SHIKSHA Initiative in Action

For any queries, ideas and/or suggestions please contact:
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Message from Project Director

Dear Colleagues,

Happy new year to you all. I hope you celebrated the start of 2018 in good spirits with family and friends. As we welcome New Year, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past year, the journey we've taken to get to where we are and the plans we have for an exciting, bright future in the New Year.

In the year 2017, we saw our hard work result in the achievement of several important milestones to position SHIKSHA Initiative for the future. SHIKSHA Initiative strategically intensified into adult literacy approach entitled as SHIKSHA+ that uses an ICT based methodology to teach the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic skills to illiterate adults. Also, focus was to develop monitoring and evaluation tools to track the progress and facilitate decision making. Furthermore, a formal agreement has been signed with Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow to conduct in-depth impact evaluation study of SHIKSHA elementary. The year also marked a development in terms of communication by introducing monthly newsletter "SHIKSHA Initiative in Action" and streamlining our procedures and operations.

The Year 2018 holds promise of much more progress and excitement. I am confident that we are in the right direction; we remain committed to our vision of Eradicating Illiteracy from India. This year, we intend to fast track our steps towards accomplishing SHIKSHA Initiative's vision through intensive capacity building and adopting innovative approach. Our endeavors will be taking the SHIKSHA to excellence and above the mundane. I could see our organization is being looked at as incubation center for new techniques and technology in the field of education. While appreciating the hard work of all of you, I urge all to pull up your socks and look forward to the next level at your individual areas.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your passion and dedication in SHIKSHA Initiative's success. I look forward to your continued support as, together, we take SHIKSHA Initiative into 2018.

I once again wish you and your families a very happy and a prosperous New Year!

– ROBIN SARKAR, Project Director, SHIKSHA Initiative

SHIKSHA Initiative Snapshot-2017

JANUARY – MARCH

- Meeting with President of India secretariat in Rashtrapati Bhavan to discuss SHIKSHA Initiative
- Standard Operating Procedures and Detailed Project Report of SHIKSHA Initiative developed
- ASER Baseline and Endline conducted
- SHIKSHA+ Certificate Distribution Ceremony held in Gautam Buddha Nagar
- Testing of SHIKSHA+ Content on field
- KPA (Key Performance Areas) developed and implemented

APRIL – JUNE

- Launch of SHIKSHA$^+$ in Kasmanda Block of Sitapur district
- Pilot Testing of Tab Assessment
- Monitoring and Evaluation tools developed to track the progress and facilitate decision making
- Product Knowledge Training conducted to enhance knowledge of SHIKSHA Initiative, enrich delivery in the classroom and mentor teachers
- Meeting with District Magistrate, Chief Development Officer, Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Block Education Officer to discuss logistical issues pertaining to SHIKSHA's ICT enabled classroom in Kasmanda

JULY – SEPTEMBER

- Monthly Newsletter "SHIKSHA Initiative in Action" introduced
- Formal agreement signed with Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Lucknow to conduct in-depth impact evaluation study of SHIKSHA Initiative
- IIM Lucknow initiated their work in the primary schools of Kasmanda block.
- SHIKSHA Initiative faciliated Chris Garrett, board members of Better World Ed, to introduce various facets of SHIKSHA Initiative
- Training on SHIKSHA$^+$ imparted to Samuday team to build their capacity and understanding

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

- Expansion of SHIKSA Initiative in 5 New Blocks of Sitapur district
- SHIKSHA$^+$ First Batch of Male Learners formed in Sitapur
- Mobilization drive for SHIKSHA$^+$ in 8 villages of Sikandrabad and Dadri
- Workshop on assessment development with VidyaGyan teachers
- Support to VidyaGyan by developing their assessment papers
- Brainstorming session with Shiv Nadar School teachers on assessment
- Baal Diwas Celebration at Gautam Buddha Nagar schools
- Participation in National Conference on ICT in School Education organized by NCERT in Ajmer

Learnings, Experiences and Insights of Teaching and ICT Intervention

" *Those who know, do. Those that understand, teach.* **"**

– Aristotle

Arun Kumar Pal, Field Officer,
P.S. Mahepa Jagir-II, Sikandrabad, Bulandshahr

Arun Kumar Pal, Field Officer, P.S. Mahepa Jagir-II, Sikandrabad, Bulandshahr shared his experience and learnings of working as a teacher and impact of ICT intervention on students.

In his association with SHIKSHA Initiative for past four years, Arun understands that it is of paramount importance to know what children think, how they think and how he can help them enhance their learning. When a child comes to school, he is not a blank slate which can be filled with knowledge. Rather he comes to school with a basic understanding, approach and imagination. Therefore, teacher should adopt a method in which children get more opportunities to learn and grow and this can be achieved by understanding them, their interest and their requirements. Keeping into consideration their background, economic and social status, Arun makes an effort to provide them with varied learning opportunities and adopt innovative techniques that make learning a pleasure, not a burden.

Referring to his experience of teaching Grade 1 and 2 students of government school, Arun shares that in a same class we have diverse group. In same section of Grade 1, a child knows the tables till 20 and in the same class there is a student who cannot even recognize the numbers. Someone can read English sentence and on the other hand there are students who do not even recognize the alphabet. Thus, understanding the level of students and accordingly teaching them is a very challenging task for a teacher. Therefore, the key is understanding the child's problem, fear, or confusion which will give the teacher a better understanding of the child's learning difficulties. Once the teacher becomes aware of the problems, he or she will have more patience with the student, thus making him feel confident and help students learn effectively and accomplish quickly.

Arun shares that as a teacher he makes an effort to develop a logical approach among students so that they accept the notions only after thorough testing and reasoning. Furthermore, they share and comprehend their views with wider audience based on logic. Thus, such abilities will certainly have a positive effect and will help them fostering deeper learning. According to him, education is not only about gaining knowledge. It is also about inculcating good habits in students so that they become good citizens.

Relationship between Teachers and Students in Class

Through experience and observation, Arun shares that when students come to school they are afraid that teachers will punish them and therefore they hesitate to speak. In light of above, he decided that as a teacher his primary responsibility is to make students comfortable and then proceed with the learning. A conducive environment has to be created wherein children come to school confidently and doesn't hesitate to express themselves freely. Hence, it can be accomplished by talking about their family, village, vicinity and listening to their experiences. Moreover, teachers need to establish a positive relationship with their students by communicating with them and acting like a friend, philosopher and guide. Having established a positive relationship with students will encourage students to seek education and be enthusiastic to be in school.

"मैं भी शुरुआत इसी तरह करता हूँ। उनका नाम, घर, पास–पड़ोस के बारे में बातें करता हूँ। उत्साहवर्धन करता हूँ। स्वयं को बच्चों के स्तर तक ले जाकर उनसे बात–चीत करता हूँ। मैं कहता हूँ कि अच्छा बच्चों कुत्ता कैसे बोलता है? बच्चे कहते हैं भौ–भौ। फिर बकरी की, फिर मुर्गा की आवाज निकालने के लिए कहता हूँ और कभी कहता

हूँ– अरे सारे गाँव के मुर्गा यहीं आ गए क्या? बच्चे हँसते हैं। उनसे शेर की आवाज निकालने के लिए कहता हूँ। जब बच्चे शेर की आवाज निकालते हैं और मैं डरकर गिरने का अभिनय करता हूँ, तो सारे बच्चे खिलखिलाकर हँस पड़ते हैं। इस बात–चीत में मैं उनकी भाषा बोलने का प्रयास करता हूँ ताकि मैं उन्हें समझ सकूँ और वे मुझे। मैं उनकी कल्पनाशक्ति के पंख लगाने के लिए और हिन्दी शब्दों को सिखाने के लिए Content (CMS) चलाकर कविताओं के माध्यम से शब्दों का उच्चारण करवाकर खेल–खेल में भाषा से जुड़ाव करने का प्रयास करता हूँ।"

SHIKSHA Initiative ICT Class

Another important component is not all children are alike- some learn themselves, few learn quickly, some late. But the common point is all children learn and read when they are ready for it. The method of learning is also different for everyone. Some children remember the poems by looking at CMS, while few learn after reciting and listening. Hence, the more the teacher connects or communicates with the students, the more likely they will be able to help students learn effectively and efficiently.

SHIKSHA Initiative ICT Class

SHIKSHA Initiative works with the mission to create lifelong learners, by enhancing the learning process and utilizing a technology-enabled learning program. It enhances the class-room environment and equips the teachers with an innovative high-engagement teaching mechanism to boost learning effectiveness and retention among children.

Arun shares that there is lots of enthusiasm among students in ICT class. They enjoy ICT based teaching and foster confidence through enjoyable learning experiences. All the students in the class proactively participate in the activities carried out in the CMS and want to see new poem, story, and characters every day. He shares that he gives the opportunity to children to sing poems along with the animation which they really enjoy. Moreover, when children recite poems in the same manner at home their parents are overwhelmed. Furthermore, in between the session, Arun discus the poem by asking the questions which further help in expanding their understanding and make them learn in between the fun activities. It has been experienced that like Hindi poems which is in their mother tongue children learn English poems also with full enthusiasm.

The Characteristic of SHIKSHA Initiative Content (CMS):

1. Introducing and illustrating the concepts from real life situations
2. Fun and interactive classroom teachings
3. Content is very humorous, interactive and interesting
4. Multi-religious and multi-cultural approach adopted
5. Concept break animation is added in between two concepts/examples/scenarios. These 'concept break animations' help break the monotony in nuggets and alert students to get ready to know a new concept
6. Fun element characters used to make the story interesting and entertaining
7. Poems are taught in a rhythmic manner which help children to remember easily
8. Get acquainted with technology and easy to learn and understand with simplicity and ease
9. Many interesting activities included to keep children in touch with subject matter
10. Importance of the role of the teacher through the "जारी रखें" button
11. In addition to the text book, content enhances children's practical information
12. Reading and writing practice activity is included in all the subjects
13. Simple words and language is used to explain the concepts and enrich the learning experience
14. The information given in the entire text is summarized by "हमने सीखा"

Thus, it has been observed that ICT based intervention has the potential to enhance the quality of education, enrich the learning process and deepen skills to motivate and engage students effectively.

> "मैंने अनुभव किया कि जब बच्चों को ज्यादातर रटा–रटाया लिखना होता है, तो उन्हें काफी दिक्कत होती है, इस प्रक्रिया में लिखने के प्रति उनका आत्म–विश्वास एकदम गायब हो जाता है। इसलिए मैंने सोचा कि बच्चों को लिखना सिखाने के प्रति उत्साह जागृत करने के लिए ऐसी विधि अपनाई जाए जिसमें बच्चे रोचकता और रचनात्मकता के साथ लिखने के प्रति आकर्षित हों। इसलिए मैंने **चित्रकला का प्रयोग किया।**"

Initially, Arun asked students to draw a picture of their interest to which they were hesitant. To motivate and make them comfortable, Arun made few pictures (bucket, fish, tomatoes, mango, apple, flower, peacock etc.) on blackboard and then asked students to make in their notebooks. Children started drawing enthusiastically with full engagement and then their enthusiasm increased so much that as soon as the school prayer ended, they started drawing. He found that they try to make new pictures at home and display their talent the next day on the board. In this way they got comfortable to write and

Students engaged in an activity

through this approach they were taught to write alphabets through fun activities.

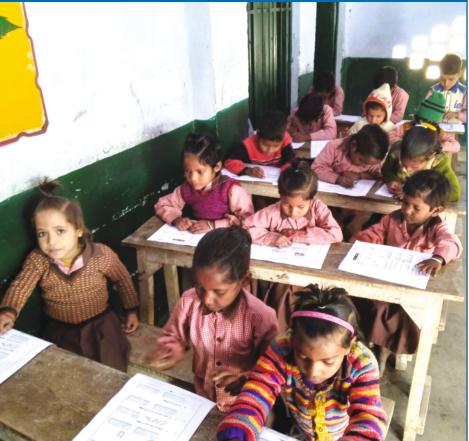Concluding his experience, he states that with the support of SHIKSHA Initiative -

शिक्षा का दीप जलायेंगे,
हर घर में खुशियां लायेंगे।

– ARUN KUMAR PAL
Field Officer

Half-Yearly Examination

Half- Yearly Examination was conducted for all the subjects in SHIKSHA enabled schools of Kasmanda. The process of examination started with post-test (PT) from 14th to 16th December and concluded with post-augmentation test (PAT) from 20th to 22nd December 2017.

STORIES from the Field

Mahesh Bisht,
District Almora,
Uttarakhand

Mahesh Bisht, resident of District Almora, Uttarakhand is working as a field officer in Neeraj Memorial Public School, Noorpur, Sikandrabad. He has completed his studies from government school, village Diksha. After schooling, he did B.P.Ed from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. His father has been working as a teacher in government school and as a child looking at his father he was also motivated and had a passion to work as a teacher. To fulfill this passion, he turned down his family's proposal of doing B.Tech and be an engineer.

During his B.P.Ed, he got the opportunity to work as a teacher in Shishu Mandir School, Bhopal. Moreover, he also got engaged in educating tribal children which further enhanced the passion of teaching. During his vacations, whenever he used to visit his village, he used to get ready early morning and visit government school near his house and teach students. However, after completing studies he didn't get good opportunity in teaching and in order to support his family he started working as a Customer Service Associate in cafeteria of SNU (Shiv Nadar University).

During his association with SNU, he came to know about SHIKSHA Initiative and accordingly he met SHIKSHA team in Cafeteria. He was not aware that they are part of SHIKSHA Initiative but had casual discussion about his passion of teaching and work of SHIKSHA Initiative. When they shared about SHIKSHA Initiative, he felt as if he is getting wings to his dreams and asked them how to join SHIKSHA Initiative. Team shared the process of joining and subsequently he joined on August 4, 2014 as a Field Officer. Since 2014, Mahesh has been actively engaged in SHIKSHA Initiative's mission to eradicate illiteracy from India by using ICT in teaching. In beginning, it was very difficult for him to teach through ICT as before joining he had no experience of teaching through technology. However, with continuous capacity building and support of his colleagues he was able to learn technology and its effective use in the class.

Mahesh expresses that his life has changed a lot, since he has carved out an identity of his own. Prior to joining, he was really shy and quiet but this opportunity enhanced his confidence and also enabled him in refining his knowledge. He feels really proud and privileged to be part of SHIKSHA Initiative as a teacher and simultaneously contribute towards society. ∎

– **MAHESH BISHT**
Field Officer

Meeting with Government Officials

SHIKSHA team comprising of Senior Project Manager (SPM) Mayank Sinha, Senior Resource Coordinator (SRC) Deenanath Tripathi and Senior Field Supervisor (SFS) Manoj Kumar Shukla met respected Chief Development Officer (CDO) Dr. Arvind Kumar Chaurasiya on December 22, 2017. During the meeting, Dr. Chaurasiya shared a proposal requesting to install SHIKSHA Initiative's ICT smart class project in the schools of 140 gram-panchayat of Sitapur which are under Pradhan-Mantri Adarsh Gram Panchayat Yojana. Post discussion of the requirements, SHIKSHA team agreed to collaborate and install its ICT smart class project in one school of every gram panchayat of 5 blocks i.e. Biswa, Kherabad, Gondlamau, Sidhauli and Machhrehta which are under Pradhan-Mantri Adarsh Gram Panchayat Yojana. ∎

SHIKSHA Initiative Data (as on 31st December 2017)

	SHIKSHA Elementary		SHIKSHA+	
	CoE	Expansion	CoE	Expansion
No. of District	2	1	2	1
No. of Block	2	3	2	1
No. of Villages	50	134	10	31
No. of Schools/ Batches	35	90	36	53
No. of Students benefitted / Learners	2280	4901	353	540
Total staff	52	21	10	22
Attendance (Present %) **Month – November***	68.91%	58.08 %	78.66%	68.74%