



LEARNING
FESTIVALS

TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING

FEBRUARY
2020 | Delhi



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THE numbers ▶

352

children

187

parents

14

facilitators

15

studios

82%

average attendance of children
during the LF, when on
regular days it is **66%**

*the data mentioned is of two schools

An ◀ OVERVIEW

Kshamtalaya Foundation, initiated in 2016, a not for profit organization is committed to reimagining educational structure and practices within local schools and communities. We realise the current education system and their circumstances have rendered a lot of classroom learning obsolete and irrelevant. The work that we propose is aimed at establishing the significance of entrepreneurship in the lives of students and the community along with the teachers owning this agenda of learning.

Through the Learning Festivals (LFs) we hope to co-create spaces within schools and local communities that encourage students and youth to become self- directed and life-long learners. The LFs are a way to demonstrate the processes and needs experiential and contextual learning for schools and the local communities. The festival is a medium through which we aim to begin a dialogue with all stakeholders including children, on what they need to realise their full potential. We also believe that the schools have progressively alienated from the changing community over the last many years. The wider the gap between the real world and schools, the more difficult it is to create a learning system that is in tune with the needs of the current scenario. We wish to create spaces that are open and welcoming of dialogues between groups of people interested in their student's learning and betterment of their own community.





This publication illustrates our efforts in re-imagining the learning spaces within the schools so as to revive the spirit of learning. In the course of this document, we elucidate ways and actions through which we hope to revive the spirit of learning. The document will illustrate pathways that the Learning Festival will try to create, actualize and build ownership towards a common agenda for learning for their students.

Many initiatives in our nation today are working towards equality, peace and justice. In the education sector, we see motivated individuals and organizations committed to work for the media-dark geographies, urban poor and some specifically to girls, giving them all the opportunity to learn. We are here, learning and working together to help students and their families realize the significance of learning. With a systemic approach, the LF is an exercise in reimagining a better future for children and their communities.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Core principles are what support the vision, shape the culture and reflect what a program or an organisation values. They are the essence of the organisation's identity – the beliefs or philosophy of values.

The Learning Festivals (LFs) are designed keeping few integral core principles in mind. During the LFs organised during February 2020, a few of these principles were observed in action:

1. FREEDOM WITH RESPONSIBILITY:

The goal should be to empower students to take a part in their own learning while being held accountable for their behavior and work product. That can be developed through a system of Consistency and Flexibility within a learning space.

2. INITIATIVE TAKING:

The ability to take initiative is developed through internal rewards, like creativity, dignity, autonomy, making a difference for others, and activities that help children create their own futures. It is not developed through external rewards like grades, winning, awards, and money.



3. JOYFUL LEARNING:

The environment in the learning space should uphold the value of learning with happiness, encouragement and fun. This has shown to motivate children to come to school with a purpose to learn.

4. PEER LEARNING:

Peer Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that involves groups of students working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping team-mates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement.

5. SELF EXPRESSION:

Children's perceptions of their social position in the classroom, the nature of their relationships with others, and their expressions of personal identity are all tied to communication. Dialog promotes children's self-expression in their interaction with adults.

FREEDOM WITH RESPONSIBILITY▶



405

instances were observed of children sharing that they followed **classroom agreements** during the 5 day LF. Shared agreements build community.

We can intentionally create a classroom culture of mutual respect and collaboration by establishing, modeling, and holding all participants accountable to supportive agreements about how we learn together.



Today I was feeling very irritated and lost due to mismanagement of logistics. Everytime a child would come to me and for sketch pens or coloured sheets I would get lost in the materials box and was unable to find a thing.

Khushboo was observing me from a distance but she did not say anything to me. After 10-15 mins she came and started emptying the box on her own and started rearranging them properly.

In all patience and calmness, she started putting all the scattered sketch pens back in their packets and ket them in the box in an organized way.

Looking at her, another girl joined her in the task. In the next 20 mins they were done arranging the box and I felt overwhelmed by their sweet and well thought gestures.

After that day she made sure, everyday that box was arranged properly and also that the other children were taking care of material and keeping them back properly.

- as shared by NISHTHA, a facilitator of the ART & IMAGINATION studio



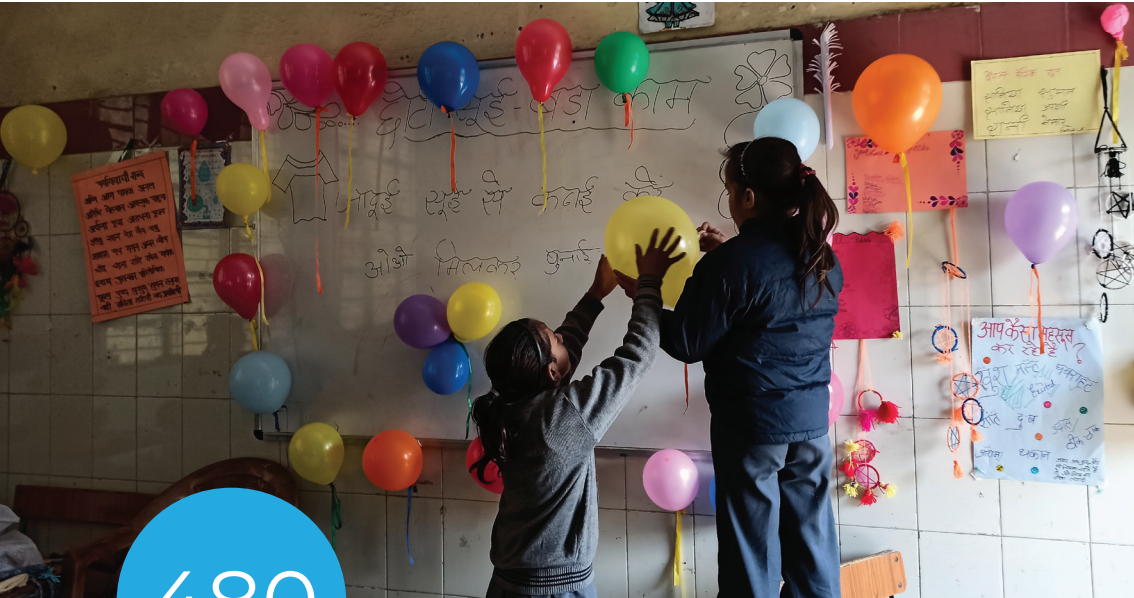
INITIATIVE TAKING▶



175

children mentioned that they were proactive in **taking initiatives** in the class and school space.

Showing initiative promotes teamwork and cooperation. Qualities like these make for a better school experience for everyone. Students enjoy learning in environments where there are values like these. Teachers appreciate working in schools where there are considerate students. It's a "win-win."



480

instances were observed of children **taking initiatives** on their own across studios.

How would students respond to opportunities to initiate their own learning?

How could we create opportunities that would bridge the present teacher-centered approach to more student-centered, empowered learning experiences?

Would students respond favorably to our invitations or resist the opportunity to play a stronger role in their school life?

“I saw children taking initiative on their own in my studio today. They themselves started their day by cleaning the classroom.”

- Garima, a facilitator of the Movement and Expression studio



JOYFUL LEARNING ►



88%

of 352 children shared that they had a **joyful learning** experience during the LF.

Non-interactive, chalk and talk methods used in classrooms end up producing children able to replicate but not create knowledge. In the last few decades, joyful learning has emerged as a powerful concept to change the way we manage schools and classrooms.

Samreen “flies” out of the classroom whenever she does not like the activity or whenever she does not feel like sitting in the classroom.

But twice today, especially in the first activity she was so engrossed, she drew all the 5 products. After lunch, she kept roaming around on the school's campus but as soon as we started creating products, she herself joined back and started creating something as per will.

She showed her product to me and asked for my opinion.

- as shared by MANJARI, a facilitator of the PLASTIC UPCYCLING studio





302

children mentioned that they shared about their **Joyful Learning** experiences with others.

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes:

- They interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking, negotiate and share new understandings.
- They express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others.



PEER LEARNING ►



89%

of the participating children shared that they learnt from their peers and helped them learn too.

Peer learning involves the use of groups to engage in more structured activities. These activities also give students time for active engagement, often providing opportunities for problem solving and application of content.

Today Aryan was not feeling well so I let him sit aside and rest for a while. And then I got busy with the other kids. The next moment, I saw Aryan crying and when I asked him he told me that Abdul had hit him on the shoulder and that his shoulder was paining. I consoled him and asked Abdul to apologise and he did.

I paired both of them together for another activity and since then they were seen working with each other without fighting and teasing. This is a huge change that I observed in Abdul. Since then he was working in co-operation with Aryan and both seemed happy.

- as shared by JAGRITI, a facilitator of the STORYTELLING studio





SELF EXPRESSION▶



89%

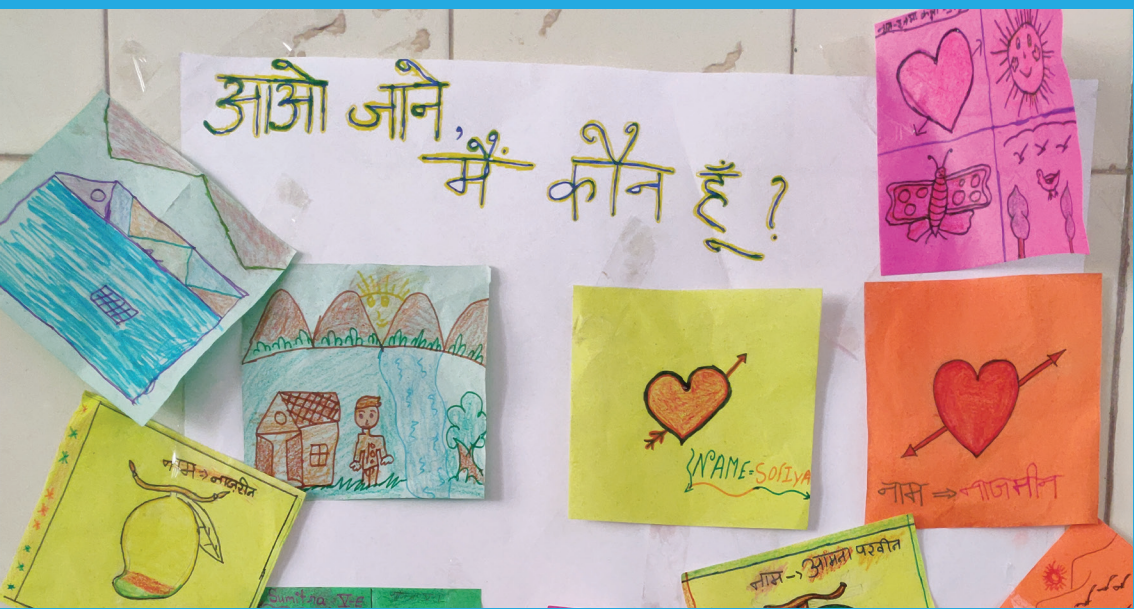
of the participating children shared that they learnt from their peers and helped them learn too.

Peer Learning helps gain a deeper understanding of what each one teaches the other which, helps both the individuals. Peers also develop a deeper connection considering that they share the same position in school.

Ahad is a very reserved child, with a mild voice and is very disciplined.

He would sit quiet and when I would call out to him but he would answer in class. He would grab an opportunity to raise his hand before answering. He is among the few who followed the agreement always. He is still the quiet child but if he raised his hand he would answer confidently.

- as shared by SAUMYA, a facilitator of the PLASTIC AWARENESS AND UPCYCLING studio



TESTIMONIALS ▶

"I never thought I would be able to speak to an audience through a microphone."

-Roshina, 5A

"There should be no discrimination with girls. Girls should not stay at home after the 5th Grade. Concerns should be addressed by communicating to our parents."

-Anam, 5D

"I realised that I can dance too. I have never danced before."

-Mohd. Jishan Khan, 4B

"I learnt to make my own books. I can repair my books too."

-Farhan Akhtar, 4A

"There were a bunch of Studios that I saw. Whether it was the embroidery or story telling studio, what stood out for me was to see every child actively doing, making something which you do not see in many schools. Children being so happy and excited about showcasing what they had learnt which was so contrary to when they learn something and present it in the form of an examination."

-A visitor at the Learning Festival

"The Learning Festival brings in a conducive atmosphere in the school. One positive aspect of this is that the children experience joyful learning. The parents also get a chance to witness an alternative to conventional pedagogy taking place in school. It gives them a chance to see how children learn through playful methods."

-Mrs. Sita Verma, Principal In-charge, Nagar Nigam Balika Pratibha Vidyalaya





LOVE and GRATITUDE▶

Kshamtalaya Foundation owes many thanks for the success of the amazingly fun and successful Learning Festivals organized for the sixth time in East Delhi during the month of February 2020.

Without nurturing and care, it is a huge challenge for a seed to grow into a tree. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to Tech Mahindra Foundation for their love, care and support in making it possible to organize these Learning Festivals. We wholeheartedly thank Art of Play, the partner schools, teachers and community members for their love and support throughout the festivals.

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 Mrs. Sita Verma and Mrs. Poonam Roy walked into the spaces each day, inspired us to stay true to our purpose and cause.

A whole-hearted gratitude to EDMC (East Delhi Municipal Corporation), for their belief in the Learning Festivals as a means to make learning joyful and meaningful for the children.

Kshamtalaya also thanks the facilitators who were the souls of the festivals. Without whom, it would have not been possible to reach out to 352 children. We look forward to continuing this journey of helping children realize their true potential by ensuring that they attain quality education.

THANK YOU!



kshamtalaya



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