



2019 - 20

ANNUAL REPORT



kshamtalaya

All children will realise their true potential through
quality primary education

Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever.

MAHATMA GANDHI



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The past year has been an extremely humbling and enriching experience for us. This year has been of many firsts, be it new partnerships, new failures, new learning and new challenges. While all of this makes sense only in hindsight, we must admit while experiencing them, we all went through a plethora of emotions ranging from fear, frustration, confusion, excitement, connection among others.

The year started with us becoming part of the global SEE Learning community of practice. This opportunity provided us with a deeper understanding of social, emotional, ethical learning and the aspects of integrating it with everyday classroom practices. Guidance and mentoring from Emory University, U.S.A allowed us to strengthen our classroom practices.

The second curricular partnership was with the UPAI (Ultimate Players Association of India) for embedding sports as a part of our holistic learning experience through Ultimate frisbee.

The third curricular development process included developing the thematic curricula further to create purposeful and contextual learning experiences for children. This fostered a development of deeper bonds with our children through their local stories.

The fourth and an integral pillar of our intervention was the school governance & community engagement model. In this intervention we witnessed a mother with her young child of 2 months, coming to vote towards creating a holistic learning experience for their children during the local SMC elections. The above four form the domain-based intervention at school level for cluster based systemic change in the areas of learning and governance.

This resulted in the C.E.L.L(Cluster Excellence Learning Lab) model of systemic change which thrives on building classroom excellence and community ownership for a sustained governance.

This has been a milestone year for us in terms of Learning Festivals (LFs). Till date, we have organised more than 85 LFs. The core objective of it is to revive the spirit of learning and to bring back a demand for it. Seeing Ramesh* a school walk-out colouring his world of imagination on a school boundary and working along-side other students demonstrated a need for cultivating entrepreneurial spirit in classrooms. This brings in a strong conviction and dignity reinforcing the core spirit of the LFs.

Our tryst with the Delhi Entrepreneurship Curriculum team has also been an experience filled with unforgettable learning. This relationship helped us stand on the shoulders of leaders, enriching our knowledge and experience. We were also able to think through and design how LFs can integrate within school curriculum of higher secondary grades.

Our reflections on failure emerges from re-thinking on what true freedom means for an individual. Our friendly neighborhood Spider-Man learnt a useful lesson from his Uncle Parker that 'With great power comes great responsibility,' we adapted it to 'with great freedom comes great responsibility' and it reflected in our work culture. Setting up a responsible democratic space and investing in organizational culture has been a priority for us. The place where we have chosen to work offers its own challenges and it is critical we offer a safe and nurturing environment for people to flourish. The efforts to play this out required us to conduct courageous conversations, expressing vulnerabilities, letting people achieve their learning on their own by scaffolding them through the process and believing in equitable contributions of everyone for the growth of the organization – where everyone has a learning mindset.

As Peter F. Drucker says - Culture eats strategy at breakfast. The implication of this also has been to embrace imperfections, failures which comes from distributed responsibility, not being able to respond to responsibilities. We were not able to make good use of data to inform our decisions and there were some lapses in terms of data collection. The lack of clarity in few roles early on led to partial documentation of a few key programs. This was also the year where we were trying to innovate and experiment with the new model. The flip side to this was losing a bit of time in gaining clarity. The positive side has been developing a clarity not only on the model but also developing a robust program monitoring framework to keep a constant progress check. Lot of what we have arrived at, be the program model, structures, stems from the feedback from the ground. We observed its very critical to align the program with the needs of the communities. Co - creating things is a slow process in the beginning but leads to organic exponential growth if we stick to it for a considerably longer time. A learning that we have been able to synthesize is consistency and co - creation comes at a cost. Slow growth requires patience and view on the larger vision.

“Failure is instructive.

The person who really thinks learns quite as much from failures as from successes.”

John Dewey

This year we hope to consolidate on our learning from the last year. We will scale down our work to three clusters for a deeper engagement. Our work with the PEEOs (Principal Elementary Education Officer) this year has encouraged us to explore working through a larger scale.

We will continue to work on building creative confidence and entrepreneurial mindset through the learning festivals, our scale and outreach program. Our work in Delhi will continue to focus on demonstration of government schools as centres of excellence and modelling caring and compassionate schools.

Having an extremely passionate and kind team has been a labour of love. Lot of our work looks easier because of the team.

The journey over the last three years would not have been possible without the love, care, and generous support of all our partners. A lot of gratitude to them with whom we are looking forward to this year with greater zeal.

We would like to thank the communities, schools, children, teachers, parents, government officials for trusting us and allowing us to work together, develop a shared vision grounded in our shared reality.

This year will be a year of depth in scale. We invite you all to continue being a co-traveller on this journey.

With love and gratitude,

Team Kshamtalaya





Imagine a school where children and teenagers are accorded all the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship; where students truly practice, rather than just read about, the principles of free speech, free association, and freedom to choose their own activities; where students vote on the rules that affect them, and serve on juries to try those accused of violating those rules. What better training than this to prepare students for democratic citizenship? Many people are skeptical that such a school could work. They wonder whether children and teenagers, given such power, would make reasonable decisions, either for the school as an institution or for themselves as individuals.

Let us zoom into a village - Motavida, situated in the block of Gogunda, 40 kms from the city of Udaipur, Rajasthan. Govind is a young, curious and proactive teacher at the Government Upper Primary School here. He felt that it was a school where children were spending their entire days in their classrooms due to a lack of space for interactive learning. The construct of the communities from where these children come from is not democratic in nature too. Children are the least heard voices and this manifests in the school as well. The literal meaning of the phrase "Bal Sansad" is Children/Student ("Bal") and Assembly/Parliament ("Sansad"). That is the Student Parliament in every middle school. The Bal Sansad is an elected body of the school which identifies issues, initiates problem solving approaches and drives impactful changes in their school.

They act as an inspiration to work with the limited resources and high aspiration for their school. They are the democratic voice of the entire student body. The compulsion to have the Bal Sansad as a process in schools, emphasizes that students need to raise their voice on child rights issues and find solutions for their problems and basic needs in the school.

In the Government Upper Primary School at Motavida, the sansad was constituted only on paper and the child whose name was for the role of Prime Minister did not know of his roles and responsibilities, and nor did he know that he was the Prime Minister. Deeper conversations between the teachers and iDiscover fellows of Kshamtalaya revealed that the children are occupied with household chores at their homes. They will not need this process in school or understand what to do with their role. To begin with, the iDISCOVER fellow and the Program Manager Naushad at the Gogunda Block conducted a meeting with all the staff members to understand what processes at the school governance is functional in the school. The intention was to do a collective need assessment from the lens of all the stakeholders. Together they came to a conclusion that the process of activating governance can start with the Bal Sansad. The team then began their preparation on going about the process – The fellow designed a session on ‘discussion with children around what is child parliament and how it is useful for the school.’ Post the session the team prepared for the process of nomination and voting that would be facilitated with the children.

“I was very enthusiastic during all the Bal Sansad training sessions. The election day of the Bal Sansad committee saw the entire staff of the school steer the process as equal participants. The children participated in a session co-facilitated by iDiscover fellow Dashrath and me. Children were asked to identify issues or problems they face in the school through questions. With the help of this session, the children understood the process of an election. The next time there is a sarpanch election or any election - these children will be able to relate between the two.” said Govind sir.

A total of 6 schools in Gogunda and Kotda were able to have similar journeys of an activated Bal Sansad. In 2 other schools the processes have begun where the fellows have discussed with the head teachers for the activation.



“Who will take care of this? How will we keep this safe? Who will take the responsibility for this? Sohan, will you take responsibility for this?”

One will hear similar conversations in the classroom. The question is “Do we assign responsibilities at home to keep anything safe?” NO. Then why are such conversations happening in a classroom? Maybe the children don’t feel that the classroom belongs to them?

Dadiya, is a village in the block of Gogunda, Udaipur. At the Government Primary School here, due to the unavailability of adequate classrooms, the 4th and 5th Grades are seated together. In this space, one could see a lot of TLM (Teaching-Learning Material) stacked in a corner, a lot of charts on the walls torn by children (according to the the teachers), and a lot of worksheets turned into paper planes in the hands of the children. The teachers and iDiscover fellows tried several attempts to have a dialogue with children about this, but to no avail. The missing links - children’s ownership over the “attempts at print richness” and emotional regulation.

As part of the SEE Learning sessions, children created charts and other resources to symbolise their learning. While creating these, children were provided with the space to make decisions, which visibly built an ownership of the children towards the material they were creating.

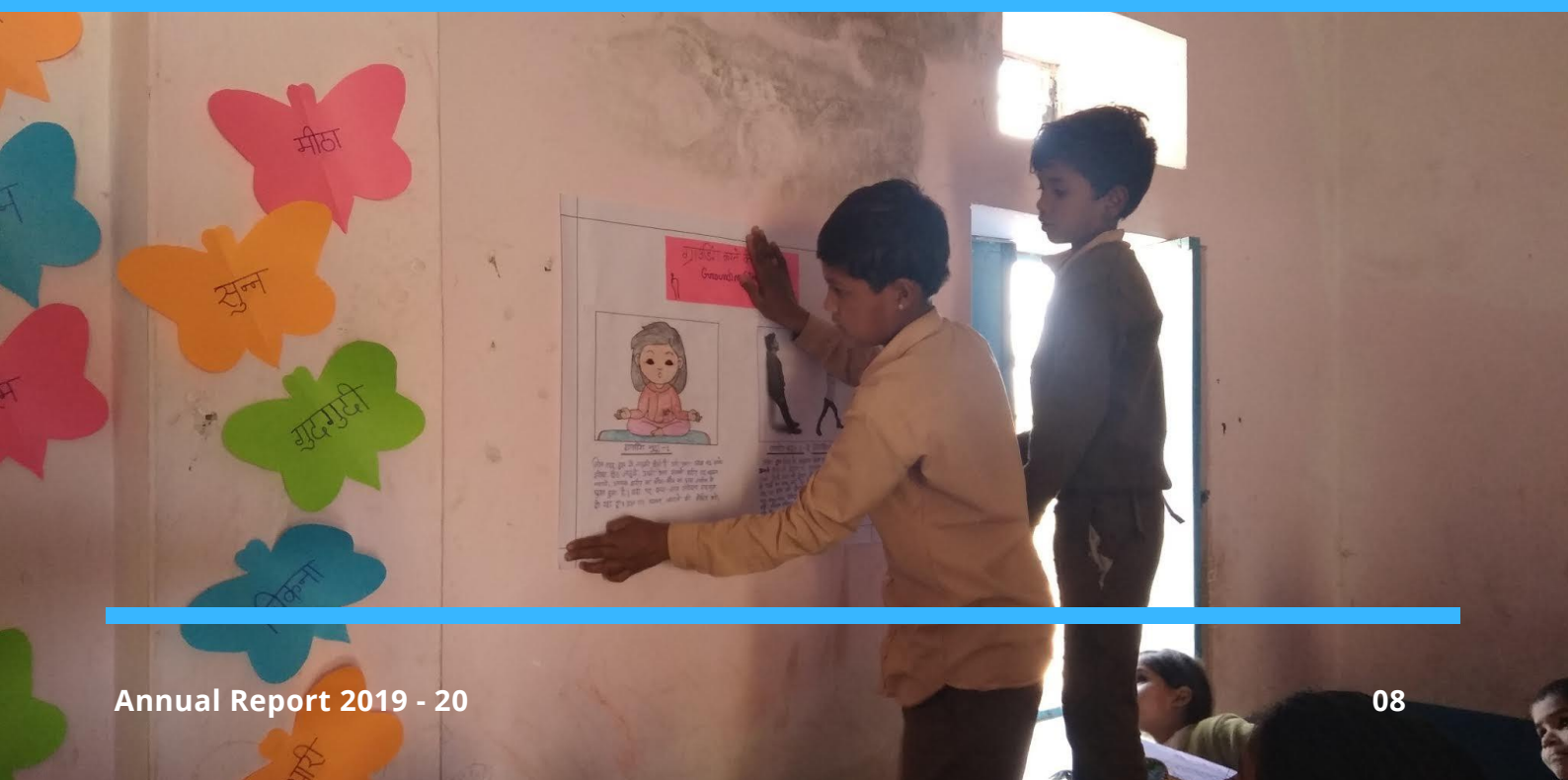
“Ma’am, these charts and resources have been created with so much of an effort and investment. What if these are torn too?” asked a teacher. “We will take responsibility of this classroom space” replied the children.

It is surprising indeed, to see the classroom, which once had torn and damaged print material, decorated with worksheets, charts and resources created by children. They are being taken care of by the children themselves.

To implement the SEE learning curriculum designed by Emory University, it was necessary for us to understand the contextualising of the same with children here in Kotra and Gogunda.

“This year I understood that a singular approach or method cannot bring holistic learning in a child. I always thought SEE learning along can bring change in the mindset. But the past year has helped me see the interconnections between various styles of learning - through learning festivals model, Sports on field, which through bal Sansad, which are beyond the four walls of a classroom. And with all this exposure, I was able to develop an embodied understanding that learning should be contextual and interconnected with all the disciplines and only then a child completes the cycle of learning.

- Pooja Singh





Recently, Gogunda, a tribal-rural block of Udaipur district has been inducted into the TSP model by the State government. This place is secular in terms of population. Gogunda has been closely associated with the history of Rajasthan as being one of the administrative offices of the erstwhile Rajput rulers. Since time immemorial, there exists a lot of stigma surrounding gender roles - Men and Women, Boys and Girls are different entities; Women cannot accomplish tasks that a Man can do easily, Men are at a higher social order. This lens of seeing gender roles manifests in children, which is generally visibly in schools as well.

Behada, is a village located in Gogunda, 45 kms from the city of Udaipur. Banshilal is a boy studying in the 5th Grade. He loves playing games and has been observed to play cricket with his teacher during lunch break and in the classroom, he sits only amidst boys. Krishna Dayal, is an iDiscover fellow is a part of the Ultimate Frisbee domain. The primary objective of this domain is to bridge the existing gap between both the sexes and help remove the stigma that surrounds gender roles. When Krishna organises games for the children at the Government Primary School in Behada, Banshilal sits out and does not participate. "I do not like it when you play games with both boys and girls in it. I will play when you separate both boys and girls", said the boy.

Krishna continued to facilitate games which were inclusive of both boys and girls. The school assembly was also now beginning to see lines of children with an alternative arrangement of a boy and a girl. These aspects and processes began reflecting in Banshilal's behaviour too. He began participating in a few games alongside girls. During a spirit circle sharing, he once shared "I do not like playing with girls. One day I saw Hemraj Sir playing with girls, and I thought to myself that it was not wrong, even my teacher is doing so. And then I began playing." And today, one can see Banshilal sitting with girls in the classroom when asked to work in groups.

The Ultimate Frisbee domain focuses on physical well-being and social skills through play and engagement. Play is considered a basic human right for children as it is vital for the holistic growth of children. This will invariably build social-emotional skills in the players where they have to negotiate, make the right decisions and build an empathetic sportsperson spirit. It also proudly encourages mixed-team play that aims to build healthy relationships between the various gender categories.

Another element of the game that contributes to the personality of the player is the 'spirit circle'. Players from both teams sit with each other and encourage and appreciate instances of fair play, skills and moments of sports person's spirit. It enables the players to give more attention to 'growth' rather than merely victory of a game. Kshamtalaya's focus on creating a center of excellence resonated with the game's philosophy and hence decided to implement them in 30 schools of Kotra and Gogunda. The anchors of this program are young fellows who come from both local areas and outside its geographic boundaries. The key goal of this program is to invite children who might not be a part of the formal set up, to encourage them and build their confidence.





Chaapar is a village in the Rujiyakhuna panchayat of Kotra, located 130 kms from the city of Udaipur. Parmesh is a very bubbly child, studying in class 3, attends school regularly and is also a very friendly child. Parmesh is doing his part in coming to school but he finds himself ranked beginner level on the ASER scale on both language and math.

Fatahlal, an iDiscover fellow working in the Theme-based learning domain has been working with Parmesh over the last 8 months. He has been trying to contextualise the curriculum to the child's immediate environment and language, along with facilitating the same in the classroom. He includes a lot of interactive activities in his pedagogy and also uses songs, dance, games as mediums to facilitate learning.

After he was reassessed in the month of March 2020, Parmesh was able to move up by two multiplication levels and in language he is now able to read and write simple words. Parmesh has the highest attendance in the Theme-Based learning classes and fellow Fatahlal Pargi shares that because of his regular attendance he was able to learn to read and write. "I have also worked with him individually and scaffolded the process" says Fatah with a smile on his face.

We strongly believe that along with being literate one should also acquire social, emotional, physical and ethical skills to lead a life of empathy, collaboration and also realising one's true potential. The theme-based learning curriculum and domain is focussed on making learning subjects like mathematics, social studies and language purposeful for children. It focuses on learning material that is within the immediate environment of the child, designed according to the learning level of the child and how to integrate activity-based learning within the curriculum.

Despite a lot of effort in making a Theme-based learning manual and capacity building with fellows in multiple learning levels' treatment, somehow the movement in learning was not as effective. I observed that the reason for this could be that the teachers were not giving their local language its due space in the classroom. Giving concepts without trying to understand their local language was not useful. So, we collected stories and/or poems from the community and planned how we could introduce Hindi language through these. And it made a lot of difference. So, my insight was that just as adults need a readiness to accept new knowledge, so do children. I also had to think of what knowledge, skills or mindset changes I would want in teachers. Also, how these changes could be effectively executed. I had to think of what would help them in their daily lives to make things simpler as also effective.

- Anjali Gupte



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

1. Yearly review of fellows on self, community and school
2. Kshamta-Utsav and Learning Festivals in schools
3. Design Days by CTM – Arriving at a year three model towards sustainable actions in the project.
4. Orientation and Induction of the new cohort of iDiscover Fellows
5. Cluster Meeting organized by Jhed Senior Secondary school PEEO Mr Chandrabhan sir that was attended by health workers, school teachers of all the panchayat schools, NGOs & Societies – Hunar ghar and Kshamtalaya.
6. Received permission from the DEEO (District Elementary Education Officer) for new model and finalized school for cluster intervention.
7. Kshamtalaya's foundation day celebrations.
8. First ever block level Shiksha Samvaad was organized by Kshamtalaya & Kotda Adivasi Sansthan.
9. Designing a Master Assessment tool that includes all parameters of school structures & processes, classroom and community.

PROCESSES

1. Classroom observation and documentation.
2. Feedback on the existing curriculums for both teacher and children.
3. Check in calls.
4. Capacity building sessions.
5. Scheduling workshops for stakeholder engagement

VISITS BY ORGANISATIONS

1. Manickam Narayanan, Executive Director UPAl at Summer Learning Festival 2019, helped us design Ultimate frisbee studio and conducted practical sessions on how to use Ultimate as a tool for learning.
2. Field visit by TISS monitoring team meeting stakeholders in both Gogunda and Kotda.
3. TFlx Core Team visit to Kshamtalaya – classroom observations and understanding our model of intervention.
4. Visit by Christa Tinari from Emory University Core Team of SEE Learning Global to understand our operations on ground.

WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED AND ATTENDED

1. Session on Panchayati Raj by Sarfraz Sheikh, Program Lead, Kotda Adivasi Sansthan.
2. Understanding the structure and functions of Child Parliament, Naushad & Abhishek.
3. 2 Days Workshop on “How Children Learn” at Hunar Ghar, Rajsamand – Jatan Sansthan.
4. POSCO workshop integrated with mindfulness for DRU department of DIET Rajsamund.
5. Naushad attended WIPRO workshop in Bangalore for developing a scientific temper in learning Soumya attended the OD workshop organized by WIPRO

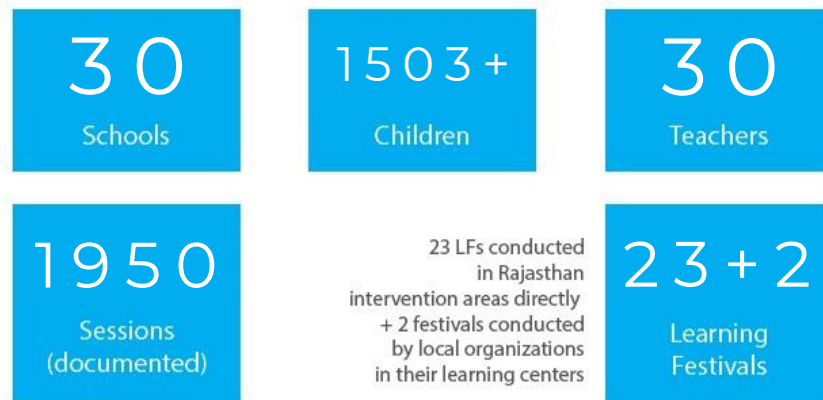
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

1. Kshamtalaya’s work in the block of Kotra was well received by the District Education Officer and was given a letter of appreciation by the district officials.
2. Abhishek Tiwari, fellow Kotra was felicitated by Sub-Divisional Magistrate T Shubhamangala for his efforts of activating community ownership in learning in Aadi Peepli School and his overall work in the community domain. The work was invited by the local SDM to be replicated across the block.
3. Kshamtalaya work was presented at Jaipur – a conference organized by the government to review work done across Rajasthan.
4. Kshamtalaya presented at UPAI’s National conference in Bangalore sharing about their achievements in using Ultimate Frisbee as a learning tool.

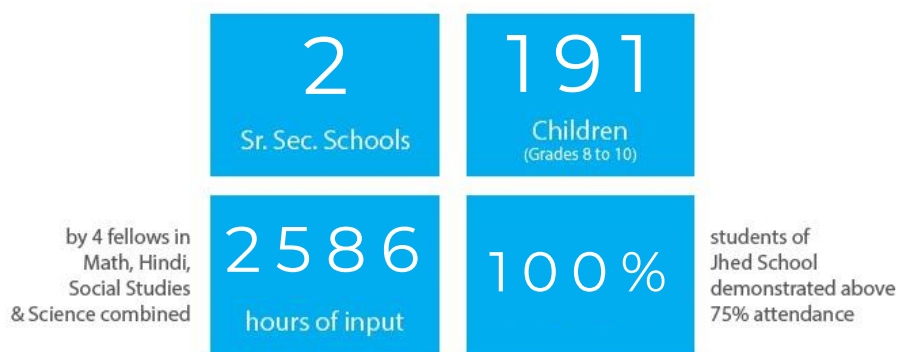
RAJASTHAN

Details of the key programs

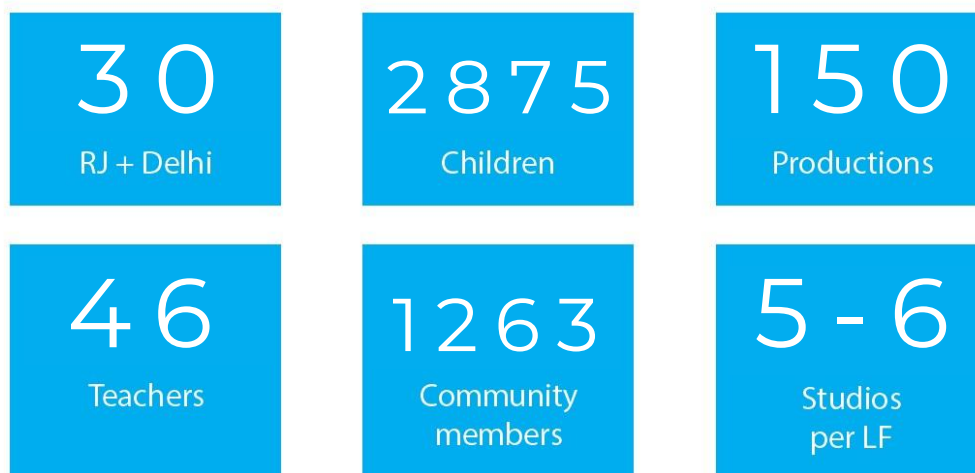
C.E.L.L - Direct Intervention



Digant



Learning Festivals



THE DESIGN TEAM'S LENS

The year came with a lot of learning where the design team were able to understand and reflect around the gaps between design and implementation. The new academic year began with a question - "what should the new model be?"

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

This time we felt confident of the recruitment process because we had a well-designed structure (product) to recruit our new team. The process helped us develop clarity in decision making and for the first time all team members in Kshamtalaya were able to lead the recruitment with ease and clarity. This was also possible because of a well-defined rubric.

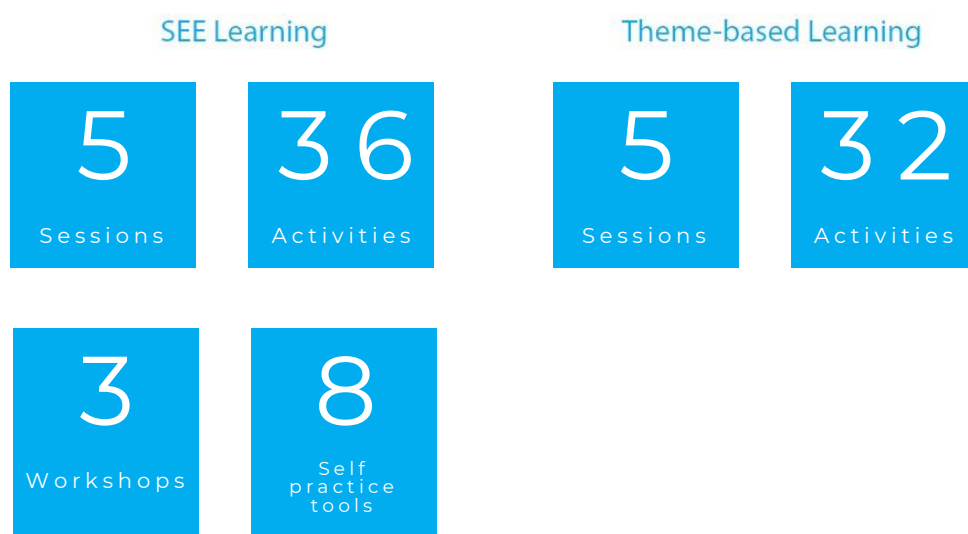
SEE LEARNING

It was necessary for us to understand how this curriculum - designed by the Emory University, can be implemented with children here in Kotra and Gogunda. A design team member had an experience of working as a facilitator with a group of children in Udaipur which added more value. We felt it necessary to have teachers on board for this journey. And it all began with a SEE Learning orientation workshop of 2 days. The objectives of the workshop were:

1. Exploring self, introducing tools, techniques to understand bodily sensations, self regulation, self awareness and attention.
2. Introduction of the SEE Learning curriculum (framework, learning experiences and pedagogical model)
3. Understanding the importance/need/challenges of these practices in the classroom with children

TEACHER SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

We also focused on development of teacher support framework around knowledge, skills and mindset/attitude. This year we developed milestones for the timelines and further dividing the year into quarters and quarters into weeks. We moved from the macro picture to micro steps of activities and hours required for teacher engagement keeping in mind the availability of a teacher.



This is a foundational structure that will help us build the complete teacher support program for 3 years inclusive of assessments. Our plan is to launch this curriculum in the upcoming academic year beginning from June 2020.

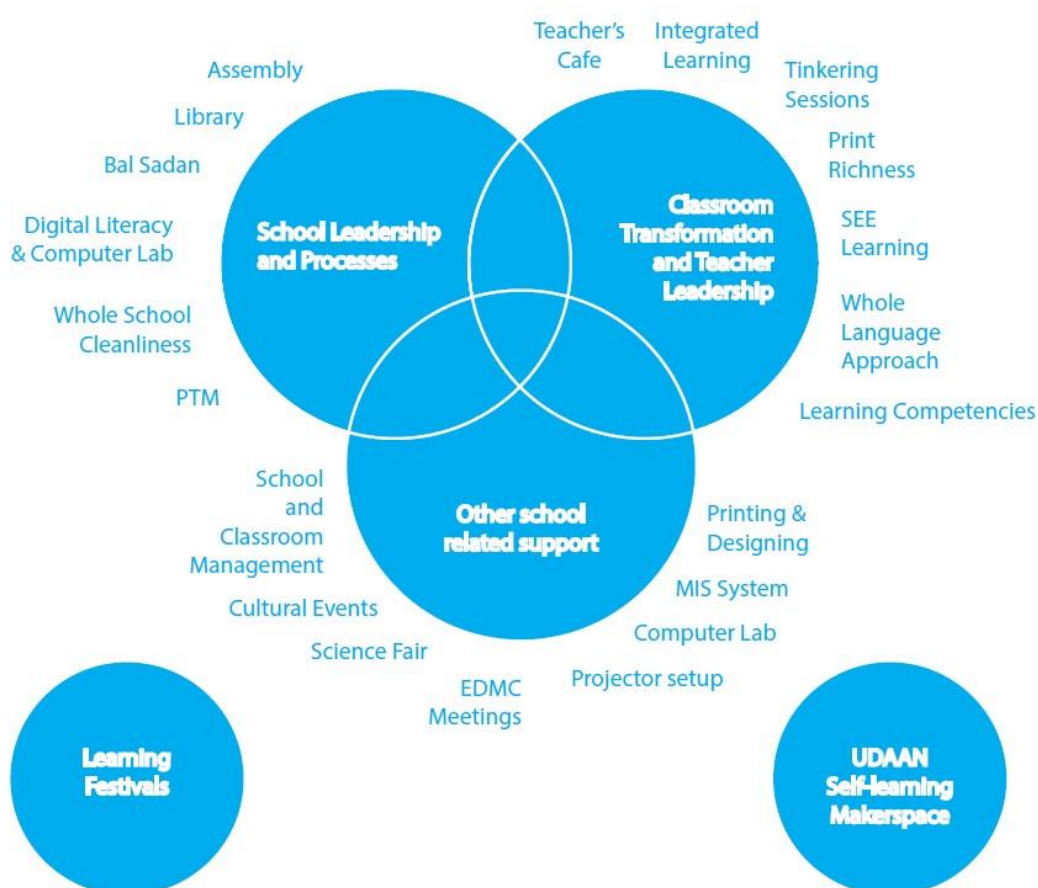


DELHI

Our schools Nagar Nigam Baalika/Baal Pratibha Vidyalaya are located in the heart of Dilshad Colony, East Delhi. It caters to a total of 1439 children in grades 1 to 5. We work closely with 45 teachers. The project started in August 2018 to make a collaborative effort in influencing a systemic intervention with two government schools under the EDMC with an objective of Whole School Transformation.

We intervened in the following key areas as per a designed model in 2019-2020:

Key Programs



To read a detailed report, click on the following link:

<https://bit.ly/DelhiReport201920>



LEARNING FESTIVALS

Our vision with the LFs is to demonstrate joyful, meaningful and purposeful learning for the students and teachers. The LFs also aim to engage the community to build a connection between the parents & local governance with the school administration. Further, in its demonstration, the LFs also holds spaces for teacher capacity building, participation and understanding of student-centered, contextual learning approaches.

To break the traditions, recourse our pathways and re-imagine how learning happens, the LF aims to demonstrate a shift from conventional teaching practices. The LFs are run by facilitators who have been trained in its stages and processes in an experiential format.

One of our core aims is to embed this in a daily classroom environment too. And to make that happen, we incorporated a process where the facilitators of the LF were also the teachers of the same schools, where the festivals were organized.

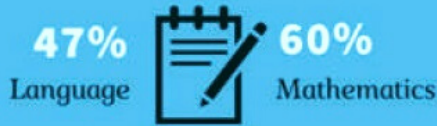


The Impact Journey



11 School Management Committees (SMCs) were activated

percentage of children who have showed 1 or more levels of jump on ASER



75% of alumni have gone back to their own communities to work on social justice

LEARNING FESTIVAL IN FOCUS



81%

average attendance during the Delhi LF, compared to school's 57%

83%

of the children demonstrated collaborative skills in Delhi LFs

96%

of the children shared their learning with their family and friends in Delhi LFs

97%

of children expressed themselves and shared their emotions in Delhi LFs

474

school drop-outs were engaged during festivals in Rajasthan

GRATITUDE

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to our partners, supporters, friends and family for their love, trust, and guidance in making it possible for us to give our dedicated energies on the ground operations.

At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. The dedication, passion with which the Principals and all the teachers the schools believed and invested their time and energies in us, inspiring us to stay true to our purpose and cause.

At times, we have felt as to whether we are invading communities or spaces to fulfill our need of working towards a goal. A wholehearted gratitude to the communities of Kotra, Gogunda and East Delhi for helping us realise through interactions, experiences that it is important to arrive at mutual needs to build partnership towards a common goal. Kshamtalaya also extends their gratitude to all the volunteers, Learning Festival facilitators who added their energies and motivation along the way, without whom, it would have not been possible to reach out to 9000+ children. And we thank each one of our children and their parents for loving us, trusting us and motivating us to always go the extra mile.

We look forward to continuing this journey of helping children realize their true potential by ensuring that they attain quality education.

THANK YOU!

Partners, Supporters and Friends of Kshamtalaya



EMORY
UNIVERSITY

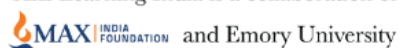


EDMC
East Delhi Municipal
Corporation

GANDHI FELLOWSHIP
unfold impact enjoy



SEE Learning India is a collaboration of



and Emory University

and the communities of Kotra, Gogunda and East Delhi

www.kshamtalaya.org
facebook.com/kshamtalaya
faceboom.com/learningfestivals
instagram.com/learningfestivals