

**SUPPORTING EDUCATION FOR RURAL CHILDREN
THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION CENTERS
IN BADGAON BLOCK, UDAIPUR DISTRICT
A REPORT**

1st April 2007 – 31st March, 2008

SUPPORTED BY

ASHA For Education



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EDUCATION PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

Poor access to quality education is a significant development challenge in Udaipur district, severely limiting the prospects for advancement for the poor and marginalized communities with which Seva Mandir works. Poverty and the lack of quality education reduce the likelihood of a child going to school. Furthermore, the condition of schooling in tribal areas is often one of severe neglect, with high rates of teacher absenteeism, poor pedagogical methods, lack of required materials, and inadequate infrastructure. At the same time, parents (and communities in general) are not able to put pressure on the government to address such issues. This is largely because of the fragmented nature of communities, low awareness, and the prevailing sense of disempowerment, which reduces their ability to undertake collective action to address such issues. Compounding all these issues, the common experience of education failing to deliver the kinds of benefits that people value tends to result in only weak demand, if at all, for more educational services. However, in a number of villages where Seva Mandir has been working, signs of change have become evident with a growing number of communities taking initiatives to demand better quality services. Seva Mandir's experience gained through the Education programme has facilitated a huge amount of learning on what it takes to make quality education available in such remote areas. This places Seva Mandir in a unique position to understand why the government's efforts have proved frustrating and offers critical insights into what kinds of solutions may be required to address the problem.

Badgaon is one of the six blocks in which Seva Mandir works. Badgaon block, like the rest of Udaipur district, also faces similar challenges and constraints. Poverty and the lack of quality education reduce the likelihood of a child going to school. Badgaon block is also close to the Udaipur City and therefore there is a high incidence of children migrating daily to the city for work. Many of the children who migrate have dropped out of school because they have not found it interesting enough. Hence providing a meaningful education in this context is important not only for the value of education but also because it will prevent the child from migrating at such an early age.

To address this issue, the Education programme helps the village communities run the following activities:

- Non-formal education centres (NFE)
- Action research projects
- Residential learning camps
- Jan Shikshan Niliyams / village libraries (JSN)
- Youth resource centres (YRC)

The NFE programme in Badgaon block is being supported by ASHA beginning 1st October, 2007. This had a proposed coverage for 22 NFEs and 657 children of Badgaon Block.

A report on NFEs is given below. For the sake of having a comprehensive progress review, the report is for the entire year i.e. from 1st April, 2007 to 31st March, 2008 and not only from 1st October onwards.

NON FORMAL EDUCATION CENTRES IN BADGAON BLOCK

Seva Mandir helps village communities run Non Formal Education Centers (NFEs) to ensure quality education to out of school children. These NFEs also act as sites of providing 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 NFEs generally outperform the children of the other government and private schools.

Against a target of 22 centers a total of **23 centres** were running in March'08 in 21 villages with the support from Seva Mandir and ASHA. The total enrollment is of **644 students (279 girls and 365 boys)** During this reporting period, three centres were closed and four new centres opened. School fees (*Shiksha Shulka*) of. **Rs.14,000** were collected as against a targeted Rs.38,486

The details of the NFEs operational in Badgaon are given in Table 1

(Table 1) NFEs in Badgaon Block

No.	Zone	Village/ Hamlet	Name of teacher	Educational qualification of teacher
1.	Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura	Nangaram	7 th
2.	Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura	Amar Singh	8 th
3.	Kadiya	Selu	Durga Lal	
4	Kadiya	Maruwas	Lalu Ram	8 th
5	Kadiya	Waghelo Ka Guda	Nanalal	8 th
6	Kadiya	Khokhariyon ka Bhilwara	Kalu Singh	12 th
7	Kadiya	Dulawaton Ka Gura	Kishan Lal	12 th
8	Kadiya	Lohingdhana	Ms.Premata	8 th
9	Delwara	Varwaliya	Rodi Lal and Mohan Lala	B.A. 9 th
10	Delwara	Raya	Chagan Lal	7 th
11	Delwara	Karawadi	LaxmiLal	9 th
12	Dhar	Dhar Magri Phala	Bhanwar Lal	9 th
13	Dhar	Badanga	Noji Ram	8 th
14	Ghodach	Ushan	Ms.Kesar	B.A.
15	Bagdunda	Dholi Ghati	Pema Ram	9 th
16	Bagdunda	Sagavera	Prabhu Lal	10 th
17	Bagdunda	Malaria Khurd	Bhanwar Lal	8 th
18	Bagdunda	Badundia	Laxmi lal	11 th
19	Bagdunda	Challi Bhilwara	Tej Singh	10 th
New Centres				
20	Delwara	Naya Kheda	NanuRam	8 th
21	Bagdunda	Patiya	Prabhu Lal	10 th
22	Bagdunda	Patiya	Doltram	8 th
23	Kadiya	Maruwas Bhilwara	Ms.Bharti	8 th

It is worth noting that we have three female teachers with us, which has always been difficult in these parts is an encouraging sign.

After support received from ASHA, we were able to **open four NFE centres**.

The reasons for opening each NFE are :

- ◆ Maruwas Bhilwara: There were many out-of-school children in this village. This was not only because the school was at a good distance, but parents were also unhappy about the school teacher's teaching. The community approached Seva Mandir for opening an NFE and after assessing the field situation, a NFE was opened here.
- ◆ Naya Kheda : In this village too, access to the existing school was again a problem. Without any transport facility, the children were finding it difficult to go to school. In view of this the NFE was opened.
- ◆ Patiya: Two NFE's were started in two different hamlets of Patiya. Here again the school's location was a problem. This village had children keen in studying. The parents and community members also actively sought for education for their children. Seeing this Seva Mandir, opened a NFE here. One hamlet of Patiya was in the interior where access to schools was a major problem. Another NFE was opened in this hamlet to cater to the needs of the children there.

Reasons for closure of the three NFEs :

Mandara and Bilota: In both the cases it was observed for some time that both the teacher and the children were not regular. The total number of children enrolled was also less. Despite repeated talks with the community and parents, the community failed to take up adequate responsibility and action on this matter. In Bilota, some children of the NFE also passed out and enrolled in the government school. In view of these, the NFEs here were closed but the discussion with the community is ongoing on education.

Papamaal- Most children of this center are now going to government school nearby. Seeing that the NFE had served its purpose, it was closed after consultation with the community.

The students in the NFEs are from tribal communities. Almost all children are from very impoverished backgrounds, and their families were living on marginal incomes. But it is worth noting that in few villages like Challi, Malaria, Ushan and Lohingdhana , even students of the so called "upper caste " are attending the NFE along with the tribals. This not only speaks about the quality of the NFEs but also implies that Seva Mandir has able to bring down the social differences and promote cohesion.

a. Shiksha Shulk (Fees)

Though the NFEs do not charge any fees from the students for enrollment, to encourage partnership with the parents, and bring a sense of accountability, parents are expected to contribute a Shiksha Shulk (education fees) which is a token amount of Rs. 5 a month to the NFE centers. In many cases, the fees is waived off completely if more than one child per family is attending the NFE or if the family is economically constrained to pay.

The fees collected is deposited in a common village fund and is used, under the supervision of the village development committee and is utilised to meet some of the cost of the school, which could be the maintenance of the NFE, buying uniforms, shoes, sports materials, or whatever the students and parents decide.

Against an expected amount **Rs.38,486** for 23 NFEs, school fees of Rs.14,000 were collected by early March. (details in Table 2)for 17 NFEs. Many NFEs are expecting the parents to deposit the remaining fees by end March or early April, as this coincides with the harvest time.

Data on this collection could not be available by the time this report was compiled. Data was unavailable for 2 NFEs and there are 4 new NFEs and hence no shulk has been collected so far. Considering this, in the remaining 17 NFEs, against an expected sum of Rs. 27,500 , Rs.14,000 were collected which is a around 50%. This is a big improvement since the past few years. On a closer look, only one NFE has been unable to secure any fees so far, while all the rest have got around 50% or above fees. For communities which are economically weak, even small contribution is a big step and reflects their interest and support for the NFEs

The utilization of the fees has been started in most NFEs in March. This happens after consulting with the parents and children on what the accumulated fees should be spent on. Depending on the children's and parents need, the fees will be spent for different purposes like buying uniforms, shoes, sports material, etc.

(Table 2) Details of Shiksha Shulk for each NFE

No.	Zone	Village/ Hamlet	Students Enrolled	Girls	Boys	Shulk Expected(Rs)	Shulk received (Rs.)
1	Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura	19	9	10	1140	460
2	Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura	21	10	11	1226	500
3	Kadiya	Selu	38	19	19	2280	580
4	Kadiya	Maruwas(wandar)	37	14	23	2220	1800
5	Kadiya	Maruwas(Bhilwara)	40	15	25	2400	New
6	Kadiya	Waghelo Ka Guda	25	7	18	1500	600
7	Kadiya	Khokhariyon ka Bhilwara	22	8	14	1320	600
8	Kadiya	Dulawatn Ka Gura	27	9	18	1620	840
9	Kadiya	Lohingdhana	22	13	9	1320	900
10	Delwara	Barwaliya	66	29	37	3960	2520
11	Delwara	Raya	20	8	12	1200	0
12	Delwara	Karawadi	26	7	19	1560	1000
13	Delwara	Naya kheda	28	14	14	1680	New
14	Dhar	Dhar Magri Phala	23	13	10	1380	750
15	Dhar	Badanga	31	14	17	1860	750
16	Godach	Ushan	39	21	18	2220	930
17	Bagdunda	Dholi Ghati	25	12	13	1500	900
18	Bagdunda	Sagavera	16	7	9	960	405
19	Bagdunda	Malaria Khurd	20	8	12	1200	Data Not available
20	Bagdunda	Badundia	20	10	10	1200	Data Not available
21	Bagdunda	Challi Bhilwara	37	14	23	2220	420
22	Bagdunda	Patiya 1	22	11	11	1320	New
23	Bagdunda	Patiya 2 (Aodiyo ki jad)	20	8	12	1200	New
Total			644	279	365	38486	13955

b. Repair and Construction Work in the NFEs

Repair and construction work was undertaken in a few NFEs. Repair work in three NFE centres : Ushan, Sanga Ka Vera and Dulawato ka Gura are in the final stages of completion. Instead of Challi and Vadanga centre where it was planned to do repair work earlier, the repair work was undertaken at Sanga Ka Vera and Dulavto Ka Gura. This happened primarily for two reasons, one the community took more responsibility and initiative in the last two villages against the ones initially planned. Also, in Vadanga the teacher is still taking time in settling so work was not initiated. In Chali the villagers are trying to get land from Panchayat and build an entirely new centre instead of repairing the old one.

Accordingly, in Ushan, repair work of the NFE roof was completed and other minor work is undergoing. Repair work is in full swing in the NFEs of Sagavera and Dulawaton ka Gura. In Raya, the community hall was old and had water leakage problem. This hall has been demolished and a new hall needs to be constructed.

Similarly, in Varwaliya a new room has been constructed and was inaugurated on 15th February, 2008. The Varwaliya NFE building was renovated with the help of villagers contribution and a donation received from an external visitor

c. Parent-Teacher meetings

In order to make the NFE centres more responsive to the parents, Parent-Teacher meetings were organized in all NFEs once in two months. The meetings enable the parents to get acquainted with the progress their child has made and gives the teacher and parents an occasion to have a dialogue. Though such meetings were held earlier also, it is since past one year that emphasis is laid on making them more regular. As a result of this, the number of parents attending the meetings have increased. Also a lot of issues get discussed and resolved through such forums. Topics discussed included *Shiksha Shulk*, enrolment and attendance of children, hygiene, teaching pattern, parent's role, and the on going research on the diary and collage (described later).

d. Events

Independence Day and **Republic Day** were celebrated in most NFE centers, and a very traditional **Pravesh Utsav** was organized to welcome all the new children enrolled in NFE centres and their parents.

Such celebrations serve varied purposes. They provide children a break from their routine life and interaction with others. The children get an opportunity to take part in many creative activities, thereby furthering their cognitive and other skills. It also gives them an opportunity to develop and showcase their cultural talent. For the village, it was an opportunity to get together and strengthen their solidarity. Most importantly, it encourages and inspires people to enroll their wards and regularly send them to NFE.

For instance in Varwaliya, Gario Ka Guda (First and Second), NFE students received sweets from the panchayat on Independence Day. The event was attended by other members of the village. The students of the NFE were then taken to the government school and it was discussed whether the children are learning more in NFE or in the school and what can be done to improve the school. Though a small event, this shows the growing interest in the community towards demanding quality education for their children.

e. Children's Forum

To get the children to engage with different issues concerning them, Seva Mandir has been working on building children's forum (*Bal Manch*) in a few villages. This is a new initiative of Seva Mandir. In Badgaon block this has been initiated in *Maruwas*, *Ushan* and *Varwalia* villages. All the three villages have NFEs facilitated by Seva Mandir. Though all the children in the Bal Manch are not only from the NFE, the presence of NFEs in these villages, helped have an initial base of children to work with. A brief on the happenings of the children's forum is given below:

(i) Maruwas Bal Manch

Here around 60 children are participating in the Bal Manch. In the initial meeting of the bal manch, children were divided into groups for different activities. While one group was asked to identify the problems related to children in the village, another group was asked to write what did they like about the village. The third group were given a craft activity. The first two groups raised the following issues :

- *Anganwadi* (pre school run by government) worker does not report on time
- Health worker (ANM) does not visit village
- Teachers in school are not regular and there are less teachers as compared to strength of students
- There is no open space to play in school
- Children are not given newspaper to read in school.

The first two issues were deliberated upon further and the Children committee took upon themselves to go and talk to both the *Anganwadi* worker and the ANM. As a result of their going and meeting the *Anganwadi* worker, it was reported in the next bal manch meeting, that she has become a little bit more regular. The children were enthused with this encouraging development. It was decided that they continue with their monitoring of the *Anganwadi*. They will also now contact the parents of small children in their neighbourhood and ask them to send their children to the *Anganwadi*.

Apart from this the meetings of the Bal Manch is also an occasion for the children to play and learn new games, engage in painting, etc.

(ii) Ushan Bal Manch

Children of different hamlets of Ushan have started coming together under the Bal Manch. Activities like sports, drawings, paintings etc. have been used to facilitate this coming together.

(iii) Varwalia Bal Manch

The Bal Manch in Varwalia was initiated in mid January, 08. Around 20 children are taking part in it. Apart from games and sports discussions are a part of the forum. Here four children are such who have dropped out of school. On being asked why they dropped out, they cited four major reasons: not enjoying school, bad behaviour of teacher, failing in school and parents refusing to send them due to domestic chores. The children also discussed about a nearby Rajiv Gandhi School. Though around 25 children are enrolled here, only 3 - 4 students attend. The teacher here does proxy attendance for the rest and distributes mid day meal. From the last month, around 20 students enrolled in this school have started coming to the NFE. The teacher of school seeing this accused the NFE teacher of taking away her students. It was decided that the matter will be discussed in the gram samooch (meeting of the villagers) along with the parents of these children. A committee of children under bal manch has been formed. They have taken the responsibility of surveying the status of children who are enrolled in the Rajiv Gandhi School and presenting their findings in the *gram samooch*.

f. Evaluations

In this reporting period 2 evaluations of the students were conducted, an yearly evaluation in March- April 07 and half yearly examination in Oct – Nov '07.

In the yearly examination (March – April 07) , a total of 410 students from 21 NFEs participated. The post examination level of students is as follows:

- (a) level 0ⁱ: 42 students
- (b) level 1: 234 students
- (c) level 2: 86 students
- (d) level 3: 48 students.

Thus 48 children reached level 3 in the previous one year (2006-07)

(Table 3) Students level according to Yearly evaluation March – April 07

Zone	Hamlet	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura-	5	13	1	4	23
Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura	0	7	3	4	14
Kadiya	Selu	3	22	9	2	36
Kadiya	Maruwas	3	12	5	3	23
Kadiya	Waghelo Ka Guda	0	6	0	5	11
Kadiya	Khokhariyon ka Bhilwara	2	8	8	1	19
Kadiya	Dulawaton Ka Gura	11	7	0	0	18
Kadiya	Lohingdhana	1	7	1	1	10
Delwara	Varwaliya	3	13	23	11	50
Delwara	Raya	0	6	3	0	9
Delwara	Karawadi	3	17	2	4	26
Delwara	Bilota	0	12	0	0	12
Dhar	Dhar Magri Phala	1	16	4	0	21
Dhar	Badanga	3	13	4	0	20
Ghodach	Kagam Darda	0	7	3	3	13
Ghodach	Papamaal	4	10	2	0	16
Bagdunda	Sagavera	1	8	3	0	12
Bagdunda	Malaria Khurd	1	18	0	2	21
Bagdunda	Badundia	0	6	7	0	13
Bagdunda	Umariya	0	18	1	5	24
Bagdunda	Challi Bhilwara	1	8	7	3	19
Total		42	234	86	48	410

ⁱ 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 s/he can read write small words and do simple counting, identify some numbers. When a child can start reading writing and understanding simple texts , 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 child can read ,write and understand texts in language and in Mathematics understands concepts of multiplication, division, etc.

In the half yearly examination, a total of 412 students from 19 NFEs participated. The post examination level of student is as follows:

- (e) level 0: 26 students
- (f) level 1: 216 students
- (g) level 2: 116 students
- (h) level 3: 54 students.

(Table 4) Students level according to Half Yearly evaluation Oct – Nov 07

Zone	Hamlet	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura-	1	10	5	0	16
Kadiya	Gariyon Ka Gura	1	7	2	6	16
Kadiya	Selu	1	22	10	3	36
Kadiya	Maruwas	2	16	6	4	28
Kadiya	Waghelo Ka Guda	1	11	3		15
Kadiya	Khokhariyon ka Bhilwara	1	9	5	0	15
Kadiya	Dulawaton Ka Gura	6	12	5	2	25
Kadiya	Lohinghdhana	1	8	9	3	21
Delwara	Varwaliya	1	12	18	13	44
Delwara	Raya	0	2	4	2	8
Delwara	Karawadi	2	12	5	3	22
Dhar	Dhar Magri Phala	1	14	6	2	23
Dhar	Badanga	2	13	10	4	29
Ghodach	Ushan	2	13	9	1	25
Bagdunda	Dholi Ghati	0	10	5	3	18
Bagdunda	Sagavera	3	3	3	0	9
Bagdunda	Malaria Khurd	0	13	4	0	17
Bagdunda	Badundia	1	10	1	2	14
Bagdunda	Challi Bhilwara	0	19	6	6	31
Total		26	216	116	54	412

Total of 207 common children appeared in both the exams. The progress of common children over the two evaluations:

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Yearly exam Mar- April 07	23	110	53	21	207
Half yearly evaluation Oct-Nov 07	1	97	66	43	207

The table above reflects the progress of the children in the period between April '07 to Oct '07 and it does seem that the progress in the initial levels is quite fast.

g. Graduating to Main stream school (Achievement)

Many students after studying in the NFE get encouraged to enroll in the government school. In July 2007, 77 students (from a total of 559 students) enrolled into government school. Most of the admissions were to class 5th & above but in few cases there were also admission in other classes

In Varwalia for instance 16 children entered 6th class, 3 in 4th class and 3 in class 3rd class.

h. Training and Capacity Building of Teachers

As can be seen from table 1, most of our teachers have studied only upto 8th or 9th class. To enhance the capacity of the teachers, trainings are conducted regularly. Thus capacity building has been a critical area of engagement for Seva Mandir as on one hand it serves the instrumental purpose of better teaching – learning for children and on the other also serves as a tool of motivation for the teacher. Thus training is a regular feature of the NFE programme. The details of different trainings conducted in the past year are given below:

(i) Language skills enhancement (English teaching)

Since some time, there has been demand for including English as one of the subjects taught in the NFE. To initiate this, and in keeping with the tradition of deepening the teacher's capabilities that training on English language teaching (ELT) for the NFE teachers was conceived. It was also felt that ELT should be started at the NFEs as English is becoming an important tool for communication now.

First, a four day exploratory workshop of English Language Teaching was held at Vidya Bhawanⁱⁱ by Professor A.L Khanna and Ms. Falguni for understanding the level of the Instructors. Seva Mandir conducted training of a few instructors on this subject. Instructors who had at least basic knowledge of the subject were selected to attend the training. In Badgaon block, out of the 20 instructors, 9 were selected to attend the training. A one week training was held in the month of October, 2007.

Through very simple and basic activities like poems, games, commands, etc the teachers were taught different ways to impart English teaching to their students. The focus of the workshop was on developing listening and speaking skills, enriching vocabulary and reading practice. The participants were divided into groups. The staff members of Seva Mandir and Vidya Bhawan helped with the group work. There were intensive practice sessions for all the activities, within and across the groups and the presentations thereafter, giving every participant a chance to speak. The group work was supported by handouts. The main topics dealt within the training included -

- Practicing spoken English
- Understanding and following commands
- Reading and writing text
- Enriching vocabulary

After the training these instructors began teaching English in their centers. These instructors along with the block incharge also began imparting training to the other instructors during the monthly anudeshak meetings. The children in these NFEs are enthusiastically learning English.

(ii) Certification Course

The NFE Certification Course is being done in very close collaboration with Vidya Bhawan continues to be an integral part of the capacity building efforts of the

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

Education Programme for the teachers of NFE centres. The course has three levels and the instructors' progress to the successive level on the successful completion of the previous level. Successful completion includes assignments, given through monthly worksheets, and examinations. Currently this Programme includes 14 teachers in level I, and 8 in level II. Tutorials are held in the block to help the teachers with their assignments. The tutorials are clubbed along with the bi monthly teachers meeting at the block. A total of 8 tutorials combined with block meetings were held in the block during the reporting period.



NFE instructors at the certification course meeting

i. Action Research Projects

(i) Camera Project

Seva Mandir had started an action research in August 2003 to address the issue of absenteeism across the NFE centers. This was done using tamper proof cameras, through which the teachers had to get photographs taken, showing themselves and all the students at the beginning and at 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 'valid 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 has continued with using cameras at five NFE centers in Badgaon block. Their payment details for the past one year are given in Table 5.

Table 5 Stipend Payment Details of Instructors at Camera Intervention Centres

NFE	Karawadi	Gariyon Ka Gura	Gariyon Ka Gura	Khokhariyon ka Bhilwara	Waghelo Ka Guda
Average stipend in 12 months	Rs. 1528	Rs.1376	Rs.1499	Rs.1417	Rs.1487
No. of months where payment was \geq Rs.1400	11	8	10	9	10
No. of months where payment crossed Rs.1600 implying NFE open for atleast 25 days a month	4	2	5	2	10

As can be seen from the table, over the time, the camera monitoring has encouraged the instructors of these NFEs to open the centre regularly. As a result the centres now runs on an average for more than 22 days a month, enabling the instructors to earn more than the fixed stipend Rs.1400/-ⁱⁱⁱ per month. The regularity of the instructors has also translated into better attendance of the students and also of their learning levels.

(ii) NFE Intrinsic Motivation Study

Even though the cameras were successful in reducing absenteeism, we were looking for ways of enhancing the teachers' intrinsic motivation to reduce absenteeism as opposed to the extrinsic motivation through using cameras. Seva Mandir and the MIT's Jameel Poverty Action Lab are now collaborating on a study into the intrinsic motivation of instructors in rural non-formal education (NFE) centers. The object of this study is to increase the understanding of the links between community participation, instructor motivation and school performance, with the specific goal of increasing instructor attendance. It will see whether changes in the daily routine and community participation in the NFE centers can have significant effects on instructor motivation, attendance and performance.

Having piloted four concepts in April 2006, we ran two full-scale randomized evaluations of participatory interventions: *the diary and the collage*.

- As in the Camera Study, we sought to reduce the rates of instructor absenteeism.
- Instead of extrinsic motivation of monetary incentives, we sought to improve the intrinsic motivation of NFE instructors through strengthening
 - Their daily commitment to work.
 - Their sense of importance to the Community.
 - Communication between parents and instructor.
 - Instructors' salaries will not depend on their performance in these studies.

◆ The Diary project:

The diary project sought to increase the motivation of students, parents and instructors through the use of a daily student diary. Each student is given a daily diary, in which he/she draws and writes at the end of every school day for 30 minutes. Every Saturday, the students took the diaries home to show their parents what they are learning; the parents must then check a box to indicate that they have seen the diary. The project hopes that the diaries provide the parents with a greater understanding of their children's education give the students a daily ritual, which is also fun, and provide the instructor with a useful pedagogical tool. A total of 13 Diary centers were set up in the Badgaon blocks. Some observations are:

- Diary has become integrated into daily teaching routine.
- It is a multi-purpose tool that brings together instructor, students and parents.
- Helps the children learn their lessons.
- Allows parents to see children's educational progress.
- Gives parents a tool for monitoring attendance.

ⁱⁱⁱ The base salary for teachers of NFEs is Rs.1400/-. For camera intervention center, if the center is open for 22 valid days, then the instructor earns Rs.1400/-. For each additional day the center is open, the teacher gets a bonus of Rs.70/- per day. If the centre is open for less than 22 days, he is penalized by a deduction of Rs.70 per day.

♦ **The Collage**

The second intervention is a one-time collage making event at each NFE center. At a community meeting, the collage facilitator explains the idea of the collage and agrees to come back on a certain date, chosen by the community, to host the collage. On that date, parents of NFE children gather at the center. They look through magazine photographs, with the purpose of choosing one photograph each that reminds them of education. Once everyone has chosen a photo, they paste their photos and explain to the gathering why that photograph reminds him/her of education. This gives the parents an opportunity to share with the NFE instructor, their children and each other their thoughts on the importance and potential effects of education in their village. Some observations are:

- Villagers easily understood the concept and participated enthusiastically. Women especially enjoyed the event and spoke willingly.
- Instructors loved the attention that he and the NFE center received at the event.
- Responses were all positive and serious.

Explanations of the pictures were mainly of parents' hopes and dreams for their children's education. Parents expressed very high expectations for their children's lives and education.

The collage was carried out in 21 NFEs. The data for random checks on teachers' presence and the data on children's learning levels is currently being analyzed.

The results of both the diary and collage project are being compiled and will be ready shortly.

Conclusion

The NFE programme has made headway in terms of enabling communities to experience quality education even while ensuring quality education to more than 600 children. The programme has also created a cadre of very hardworking and motivated teachers, some of whom have become respected agents of change in their own communities. Such efforts have also helped communities to value education, which has translated in a number of cases of communities demanding a better quality of education from the state. However, the lack of responsiveness can lead to despondence and frustration. In some cases, the village communities have been able to proactively collaborate with the Government to ensure better education for their children. The NFE's have also provided a fertile space for researches and innovations, the findings of which have much wider applications.

However, in our struggles to ensure good community based education, we have faced several challenges. Getting and retaining qualified instructors for the NFEs has been one such big challenge. Due to Badgaon's proximity to the city, there are more lucrative job options for people and therefore even a little educated person wants to go to the city and make more money. The start of the new centers were delayed largely because of unavailability of teachers. The other big challenge has been in retaining the community's interest and ownership in managing and running the NFEs. The interest and ability to manage village level interventions like NFEs is influenced by the community's cohesiveness but many a times this cohesiveness is threatened thereby affecting the overall functioning of the NFE.

Case Study I
Non Formal Education Center – Village Dulawaton Ka Guda



The Non Formal Education Center (NFE) of village Dulawaton Ka Guda is located in one of its most interior hamlets called Ranawada. There are 15 households of Gameti caste. The parents from this hamlet wanted to send their children to the school but the Government School is very far (around 3 kms). And it is difficult for little children to walk so far. In addition, there is a stream that separates the Ranawada hamlet from the rest of the village and so it would become even more difficult for the children to go across during rains.

Several village meetings and discussions on the issue resulted into an NFE supported by Seva Mandir in mid November 2006. An open space was assigned to run the NFE. A local teacher Kishan Lal Gameti was appointed and was given trainings from Seva Mandir. In the beginning the children were not regular because they did not feel comfortable in the open space. Kishan requested for a room to run the NFE in the village meeting. He also kept motivating the parents to send their children to the NFE on regular basis. After a couple of months a small room was rented for NFE. There were as many as 27 children who got enrolled including 18 boys and 9 girls.

Kishan is very passionate about his work. He is amazed that in a very short time the children have learnt reading and writing skills. The children are very happy with Kishan and enjoy learning with him. He proudly says- "The children of his NFE are better students than those who go to the Government School."



Case Study ii

Non Formal Education Center – Village Ushan

Ushan village lies in the Gorach zone of Badgaon block, at a distance of 35 kms from Udaipur city. The village is populated by around 2000 people, both with tribal and rajput community. Seva Mandir has been associated with the village for some years now through various interventions – wasteland development (anicut construction), pre-school (*balwadi*), health education and traditional birth attendant (*dai*) programme.



The Non Formal Education Center (NFE) of Village Ushan was started in January 2007. What makes it unique is the fact that the Instructor in this NFE is a young woman Kesar (generally in villages it is difficult to find a woman who holds a Graduate degree and is allowed to work) and secondly the regularity of these children attending the NFE.

Interestingly, there is a primary school and also a middle school in the village, but the children do not go there. One main reason for the children not going to the school is the irregularity of the teacher. The teacher is the daughter-in-law of a powerful person of the village. Many a times, she is absent, even when she comes, she is hardly on time. And when the teacher is in school, she does her own personal work and at times, she even asks the children to do the same. Seva Mandir, field workers, who are associated with the village, started talking about this problem to the village committee. In one of the monthly village meetings attended by the Seva Mandir field workers and other staff members, the issue of the school was again brought up. The villagers complained about the teacher's irregularity and behavior with the children.

However, when the Seva Mandir staff members asked the villagers to take some action against the teacher, they said that it would be of no use. Some of them were also apprehensive of complaining against her as she belonged to a powerful family of the village. Coincidentally, the teacher also happened to be in the village that day. She had at some other time complained to the Seva Mandir field worker that the villagers don't send their children on time. So that day, the field worker called the teacher also in the meeting and said that let us resolve this issue today. In the meeting, when the villagers confronted her, the teacher said that the children do not come on time and even when they come, they are very

untidy. However, the villagers countered that the children do not come because there is no certainty whether the school will open or not. Since, it had become a matter of counter allegation, it was proposed in the meeting, that a visit register be kept in the school. The village committee members would visit the school and note the teacher's presence or absence in that. However, this system did not last too long. At times, the teacher hid the register, at others people forgot to ask for it, whatever the reasons be, the system failed to improve the school's effectiveness. The villagers even lodged a complaint against the teacher. In fact, the Block Development Officer and the Sub- Divisional officer both admonished the teacher but yet there was no improvement in her.

The struggle for the school continues but seeing no change in the school it was also felt that some alternatives would have to be set up for the currently out of school children. Subsequently, the NFE was set up last year.

The enrolment of children in NFE of Ushan has gone up from 25 to 35 as of today. These children attend the NFE on a regular basis and enjoy learning with Kesar. She is a dedicated worker and enjoys her interaction with these children. Kesar is amazed at the fact that these children have learnt the reading-writing skills in only few months whereas some of these children have attended schools in the past for years but were not able to read and write. The parents are extremely happy with their children's performance

