

SUPPORTING EDUCATION FOR RURAL CHILDREN

(THROUGH SHISKHA KENDRAS, SAHYOG KENDRAS AND
RESIDENTIAL LEARNING CAMPS)
IN UDAIPUR DISTRICT

Annual Report

(1st July 2010 – 30th June, 2011)

SUPPORTED BY –

Asha for Education



Submitted By:



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BACKGROUND

The Education programme of Seva Mandir endeavors to ensure education for out-of-school children and empowers communities to demand and collaborate with the government to secure better education for their children. In five blocks of Udaipur district, the programme helps the village communities run the following activities:

- Shiksha Kendras (SK) formerly called Non-formal education centres
- Action research projects
- Seasonal residential learning schools
- Youth resource centres (YRC)
- Activity Centres in Government Schools

Of the 5 blocks, Asha for Education supported the SK programme in Badgaon block starting on 1st October, 2007 for one year. Then from 1st February, 2009, Asha for Education supported the major educational interventions in Badgaon which included Shiksha Kendras, activity cum tuitions centers and supporting 25 out-of-school children to attend three residential learning schools. From 1st July, 2010 the support was renewed for the following three components:

1. 23 Shiksha Kendras (rural schools), formerly known as Non Formal Education centres.
2. The continuation of 5 activities cum tuitions centers. These centers were set up in collaboration with government schools in Badgaon block.
3. Funding for at least 25 out of school children from Badgaon to attend two seasonal residential learning schools (out of the total three seasonal schools held in a financial year) organized by Seva Mandir.

An annual report on the three initiatives is given in the subsequent three sections below for the period 1st July 2010 – 30th June, 2011.

Shiksha Kendras

Introduction:

Seva Mandir works with village communities to establish Shiksha Kendras (SKs), in remote rural hamlets with the aim of providing access to quality education for out of school children between the ages of 6 and 14.

Given the dismal quality of schools, large numbers of children are out of school in certain pockets of deprivation. The few who attend school drop-out as they are unable to cope with the burden of non-comprehension. In this context, the SKs not only offer primary education but also ease the transition and retention of first generation learners to Government schools. The sound education provided at the SKs help the children become confident with their ability to learn. Evaluations of the SKs have shown high retention of children who pass from SKs to Government schools.

The objectives of the SK programme are:

1. To ensure quality education to out of school children, of marginalized communities who are deprived of education. A focused effort is made to help these children read and write independently with comprehension.
2. Provide these children with a strong educational foundation in order to prepare them for enrolment in regular government schools. It is hoped that these efforts will both aid the children in getting admission in government schools and improve their retention there.

SKs enable communities to become participatory in an alternative and meaningful education through the activities listed in this report. SKs help increase communities' value of education.

Current Status of SKs:

At present, there are 188 rural schools in all the five blocks of Seva Mandir. The total enrollment of children in these schools is **5,694**. **Badgaon block, with support from Asha for Education, currently has 22 centres with enrollment of 533 children out of which 273 are girls and 260 are boys.**

Zone wise details - the number of SKs

Zone	No. of Rural Schools/ SKs			Enrollment of children		
	July 2010	June 2011	Teachers	June 2011		
				Boys	Girls	Total
Delwara	4	5	6	69	66	135
Bagdunda	7	9	9	98	115	213
Dhar	2	2	2	28	26	54
Godach	1	1	1	12	6	18
Kadiya	8	5	5	53	60	113
Total	22	22	23	260	273	533

In reporting year 2010-2011, 2 SKs were closed and 2 new were opened.

Reasons for opening SKs:

Dang fala (Mala) - Dang fala's SK was opened because many children from the hamlet had attended Seva Mandir's Seasonal Residential Learning Schools and wished to continue their education. However, because government schools were far from their homes, it was not possible for them to join those. The community requested that Seva Mandir open a center in their hamlet.

Negadia - A SK was opened in response to a Seva Mandir survey about out-of-school children conducted in 2010 in their hamlet. Seva Mandir conducted the survey in order to better assess the region's educational needs. The survey reported that many children in this area do not attend the available government schools even if they live close by because of corporal punishment and the lack of quality education in the schools.

Reasons for Closure of SKs:

Selu - The instructor of this center was very irregular and hence the center was closed. The children from this center were sent to the nearest Government school. Seva Mandir was able to aid in the transition to the government school because it has an Activity Center in the school. The instructor of the Activity Center was very helpful in getting children enrolled in the government school.

Ranawada: Initially the Ranawada center was opened due to its remoteness from the government school. During this reporting period Ranawada closed due a positive reason, namely that most of the children from this center were enrolled in government school about 1 km away. After much discussion the center was closed because of a lack of an appropriate teacher, lack of parent support and low attendance.

Activities at Shiksha Kendras:

SKs give children the foundation and skills to attain higher education. The programme aims to help children attain basic skills in Hindi and mathematics through informal as well as peer learning processes. The ideology is that every child has a unique set of skills and pace through which s/he learns. The SKs work to cater to these needs.

Apart from the basic activities above, SKs have a holistic approach which includes the following activities which help children understand the importance of education through a cultural context. Many out-of-school children do not get to experience festivals and holidays with their peers in a learning environment. Instructors provide important cultural context surrounding the celebrations.

Children's Festival – Bal Mela

Malariya - In month of February 2011, a children's festival was organized in the Government Upper Primary School of Malariya village with a total of 180 participants. Children from SK, Government school, Balwadi and people from surrounding villages participated in the event. The theme of the festival was education and the stalls provided activities on language (Hindi) and mathematics. The children also enjoyed games and sports activities. At the end of the program, candies were distributed to them as a token of appreciation for their participation. Teachers of Government school and village committee members played a vital role in managing the whole festival. Investment of time in the preparation of such activities creates ownership of the children's futures.

Pipad - In month of March 2011, a children's festival was also organized in Pipad village in a Government school where Seva Mandir has an activity center running in a Government school. Children from the SK, Government school, Bal Manch and people from the surrounding villages participated in the festival. The theme of the festival was education and the stalls provided activities on language (Hindi), mathematics, science etc. Children performed dances, sang songs and

poems and hosted plays as part of their cultural education. Teachers of the Government school looked after the management of the event and the village committee arranged light snacks for all participants. The festival was a huge success and the children asked for the same festival every year.

Republic day - Republic day (26th January) was celebrated at all SKs centers in the block. Cultural activities were held where children of SKs performed in various plays, sang songs and recited poems. Parents and village committee members participated and encouraged the children.

Admission festival - Admission festivals were organized at 4 centers: Chhali, Barwalia, Malariya and Karawadi. Cultural programmes by the children were the center piece of the program which also included activities such as vocabulary games such as the formation of sentences from set of words as well as other logical games. All the activities were organized and arranged by the parents and children collectively. This festival helped to increase enrollment at the respective centers and engage parents as participants in their children's education.

Parent-teacher meetings - 2 meetings per center in the year were held with parents and issues such as deposition of fees and learning levels of and improvement in the academic performance of children were discussed with them. Sometimes meetings are combined with other events in order to engage parents who are already attending the meetings.

Children's Evaluations:

SK Children's Learning Level

To measure the extent to which SK students have been able to acquire new knowledge over the course of the year, standardized tests were conducted twice. The tests included a variety of questions ranging from text for reading comprehension, mathematical sums, pictures to identify, etc. Along with testing language and mathematics skills, children's knowledge of their surroundings and environment were also evaluated. The evaluation material was designed in an unbiased way taking into account the range of learning levels and abilities of the children. In the half yearly examinations held in December 2010 a total of 363 children appeared. 33 children attained level 3 and can now be termed as literate. 173 children are still in level 0 which indicates beginner's level.

Half-Yearly Evaluation –December 2010- Results

Level Attained				Total
0 ¹	1	2	3	
173	127	30	33	363

The final exam was conducted In June 2011. Only 19 students were found to be in level 0, down from 173 in December 2010. Further, in June 2011 72 children were considered literate, up from 33 in December 2010.

Yearly Evaluation – June 2011 - Results

Level Attained				Total
0	1	2	3	
19	204	67	72	362

159 children were common across both the evaluations in the SKs. Only one child scored at level III on the half yearly evaluation. The yearly exam showed marked improvement with 30% of the common children scoring in level III, thus being termed as literate.

In regard to their marks, the children improved from the half yearly to the yearly examination by an average of 17.29 points with 16 children making a 40 point or higher increase in overall marks scored from half yearly to yearly evaluation.

Half-Yearly Evaluation (Common Children) –December 2010- Results

Level Attained				Total
0	1	2	3	
21	89	51	1	159

¹ Children's progress was measured using learning levels. A child who barely read and write is at Level 0. This is considered Basic. A child who can read and write small words in Hindi and complete basic counting and simple math operations is at Level 1 & 2, this is considered Semi-Literate. A child who can write text in Language and complete in operations like multiplication, division etc. is placed in Level 3 and considered literate.

Yearly Evaluation (Common Children) – June 2011 - Results

Level Attained				Total
0	1	2	3	
3	68	39	49	159

Graduating to Government Schools:

Once the students of the SKs have had the initial foundation of reading, writing and mathematical abilities, they and their families are encouraged and assisted with enrollment in government schools. This year in the month July 2011 a total of 102 children (more than 18% of the total 560 children enrolled in SKs in 2009-2010 session) were enrolled in government schools.

The greatest number of children were admitted in class 6 (35 students) and class 5 (30 students). Of the 5th class students, 6 attended the SK since 2007, 1 since 2008 and 6 since 2009. Of the 6th class students 3 students attended the SKs since 2004, 2 since 2005, 1 since 2006 and 7 since 2007. This is a noteworthy success for the SKs because it shows that students, many of whom come to SKs with no prior education, were well prepared for entrance into higher level government classes. The table below gives class-wise enrollment data, by gender, of children in Government schools.

Graduating to Government Schools from SKs

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Total
Boys	7	11	9	1	18	30	76
Girls	3	-	6	-	12	5	26
Total	10	11	15	1	30	35	102

Capacity Building of Instructors:

Seva Mandir understands that children's education is greatly dependant on the instructors' abilities to teach. Therefore, Seva Mandir puts multifaceted effort into building the capacity of their instructors through training courses and instructor meetings. Particular importance is given to instructors sharing their ideas and learning from one another.

Certificate Course

This course intends to build the capacity of the SK instructors which has been an integral part of Seva Mandir's Education Programme. This certificate course, started in 2003, is conducted in collaboration with Vidya Bhawan².

Most of the instructors have only studied up to Class 8 and have no formal training to teach. The certificate course helps teachers improve their academic competencies. In direct correlation with their academic competency the course-work aims to increase the instructors' self-worth and value. The course aims to set up a mechanism that enables a continuous dialogue and interaction among instructors on academic and teaching issues.

The certification course is divided into three levels (Level I, II and III). The first level is focused around the reading-writing and mathematical skills expected from a class 5 student. This level has a section on the "child learning processes".

Level II is an advanced version of level I with the expectation that the instructors after completing level II become capable of teaching upper-primary classes. Level II concepts are more dense and abstract in comparison to level I. For example, level II has more inputs on the classroom processes that will help instructors understand the classroom teaching and learning and the ability to relate with learning theories.

Level III integrates classroom teaching with the larger issues of development and education. Level III focuses on building an understanding on child-development, sociology of education, further understanding of subjects, etc.

For the current group of instructors the measurable components of the certification course work were worksheets, tutorials and written exams. Assignments in the subjects of language, mathematics and classroom learning were administered. Tutorials were then offered to help the instructors with their assignments. The tutorials occurred in conjunction with the bi-monthly instructors' meetings held at their respective blocks. Participating instructors regularly submitted their assignments and attended the tutorial classes.

Initially 27 instructors were enrolled in the Certification Course. During the course, 7 teachers left the course for a number of reasons including the changing of instructors (within centers) and the closing of centers. 17 out of the remaining 20 instructors (85%) appeared for the final exam of the certificate course. 3 new instructors were appointed last year and were not enrolled in the certificate course because the course was approaching completion.

² Vidya Bhawan is a consortium of educational institutions with special expertise in elementary education.

	Level-I	Level-II	Level-III	Total
Enrolled	15	8	4	27
Left	5	2	0	7
Absent	2	1	0	3
Total Attended Exam	8	5	4	17

Out of the four instructors who completed level III, three passed the exams with marks of an average 86.79% on language, 84.03% on math and 87.78% on "Child Learning Process". These instructors completed all three levels of instruction over the course of 3 or more years.

Since 2003 Seva Mandir has repeatedly asked for feedback from instructors. The Badgaon Block instructors felt that after being enrolled in this course, their reading and writing skills improved. They are now able to understand the meaning of complex words used in a text and Mathematical concept of units, tens, fractions, ratio-proportion etc. have gone to a higher level. They also understood the "child learning process" which better equips them to teach effectively in the classroom.

Instructor Training

A one-week intensive residential training was held for the instructors during this reporting period. The trainings offered a platform for instructors to examine theoretical aspects of pedagogy and practical experience.

The training was held in March 2011 at K.V.K Badgaon in Udaipur. From Badgaon block 15 instructors participated: 2 new instructors, 10 from level I and 3 from level II. The training was offered for only new, level I and level II instructors.



Activity with number cards

The main two objectives of the training were:

1. To build the capacity of the instructors by strengthening their conceptual understanding in language and Math and

2. To share and disseminate (among each other) contextual knowledge learned through various teaching methods conducted in classes.

For the preparation of training, a Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted for four days from 15th to 18th February 2011. During the ToT, the topics and content for the instructor training were chosen. Resource people from Vidya Bhawan also provided guidance with regard to the curriculum of the training. Activities on teaching methods, engaging use of learning material and involving children in learning process, to be held with the instructors during the training were prepared collectively.

Instructor Meeting - In order to build the instructors' capacities through more regular contact with other teachers working in the same region and with the same populations, eight instructor meetings were organized during the reporting period. The aim of the meetings was to get the instructors' feedback and monitor their current status in their classrooms. Instructors shared their day-to-day concerns and problems during the meeting. The prime agendas addressed by the instructors were the collection of fees, how to increase parents' participation in parent-teacher meetings and how to create and submit monthly reports in a timely manner. One prevailing concern from instructors was in regard to the changed settings (date and time) of the camera memory. During the meetings the problem was addressed and the date and time were restored. The cameras were then sealed carefully so that no further tampering could be done. Discussions were also held with instructors whose pictures of the children's attendance were in question (low attendance, faulty pictures, etc.).

Community Ownership:

In addition to Seva Mandir's understanding that children's education is dependant on the instructors' abilities to teach, great stress is placed on community ownership of children's education. When a community is invested in their children's education, they stand a chance of continuing educational efforts from their impetus.

Shiksha Shulk

Each child attending the SK is charged a token fee of Rs. 100 every year. The fee is collected by the village communities. The fee accrues in a fund where the village development committees can authorize the use of funds on children's needs such as uniforms, lunch boxes, foot wear etc. In the reporting year, expected fees was Rs. 49,500/- and the actual collection was Rs. 34,995/- which was 70% of the total fee collected across all centres. The amount collected was mainly used for purchasing uniforms for children.

In some cases, the fee is waived for children who come from vulnerable and poor economic backgrounds. In order to enhance community involvement the village development committees hold the discretionary power for the waiver.

Zone wise collection of fees (March 2010-April 2011):

Zone	Number of Children	Number of exempt children	Expected Fees	Actual Fees Collected
Delwara	112	2	11000	8345
Bagdunda	216	34	18200	11050
Dhar	53	0	5300	3700
Godach	35	3	3200	2000
Kadiya	138	20	11800	9900
Total	554	59	49,500	34,995

Conclusion:

Our experience shows that conversations around education and pedagogy are changing in the field of rural education. More and more the people are now comparing and questioning the quality of education that is given in government schools. People are also beginning to organize informed community action to change the situation. To address such issues as employing adequate teachers in the government schools have been achieved through approaching the local panchayats or even demonstrating on the national highways. Through community ownership initiatives, capacity building of teachers and close monitoring of the SKs in Bagoan block Seva Mandir has contributed to the increased community value of education.

Case Study

Shiksha Kendra - Dhar

Child name - Panni Kumari

Child age - 13 years

Panni has 4 brothers and 3 sisters. Only she and her younger brother are in education net and both study at the Shiksha Kendra. She joined a government school in class 1. Because the teacher used to beat them, she left school.

Panni is a regular student of the Shiksha Kendra. She can read in Hindi and loves story books. In math she can do addition and subtraction. She also teaches her younger brother at home.

Panni's story illustrates the importance of the Shiksha Kendras as educational options for children. Not only is Panni educated in the Shiksha Kendra but she brings the knowledge, she gains, home to her siblings.

Case Study

Shiksha Kendra - Barvaliya
Shiksha Kendra Zone - Delwara
Child name - Kasni Bherulal
Child Age - 13 years

Kasni lives in Barvaliya Bhil Basti. Kasni lives with her married sister who is an instructor at a nearby Seva Mandir Baldwari (preschool). Kasni graduated from the Barvaliya Shiksha Kendra and then wished to study further. However, her parents were not ready to send her to school. After hearing that her parents were unwilling to send Kasni to school, Kasni's older sister tried to convince their parents. She suggested that they send Kasni to Kasturba Hostel in Nedach (A hostel for tribal girls who are pursuing education). And after many efforts Kasni's parents were ready to send her to the hostel and for further studies.



Kasni's educational struggles started from this point. When she arrived at the hostel the warden asked her, before admission to the hostel, to complete paper work for the hostel which included the signatures of the sarpanch, teacher etc. She was unable to complete the paperwork and was denied admission to the hostel. Her sister again intervened and came to Seva Mandir to ask for help. The education in charge of Badgaon block went to the hostel and conversed with the warden. The education in charge was not given satisfactory justification from the warden for Kasni's denied admission and therefore, went to the district government, completed all the formalities for Kasni and obtained reference letters from the sarpanch, medical certificate etc.

Finally Kasni was admitted in the hostel.

Kasni's story, and many like it, is an example of the positive results of team work, perseverance on behalf of marginalized and rural children's education. This case study also shows that an understanding of the importance of education, as exemplified by Kisan's sister's actions, can make a life-long impact.

**Along with Kasni, two other girls, Pooja and Nedha were also admitted to the hostel through the same process. Pooja and Nedha graduated from government school and also wished to pursue further studies.

Residential Learning Camps

Background:

The goal of the Residential Learning Camps is to enable the children to read and write independently and with comprehension. The target population of the program is out-of-school children aged 6 to 14 years (i.e. child laborers, children who have dropped out of school, children who have never been in school).

Seva Mandir organizes three Residential Learning Camps in one financial year. In the year 2010-2011 three camps were organized; May 5, 2010 to June 30, 2010, November 10, 2011 to January 08, 2011 and January 27, 2011 to March 15, 2011.



All the Residential Learning Camps were organized at the Dr. Mohan Singh Mehta rural training center, Kaya village. The Kaya training centre is 20 km away from Seva Mandir head quarters and the main city. It is well equipped with all basic amenities, has a lot of open space and greenery for children to play and explore in.

For the reporting period (July 2010- June 2011), Asha for Education supported 25 out-of-school children of Badgaon to attend two (out of the total three) camps held during November 10, 2011 to January 08, 2011 and January 27, 2011 to March 15, 2011.

Educational Background of Children:

34 unique children attended two Residential Learning Camps. 14 were school drop outs, 16 had never been previously in school, 3 were currently enrolled in school elsewhere and 1 did not provide data. When children were asked why were they out of school one of the main reasons given was the regular beatings in government schools. When asked about their present working status most of the children listed cattle grazing or were involved in domestic work.

Teachers Selection & training:

During the year 2010-2011, two recruitment processes were organized to find the qualified and promising teachers for the Residential Learning Camps. Each time, around 70 to 75 applicants applied. The selection included a written test followed by a personal interview.

The teachers who were selected attended a three-day residential orientation workshop and an eight-day focused training designed to build the teachers'

capacities on learning techniques in math and language, child psychology, and the overall responsibilities of teachers.

An average of 19 teachers, 7 female & 12 male, worked in the camp. From the Badgaon block one female & three male teachers were involved during the year. Camp also provided the platform for orientation & training of new instructors for the SKs & Activity Centers.

Story of change (Teacher)

Name- Roshini

Camps Worked – 2

Roshini worked for *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Government Elementary School) for 6 Months, teaching a class of 50 girls. After working there she realized that she wanted to pursue a degree in education and work for a non-profit. Her willingness to learn during the two camps was evidenced in her marked professional growth. Having already worked for a Government school, Roshini first came to the Residential Learning Camps believing that she knew everything there was to know about teaching. Because Seva Mandir's teaching approach and pedagogy are different from the Government Schools' techniques, Roshini struggled initially with the new teaching methodologies. Over the 2 camps Roshini quickly adapted to the new techniques and excelled.

Along with her professional growth, Roshini showed a tremendous amount of personal growth. She is from a difficult background, was married at an early age and does not have good relationship with her ex-husband and in-laws. Her divorce, especially at a young age, was also a hard-ship.

Roshini explained, since coming to the camp she felt a change in herself and is more at peace with herself and her past. She credits her interaction with the children, especially the group of girls from Kotra block, as a turning point. Throughout her time at the camp she has shown a lot of maturity and is now one of the children's favorite teachers.

Children Profile

From Badgaon block, a total of 34 children (22 girls and 12 boys) participated in two Residential Learning Camps from four villages (Mada, Malaria, Dang & Undithal).

Out of 34 children, 25 (17 girls and 8 boys) children attended both the camps while 9 children (5 girls and 4 boys) attended one camp.

School wise details:

Seasonal School	Total children who completed the school ³	Girls	Boys
School II: 5 November 10 to 5 January 2011	27	18	9
School III: 20 January 2011 to 25 February 2011	32	21	11

In the second school, out of 27 children, 19 children came for the first time, 8 continued from the first camp. In the third camp, 6 children were new, 1 repeated from the 1st camp, then dropped out for the second and attended the third, 25 repeated from the second camp and 7 who attended all three camps.

Learning process

The day-to-day operation of the camp involved a wide variety of learning activities targeted at giving children, with little or no exposure to education, an academic foundation.

A minimum of 6 hours per day was devoted towards classroom learning. Math and Hindi were taught with the supplement assistance of the *Nanhe Kadam Badthe Kadam*, workbooks developed by Seva Mandir. Every teacher adopted a method of teaching which was conducive for children of their class with the use of flash cards, stones, wooden sticks, story books, ganit mala (a fixed string of 100 beads to help children count), etc.

The class schedule changed each week in order to provide the teachers and children with variety in their daily routines. Also, once per week, the children attended an activity centre in a separate area on the camp grounds. The activity centre housed science experiments, educational toys, maps, globes and books. Additionally, a small library was set up where children could checkout books and pursue independent study.

³ In most seasonal schools, a higher number of children had joined in initially, but little less of them completed as either they returned home mid way either due to health issues or other reasons.

Activities in Camps:

Seva Mandir organized many cultural, health related and exposure activities for children who attended the camps.

Dental Check up

Darshan Dental College & Hospital, a highly recognized institution in Rajasthan, organized a dental check up conducted by four student doctors and their assistants on June 26th, 2010. The student doctors referred one child for further treatment.

Eye Check up

In collaboration with *Alakh Nayan Mandir*, a well known hospital in Udaipur, an eye check up was organized. Five children were identified with vision problems and corrective actions were taken including the children receiving free glasses.

Celebration of Children's Day

On November 14th 2011, 'children's day' was celebrated at the camp. A puppet show was organized and a movie was screened (*Tare Zameen Pe*). The film created a social commentary surrounding the learning disability of dyslexia. It showed children and adults alike that one's disability does not have to define their opportunities in life.

Adolescent Health Training

In collaboration with the health program of Seva Mandir, 50 adolescent girls, all above 12 years of age were trained on reproduction including physical and mental changes during adolescence such as menstruation, menstrual hygiene and nutrition.

Games

Every Sunday was a fun day for children. On Sundays no classes were held. Instead various competitions were organized such as musical chairs, chocolate searches, balloon blasts, etc. Both the children and the teachers participated enthusiastically in these events.

New Year Celebration

To welcome the New Year, the Residential Learning Camps was decorated with balloons, colorful patterns and designs (rangoli). The children and teachers danced together and celebrated New Year in this special way.

Health & Nutrition

In order to address the problems of anemia and malnutrition common in children who attended the camp, fresh fruits and vegetables were included in the regular diet of each child. As a nutritional supplement the children were provided fresh soymilk three times a week. A positive change during the year 2010-2011 was observed in the children's health.

Dr. R.L. Suman, a pediatrician, conducted regular health check ups of all the children. Children mainly suffered from common ailments such as a seasonal cold or cough and were provided with adequate treatment. Under the doctor's supervision, 2 to 3 highly anemic children were hospitalized. After receiving appropriate treatment their condition improved and they continued their work at seasonal school. These children were also given oral re-hydration salts and drinks. By the end of the camps the children were noticeably healthier.

Visit of students from St. Christopher School, UK

A number of volunteers from both India and abroad attended each camp. The volunteers helped by conducting games, organizing activities, teaching sessions on health or hygiene etc.

In both the second and third camps a group of 17 high-school students from St. Christopher's School, England, volunteered for 3 to 4 days.

St. Christopher School brings their children to Seva Mandir twice every year for the specific purpose of visiting the Residential Learning Camps. The students prepare a number of activities well in advance and conduct sessions on science, math, English, music, arts & crafts and games & sports.

This visit provided both the camp children and St. Chris's children with an enriching cross-cultural experience. The sessions were focused on learning disabilities. Additionally, the teachers from St. Christopher's contributed by organizing teaching sessions for Residential Learning Camps teachers & Seva Mandir staff.

Picnic

On March 05, 2011 the camp children were taken to Gulab Bagh (Rose Garden), a local park & zoo in Udaipur where they saw many animals for the first time in their lives.

Closing Ceremonies

Every Residential Learning Camp has a different way of organizing the closing ceremony.

At the end of the second camp a "*Camp Fire*" was organized. During the event children performed local songs and dances and described their experiences at the school. Mr. Narayanlal Ameta (General Secretary, Seva Mandir), Ms. Angela Jacob (In-charge, Education Program), and parents of the attending children came to the event and greatly appreciated the children's efforts and talents.

At the end of the last camp, a one day "*Bal Mela*" (Children's festival) was organized. The children put up different stalls and games including oil painting, mask making, jewelry making, spoon races, mehndi (henna tattoo), ring tossing,

etc. At the end of the day, the children were presented with certificates of learning levels.

Impact:

Assessments of Children's Learning Level

At the beginning of each camp, through informal interactions, small group discussions and a formal evaluation, the teachers conducted a pre-test of the children. Based on the information gathered through these tests, the learning ability of the children was established and they were divided into small groups of 10 to 12 children. Groups were then assigned according to the children's learning levels and the teacher's abilities. After one month a mid - term formal test was conducted. The teachers thus adopted appropriate learning methods.

At the end of the each camp, children were given a final evaluation exam. The final exam was divided into two sections with 50 marks each for language and math.

Evaluation Results of All Children, Camp-Wise:

Camp	Total Children	Level C⁴	Level B	Level A
Camp 2	27	17	8	2
Camp3	32	3	21	8

Results of Children Common in all Camps

Out of 34 children who attend both the camps, 24 were common. The progress made by these children across both camps can be find in the table below:

	Level C	Level B	Level A
Camp 2	16	7	1
Camp 3	1	18	5

⁴ Children's progress was measured using learning levels. A child who barely read and write is at Level C. This is considered Basic. A child who can read and write small words in Hindi and complete basic counting and simple math operations is at Level B. Level B is considered Semi-Literate. A child who can write text in Language and complete in operations like multiplication, division etc. is placed in Level A and considered literate.

The preceding table justifies the academic growth made by children across the two camps. After first camp many children left to attend Government school and with fresh children coming in second camp, a noticeable increase in children standing at level C was observed. Credit should go to the dedicated and enthusiastic instructors who worked hard with these children and in mere course of 4 months they raised the academic level of these children.

Mainstreaming to Government Schools

In August Seva Mandir conducted a survey to follow up on the children who attended the camps. In that study Seva Mandir learned that out of the 34 total children, 29 children were enrolled in school after they attended at least one of the camps.

The school enrollment details are below:

School Details	Number of Children
Seva Mandir Shiksha Kendra	8
Government Primary School	7
Government Upper Primary School, Mada	6
Government Upper Primary School, Malariya	7
Private School	1
Total	29

14 children were enrolled in class one and 5 in class two. The class wise details are below:

Standard	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Total
Children	14	5	4	3	2	1	29

Out of the remaining 5 children, 4 children do domestic work in their homes or take care of the younger siblings and 1 child works with cattle. Seva Mandir will motivate them to attend government schools with regular follow-up with the children, discussions with their parents and reach-out efforts from the local SKs.

Helping Strengthen the Retention Level in Regular School:

Even when interventions (such as residential learning camps) are made available to help children catch up on their learning level and help reconnect with schools, their economic conditions can still deter them from attending schools. In order to address this problem, Seva Mandir began a pilot scholarship project in 2009 with Monsoon Accessories, UK to prevent children from migrating for labor work. The purpose of the scholarship project was to encourage parents and villagers to help retain children in schools. The attempt was to attract children to enroll in and regularly attend school, rather than migrate for labour or stay back at home for domestic work. The scholarship was compensation against the earnings that the child would have earned being a laborer. The results of the pilot were encouraging.

Seva Mandir's follow ups in 2009 revealed the fact that close to 70% children were enrolled in government schools after finishing the camps. However, a challenge was that almost half of these children dropped out from school soon after enrolling. While the camps have been able to arouse an interest for education and confidence among these children, Seva Mandir met a challenge in overcoming the economic and social constraints for these children and retaining them in school.

In 2010 Seva Mandir revised the scholarships to work with children attending the residential camp program. Under the program, the family of the child received a scholarship of Rs. 2,500 every year for three years, provided they kept the child in formal schools after finishing the residential camps.

Children above 9 years of age who have attended at least 2 seasonal camps are eligible for this scholarship.

Last year 142 children were eligible for the scholarship (50 were girls). Out of those 142 children, random checks showed that 111 children were regular in school and were awarded the scholarship. The education team worked to mainstream the children who were enrolled across 20 government schools and in 7 upper primary schools.

Throughout the entire process the community was involved. Continued conversations occurred with village committees and parents about monitoring the children attending the schools as well as the regularity of teachers.

This year, from Badgaon a total of 17 children were eligible for the scholarship programme. 16 were from Malria village and one boy from Patiya. Out of the 17 selected children 12 have been enrolled in three schools.

Standard	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	Total
Children	1	1	4	2	1	3	12

The 5 children who did not enroll in the school left for the following reasons: 1 boy became married, 1 boy migrated for hotel work, 2 girls dropped out due to teachers in government schools insulting them and 1 girl left to live with her uncle.

Success stories (Child)

Child name: Devli Kumari

Age: 9 years

Village: Malariya

Zone: Bagdunda

Devli Kumari is from Badgaon block and has 3 brothers and sisters. When she was very young her father expired due to an illness. After her father's death her brother dropped out of school and started earning. Devli has only four goats at home. Before attending the seasonal school she worked in cattle grazing.

Devli explained that she is lucky to attend the seasonal school where she had the opportunity to learn basic of reading and writing. She wants to continue her study by going to government school.

Conclusion

Seva Mandir's Residential Learning Camps provide a residential educational experience to children at-risk for becoming migrant child laborers. The camps' holistic approach to education allows for creative learning methods and more importantly, provides educational stimulation, with emotional and physical support to children who could be overlooked by over-worked parents.

As word of mouth about the success of the Residential Learning Camps spreads in villages, families continue to elect to send their children to school. Most importantly, children who have attended the camps have become increasingly excited about their education, a tool that will empower them and their communities in immeasurable ways.

Activity Centers

Background:

Various studies in India reveal that children in rural government schools are not learning as much as they should. ASER, 2010⁵ reveals that only 5.7% of children in grade II (7 years old) can read texts of that level and only in the middle of class VIII are 87.6% of the children able to read those texts. Similar conditions were found by the study even for learning numeracy.

In response to the poor learning levels of children in government schools Seva Mandir initiated Activity Centers (named as Sahyog Kendras) in collaboration with government schools and the village communities, with support from Asha for Education since February 2009.

The activity centers are housed within the government schools and are run by Seva Mandir teachers. The main objective of the program is to enable the students to have meaningful and joyful education by providing various opportunities and exposures to learning which they are not able to get in mainstream schools. Through these centers Seva Mandir is trying to build conceptual understanding of children in the subjects of Math and Hindi. At present 5 activity centers are functioning in Badgaon block.

Status of Activity Centers:

In the beginning of academic year 2010-11, only 4 activity centers were in function, as Ushan center had to close due to a lack of cooperation from the government school.

This year in 2011 June, one new center at UPS of Maruwas village has been opened. Maruwas village is situated in Badgaon block at a distance of 45 km from Udaipur. The village includes 10 hamlets and is inhabited by 350 families. The hamlets are spread across a wide distance. Most of these families are of Gameti, Rajput and Meghwal castes. People in the village mainly engage in agriculture and daily wage labour for their livelihood. There are 2 primary schools and 1 upper primary school available as education facilities. However, because of the distance many children could not attend schools.

As a result, Seva Mandir initiated two Shiksha Kendras (SKs) in two hamlets of the village in the year 2007 and 2008. Every year, around 5 to 10 children who graduate from SK are enrolled in the upper primary government school of the village. It is difficult for the children to remain in school as the student-teacher ratio was very high and little learning and teaching takes place.

⁵ Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) 2010 was conducted in all districts of Rajasthan in facilitation by an NGO called Pratham.

At present, 221(129 boys and 92 girls) children are enrolled in the school and around 140 children of primary classes attend Activity Center regularly while 100 children of grade 5 to 8 have been registered in after-school classes and attend regularly.

Details of activity centers:

Village/ Zone	Classes in School	No. Of teachers in School		No. of children enrolled in July 2011
		June 2010	July 2011	
Negadia / Delwara	1 st – 5 th Class	3 teachers (including head teacher)	4 teachers (including head teacher)	82 (36 Girls -46 Boys)
Selu/ Kadia	1 st – 8 th Class	3 teachers (including head teacher)	6 teachers (including head teacher)	145 (58 Girls – 87 Boys)
Peepad / Kadia	1 st – 8 th Class	7 teachers (including head teacher)	6 teachers (including head teacher)	165 (48 Girls - 117Boys)
Undithal / Bagdun da	1 st – 10 th Class	4 teachers (including head teacher and para teacher)	3 teachers (including head teacher and para teacher)	181 (69 Girls and 112 boys)
Maruwa s/Kadia	1 st – 8 th Class	1 head teacher and 2 para teachers	1 head teacher, 2 teachers and 2 para teachers	221 (92 Girls and 129 Boys)

Capacity Building of teachers:

10 facilitators are associated with the Activity Center programme including 5 new facilitators and 5 who have been associated with the programme for more than one year. Before their joining, new facilitators participated in the annual instructor training of Shiksha Kendra (see details in the SKs section under “Instructor Training”). During the summer vacations all the new facilitators were also placed in residential seasonal schools for one week for classroom lessons. During the year, four major workshops and trainings were organized on pedagogy. An explanation of these workshops is as follows:

Workshop on use of TLM (Teaching-Learning material):

In the month of September 2010, a two-day workshop was organised for the facilitators on the use of different aids in primary math teaching. Along with Activity Center's facilitators, instructors from few SKs also participated. This workshop was conducted with the help of the resource person from an Organization, Jodo Gyan⁶. The main focus of the workshop was to understand how to use the materials which were provided to the centers to support the math classes. There were sessions on Ganitmala, recognizing numbers, the concept of ones and tens, multiplication, and division through various activities.

The sessions in the workshop combined arithmetic and geometry. Teachers were given different kits like Rangometry (small shapes in various colours) and AkarParivar (basic shapes in different size) and were told to make figures and drawings using these kits. This exercises helped teachers think creatively.

This workshop helped teachers understand the importance of learning-by-doing as they themselves performed all the activities before teaching them to the children. Facilitators found it very interesting and also demanded such trainings for the subjects of science and environmental studies.

Pedagogical training with SK instructors (Annual instructor training)

**Information on this training can be found in "Instructor training" under the Shiksha Kendra section.

Participation of senior facilitators in Summer Programme

A five day summer intensive programme was organized from the 16th to 20th of May under the English Access Programme⁷. The programme was organized to enhance English language skills through various activities such as story writing, reciting poems, reading sessions, creative-writing, theatre, and market place scenarios. Most of these teachers were from rural backgrounds and they had not been exposed to such activities, especially ones involving English. Initially, they were shy and did not speak, but slowly, they engaged with the activities.

Annual facilitator training

The training was conducted for 6 days from the 20th to 25th of June 2011 for all the facilitators of Activity Centers. The main objective of the training was to revise the conceptual understanding of previous trainings and link them with actual classroom transactions. Facilitators worked on lesson plans in language and created support material like flash cards, charts and counting material for their own centers.

⁶ Jodo Gyan is an organization working on activity based education and makes package of modules and TLM for mathematics

⁷ English Accesses programme is for enhancement of English Language funded by U.S. Embassy.

Exposure visits for Activity Center facilitators

Medicinal Plants

During the training, two exposure visits were also conducted for the facilitators. During the monthly meetings many times facilitators mentioned their interest in learning about local medicinal plants in order to deal with small day-to-day illness. In response to the facilitators' requests one exposure visit to an NGO Jan Jagran Vikas Samiti was planned.

On the 23rd June the facilitators visited Jan Jagran Vikas Samiti, an NGO which works on increasing awareness for use of medicinal plants. Facilitators visited the herbal garden and received knowledge of medicinal plants like Aloe Vera, Tulsi, Ashwagadha, etc. They also shared information about local usage and other plants which are used for normal illnesses.

Science as a subject

In the coming academic year Seva Mandir plans to introduce science as a subject for primary classes 1 and 2 in each Activity Center.

In regard to this plan, for exposure, on 24th June the facilitators visited the 'Science Museum' in Udaipur. It was a first-time experience for all of them. They spent half a day at the museum, doing experiments and learning about new things. In their feedback, they shared that they learned many new things like rock structures, skeleton of various species, Law of Archimedes, simple experiments, etc.

Activities to enhance learning skills:

Along with training instructors Seva Mandir also focuses on enhancing their skills by implanting workshops and targeted celebrations in the Activity Centers.

Story telling- writing workshop

A story telling workshop was organized in the month of August at Selu activity center. Children in classes 5 through 8 took participated. In the beginning, children were given the task to write stories with which they were familiar. From these, children made their own stories and presented these stories using puppets and picture cards.

After the workshop there was a brief discussion with the facilitators about the importance of story telling in language learning. Teachers of government schools also participated in the workshops.

Math day celebration

During 2010-2011 Seva Mandir decided to stress math as part of the concrete study material addressed in Activity Centers. Children are often afraid of math as a subject and thus the math day celebration aimed to teach math in an accessible way.

In the month of September, the day was celebrated at Pipad activity center. Facilitators from all the centers participated in this celebration.

Children from class 1 to 6 were divided in the groups according to their academic level and their mathematical ability. Facilitators had already prepared lesson plans for teaching different mathematical concepts such as counting, place values, addition, subtraction, multiplication and geometry.

After the workshop a meeting was organized with the facilitators to share feedback of the activity. Facilitators shared their experiences and also shared that these activities helped them to learn new methods from their peer group.

Community Participation:

Since the beginning of the Activity Center in February of 2009 there has been active community participation in the monitoring of the Centers and with government schools negotiations in regard to setting up the Centers. Facilitators did home visits of irregular and out-of-school children to connect them to the school. They also shared the functions of the Center and other education issues during village meetings.

Community participation has increased over the past 2 years as many parents have observed and participated in the centers. Many parents now believe that these centers are useful for the children of their villages. With the help of the community, facilitators have re-enrolled 25 previously dropped-out children into the schools for the current academic year. In fact, efforts are still being made to bring the out-of-school children back into the school community.

Challenges

Working in government schools last year was indeed a great learning experience for Seva Mandir. Throughout the process, Seva Mandir received mixed responses from different schools about the Activity Center programme.

Last year's foremost challenge was that of creating physical space for the centers in government schools. It was achieved, last year, in four centers. In spite of immense efforts one center, Ushanm, could not function properly due to the lack of consent from the Headmaster and staff. Since the center was not benefiting the children it was jointly decided by both parties to close the center this year. This example shows that establishing and maintaining relations with the school teachers is the biggest challenge of the program to date because teachers are often transferred.

One emerging challenge for Seva Mandir in this programme is measuring improvement in the learning levels of the children, as at most of the schools, the administrations are reluctant to provide permission for taking exams.

Impact

During the months of June – August a study was done by a volunteer entitled: *Activity Center - An Analysis and Evaluation of the Learning Environment*. This study was done on 3 centers, Selu, Undithal and Negadia. The purpose of the study was to understand actual classroom observations and to know more about the perspective of government school teachers, children and their parents about the activity centers.

The volunteer interviewed 7 government school teachers combined from the 3 schools. The data shows that all the teachers reported that the Activity Center in their school is very useful for children and school teachers alike. All teachers reported that the Activity Centers are helping children to learn quickly and in better ways than in mainstream government classrooms.

Similarly, all the students shared that they like Activity Centers because they help them in their studies and provide them valuable study materials. Most of the children said that they will continue coming to the centers because they like the way teachers teach them at the center. They also like the story books.

Interviews of parents were also completed as part of this report. The interviews showed that the parents, especially fathers, know about the existence of the centers but they do not visit those.

In last two years the acceptance of the programme in the government system has increased and some teachers of other schools have requested Seva Mandir to start Activity Centers in their schools.

Further observations were noted during the analysis including documentation of materials used and an in-depth explanation of the activities that occurred in the classrooms. The detailed results can be found in the report which is included in the annexure.

Quotes from government school teachers:

“I see positive changes in the students, since their academic abilities have improved, and they more easily understand me. The (Activity Center) materials keep the interest of the students.” - Mahendra Singh Ranawat, Undithal teacher (all grades, all subjects)

Quotes from government school teachers:

“The Activity Center is good for students because it helps them in their thinking process, is entertaining for them, and improves their thinking and speaking skills. The materials are accessible for students, easy to comprehend. It improves the younger students’ learning and speaking ability and the ability to identify objects. Those students also are more well-behaved in class. Another beneficial aspect of the AC is that it is more hands-on: the teacher sits with the students, and the teacher has a lot of time with students. He thinks that involving the younger students are very important, and the AC does this.”

-Mangi Lal Gandharva, Selu teacher (6th, 7th, and 8th grade science)

Conclusion

From inside the government schools Seva Mandir Activity Centers are able to examine the deeper causes of poor learning levels for children. In this last year Seva Mandir has learned many lessons through the start of Activity Centers including how to collaborate with the Indian Government Schools. Through continued support, Seva Mandir will be able to monitor and evolve this program to approach quality in rural education.

Annexure: Activity Center - An Analysis and Evaluation of the Learning Environment

- Maggie Huang, August 18, 2011

Classroom Observations:

1. Activity Center, Selu

A. Introduction

Selu school in Kadia zone covers grades 1-8 and has 145 students and 6 government school teachers. The Activity Center is set in the corner of the school. The classroom has two rugs on the floor, one blackboard, and one desk and chair for the teacher. There are books and games, and maps and charts cover the walls. The room has no electricity, water, tables, or chairs. There are many flies and dust inside the classroom. Due to the lack of government teachers and the location of the Center, students who are out of class easily peep into the Center, causing disruptions.

B. Observation

1. Math Class

a. Material:

- Beads strung on a line
- Number cards
- Fractions of a whole circle
- Dice, straw
- Place value charts
- Flash cards with images and the corresponding number
- Puzzles with arithmetic equations written on them—very popular with students
- Blackboard; notebook

b. Activities:

- Counting: a line of beads strung across the room. The intent is to “count the number of birds that fly across.” A number is assigned to each student, and he moves the corresponding number of beads across the line. Then, he identifies the number from a pile of numbered cards, hangs it on the line, and writes the number on the board. All students write down the numbers in their notebook. Activity used twice. (Class 2)

- Counting: A chart of images with corresponding numbers (1-10) was drawn on the board, and students identify the correct number of images shown. (Class 1)
- Counting: Teacher shows a flash card and the students identify the images shown, count the number of images, and write out the number (Class 1).
- Counting: One student leads the class in counting numbers in English aloud. (Class 1)
- Identifying Numbers: Students copy down numbers 1-5 from the board. (Class 1)
- Identifying Numbers: A chart with two columns is drawn on the board, with each column containing numbers 1-10 in mixed orders. Students match the numbers. Activity used twice. (Class 1)
- Arithmetic: The teacher guesses a secret number by using arithmetic to estimate. (Class 2)
- Arithmetic: Students compete in two groups to solve arithmetic problems written on the board with the help of a numbered card. (Class 6)
- Arithmetic: Puzzle competition (girls vs. boys, piece together the arithmetic puzzles) (Class 3, 7, 8)
- Arithmetic: Students solve addition problems in their notebooks. (Class 3)
- Arithmetic: Students solve division problems in their notebooks. (Class 7)
- Fractions: Students compete in two groups to piece together a whole circle with a certain fraction. (Class 5, 8)
- Fractions: Students solve addition of fractions problems in notebooks (Class 8).
- Place Values: Students draw a table with three columns; each column represents 0, 10, and 100, respectively. Students roll the dice, identify the card with the corresponding number, and pick up that number of straws. If students accumulate more than 10 straws, then they exchange the 10 for one bundle. They write down and add their numbers on their charts. (Class 2)
- Shapes: Students identify the names of shapes. They handle the shapes, which are made of foam, and make other shapes with them. The teacher made patterns with the shapes, asking the students to complete the pattern with the correct shapes. (Class 1)

2. Hindi Class

a. Material:

- Flash cards with pictures and vocabulary
- Clock
- Poems (Elephant)—very popular with students.

- Posters of farms, villages, kitchens, other relatable scenes
- Storybooks (about animals)—used only once
- Blackboard; notebook

b. Activities:

- Verbal: Cards with images on them are shown to students, and students are asked questions about these images. (Class 1)
- Verbal: Students tell time with a clock. (Class 1)
- Verbal: Teacher lead students in recitation of a poem/rhyme ; students would sometimes lead the class (Elephants). Activity used more than twice. (Class 1, 2)
- Verbal/Comprehension: Cards with images and the Hindi vocabulary are distributed to students, and students identify aloud the words.
- Comprehension: Students identify Hindi script written on the board. (Class 1)
- Writing: Students practice writing simple vocabulary. (Class 1)
- Writing: Posters of familiar situations or scenes are shown to the students, and students compose an essay on the images. Students read aloud what they have written, notebooks are checked by the teachers, and vocabulary related to the images is written on the board for the students to copy. Students read aloud the vocabulary written on the board. Activity used more than twice. (Class 3, 5, 6)
- Writing: Students write Hindi syllables on the board; teacher guides the students' hand in writing. (Class 1)
- Comprehension: Teacher writes 3 simple words on the board, picks one word, and the students to identify the correct written word. (Class 1)
- Comprehension: Matching words and pictures activity. The teacher writes certain characters and draws the corresponding pictures on the board. The students match the word and pictures. (Class 1)
- Comprehension: Students split into two groups based on reading and writing skill level, with one teacher per group. In the group that needs more help with reading/writing, the teacher reads aloud from the book and asks students to read aloud as well. Students identify characters with certain sounds in the book and record them in their notebooks. The only activity that incorporated books. (Class 5)

3. English Class:

a. Material

- Flash cards
- Posters of Rhymes eg. ("Ten little fingers")—very popular with students
- Commands

- Blocks with letters written on the sides

b. Activities

- Rhyme; some rhymes led by volunteer (“Ten little fingers;” “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star;” “North, South, East, West...;” “Hop a little, skip a little”). (Class 2)
- Body parts: The teacher gestures towards different parts of his body, identifying the parts in English and Hindi. Students follow with gestures and repeat the words. Teacher also gives commands, such as “Touch your toes.” Teacher writes down the names in Hindi and English and accompanies the English words with Hindi syllables that will help the students sound out the English words. Student copy this in their notebooks. (Class 4)
- Alphabet: Teacher writes the alphabet on the board, then shows blocks which have letters stamped on the sides to students. Students write letters in notebook. One student goes up to the board and leads the class in reading aloud the alphabet. (Class 1)
- Students also learn the names of body parts, fruits, and simple objects by repetition and with visual aids. (Class 1)

4. Miscellaneous

a. Material

- Maps
- Puzzles
- Darts

b. Activities:

- Dart competition (girls vs. boys) in which each student from each team took three chances at aiming a dart at the target board hung on the wall (Class 7).
- Map competition in which the teacher divided the students into two groups, mixed boys and girls in each group. Students identify certain places in Rajasthan. Although the teams were mixed gender, competitors who went up to the map were mostly of the same gender. All the students were given a chance to play, though the more shy students abstained. (Class 7).

Teaching Style

For math activities, the teacher mainly uses notebook writing and the spirit of competition to motivate students to solve problems. They use the blackboard to train students to recognize numbers. Finally, they also use more hands-on

activities such as having students “count the flying birds.” For Hindi, they recite poems and ask students to write stories based on the images on the posters. For English, they recite poems and practice commands with the students, but English activities did not seem very common. There is one “main” teacher who guides the new teacher.

The teachers did not really have a method of assessing the students. The only kind of assessment that they seemed to do routinely was checking the stories that the students wrote based on the posters. Likewise, teachers did not assign homework.

Engagement of Students

Students always sat in a semi-circle around the teacher. At times, students were bored or were not paying attention when teachers wrote on the board for the next lesson. Students were least engaged in activities that merely called for recognition of numbers or words written on the board. The younger students were least interested in any activity that engaged mainly the blackboard and their notebooks; they were most engaged in activities that allowed them to move and sing/recite a poem and that included visual aids and colors. The older students paid more attention to bookwork and lessons written on the blackboard, but this kind of work did not stimulate the interest of all the students. Actually, some students would sit quietly without really completing the work or work without really applying themselves. There is also a gender disparity in student participation: Teachers called on students randomly, but more often, they called on the boys first, and boys would generally participate more than girls, either voluntarily or by the teachers’ request.

While the teacher never barred the students from asking questions, the students did not ask questions on their own. Also, it seemed that the teachers rarely encouraged the students to ask questions. This could be problematic, since some students were left to wonder what was going on (confused expressions or lost). During these times they did not ask the teachers for help. Sometimes the students would be off-task and engage in side conversations or some side activity that has nothing to do with the lesson. The lack of questioning from the students and the lack of teachers reaching out to students, checking in to see whether or not they understood, contributed to confusion regarding the lesson or boredom on the part of the students.

Teacher-Student Relationship

In general, the students and teachers have a peaceful relationship. The students are respectful of the teachers. The teachers are tolerant of students who do not understand and did not appear to scold them very much; however, once, a teacher hit a student on the head for disturbing another student. The veteran teacher is very patient with the students. However, teachers disturb students by checking their mobile phones and sometimes even answering them. Both the

ringing of the phone and the teachers physically leaving the classroom to answer the phone disrupts the lesson.

To a degree, classroom conduct seems to be lacking. When students are dismissed, they rush out instead of filing out in a single line or doing so quietly.

2. Activity Center, Undithal

A. Introduction

Undithal in Bagdunda zone covers grades 1-10, has 181 students and 3 teachers. Its Activity Center (AC) is located apart from the school in a spacious clearing under the shade of willow trees. This location makes for a good informal playground for the students. The classroom walls are bare (being readied for a paint job), there are two rugs on the floor, one blackboard, a string of beads hanging along one wall, and a cabinet of books and games. There are no chairs or tables. Though rather bare, the classroom was clean, with little dust and almost no flies.

B. Observations

1. Materials

a. Math

- Stones
- Numbered cards
- Fractions of a circle
- Blackboard, notebooks

b. Hindi

- Hand-out of a passage of text

c. English

- Blackboard, notebooks

2. Types of Activities

a. Math

- Place values: Teacher asks students about the meaning of place values, writes addition and subtraction problems on the board, and students complete the problems by counting out the stones. (Class 4, 7)
- Place values: Students compete in two groups to add up the correct number with the appropriate place value cards (boys vs. girls). (Class 6)
- Place Values: Lecture by the teacher on the meaning of place values, expanding numbers, infinity, and division by zero. (Mixed class)

- Ascending/Descending order: Lecture by teacher on the concepts of ascending/descending order of numbers. Teacher also asked student volunteers to line up based on height to illustrate the concepts. (Mixed class, class 8)
- Even/Odd numbers: Lecture (Class 8)
- Number order: Teacher writes a number on the board and students write in the preceding and proceeding number. (Mixed class)
- Arithmetic: Students choose a number from 1-100, and the teacher must guess the number by asking five questions. (Class 9)
- Fractions: Students practice addition of fractions by using foam fractions to piece together a whole circle. (Class 8)
- Roman numerals: Teacher writes Roman numerals on the board to teach students to recognize and count in this way (Roman numerals 1-20). (Class 6, 7)
- Geometry: Teacher draws a chart of different polygons and assigns different values to each shape (square=16, triangle=8), and students calculate the values of the polygons based on the given values of the square and triangle. (Mixed class)
- Riddles: Teacher tells riddles that involved many numbers and that involve word play. Students must listen carefully and calculate the arithmetic diligently for the correct answer. (Mixed class)

b. Hindi

- Comprehension/Writing: Students identify the correct words that relate to the given topic (fruit names) among a hodgepodge of words written on the board and write them down in their notebooks (Mixed class).
- Comprehension: Students each read aloud in front of the class from a passage printed on a hand-out. (Class 8)
- Singing: Hindi love songs. (Mixed class)

c. English

- “Simon Says” game conducted by volunteer. (Mixed class)
- “Groups” game in which “Groups of 1, 2, 3, etc.” is shouted, and students must get into groups of that number. (Mixed class)
- Comprehension/Listening/Writing: Students listen to a passage from Anne Frank’s The Diary of a Young Girl being read aloud by the volunteer and translated by the interpreter. Students write down English vocabulary and the Hindi meaning. (Class 10)
- Grammar: Lecture about active/passive, noun-verb agreement, and past/present tenses. (Class 9)
- Listening: “Color, color, which color?” game. Teacher sets up six pens of different colors around the room, students walk in a circle, chanting “color, color, which color?” Teacher calls out a color, and students run to that color. The students who run to the wrong color are “out.” (Mixed class)

- Listening/Comprehension: Student says one English word, and the next student must say another word that begins with the last letter of the previous word. (Mixed class).

d. Miscellaneous

- Pani/Bara tag game (outdoor): Some students chase the rest of the class, turning them “bara.” Those who are “pani” are still free and can free the students who are “bara.”(Mixed class)
- Treasure Hunt: Teacher writes questions on twelve index cards, making two sets of six cards, and sticks the cards in different places on campus. Students compete in two groups to collect all the cards and finally return to the AC to answer the winning question. (Mixed class)
- Ball game (outdoor). (Mixed class)

3. Teaching Style

One of the teachers was more experienced than the other and more familiar with pedagogy. He had a very interesting style of teaching which involved posing questions to students, hands-on trial-and-error experimentation on the part of students, and lecture. For example, the teacher began the 7th grade lecture on place values by asking questions: “Why is this called ‘25’?” The teacher would then ask the students to add up numbers on paper (incorrectly), then add them up physically with stones, and compare the answers. Then, he would ask, “For $25+26$, why is it not $11+5=16$?” The teacher also asked the students what the difference was between numbers 1-10, to define zero (here, the teacher gave the example of an empty bucket, that zero still holds places). For the lecture portion, the teacher used examples, such as $253 + 264$ to illustrate addition properties.

However, for some lessons, the explanations went on for too long. For example, the teacher asked students to line up by height to illustrate the idea of descending/ascending order: While this stimulated the attention of the students and was more interactive than the regular lesson, the teacher over-explained this concept, taking about 15 min. to explain. The other AC teacher also explained this concept, and by that point, many students had lost interest.

The teachers also engaged the students in competitive and creative learning, fueling their interest. For example, when learning place values, the students were split into two groups (girls vs. boys). They competed against each other to put together numbers in which the digits were in the correct places. The treasure hunts were both competitive and creative forms of learning. Students had to be clever to answer the questions written on the cards, and they enjoyed racing against the other team to collect the cards hidden around campus. The final question was based more on knowledge of current events

(the name of the current prime minister of India and his wife) or common knowledge (the chemical in the air that humans breathe in), testing the students in a more non-traditional manner.

The teachers had different kinds of lessons, but they did not seem to have a way of assessing the students' understanding of subjects other than Hindi. For Hindi, they had the students read aloud by themselves from a passage (once, 8th grade). In another lesson, students were asked to identify and write down the correct fruit names from the board, but the teachers did not check all the students' notebooks (once, mixed class).

4. Engagement of Students

Students always sat in a semi-circle around the teacher, creating a sense of community.

While it seems that the teachers would try to have interactive lessons and clear explanations, one thing that is lacking is that they did not encourage the students to ask questions or ask the students if they had any questions. While the teachers may ask questions as part of the lesson, no student ever raised a hand to ask a question.

For the students who were less literate, this activity of reading aloud was embarrassing for them. The other students would laugh at these students. Instead of having students read aloud to all other students in the class, a more nurturing method which would create a safer environment would be for students to get into groups and read.

Students loved playing the interactive, physical activity of "Simon Says" and the "Groups" game in which students got into groups of a certain number, and those students who did not get into the group would be "out." Also, have students get the penalty of being "out" of the game increased their interest and attention.

Students were least interested in activities in which they had to wait for the teacher to finish the lesson plan (they were waiting and had nothing to do). Also, students were least interested in activities that overly involved lectures, such as the lecture on ascending/descending order.

While both boys and girls were called upon to participate in activities or answer questions, more boys participated than girls. This was due to the shyness of the girls but also to the teacher's bias of calling on the boys more so than the girls. However, unlike at Selu or Negadia, the gender disparity is somewhat mediated by the female teacher: when the boys call on the male teacher, the girls can call on the female teacher, getting the same amount of attention and feeling less shy with the female authority figure.

5. Student-Teacher Relationship

On pedagogy, the teachers have a lot of conversations regarding teaching methods, the mentality of the students, and the nature of the lesson. While this is good, it unfortunately takes place during the lesson, disrupting the lesson and taking time away from teaching the students.

On the behavior of teachers: there would sometimes be too many side jokes from the teachers, disrupting the lesson. Also, scolding from one teacher to another causes the latter teacher to be embarrassed and affects the way the students view that teacher. During the reading aloud activity of the Hindi passage, the teachers should lower their voices when they have side conversations, as loud talking distracts the listening students and interrupts the students who are reading.

3. Activity Center, Negadia

A. Introduction

Negadia Bhilwara Primary School in Delwara zone covers grades 1-5, comprises of 82 students and 4 government school teachers. The AC has two rugs, student drawings hanging on the walls, and a cabinet of books and games. It has no electricity, tables, or chairs, and one of its walls is made of cross-hatched hay material.

B. Observations

1. Materials

a. Math

- Stones
- Numbered cards
- Fractions of a circle
- Blackboard, notebooks
- Ganit Mala

b. Hindi

- poems (praise for India; praise for a god;
- songs (story about a peacock's eggs in danger of being eaten by a cat; "Me Bharat KaLadla;" "Mere dilki he awarch")
- blackboard

c. English

- poems ("Johnny, Johnny, Yes, Papa;" "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star;" "1,2,3,4,5, I caught a fish alive")
- foam shapes
- blackboard

2. Types of Activities

a. Math: N/A

b. Hindi

- Songs: A male student leads the rest of the class in singing a song (about a peacock, a god, “Me Bharat KaLadla,” “Mere dilki he awarch”). (Class 5)
- Poems: A student leads the rest of the class, reciting a poem “Don’t put off what you can do today for tomorrow;” praise for India Class 5.

c. English

- Listening: Commands. The teacher gives a command (“touch your shoulders,” etc.) which the students have to obey. Also, the class played a variation of the commands activity in which the students line up in a single file in front of one ACT. The ACT then gives a command, and the student at the front of the line has to obey. They either touches a body part of the teacher or their own body part depending on the command. (Class 5)
- Poems: a student leads the rest of the class in a recitation of a poem (“Johnny, Johnny, yes, Papa;” “Twinkle, twinkle little star;” “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, once I caught a fish alive”) (Class 5)
- Listening/Comprehension: Teacher writes English and Hindi animal names on the board, and the teacher asks what an animal sounds like, and students make the correct noises.
- Listening: Teacher hands out shapes to students, and the teacher asks students who have a particular shape to stand up.

d. Miscellaneous

- Students play a game of tag in which students line up such that each line has only two students. The lines of students then form a circle, and one student runs around tagging the other student until the student gets into a line, bumping one of the two students to run. (Mixed class)
- “Netaneta char bedung” (spelling?), a game in which one leader makes a gesture, and the rest of the class follows, and another student tries to guess who the leader is. The leader varies the gesture. (Mixed class)
- Hunter/prey game: students circle up, one student is blindfolded and has to “hunt” another student, the prey. The prey makes noise (as would the other students to give the hunter some clues about his location). (Mixed class)

3. Teaching Style

The teacher emphasizes listening and speaking skills in the Hindi and English lessons. For example, they used Hindi poems that praised India and songs such as “Me Bharat KaLadla,” English poems such as “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.”

The teacher also teaches extraneous material. For example, when students from outside the AC came into the room, and the teacher said, "Disturb...you must go" in English, and he also taught the phrases to the AC students. This small lesson interested the students and stimulated their attention to English.

4. Engagement of Students

The students always sat in a semi-circle.

The students were most interested in activities that allowed them to move or speak or sing or activities that were led by a student. They recited poems with great respect and seriousness, maintaining a straight posture and singing/reciting in a loud and clear voice. They also knew the recited works well, since their deliveries were very fluid. Students enjoyed both listening and performing. Students especially enjoyed when a peer was facilitating or leading an activity or song/poem. The students also seemed to enjoy engaging in the lesson in this way.

Also, they displayed good sportsmanship by clapping after every recitation/song.

While both boys and girls both participated, boys participated more than girls because the boys were less shy but also because the teacher calls on the boys more.

In general, the teacher did not encourage students to ask questions, but the teacher did not bar them from asking questions either. Students did not raise their hands to ask questions.

5. Student-Teacher Relationship

The students and teacher seem to have a respectful relationship. The teachers are patient with the kids and seem at ease with them. For example, during recess, one of the teachers played board games with the students. However, once, a teacher hit a student on the head to discipline him (reason uncertain).