

SUPPORTING EDUCATION FOR RURAL CHILDREN

MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

July – December 2010

SUPPORTED BY

ASHA for Education



Submitted By:



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Supporting Education for Rural Children

IN BADGAON BLOCK OF UDAIPUR DISTRICT

A MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

1st July – 31st December 2010

By SEVA MANDIR

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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/ camps
- Jan Shikshan Niliyams / village libraries (JSN)
- Youth resource centres (YRC)
- Activity Centres in Government Schools

Of the 5 blocks, ASHA supported the SK programme in Badgaon block starting on 1st October, 2007 for one year. From 1st February, 2009, ASHA 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 organized by Seva Mandir. From 1st July , 2010 the support was renewed for the following three components:

1. 23 Shiksha Kendra (rural schools), formerly known as Non Formal Education centres.
2. The continuation of 5 activity cum tuitions centers. These centers have been set up in collaboration with government schools in Badgaon block.
3. At least 25 out of school children of Badgaon to attend two seasonal residential learning schools (out of that total three seasonal schools held in a financial year) organized by Seva Mandir.

A brief progress on the three initiatives will be given in the subsequent three sections for the period 1st July– 31st December 2010 .

Section 1
SHIKSHA KENDRA

1.0 BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Seva Mandir helps village communities run Shiksha Kendra (SKs) to ensure quality education to out of school children. These SKs also act as sites that provide an experience of quality education to communities. These centers are often single teacher schools offering education to out-of-school children up to class 3. All teachers are local and none of them have had any formal training in teaching children. The average academic qualification of a teacher is class 8th. Even though the teachers have not had much academic training, due to Seva Mandir's investment in their capacity building, the students of the SKs generally outperform the children of the other government and private schools.

Against a target of 23 centers a total of 21 centers are running currently in 5 zones with the support from Seva Mandir and ASHA. The total enrollment is 560 students (260 girls and 300 boys).

Table 1: Details of SKs in Badgaon Block

		No. of SKs				Enrollment			
Mar 2010	Dec 2010	Closed	New	Instructor		April 10	March 2010		
				Total	Female	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
23	21	5	2	22	3	582	300	260	560

Brief information about New SK's:

- A new SK was opened in Akhriya Neda hamlet in Majam village. This hamlet has a primary school in the vicinity, but unfortunately it exists only on paper. The teacher, who despite being a local person, is highly irregular. The villagers in the past raised this concern at the panchayat, sarpanch and other government authorities, but no improvement happened. Thus they approached SM with a request to open a SK. Based on the number of out-of-school children and on the willingness of the village committee to take responsibility of the programme, a SK was opened here in September 2010. Around 44 children from 3 hamlets are attending the SK. Two village members from each hamlet have taken up the responsibility of sending the children from their hamlet regularly to the SK.
- A new SK was opened in Dungalakheda hamlet in Patiya village. To reach the nearest school the children had to cross a river which was impossible during the monsoons. Thus a SK was opened here on the request of the village committee and has 30 children attending the SK.

Brief information about Closed SK's:

The SKs which have closed are:

- SKs of Vendia Bhata and Patiya Odiya ki Jhad in Badgunda zone were closed. The reasons for this were that the instructor was irregular and no suitable replacement could be found.
- The SK of Gariyon Ka Gura village Kadiya zone was closed because out of the 22 enrolled children, half of them graduated to the government school. The remaining children were enrolled in another SK in nearby vicinity.
- In Selu village, the SK was closed when instructor was found to be irregular after camera monitoring results and several visits to the SK. The students are being encouraged to join the government school, where the Activity centre is also running.

- The SK of Khokhariyon Ka Bhilwara was closed as the children were not regular and no improvement was observed despite several rounds of discussions with their parents.
- The SK in Dhar was closed in May as the instructor was found to be irregular after camera monitoring and personal visits. After discussions with the village committee, a new instructor was found and the SK reopened in July.

Table 2: Enrollment Status In SKs of Badgaon

Name of Zone	No. of students (Apr 10)	Enrolled in Government school	Dropped out students	New enrollments	Current status
Delwara	116	15	02	14	113
Bagdunda	185	41	27	84	201
Dhar	52	18	00	11	45
Ghodach	35	03	00	10	42
Kadiya	228	20	70	21	159
Total	616	97	99	140	560

The students in the SKs are from tribal communities. Almost all children are from very impoverished backgrounds and their families are living on marginal incomes.

2.0 Capacity Building of Teachers

Since most of our instructors have studied only up to 8th or 9th class, trainings are conducted regularly to enhance the instructors capacities. The details of different trainings and meetings conducted in the reporting period are given below:

2.1 Instructor Meetings

There were 3 meetings held in the block in the previous 6 months. In these meetings, the instructors have the opportunity to interact with the block level programme coordinators, share their concerns, find solutions jointly, discuss new directions for action, and review various skills required for running the centers. In the 3 meetings held, fee collection, parent teacher meetings, monthly reports and other issues were discussed.

2.2 Certification Course

Background: The SK Certification Course is being done in collaboration with Vidya Bhawan¹ and continues to be an integral part of the capacity building efforts of the Education Programme for the instructors of SK centres. The certificate course started in 2003 with the objective of helping the instructors transact their classrooms better so that the children's learning levels also improve. Instructor's knowledge about children's learning, their own reading, writing and articulation skills, and their ability to

¹ Vidya Bhawan is a consortium of educational institutions with special expertise in elementary education.

deal with mathematics proved major hurdle in improving the quality of children's learning in the SK Centers. Knowing how to teach a subject involves the process of knowing how knowledge is constructed in a given domain of knowledge i.e. math, language, science and social science. The instructors faced problems in both their own knowledge and then transacting it with the children. While the annual trainings helped them in overcoming these limitations it was not enough. The instructors had no support system back in their villages to help them continue with the process of learning triggered in the trainings. The need for setting up a mechanism that could make possible a continuous dialogue and interaction with the instructors on academic issues was provided through the certification course. The certificate course aimed at offering a continuous process of dialogue with instructors in a manner that they found, interesting, challenging and meaningful for their own learning. This in turn was meaningful for the children of their classroom. Level-1 and 2 of the course aimed to aid instructor directly in the classroom teaching while level-3 focuses on integrating classroom teaching with the larger issues of development and education. Internally in the organization, the certification course helped in building a team in both Seva Mandir and Vidya Bhawan capable of working with 'parateachers' and 'paraworkers' on their capacity.

Current Status: In Badgaon the SK Certification has 12 teachers in level I, 6 in level II and 4 in level III. New Instructors joined level I of the course. Assignments in language, mathematics and classroom learning process were given through worksheets to the instructors. After which, tutorials were held in the block to help the teachers with their assignments. The tutorials were clubbed along with the bi monthly teachers meeting at the block. All the instructors regularly submitted their assignments and attended the tutorial classes. Worksheets helped concretize discussion in the tutorials.

The focus of the certification course in the last few months was on the activities used while teaching students. Discussions were also held on the problems faced during teaching children. Discussions on pedagogical as well as other issues in the teaching of math and language were also held.

The certification course will end in March 2011 when the exams for the three levels will take place. After this, a pause will be taken in the certification course. A review of the course will be done after which we will decide on the future of the course.

3.0 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Community participation and ownership, a central component of Seva Mandir's vision, are also a critical part of the SK programme. This is not only because Seva Mandir strives to translate these principles into norms within its philosophy but also because parents and communities at large play a very important role in the well-being of their children. It is for this reason that Seva Mandir works in a more systematic and comprehensive manner to involve communities in the functioning of SKs and to deepen their understanding on quality education. Thus to encourage partnership with the parents and community and to bring a sense of accountability both from the teacher and the community, various initiatives were taken. Some of which are described below.

3.1 Shiksha Shulk (Fees)

One method of involving parents in the educational system is to increase their stake in their child's education. It is with this purpose that a yearly fee of Rs.100 per child,

known as Shiksha Shulk, is collected from parents. In many cases, the Shiksha Shulk is waived completely if more than one child per family is attending the SK or if the family is economically constrained to pay.

Against an expected amount of Rs. 49,500 for SKs, Shiksha Shulk of Rs. 34,995 was collected this year. The Shiksha Shulk collected was about 71% of the expected amount. In centres of Barwaliya, Challi, Bhilwara, Lohsingh, Waghelo Ka Gura, Maruwas and Vandar full fees have been received.

Table 3: Shiksha Shulk Collection Details

Zone	Total Students	Exempted Students	Expected Fees (Rs.)	Actual Fees (Rs.)
Delwara	111	02	10900	8345
Bagdunda	200	34	16600	11050
Dhar	45	00	4500	3700
Ghodach	42	03	3900	2000
Kadiya	156	20	13600	9900
Total	554	59	49500	34995

The fee collected was deposited in a common village fund and was used under the supervision of the Village Development Committee. The utilization of the fees has been done in different manner after consulting with the parents and children. Depending on the children's and parents needs, the fees has been spent for different purposes like buying uniforms, shoes, sports material, maintenance of the SK, or whatever the students and parents decide. In Challi the fees amount was used to buy uniforms for the children and was distributed during 15th August celebrations. In Barwaliya sweaters were purchased for the children from the fees collected.

3.3 Role of GVCs (Village Committee)

In the past the village development committees have been entrusted with the responsibility of making monthly stipend payments to all grass-root level workers. This has been done to ensure the accountability of the grass root level workers towards the village, not only towards the organization. This is working well in most of the villages. Through trainings, the capacity of the village committee to monitor and support different initiatives is being enhanced. As a result in many places the committees are conducting visits to the centers, checking the cleanliness, attendance of the instructors and the children and penalizing the instructor if s/he is absent without due reason. The committees are also encouraged to look at other aspects of the center vis-à-vis the behavior of the instructor towards the children and what and how the instructor is facilitating in the class.

- In Dulawaton Ka Gura village SK, there was scarcity of drinking water. A handpump is there, but the quality of water is poor. The parents and village committee decided to fetch water from a well, turn by turn each day.

Case Study

In Maruwas village, there are 13 hamlets. One of the hamlets is called Bhilwara where a SK is running as the hamlet is 3 kms from the nearest school. However due to the irregularity of the instructor and the students, the SK has been closed once in the past. Currently there are almost 50 out of school children in this hamlet. Due to irregularity of instructor students were losing interest in their studies. In a meeting of the village community it was decided to find a replacement for the instructor. It was also jointly decided that the parents who do not send their children regularly to the SK, will not be allowed to get benefits from government schemes and will also be penalized. As a result of the community's initiatives, the SK has improved and out of the 45 students, 30 – 35 children attend regularly.

3.4 Infrastructure and Repair

In SKs of Akhariya Neda, Maruwas Bhilwara, Vandar, Vadanga and Chali repair work of the centres was carried out with the help of the village committees. The work ranged from painting of walls and blackboard to repair of walls and roof.

In April, the new community centre constructed at Raya village was inaugurated. Here space will be given to the SK for running the classes. For this construction work, Seva Mandir helped with material and technical advice, while the villagers contributed their labour and the Panchayat contributed 50 bags of cement. The village committee took the entire responsibility for the construction from the beginning. In Raya, the construction was done with funds from another funding agency.

4.0 EVENTS

4.1 Independence Day

Independence Day (15th August) was celebrated in most SK centers. The day was observed by hoisting the national flag and doing a cultural programme. In Chali, Barwaliya and Losingh Dhana centre, children presented some plays, songs and poems. The village committee and other members of village also participated in the celebration. Celebrating national festivals collectively serve various purposes:

- 1) They provide children a break from their routine life and interaction with others.
- 2) The children get an opportunity to take part in many creative activities, thereby furthering their cognitive and other skills.
- 3) It gives them an opportunity to develop and showcase their cultural talent.
- 4) For the village, it was an opportunity to get together and strengthen their solidarity.
- 5) Most importantly, it encourages and inspires people to enroll their children and regularly send them to SK.

4.2 Pravesh Utsav

Pravesh Utsav² (Admission day): The traditional pravesh utsav was also celebrated in many SK's in July 10. The purpose is to encourage the out-of-school children to enroll in the SK. Students of Chali, Barwaliya, Malariya and Karawadi SK organized a rally in their respective hamlets. Some games and activities were also organized

² Pravesh Utsav or Admission Day has been traditionally celebrated in Seva Mandir SKs at the onset of the new academic session in the month of July each year. The aim is to encourage out-of-school children to enrol in SK.

and children and their parents were encouraged to participate. Such programmes help increase the new children who get enrolled.

5.0 Ensuring Instructor's Presence

Seva Mandir had started an action research project in August 2003 to address the issue of absenteeism across the SK centers. This was done using tamper proof cameras through which instructors had to get photographs taken, showing themselves and all the students at the beginning and the end of each school day. Teachers either received a bonus or paid a fine depending on the number of 'valid days' above or below a specified number of 'working days'. A valid day was defined as a day where the opening and closing photographs were separated by at least five hours and where the number of children in both photographs was at least eight. The research done in a randomized treatment control design showed a significant reduction in absenteeism across the treatment centers and also an improvement in children's learning levels. After the research, Seva Mandir continued with using cameras at 5 SK centers in Badgaon block.

Due to the encouraging results cameras have been introduced in all the SK's. Due to spiraling cost of living in the recent year, it was also decided to increase the base salary of the instructors to Rs.2000 per month (from the previous salary of Rs.1400). In May 2009, digital cameras (earlier manual cameras were used) were introduced in all the SKs of Badgaon block. Continuous rounds of trainings on the use of digital cameras were done with instructors. From 1st July 2009, the use of digital camera and the new salary structure came in effect at all SKs of Badgaon.

Initially the introduction of cameras was met with a mixed response: unwillingness by some and willingness by others. In the first few months, data confirmed the irregularity of some of the instructors. Till now, irregularity of instructors came to light only through random visits or when the village committee / parents reported such instances. However with camera monitoring, this is easier and done on a daily basis. The cameras have helped us ascertain the irregularity of some of the instructors. We have taken this concern to the relevant village committee for notice and action. While in some cases the SK have been closed, in others the instructor has been replaced or the current instructor has promised to improve.

The cameras are also ensuring that the centres are open for six hours each day, and the centre is not being closed down early by the instructor. Through this the other important piece of information we are able to gather, is the attendance of students at each centre. Where fewer students are found, discussions are being held with the parents and village committee to encourage better attendance.

In this reporting period, the software to handle the data collected from camera monitoring was also finalized with the help of MIT, USA. As a step towards decentralization, the software has been installed at the block level and also ensures timely preparation of payment sheets.

The average payment made to the instructors in the Badgaon is to **Rs. 2062**, which means that the centers were open for more than 22 days in a month.

We are positive that this intervention will motivate the instructors to keep their SKs open longer and will ultimately benefit the children.

6 SOME IMPACTS

6.1 Evaluations

To measure the extent to which SK students have been able to acquire new knowledge over the course of the year, standardized tests are conducted twice a year. Half yearly evaluations were conducted in December 10. Results of 363 students who took part, are given in table 4 below³:

Table 4: Half yearly evaluation results

Block	LEVEL 0 ⁴	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	Total
Badgaon	173	127	30	33	363

6.2 Graduating to Government Schools

Students from SKs are encouraged to enroll in the government school once they have had the initial foundation of reading, writing and mathematics. Maximum admissions were in class 6. In July 2010, a total of 97 children from the SKs got enrolled in government schools. Class wise admission details are in the following table:

Girls	Boys	Total
35	62	97

Table 6 : Enrollment of the students in different classes

Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V	Class VI	Total
17	16	12	13	13	26	97

³ Due to some technical reasons, evaluation results are only of 18 SKs.

⁴ To identify the progress of a child we have categorized four levels of their learning from 0 to 4. The levels are roughly equivalent to government classes. Level 0 is when a child enters the NFE and can barely read or write. Level 1 is where she can read and write small words and do simple counting, identify some numbers. When a learner can start reading, and understanding simple sentences and writing small / incomplete sentences, in Mathematics can do basic counting and simple operations like addition and subtraction with small numbers, she is placed in Level 2. At level 3 a learner can read and understand simple texts and articulate themselves by writing a group of sentences and in Mathematics understands concepts of multiplication, division, etc.

Annexure I
Table 7: List of SKs in Badgaon Block

S. No.	Zone	Village	Hamlet	Teacher Name	Qualification
1	Delwara	Barwaliya	Barwaliya Bhilwara	Mohan Lal, Rodi Lal	B.A. 9 th
2	Delwara	Karawadi	Helaghati	Laxmi Lal	9 th
3	Delwara	Raya	Raya	Chagan Lal	7 th
4	Bagdunda	Chali	Chali Bhilwara	Tej Singh	10 th
5	Bagdunda	Jogiyon Ka Gura	Dholi Ghati	Pemaram	9 th
6	Bagdunda	Majam	Akhriya Neda	Lacchi Ram	
7	Bagdunda	Majam	Sanga Ka Veera	Dhool Chand	
8	Bagdunda	Badondiya	Kadiya Fala	Laxmi Lal	11 th
9	Bagdunda	Malariya Khurd	Malariya Khurd	Bhanwar Lal	8 th
10	Bagdunda	Patiya	Khakar Khet	Prabhu Lal	10 th
11	Bagdunda	Patiya	Odiyo Ki Jhad	Dalla Ram	8 th
12	Dhar	Badanga	Mataji Ka Fala	Pushpa Devi	8 th
13	Dhar	Dhar	Dhar	Radhu Lal	
14	Ghodach	Ushan	Ushan	Urmila	B.A.
15	Kadiya	Gayriyon Ka Gura	Gayriyon Ka Gura Navagar	Naga Ram	7 th
16	Kadiya	Baghelo Ka Guda	Baghelo Ka Guda	Nana Lal	8 th
17	Kadiya	Dulawato Ka Guda	Ranawada	Kishan Lal	12 th
18	Kadiya	Lohsing	Loshing Dhana	Premlata	8 th
19	Kadiya	Maroowas	Wandar Fala	Ram Lal	
20	Kadiya	Maroowas	Maroowas Bhilwara	Lalu Ram	8 th

It is worth noting that we have three female teachers listed with us, which is an encouraging sign given the difficulty in finding female teachers.

Section 2

Seasonal Residential Learning School

Background

The purpose of the proposal submitted by Seva Mandir and approved by ASHA for Education was to enable out of school children from rural Udaipur “to be able to read and write independently with comprehension”. This was proposed to be done by organizing seasonal residential learning schools / camps of two months duration each. Three such seasonal schools were proposed to be held in the financial year April 2010 to March 2011.

Out of this ASHA extended support for two seasonal schools that supported 25 children each. The first seasonal school which received support from ASHA was held from November 10, 2010 to January 08, 2011. Though the first seasonal school concluded after the reporting period, information is included in this report in order to present a complete picture.

It was proposed to reach out to at least 25 out-of-school children from Badgaon block through the seasonal schools with each child being encouraged to attend all three seasonal schools. Our experience has been that on an average, a child needs to attend three seasonal schools to attain stable literacy skills. After the completion of the seasonal schools, wherever possible, the children will be encouraged to enroll in a regular school and continue their studies.

The two main subjects planned to be taught in the seasonal schools were language (Hindi) and Mathematics. For overall development of the child, sessions on health, hygiene, environment, art, games, outdoor sports, etc are an integral part of the seasonal schools.

PROGRESS REPORT

1.0 Introduction

The first seasonal school of the year was held from 5 May to 30 June 2010.

The second seasonal school of the year 2010-2011 and the first one to receive support from ASHA was held from November 10, 2010 to January 08, 2011.

Table 1: Participation Of Children In The Seasonal Schools

Seasonal School	Total children who completed the school from Badgaon	Girls	Boys
Seasonal School I : 5 May to 30 June 2010	27	13	14
Seasonal School II : 10 Nov to 8 Jan 2011	27	19	8

2.0 Population Covered

In both School I and School II, 27 children attended each school. The children were from the following villages: Malariya, Mada and Dang (Bagdunda zone). All these villages are remote and characterized by poverty. They are largely inhabited by tribal population.

Many of these children have either never been to school or dropped out at a very early stage due to either economic or social constraints. Some of them migrate from the villages for work and hence were not able to attend regular school.

In the second seasonal school, out of the 27 children, 10 had never been to school while 14 children had gone to school for some period of time but dropped out early. 3 were enrolled in school but were not attending it regularly. Most of the students were involved in grazing and other domestic work.

Out of these 27 children, 17 were attending the school for the first time, while for 8, this was their second school. For 2 children, this was the third time they were attending the seasonal school.

3.0 Instructors Selection and Training

Five candidates from Badgaon rural areas were selected as teachers, one being a woman. One of them is youth from Malariya YRC and performed very well as a instructor in the seasonal school .

After being selected, the instructors underwent a training on what and how to teach in the seasonal school. The training was divided in two major sessions, Hindi and Mathematics. In addition to this, sessions were also organised to sensitize them towards the other psycho- social needs of children.

For the children of Badgaon block, 3 teachers were dedicated.

Zuber Sheikh is a 21 year-old camp instructor from the Delwara village of Tehsil Nathdwara, Badgaon block. Zuber comes from a large family where his father, an electrician, is the income generator in his family. Zuber is a bright and diligent student and was given an opportunity to participate at one of Seva Mandir's Youth Resource Centers (YRC), where he spent a significant amount of time attending workshops, interacting with his peers and concentrating on his studies. After spending time at the YRC's and directly experiencing the benefits and impact of Seva Mandir's work, Zuber wished to work with Seva Mandir. Zuber is currently studying for his Bachelors of Arts with the goal to pursue a Masters in Social Work. Zuber believes that his life would be drastically different without the presence of Seva Mandir.

4.0 A Brief Description of the Seasonal School

The seasonal school was fully residential for both the children and the teachers and was organized at Seva Mandir training Centre at Kaya.

4.1 Learning process

In the beginning of the seasonal school, the children were assessed on their existing literacy levels and formed into groups of 8 - 12 children, with each group being assigned to one teacher. The classrooms in the seasonal schools were structured to allow for children to work on their own, individually and in groups. There were spaces and exercises which allowed them to read, write, speak and reason on their own. The children were also encouraged to speak and ask questions.

The philosophy and pedagogy that we follow is that each child is an intelligent being and learn's best when allowed to explore, think and reason on their own. Rather than transferring knowledge, we build on the child's existing knowledge through joyful learning.

While pre-lunch was devoted to Language (Hindi), post lunch classes were utilized for math. For example, Hindi lessons, instead of alphabets, were started with the help of small stories. This helps children understand that what they speak and hear can also be expressed in the written form. Stories were used



because full texts have more meaning for the children rather than just words or alphabets. Therefore, they are able to establish a relationship between the written word and its meaning. This also fuels a child's curiosity to understand the written text and be able to read and understand on their own. In mathematics, exercises are designed which allow children to understand the concepts of numbers and the functions possible with them instead of just learning the algorithms. We designed and compiled numerous worksheets for children to work, learn and enjoy with. There were lots of other play materials like snakes and ladder, dices, flash cards that helped the children understand and learn. To ensure overall development of the children, various activities were organized along with studies

Once a week, children immersed themselves with new activities at the activity centre—an informal setting where they learned through experimenting and engaging in other activities. Additionally, a small library was set up in the campus where children had the freedom to choose from a big collection of colourful and attractive books and read them at leisure.

No classes were held on Sundays. To make this day fun for the children, on each Sunday different events and activities were organized such as musical chairs, searching for chocolates hidden in wheat flour, games with balloons, etc. Along with students, teachers too participated in such competitions, improving the interaction levels amongst each other.

4.2 Some Special Moments at the Camp

Children's Day Celebrations

Students celebrated 14th November, birth date of Jawaharlal Nehru, known in India as "children's day". A colourful and traditional puppet show was organized which was thoroughly enjoyed by the children. In the evening, the treat continued with screening of a movie and distribution of sweets.



New Year Celebration

To welcome the New Year a small informal programme was organized on 31st December by teachers and children. They together decorated the ground with balloons and *rangoli*. Both children and teachers sung songs and did traditional dances to welcome the New Year.

Adolescent Health Training

For the benefit of the older girls, a half day Reproductive Health workshop was organized with about 50 girls aged 12 years and above participating including 7 girls from Badgaon. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Sangeeta Bhatnagar (member of Health Unit of Seva Mandir). She explained the changes in the body that occur for girls during this age, in addition to other subjects such as personal health, hygiene and food cleanliness.



St. Christopher students visit

In this seasonal school, we had a group of eight students and three teachers from St. Christopher school, U.K. spending time in the seasonal school from 20 – 23 December. The students were briefed about the seasonal school well in advance and came prepared with loads of activities and games on maths, English, science experiments, outdoor games and art and craft activities.

On the first day, an introductory session was organised in which St. Christopher students performed a drama about peace and harmony and sang songs. The camp children introduced themselves and sang songs as well. On the second day, St. Christopher students divided into four groups and facilitated sessions with the help of alphabetic and numerical flash cards, greeting cards, colouring supplies, facemasks, etc. In the concluding session a cultural program was organized jointly.

Additionally, St. Christopher teachers conducted sessions for camp teachers and Seva Mandir staff about different activities to engage students in classroom activities. They also addressed learning disabilities that children may face and how to deal with them.

The children immensely enjoyed and benefited from all the activities. It was a rich cross-cultural experience for both the children of the seasonal school and of St. Christopher's School. The children of the seasonal school and students of St.Christopher's developed deep friendship, such that kids from both groups shed tears at the time of farewell.

Closing Ceremony

At the end of seasonal school, a brief closing ceremony was held which offered the children an opportunity to show their talents to others. A camp fire was organized where children performed local songs and dance and shared their experiences of the camp. The occasion culminated with children receiving certificates of participation

5.0 IMPACT

5.1 Evaluation of Children's Learning Levels

In the beginning of the seasonal school, the teachers assessed each child's reading and writing skills through informal interactions. This information was used to divide the students into smaller groups as per their learning levels.

After this regular evaluations were carried out, which included classroom observations and a mid term test to gauge the progress of children was administered. Based on the results of these evaluations, students groups were re-arranged and changes made in the teaching techniques accordingly.

An end-test evaluation of children was also conducted to assess the children's progress. The results of the same are given in table below.

Table 2 : Evaluation Results of Children

Evaluation	Pre test			Mid term			Final		
	Level 2 ⁵	Level 1	Level 0	Level 2	Level 1	Level 0	Level 2	Level 1	Level 0
No. of children	0	1	26	0	1	26	0	16	10

By the end of the seasonal school, 15 children moved from Level 0 to Level 1.

5.2 Helping Strengthen The Retention Of Children in Regular Schools

To encourage the enrollment and retention of students in mainstream schools after passing from seasonal school, SM is piloting a scholarship programme. To compensate the family for the children's earning, a scholarship of Rs.2500 is awarded to a child who attends school regularly. The attempt is to motivate children to enroll and regularly attend school rather than migrate for labour or stay back at home for domestic work. Children participating in the seasonal school, who are above 9 years of age and have attended atleast 2 seasonal schools are eligible for the scholarship.

Accordingly 17 children (11 girls and 5 boys) were selected for the scholarship from Malaria and Patiya village in Badgaon block. These children had attended atleast 2 seasonal schools in the year 2009-2010 and all are above 9 years of age.

Out of these 17 children selected for scholarship, 14 children enrolled in school. From these, 13 children were regular and received the first installment of scholarship in Oct 2010. 3 children did not qualify for the scholarships. One boy migrated to Surat and is working in a hotel. As one girl is 13 years old the school teacher was unsupportive of giving her admission. Because of the teachers rude behaviour, both the girls refused to go to school and are at home.



CASE STUDY

Ganeshi Kumari is a 12-year-old girl of Village Mada, Badgaon block, with 2 brothers and 4 sisters. Her father died 7 years ago and her brother works in Ahmedabad, Gujarat and her mother is a laborer. Before the camp, Ganeshi never went to school and looked after household tasks like raising goats and tending to her younger siblings. One day when Ganeshi was working around her home, a Seva Mandir worker convinced her to join the camp. Ganeshi initially resisted going to camp but as she saw her friends attending too, she decided to attend as well. After her first camp, Ganeshi was eager to join later camps. Because of the camp, Ganeshi knows how to write to 20 and recognize different dialects. She loved playing with "the foreigners" (students from London, as she calls them), and was thankful for the new clothes she received from Seva Mandir. While one of her sisters joined her at these camps, Ganeshi wants to bring the rest of her siblings to the next camps to see them become literate and educated.

⁵ To identify the progress of a child we have different levels of their learning. When a child can barely read and write anything, she is at Level 0. When a child can read and write small words in language and in Mathematics can do basic counting and simple operations like addition and subtraction with small numbers, she is placed in Level 1. When a child progresses and can read and write small text in language and in Mathematics can further also do operations like multiplication, division, etc she is placed in Level 2.

Section 3 **Activity center**

Background

In Seva Mandir's work area, the only option for most rural children is to attend a local government school. Unfortunately the condition of government schools in Udaipur's tribal areas is often pathetic. The schools are either understaffed or if there are teachers employed, they are often absent or not able to teach effectively due to time consuming administrative tasks and poor pedagogical methods. The style of teaching practiced often involves chalk and talk rather than directly engaging the students through participatory methods. The mundane copying of exercises from the blackboard is also a common teaching method. In such environments, there is very little opportunity for the children to explore and think creatively, write independently or engage in discussions and conversations.

Most children struggle to learn due to inadequate teachers and the poor standard of teaching. Consequently, many children are unable to read and write with comprehension even after attending school for 4 – 5 years. The unattractive schools either cause low attendance of students or their dropping out eventually. This high drop out rate, most of which happens before class V, is also indicative of children reaching an employable age. Moreover, the children who do manage to proceed past class 5 often encounter difficulties when confronted with external examinations required to be taken in classes 8 and 10.

With the support of ASHA for Education, Seva Mandir has initiated Activity center Programme in collaboration with government schools of Badgaon block, to help make the schools more attractive to the students. The main objective of the programme is to enable the students to have meaningful and joyful education by providing various opportunities and exposures to learning which they are otherwise unable to get. Through these centers Seva Mandir is trying to build conceptual understanding of children in the subject of Math and Hindi.

PROGRESS REPORT

1.0 Details of the Centres

By the end of this reporting period, 4 activity centers were functioning in government school in Badgaon block. The details of these government schools are in the table below.

Table 1: The villages where the Activity centers are functioning

Village/ Zone	Classes in School	No. Of teachers in School		No. of children enrolled in August 2010
		March 2010	August 2010	
Negadia/ Delwara	1 st – 5 th Class	3 teachers (including head teacher)	3 teachers (including head teacher)	81 (38 Girls -43 Boys)
Selu/ Kadia	1 st – 8 th Class	3 teachers (including head teacher)	5 teachers (including head teacher)	130 (44Girls – 86 Boys)
Peepad / Kadia	1 st – 8 th Class	7 teachers (including head teacher)	6 teachers (including head teacher)	133 (37Girls - 98Boys)
Undithal / Bagdunda	1 st – 10 th Class	1 head teacher and 1 para teacher	4 teachers (including head teacher and para teacher)	174 (69 Girls and 105 boys)

In comparison to last academic year, though the number of teachers in these schools has increased, in some schools such as the Undithal School, the teacher-student ratio is still very low. It has also been observed that new appointments of teachers are not helping children much due to the issues like teacher absenteeism.

2.0 Support from Government:

The experience during the last one and half year of working in government school has been a great learning. We have got a mix of responses from different schools. In Selu government school, Head Master and teachers are providing lot of support to the instructors of the Activity center. For example, all the primary classes have regular set timings for activity center per week. In the Negadia activity center every week, four hours are assigned to class 5 and five hours are assigned to class 1 and class 2. This time table is being followed regularly. All the staff members of the school admire the progress of the children and also use resource material of the center in their classes. The Activity Centre in these school are also influencing the classroom teaching.

On the other hand, in the village of Ushan, in spite of immense efforts, the center could not function properly and Seva Mandir had to take the decision to close the center. The instructors were not given sufficient time and space in the classrooms. It became difficult to maintain relations with the school. We also found that due to the lack of consent from the Head master and staff, the center was not benefiting children. As a result, it was jointly decided that we will close the center for few months and will then review the need of the center.

3.0 Capacity building of facilitators:

During the course of the period 8 facilitators, were associated with the programme. In the beginning of this academic year the schools were closed for summer vacation and new facilitators were placed in the residential seasonal school for one week where they got hands-on-training in teaching and interacting with children.

Apart from this, two major workshops were organized on pedagogy. The brief of these workshops are as follows:

3. 1 Workshop on Teaching and Learning Methods:

A two day teacher training workshop was held for teachers jointly from the Activity Centers and the SKs at Seva Mandir on 5-6 April. The workshop was facilitated by Ms.Linda, who is a mathematics teacher in St. Christopher School in U.K.

The theme of the workshop was that every child is special with children learning in different ways. Therefore, the teaching methods should also be different. The workshop began with a session on expectation of teachers and by sharing the challenges teachers face in the classroom. In the discussion various challenges were raised by the teachers. For example teachers from the Activity Centers raised the issue of difficulties they face between the government schools and the Activity Centers. As the Activity Centers aim to teach in a different manner than the methods in the government schools, it can be difficult to create balance in this regard. This can be manifested in different ways. Sometimes the children are not willing to go back to school, and the schools on the other hand are often unhappy with the presence of the Activity Centers.

The second session focused on good qualities of teachers and how to regularly update our teaching methods. Ms. Linda showed a presentation on the qualities of a good

teacher as described by children aged 12 years old through Pupil Voice. Linking this to the next session, Ms. Linda has shared three reactions of the teachers, aggressive, reactive and assertive. Through this discussion she facilitated some good activities with the facilitators. Next day of the workshop was more focused on practical methods of teaching maths. Teachers learnt many new teaching methods and activities in this workshop.

3.2 Workshop on use of TLM (Teaching-Learning Material):

In the month of September, a two days workshop was organised for the facilitators on better use of the primary math teaching materials provided to the centers. Along with activity center's facilitators, a few instructors from some SKs also participated in the workshop. This workshop was conducted with the help of the resource person from the Organization, Jodo Gyan⁶. There were sessions on use of different resources for learning counting, recognizing numbers, understanding concepts like ones tens and hundreds, multiplication, division, fractions, etc.

The sessions in the workshop also included some aspects of geometry. The activities on introducing shapes were interesting and innovative. Teachers were given different kits like *Rangometry* (a kit which has an assortment of small shapes in various colours) and *Akar Parivar* (a kit which has an assortment of basic shapes in different sizes) and asked to make figures by using these shapes. This exercise helped teachers to 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 requested such trainings in the subjects of science and environment.

3.3 Bimonthly meeting:

In addition to the workshops, a variety of efforts were made to enhance the effectiveness of the centers. One of these efforts was to conduct regular bimonthly meetings with the facilitators. In this meeting, facilitators shared details on the activities they conducted for different classes and the response of the children. The facilitators and programme staff also had discussions on teaching- learning process and other administration issues. These regular meetings also helped everybody to do follow up on the workshops and progress of the center.

4.0 Activities to enhance learning skills:

4.1 Puppet making workshop:

A Puppet making workshop was held on 26th July at Negadia Activity Centre. Along with the children and instructors of that centre, Instructors from other 3 activity centers, Pipad, Selu and Undithal also participated in the workshop. Around 50 children of class 4 to class 8 (including children of tuition center) participated in the workshop. In the beginning, for ice breaking activities, resource persons conducted games and activities. Gradually, the children started participating fully. After this children were divided in two groups according to their age. One group was given task of drawing and painting while the group of elder children were selected for puppet making.

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

Children were given story books from the library to read and then make puppets of the characters from stories. Children displayed keen interest in making finger puppets from pieces of waste cloths and papers. Elder girls enjoyed making puppets from the cloth pieces as they already knew the skills like sewing and cutting. Together the children made finger puppets of butterflies, dolls, crow, tiger etc from paper and dolls from cloth pieces. Everybody enjoyed and were at their creative best while making beautiful puppets.

Apart from art and craft activities, the main objective of the workshop was to help children to take interest in stories and use puppets as a medium to connect with stories. After the puppets were made, children used them to narrate stories to other groups.

4.2 Story telling- writing workshop

A story telling workshop was organized in the month of August at Selu activity center. Children of class 5 to 8 took part in the workshop. In the beginning of the workshop children were divided in small groups and asked to write stories they had heard or read in books. Children made their stories in the groups and presented them by using puppets and picture cards. Some groups also performed role-play. Children also wrote these stories on chart paper and displayed the in their own classrooms. After the workshop there was a brief discussion with the facilitators about the importance of story telling in language learning. Teachers of government school also participated in the workshop. It was an interactive activity to learn language in joyful manner.



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4.3 Maths day celebration

The Mathematics day celebration was a unique and wonderful experience for all the children and facilitators. In the month of September, this day was celebrated at Pipad activity center. Facilitators from all the centers participated in this celebration. Seva Mandir has taken prior approval from the school for the activity. Children of class 1 to class 6 were divided in smaller groups according to their academic level and their abilities in maths. Facilitators had prepared their lesson plans for teaching different concepts of maths like counting, place values, addition, subtraction, multiplication and geometry. With the help of various teaching learning aids children were learning mathematics.

Though children learn mathematics in their regular classes, these activities help them to learn these concepts together and with lots of fun. This activity provided them an environment to increase their interest towards the subject and also helped to remove their fear for the subject. Teachers of government school also visited each group and spent significant time to understand the process of self learning and learning by doing. They said that they are very happy to see even those children speaking and learning who never participate in their regular classes.

After the workshop a feedback meeting was organized with the facilitators.

5.0 IMPACT

5.1 Improving Learning Level of children:

One of the biggest achievements of the programme is that the learning level of the children at the centers is improving. Extra classes are great support to the children of class 6 to 8. In the board exam of 2009-2010 year, out of 29 children of class 8, 26 children fared well in the exams. These results are comparatively better than the previous results of board exams.

Case Study 1

For last 2 years, the activity center at Negadia primary school is functioning. At present around 80 children are enrolled in this school. Instructors Motilal and Bheru singh are very enthusiastic and dedicated who understand the need of children very well. Children also very fond of the Instructors and openly discuss their problems with their "*maat sab*". Government School teachers are also appreciative of the instructors hard work. As a result, one can see tremendous improvement in children's learning as well as confidence level. School teachers and village people also feel the difference in their children and are supporting the center by in all possible manner.

One of the success of this hardwork is that 3 students of this school got selected in Navodaya exam⁷. In Negadia village this has happened for first time and is matter of great pride for the teachers and community both. These 3 students (1 girl and 2 boys) are now studying at the Navodaya residential school in Rajsamand, which is at the distance of around 30 km. from Negadia village. Whenever these children come to the village to visit their parents, they always visit the Activity center and meet the instructors and other students of the school. They share their experience of new school and also encourage their juniors to prepare them for the exam. They also give credit to the center and the instructors for their achievement.

Case Study 2

Undithal village is located in a remote area, thus the Activity Centre was opened here. The government school had only primary teacher (who had the dual task of performing the administrative work) and one para teacher. This issues was taken up with the community and parents by Seva Mandir, and they were encouraged to take the matter to the government authorities. After persistent persuasion, the community succeeded in getting 2 additional teachers appointed.

The Activity Centre teachers are also very hardworking and take great efforts in teaching the children. As a result students now around 30 children come to attend tuitions regularly. Some of them are staying even as far as 2 k., yet come to attend tuitions here after their school. The parents are also now supportive of the Activity Centre and encourage their children to attend the Activity Centre.

The children at the centre also have now taken up ownership of this Centre and managing the day to day responsibilities like keeping the Centre in a clean and orderly manner, arranging the library, etc.

⁷ Navodaya is a competitive exam for the students of class 5 to take admission in the residential school run by central government. The selected children get free higher secondary education. In the region passing the exam is very difficult due to the tough completion.