



kshamtalaya

Annual Report

2018 - 2019





About Kshamtalaya

We at Kshamtalaya, aim to build spaces of learning to nurture human potential. We imbibe a culture of work that lives on trust, love and passion to see our vision turn into a true world, where every human is believed to be a self-learner, understands his/her potential and lives a happy and productive life.

Kshamtalaya is a non-profit organization founded to support school children in disadvantaged and rural settings so that they develop into socially and economically active young adults. Kshamtalaya intervenes within government schools and outside to improve academic outcomes and life prospects for the students in rural and marginalized settings. We also work to enhance capacity of teachers through building their pedagogic leadership and Social & Emotional Learning.

Manisha, Class 7 has stitched
her own dress as shown in
the photo during the Bakhel
Learning Festival 2018



Our Vision

We imagine a world where everyone realizes their true potential

Our Mission

- We will build spaces within & outside schools that provides access to all kinds of learning opportunities to cultivate entrepreneurial mindset.
- We will enable young facilitators, teachers, educators & systemic officials with skills, mindset and attitude to run these spaces.
- Creating models of whole school transformation

Our chapters across locations

RAJASTHAN

29 schools
3000+ children
31 fellows

DELHI

2 schools
865 children
4 facilitators

HUBLI

6 schools
893 children
3 facilitators



Our Impact : a sneak-peek

- A team of 39 facilitators were trained to be grassroots development professionals
- 4000+ children were directly impacted with LF and Classroom Support across geographies
- 35 schools were engaged with in our LF and Classroom Support programs
- 5 Happiness workshops held engaging 70+ teachers across geographies
- More than 2000 community members reached through LFs, PTMs and Community Immersion
- 52 Learning Festivals were organized across the three locations in the April 2018 to March 2019 period





A Theme-Based Curriculum to support students in increasing their Learning Outcomes

Rajasthan | Kotra and Gogunda

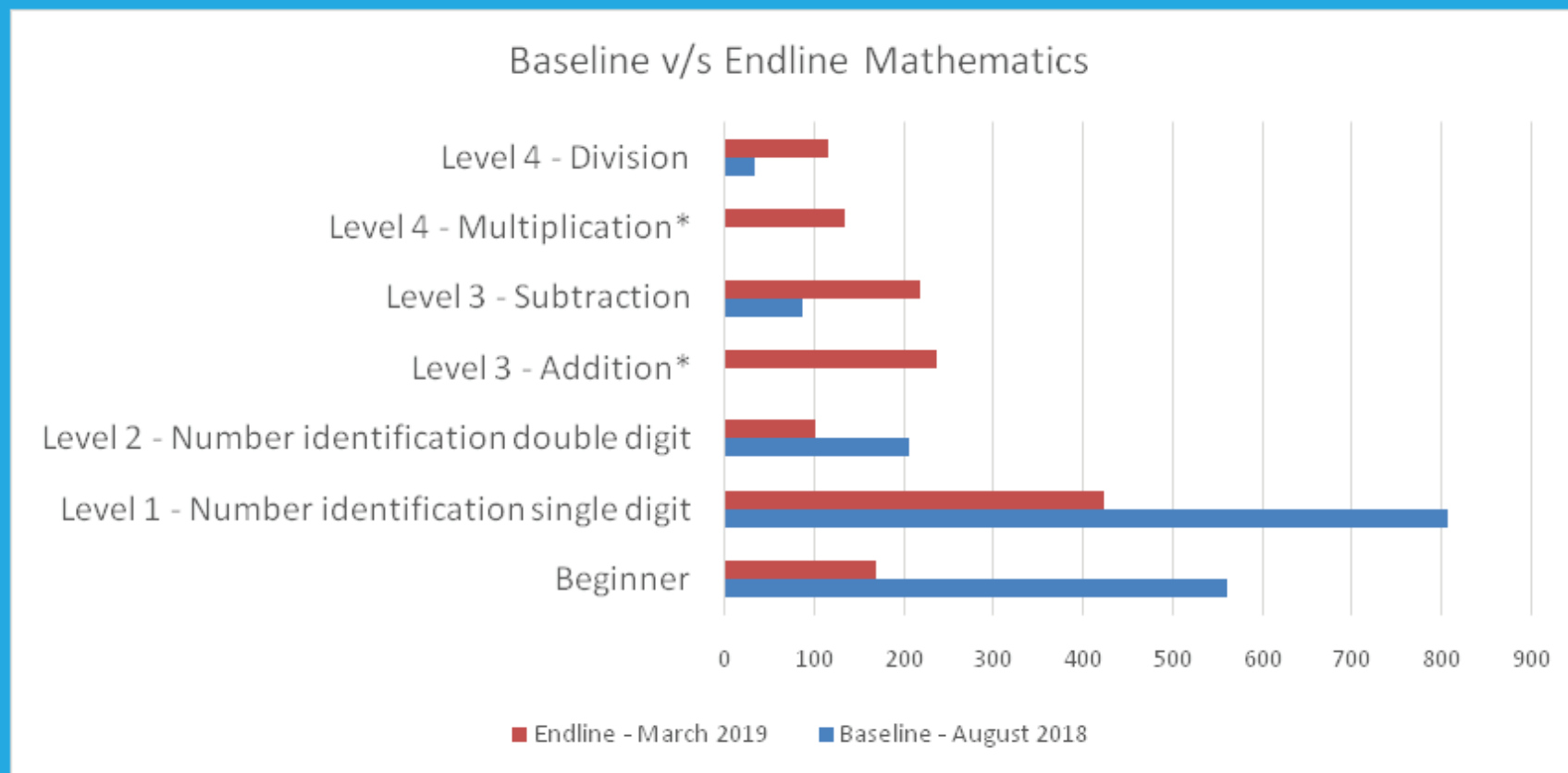
With an aim to create a child centric environment of learning, we realized that in most of the schools in Kotra and Gogunda that we have opted to work in, had the following issues – multi-grade classrooms, low foundational numeracy or literacy skills, dearth of teachers and lack of joyful or playful methodologies of learning.

With the intervention of Theme-Based Learning, it provided various opportunities for children to learn from their environment. It integrates mindfulness where children imagine and feel the 'numbers' or 'shapes' – taking the inward journey to understand an abstract subject like mathematics. It encapsulates processes like circular seating arrangement, learning level based segregation of groups, experiential learning, dialogue and reflection based approaches.

A total of 29 fellows are using these methodologies of Theme-Based curriculum where they take the child on a journey of Math, EVS and language through a single given theme.



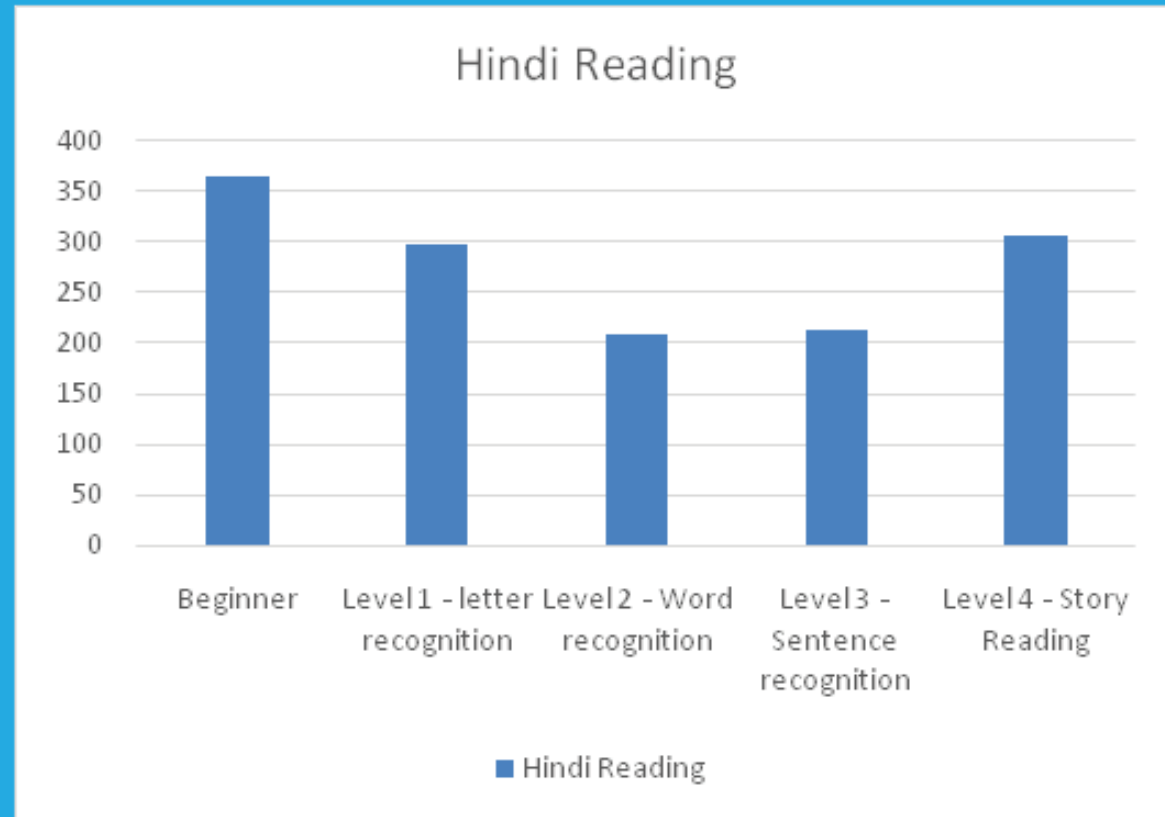
Below given statistics outlay our achievements in the year that has passed.



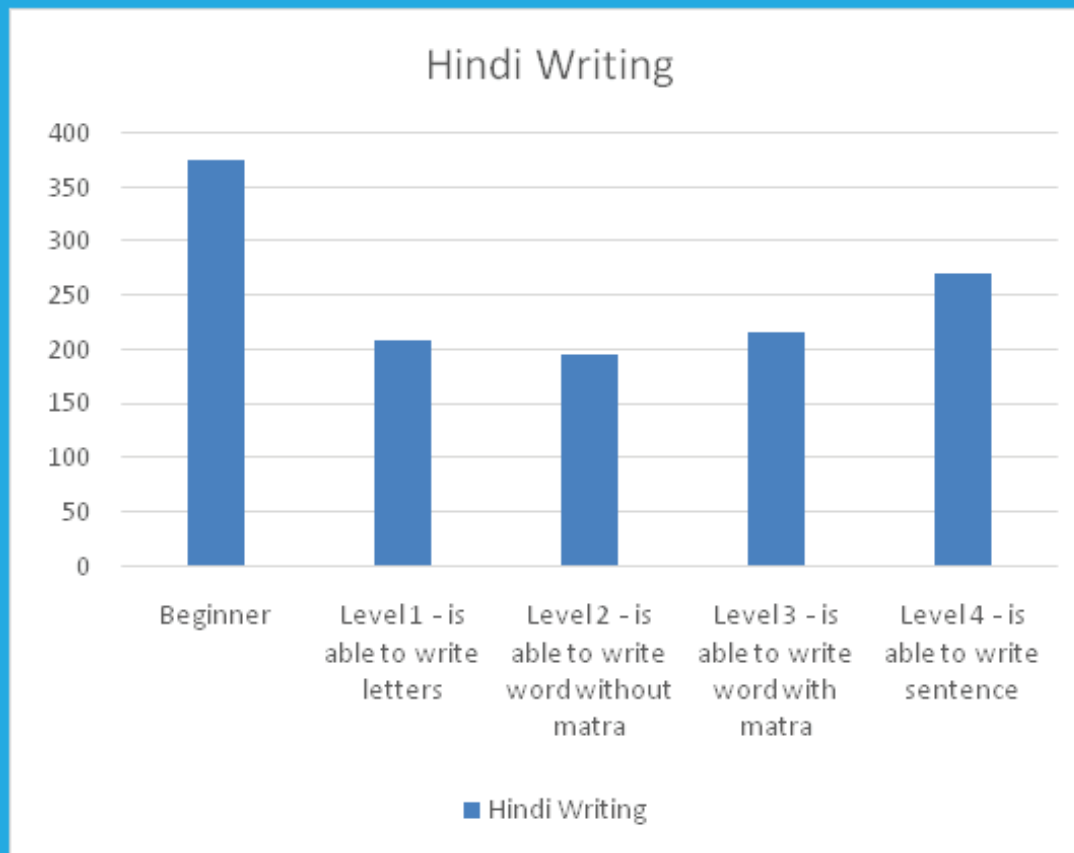
*Multiplication and Addition tests were adapted during the Endline test only.

The Baseline v/s Endline test results show a significant growth in the math levels of children. An increase to 116 children doing division problems from 33 last year is showing the impact of the Theme-Based Curriculum that the facilitators are using as guides to their Classroom Intervention.

Due to our understanding that the need to focus on strengthening Hindi language rather than English – The ASER assessment conducted in March 2019 covers Hindi Reading and Hindi Writing levels. Here are the graphs showing the levels of learning of 1394 children in Hindi Reading and 1270 children in Hindi Writing –



The graph reads a total of 366 students as of March 2019 are still not able to recognize letters of the Hindi alphabet. There has been a record of 307 students who are able to write sentences. It is not far that through our efforts, we aim to take a lot more students from the Beginner to Sentence Reading levels.



To understand a child's holistic growth we have also conducted the Hindi writing levels where there is still 376 children who are not able to write letters of the hindi alphabet. We have observed 307 children who are able to write sentences without any errors.

Udaan
– A Self Organized
Integrated Learning space
to re-imagine
how learning happens

Delhi

Two children named Aasma & Vishakha have worked on LED PCB circuit. They found it very interesting to use soldering iron on PCB and make the project.





One child named Aaysha started coming regularly. Her father was very happy while sharing that her daughter loved to come to school now. Before this, she didn't love to come to school

Developing a SOIL classroom for children to inculcate them with specific skills to practice self- learning

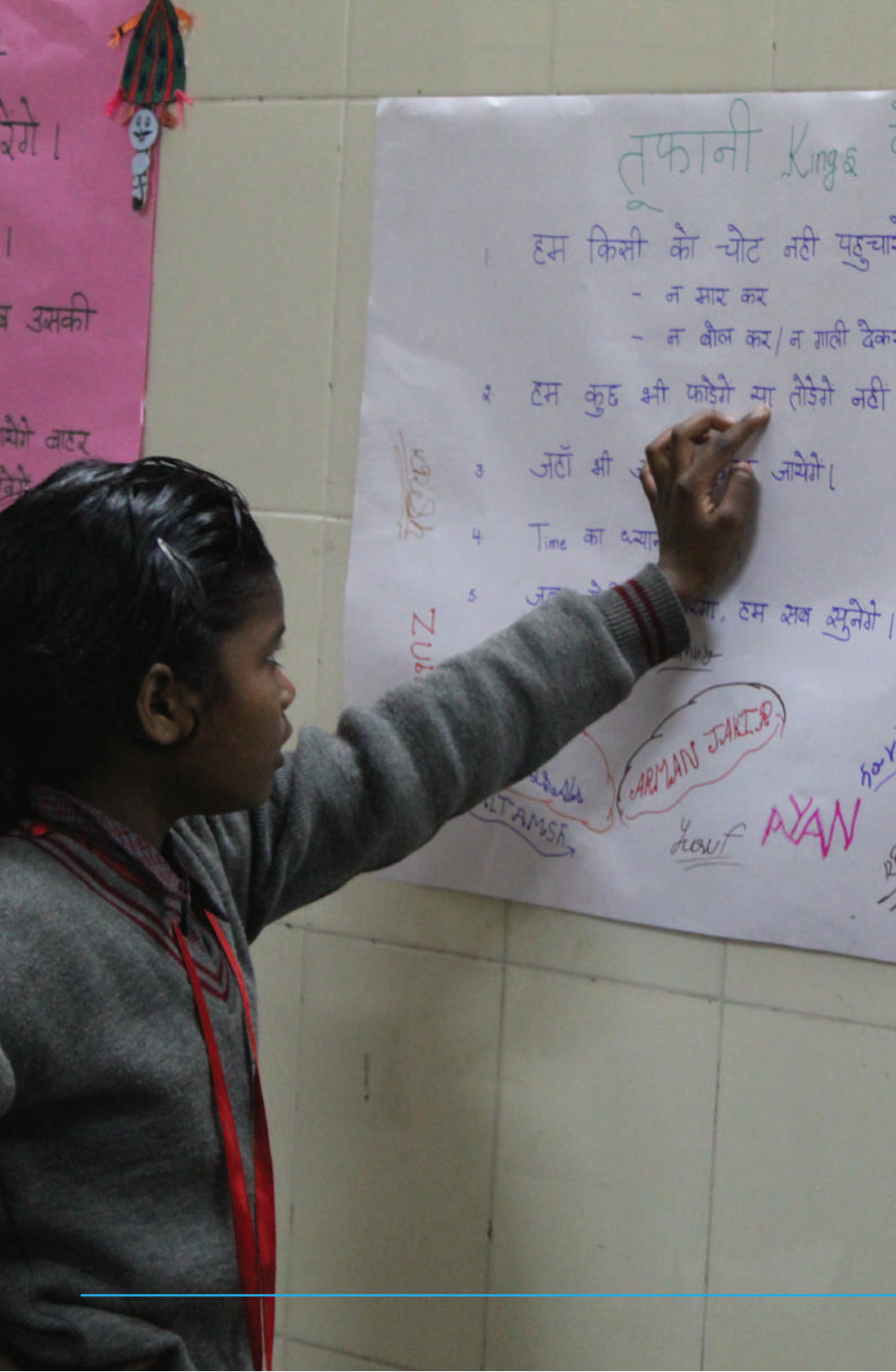
A space in the school which can be accessible to children as per their needs where they can learn different skills and come up with the projects, they are most interested in.

Total no. of beneficiaries		
Direct		
Male	Female	Total
386	479	865

We engaged with total of 52 learners. During this intervention, children created a total of 94 Projects, 72% learners learned how to operate basic laptop functions (on, off) access internet (Avg 60% learners know about Internet and how to connect and disconnect it) and search information (50% children can independently search information on Google and YouTube), documenting their projects through videos and increase in life skills like working in groups, resource utilization, problem solving and creative confidence (65% children out of 25 assessed are able to express their thoughts and share about their project with peers with confidence).

December Parents Teacher Meeting –The parents' attendance in PTM rose to 70% from a school average of 15-20%. We ensured in our community support visits that parents connect with idea of SOIL classroom. Parents got to know what their children had done so far in this space through Portfolios and Videos.





Academic Support - 10% increase in ASER baseline in Academics

60% children (out of 52 regular learners) moved by 1 stage 2 or more in Hindi Reading and Writing as per internal assessment. Children started recognizing alphabets in English in evening school and in morning the major shift was seen in Hindi Reading and writing in children who were at the beginner stage.

However, we took more than anticipated because we had not been able to foresee the challenges which would come in direct intervention with the children who are at multiple grades and with different leaning behavior. Much time was spent in understanding the child learning pattern, attention and in building a healthy relationship between facilitator and children which was also crucial to our own understanding and work.

Teacher's Cafe

To create safe space for Teachers to express, interconnect and develop their personal and professional capacity.

Delivered 11 Sessions in total where 8 sessions were focused on understanding Kshamtalaya's project, oriented them with the concept of empathy, understanding interconnectedness in school system and 3 sessions were focused on building relationship, getting insights from Teachers of how Teacher Café should shape up and celebrating festivals with Teachers.

Teacher's Cafe is a new idea which did not exist in school space before our intervention, since teachers are supposed to be with students all the time, it was difficult to find out the avenues of arranging such sessions, however we were able to achieve the first milestone of making Teachers understand the concept and need of the Cafe and get them onboard with the idea. All the sessions which were executed with Morning school reported 80% as an average attendance of teachers and Evening School marked 50% as an average attendance of Teachers to this cafe session





Organized two Happiness Workshops for Teachers on understanding self through Movements and Expressions pedagogy.

More than 70% teachers joined the workshop and we received positive feedback from them (See detailed report attached below). We also led 4 follow-up sessions with teachers and their classes and helped teachers to execute activity based on understanding self and emotions.

The workshops helped us to build trust and connect more on a personal level with teachers, it also helped teachers to understand each other. It also was a stepping stone to make teachers understand the objective of Movement and Expressions Curriculum and experience it in person, so that they are more receptive of executing similar sessions with children with support of Kshamtalaya's team.



Four teachers have come to this space along with their class. Both teachers and children have made projects under SOIL exposure visit. Other teachers also showed interest in this space and they have used the materials available in the space like wood cutter, cutter, first aid kit, scissor etc to build/repair something. They have also requested for exposure to this class.

Samreen is the only girl who was not part of the SOIL students, we were given by school staff. She is highly interested in arts & crafts and use to come regularly to SOIL space to make projects in her free time. The facilitator requested teacher to send her to SOIL space and she has used this space very well for her own learning. She chooses her own projects and supports other children in art and craft projects.





Hidden skills of learners will come out when they are given exposure to different mediums of learning. With exposure of dance in December, one learner Saniya started to explore dance on YouTube and prepared dance performance on Patriotic music and then performed on Republic Day Celebration in school in front of her peers, teachers and other dignitaries. Her memory of learning dance steps is so good that she was able to do the dance steps from video after watching it 2-3 times.

Five learners named Hifza, Naazrin, Aaysha, Vishakha and Mantasha prepared a group dance by their own from YouTube without any facilitator support and that was a proud moment when they performed their prepared dance in republic day





Friendsline-Kshamtalaya : Enhancing SEL through Yoga and Mindfulness

Kshamtalaya Foundation partnered with Friendsline in the month of November to take Yoga and Mental health to the high school students of some of the schools we work in. Our fellows Unnati Sharma, Nisha Kothari, Lakshmipriya, Sharmishtha and Anu along with the Operations & Strategy head Poojas-ingh and Anjali Gupte attended the vision building session and how we can raise the importance on mental health and well-being to the rural women of Rajasthan.

Key Observations by Local Coordinators

1. The beneficiaries have developed a unique mind-set in which during debriefs they usually mention the changes within themselves in comparison to what they did and felt in the starting of the program.
2. The ownership which we see is amazing whether it is – arriving on time, winding up the yoga mats the yearning to do the session twice in the week and informing others about the program.
3. The yoga and mindfulness implementation is better. The way they hold their poses, they are able to clearly inform what is disturbing them during sessions (ex; vehicles passing by, the cold, phones etc.)





Case Study of a Beneficiary Hemlata Sen

1. The beneficiary is 16 years old she has a perfect attendance till now. The passion towards the program can be seen within her. She once mentioned during mindfulness that in the starting of the program she was unable to focus on her breath and kept getting distracted but now she is able to focus more. Also she mentioned that she loves coming here and would like us to take 2 sessions per week.

2. The new strength yoga sessions was enjoyable according to her and she loves the space and her ownership towards it is admirable she stays and helps in winding up and locking the room. Yes, right now my group and hemlata understands what is mindfulness and what are few mental illness and how mindfulness helps to focus and be in the moment (we did a emotion diary session, also showed them few videos explaining what mindfulness means and its definition, we continuously during debriefs ask them how they are feeling and what change do they observe within themselves after the sessions).

Locations	Month	No. of Seminars	Avg. no. of participants per seminar
Gogunda	November	3	8
	December	3	10
	January	4	9
	February	3	6
Kotra	December	4	5
	January	4	6

Learning Festivals demonstrate the tension between - what is and what is POSSIBLE



Day 1

Introduction
and
Exposure



Day 2 | 3

Exposure to
various learning
mediums continues



Day 4 | 5

Creation Days:
make your
production

Day 6

Share your
learning with
friends & family

52

festivals

40

schools

5622

children

| 86 |

community
members

Summer LF

12 festivals

12 schools

2407 children

Rajasthan

500+
drop-outs
engaged

1439 1776
girls boys

Winter LF

40 festivals

38 schools

3215 children

Rajasthan + Delhi

Learning Studios

Art &
Imagination

Electronics &
Tinkering

Embroidery &
Stitching

Singing &
Composing

Puppetry &
Storytelling

Movement &
Expression

Recorded Observations

Tool created for 37 winter LFs conducted from Dec '18 to Jan '19

454

children took initiative
in the festival's processes

65

community members
contributed time/material
for organizing the LFs

429

children stayed back after
studio hours and continued
working

68

parents expressed their pride
over their children's learning
during the LFs



The journey towards creating a reading future

The Journey

The need for reading spaces emerged after detailed discussions of several schools over what constitutes their media diet and their exposure to events, people, cultures and thoughts outside their area of residence. Moreover, reading as an act is deeply empowering as it leaves us with the deft skill of imagination, creation and thinking. This was our earliest intention for the children of Kundgol. When we spoke with teachers and community members, all their responses were directed towards thinking of reading as a useful activity that would improve their vocabulary and their attention span.

We then setup a fundraiser on Pratham's donate a book platform as it seemed like the smartest choice. We were able to reach our fundraising goal at the end of the month with the help of tens of people who also shared this dream. Though we had done some research on what the books would be like and asked a lot of people their thoughts on the books and their responses were in the affirmative. Once we received the books, we realized that they were written by mostly upper class city people and were highly unrelatable. Post that we did some research on the problems with children's literature and found that it is being produced by the richest people in society and even when the books are written by socially marginalized groups, they are co-opted by the rich and are produced in such a way that they are out of the monetary reach of a majority of children.

We then realized that we must produce and publish our own stories to break the toxic trend in children's writing. The silver lining was that the pratham books were very well-illustrated and as our children could not fluently read, the pictures were a great source for building more stories.





The Process

We immediately did not set library spaces when we started reading sessions. We first started with introducing the kids to the books, carried out story telling sessions in 2 schools: Model Government School and Higher Primary Boys School, Hireharkuni. We then needed to know the reading levels of the children and used the books which are divided in levels to understand how the children must graduate through the levels. We found that the most of the children were in level 1 and 2.

No. of sessions per week (since November 2018)	No. of hours	Total hours	Schools
3	3	12 hours in November 3 hours in December 12 hours each in January and February 39 hours in total	Bilebal Primary School Devanur Primary School Model Primary School, Upper Primary, Hireharkuni
2	2	8 hours in November 7 hours each in February and March	Hireharkuni Lower Primary School

In some schools we were able to carry out more sessions as against others due to reasons of class availability, teacher support, holidays and examinations.

While we did do a baseline when we started, we weren't able to complete an endline process though we found that children were attempting to read books of a higher level and were more imaginative.

Testimonials

“Thank you so much for the Urdu books, we were in desperate need of reading material for the children as we don’t have any such thing here. I can’t believe you have come till our school to give us these books! Next time if you have any of these resources, we will come to where you are to get it. We find that Urdu is very neglected so it is very encouraging when an organization comes to help us with what we need.”

Mrs Shailaja

HM in-charge
Urdu Primary School
Kundgol

“This is exposing our kids to things they would have never known. They are also picking up books on their own and hopefully wont make much noise. Good thing you have done.”

Bandiwad

Teacher
Lower Primary School
Hireharkuni



Our Partners & Supporters



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