

# Centre For Learning Resources

Annual Report

2009-2010



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## Background

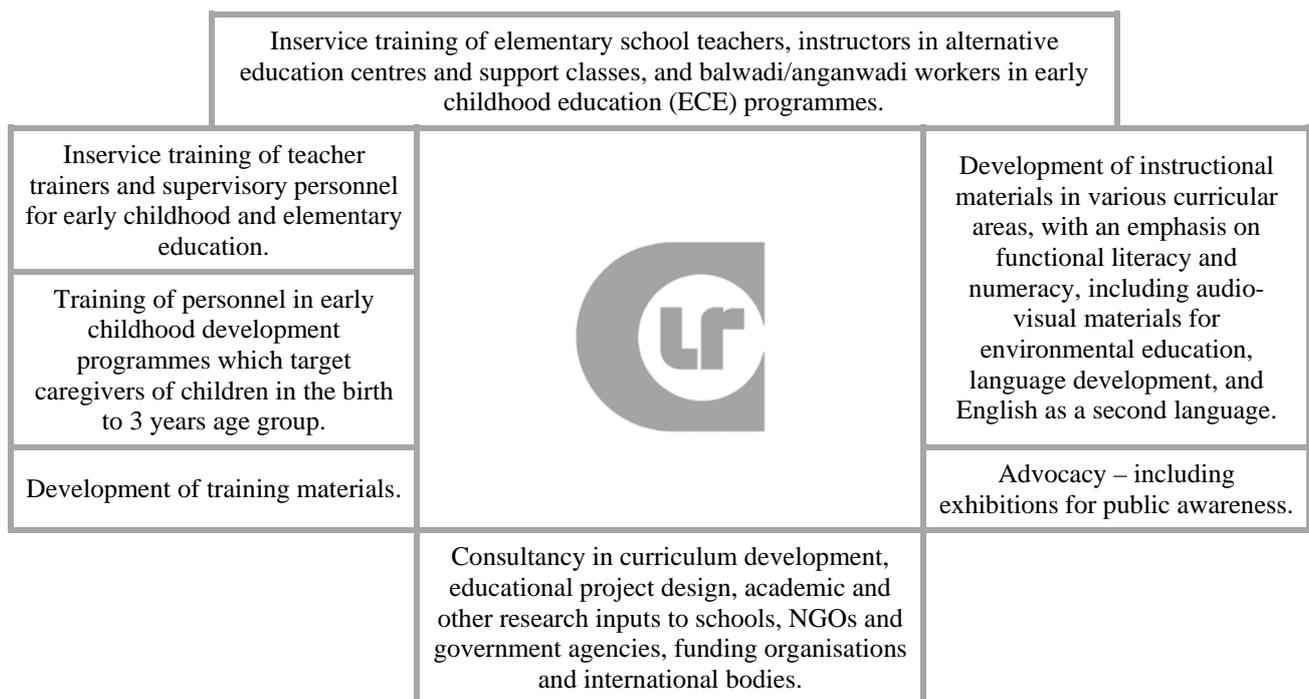
The Centre For Learning Resources (CLR) was established in Pune in 1984. It is a non-profit educational institution of The Society For Educational Improvement And Innovation which is registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, the Bombay Public Trust Act of 1950 and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 1976.

## Goals

The expansion of elementary education and early childhood education in India has often not been matched by a similar concern for the quality of teaching and learning. This has resulted in dreary and unstimulating classrooms, millions of elementary school dropouts and unacceptably low levels of learning in our classrooms. Moreover, the significance of the first three years in early child development is also not sufficiently understood. The main goal of the CLR is to improve the quality of early childhood care and development and elementary education that rural and urban disadvantaged children receive in our country.

## Main Activities

The CLR acts as a technical support organisation to NGOs working at the grassroots level, and to government and private schools. Its main activities are as follows:



# EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

## Developing "Observation-Cum-Lab Centres" to Demonstrate Effective ECE

### Rationale

In inservice teacher training programmes for both NGOs and government agencies involved in preschool education, there is usually a common need that has to be addressed - the need to introduce a developmentally appropriate curriculum, teaching-learning methods and materials. Existing balwadi teachers and anganwadi workers tend to have insufficient and often unsound preservice training, with a smattering of theory and no exposure to good implementation at the field level. Besides teachers and anganwadi workers, administrative authorities in government programmes like the ICDS, and project directors / coordinators of NGO ECE interventions also need far more in-depth perspective-building on early child development and how to promote it.

At the CLR, we have therefore felt a great need, in our own training programmes, to be able to expose trainees to a well-run, developmentally sound preschool programme, and give them an opportunity to interact with good preschool teachers. It was important to lodge a good programme not in an ideal situation, but preferably within the constraints of schemes like the ICDS, so that trainees from similar backgrounds would find their observations at these sites relevant to their own contexts.



To this end, we started developing, in 2008, 3 rural ICDS anganwadis in Mulshi Block to serve as "Observation-cum-Lab Centres." This year, 4 more rural anganwadis were added to this programme – in Azde, Savargaon, Khubavali and Kulewadi.

### Training and Mentoring of Anganwadi Workers and their Helpers

A large part of the training focused on building good rapport with the anganwadi workers and helpers, in order to bring about much-needed attitudinal change towards young children and towards their own work.

To sustain the quality of these observation centres, we have established a mentoring relationship between our staff and each worker, through frequent one-to-one interactions. These interactions focus on linking theoretical inputs to the practical aspects of implementing

a sound, activity-based ECE curriculum. Toys and age-appropriate learning materials have been provided, and anganwadi workers also encouraged to develop materials and activities on their own.

### Improving Infrastructure

Maintenance and repair work was carried out where necessary. In Kule, an attractive, outer mural was painted with enthusiastic involvement of women from the village. As in the initial 3 villages, the 4 new anganwadis were equipped with display boards for children's work and better storage facilities.



### Involving Parents and Community

Parents' meetings were held in the villages. In Hinjewadi, an awareness-raising film on effective ECE was screened for parents and other community members. The anganwadi worker interacted with parents, who were able to view their children's creative work.

### Sharing of Wider Experiences

The ICDS authorities organised a programme at the Mulshi project headquarters where the workers from our observation centres shared their ideas on preschool education and demonstrated the use of some CLR teaching-learning materials developed by the CLR, as well as the use of locally available materials for devising various ECE activities.

### Anganwadi Children's Artwork presented at India Foundation For The Arts

The CLR was invited to make a presentation on the Arts in Early Childhood Education at a conference organised in Bangalore by India Foundation for the Arts. Examples of drawing, painting, clay-work, printing, etc. done by the children in our Observation Anganwadis were presented, and subsequently formed part of an article appearing in the publication, 'ArtConnect'.

## **Fulfilling the Young Child’s Right to Development by Strengthening the Pre-School (ECE) Component in ICDS Anganwadis of Dharni Block, Amravati District**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is one of the six “Education For All” goals set out in 2000, highlighting its significance in the holistic development of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. While India is committed to the Dakar EFA goals, it has also passed a historic legislation – The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009. In this effort to universalise elementary education, there is sufficient global evidence that for children from disadvantaged communities, good preschool education is an important avenue for addressing the multiple domains that influence their readiness for formal schooling.

### Objectives of the Dharni Project

For the vast majority of disadvantaged children in India, the ICDS scheme is the only avenue for providing ECE. Its preschool component, however, is particularly weak, and often non-existent. Last year, the CLR launched an action-research project in the Melghat region of Maharashtra with the objective of strengthening the delivery of ECE in ICDS anganwadis. Our larger objective in this ongoing project is also to demonstrate an effective and replicable decentralised strategy, through capacity-building of all levels of ICDS functionaries, whereby the preschool component can be rejuvenated within ICDS in other regions of the country. The first phase of the intervention covers all the anganwadis in Dharni block of Amravati district.

### Building Capacity and Upgrading Facilities at Anganwadi Workers Training Centers (AWTCs)

For any wide-scale replicability of quality inputs for the preschool component of ICDS, it is important for a non-governmental organisation like the CLR to build the capacity of the scheme’s own training institutions and involve them in project activities from the beginning. Hence, the instructors of the 2 AWTCs at Amravati, as also the Middle Level Training Centre (MLTC) at Nagpur participated in an intensive 5-day perspective-building programme at the CLR in Pune. The focus of this programme was not only to discuss the project objectives and decide upon strategies, but also to touch upon more indepth understanding of the preschool age group and the principles, methods and materials of sound ECE. The ICDS instructors also had the opportunity to visit our rural observation anganwadis in Mulshi block, where good ECE practice could be observed within the constraints of ICDS.

Subsequently, CLR staff visited the AWTCs in Amravati to observe their regular training programmes and give inputs related to more participatory and skill-based training methods.

### Developing "Observation Anganwadis"



Preparatory activities last year included a Baseline Study of both the socio-cultural and the ICDS context in Dharni. The findings clearly indicated the absence of any anganwadis where good ECE practices were visible. Hence, in the first phase of our interventions, we are focusing on building the capacity of a core group of anganwadi workers who can demonstrate good ECE practices in their anganwadis. These anganwadis would in turn serve as observation centres for the rest of the ICDS project. A group of 19 anganwadi workers, covering all the supervisory circles in Dharni block, were selected. In addition to these, 4 anganwadis from Amravati-ICDS were also selected by the instructors of the two Amravati AWTCs, to serve as observation centres in future inservice and preservice training. The advantage in creating observation centres is that it will provide concretely to all concerned – District authorities, CDPO, supervisors, AWTC and MLTC staff, parents, local body members, and above all anganwadi workers – a vision of what good practices mean, what can be achieved and why ECE is important. This is necessary to motivate not only the anganwadi workers in the entire block, but also all those involved in monitoring and training.

### *Training Anganwadi Workers of the Selected Centres*

The anganwadi workers of the selected observation centres attended the first round of a recurrent training programme conducted jointly by the AWTC and CLR trainers at the AWTCs in Amravati. The anganwadi workers were provided the CLR Early Learning Kit. They also prepared materials on their own to supplement the kit. CLR staff regularly visited the anganwadi centres to provide on-site support and guidance to the anganwadi workers. This helped to translate training into practice.

#### **Areas of Focus in the ECE Trainer's Training**

- Understanding oneself for ECE work
- Children's developmental needs and rights
- Activity-based ECE curriculum
- Creating a good learning environment
- Making and using teaching-learning materials
- Attitudes and motivation of ECE workers
- Classroom organisation and management
- Monitoring ECE programmes
- Gender sensitivity

### *On-site Inputs*

With our assistance, the anganwadi workers carried out various improvements in their anganwadis. Some examples :

- Clearing and tidying the learning space; removal of irrelevant materials and display.
- Categorising learning materials and storing them in an orderly manner.
- Arranging display boards at children's eye level.
- Changing seating-in-rows to seating that allowed for more interaction and group work.
- Starting to implement the ECE curriculum received in training

### Video Documentation

The development and sustaining of these observation anganwadis is an ongoing process. As part of process documentation, we have gathered video footage of the progress so far, which is being shared with the ICDS functionaries and the local authorities.

### **Developing an Approach to Assess ECE Programme Quality**

Our action-research hypothesis is that comprehensive technical inputs along with the active participation of ICDS functionaries can significantly improve the quality of ECE in ICDS anganwadis. For purposes of baseline data, as also for formative and summative evaluation, it was necessary to develop two sets of tools. We adapted the following tools developed by the World Bank, New Delhi, to suit the context of our project.

### Tool to Assess Overall Quality of the ECE Programme

A set of indicators have been developed/adapted to assess the overall quality of anganwadis and the transaction of ECE within them. The main categories of indicators include :

- Attendance of children
- Observation of classroom process
- Physical facilities
- Availability of play and learning materials
- Use of a time table
- Classroom display

Each of the above contains sub-indicators where relevant.

### Tool to Assess Learning Outcomes of Children

We developed a tool for assessing the learning outcomes of children who had attended two years of ECE and would be entering Class 1 of the local primary school. The competencies to be assessed cover the domains of cognitive and language development, including reading and mathematics readiness, based on a broad developmental understanding of school readiness.

### Assessment Through Play

A unique feature of our approach to assessing learning in young preschool children was the development of a kit of play materials and colourful picture activities through which competencies can be assessed informally. A booklet of instructions for administering the assessment through activity-based methods was also developed. We are now in the process of producing a module for the training of investigators, with a focus on how to establish inter-rater reliability.

### **Building Capacity within NGO Programmes for Early Childhood Education: Inputs for F.E.M.A.L.E., Jharkhand**

F.E.M.A.L.E. (Foundation for Emancipation of Marginalised) is an organisation based in Jharkhand, working in the development of women and children in tribal areas. We were introduced to them by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, with a view to providing the necessary technical support for running balwadis in 12 fairly remote Mundari tribal communities in Raniya block of Kunti district.

### Preparatory Activities

As the organisation had no previous knowledge in the area of ECE, an intensive 10-day preparatory programme was organised for them in Pune. The structure of this programme allowed for focused observations at our Observation Anganwadis in Mulshi block, interspersed with discussions on ECE theory, developmental characteristics and needs of the preschool age group, and the design of effective ECE curriculum and materials.

The F.E.M.A.L.E. project coordinator and balwadi supervisors discussed the training needs of the teachers recently appointed, and issues related to monitoring and supervision. This formed the basis for the teacher-training programme we developed for them. The Hindi version of our ECE package was designed in a revised format.

## Training at Ranchi

Part 1 of the teacher-training programme was conducted by CLR staff in Ranchi in October 2009, attended by 20 participants. Sessions on local cultural relevance in the activities for children were facilitated by the balwadi supervisors who had attended the initial ‘training’ in Pune, and who could introduce songs, stories, etc. in the Mundari dialect. Much of our interaction in Hindi had to be translated into Mundari for the local teachers.



## Follow-up

Periodic follow-up has been undertaken by us through teleconferencing with the project coordinator and supervisors. Part 2 of the teacher-training programme will be conducted in the coming months.

## **New Versions of the CLR Early Learning Kit**

The CLR Learning Kit has up to now consisted of a handbook and cut-out picture supplement for making and using a variety of activity-based materials for young children. This year we adapted it to a more teacher-friendly format, whereby less time needs to be spent in assembling the materials. The Hindi edition, “Kriya-Kalaap Se Bal Shikshan” and the Marathi edition, “Shikshan Chhotyaanche, Sahabhag Mothyancha” were adapted accordingly, and have been provided to the F.E.M.A.L.E. balwadis and the ICDS anganwadis in Dharni respectively. In both cases, these kits have been supplemented with locale-specific discussion pictures and other teacher-prepared materials.



## **Promoting the Use of Home-Language in the Preschool Years**

Both the balwadi project of F.E.M.A.L.E. in Raniya block of Jharkhand, and the intervention in ICDS-Dharni, gave us the opportunity to encourage teachers and anganwadi workers to transact the ECE programme, as much as possible, in children's home language. In Dharni, the large majority of tribal children are better able to participate when the Korku dialect rather than Marathi is the medium of communication, and most anganwadi workers have a reasonably good knowledge of Korku. In the case of F.E.M.A.L.E., the children, teachers and supervisors belong to the Mundari tribal community. Besides daily use of the home-language, we helped both groups – from Dharni and Raniya – to generate a collection of local songs and stories in Korku and Mundari respectively, to be incorporated in the ECE curriculum.

## **Digitising the CLR A.V. Series “Story Time”**

Young children love to listen to stories. Story-telling sparks their imaginations and exposes them to the creative use of language, and to its basic patterns and rhythms. It is hence an important tool for language development. Listening and responding to stories also helps to develop reading readiness in the early years.

With this in mind, the CLR had developed over the past several years a series of slide shows entitled “Story Time” which we were disseminating through our own lending library. Each title is accompanied by a story script which the teacher can use as a reference to narrate the story as each slide is projected.

Many schools in Pune now find the slide-show medium outdated. Given the growing use of visual electronic media in children's education – DVDs, CDs, computer software, online learning, etc., combined with requests from schools and individuals who were keen on accessing this series - we have now adapted select titles from the “Story Time” series into DVD-cum-CD format. Pre-primary and lower primary school teachers can use the DVDs and CDs to provide hours of learning and fun for young children.

As most existing digital material in the market for this age-group includes pre-recorded scripts for stories, it impedes adult-child interaction and active involvement of children. The CLR series, on the other hand, promotes interactive story-telling to enhance language development. We are planning to disseminate this DVD series, so that it can be accessed by schools and individuals.

## Advocacy for Holistic Child Care

Two NGOs, Kshitij and Snehadeep Janakalyan Foundation jointly organised a Bal Mela in March for the Wadarwadi community in Pune city. The event was facilitated by Swabhimaan, their partner organisation. The CLR exhibition entitled, “Vikas Balacha : Sahabhag Sarvancha” and our film on holistic child care for the birth to 3 years age



group were featured in this event. About 1000 community members from nearby slum areas attended the mela. Volunteers had been recruited to explain to the largely illiterate and semi-literate audience the various messages on health, nutrition and psychosocial stimulation using the photos and the poetic text on our exhibition panels. The screening of the CLR film was also followed by discussion.

We lend our exhibition and films to field-based organisations who are interested in partnering with us in advocacy activities related to the improvement of early child care in disadvantaged families.

### Focus Areas of the CLR Exhibition

- Holistic development and role of parents / caregivers
- Prime messages in reproductive health, child health, nutrition, safety and age-appropriate handling of children
- Importance of psychosocial stimulation and how to promote it
- Play materials
- Gender equity in caregiving practices

## ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

### Strengthening Language Development in Primary Schools in Nandurbar District

We have been working since 2008 in partnership with Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) and Hedgewar Seva Samiti (HSS) on a project to improve the quality of elementary education in the predominantly tribal district of Nandurbar in North Maharashtra. Our focus has been on in-service training of teachers for improving language and literacy teaching-learning in 24 government primary schools in Nandurbar Block. HSS, the local partner organization, has undertaken monitoring of the implementation in classrooms.



#### Training and Materials

This year, we continued the recurrent inservice teacher-training programmes in August and November 2009, thus completing the sessions related to methods and materials to develop reading readiness and emergent literacy skills in young children. Teachers also generated their own lesson-plans.

#### **Objectives**

- To enhance teachers' knowledge and improve teaching practices by introducing teachers to currently accepted theories of how children learn to read and write, thus giving them a rationale for adopting sound teaching methods that would result in improved learning attainment.
- To develop and provide language and literacy learning materials and to assist teachers in making their own teaching-learning materials.
- To develop the concept of a classroom library and to provide an age- appropriate set of selected children's literature in Marathi, to be placed within each classroom.
- To train teachers in the use of classroom libraries

#### **Approach to Emergent Literacy**

- Encouraging cognitive maturity through a series of activities, and thus enhancing the child's capacity to bring meaning to written symbols.
- Helping the child to developing mastery over spoken language.
- Inculcating the desire to read.

### Classroom Libraries

A set of graded children's literature in Marathi, consisting of 96 books, was provided to serve as classroom libraries for Classes 1-4. The books were organised according to reading levels. Teachers were trained in the use of a classroom library. We suggested that one period every day could be devoted to children using the books for recreational reading and doing some follow-up activities also suggested in the training.

### School Visits

It was important for CLR trainers to periodically visit some of the project schools in order to observe the extent to which training was being implemented by teachers, and to give on-site guidance where needed. The purpose of these visits was not for regular monitoring, but rather to gain feedback on any changes that might be necessary in our own further training programmes, given the context of government schools.

### Assessment of Learning and Overall Observations

Assessment tests at the end of Phase 1 of the project showed a clear improvement in the reading skills of Class 1 students, with students in some of the sample schools scoring significantly higher in the more complex comprehension items. The majority of Class 2 students however, had not mastered the expected level of reading skills. Moreover, writing skills continued to be weak.

Observations by both HSS and CLR of actual classroom implementation were somewhat disappointing. Classes were held irregularly, teachers were often absent, some reported that they were unable to conduct classes because of administrative work assigned, or because they were being deputed to various government programmes. It may therefore be reasonable to conclude that these were the main reasons why learning outcomes did not meet our expectations, inspite of the considerable amount of inputs by way of training and materials.

### **Piloting Classroom Libraries in Rural Primary Schools**

It is a widely accepted fact that many children complete 5 years in our government primary schools without acquiring basic functional literacy. Apart from reasons of flawed pedagogy, there is simply not enough reading materials provided besides the textbook. An understanding of the maxim that children learn to read by reading is beginning to spread, largely due to the efforts of NGOs and activists, and school libraries are being developed. Surveys have indicated, however, that these libraries are rarely being accessed by children

and teachers. The CLR has therefore piloted the concept of classroom libraries in Classes 1 and 2 of 5 rural schools of the Pune Zilla Parishad, to learn whether more reading experiences can be integrated into the day-to-day curriculum on account of more immediate access to books. Each class was provided with a set of about 25 titles of graded, age-appropriate children's literature in Marathi, and a few Marathi-English bilingual titles.

#### **Objectives of Classroom Libraries**

- To provide children's books – fiction and non-fiction – at the children's interest level and reading levels
- To encourage children to read beyond their textbooks
- To give opportunities for deriving enjoyment from books and sparking their imaginations.

This programme started last year. This year, as new teachers had to be inducted, orientation sessions were once again conducted by the CLR on the use of the library books. Principals and teachers were encouraged to assign special library periods within the weekly timetable of Classes 1 and 2.

#### **Aspects of the sessions with teachers**

- The importance of reading stories aloud to young children
- Using the books for orientation to print
- Group work
- Encouraging guided reading and silent reading, with discussion
- Follow-up discussions and activities related to the books
- Maintaining simple records of children's supplementary reading
- Lending books for home use
- Helping children to handle books appropriately

We visited the schools regularly throughout the year and interacted with teachers and children, giving on-site support through classroom demonstrations of activities related to the reading content.

Our observations regarding the level of implementation by teachers ranged as follows:

- A motivated teacher, regular and appropriate use of the books
- Regular and appropriate use due to involvement of a local volunteer
- Infrequent use by children, with no support from the teacher
- Library books not read at all

It is evident that with no systemic support for the importance of wider reading experiences in the classroom, rural school teachers do not by and large encourage children to access the library books within the curriculum. Where the local volunteer, a young college student, read aloud to children regularly from the books, and also encouraged them to read independently, children showed a high level of interest and excitement in reading the books.

Our experience points to two conclusions:

- A classroom library does help to encourage reading beyond the textbook;
- As it is imperative to provide this opportunity for all children, it may be necessary for NGOs and donor agencies to provide local resource persons who can facilitate the use of library books within the classroom and conduct relevant reading activities.



*Selection of graded books for the classroom library*

## **Teaching English in Regional Medium Government Schools**

### Enhancing English Skills of Teachers in Regional Medium Schools

Almost all states have adopted the policy of teaching English at the primary level in government schools. However, the vast majority of teachers themselves have a very limited command of English. To address situation, the CLR has developed “Enhance Your English”, an intensive, interactive course to strengthen the English skills of school teachers in regional-medium schools.

#### *Revision based on Feedback*

This course was conducted for Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) school teachers and resource persons from NGOs like Eklavya, Bhopal and Hand-in-Hand, Chennai last year. Based on feedback from the teachers, and our own experience while conducting this course, we decided to revise the structure of the course to make it more effective. The duration of each unit was reduced from 6 hours to 4 hours a day, as it was found that it was difficult for teachers to attend 6-hour-long inservice sessions. The overall duration of the course itself was also shortened to 21 days.



The Grammar component, which earlier featured as a separate workbook, is now included in the main Learner's Book, to support speaking skills. The Reading component now features as a separate Reader-cum-Activity book.

The PMC is in the process of finalising regular courses in the coming year for multiple batches of primary school teachers.

### *Partnering with Idea Foundation*

We were requested by Idea Foundation (Foundation for Initiatives in Development and Education for All), a Pune-based NGO, to conduct the "Enhance Your English" course for PMC school teachers in the neighbourhood PMC schools in Kothrud area in Pune city. IDEA works to create awareness of the importance of education within urban disadvantaged communities.

A group of 27 PMC teachers of Classes 3-6 attended the 21-day course. The teachers gained a lot of confidence in speaking English. Feedback indicated that they particularly enjoyed the role plays and mock interviews. They also expressed that they felt better equipped to use English during English classes in school.

### Interactive Radio Instruction

To improve the spoken English skills of students studying in government regional-medium schools, the CLR has developed a 3-year bilingual radio programme in English-Marathi and English-Hindi that has been broadcast to lakhs of urban and rural students in Maharashtra and many other states.



### *Broadcasts in Lucknow District, Uttar Pradesh*

Last year, Level 1 of the English-Hindi radio programme had been broadcast in Lucknow district, in partnership with the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) Lucknow and UNICEF.

## *Evaluation*

The Nehru Yuva Kendra, an independent evaluation agency, was given the responsibility of evaluating the impact of the programme in Lucknow district in 2009, which involved testing a random selection of 1880 students in 101 primary and upper primary schools and interviewing 101 teachers. The testing revealed that more than 80% of students were able to answer simple questions in English, and able to express themselves in broken English. The analysis revealed a substantial improvement in the listening and speaking skills of both rural and urban students.

Based on the documented success of the radio programme, Level 2 was added along with the existing broadcast of Level 1 in the year 2009-10.

We conducted an intensive training session for teachers and cluster coordinators, which was followed by another mid-term training session. Regular monitoring visits to rural schools of different blocks were also made throughout the academic year. The positive impact of the programme was in clear evidence, as also the fact that the programme was being listened to and enjoyed by the community as a whole.

The DIET is planning to continue the broadcasts in the following year, with the addition of Level 3.

## **Facilitating Improvement of Students' Spoken English Skills in Rural Schools**

### Akshara Programme, Mulshi Taluka, Pune District

The Akshara Programme, a Mahindra United World College initiative, had started using the bilingual audio CDs of our radio programme, "We Learn English", as part of their projects in rural schools to improve students' basic communication skills in English.

Based on the positive impact, they continued this programme this year as well in primary and secondary rural schools.

## Audio-Visual Series for Inductive Value-Based Teaching

### Partnering with Pragat Shikshan Sanstha, Phaltan

The CLR has been disseminating through a lending library scheme its audio-visual series of instructional slide shows, entitled, “You and Your Environment” in English and Marathi. A variety of syllabus-related topics in health, ecology, agriculture, history, biology etc. are covered. Besides making subject matter more meaningful and relevant for students, these materials encourage discussion in the classroom, and clarify values related to students’ physical, social and political environment.

For several years, we have made the Marathi edition of this series available to Pragat Shikshan Sanstha (PSS) in Phaltan, Satara district. As an extension activity of their own school, they are screening the slide shows regularly in the Phaltan municipal schools, Zilla Parishad schools, as well as in some Ashram Shalas and private schools. In 2009-10, altogether 1984 students benefitted from the slide library.

### Digitising Select Titles of the A.V. series “You and Your Environment”

Over the years, based on our observation and feedback from local member schools of our A.V. lending library, we have realised that many schools in Pune had discontinued use of slide projectors and switched to using computers. Based on requests from schools that wished to continue to access the series, we decided to digitise some titles in the series and make them available on CDs, at the same time retaining the interactive nature of the pedagogy.

#### **Excerpts from this year’s report of the project, recently received from PSS**

*“The CLR mobile slide-library started several years ago and it has survived the onslaught of more attractive and modern media like TV and video films. There are several reasons for this. First is the quality of the slides, second is the person and third is the interactive nature of the medium...*

*...The slide-show programme is basically a one women show. Sushma Subanis is that extremely competent woman loved by all the children she visits. Especially the older children from Municipal Schools value her friendship and the breath of freshness she brings to the classroom...*

*... In the year 2009-2010, Sushamatai visited 41 ZP schools including 2 Ashram Shalas where she showed the slide-show entitled ‘mi’. Two of the schools in remote areas had only seven and ten students in Class 1. Their teacher were pleasantly surprised and touched that Sushamatai visited them with her slide-show...*

*...In the medium of a slide-show, the participants are not passive spectators and listeners. They are asked questions. They are asked to share their experiences. They are asked to do some activities. And so the show becomes interesting. It also helps to get the children to talk in the class. Thus we value the slide library tremendously.”*

Three titles were selected for conversion from the series on water, namely : *Aqua at Home*, *Aqua in Trouble*, and *Water Management*. From the topics related to the urban environment, we selected *Keeping Our Neighbourhood Clean*.

Many of the old photographs required quality enhancement, so fresh photography was commissioned. The accompanying teacher's guidebooks were also modified.



## YUVA ENGLISH

### Developing a Basic English Course for Underprivileged School Leavers

Most young men and women from socio-economically disadvantaged background have extremely limited communication skills in English, despite having passed the Class 10 examinations and been exposed to 7 -10 years of instruction in English as a second language. Without basic English skills, young people are handicapped not only in terms of opportunities for higher education and employment, but also access to various bodies of knowledge and to new technologies.

Given this existing scenario, and the dearth of English courses that cater specially to the unique needs of young urban and rural learners from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the Centre For Learning Resources (CLR), supported by the Tech Mahindra Foundation (TMF), has designed an intensive, learner-centered course entitled Yuva English, to impart basic communication skills in English, with a focus on speaking and listening, to learners from this socio-economic milieu.

The development of Yuva English was begun in 2008, and the course content was trialed within colleges and with NGOs even as the modules were being formulated. This helped us to make the course more learner-centric. Even after the entire course was developed, it was trialed with Pune-based NGOs in its entirety to gauge learning outcomes and impact.

This year, Yuva English was piloted with several NGOs from Pune, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Bangalore. Many of these NGOs were TMF partners.

Intensive training was conducted by us for instructors from these organisations, followed by monitoring visits. Learner evaluation was completed, with CLR conducting spoken evaluation on phone with learners from some NGOs. Materials were sent for evaluation to language experts. Based on feedback from these experts, as well as from learners and instructors, the course is being revised before commissioning a large print-run for scaling.

#### Course Materials

- Instructor's manual
- Learner's workbook
- Supplementary Reader
- Audio-visual materials
- Evaluation materials to track progress of learners



#### Outcomes from Different Stages of Piloting

- Definite improvement seen in the learners' speaking abilities and active listening, reading and comprehension skills.
- Most noteworthy feedback from learners has been that they all feel confident of being able to speak in English.
- Those who already possessed fairly good spoken English skills prior to joining the course have expressed that Yuva English has given them the confidence to speak articulately on a public forum.

#### Key Lessons

##### *About the Course*

- All organisations feel that the course is different, interesting and effective. It is placed just right in terms of content and duration for the target group.

##### *About the Materials*

- Course material appropriate and relevant, for the knowledge level of the learner.

##### *About Instructors*

- Monitoring visits have reinforced our understanding of the critical importance of a good instructor, fluent in English.

#### *About Partner NGOs*

- The significance of prudent selection of NGOs after scaling the course highlighted, as the course progressed smoothly only in those centres which have previous experience in conducting similar courses, have proper infrastructure in place, ensure regular attendance, and also have a bank of capable instructors.

#### The Way Forward

CLR and TMF are in the process of jointly formulating a strategy so that Yuva English can be ‘branded’ and go to scale.

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#### **Funding**

The CLR gratefully acknowledges the grants received from The Karuna Trust, U.K., and the ICICI Centre For Elementary Education, towards the capital and recurrent expenditure on its activities for 2009-10.

We are grateful to the Sir Ratan Tata Trust for supporting the language development project in Nandurbar district.

We are also grateful to Tech Mahindra Foundation for funding the development and piloting of the English language course entitled “Yuva English”.

#### **Acknowledgements**

We gratefully acknowledge the guidance and cooperation of the members of our Governing Council.

The members are:

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Ms. Shirin Darasha | Ms. Zakiya Kurrien      |
| Ms. Shridevi Mukhi | Mr. Ardeshir Dubash     |
| Dr. John Kurrien   | Mr. Dharmasukh Nanavati |
| Dr. Statira Wadia  | Mr. Milon Nag           |
| Mr. Gautam Patel   |                         |