000 disadvantaged children through quality education, 11,000 women and children through health services; providing food security and sustainable livelihoods to thousands of families achieve through rehabilitation of hundreds of acres of land; and financial independence and gender equality to 11,000 women through women's groups and lending cooperatives.

Why Shiksha Kendra

In the remote rural and tribal areas of Udaipur and Rajsamand districts, southern Rajasthan, access to education is a huge problem. Government run schools are unable to service the rural population efficiently due to the remoteness of most communities, with many centres understaffed and under resourced, or located many miles away from small villages and hamlets. This issue has led to many children being kept away from school and work in an attempt to support their family's incomes. One result of this is that many children remain illiterate or having a very low understanding of language and maths, catalysing the devastating cycle of poverty.

Shiksha Kendras – The Bridge Schools

In response to this destructive situation, Seva Mandir runs its Shiksha Kendra Education Centre programme. Shiksha Kendras are 'bridge-schools' that offer education at a primary level to children aged between 6 and 14 years old, who have never attended school or have dropped out entirely. The Bridge Schools offer an engaging, active and quality syllabus created by Seva

Mandir, with the primary aim being to ensure that the children are able to read, write and articulate in Hindi alongside understanding fundamental mathematical concepts. Recently, English language classes have started to be introduced into these schools.

Currently, 138 SKs are in function and reaching out to 5096 children.

Bridge Schools are set up in remote communities once a need has been identified. This happens once Gram Samuhs (village groups formed and facilitated with the help of Seva Mandir) approach Seva Mandir with a proposal to create a Bridge School in their area. When the proposal has been received, it is then verified by Seva Mandir by visiting the proposed area to fully assess the need. Once the Bridge Schools



has started, the Gram Samuh will recommend qualified and eligible local people to become teachers, which will again be verified by Seva Mandir. The overall monitoring of the Bridge Schools is conducted at the village level, including the review of the teacher's performance.

To ensure that the Bridge Schools fulfil their purpose, a number of systems has been put in place;

- All teachers receive full training in academic practices to assure that they can deliver quality education to the children.
- A management system has been put in place that promotes enthusiasm for teaching and that creates an ecosystem of accountability affirms the Bridge Schools will be run efficiently and successfully.
- A camera monitoring system to ensure that the centers are being open on time, during the allocated weekly schedule. The teacher must take a photo of themselves and the class at the start and the end of each day. At the end of each month, the photos are sent to the head of education for the specific block, where the photos are analyzed to check the date and time.
- Teachers are from the local areas, hence comprehend the context and challenges that the children face. The medium of teaching is thus also conducted in the local dialects along with Hindi.

- The children receive education until grade 4 in Shiksha Kendras and then join government schools in a higher grade. Students from Bridge Schools tend to perform better than their peers in government schools, receiving higher grades and having more advanced literacy skills. Because the Bridge Schools are more successful in providing education, rural community's attitudes have become more positive towards education and there is consistent enrolment every year. Encouragingly, the proportion of students who are girls has increased over time, which is an indicator of a change in traditional attitudes towards their access to education, where before the girls would be kept at home to work or look after younger siblings whilst the parents work.
- Examinations are held each year to assess the children's progress. They are split into four levels, depending on their results. Level 0 is given to children who have no literacy skills, and as they improve, they will attempt to reach Level 3, which is assigned to those who are able to read and write simple texts and understand basic mathematical concepts such as multiplication and division.
- To ensure that children who have graduated from the Bridge Schools get to remain in higher education institution, they are tracked periodically. Team members from Seva Mandir and Bridge School teachers continue contact with the child's family and also with their new school.

The Alternative Strategy of education during Covid 19

The prevailing Covid-19 situations seriously interrupted the flow of education through centre-based teaching and learning process. Our efforts thus, become critical & essential, at the same time for retaining them in the safety net, ensuring their education, well being, health & hygiene and also supporting their family as a unit to achieve the core objective of the programme.

The educational activities that involve children' gathering is completely on hold as per the government directives. However, education is a must for the children to be remained connected with daily learning outcomes and without them; they will definitely engage into other household activities, earning livelihood and grazing domestic animals or may drop out permanently. We are continuously devising alternative models to engage children constructively and make some level of teaching

Proposed Activities followed in alternate strategy plan

As per the evolved strategy considering COVID situation, below are the activities planned:

1- Providing Educational Support & Hygiene Kit

- Provision of timely study material kit distribution for every child (Kit will be prepared based on learning levels of students)
- Small group teaching through daily visits of teachers.
- Teachers will be involved with parents for creating a dialogue regarding their contribution on continuity of their children towards education

Regular Capacity Building of Teachers

- Quarterly meeting Virtual/Online and Offline training in small group at block and zone level
- Timely TLM kit and reading learning material for Teachers

2- Hygiene and WASH Awareness

Regular dialogue with children and families Information and awareness targeting children, family and community at large.

3- Implementation Plan & Responsibility of Teachers

- Each and every instructor will work for six hours as earlier.
- Child's home visit is mandatory in their daily routine. Every instructor will have to complete work and maintain their daily work plan and register as per their daily/weekly schedule.
- The teachers will have to stay/engage with children in each child's group or location. No group has to teach more than 4-5 children at a time. The mode of teaching will be followed by activity-based learning.
- Provide the children with study materials and stationeries time to time so that they may continue learning from home. Study kits will be distributed in small kits in multiple rounds.
- The teachers will have to join the online mode or offline meeting in a small group for their capacity building part whenever required. And prepare the monthly progress report.
- Strictly follow the corona safety rules and build regular communication around Covid-19 awareness (wearing mask, appropriate distance and frequently hand wash) with key stakeholders during their daily home visit.

4- **Monitoring:** To supervise the above roles & responsibilities of the teachers the following mechanism will be followed:

- Weekly planning and monthly report submitted by teachers
- Camera monitoring: to ensure teachers and children regularity on daily basis. **Rules of taking photos:** - Three photos are mandatory to capture with children where

Anudeshak/teachers should be covered in each and every photo taken during daily intervention.

- Photo 1: During the starting of educational activities with group of children (at the first location/place)
- Photo 2: During starting of educational activities with group of children (at the second location/place)
- Photo 3: During starting of educational activities with group of children (at the third location/place)

Budget

S. No	Budget Head	Details	Budget for 15 Shiksha Kendras
1	Instructor Stipend	Rs. 5500 for 4 months for 15 instructors/teachers for 15 bridge schools	330,000
2	Instructor Meeting	Rs. 600 per instructor. 1 training/ meetings in a quarter for 15 teachers	9,000
3	Rent & Repair	Rs. 300 per month/ school for 15 schools	18,000
4	Staff support	Rs. 30000 per month for 4 months; monitoring, overall field implementation, evaluation, subject expert etc.	120,000
B	Sub Total		477,000
5	Support Cost	6%; accounting, reporting, IT support, photography, building maintenance, communication, travel, monitoring, etc.	28,620
	Grand Total		505,620

Nobel Prize 2019

Seva Mandir's research association with Nobel Prize 2019 winners Abhijeet Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer began in 1996 and set out to improve the health and educational status of remote rural and tribal communities in our region.

In an effort to improve the conditions in our work area, Seva Mandir partnered with Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer to conduct a series of action-research projects using the Randomised Control Trial (RCT) methodology. The first experiment showed that increasing from one to two the number of teachers in Seva Mandir's village schools did not necessarily increase their efficiency, but that a camera-monitoring system linked to teachers' pay could greatly increase their attendance rate. Another study showed that immunisation rates could be increased by offering families small incentives (such as lentils or utensils) to ensure that children attended Seva Mandir's regular immunisation camps.

The results were remarkable: teacher attendance increased in Seva Mandir's Shiksha Kendras (bridge schools) leading to nearly all schools being open 25 days a month, and immunisation rates from 3% to 38%.

For Seva Mandir, the partnership helped to enhance the effectiveness not only of those programmes studied but also of future programmes and showed the importance of evidence-based planning. We continue to use and develop the outcomes in our programmes, and camera monitoring has been expanded to other interventions.

