



LEARNING
FESTIVALS

TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING

Learning Festivals for Young Entrepreneurs

A Concept Note



kshamtalaya

Overview

The world has gone through breathtaking change in the several decades. Countries and people across the world have managed to lift a huge number of people out of poverty, invested in infrastructure, funded critical public research in science, arts, medicine and technology to guarantee a better standard of living for all of us. These discoveries, incentives and encouraging ecosystems created by governments across the world like in Japan, Estonia and the United States allowed ordinary people and collectives to stand on the shoulders of giants to discover, innovate and disseminate these at scale to millions of people like for example the desktop computer and the internet. The people who were at the forefront of bringing these innovations to the world were entrepreneurs.

For India, it is only now that entrepreneurship has moved out of the traditional business confines of the Hindu Undivided Family to spread across different age groups, streams and communities. In analyzing the number of patents filed with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the last four years indicates a boom in the number of innovations; while only about 6000 patents were filed in 2015, the number had reached up to 13000 patents by the end of 2017. In comparison to the population this may seem like a small number but it is still a start and thus, becomes clear that entrepreneurship must only be for outliers, it must be for all. The best way to create this even playing field is by instilling the entrepreneurial spirit in children right from their time in school itself.

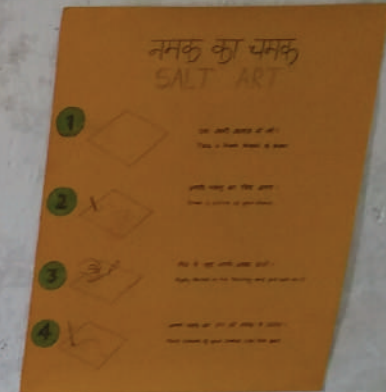
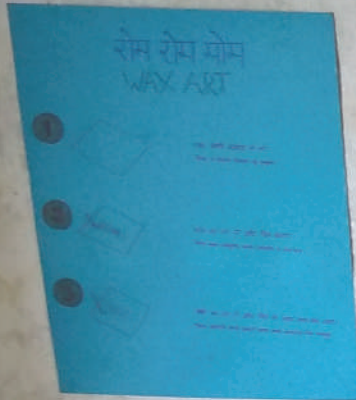
Moreover, in a transnational global economy, the systems governing labour, job security, automation and industries are all changing and are putting the incomes of a great number of people at risk. While this is happening on one side, great new opportunities are opening up on the other, it is up to us now to smell the tide and reinvent ourselves for the changing economy.

As social entrepreneurs ourselves who are immersed in the purpose of creating learning spaces that tap into the endless potential of children to imagine a better and freer world for everyone, here is our proposal to bring entrepreneurship into the minds and thought processes of the young adults in the government secondary schools.

A photograph showing a group of children gathered around a small, custom-built electronic device on a light-colored tiled floor. The device consists of a small motor, a battery, and two plastic caps (one blue, one orange) connected by wires. One child's hand is reaching towards the device. Another child's leg, wearing a yellow shirt with 'NEW CREATY' written on it and blue sandals, is visible. A third child's hand is in the foreground, resting on the floor. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor environment.

We propose the Learning Festival

The purpose of the Learning Festival (LF) is 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 need of entrepreneurship for schools and the local communities.



The Learning Festival is:

- A space of exposure
- A space for a deep dive into problems and plausible solutions
- A dedicated 8 days to observe, experiment and create and market
- A simulation of an entrepreneurial destiny
- Learn the skills and mindsets of an entrepreneur while working on your own projects and activities
- A community to be inspired by your own budding entrepreneurial spirit and to meet and learn from entrepreneurs all around you!
- A community celebration!





In the course of this document, we lay out in clear terms why we extend the Learning Festival, how will the children benefit from it and the processes of the Learning Festival for young entrepreneurs. 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. Programs like vocational training, dream camps on self-transformation, maker-space labs run by communities are giving an agency to the people to mark their presence and be heard. We are here; learning and working together to help students and their families realize the significance of entrepreneurship. With a systemic approach, the LF is an exercise in reimagining a better future for students and their communities.

A group of students are sitting on the floor in a room with yellow walls. They are facing a man who is sitting on the floor and talking to them. The man is wearing a white t-shirt and glasses. The students are wearing school uniforms. There is a patterned bag on the floor next to one of the students. The room has a doorway in the background and some posters on the wall.

WHY

do we need
Learning Festivals
for Entrepreneurs?

The Learning Festival (LF) is a monthly event conducted over 10 days in schools or local community spaces. The days are designed in a natural progression; where students explore various mediums of potential income generation, by experiencing a pre-determined set of creative activities of each medium.

The child discovers new methods of learning and constructs knowledge of her immediate environment. Guided by a Group Mentor (GM), the child in a group moves from one medium to another. The group of students, having experienced the activities will then go on to express themselves. The students will use their learning from the previous days and with the guidance of the GM, blend two or more mediums to create an enterprise idea, by involving processes of market research, analysis, branding, accounting, presenting. This is shared with the facilitator.

The LFs will be equipped with diverse set of resources and methods (physical & people infrastructure) to encourage questions, curiosity and learning by doing. The GMs will be trained in theories and practices of multiple intelligences, entrepreneurship. The learner then deepens her understanding of her particular choice by investigating, doing, creating and sharing with support from the GM and the team. On the last day of the festival, they pitch the enterprise idea with their respective teams to an active entrepreneur who will be invited to the presentation, or even a jury panel comprising of investors, researchers and entrepreneurs.





The Learning Festival is not an escape from the pitfalls of the traditional classroom but is instead a movement to reimagine the interactions and dialogue within a learning environment. We cast no doubts about young adults learning in such an energized and fertile learning environment as in the disconnected far reaches of Roopani village in Kotra, Rajasthan, a parent of a primary school child said, "My daughter has been going to school for the past 5 years but has still not learnt how to write her name but in three days of the Learning Festival, I have seen her dance on stage with no fears and inhibitions." As we are witness to these results in Kotra, we expect better results in Government secondary schools in the coming times.

The Guiding Principles


Joyful Learning: The environment in the learning space will uphold the value of learning with happiness, encouragement and fun. This will motivate students to come to school with a purpose to learn.

Equality of Opportunities and choices: All learners participating in the LF are given equal opportunities to learn, be heard and listened to carefully. No child/parent/teacher will be discriminated or favored excessively on gender/race/-caste/class.

Collaboration: It is an integral value that stems from the idea that we are truly interdependent. Collaboration leverages the interdependence of each other. Collaboration in LF is fundamental beginning by involving the parents, teachers and the government in an attempt to re-imagine learning within communities and schools.

Right to Risk: The young students will have the right to risk in this safe environment knowing fully well that they will not face any repercussions or emotional harm in the course of an activity or project.



The background image shows a top-down view of an art studio floor. It is a light-colored, textured surface, possibly concrete or stone, covered with various art supplies and paint splatters. In the upper left, there are several small, shallow metal or plastic containers filled with different colors of paint: blue, yellow, and black. A paintbrush is visible in the black container. To the right of these containers is a large, vertical, irregular splash of yellow paint. Further right, there is a white rectangular piece of paper with some purple and blue paint splatters on it. In the bottom left corner, there is another white piece of paper with some orange and red paint splatters. The overall scene suggests a creative and messy workspace.

Learning Studios: A studio is a workshop set-up space where students come together to learn. The studio is designed keeping in mind the learner. The space enables movement, a dedicated section to store resources and their work area. They are physical spaces that host a range of learning mediums - arts, science, sports, and environment and so on – any medium that the learner relates or aspires to. The studios are backed with manuals that are designed keeping in mind a progression of activities described in detail and their purpose on each day of the festival. The activities are designed in a manner that takes the learner from familiarizing oneself with the medium, to applying the methodology for creating an output using the same medium. The manuals are guiding documents for the facilitator to create this experience.

Some aspects of this learner-centric model are:

- (i) Creating a safe space for students
- (ii) Activities that range from basic to complex, allowing the child to choose one that is most relevant to her
- (iii) Learning by doing
- (iv) Using available resources to facilitating learning

A smiling woman with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a black vest with colorful embroidery, has her right hand raised in the air. She is surrounded by a crowd of children, some of whom are also raising their hands. The background is slightly blurred, showing more people in a bright, outdoor setting.

The Learning Festival Team

Learning Festival Organizer (LFO): The senior teacher/facilitator in whose school/community the festival will be organized will be the host or the LFO. One of the major responsibilities of the LFO is to ensure a smooth functioning of the festival by taking up responsibilities related to resource management, team relationship and documentation through video/photography.

Studio Facilitator: The Studio Facilitator is solely responsible to prepare and facilitate the studio that will be set up in the LF space. The Studio facilitator is closely involved from the process of designing the manual and allocating the materials to run the studio. (S)he plays one of the key roles in the festival as they will be directly in touch with the children.

Group Mentor: The group mentors are the first contact person in the festival for the children. They are responsible to orient the children about the festival, taking them on a journey of exploration of all the studios that are set-up and lastly to help the children make a choice and guide them in their creation days. Post the choice made by the children, the group mentors will join a studio facilitator to co-operate within the studios.

A group of children and adults are gathered outside a school building. The building has yellow walls and is partially covered by large, colorful fabric hangings in shades of yellow, green, and blue. Several children are standing and sitting, some looking towards the camera. A man in a light blue shirt and a cap is standing in the center, looking at a smartphone. A woman in a yellow sari is sitting in the foreground, holding a baby. Other children are standing around her, some looking at the camera and others looking away. The scene is set in a rural area with trees and a clear sky in the background.

Who we are

Kshamtalaya Foundation is a social entrepreneurial venture in the field of education. We are in the not-for-profit business of reimagining education and learning within local schools and communities since 2016. Moreover, we started Kshamtalaya meaning a house of potential to change the status-quo in learning. We find that 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 owning this agenda of learning. Through the Learning Festivals we aim to begin a dialogue on what a child needs best for her learning potential to be achieved.



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