

Annual Report 2019 - 20

Table of Contents

Director's Note

Outreach and Coverage

Section I: Technical Support and Resource Development

Our theory of engagement

Technical support to agencies

Early Language learning course

Technical Support to US Consulate

Resources and Publications

Section II: Foundational Learning Programmes

Early childhood education

Foundational literacy and numeracy

Programmes with middle and senior schools

Section III: Organizational Functions

Advocacy actions

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Accounts

Governing Body

Acknowledgement

People



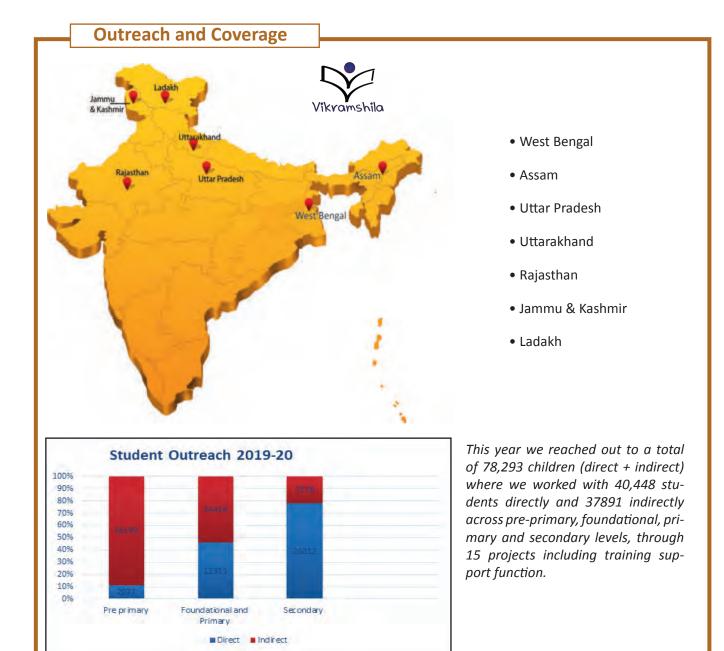
From the Director's Desk

riting this note proved to be an extremely challenging task, as March 2020 was like a watershed that turned our familiar world upside down. It was a difficult task to go back and reflect on a period when things were normal in a different sense, since some of the assumptions that were held at that time seem to be not valid any more. Last year we decided to celebrate 30 years of our existence with a series of small events culminating into something big. We started our celebrations with a low key but elegant event at Raj Bhavan, where the children of Naba Disha put up a small skit on environment awareness based on Shel Silverstein's beautiful story "The Giving Tree'. They also presented the Governor with a picture depicting the gradual destruction of Ganga based on their own experiences. It was a proud moment for all of us. Completion of 30 years is a kind of landmark, when one should take a pause to ask some fundamental questions – have we remained true to our mission and vision, are we engaged in doing relevant and meaningful work, have we learnt new things along the way, etc.? The answers were on the positive, but it has been our practice to temper any sense of achievement with a caution that we should never allow complacency to blur our sense of purpose and commitment.

Last year we reached out to 78,000+ children and over 5000 teachers through 15 projects. Our technical support teams were equally enthusiastic about working with a small tea garden project catering to 5 schools and a large project involving lakhs of teachers; with small grassroots NGOs working un-

der difficult circumstances and a large project involving thousands of learners. This is because we believe in our hearts that each project is unique and offers us with an opportunity to learn and grow. Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Foundational Learning (Early Language and Early Numeracy in the primary years) are slowly evolving as a major part of our work specially with UNICEF supporting our ECE work in two states on a large scale. Quality improvement of Madrassa education, specially the partnership with TISS and Tata Trusts on ITE have been our flagship projects last year. Our two projects in Birbhum and Bankura, supported by National Stock Exchange Foundation and Transforming Rural India Foundation respectively have given us valuable insights on the strengths of community partnership. Towards the end of the year, we entered into an important partnership with Central Square Foundation, to start work with the governments of Assam and Uttar Pradesh. Needless to say, our relationship with our donors goes beyond the granter-grantee dyad, enriching us with newer ways of working and thereby deepening our learning, whether it is Wipro Foundation, or CRY or a CSR like ITC Foundation. And last but not the least, it is our diverse and committed staff, our 205 member staff team, that have helped us to cross yet another milestone last year, stepping into an unchartered territory at the end of the year, into a world order wrecked by a pandemic that would put our normal ways of functioning to severe tests, but the preliminary responses have shown that they were ready to take the plunge.

> Schart Ungi Subhra Chatterji

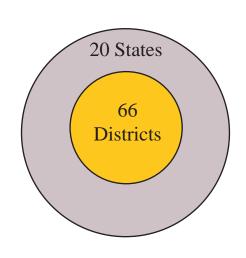


We also worked in 5 states through direct implementation and 20 states indirectly through our technical support to agencies. Overall, our interventions covered 66 districts of the country reaching out to 5460 teachers/education functionaries, instructors including frontline works of anganwadi centres.

In terms of institutional coverage, Vikramshila worked with 382 schools/madrasas, 3250 anganwadi centres and 28 NGOs across India.

Our community outreach reached across 32838 parents and 1392 Self Help Group members.

Overall geographic reach- 20 states spanning over 66 districts with in-depth intervention in 3 states-West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh.



Technical Support and Resource Development



In Vikramshila's 30-year journey, the central area of work has been capacity building of teachers and educators. We believe that the teacher is at the heart of the curricular process and the direct frontline practitioner in the field of education. Hence the core of Vikramshila's efforts are in developing the agency of the teacher and to equip her/him to handle the challenges of an everchanging system.

As prime enablers of change in the education system, our approach over the years has been to bring about transformation in the perceptions, attitudes and mindsets among those who work closely with children, by enriching them with skills, tools and knowledge to make this possible.

Education cannot be seen in isolation, separately from the local social and political context of the place. It is a part of a larger ecosystem. An organized effort on developing the capacities of the education system from within therefore, involves not just working with various stakeholders and partners of the education system, but also on a host of systemic issues ranging from immediate curricular matters such as basic literacy and numeracy to larger and more abstract academic issues of value formation, citizenship and empowerment. Thus, Vikramshila engages with a range of agencies across multiple domains as a knowledge and resource partner with a vision to ensure a better educational experience for children leading to better learning outcomes.



Our Theory of Engagement

As a resource organisation, we have been providing technical support to several partner organisations for years; for the last 3 decades, the spectrum of our work has included advocacy with the government system and empowerment of teachers to equip them so that they can deal with various educational issues at the local level. Working in different socio-cultural and linguistic contexts and varied geographies has not only increased our outreach but also given us the scope to think out of the box to address different kinds of challenges. From the arid deserts of Rajasthan to the green rolling hills in the northeast, in mountains or in tea gardens, villages or towns, through collaboration with local partners at the grassroots or through our own interventions, we have tried to devise strategies to address the educational needs of a diverse group of people, and to capacitate government and nongovernment teachers to provide meaningful and relevant education to their children.

Over the years, Vikramshila has made several inroads in the field of education and has adopted various modes of engagement to reach out to its beneficiaries in the best possible way. At the heart of its efforts lies the belief in the unwavering agency of the teacher, and thus its efforts have almost always been directed towards nurturing and empowering the teacher through capacity building, mentoring and other supportive measures.

Another realization that Vikramshila has had through its years of working with the system is that outside interventions alone cannot generate sustainable change at the grassroots level. Quality education measures, when thrust from outside, lose their effectiveness eventually. Vikramshila too, has realized this the hard way by looking at its intensive investments in centralized training programmes failing the tests of transmission loss, staff turnover or even time! The need for quality education has to be generated from the community itself, and an aware and vigilant community can ensure that the system is working properly and all the good practices are sustained. It has been our experience that an invested community can play a central role in ensuring the effectiveness of the various pillars of the education system. It is with this learning that all of Vikramshila's current engagements are designed in a way to maximize meaningful community participation.

Vikramshila therefore adopts a multi-pronged approach to strengthen the education system through its various interventions. The diagram below illustrates the strategic approach that guides its various programmes.



Technical Support to Agencies

This year, as in other years, technical expertise was provided in capacity building and resource development to partner organizations working across a varying range of geographical contexts. Support was provided in the areas of foundational learning, early childhood education, perspectives on education, learning theories and in the field of classroom management and strategies. For each training, a thorough needs assessment was conducted to understand the immediate issues and challenges of the target audience to customize an action plan that was best suited for the situation to meet their immediate issues. Our collaboration with various partners across the country has helped us to extend our own reach and understanding of complex situations, difficult geographies and the real needs and risks faced by millions of children in India. We reached out to over 1400+ teachers and educators as part of our exclusive technical support programs. A glimpse of some of the programmes conducted for such organizations in the previous year is



provided below.

Technical Support to SchoolNet India

Foundational Learning programs

ECE focused programs were supported for School-Net India. Vikramshila capacitated the supervisors and AWWs on the Nandghar program, aligning it with the respective state curriculum. A contextualization and translation of the Nandghar resource pack (teacher handbook and calendar) was done in Odiya language as well. This is discussed in greater detail in section II under Vikramshila's Early Childhood Education focused programmes. Technical support was also provided to supplementary teachers of 'Dikhya' programme in Assam through a fiveday workshop on subject pedagogy.

Public awareness campaign 'Namami Gange'

In 2019, Vikramshila ventured into new territory revolving around an interdisciplinary theme of environment conservation with teacher training through the project "Ganga Box". It was designed following the example of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River that created an educational multimedia tool called "Danube Box". Participation in the project was a steep learning

SALIENT FEATURES

- A comprehensive toolkit for educators consisting of resources and materials for teaching and learning
- Addressing children between the age of nine and eighteen
- Aims to help teachers and students understand their role and agency in facilitating positive change at the local level
- Module of engagement designed based on the experiential learning approach
- Sessions consisting of audio visuals, hands on activities, simulation exercises, group discussions, dramatization and role play

curve for the entire training team.

The trainings of Ganga Box therefore were aimed at bringing about a change in the teachers' understanding of the magnitude of the problem, and the importance of being informed and motivated so that they were able to instill in their students a sense of mission and urgency. The module of the training was designed in a fashion so that it garners active participation from the teachers and involves them in the process in order to enrich "Ganga Box" with the contextual inputs. The training was focused on generating a high degree of energy and enthusiasm through experiential learning.

The programme was organized in four phases. The first two phases involved design and roll out. 97 teachers from UP and Uttarakhand were trained during the second phase and master trainers have also been selected through subsequent field visits to 40 schools of UP and 13 schools of Uttarakhand. The third and fourth phases of the programme (scheduled to have an advanced training for the selected master trainers, and then dissemination) however, could not be implemented due to cold wave conditions and the nationwide lockdown.

Technical Support to Wipro Foundation partners

Vikramshila provided direct support to three Wipro partners working at the grassroots level –Rural Aid, Dooars Jagron and JMECT. The NGO staff and teachers were capacitated on language and mathematics. Planning and strategy meetings were also facilitated to help the organizations successfully run their learning support centres. Through Wipro's support to Vikramshila's Early Language Learning course (discussed in detail later in this section), Vikramshila was also able to reach out to 19 more grassroot organizations across the country.

Technical Support to The Action Northeast Trust (ANT)

This intervention aimed at empowering ANT's supplementary teachers that work directly in local schools and provide support to government teachers. Training programmes including workshops on Mathematics and Science teaching, foundations of education and subject pedagogy were conducted this year for ANT community teachers and govern-

ment school teachers. The teachers were mentored through classroom observation and on-site support. The programme was held in Assam and 9 fledgling organizations from the northeast participated in the workshop.

Technical Support to Jalan's Plantation Schools in Tea Gardens of Assam

This was a new partnership with Jalan Industries in which Vikramshila worked closely with 4 govt. aided schools in tea gardens in Dibrugarh. The organization facilitated the capacity building of 15 teachers and helped them to address issues at the field level. Support was provided in the form of needs

assessment, training and workshops and handholding to teachers to help them set up effective print rich classrooms and focus on learning outcomes.

Technical Support to Indienhilfe eV Herrsching, Germany

This support was ongoing from 2015, where Vikramshila supported the local partners Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) and Seva Kendra Calcutta (SKC). Vikramshila worked with community volunteers (called animators) who ran after-school learning support centres for children from marginalized communities. Vikramshila supported their interventions in the education domain through a series of trainings for 28 animators of SKC in 24 Parganas and 32 animators of DMSC in Purulia.





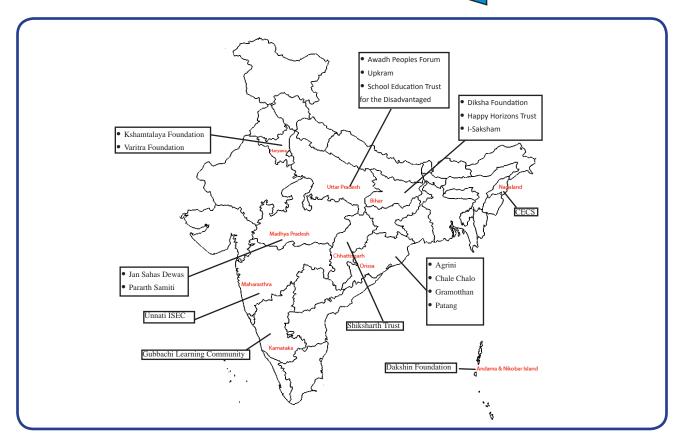
Early Language Learning Course

Vikramshila's Early Language Learning Course supported by WIPRO Foundation observed its second year in 2019, with 37 participants enrolling from 19 organizations across India. The course design included 80 hours of contact classes and 30 hours of off-site assignment.

This 110-hour blended course had 3 face-to-face workshops and distance mode of engagement, and was designed for education practitioners working in partnership with WIPRO all over the country, with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning of language in primary schools.

Focus Areas of the Course

- How children learn
- Components of early language learning
- Development of oracy and literacy
- Addressing multilingualism in the classroom
- English language teaching and
- Assessment



The group was diverse not only in language and culture, but also in terms of work experience. While some had long association and experience of working with children, others were relatively new players in education domain. Far from being a hindrance, this diversity among participants proved to be an aide in enriching the workshop as the novice and the veterans exchanged ideas and shared their experiences across a shared platform.

After hours of research, brainstorming sessions and meetings, our team developed the course content, keeping in mind the diverse needs of the group; and it required time for deep thinking and reflection. Looking at the heterogeneity of the group and the subject areas covered, the number of contact days was increased from 9 to 12 this year.

Technical Support to U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata

In 2019, we also started with the second phase of business communication engagement in collaboration with US Consulate General Kolkata and reached out to 24 participants from different colleges and organizations. Vikramshila was the implementation agency to ensure that the three-month course designed for university students and young professionals, including managers, sales people, account managers and business leaders between the age group of 18-30 years was successfully completed. The course was focussed on communication skills to successfully engage in general workplace and professional situations. The program perceives giving these young professionals the edge to communicate effectively using innovative and interactive methods.



Resources and Publications

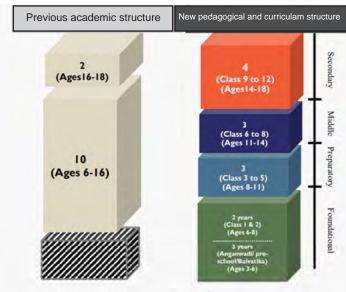
To ensure delivery and adoption of effective pedagogy in the field as well as to bring forth actual demonstration within the training, Vikramshila regularly develops and upgrades its learning resources and modules. The following resources were developed in the previous year.

- Activity Booklet for Mathematics, first language (MT) and English in 4 Languages: Bengali Urdu Hindi Oriya
- TLMS in first language (4 languages) and English
- Primary Teacher training modules including foundations of education, subject pedagogy for Mathematics, English and First language.
- Handbook on early childhood education West Bengal
- Workbooks/Student activity books in Hindi and Maths
- An instructional module containing activities for training of Master Trainers, to be used also as module by MTs for teacher training in Ganga Box project
- Teachers' Manual for Mathematics, Science and Life Skill
- ECE upgraded modules for Supervisors and AWWs in UP and Rajasthan
- 30-week calendar, Daily instruction plan, TLM Kit and 6-day training module for pre-primary intervention in government schools (Assam)
- An instructional module for teachers on STEM, originally developed by Quest Alliance and translated by Vikramshila in Bengali for implementation in Schools in West Bengal

Foundational Learning Programmes



The recent National Education Policy (NEP) emphasizes the importance of a good quality education that can help create a group of proactive citizens to take the nation forward towards meaningful progress both in the economic and social domain. The NEP recognizes the importance of the child's early years in laying the foundations for a good quality education, and accordingly proposes a curricular restructuring from the earlier 10+2 system to a more meaningful age-appropriate division that takes into account the child's foundational years. The importance of a solid school readiness curriculum, especially in a system where children come from vastly different backgrounds, cannot be emphasized more. Thus, empowering the already prevalent ICDS system and creating pre-primary spaces within primary schools, co-locating anganwadis within school complexes and ensuring convergence between the departments of Education and WCD together with focused curricular and pedagogic inputs are strongly emphasized.



Proposed change in structure of school education as per NEP 2020; Source: NEP 2020, MHRD document, Pg. 6

With a strong belief that robust ECCE paves the way for further learning in the elementary and higher education stages, Vikramshila has worked in ECCE as an important thrust area from the inception years. This year the organization continued to enrich its deeply entrenched ECE programs in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh with UNICEF and started a new chapter in collaboration with the Samgra Shiksha Mission Assam and Central Square Foundation, to provide quality ECE and school readiness in preprimary sections (K-Shrenis) of the state's government schools. The organization has been liaising with state governments for several years and has worked as collaborators to ensure that developmentally appropriate and well designed, scientific and research oriented ECCE practices can reach out to every child in the preprimary age group of 3 to

6 years. The first part of this section of the annual report therefore, starts with Vikramshila's work in the domain of early childhood education.

The acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy forms the backbone of a meaningful education. National and international level reports have pointed out the burden of incomprehension that children in our country face in the later years of their schooling because of a lacuna in this fundamental area of learning, and eventually drop out due to it. It is a reality that all children are capable of learning when provided the right kind of inputs, and Vikramshila works with teachers, community members and sometimes directly with children as well, to demonstrate how children can acquire these basic skills in literacy and numeracy and move ahead in their learning levels quite easily when provided appropriate instruction in an enabling environment. The second subsection thus talks about Vikramshila's work in foundational literacy and numeracy programmes using a variety of strategies and methods, but focused on improving learning outcomes of children.

The final subsection of this unit reflects Vikramshila's work in middle and senior schools. Vikramshila has emerged as a resource organization over the years that provides academic support to teachers, education officials, various organizations and also to the larger government system in the domain of curriculum development and transaction in areas beyond primary schooling. It has collaborated on developing and implementing innovative curricula and planned interventions in a vast range of domains, spanning from math, science and technology related interventions to life skills and citizenship education programmes. This work has been captured in the third part of this unit.

I. Early Childhood Education



Early childhood provides the base for a holistic education, and research shows that educational interventions in this domain provides long term benefits for sustainable growth and development. Multi-disciplinary research from economics, neuroscience and education has demonstrated that maximum brain development occurs between the ages of 0-6 years and that quality ECE is critical in determining a child's life outcomes in terms of health, education and income levels. Given below are glimpses of work across three states (Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam) together with inroads in Child Care Institutions and ECE consultative support to partner agencies.



Partnership with UNICEF, Uttar Pradesh

Vikramshila's partnership with UNICEF, Uttar Pradesh continued to capacitate the state ICDS system on holistic ECE practices together with rolling out a pilot for demonstration of quality ECE practices in 4 aspirational districts of Devipatan Division. Vikramshila has collaborated in the setting up of 240 prototype ECE model centres and trained more than 2800+ AWWs along with 150+ ICDS functionaries.

The partnership largely aimed to minimize the existing gaps and uphold delivery of quality ECE service in the ICDS centers, and in consonance with the State's aim to ensure compliance with the ECCE Policy and its components. The scope of engagement covered aspects of developing functional indicators, conducting training and monitoring programmes and administrative activities at all levels.

The project intervention plan was designed at the state and division levels.

State Level Intervention Plan

- ➤ Comprised of engaging and liaising with respective departments of the State Government involved in the State-wide roll out of the ECE program in accordance with the relevant government schemes and policies
- ➤ Was anchored by an Academic Lead, with continued support from Vikramshila monitoring and support team at Kolkata

Division Level Intervention Plan

- ➤ Aimed to serve as evidence of the appropriate practices for child development in the AWCs.
- ➤ Covered implementation in 4 districts of Devipation division
- > Implemented in three aspirational districts of Bahraich, Shrawasti and Balrampur and in division

HQ district at Gonda

➤ Was looked after by project team comprising of one divisional coordinator, 4 district coordinators and field coordinators for implementation of plan at the division level

The figure below illustrates the major milestones covered in the past year.

- State ECE curriculum revised and aligned with National ECCE Policy and Curriculum Framework, and NCERT learning in activities of concept formantion and school readiness, highlighting age and developmentally appropriate practice.
- Capacity building of 52 DPOs, CDPOs and Supervisor from 15 master Trainers enabling them to guide AWWs on quality transaction of ECE centers.
- Mid-level to 5 districts, with direct training to 163 AWWs and orientation of 121 CDPOs and Supervisors.
- Development of a Quality Monitoring and Mentoring Tool for supportive supervision of AWWs by CDPOs and Supervisors.
- Development of a Child Assessment Register to track the progress in the developmental domains of children in accordance to the developmental milestones.

- 240 prototype ECE centers develped equipping the centers with play materials and TLMs.
- 2848 AWW trained in the developmentally and age appropriate ECE practices in AWCs.
- Developed and provided support to Technical Support Group (TSG) in each district for Supportive Supervision of AWWs.
- 121 CDPO and Supervisors trained to roll out and implement state ECE program
- Quality Monitoring and Mentoring Tool piloted.
- Child Assesment Tool Piloted

Partnership with UNICEF, West Bengal

As a technical partner to UNICEF, Vikramshila has been the primary agency in ensuring quality early chilhood education practices at the state anganwadis in West Bengal since 2011. In 2019-20, Vikramshila has been involved in developing a scale up strategy for the state to ensure effective outreach without a compromise in quality. The partnership involved training of the State Resource Group (SRG) from all 23 districts on ECE pedagogy and curriculum. A parenting programme was also introduced, which has been piloted by the SRG members in 5 selected Anganwadis, catering to parents or caregivers of children from birth to 6 years.

2019 had both state level interventions and also intensive district level support in two of UNICEF's focused districts, namely, Malda and Murshidabad. The major focus areas of the programme at the state and district level have been captured below.

Intervention at the State Level

- On developing and replenishing ECE content Strategizing for MLE situations
- Collaborating with CECED, Ambedkar University on pilot of parenting module
- Gathering quantitative and qualitative data to ensure evidence based planning

District Level Intervention

- Mentoring of 400 AWCs through visits, training sessions and live demonstrations
- Developing strategies for scale up with minimum transmission loss

Key activities and highlights of the past year

At the state level

- ➤ The training of the State Resource Group (SRG) on fundamentals of early childhood. The SRG has representation from all 23 districts who attended a five-day long refresher training on ECE pedagogy and curriculum.
- > A parenting programme was piloted by the SRG members in 5 selected Anganwadis
- > Developing of resources to aid the scale up at the state level such as the 4th handbook on ECE. It was validated by the 100 SRG members before it was launched by the Minister-in-charge.
- > Translation of handbook, assessment cards and activity books to Nepali and contextualization of resources through inclusion of local stories and rhymes, all based on a long term need of the state.
- ➤ Creation of four videos to aid in the training of anganwadi workers and supervisors covering the following areas storytelling, conversation, use of PSE Kit and preparing TLMs. The videos have been made in Bengali, with English subtitles.
- ➤ Development of a strategy note on language transition, based on field study conducted in Jalpaiguri district, to inform the state about the challenges of multilingualism in AWCs
- ➤ Organizing a workshop with subject experts to generate a discourse around multilingualism and to develop an effective methodology to help AWWs to transact the ECE curriculum in a multilingual situation. Following the workshop, a package was prepared on the Santhali language, a language spoken in many

parts of the state.

At the district level

- ➤ Regular visits to AWCs to observe the transaction of the AWWs and the use of age appropriate materials.
- ➤ Supervisors and AWWs from 11 projects in Malda and 6 projects in Murshidabad were capacitated in ECE curriculum and transaction.
- ➤ 80 Supervisors and 11 CDPOs received training on Supportive Supervision in Malda and 20 Supervisors and 4 CDPOs in Murshidabad.
- ➤ 200 Shishu Aloys selected in both Malda and Murshidabad for intensive support from Vikramshila's team with the objective to align about 20% of the AWCs with the norms of Shishu Aloy.

Using multilingualism as a resource in the classroom Developing Resource Package in Santhali and Nepali (Routine ++)

Several districts in West Bengal face a multilingual situation where the children and anganwadi workers speak different languages. While the curriculum and resources have already been translated in Nepali earlier, this year the focus language was Santhali. After sufficient deliberation, a Routine ++ package was strategized. The package consists of a composite manual and routine based on the three existing handbooks along with the set of common instructions for the AWW to use in her classroom, and a resource bank of local rhymes and short stories to promote use of local language, one of the key recommendations of the NEP.



"I have been using the concept of four corners and conducting morning circle activities in my centre for a while now. However, my observation was that my children would remain restricted to the art and play corners. My main challenge was to make the centre more vibrant and attractive for the children, and to ensure their participation in all the activities of the centre. I would struggle the most with guided activities and school readiness. The Vikramshila team has been really supportive with their visits and continued feedback. One day after observing class, they sat down with me and gave me detailed feedback and explained all the sessions, activities and use of TLMs. I was quite impressed with their friendly approach and with how they sat with me at length to personally address all my doubts and queries. It has not only been a big boost to my confidence, but also huge motivation to constantly innovate with activities in my centre. My colleagues have noticed a positive change in my approach, and even the local primary school teachers often come to me to share how my children are outperforming the others in school!"

- Jayashree Sarkar, Anganwadi worker of Gazol, Malda. Was felicitated as best worker on March 2020 by the CDPO of the block.

Strategies used for mentoring support

Vikramshila has dabbled with various modes of engagement to provide support to the centres.

A. Centre visits – 1 initial baseline visit followed by 3 support visits

B. 2 days training followed by 3 support visits

C. 2 days training, followed by 2 support visits, one of which is a centre based training following a cluster approach

Out of the following three strategies mentioned, our learning has been that the sandwich approach (Strategy C), works best to align the centres to state norms. Training sessions followed by visits and subsequently a site-based training followed up with another visit has proved to be the most effective in a shorter time while ensuring sustainability. It was found to be the most efficient and effective in terms of impact, and the investment in terms of resource deployment was also lesser.

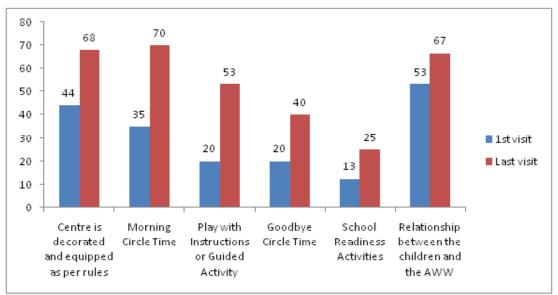


Fig 1: % distribution of AWCs showing improvement in Malda in the 2 visits

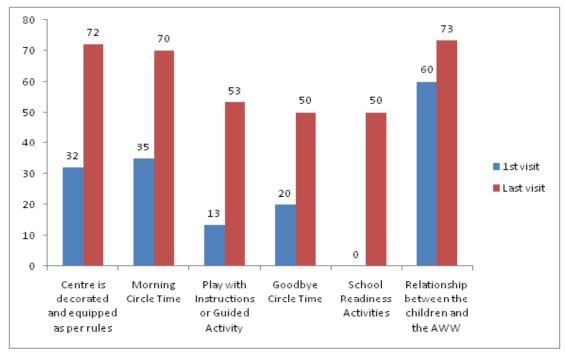


Fig 2: % distribution of AWCs showing improvement in Murshidabad in the 2 visits

Pre-primary intervention in Assam

Vikramshila, in collaboration with Centre Square Foundation (CSF) and the Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) Assam, started working on a pre-primary intervention in the state to ensure quality ECE facilities that are critical components of quality education and forerunners to achieving foundational literacy.

The intervention was started with a tripartite MoU drawn up in January 2020, to undertake a pilot in 100 schools across pilot districts of Assam. The scope of the program included creation of exemplary curricular resources to enable effective roll out of high quality ECE in schools, state level trainings followed by cascades across 33 districts and piloting the curricular package in 100 schools to draw hard evidence to inform state policy on ECCE.

Status of Work – January to March 2020

Workshop Development of Resource Package (Feb Week 1)

- Curation of a 6-day detailed training module
- Curation of a resource handbook for teachers
- Development of a 30-week calendar of daily classroom instruction plans
- TLM kit prototype with specifications for procurement

Trainings (February Week 3 and March Week 1)

- 11 member KRP team equipped to train district resource persons through
 - 4- day workshop
- 99 RP's covering 33 districts equipped to train the teachers in districts

School level engagement

- Situation analysis of 33 schools covering the four pilot districts completed
- A draft report has been prepared and discussed internally

Owing to the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, the state government was forced to declare closure of all schools in Assam. Due to unforeseen challenges and a definite reduction in number of school days and instruction hours, the program is expected to undergo some changes in targets set out for the first year of engagement.

Interventions in Child Care Institutions

Vikramshila was invited by the Department of Women and Child Development to initiate an education programme in the Government-run Children in need of Care and Protection (CNCP) homes to ensure quality education which is appropriate in the Institutional set up. The long-term objective is to set activities around education that would bring about a qualitative difference to the lives of children residing in the Homes and to enhance their confidence and communication skills, ensure better performance in schools and increase their likelihood of completing school education.

Government run homes have often been a contested and closed space with limited entry opportunities, especially for civil society and non-governmental organizations. It is a great honour for Vikramshila to have been granted access to this space, and serves as a recognition of its longstanding role to provide quality education opportunities to children from all walks of life. This programme has therefore been a great learning experience, highlighting the need to acknowledge the convergence between child protection and education through its various components. This programme therefore, though small, has indeed been a pathbreaking one for Vikramshila.

Programme Highlights

- A situational analysis was conducted to understand the scope of the intervention, and based on its findings, an ECCE centre was set up at the Liluah Home, initially catering to 7 children in its first month.
- ➤ A Job Training Program was facilitated in April 2019 for 3 resident young women of the home. They attended the five-day training on ECCE pedagogy, preparing developmentally appropriate materials and activities and handling a class on toddlers.

In the course of a few months, the facilitation skills of the trained young women greatly improved, as glimpsed from the activities of the centre. By the third month of the programme we noticed that ECCE sessions were managed efficiently as per the routine and curriculum with limited hand-holding support from our side. While continued mentoring will be needed over time, the actual processes in the classroom were efficiently organized with children displaying regular attendance and interest in activities.



ECE focused programmes for partners

ECE focused programs were supported for partner agencies. For example, Vikramshila started working with SchoolNet India LTD. as a technical and knowledge partner in Early Childhood Education in 2018 and the partnership continued through 2019-20. Vikramshila supported SchoolNet in aligning the Nandghar Program to the state curriculum in both Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh by

- (a) designing the curriculum, handbook and daily activity plans
- (b) capacity building of functionaries and frontline workers

Capacity building modules were designed for Supervisors and anganwadi workers. Over 400 Anganwadi workers and supervisors were trained in Sikar, Jaipur (Rajasthan) Pilibhit and Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh).

As the Nandghar curriculum includes the use of a repository of audio visuals in the anganwadi centres, Vikramshila trained the implementing partners of the curriculum on this component through a comprehensive orientation. The aim of this training was to enable the 115 participants from Ajmer, Udaypur, Rajasamand and Chittor (Rajasthan) to weave in the audio-visual sessions effectively by integrating the e-content with existing curriculum.

Meanwhile, with our current partner ITC Limited, a programme in Howrah was undertaken on training support around school readiness. 24 Anganwadi workers in Howrah received an intensive 3-day orientation on the importance of early childhood education along with an enriched Pre School Kit. The aim of the training was to capacitate these AWWs to transform their AWCs into model centres. 20 ECE kits were provided to the centres, 10 in Hooghly and 10 in Howrah. During this training, the PSE kit was handed over to the CDPO of Howrah. These kits were prepared and designed by keeping in mind the need of the children and the global innovations in areas of early childhood education.



II. Foundational Literacy and Numeracy



The NEP 2020 harps on the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy programmes and emphasizes that achieving universal foundational literacy and numeracy by 2025 will be the highest priority of the states. The policy alerts us about the presence of more than 5 crore students across India, currently in elementary school, that are yet to achieve these basic skills! It is indeed interesting to note how the achievement of basic literacy and numeracy has baffled generations of policymakers. Yet it remains true that the acquisition of these foundational skills is the base for an active citizenry that can take the individual, community and ultimately the nation forward with development in the economic and social domains.

Vikramshila acknowledges the importance of FLN programmes, and continues to use multiple strategies to reach out to children either directly or indirectly. Whether through capacity building of teachers or through community led initiatives, with demonstration SLCs within or outside school or with alternative schools, the organization's efforts are largely geared towards a learning improvement in these foundational areas. Let us take a brief look at the work taken up by Vikramshila in this domain in 2019-20.



Partnership with ITC 'Mission Sunehra Kal' In Kolkata and Howrah

ITC's Mission Sunhera Kal is a social investment by the ITC brand on ensuring sustainable and equitable development through support in education, health and livelihood projects. Vikramshila has been an implementation partner for several years, supporting the company's work in the education domain by working through multiple modes to improve the learning outcomes of children.

The Kolkata Model of functioning involved a focus on teacher empowerment. Vikramshila took empowerment as a starting point and gradually added layers of support in the form of classroom makeovers, demo lessons, learning camps to model implementation.

Meanwhile, the model in Howrah was based on demonstration of classroom enrichment by creating SLCs in government schools offering foundational learning and gradually moving on to teacher training.

Mission Sunehra Kal - Teacher Empowerment Program in Kolkata

The Teacher Empowerment Program was initiated in 2019 as a pilot in two education circles of Kolkata – Circle 10 and Alipore, as a joint collaboration be-

tween ITC, SSM and Vikramshila. The program aimed to ensure enhancement of learning outcomes of children in 100 government primary schools by equipping teachers through trainings and resources to improve the learning outcomes of all children in Mathematics and Language.

The programme reached out to children from urban-disadvantaged groups, where communities were mostly engaged in the informal sector (kite making, zari work, embroidery among others). The challenge was to create an environment that is motivating for the child to learn, by work-

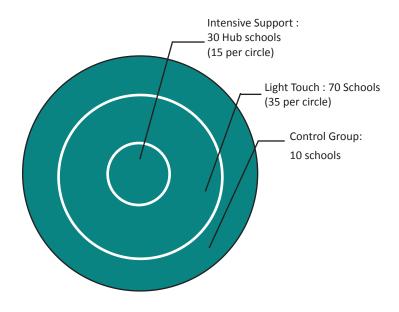
ing towards reducing the social distance between the teacher and student. The intervention aimed to ensure a meaningful education that is sensitive to the socio-linguistic barriers that the children experience on a daily basis, and provide a relevant education that can respond to their diverse learning needs by sensitizing and equipping teachers to respond.

Programme Features

- ➤ Enhancing teacher motivation through capacity building programmes
- > Helping teachers use innovative methods in the classroom
- > Creating child friendly schools
- Core areas of focus:
- > School based support
- ➤ Development of modules for teachers on exploring self-awareness, self-worth and ownership
- ➤ Research and evidence-based approaches to assessment of children
- ➤ Mentoring of 'Champion Teachers' to serve as role models

Strategy and Approach

30 hub schools (Category A) were identified for intensive support. A mix of vernacular medium schools were chosen and more than 300 teachers from these schools were directly trained by Vikramshila in English, Math and First Language teaching.



Intensive hand-holding support was provided to the trained teachers through field visits and demo classes to demonstrate innovative practices. Events involving both teachers and students such as one day camps, classroom makeovers, etc. were organized throughout the year. A pool of 25 resource teachers or Master Trainers were identified from this group to serve as role models and provide support to all 100 schools in the two circles (for both school categories A and B). 116 teachers from 35 schools of circle 10 were trained through a cascade training.

10 other schools were chosen as control group (category C) where no support was provided. A comparative assessment of the baselines and endline assessments of students from category A and C schools were undertaken to gauge the impact of the intervention.

Highlights of the year 2019

- 302 teachers of the Category A schools were trained through parallel batches conducted for different linguistic groups Bengali, Urdu and Hindi.
- An Activity Booklet was designed for teachers where the activities were aligned to learning outcomes. The booklet was translated into 4 languages.
- Teaching Learning materials were distributed in 30 hub schools and our team provided in-class mentoring support to teachers.

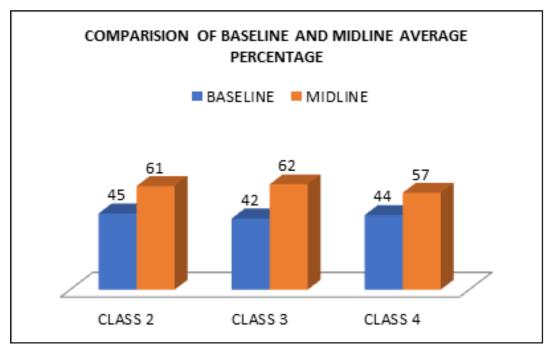
- Classroom makeovers were organized as a joint activity with the project team, teachers and students. This helped to create better bonding among all stakeholders.
- 45 master Trainers were selected through an elaborate process in consultation with SSA and the school heads. The selection was made on the basis of certain identified criteria (e.g. the teachers' subject matter knowledge and conceptual clarity, maximizing students' participation, relationship with students, appropriate use of TLMs and resource materials) to eliminate subjectivity and bias.
- Special Training of Master Trainers (ToT) workshops were designed to help teachers prepare their own trainers' tool kit. There was a mixture of confluent and breakout sessions keeping in mind the diversity of the group.
- One day English Language Teaching (ELT) camps for children were organized in all the 30 hub schools, which served as an embedded training for teachers. It also helped to remove their misgivings about the feasibility of applying communicative language teaching for children from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Assessment was conducted for 2110 students of classes 2, 3 and 4 from the 30 hub schools and 570 students from 10 control schools. Comparative improvement in learning levels were demonstrated in the students of hub schools.



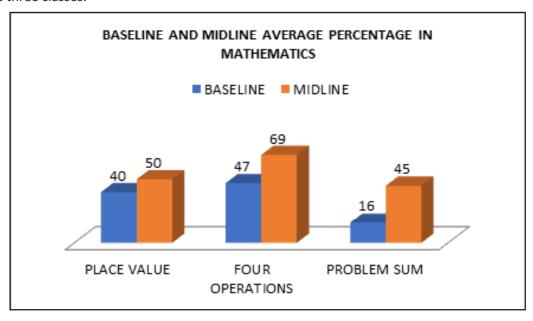
Comparative analysis of Baseline-Midline performance of children

The baseline papers of all 30 schools were analyzed, and the trends and indicators were shared during the teacher trainings with all the teachers

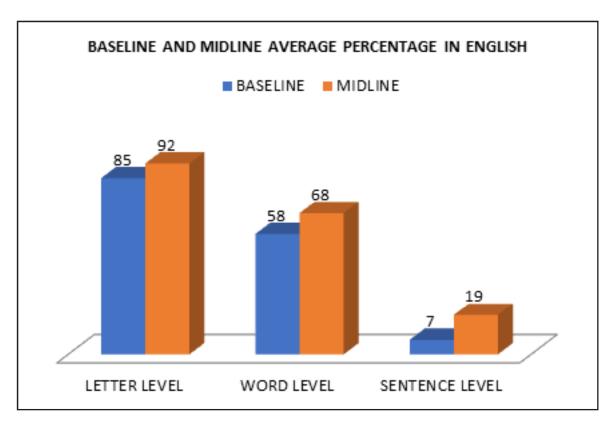
Below are few examples showing the improvement in learning outcomes in three subjects:



The above data represents a comparison between overall baseline and midline assessment score of a particular class. The data shows that the percentage scored by students have improved in midline assessment for all the three classes.



The above data represents a comparison between baseline and midline assessment score in Mathematics of a particular class. The students have shown a significant improvement in problem sum, with the baseline score being 16% and midline score increasing to 45%. In place value and four operations also, we can see the score has improved.



The above data represents a comparison between baseline and midline assessment score in English of a particular class. The scores have improved in all the three competencies.



Mission Sunehra Kal – School-based Supplementary Learning Centres in Howrah

The Howrah intervention of ITC programme has been running since 2015 as a joint collaboration with ITC's Mission Sunhera Kal, with the primary objective to improve enrollment, retention and learning achievements of children with the help of local education volunteers (EVs). The programme covers 30 Supplementary Learning Centres (SLCs) in Government Aided Primary Schools and one Sishu Siksha Kendra (SSK) in Joargori, Kanduah and Beldubi Gram Panchayats in Howrah, catering to approximately 3000 children.

Here, the three-year pilot was focused on ensuring programme sustainability this year, and moved into community based Shikhon Melas on school readiness.

This year, the intervention continued with 30 CLCs running till December. Thereafter, school readiness programs were undertaken from January onwards through Shikhon Melas from a sustainability viewpoint to reach out to communities and engage them in the process of educating their children.

The programme formally comes to a close after four years, as it is now time to hand over these SLCs to the headmasters and teachers of the respective schools. Therefore, this year all the programmes that were undertaken were to ensure sustainability. It is hoped that the pedagogical practices of these learning centres will be integrated into the daily teaching in the schools.

Sustainability Strategies

The multi-pronged approach to ensure sustainability involved the following:

- > Creating hard evidence on effectiveness of camps in providing necessary learning push
- > Capacity building of project stakeholders
- ➤ Creating rubrics, SOPs and templates to act as tools (e.g. classroom makeover design, assessment instruments to gauge learning levels, mapping competencies, activity centres etc)
- Community outreach and sensitization through events

The programmes that were therefore undertaken in this regard were:

- > capacity enrichment of 40 school teachers on learnings from our Sunehra Kal field (teachers of 3 initial GPs and the teachers of the 10 schools of Chandipur GP)
- ➤ demonstration of our practices to create evidence by organizing learning camps for children within the 10 selected schools in Chandipur GP
- > organizing School Readiness Mela and Shikhon Mela in thirty project schools and designing a plan for classroom makeover in all classrooms of the project schools.

Programme Activities and Highlights

Capacity Building

- ➤ 2 batches of four-day teacher training workshops on languages, math and library for primary school teachers, for 99 teachers of 37 Project Schools across 4 GPs
- ➤ Capacity building of EVs and supervisors through refresher trainings and orientations on innovative practices, namely, conducting learning camps, Sikhon Mela, school readiness mela and classroom makeover

Interventions with Children

- ➤ Quarterly learning camps in 10 schools of Chandipur as a means to ensure improvement of learning levels in children, and to demonstrate to the teachers and parent community that all children are capable of learning
- ➤ Directly reached out to 3083 students (SLC students- 2029, School readiness mela 722, Shikhon Mela -2229, Camp in Chandipur- 854.)
- ➤ Based on comparison of baseline and endline data, we have noticed an improvement of 13.08% in Bengali, 12.56% in English and 14.24% in Mathematics in last year in the CLCs

School-based events

- ➤ Joint drawing and Creative writing competitions with SLC students and children of 40 schools
- > Teachers' day celebrations in 40 schools
- ➤ School readiness mela with 722 children of class-I in 30 project schools
- ➤ Sikhon Mela attended by 2229 children across the 4 GPs



TRI Pride Programme in Bankura

Working with rural communities has always been a challenge but in the last two decades, India's development trajectory has impacted their lives in significant ways. The rural poor, especially those who are landless and those with small landholdings, have been facing huge challenges to their very existence. Equally, marginalisation of tribal communities dependent on forests and small farmers dependent on the monsoon have had to deal with new challenges and new hardships.

While access to primary / upper primary schools has improved substantially in the last twenty years, the sad reality is that children from very poor families who attend local government schools have not benefited significantly – their learning outcomes are known to be poor, many of the schools in remote and difficult areas have no more than two teachers and, in many ways they are dysfunctional.

While we believe education has the potential to change their lives and open new doors – the kind of education they receive leaves them not only disheartened but also very cynical. It was against this backdrop that TRI created a platform where PRADAN, a well-established frontline organization working with rural marginalised communities could partner with Vikramshila to leverage their presence in the area and their work with women collectives (SHG institution) – to enable their children to actively participate in education. The idea was to encourage the community to engage with the school to ensure that their children learn and are treated with love and care – as mandated in the Right to Education Act of 2009.

Here, the approach of the project was to empower SHG group members to undertake capacity building, create a community vigilance and back pressure on schools to ensure quality learning and effective learning outcomes. Two strategies were

(a)

Bridging the school community divide by bringing in parents and community members as partners in the learning process through Shikhon Melas or Learning camps,

(b)

Acknowledging the role of the teacher as critical in the child's learning and development and thereby the need to support, empower and appreciate them

Highlights of last year

As we entered the third year of our intervention, encouraging trends have started to surface on the ground. Intensive engagement with the community and the teachers over a period of time has galvanized into a concerted and cohesive approach towards improving the educational landscape of the area.



shorten the 5 days intensive language camp into a one day learning camp, Shikhon Mela.

The fundamental idea remains the same, i.e, to demonstrate to all the concerned stakeholders that all children can learn if taught in a certain way. It was felt that to make it an event led by the community and to optimize the participation of Change vectors (CVs), it is important that the engagement of the CVs is reduced to 1 day from 5 days. Therefore, a revised module of the camp was developed and CVs were given a thorough orientation on the module along with teachers. Following the training, CVs planned Shikhon Mela in their respective schools. This change in format also ensured a manifold increase in reach in terms of numbers of schools where this activity was undertaken.

Outcomes

- Opens up the school space for the commu-
- Creates a positive environment for parentteacher dialogue.
- Can generate PTMs.
- Parents develop confidence in the child's ability to learn, create and perform.
- Activities and strategies adopted by teachers from the camp.
- Demand generated from the teachers for more such school-based camps.



Teachers' Day Celebrations

Over the period of 3 years, more and more Upashanghas have come forward to celebrate teacher's day. Upashangha didis led the initiative to organize the event in their respective schools. Teachers acknowledged the community for their initiative and thanked them for their efforts.

Number of schools where CVs and Upashangha Didis celebrated Teachers day have steadily increased in the last 3 years. Beginning with a meager 4 schools in 2017, this year Teachers day was celebrated in 59 schools out of 80 target schools. This phenomenon points to the fact that the community institution has started taking ownership in educational issues and is reaching out to the schools in an organized manner.

Many teachers were overwhelmed and emotionally charged when honoured by the community. The entire initiative has contributed towards building a positive environment around education in the villages and paved the way for bridging the school-community disconnect.

Impact

At the third year of intervention, there is a visible shift in the school-community dynamics in the target area. The community has started recognizing their role in building a good learning culture for children in their villages. On the other hand, the teachers have also started reaching out to the parents in more empathetic ways than before. There is a distinct shift from a relationship of antagonism to a culture of cooperation between the parents and the teachers. However, this positive momentum will only sustain if the change processes initiated by the CVs are solidly nested and nurtured within the community institution structure.

Green shoots

- PTMs have started in 35 schools. PTMs have been regularized in 15 schools.
- Community led Teachers' day celebrated in 59 schools. 79% of Upashanghas have discussions on education issues. Some of the activities demonstrated during the training and camps have been adopted by some teachers in their classroom.

The Story of a School Upasaluipahari Primary School, Gopalpur GP, Hirbandh Block:

A nondescript primary school in a quaint village. Deep into the woods

可

of Jangal Mahal, away from the humdrums of busy life. That is how we discovered this school back in 2017 in the initial days of our work in Bankura. As a part of our planned activity, we went to this school for a formal survey. It was just another day... we could see that the school closes down right after the mid-day-meal is over. There were few students. On probing deeper, we could understand that the average attendance is extremely low. There were two teachers. The head master- Babloo Bauri came across as a nice man, but trapped in the vagaries of running a remote primary school. Demotivated, eager to finish off his day's job and go back to his home. But a little conversation with him revealed much more than what apparently meets the eye! He along with his sole assistant teacher was eagerly listening to us, our plans, and our then nascent vision. There was a glint in his retired eyes. He said earnestly that he would look forward to anything "NEW" and wholeheartedly cooperate with us. He did keep his promise. He participated actively in the learning camp. He attended a Maths orientation program organized by us and he has been proactive in every little initiative we have taken in the last three years. That was in 2017. And now at the threshold of a new decade, much has changed in that small school of Upsaluipahari village. In the course of three years that small nondescript school has transformed into a vibrant space of learning. A sudden visit to the school surprised us with the presence of a large number of students. Not only has there been a significant increase in attendance, the happy faces of the children tell a lot about the change in the overall atmosphere of the school. Now, PTM is organized regularly every month. The guardians come in hordes...often the meeting ends with a hot cup of tea, some snacks and lively conversations between the parents and the teachers. The school is open full time and to the delight of parents, there is also a weekly class dedicated to cultural activities such as songs, dance and poetry. Teachers' day is celebrated by the local community and children's day has become a great occasion for the teachers and parents to revel in the glory of their children's performance on stage. It took some time. Yet, a little effort from us, a lot of sincerity from the teachers and great support from our didis have charted a new path in our journey together towards a new dawn.

A new partnership – Mission Prerna, Uttar Pradesh

In February this year, Vikramshila joined the Uttar Pradesh Government's initiative 'Mission Prerna' in collaboration with Central Square Foundation and Language Learning Foundation to provide focused support to the state-wide effort on resource development on mathematics and capacity building of state level functionaries, namely the state resource groups and mentor groups. Vikramshila's role in the long-term state-led initiative is to create academic resources on mathematics in alignment with desired pedagogical reforms, and to facilitate training programs for teachers and functionaries in numeracy. The work undertaken in February-March 2020 is summarized below.

SRG Selection Meeting

- Journey began with formation of State Academic Resource Group that would work on the development of resource package for the state.
- 12 SRG members for mathematics identified through one day workshop and selected on the basis of specific criteria

Orientation on Foundational Mathematics

A four-day residential workshop for 9 SAG members consisting of an orientation on foundational areas of math learning and alternative pedagogic practices and strategies

A second batch of the same workshop was held to extend the pool of state resource persons

Material Development Workshop

Desk review of Adharshila, textbooks and materials of all grades was conducted by Vikramshila. This was followed by material development workshop with SAG members to help develop an effective resource package that complements the existing materials We are excited to be a part of this new partnership around foundational mathematics.

Shiksha Deep Prakalpa

The Shiksha Deep Prakalpa is a three-year primary education and community empowerment program implemented in Khoyrasole block of Birbhum Dis-

trict, West Bengal, in collaboration with the National Stock Exchange Foundation. The objective of this collaboration is to create a sustainable model of quality education support to enhance the learning levels of the children, empower local youth and address the issues of enrolment, attendance and retention in the education system of the State, specifically for the most backward regions. Vikramshila offers academic learning support in language and math, and library-based literacy activities in all the 10 GPs of Khoyrasole block. The organization has also helped organize a series of community based educational events across the block.

The Project started in March 2019 with a detailed scoping study to inform strategy and implementation plans. It set out to establish 65 Community learning centres with a total of 65 facilitators, 10 supervisors and a small project office in Khoyrasole, Birbhum to work across the 10 GPs. The programme has reached out to 8100+ children and over 15000 community members over the year.

The nature of support this year has been the domain of education program research, design and development for effective roll out. The focus was on the creation of a foundational learning program contextualized to the block level needs and learning gaps based on comprehensive evidence of good practices, and the implementation of in-classroom elements (such as instructional design and teaching learning material for students) to promote literacy and numeracy aligned to NCERT Learning outcomes.

Programme Highlights

- ➤ Education package created to ensure state-specific, structural factors such as the differences in language at home and in school, and the multiple levels of competency within classrooms.
- ➤ 65 CLCs were set up within a period of 5 months in community identified spaces to ensure coverage across all 10 GPs and 132 villages.
- ➤ Centre was designed to make maximum use of display spaces, organization of language and number work corners, use of TLM, display children's portfolio and learning artifacts
- > Baseline assessment was undertaken and chil-

dren grouped into learning levels to ensure a multigrade and multi-level vibrant remedial program.

- ➤ Regular 2-2.5-hour learning support programs were undertaken with specific tasks, activities and outputs for each learning group
- > Investments were made to equip the project team to undertake relevant support programs for primary school children and sensitizing parent communities.
- ➤ Induction training was conducted on the nature and purpose of foundational literacy, needs and gaps, along with effective pedagogy (subject wise) and classroom strategies to organize learning improvement classes for multi-grade and multilevel situations.
- ➤ Intensive support in first 6 months by academic team of Kolkata office to set up demonstrable centres, undertake demo lessons etc.
- Mentoring support and regular supervision of centres by Program Manager, Supervisors and academic resource persons from Kolkata

For smooth running of the programme, we estab-

lished dialogue, communication and regular sensitization meetings with the school education system in the block and district level involving teachers, school heads and education officials. In absence of community spaces in some villages, the community members and local schools have provided the school space to run CLCs within them. Schools were invited to be part of learning camps and TLM exhibitions were done everywhere with the view to transfer best educational resources and know-how into the formal school system. With regular parent interactions being gradually institutionalized in the CLCs, we will move toward formalizing PTAs in the CLCs which will enable the parent community to seek and demand similar PTAs formalized in the school system as well - where the child's regularity, attendance, academic progress will be the focal point of discussion.

In the next phase of the intervention, in addition to the current work, we plan to theorize our experiences for discourse, advocacy and sustainability and our focus will be on weaving sustainability strategies into our practices.



Theory and Praxis – Our Ongoing Programs of Direct Implementation

As an organization championing the cause of quality education, educational innovations have been at the core of Vikramshila's engagement in various programmes since its inception. It is in this context that looking at the journey of two of Vikramshila's flagship programmes in the urban and rural context becomes important. The rural school at Bigha 'Shikshasatra' and the supplementary learning centres under the brand 'Naba Disha' of Kolkata Police, have been the long-term sites where Vikramshila's experiments in pedagogy have been tested and implemented. The learnings from firsthand experience of the long-term engagement in the two fields have informed the organization's practice. Moreover, the three decades of work in the education and development field and engaging in various social, geographical and linguistic contexts across the country has led to a deeper understanding of the core issues and challenges of the system. This knowledge has further shaped the practices of the two set-ups, and both Bigha and Naba Disha have emerged over time as pioneering models for advocacy with the system.

Vikramshila's main role as a resource organization, is to encourage innovations to ensure that children realize their fundamental right to life through education. Working to strengthen the system from within, the organization strives to highlight the need to acknowledge the convergence between child protection and education through both of its flagship programmes. The emphasis is not on creating a parallel system of education, but rather to create a supportive environment where children from vulnerable backgrounds may be mainstreamed, along with an umbrella of support over time, so that they can be retained within the system. Moreover, the educational spaces provide a sort of reinforcement of the school curriculum, support in understanding basic concepts that the formal school system does not have the time or flexibility to offer, as well as the overall socio-emotional support that the children of deprived backgrounds need in order to cope with the problems of home on the one hand and rigidities of the school system on the other. Through a system of holistic support, the programmes aim to bring about a culture of change in the community through sensitization, dialogue and awareness programmes, thereby working to bridge the gap between the school and the community.



	Bigha	Naba Disha		
Field	Rural, Small village in Bardhaman district with approximately 80 percent families of minority communities	Urban, Centres located in crime-prone pockets of Kolkata city, mostly slums and squat- ter colonies sometimes with multi-lin- gual settings. Communities with reli- gious, linguistic and cultural minorities, unorganized sector workers and mi- grants with children at a constant risk of dropping out of school system		
Target Audience	Primary and pre-primary children from an environment characterized by under-resourced schools, and with low levels of awareness and educa- tional attainment	Vulnerable children from marginalized backgrounds residing in urban slums		
Establishment History	Set up as an experimental school in 1996 under the MHRD's Innovative and Experimental Scheme to create linkages between life and learning, with the school offering meaningful, relevant and contextual education	Partnership with Kolkata Police since 1999 to provide safe space for children offering quality education opportunities to ensure school enrolment, retention and improved learning outcomes.		
Type of engagement	Primary school and resource hub for local community – coupled with residential training space	Learning enrichment through before and after school services		
Approach towards Community Owner- ship	Both Bigha and Naba Disha are based on the principle of community participation and ownership. A motivated and informed community is responsible for sustaining any intervention. Over the years, a strong network of individuals (teachers, mentors, community mobilizers) from the locality has been created, trained and nurtured by Vikramshila who continue to sustain the programmes in its original spirit and flavour, and both Bigha and Naba Disha have therefore emerged as truly community-based units, spearheading positive change in their immediate environment.			
Curricular Practices and Innovations	Education is offered in alternative ways, beyond the traditional chalk and talk methods used in schools, with emphasis on collaborative activities, use of well-designed and age appropriate teaching learning resources, objects and library books. The programs believe in bringing in home-knowledge, home language, community skills and using familiar contexts, demonstrations, innovative assessment strategies to track progress such as observation, portfolios, projects and peer reviews. Basket of services include ECE and school readiness support, academic support, technology-based language support, library sessions, sustainable farming practices, using language as a tool of expression through Sahitya Sabhas, Wall Magazines and other innovative means, citizenship and life-skills education and employability programmes.			

Highlights of 2019-20

Supplementary learning centres of Naba Disha continued to reach out to its 700+ students in the 3-14 age group through 24 teachers across 10 centres located within Police Stations. Vikramshila's school in Bigha applied the best practices of all projects to implement an effective education program in the school and with partner government schools, through daily classes, outreach, camps, Sikhon melas and community empowerment. Both Naba Disha and Bigha continued to serve as experimental laboratory centres for Vikramshila to take good practices to other projects and to provide a repository of collected best practices from other projects, with more nuances and layers added each year.

In the past year, activities included the following:

- academic support to primary level children
- advocacy and liaison with the state education system to showcase good practices
- initiatives to strengthen community linkages, citizenship education and environmental awareness
- innovative interventions with children to promote their holistic development - read alouds, art workshops, etc.

- celebration of special occasions and milestones through events - Child Rights Week, 20 years of Naba Disha, Annual cultural programme at Bigha, sports day, etc.
- hosting of interns from reputed academic institutes in the spirit of knowledge sharing and exchange
- continued capacity building of Naba disha and Bigha teachers
- collaborating with partners to provide opportunities for shared learning and meaningful experiences

Citizenship Education Programmes

Citizenship Education programs have cut across direct implementation projects such as Naba Disha and Bigha. This year, environmental awareness was the main theme chosen by the students in the citizenship group. The theme encouraged adolescents to engage with their environment to protect it and develop community awareness towards the issues of waste management, climate change, river conservation and animal welfare. Here is a glimpse of the activities undertaken in the respective fields.



III. Programmes with Middle and Senior Schools



Work with teachers and students in the middle and high schools was centered around Maths, Science and Technology related interventions coupled with life skills and citizenship education programs. This year a comprehensive learning package (inclusive of Maths, Science and Life-skills) was developed against the background of the study done the previous year on early school transition and the risks of school dropouts especially among boys in classes 6-8 in West Bengal. Based on findings that reflected gaps in systemic, curricular and teacher capacity levels. This package was implemented across Madrasahs in Malda which impacted as many as 19000 children from classes 5 to 8 from these selected Madrasahs. It has also directly capacitated 80 teachers. Moreover, the ITE intervention in Madrasahs witnessed scale up from 14 madrasahs of Hooghly District to 63 Government Aided Madrasahs and Model Madrasahs across 6 districts reaching to nearly 14,000 students of classes 6, 7 and 8 and 350+ teachers. The programs have been instrumental in providing curricular enrichment as well as improvise on pedagogical practices for older children, for whom learning processes, receptivity, interest and skill development across domains needs to be looked at differently as compared to primary or preprimary levels. It is something, we feel, our education system is gradually coming to terms with.



Comprehensive Learning Package for Adolescents in Madrasahs in West Bengal

Vikramshila, in collaboration with UNICEF and the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education (WBMME), launched a pilot programme to develop a comprehensive package for the adolescent students of Madrasahs. The objective of this programme was to encourage and motivate adolescents, many of them being at risk of dropping out of school education for a variety to reasons, to continue with education and ensure school completion with adequate knowledge and skills to make informed choices. This programme came as a response to high absenteeism, poor learning outcomes and large-scale migration that has been observed among marginalized communities. Before initiating the pilot, a situational analysis was undertaken in 2018 in Malda to understand the causes for low school retention and the lack of interest in education. Based on the data from this study a comprehensive package was developed and demonstrated in 20 selected Madrasahs in Malda. The pilot programme has impacted 19000 children from classes 5 to 8 and directly capacitated 80 teachers

The comprehensive package has 3 main components –

- Foundational literacy and numeracy learning Module for Classes 5 and 6
- ➤ Hands on Science and Maths Module for Classes 7 and 8 and
- Life Skills module for Classes 7 and 8

The modality of this package was to first capacitate the teachers of institutions followed by demonstration camps along with teachers of the madrasah, both to demonstrate pedagogical processes in implementing the resource pack as well as gauge student response to this resource. The package, developed and vetted, was then field tested in the selected Madrasahs.

At the outset, the head teachers of these 20 Madrasahs were given an overall orientation about the rationale and need for such a programme. In each

of the 20 Madrasahs, Mathematics and Science corners were set up, following which we began a set of training sessions for selected teachers from 20 Madrasahs in Kolkata.

Four sets of teachers' training sessions were organized.

- ➤ The first one was on Science, where, 40 teachers (2 from each of the Madrasahs) were trained in newer approaches to teach Science to young adults with the help of scientific experiments.
- ➤ The second training was on Mathematics, focusing on use of a curated set of math TLM and handmade TLMs to ensure the clarity in conceptual understanding of students. Each of these 20 Madrasahs were also given a holistic kit for Mathematics and Science which teachers and students were expected to use during regular classes to enrich the learning processes.
- ➤ This was followed with life-skills training sessions, organized for 40 teachers, centralized in Kolkata. Here too, the trainings were followed by demonstration camps.

Following these training sessions, camps were organized in all 20 Madrasahs to demonstrate the methodology that Vikramshila had prescribed to the teachers. Using the Round Robin method, three-day science camps were organized at 20 selected Madrasahs at Malda district to demonstrate the methods and also encourage students of upper-primary classes towards science subjects. The 3 days were planned as, Life Science on the first day, Physics on the second day and Chemistry on the third day. Students were given the chance to try out experiments from their textbooks with their faculties. The response towards the camps from students was positive and teachers were encouraging. The life-skills camps were to support students to cope with stress, understand their skills, knowledge of safe migration and know-how on career choices. The demo camps enabled teachers to understand the steps and processes involved in organising camps on their own in the coming days.

➤ The last training session with the teachers was around foundational literacy and numeracy which focused on the primary level competencies of children of classes 5 and 6.

As a culmination of the first phase of this pilot an inter-Madrasah students' exhibition was organized where children from each Madrasah had put up stalls with their learning artefacts, namely their science and mathematics experiments. This exhibition helped them to showcase their creativity and scientific temperament.

This pilot has been widely covered by state and national print media which highlighted the uniqueness of this programme and the significance of this enriching association between Vikramshila, UNICEF

and West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education on minority school education.

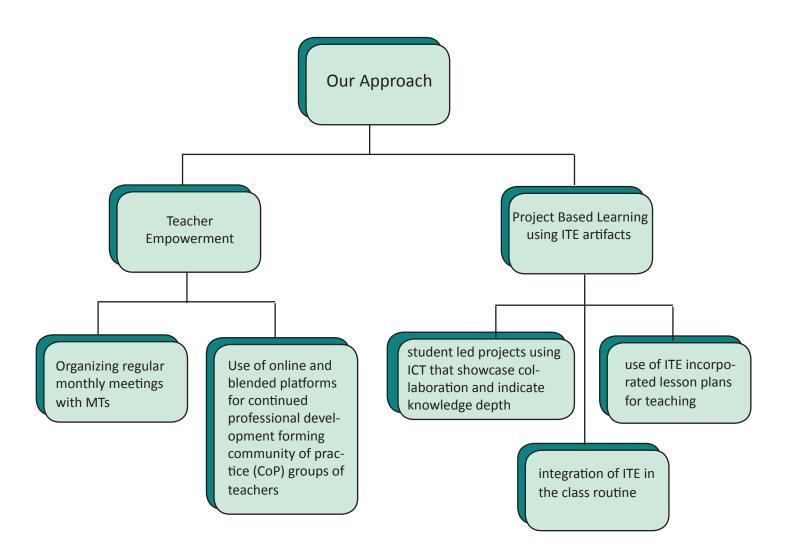
In the second phase of the pilot, the educational outcomes of this cohort will be mapped along with their regularity in classes. In addition to this, a demand has been felt for a manual for teachers to use the Mathematics and Science kit that has been sent to each Madrasah in the state by the government. Vikramshila will develop this manual based on its subject know-how and evidence gathered from the field.



Integration of Technology in Education (ITE) for Adolescents in Madrasahs

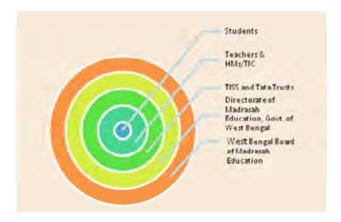
The ITE program in West Bengal is a collaboration between the Directorate of Madrasah Education, TISS, Mumbai and Vikramshila Education Resource Society with the support from Tata Trusts.

The initiative was first piloted in Murshidabad in 2013 with Vikramshila introducing ITE intervention in private Madrasahs in 2014. The current phase of ITE in Madrasah intervention has 63 Madrasahs of 6 Districts under its purview. The goal of this intervention is to foster skills necessary to adapt to a life that is influenced by rapid advancement in technology. This intervention aims to arm students with tools that enable them to think computationally, creatively and critically, so that they truly become the citizens of the 21st century. This phase of ITE intervention has witnessed scaled up from 14 madrasahs of Hooghly District to 63 Government Aided Madrasahs and Model Madrasahs across 6 districts reaching to nearly 14,000 students of classes 6, 7 and 8.





Our stakeholders



The figure shows our partners in the programme. At the core of the intervention is our work with students of the Madrasahs, with whom we engage to create learning artefacts and through participation in ITE meets. We engage regularly with the teachers of the focus madrasahs through capacity building across various initiatives, and onsite handholding support in the development, evaluation and implementation of lesson plans. We also work closely with the heads of institutions and the managing committees for strategic planning regarding implementation of ITE as well as to ensure participation of teachers and students at various platforms for advocacy of best practices.

Programme Highlights

This year, the program has worked to sustain training efforts as well as maintain the community of practice groups that have been built in the process. The continued effort of the team is reflected in the fact that 4 Madrasah Teachers (MTs) were selected as Tata Trusts-TISS ITE Fellows and students have been recognized and appreciated for their exceptional technical brilliance and prowess at various meets and webinars.

14,000 students were reached and 132 learning artefacts were created. Moreover, 334 teachers have been trained through continuous professional development during 2019-2020. We also organized 2 District Wise ITE artefact sharing meets and 1 An-

nual ITE Meet.

Considering the objectives of the intervention, we can say the intervention produced the following prominent outcomes:

- ➤ Advocacy by Vikramshila has led to the upscaling of ITE in 63 Government aided Madrasahs across 6 districts from an initial of 14 Madrasahs from 1 district
- ➤ Active student participation in different events at the district, state and national level have established that the learners are truly producers and not merely consumers of ICT resources
- ➤ 4 Govt. Aided Madrasah teachers have been selected as Fellows for Tata Trusts —TISS ITE fellowship for in-service teachers/teacher educator under the ITE project
- ➤ Inclusion of ITE in the daily routines in 75 percent Madrasahs
- ➤ During the annual ITE Meet, Heads of Institutions put forward a proposal to State officials to allocate 20% weightage to ITE artefacts created by children during annual assessments.

The way forward

In recent years, the role of ICT in education has been established as a potential tool to build knowledge. The use of ICT has given a way to rethink and redesign the pedagogy of the classroom and one can witness the coexistence of technology with traditional teaching -learning tools to create enhanced experiences in the classroom. At this juncture, collaborations with various stakeholders to support the Madrasah education system in West Bengal and focus on making our students 21st century citizens and mitigating the digital, learning and opportunity divide is crucial. We plan to upscale and sustain ITE to all the 615 Madrasahs across the state in a phased manner. To continue the momentum of the Millennium Development Goals, the "Sustainable Development Goals" have now been adopted which has listed "inclusive and equitable quality education for all" as targets.

Organizational Functions





Advocacy Actions

Vikramshila played a pivotal role in the domain of advocacy in 2019-20. Almost all the grassroot level initiatives are examples of people centred advocacy that has huge potential to mobilize, articulate and represent people's interests or concerns at different levels of decision-making, both at the local and national level. During the period under report, several significant actions were undertaken by Vikramshila. Some of these actions are as follows.

In the domain of Policy

Vikramshila was part of the state level core group on formulation of Safe School Policy for Schools in West Bengal. The core group was formed by West Bengal commission for Protection of Child rights. The representatives of Vikramshila facilitated several workshops/conclaves in this context in collaboration with members from Save the Children, CRY, Action Aid and WBCPCR and came out with a Safe School Policy. This was officially forwarded to the School Education Department by WBCPCR.

Under the aegis of WBCPCR, Vikramshila was part of another core group for formulation of Dos and Don'ts for media in the context of coverage on children. The hand book on the same was launched by Honourable Minister of State (Independent Charge) Women, Child development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal.

Intervention in Government Child Care Institutions

Vikramshila was granted permission to undertake Life skill coaching and run Supplementary Education Centres in different Child Care Institutions of Government of West Bengal. Vikramshila is one of the very few organisations that has been granted permission to engage with children in such a space. The establishment of an ECCE centre in CCI (as described in section II) is the very first of its kind and has been appreciated by the Government of West Bengal. This was also mentioned in the State Government's annual report of 2018 – 2019. Vikramshila decided to document all processes so that this could be replicated in other CCIs.

Vikramshila's Presence in the External domain

Vikramshila was invited as moderator and key speaker in several State and National level conclaves on Child Protection and Right to Education. These were mostly organised by government bodies. Two such trainings on role of police in the realm of child rights for the police officers were organised by Administrative Training Institute, Government of West Bengal.

Representatives of Vikramshila were invited by leading print and electronic media to share their thoughts in editorials and to participate in talk shows on different Child rights issues.

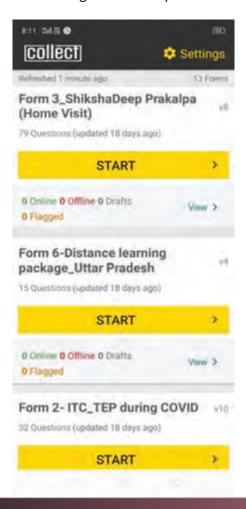
Under the aegis of West Bengal Commission on Protection of Child Rights, Vikramshila participated in the International Book fair and showcased their active citizenship initiatives.

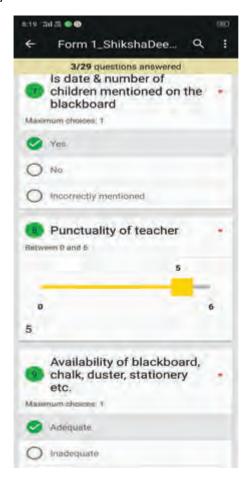
Vikramshila was invited by the National council of Teachers' Education (NCTE) to set up an Exhibition stall in its national level exhibition cum conclave. The stall was visited by several dignitaries of National and International level including Minister in charge of MHRD, Government of India.

Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework in Vikramshila is a combination of data collection, analysis, and assessing to what extent a programme or intervention has, or has not, met its objectives. The organization relies on quantitative and qualitative data giving due importance to both. There is a two-pronged approach to the M&E framework. It is typically aligned to the theory of change ascribed by the organization. It takes a more holistic and comprehensive approach. M&E structures are also designed for most programmes that Vikramshila undertakes. This helps to monitor the trajectory, evaluate any progress and guide in course correction if needed. Vikramshila believes in undertaking evidence-based decisions which is why a strong M&E structure is integral. This year, with this objective, there was collaboration with Atlan who provides system-based M&E framework helping to capture evidences from far-off fields both quantitative and qualitative. This system helps to create customized evidence gathering questionnaires which is accessible to all field members through an App. Considering the remoteness and diversity of many field locations, the App can be used without internet and is also bilingual. Key metrics from this system gives an idea of the state of implementation and the efficiency of the programme.

This shift in M&E process has helped the organization to ensure quality and standardization of interventions in all sites while reducing travel and HR expenses. The depiction of the data collected on a dashboard has additionally aided in mapping impacts on quarterly or monthly basis. Along with digital structures, Vikramshila continues to gather feedback and opinions of all beneficiaries through conventional means. These feedbacks have been fundamental in the development of the organization and it recognizes the importance of holding on systems which are time tested.





Audit and Accounts

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2020

FUND AND LIABILITIES	SCHEDULES	31.03.2020	31.03.2019
Capital Fund	А	9468869	11654040
Capital Grants	В	1458835	1695985
Grant received in advance	С	7432914	9124899
Secured Loans	D	70206	154410
Outstanding Liabilities	Е	605265	129370
TOTAL		19036089	22758704
ASSETS			
Fixed Assets	F	1688000	2013165
Deposits	G	111444	117444
Advances & Receivables	Н	5266976	4884716
Cash and Bank Balance	I	11969669	15743379
TOTAL		19036089	22758704
Accounting Polycies & Notes On Accounts	J		

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020

PARTICULARS	31.03.20	PARTICULARS	31.03.20
Indirect Expenses		Indirect Income	
Administration	6586059	Administration	4400893
Indienhilfe (IH)	928406	Indienhilfe (IH)	928401
PRADAN	2617701	PRADAN	2617701
CENTRAL SQUARE FOUNDATION-ASSAM	634059	CENTRAL SQUARE FOUNDATION-ASSAM	634059
BUSINESS ENGLISH	205546	BUSINESS ENGLISH	205546
PAHAL	119393	PAHAL	119393
CENTRAL SQUARE FOUNDATION UP (LLF)	332971	CENTRAL SQUARE FOUNDATION UP(LLF)	332971
CRY	1390546	CRY	1390546
ITC	8955543	ITC	8955543
TATA TRUST	2879962	TATA TRUST	2879962
UNICEF UP	5577679	UNICEF UP	5577679
UNICEF KOLKATA	4378006	UNICEF KOLKATA	4378006
NSE Project	5629130	NSE Project	5629130
WIPRO	2518624	WIPRO	2518624
Excess of Income over Expenditure		Excess of Expenditure over Income	2185171
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	42753625	TOTAL INCOME	42753625

Governing Body



Justice H.L. Dattu (Former Chief Justice of India and Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission) Patron in Chief



Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh Lokpal, former Supreme Court Judge Patron in Chief



Mr, Debapriya Dasgupta, former CEO, CTS Europe Operations President



Ms Shubhra Chatterji Educationist Director



Ms Tapati Gupta
Educationist
Secretary



Asesh Jyoti Datta Financial Head IL&FS Treasurer



Dr. Shelley M. Brown Retd Physician,,,Author and Publisher Member



Prof. Hari Vasudevan Academic, Educationist Member



Mr. Kartick Manna Educationist,Chairman DPSC & SSM Kolkata Member



Mr. Surojit ChatterjeeMusician and Music Director
Member



Mr. Aspi KapadiaDirector Madhujayanti Tea
Member



Ms Bandana Dutta
Develpomental Professional
Member



Mr. Atanu SainDevelpomental Professional
and Deputy Director – Vikramshila
Member

In Memorium: Profesessor Hari Vasudevan

With deep regret we inform the loss from amidst us our beloved GB Member, Professor Hari Vasudevan in April 2020. Professor Vasudevan was associated with Vikramshila since 2012 as an unstinting pillar of support providing academic guidance and insights to our different education programs, especially the Social Science Project. His untimely and abrupt departure left us with a void impossible to fill. Prof. Vasudevan will be cherished and remembered by all for his erudition, empathy and sense of humour. May he rest in peace. Farewell Professor Vasudevan.

We welcome our new governing body member-



Mr. Banibrata Basu

IPS (Retd) Former DG-IB, Ex- Vigilance Commissioner as Member

Acknowledgments

We express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all partners who have worked with us over the year – Trusts, Foundations, Government systems, Corporates, NGOs, individual donors and well wishers.

We thank our friends, community partners, SHG groups, officials and education functionaries who have continued to place their trust in us and remained open to new ideas and challenges all year through.

Development Partners

- TATA Trusts
- National Stock Exchange
- ITC Ltd
- WIPRO
- Child Rights & You
- PRADAN
- Indien Hilfe
- KOLKATA UNICEF
- UP UNICEF
- Central Square Foundation

Government Partners

- The Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare- Govt. of West Bengal
- Directorate of Child Rights and Trafficking Government of West Bengal
- District offices of SSM, Kolkata, Howrah, Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum
- West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education
- Directorate of Madrasah Education
- Kolkata Police
- West Bengal Commission for the Protection of Child Rights
- Department and Directorate of School Education Government of West Bengal
- Government of Uttar Pradesh
- Government of Assam

Most importantly we thank the thousands of children who worked with us and motivated us to think deeper and aim higher.

Behind the scenes

Shubhra Chatterji Atanu Sain Satya Gopal Dey Namrata Ghosh Ananya Dam Sanjay Bhattacharjee Sanchari Roy Chowdhury Suvam Das Aneesha Chakraborty Riti Mukherjee Arpita Ghosh Babita Dutta Majumder Md. Mehedi Hasan Samima Seikh Md.Mujibar Rahaman Sk Julfikaruddin Sumeira Abid Tarikul Islam Soumi Mukherjee Rita Das Shobhan Sarkar Sarmistha Biswas Chiranjit Sannyasi Md.Golam Nabi Azad Debadipa Mukhopadyay Debanjana Sarkar Jasmina Khatun Mustafiz Iqubal Kunal jit pyne Nurul Hasan Shounak Baidya Ria Baneriee Manjula Das Somdutta Bhoumik Nazneen Begum Jhuma Ghosh Amartya Sen Sharma Arun Sain Partha Sarathi Mukherjee Atanu Kundu Milon Kumar Sarkar Nazrul Haque Mondal Saherunnessa Khatun Samser Ali SK Keka Mullick Madhubanti Bhattacharya Atanu Das Jayanta Pal Mohammad Sazzad Hossain Krishna Mohan Singh Shashanka Pandey Dan Bahadur shukla

Sarvesh Kumar Singh

Vijay Mishra Vivek Kumar Singh Pankaj Shukla Indrakesh Neetu Singh Monoj Kumar Sharma Joshita Medhi Shaheed Ahmed Alamgir Manju Medhi Prasanta Das Nakul Chandra Deka Pinki Bora Dipumoni Deka Monimala Saikia Barnali Das Ganesh Chandra Deka Sumana Ganguli Sutapa Baksi Probal Saha **Uday Samanta** Minakshi Manna Chameli Deshmukh Eishita Panja Shibani Santra (Jana) Kaberi Sinha Putul Rani Malik Jamuna Sinha Rupsona Khatun Avijit Sardar Samina Begam Suvra Das Ikbal Mallik Joyashree Mondal Animes Kanji Suparna Ari Sudha Hudati Privoiit Pania Rita Malick Samar Kanii Surochita Manna Peu Golui Pivali Bar Chiranjit Golui Imran Khan Mita Koley Baby Adak Sagarika Hazra Sriya Dalui Sanghamitra Dwari Diptanshu Hait Modhumita Adak

Sudakshina Sing

Nipendra Nath Sow

Subrata Ghosh Sk Imammuddin Dharmadas Bauri Pria Mondal Putul Dey (Dingal) Barun Bauri Kasturi Purokayastha Dinamoy Basari Sk Najrul Islam Sabana Yasmin Sk Niyajubdin Ria Mondal Madhumita Ghosh/Pan Noor Islam Chandana Bhuin/Dutta Morjina Bibi Subodh Bauri Madhusudan Mondal Sahabur Rahaman Lokeswar Gop Tapas Gop Sk Wasim Rasul Maloy Maji Asoke Kumr Kabiraj Debashis Kapuri Mallika Das Nasim Parvin Riiiva Sultana Sk Md Juber Papia Pal / Mondal Papiya Nandi Rajib Ghosh Atul Chandra Das Sanju Chowdhary Situ Bagdi Harekrishna Mandal Debilal Mondal Monalisha Badyakar Surojit Mondal Ranjit Bagdi Alaka Gope / Manna Raja Nandi Ashalata Rav Ananta Bhandari Antara Ghosh Sk.Azijur Rahaman Ramesh Das Parimal Chatterjee Kshitish Mondal Srikanta Bauri

Roma Das

Asima Konai

Kanchan ghosh

Achinta Ghosh Ashis Mondal Chaitali Bhattacharjee Seuli Mondal Ujjwal Mandal Mongalmoy Pan Akrima Bibi Swapan Dhibar Haridas Mondal Golam Mostafa Khan Arpita Chandra Chandan Bagdi Raka Tunnisa Khatun Paresh Nath Pathak Charan Dome Prasun Taru Gope Krishna Ankure Somenath Adhikari Sanjib Pan Laltanu Badyakar Noori Begam Afrin Jahan Guncha Kahkahsa Jasmin Sangeeta Dutta Priyanka Sarkar Piyali Biswas Shvamali Bose Mehnaz Bano Soma Saha Pinki Kumari Rajbhar Durga Rajak Kanchan Paul Naskar Sima Roy Manjula Shaw Piyali Patro Afreen Afroz Nida Imam Naseem Ara Sandal Shagufta Nahid Muskan Parveen Ruby Khanam Shabana Alam Sangita Banerjee