Contents

From the Director’s Desk ................................................................. ...1
Our Outreach......................................................................................3

Technical support to other agencies 4 - 25
Capacity Building and Resource Development.................................5
Supporting Early Childhood Education Initiatives in West Bengal........12
Vikramshila’s Support to the Madrasa Board for State-wide
Outreach in Bridge Course.................................................................16
Learning Improvement Programme in Tripura..................................18
Promoting Equity in Learning............................................................22

Innovation 26 - 46
Our Bigha School..............................................................................27
Social Science Curriculum Development..........................................34
Modernization of Government Madrasa Education...........................39
Integration of Technology in Education............................................43

Life skills and career counseling 47 - 56
Education to Employability...............................................................48
Life Skills and Career Readiness Camp............................................54
Supplementary learning centres 57 - 67

Nabadisha our Flagship Learning Centres in Kolkata...............................58
Supplementary Learning Centres in Government Schools in Howrah ..................................................63

Audited Account 68 - 70

Governing Body of Vikramshila.................................................................71
Behind the scene.......................................................................................72
Thank You .................................................................................................73
From the Director’s Desk

This year we reached out to 2,563 teachers and 65,000 students through our various projects. It was an year of expansion where we saw our staff strength increase from 99 to 145. As a technical support organisation we have worked with three state governments – West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura and have also provided capacity building support to seventeen grass roots organisations supported by donors like Tata Trusts, CRY and Wipro. Our implementation role also saw an expansion when we took up a new project supported by ITC to run supplementary learning centres for children in Howrah. In Tripura we started working with 101 government schools in Khowai district under a big project that is a recent initiative of the Tata Trusts. It is a multi-thematic, collaborative intervention between the state government and the Trusts. In education, the project aims to improve the learning levels of students of classes I to VIII to achieve grade appropriate competencies in English, Mathematics and Science, and increase the number of students passing the Class X board examination. This was another expansion of our scope of work as we worked for the first time with teachers and students appearing for their Board Examinations in the area of language – both Bengali and English.

Our Naba Disha project uses a very interesting byline: “from school readiness to job readiness”, because over the years the programme has evolved into a space catering to children from the age of 3 to 18, till they are ready to take a leap into the world of work and make choices about their future jobs and careers. Now, we see that this has become more or less the range of activities for the entire organisation through our different projects. On the one hand, we engage quite intensively with the state Department of Woman and Child Development (DWCD) for improving the quality of pre school education in their ICDS centres, and on the other with
the department of school education, Rashtrya Madhyamik Skiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in West Bengal and Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parisad (BMSP) in Bihar, for a project on Life Skills and Career Counselling for secondary school students. In between these two ends, are our various projects dealing with the quality of learning and learning outcomes for children at the primary and upper primary levels. Our chosen areas of work are also in sync with the emerging global trends – ECCE has emerged as a priority in the global development agenda, and the need to address the learning crisis of children in government schools has also been identified as a pressing concern to ensure the benefits of education reach those who need it the most. Life skills for adolescents is another area where we have worked through many of our projects. With a rapidly changing world order and changed expectations from civil society organisations, we are going through a period of transition. It is my hope and belief that in the coming years, organisations such as ours who are guided with a humanistic vision of education based on the principles of social justice, inclusion, protection and diversity would be able to continue our work in order to promote our worldview to the teachers, children and all other stakeholders that we engage with.

Mrs. Shubhra Chatterji
Our Outreach

STATES WE WORK WITH
West Bengal
Assam
Tripura
Bihar
Odisha
Technical support to other agencies
Capacity Building and Resource Development

At the heart of Vikramshila lies a firm belief that teachers are the agents of change. Teacher development through various kinds of capacity building activities has therefore been the main focus of our work across various projects undertaken by us. We take on different kinds of training activities for government schools as well as for non-governmental organisations. We try to understand the social context and the challenges of a particular region while undertaking any kind of training. Our own projects generate substantial learnings and we encourage our staff to reflect and share these experiences so that we can integrate these into our different programmes, especially training.

As organisations grow in size, they tend to work in silos, as it is more efficient and convenient. But we realise that for a resource organisation, there needs to be free flow of learning and experiences among projects, especially with the training team, to ensure that the rich learning gathered from the field is shared with other organisations, especially teachers. Last year we felt a need to formalise and strengthen this process by broad basing the training unit to create a new
team called Central Resource Unit (CRU). Supported by Tata Trust, the CRU has been working to deepen the scope of learning, sharing and collating evidences to promote research based actions.

1. **Teacher Development : Support to other organisations:**

Through our teacher development programmes we engage with grass root organisations/local CBOs and NGOs working with a diverse population in extreme conditions – ranging from the Chhor areas of Assam to the deeply remote tribal areas of Purulia, Odisha, West Bengal and Bihar. These organisations are supported by different donors such as Tata Trusts, CRY and Wipro. It is a privilege to work with these organisations, as it gives us valuable insights into the variety of social contexts and issues that they are engaged in. The trainings were not seen as a one-time intervention, rather an ongoing support to the organisations, which is punctuated with field visits, onsite support for mentoring and refresher courses.

**This year we reached out to 917 teachers and 17 organisations**

Types of training offered -
- Early Childhood Education
- Primary Education
- Upper Primary – English
- Subject Based Trainings – Elementary Level
- Foundations of Education
- Integrating Technology in Education
- Remedial Education
A Glimpse of the organisation profiles

Centre for Environment and Socio-Economic Regeneration (CESR) in Purulia aims to create sustainable rural development through empowerment of women and children. We have engaged with them for training of teachers in early childhood education, primary and upper-primary education.

JMECT in Assam works to promote peace, communal harmony, social development women and child welfare and social trough education and self employment. This year we have engaged with them for capacity building in early childhood education and elementary education.

Ajagar Circle Goalpara, Assam works for change in socio-economic culture for low income segments by increasing livelihood opportunities in North East.

Suchana in Birbhum works for change in rural poverty, focusing on education with adivasi indigenous people and SCs. Vikramshila provided technical and onsite support in their assessment processes.

Gramya Vikas Mancha Assam, Nalbari: The organisation works for a peaceful, prosperous, egalitarian and exploitation-free society in every village. Vikramshila organized a training in foundations of education for teachers and volunteers with special focus on Science and English.

Society for Promoting Rural Education and Development (SPREAD) located in Koraput, Odisha, SPREAD works with tribal groups, scheduled caste groups, and other poor communities. They were offered a training programme on ‘Foundations of Education’ in March.

Patang works with a vision to create a platform for young people and to actively engage them in social justice issues in Western Odisha. Vikramshila conducted a foundation training at the elementary education level.

Jago Foundation and Network based in Jharkhand works extensively on the issue of child rights with a special focus on forest, agriculture and land issues. Vikramshila conducted an orientation on ECCE and RTE Act with special focus on school development plan and School Management Committee (SMC).

Paridhi based in Bihar also works on the issue of child rights. Vikramshila organized an orientation on School Management Committee, RTE Act and NCF 2005 in the light of quality education.

Disha is based in Rourkela, Orissa where Vikramshila organized a pre-primary teachers’ training.

2. Support to Trust Initiative in South Odisha

The Tata Trusts has taken on a new initiative in South Odisha to transform the quality of life of 25,000 households in a cluster of five blocks that score very low in the human development index. Education is one of
the focus areas where the aim is to ensure grade appropriate learning levels. We were given the responsibility to train teachers and volunteers on foundations of education, on early childhood learning, and remedial teaching based on accelerated learning techniques. Needs assessment visits were conducted by our team to the field areas prior to the training. A five-days residential workshop was organized on Foundations of Education in Muniguda reaching out to 221 teachers and volunteers. ECE training was conducted for 120 volunteers in Muniguda. After a series of meetings and workshops on accelerated learning strategy, a draft Accelerated Learning Package was developed for first language and mathematics by addressing contextual issues in South Odisha.

3. Support to SSA, Government of Tripura
i) Vikramshila continued to work with SSA, Government of Tripura, supporting them in designing subject based training modules. This year we worked on developing modules in Science (Physical and Life), and Maths for the upper primary classes. The primary level modules that were prepared the year before are now being used by their trainers to train teachers. The modules are developed through a participatory process where Vikramshila engages with a selected group of resource persons from the state. Well known subject experts identified by us, help the team in Tripura to prepare the modules.

4. Support to our internal projects
i) Quality improvement in Madrasas
Together with the madrasa project team, workshops on remedial education for 117 teachers from government Madrasah of Hooghly district in Bengali, Mathematics and English remedial strategies was organised in May. We helped the Madrasas to prepare a remediation plan and demonstrated the remedial methods with appropriate materials. These workshops were organized at the West Bengal Madrasah Board. An English language training for teachers of 10 private madrasas was undertaken in September followed by a science workshop in December.

ii) Learning Support Centres of Vikramshila in Kolkata and Howrah
(a) Naba Disha – the CRU worked with the Nabadisha team in their on-going programme trainings for centre teachers and for outreach activities in government schools in Library programme, early grade reading, ITE and remedial camps. A sharing workshop on ‘Library and Early Grade Reading’ was organised for 30 government teachers along with their Sub-Inspector of Schools (SI) where they were taken through a demonstration of a library programme that would aide language and literacy activities. Workshops on ‘library as an active learning centre’ with focus on English were conducted
for the centre’ teachers. The Naba Disha and Madrasa teams were also supported in data management and development of an MIS portal, which is ongoing.

(b) SLCs in Howrah - The training team conducted a number of trainings and workshops for new recruits of Vikramshila’s learning support centres at Howrah. The Education Volunteers were taken through primary level training, along with trainings on library development, creating the library as an active learning space, development of resources for children and assessment methods.

c) Internal Capacity Building: Vikramshila conducted induction training in phases for new staff members to orient them to the organizational vision and culture. These trainings are a continuous process for organizational growth. In addition, a two-day ITE orientation for staff-members was conducted in July.

5. Networking and Advocacy

As a resource organization, Vikramshila has constantly been engaged in generating discourses, creating opinions, offering thought leadership and building awareness on educational issues. The Eastern India Education (EIE) Forum, an initiative of the TATA TRUSTS, with an aim to create new knowledge, build capacities and promote cross learning between partners was created this year. The first meeting was organised by Vikramshila for ideation, need assessment and sharing among the members. The forum is a network of representatives of Trust partners from Assam, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Tripura and other North Eastern states. The forum aims to act as a platform to share ideas, experiences and seek possible solutions. This forum will also create and maintain an online portal to share state wise updates, best practices and teacher forums across the partners. It has already been designed, structured, and is yet to go online. This platform will allow all the partners to showcase their work and interact with each other on various issues. It has a vision to include more partners in future.

As a first activity of the EIEF, a workshop was conducted on ‘Theatre in Education’ where 34 participants from Odisha, Assam and West Bengal participated. Mr. Sanjay Ganguly and Satya Ranjan Bhattacharya of Jana Sanskriti facilitated the workshop. The process of integrating theatre in education was highly appreciated by the participants and they requested for a follow up workshop in future.

6. Hosting exposure visits

A total of 119 people from 13 organisations came to see our different programmes like Naba Disha our learning centres in partnership with Kolkata Police, our rural school in Bigha, our work with government schools. Sometimes these visits were
accompanied by a day of structured sharing and an orientation on education, or any one of the components depending on the needs and interest of the visiting organisation.

6. Research and Resource Development
As a resource organisation in education, all our programmes and projects are a form of action research. They are value-based, action-oriented and participatory in nature. Our programmes involve a collective process of knowledge generation that is analysed, which leads to further action to promote a certain conception of common good and empowerment.

We also believe in democratizing the knowledge generation process through inclusion of the marginalised and vulnerable groups throughout all stages of the research process.

This process facilitates and promotes organisational learnings – ‘action learning’. It is a collaborative learning process that creates space for reflexivity and analysis through a variety of tools such as evidence based data, journals, portfolios, reports, and diaries. Capturing and taking into consideration the views and opinions of participants in a meaningful way not only provides in-depth understanding of whether, why and how an intervention impacts local communities, it may also lend both the process and findings of an impact evaluation added legitimacy.

These learnings help us in developing appropriate resources to be used in the field – resources such as training material, training modules, teaching learning materials for the classroom, manuals for teachers and practitioners and so on.

Our efforts have facilitated the development of the following documents and manuals:
- a) Accelerated learning package
- b) Social Science curricular material
- c) School Readiness manual for early childhood education
- d) Subject based lesson plans for Primary level
- e) Lesson plans incorporating technology (ITE)
- f) Modules and materials on life skills at Secondary school level
- g) English Language Teaching methods

Module Development on inclusion and career counseling with RMSA, West Bengal
A module on ‘inclusion and career counseling’ has been developed by Vikramshila in collaboration with RMSA and in consultation with the SCERT, West Bengal. It has been approved by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education. This module aims to provide teachers with a holistic overview on some very important yet neglected areas concerning school education: following inclusive practices and the importance of counseling (both career counseling and
psychological counseling) in school. The logic of the module flows from practicing inclusive measures to combat exclusion in general in dealing with children who require special care and attention and addressing the special needs of children belonging to a particular age group and providing guidance accordingly.

The diagram explains the organization of the module. It has been structured in such a way that it has two distinct components – a two day orientation on career counseling and a three day orientation on inclusion. There is no separate session allotted for psychological counseling because it cannot be dealt with in isolation and is a relevant and recurring theme that has been woven in throughout these five days in contexts of both inclusion and career counseling. A total of 160 Master Trainer/ Key Resource Persons selected from all over West Bengal have been trained. These trainings were held in Hooghly and Malda DIETs respectively. These KRP's have further trained 4214 secondary level teachers in all over West Bengal.
The importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is well researched and evident in national and global research and policy initiatives. In India, though ECE is not recognized as a compulsory provision by the Right to Education Act, it nonetheless urges states to provide free pre-school education for children above three years. Despite the recognition of the importance of ECE, and the massive ICDS programme of the GOI, the challenges in implementation still remain. There are still substantial numbers of children not enrolled in preschools. Where enrolled, school readiness levels across states and across models are low particularly in cognitive & language skills.

The findings reflect the importance of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for which the broad essentials that emerged are- a democratic, child friendly teacher, trained and mentored not only in age appropriate and play based activities for ECE, but in planning and classroom
While we have been providing support to set up model centres across the districts, two special cases are worth mentioning. We were very pleased to be given the responsibility of developing the model centre at Domjur, Howrah, which was selected as the site by the government for inaugurating 1000 Shishu Aloys for the state (27th November, 2015). We were happy that the state Minister for the Department of Women and Child Development, acknowledged our role in her speech. The second experience was setting up model centres inside two jails in Kolkata - Alipore and Dum.

"I was so moved as I got a firsthand glimpse into the life inside a prison. It made me realise how precious freedom is- something we take for granted! I was particularly disturbed seeing little children inside the jail who had no idea of their deprivation...the outside world was unknown to them... We can only hope that education can give them a chance to a better life, sometime in future.

-Ria Banerjee, Vikramshila

organization and management of a well-balanced ECE curriculum, supported by appropriate physical infrastructure.

Vikramshila’s Efforts in ECE in West Bengal

In this backdrop, over the last three years, in partnership with UNICEF, Vikramshila, as technical partner provided support to the State Department of Women and Child Development and Social Welfare in developing a child friendly Early Childhood Education curriculum and handbook, Pre-School Education kit, and offered professional development courses for the master trainers across the State. The first 2 phases of work in ECE, has shown good results at the level of creating a standardized curriculum based on international and national policy guidelines, the training and capacity building of 400 state and district resource group members as well as creating a substantial number of model Angawnadi centres (AWCs). These initiatives have strengthening the functioning of the Anganwadi system. The idea last year was to create model AWCs in all districts, ensure capacity building of the government functionaries at all levels and build quality control measures to ensure sustainability of the good impact that is now visible in the field.

Ensuring Sustainability of visible results

Creating Model Lab Centres - Vikramshila as UNICEF’s technical partner continued to provide support to the Department of Social Welfare, West Bengal last year. The department received a directive from the central government to roll out the curriculum in 1000 Anganwadi centres over the year. Vikramshila supported the state in developing model centres in 8 districts last year.
for the purpose of training the District Resource Group (DRG). The DRG together with Vikramshila supported the remaining districts in developing their model ECE centres with the aim of developing 50 model centres in each district. As a strategy 5 model centres were be developed first as lab centres by Vikramshila which would then be replicated in 45 centres by the resource groups. Last year we created the lab centres at Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda, Murshidabad, South Dinajpur, West Midnapur, Coochbehar and Kolkata. The AWWs of the remaining 45 centres visited the model centres during their training to see how a model AWC ideally functions. Among these 1000 centres around 130 centres are developed with direct support from Vikramshila and the remaining 870 centres have been developed as an indirect outreach of Vikramshila’s technical support. These model centres have been named as Shishu Aloys by the state government. What is unique is the concept behind having these model centres: they have a twin mission –
a) to promote school readiness through a developmentally appropriate curriculum and b) a capacity building strategy for supervisors and anganwadi workers. The ultimate objective of the government is to transform all the Anganwadis into Shishu Aloys, but this has to be done through a structured process of training and hand
holding support. Capacity Building is an ongoing process. Hence the pool of 400 master trainers that was developed earlier, were provided refresher trainings on various issues such as monitoring and mentoring, school readiness, etc. and a Training of Teachers or ToT was held for the select group of resource persons who would train the supervisors.

Orientation of Anganwadi Training Centres (AWTCs)

Efforts were taken to orient the instructors and principals of the Anganwadi Training Centre (AWTC) and Mid-Level Training Centres (MLTC) on the new ECE Curriculum, since they are directly responsible for ongoing academic training and assistance to the supervisors and Anganwadi workers on a continuous basis.

Ongoing Work

We started the process of developing a ‘School Readiness’ manual with a sharing workshop with supervisors, Anganwadi workers and ACDPO, where activity banks were prepared around different themes. The need to develop a comprehensive school readiness manual emerged from the field; which is now taking shape gradually. Several practice-based researches have led to the development of a draft module which will be pilot tested and finalized in the coming year.
Experiment in Multilingual Education in Purulia

We began a study in multilingual education (MLE) in selected AWCs of Purulia, in some of the remotest parts of the district, with support from UNICEF. Since oral conversations form the basis of language development and other forms of learning in an anganwadi centre, the process is inhibited whenever there is a language barrier between the worker and children. It is quite common to find a Bengali speaking teacher struggling to communicate with Santhali children. We worked in few AWCs to probe the issue at depth and develop an appropriate strategy. We undertook a number of visits, trainings and workshops to orient the AWWs in Hura block, on the importance of mother tongue instruction in the early years, multilingual education practices and inclusive education. Even for centres where children had a Santhali speaking worker, there was an issue of familiarizing children with Bengali, which was the medium of instruction in primary schools from Class 1. Hence there was a need for a proper transition model. Some new resources were developed with the help of local resource persons who were proficient in Santhali. For instance, we developed a ‘Pictionary’ that contains a collection of 100 pictures of animals and objects which has both Bengali and Santhali names written on them. Rhymes and stories were translated in Santhali, and incorporated in the existing ECE curriculum as we did not want to create an additional curriculum but tried to devise an approach that could be applied in any similar situation across the state.
Vikramshila’s Support to the Madrasa Board for State-wide Outreach in Bridge Course

Development of Bridge Course Package

While Hooghly was our focus district to be established as a model district for Madrasa education, Vikramshila worked with the Madrasa Board for their state-wide initiatives in their Bridge Course, covering all the districts of West Bengal. In partnership with UNICEF, the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education (WBBME) introduced the bridge course for children of class 5 aiming to improve their basic learning levels. A two day workshop was held in July last year at the Board, which saw participation from resource teachers, officials of the Board and Vikramshila, as the technical partner. The Board President Prof. Fazle Rabbi and Shubhra Chatterji, Director, Vikramshila brought to fore some important issues.

- The term remediation needs to be restricted to specific/special programmes that are designed to enable children with learning gaps in basic literacy/numeracy.
- If classroom teaching is effective, there would eventually be no need for remedial teaching.
- Labelling students are slow learners is detrimental as it lays the onus on the child instead of on the school.
- Causes of learning gaps in first generation school goers was seen to be in poor teaching, poor learning infrastructure in madrasas, social distance between teachers and children leading to frequent absenteeism. Health, nutrition and inconducive learning environment at homes were seen as other factors for the growing learning gaps.
- It was felt that in order to make remedial teaching effective, due to lack of time, strategic intervention in study skills, reading skills and numeral skills would be offered.

Across the two days through discussions, group work and presentations the bridge course packages were developed in Bengali, English and Mathematics based on curricular competencies of West Bengal Board of Primary Education. This package included a Teachers’ Manual along with a wide variety of teaching learning materials and other resources. The bridge course package had primarily basic literacy and numeracy as its core curriculum, upon which the assessments were based.

Training of Trainers

Selected teachers from different madrasas were offered a TOT on the bridge course pack-
age in October. The objective was to develop them as resource persons for training of teachers at the district level. The teachers were divided into groups for Bengali, English and Mathematics. Vikramshila offered technical support, mentoring and on-site support to the resource teachers to carry out their roles

**District Level Training**

The district level training began from October 2015 and went on till March 2016 reaching out to 900+ teachers across Kolkata, Howrah, Burdwan, Birbhum, Purulia, Bankura, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, Nadia, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Cooch Behar, Uttar Dinajpur and Malda. Vikramshila offered mentoring support along with on-site visits and support in the district trainings.
Learning Improvement Programme in Tripura

Last year, Tata Trusts entered into a strategic partnership with the government of Tripura to raise the quality of life of people in the state. It is a comprehensive multi thematic-intervention, in which education is an important part. In education, the project aims to improve learning levels of students from Classes 1 to 8 to achieve grade appropriate competencies. It is being piloted in all schools in Tulasikar block in Khowai district. We are working in the area of Language – both English and mother tongue (Bengali and Kokborok). Tulashikar is a tribal dominated block where most of the inhabitants speak Kokborok, a language that has no lexical resemblance with Bengali which is the official medium of instruction of all government run schools. It is now universally accepted that children with mother tongues that are different from the state prescribed medium of instruction are at a considerable disadvantage in our education system because they face a double set of challenges – the challenge of learning a new lan-
guage and learning new knowledge through that language. Since language is the basis of all learning, lack of proper language instruction strategy in the early years results in serious learning impairment in the later years. Any quality intervention therefore has to pay attention to this. Following the guidelines of the NCF 2005, which suggests the use of children’s home language in the early years, the state government of Tripura has introduced teaching of Kokborok and other tribal languages (L1) in pockets where there are children from different linguistic groups. However this move seems to have intensified the problem instead of mitigating it due to lack of clarity at all levels, about the time and mode of transition to the state language (L2). Lack of linguistic proximity between Bengali and Kokborok seems to have heightened the problem.

In the case of English, low proficiency of teachers make them resort to a kind of drill and rote learning based on copying, chanting and word by word translation, devoid of any kind of meaning or purpose. The lack of English in the child’s day to day environment leads to further complication as both teachers and students fear the language. Dearth of bilingually proficient teachers and absence of a proper transition strategy makes it extremely challenging for children to bridge their language gaps. The challenge of language instruction is further complicated by the simultaneous introduction of three languages – Kokborok, Bengali and English from the early years, when children are still at the emergent literacy stage.

In the pilot phase 97 schools in the block were covered reaching out to approximately 7000 students. The programme reached out to teachers and children at all stages of school education – primary, upper primary and secondary. However, different strategies were adopted for each stage depending on the needs of students. The focus was on building capacities of teachers in teaching children how to read and write, using participatory learning methods that are joyful and attractive. English was to be taught along with the child’s L1 and not at the cost of other languages, using an integrated approach that focuses on maximizing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Our Work This Year

(1) Background Work - Setting up our base

- Developing a familiarity with the Context- Before starting the programme we held discussions with block and cluster Resource Persons / CRPs and district level functionaries. The objective of the visit was to understand the context, the language situation, visit schools and prepare ourselves for the intervention. Before designing the tool for baseline survey and designing other materials for intervention it was important to understand the current practices and functioning of schools in the area.
• **Orientation Meet with Stakeholders** - An orientation with different stakeholders was held at Khowai district. There were 250 participants in these meetings consisting of Head Masters, SMC members, BRPs/CRPs, district level and state level functionaries. Goals and objectives of the intervention, detailed intervention plan and expected outcomes were shared with all stakeholders in these meetings to develop an understanding of roles and responsibilities.

• **Baseline Test** – A tool was developed and the baseline assessment was conducted through random sampling of 10% student of class III in primary level and class VI at upper primary level.

• **Setting up of office** – Along with these activities, our own office was set up for the Tripura intervention team.

**(2) Capacity Building Programs**

• **Training of resource persons at block level** - Three BRPs, five CRPs and 11 subject teachers were trained in a five-day intensive programme that covered areas such as first language pedagogy, English language teaching (ELT) and on-site mentoring strategies etc.

• **Training of English teachers** - A module was designed for the primary teachers to enable them to teach English as a medium of communication and not merely as a subject. The module covered basic areas of English pedagogy and emphasized on conducting group activities for communication in the classroom. It focused on the approaches of ELT, importance of communicative language teaching, language skills, steps of language pedagogy, letter-sound recognition, phonetics and non-phonetics, designing lesson plan, features of good TLMs, using books as a language development tool, shared reading, guided reading, classroom management etc. The ELT training was completed for 93 primary schools reaching out to 93 English teachers.

• **Training on Bi-Lingual Education Strategies** – This training reached out to 46 teachers and 8 resource persons at the block level. The training was on bilingual language module - Bengali & Kokborok. Materials were developed for classroom intervention. This bi-lingual teaching programme was piloted in 25 schools.

**(3) Work in the Schools**

• **Setting up of Libraries** – Class libraries with pocket boards were set up in the schools to create a print rich environment. Selected children’s literature with good illustrations, story line and characters were chosen for the libraries and the book sets were given to each school.

• **Development of Resource Materials** - Primary level English and Bilingual materials were developed printed and distributed to the schools. English AV materials for secondary level were also completed.
• Hands on Support to Developing Print rich Classrooms - Classrooms were set up in schools to demonstrate a print rich environment and also provide hands-on training support to the teachers. This was done to ensure that there is sufficient time for oral language development, reading aloud, guided reading, word study, guided writing, and independent reading and enable students to build connections between oral and written language. Classified charts, sight words, labels, students names were all put up around the classroom.

On Site Mentoring – To make the mentoring support regular and effective, we divided 97 schools into 7 clusters. Our project team at Tripura has been visiting these schools regularly and helping teachers to use materials already provided to them. Sometimes we also took demo sessions on use of these materials. We had already given a pocket board and number of books a library corner, and now our target is to encourage teachers to use these books for language development of children at early grades. We mainly focused on reading strategies such as shared reading and read aloud and also gave emphasis on comprehension while reading.

(4) Language Camps for Class X students:

We conducted a 4 days’ training workshop with all respective subject teachers (English & Bengali) from 11 High Schools of Tulashikhor Block along with 2 Resource Teachers, 3 BRPs & 5 CRPs in December. A lot of materials, suggestion papers and other resources were developed in this workshop. A plan of action was chalked out whereby all these learning materials prepared would be implemented though learning camps with the students. Thereafter a learning camp was organised successfully from 18th January to 29th January, 2016 where all the materials were shared with the students and the resource persons of Vikramshila undertook a series of teaching learning practices for better results. These included chapter reading and discussion, comprehension, activities, one-to-one discussions with all the students helping them not just in subject specific questions but also to motivate them. Strategies were developed for better retention and clarification of concepts for better understanding that would help students during the exam. The results have been quite encouraging. An analysis was done comparing the number of students who had passed their Pre Board and the Board, the results showed that while only 98 out of 761 students had passed in English in pre Board, 327 out of 747 students passed in Board Exams, which is a big jump. In Bengali, the Pre Board numbers were 221 passed out of 761 and in Board exam it went up to 323 out of 747.
Promoting Equity in Learning

Education, Learning and the Community

Education is a public good and ensuring quality provision through public resources has been at the heart of our efforts. In working with the public system of education, we found that high dropout rates and poor student learning levels are still a cause of serious concern in the semi-urban and rural areas of Bengal. Our experiences of working in schools has pointed to a critical learning crisis, which is hitting the poorest, most marginalized children particularly hard, especially in rural areas. Thousands of children are still out of school while others suffer from the hidden exclusion of being in school but not learning. Under-resourced teaching learning practices, teacher absenteeism, deficiencies in teacher quality and poor classroom learning environment further point to the need for strengthening of the existing public system.

The link between education and community participation for better lives and livelihoods has been a central tenet of Vikramshila’s curricular experiments in both rural and urban areas. Quality education plays an important role in empowering people to make informed
decisions that impact their families’ well-being and equip them with the skills to live secure and healthy lives. However, our experiences have led us to believe that results can only be assured where shared responsibility and accountability of the community is integrated in shaping the desired goals.

Last year, Vikramshila got an opportunity to work around this premise when we were asked by Indienhilfe e.V. Herrsching, Germany to support their partner Seva Kendra Calcutta (SKC) in their educational efforts to promote equity in learning (PEL) in North 24 Parganas, Gobordanga, in 2 Gram Panchayats (GPs) of Swarupnagar block. Seva Kendra which works in the project area since 2009 envisaging a child labour free region, has been identifying out of school and drop out children, motivating them to go to schools as well as advocating in the community to build a discourse on the importance of education. Their child rights workers (CRW) and volunteers tirelessly visit homes and schools, run motivation centres for school readiness of children and offer tuition support to ensure retention and help children cope with the school system. Vikramshila’s support to Seva Kendra is in the light of sharing our learning and experiences to make quality education available to these students that will enable them to continue their education, moving towards the goal of promoting equity in learning through a child labour free village.

The Project Area- Demography and Social Problems

According to the Human Development Report, North 24 Parganas in spite of agricultural productivity being good; has 81.84% of rural population suffering from shortage of food. The number of families living below the poverty line varied widely from block to block. Even in some municipal areas, such as Baduria, Gobardanga, Taki, Basirhat, Bangaon and Habra; surveys have revealed a large percentage of people living in poverty. The district is also the third densest in West Bengal, after Kolkata and Howrah. The high density of population in the district is primarily because of large scale migration of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan, particularly in the period 1947 to 1955.

Based on our field visits to the project site, at Swarupnagar block, we found that the population was primarily migrated families from Bangladesh, with deep seated livelihood issues and lack of awareness on importance of education that has led to issues of child labour. Children often work with their mothers as domestic helps or work in brick kilns in their families. We also encountered
several families where in the absence of employment, parents have had to move to Mumbai, leaving little children behind with older siblings and grandparents.

**Need Analysis**

Vikramshila offered its technical support to Seva Kendra to enable them to send all children of the 2 GPs of Saguna and Tepulmirzapur to school and ensure retention through after-school learning support.

As per Seva Kendra’s programme plan, their CRWs undertake home surveys to identify dropouts and potential dropouts; talk to parents, and encourage them to send their children to Seva Kendra’s Motivation centres. It takes a lot of effort to convince parents to bring the children into the folds of education, and gradually mainstream them to government schools, especially as child labour is very common here and children bring in additional income into the family. These children are offered learning support in Seva Kendra’s motivation centres. After mainstreaming support, those who begin to go to schools are then provided support in 10 supplementary learning centres. While SKC has been undertaking a lot of efforts, our surveys suggested that they needed capacity building, resource support and training on how to make optimal use of educational resources to promote learning and achievements.

We also felt the need to converge efforts of the SKC staff and volunteers with that of the local community (parents) GPs, and school head masters and teachers in order to make the efforts emphatic and sustainable.

**A three pronged approach was adopted for this pilot initiative**
A quick glimpse of our activities in 2015-16 is highlighted below

Activities Undertaken Last Year – At a Glance

- Area survey and need analysis of project field site
- Baseline of students in the learning support centres to gauge their learning levels, followed by analysis and sharing of levels to develop child-wise action plans
- Training and exposure visit of SKC staff in Vikramshila’s rural school at Bigha Burdwan – training and demo classes
- Development of centre-based work plans based on student learning levels and training received by Vikramshila
- Sensitization of HMs and Teachers - to involve the public education system, share the problems of child labour, drop outs and link them to SKC’s work
- Continuous on-site field support and mentoring in ten learning support centres
- Volunteer orientation for support to children
- School visits followed by a sensitization and orientation of HMs and Teachers - to involve the public education system and link them to SKC’s work
- Resource support to the learning centres through TLM procurement and dissemination, followed by demonstration of use of TLMs and on-site support
- Support in classroom management and result oriented follow up through weekly plans for the remaining months

- Developing a network with local government schools and sensitization of HMs and teachers towards the existing problems and students needs
- Capacity building and resources support to learning support centres to develop school readiness and offer before/after school learning support
- Leveraging existing community platform: Triggering community led change process based on citizen engagement, responsibility and ownership. Developing supplemental efforts like village volunteers engaging children outside of school to improve learning outcomes
Innovations
About the School and Resource Centre

The Bigha School started in the year 1996 under Government of India’s, Innovative Experimental Project. The main emphasis of this experiment was to make school curriculum relevant in a child’s life-to make it child centric, context specific and life centric. Over the years, it has become more than just a primary school, taking on the role of a resource hub for the community. The educational resource centre at Bigha has been a product of a long endeavour of our team to build a model resource centre which could serve as conduit for change not only in the community it works with, but the schools in the neighbouring villages as well.

The school has always believed in a strong mutually enriching interaction with the community- where the community knowledge and school knowledge integrate to create new knowledge for students to construct and discover. The community inclusive of, parents, Panchayat members youth groups, farmers’ groups, fishermens’ groups, village elders, mothers’ group,
adolescent girls groups, integrated with the school in knowledge sharing. Overtime due to our efforts, the local Public Health Centre is working full time, the Asha workers have become more active. Farmers and fishermen have changed their traditional practices and two of our former students are in the business of pisciculture after finishing their graduation, and doing quite well. The students of Bigha School have been performing well consistently for the last 15 years and have broken intergenerational barriers to pursue post graduation studies. Over time, this inter-relation has expanded to create a new integration with the government school system and the anganwadi system, where our practices are shared and learnings exchanged in a bid to address the goal of equity and quality education for all children.

Taking Good Practices to the government school system

A number of good practices were piloted in the school as curricular experiments are found to be successful in engaging students and encouraging the creation of interesting artifacts by them. Some of these such as ‘Bondhur Khata’ or The Diary of my Friend, the Library Corner, Creative Writing, Wall Magazine, Kitchen Garden, Sahitya Sabha or the Literature Society were found to be particularly enriching experiences in education. With support from CRY, these practices were planned to be upscaled in government schools this year.

After sharing meets at block and district levels with government functionaries, including the Sub Inspector of shools, teacher union leaders teachers and Shiksha bandhus, we received strong support and advocacy to disseminate good practices at
This year we were successful in sharing these practices and starting them in 17 primary schools in 15 villages around Bigha to enrich learning experiences of students and teachers in the schools.

**Creative Writing** - The practice of creative writing, which led to excellent artifacts at the Bigha school, was shared with the primary schools. It was observed that the students have inculcated good writing skills using creative endeavors to express themselves.

**Wall Magazines** - The use of wall magazines has been an encouraging practice being taken up by 11 schools, with 350 children engaged in collaboratively preparing and displaying these magazines at the schools.

**Library Corners** – Library corners were set up in all the 17 schools for classes 3 and 4, based on the success of the Bigha School library. The corners are ready with selected graded and catalogued childrens’ literature that have interesting stories and good illustrations to make storytelling and reading an enjoyable activity. We hope to create print rich environments in the classrooms to encourage reading as a habit among children. What is noteworthy here is that in the classes the children themselves keep a record of the books they take and read, enabling teachers to track the childrens’ reading habits and interests. It also fosters a healthy competition of reading more books among children.

**Environment Education**

*Bondhur Khata* or “A Dairy of my Friend” was already a success last year after implementation in the 17 primary schools. The diary is a record of the child’s friend – a tree adopted by the child, on a daily basis. However what is interesting to note is that those school students who do not have trees in their campus, have found away to do this work by adopting a tree at home, or in their neighbourhood. Four schools are participating this way and with different concepts. The practices we understand not only make the students aware of the environment, but strengthen the relationship one shares with the environment.

**Resource Centre Outreach and Activities**

A number of capacity building programmes were undertaken at the resource centre this year – reaching out to childrens’ resource group, anganwadi workers, PRI members, primary school headmasters and teachers, Shiksha bandhus, SHG members, parents and VEHC members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>No of times/year</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Children Resource Group</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Communication skills and learning how to advocate on issues of enrolment, retention, prevention of early marriage, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>ICDS Workers</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Early childhood education</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>PRI members</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Exploring areas of convergence to ensure quality education</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Primary teachers (centralised training)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Continuous comprehensive evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>SHG members</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nutrition and hygiene, with respect to the mid day meals provided to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Parents and VEHC members</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Their role in ensuring attendance and punctuality, quality of mid day meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Shiksha Bandhu and Headmasters</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Role of Shiksha Bandhus in ensuring retention and ensuring delivery of services as mandated in RTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bigha School Child Profile**

One of the fundamental points of focus in our project this year has been the development and maintenance of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation for every student in each class. This is done through maintenance of a child profile where all details related to the student are maintained.

**Celebrating Joint events with Government Schools:**

i) The annual cultural programme this year saw the involvement of a large number of community members. The students par-
v) The Sahitya Sabha (or the literary meet) was held thrice a year on a number of themes, mostly environmental. Upper primary students of partner schools were encouraged to participate and write on the themes to be presented before the community members. All participants were rewarded.

Formation of Child Rights Groups

A team of 19 students were specially trained on life skills education by CRY to form a Child Rights Group (CRG) with the responsibility to reach out more children and form 14 more groups. They were helped in this by our facilitators from Bigha School. These girls have become quite articulate and confident and Barnali Bag, one of the girls in the group, actually stood up to her parents to protest against her early marriage, and was successful. Many girls from this group have performed very well in the Board examinations and are pursuing further studies. It is heartening to see the impact of training in their own lives and life choices.
Work on Early Childhood Education

We have been working with 10 model anganwadi centres (of the ICDS scheme, GOI) 2014. The main objective of this intervention is to create model centres that follow the state curriculum guidelines both in terms of centre organisation as well as classroom practices, reflecting the thematic interventions, 4 corners, timetable etc.

Our major strategies for this intervention are –
• Capacity building of ICDS workers through centralized workshops and continuous onsite support.
• Involving the local community in the process of managing the anganwadi centres
• Providing teaching learning materials to the students
• Regular interface with departments at block and district level for sharing of experiences and updates.
Other Important Highlights of this Year

• We organized an exhibition cum ‘Shiksha Mela’ by involving teachers and students from 17 Primary schools in the project area. About 500 people, including all important stakeholders like – PRI members, parents, members from CBOs, SHG members, SMC members and block level education functionaries participated in the event.

• Two of our ex-students who scored more than 85% last year were felicitated on this occasion. Approx 2000 people were present as audience.

• 28 students from our school have been admitted into government high schools in Class –V.

• 23 of our ex-students (7 boys and 16 girls) have passed their Board examination successfully. 11 of our ex-students (3 boys and 8 girls) have passed higher secondary examination successfully.

• 107 teachers and education functionaries from West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha and Assam visited our school and attended structured orientation programme at our resource centre at Bigha.

• ZEE Bangla one of the eminent Bengali media channels has put forward our work in their popular reality shows Dadagiri. It has been a great achievement in terms of larger advocacy through media.

• Regular monthly sharing was initiated and carried out with the DPO, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, D.I, and Primary Deputy Coordinator.
Vikramshila has been actively involved in various citizenship education initiatives. We believe that a democracy to flourish, its future generation needs to be empowered through a robust understanding of citizenship and its relation with the state and the society. In a rapidly changing world, the thrust towards sustainable development demands a universal understanding of global issues such as human rights, diversity, gender equality, violence, displacement and the like, to negotiate our way through a more sustainable, just and peaceful world. This prompted us to look at the discipline of social science through the socio-political lens covering a wider spectrum of experience involving life and living. In the Indian context, NCF 2005 brought forth a paradigm shift which proposed the study of the social sciences from a more well rounded perspective that includes the experiences of marginalised groups. They emphasized (a) the recasting of civics as political science, (b) the significance of history in shaping a child's conception of the past and (c) the importance of recognising civic identity.
Encouraged to find resonance of our vision in NCF 2005 and building on our experience of citizenship education over the years, we began our work in social Science in action research mode with support from WIPRO, in developing resource packages on relevant themes and field testing them in various government schools in both urban and rural context. Our core objective has been to bring about a shift in the way social science is traditionally taught in the schools. We tried to follow a pedagogy which would allow students to develop critical thinking, analytical skills and other associated life skills to help them bloom into aware and responsible citizens. The positive feedback from the students encouraged us to develop more exemplary material on social science and also fuelled our aspiration to work closely with the larger government school system.

**Major areas of our work this year:**

A) Finalising Teaching Learning Packages
We have been developing thematic modules based on relevant aspects of social science education through an intensive process of workshop in consultation with academic experts. This year our primary focus was finalizing the resource pack on ‘Gender’ and ‘Diversity’ and also develop new modules on ‘Democracy in India’ and ‘Judiciary’. For some of these topics, we used Augusto Boal’s technique of the Theatre of the Oppressed, of having ‘spectators’ - which gave students opportunities to observe, act, think and engage in the act of finding solutions to everyday problems through a process of dialogue. While field testing these modules, we found this technique to be useful in fostering critical thinking among students.

B) Reaching out to future teachers: Our experience with MACE
We got an opportunity to showcase our
project through an exhibition and audio visual presentation in the ‘Teachers Festival’ organised by MACE (Modern Academy of Continuing Education, the teacher education cell of Modern High School for Girls, Kolkata) where more than a hundred teachers from different private schools of the city participated and showed a lot of interest in the project. This resulted in our partnering with MACE to offer a short course on ‘Social Science – Nature and Pedagogy’ for teachers for their pre-service training programme. As a part of this engagement, we transacted a ten hour module which covered concepts like democracy, diversity and gender through sharing of lived experiences of teachers and students. The methodology of the classes was interactive and informal, with an open and discursive approach aiming at a holistic understanding of these important concepts from a human rights and liberal perspective.

C) Working with the state government of Tripura

Last year we had the opportunity to work with the Government of Tripura in the area...
of social science education. Following the NCERT guidelines, the Tripura government has introduced ‘Social and Political Life’ textbooks as a part of their school curriculum. However, the teachers were finding it difficult to teach these as their usual text book centric approach was not working here. Further, a literal translation and lack of contextualization had also made the textbooks dense and difficult to comprehend for both teachers and students. We felt that support was needed in two areas
   a) Improvement and contextualization of the texts and
   b) Capacity building of teachers on social science pedagogy

Workshop on contextualizing ‘Social and Political life’ textbooks

The Government of Tripura selected 45 schools from 3 districts to act as the field for the pilot. Through these we reached out to 6750 students. To initiate the process we started with a workshop involving state and block level resource persons, DIET faculties, representatives from SCERT and teachers selected from 3 districts namely Tripura West, Unokoti and Tripura North. The 3 day workshop witnessed intense participation, debate and discussion from within the participants on the contents of the text and how to transact them inside the classroom. The participants integrated the contents of the SPL textbooks and those of the resource pack provided by Vikramshila and made it relevant in the context of Tripura.

Teacher training in three pilot districts of Tripura

This workshop was followed by a three-day teachers’ training organized for each district separately. Nodal teachers from each of the project schools attended the training. About 150 teachers and resource persons were trained on Social Science pedagogy. This training gave them a firsthand experience of constructivism as a teaching practice and the importance of connecting knowledge to the lived experience of a child. The contextualized learning package on the topics Diversity, Gender and Media were handed over to the teachers for field testing.

Hand holding support in districts

The team visited all the schools to observe the classes and interact with the head teachers, teachers and students. We found the students responding spontaneously in the classroom and often shedding their inhibitions while talking about sensitive issues related to gender, diversity and media. The module invoked some introspection within teachers urging them to critically look at the traditional ways of teaching social science in schools.
The road ahead
As a part of continuous engagement with the Government of Tripura we are in the process of developing Tripura’s Social Science module for upper primary teachers training programme.

Organising an experience sharing workshop with teachers in Tripura
The teachers will share their learning and also talk about their challenges. They will also develop some resource materials on their own, as they have now acquired relevant classroom experience.

Presentation of the work to the government
The entire process of classroom interaction will be documented and presented to Tripura Rajya Shiksha Mission and other government agencies such as SCERT and the DIETs.
Modernization of Madrasa Education

A Glimpse into our work with the Madrasas in West Bengal

“Amader worksheets shesh hoyni toh!” (We haven’t completed our worksheets as yet) – A chorus of children cried out, when the Vikramshila programme coordinator visiting the madrasa learning camps, asked them why they were not going home even after the last bell. Laughing, she urged the children to go home insisting that they could come back to finish their worksheets the next day. “Kalke amader ei bhabei class hobe toh?” (We’ll have classes this way again tomorrow won’t we?)

This was a scene at an English language learning camp at Pirnagar Nabobiya Senior Madrasah in Hooghly, for students of class 5, conducted by Vikramshila with the West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education (WBBME) as a part of the state-wide bridge course initiative for students of class 5.

Vikramshila has been engaged with the madrasa
education system since 2008- both with the private madrasas and the government madrasas. Together with whole school transformation projects in government madrasas, the organisation has attempted to develop 10 model madrasas in Hooghly districts from 2011-12 and demonstrated pilot interventions for improvement in the learning processes and learning outcomes. The challenge in 2015-16 was to take these experiences and engage with the Madrasa government system.

Hooghly, the Model District of Good Practices in Madrasas

Last year, in partnership with TATA TRUSTS’ our objective was to strategically transfer the success of our pilot interventions of the private madrasas, into the government madrasa system. As the model madrasas were based out of Hooghly district in West Bengal, the government Madrasas were selected from the same district; so that the district itself can evolve as a model of good practices as demonstrated in different kinds of madrasas. With this, the programme also achieved geographic saturation in reaching out to all government madrasas of Hooghly last year.

The three most important areas of this transfer of technical expertise of the best practices were

- Linking the programme’s learning support interventions to the state wide bridge course programme so that the two can become complementary
- Integration of Technology in Education (ITE) to promote student made learning artefacts that encourages the use of higher order thinking skills
- Strengthening science education through teacher capacity building and setting up of science corners for hands on experiments

From Learning Camps to Bridge Course

Vikramshila held a series of meetings with the Deputy Secretary, Secretary and President of the WBBME last year. We shared successes of our work in the model madrasas in Hooghly and showcased both the student projects and resources developed for learning improvements. Subsequently, the Board invited us to be a technical partner in their plan to roll out a state wide bridge course for students of class 5. As students enter high madrasas with critical conceptual learning gaps in literacy and numeracy, it is essential to provide them with adequate support. This 48-day bridge course was introduced in February last year, in three content areas- Bangla, Maths

| Baseline and Endline Comparative Result of Hooghly Govt. aided Madrasahs |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bengali                     | English                     | Maths                       |
| BL                          | EL                          | BL                          |
| 26.68                       | 52.95                       | 28.67                       |
| 69.82                       | 39.11                       | 64.59                       |
and English. Vikramshila as the technical partner provided support in the package development of the course, HM orientation, Training of Trainers (TOT) as well as district level trainings, together with support in conducting baseline and end line analysis and on site mentoring support. The pilot was launched in Hooghly, being Vikramshila’s focal district. Simultaneously; surveys were carried out in each madrasa in Hooghly, to prepare a database of its infrastructure, student numbers, teacher details and so on. We received positive responses from all the HMs of the madrasas, who wished to work with Vikramshila in ITE, Science and learning support programmes.

We felt however, that even after the bridge course was completed by the students, given their learning gaps, they would need some scaffolding in attaining the expected learning levels, once they enter the classrooms. As such, we continued to provide support to these students after the bridge course was completed by providing the madrasas with simplified texts of the text book chapters. Simplified texts were prepared for the lessons of the second and third unit, printed and distributed to all the madrasas, state wide. An orientation on the simplified texts – in terms of its rationale and pedagogy was undertaken with nodal teachers, approximately 120 of them in all the 36 madrasas of Hooghly. The teachers responded very positively after using the material saying that they felt that these simplified texts were very useful in the classroom and asked for similar material from the first unit in the coming year.

**Integrating Technology in Education in Madrasas**

The ITE intervention continued in the private madrasas, with several interesting projects created by the students. We went beyond the ambit of our enrichment of private madrasas and carried the ITE interventions into the government madrasa system. Details of our work and its outcomes are shared under ITE initiatives on page 43.

**Little Scientists and their experiments at the Madrasas**

While science, technology and innovation emerged as major drivers of national development globally, we felt that these were critical areas where the madrasas were facing a gap both at the teacher capacity levels as well as student learning levels. With the MHRD focusing to make science and maths learning a joyful and meaningful...
activity, under its Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan, we felt it was the right time to delve into the same domain in madrasas. To nurture a spirit of inquiry, creativity, love for science and maths and effective use of technology among students – a two-pronged intervention was planned – to reach out to teachers and to students, first through capacity building workshops and second through setting up of science corners in the classrooms, to encourage students to move beyond textbooks into hands on simple experiments.

Last year, science corners in 10 model madrasas were activated by developing science-kits and setting up the science corners in the classrooms. A teachers’ workshop was conducted to share the concept as well as strategize the implementation. Teachers were capacitated in subject pedagogy and even conducted their experiments in the workshop. A teachers’ manual was developed for physical science with hands-on simple experiments, especially to work with students of middle school. The excited students of class 7 and 8 undertook a number of science experiments, facilitated by their teachers and our programme members. Simple hands-on experiments were planned and conducted and these were linked to the ITE intervention through detailed photo and video documentation.

Encouraged by the motivated teachers and the success of the experiments in the model madrasas, we planned to take this work up in the government madrasas as well. The concept of science corners has been shared with all the madrasas and a workshop has been planned for the teachers in the coming days.

The programme team also participated in a seminar at Nalanda, a resource organisation based in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, to share our ideas and experiences in the ‘Role of Madrasas in Universalizing Elementary Education’.

In the coming year, we will continue to focus on the government system while continuing our own curricular experiments at the model madrasas, with the hope that similar to the bridge course initiative, our efforts in science, technology and mathematics will also be scaled up to the state level soon.
Integration of Technology in Education

The Integrated approach to Technology in Education (ITE) was first piloted in May 2012 at TATA Trusts’ supported projects and introduced in Vikramshila in 2013 in our supplementary learning centres in Kolkata and the private madrasas in Hoogly.

According to the Trust Manual on ITE, “Technology when it fits comfortably with the curriculum or instructional plans of teaching is an indicative of integrated technology. Here, technology rather than an additional layer in the classroom is embedded within the design of the teacher’s lesson plan and pedagogy. In this approach, the teacher designs learning activities and students use technology to construct their own learning. For example, the students use technology for seeking information, construct and organise their learning and represent it through computer applications. The teacher plays a role of a facilitator and student as a constructionist of his or her own learning. Such an approach considers technology as a tool rather than an end itself, defines the teachers’ role as a facilitator and designer of the learning environment, emphasises the student’s use of technology, and authentic assessments and activities using technology in the classroom (Grabe and Grabe cited in Charania, 2011).”
Having implemented ITE for about three years now, both at our learning centres and madrasas, we feel that we have been able to attain to some degree, the objectives of the ITE:

a) To bridge the digital divide and foster digital citizenship
b) To create learning interest
c) To improve learning achievements, attendance and retention
d) To improve the learning processes and pedagogy

Assumptions in the ITE initiative
It is a teacher designed instruction, integrated with the curriculum, focussed on improving learning achievements, where students will use technology to create learning artefacts.

ITE Insights from Naba Disha
“Imran had lost interest in studies and wasn’t very attentive either. He dropped out from the Bow-bazar centre which further deteriorated his performance in school. However, he came to know from his friends about the ITE program. We too called him and told him about the project and asked him to come for classes and continue only if he finds it interesting. We are pleased to say that Imran started his work in the ITE initiative with keen interest and started exploring the possibilities in detail. He soon created his first email address. He also started helping his juniors and other students in ITE. There was improvement in his attendance and performance in school and his teachers gave a positive feedback. He will appear in Madhyamik Exam this year. Imran works in a cyber café and helps several young boys in his community in filling up online job applications.”

- Nargis, a Naba Disha Teacher
The ITE initiative at Naba Disha aims to empower students like Imran coming from weaker socio-economic backgrounds by allowing them to explore this powerful medium to enhance their learning and evolve as “creators” of content that leads them to develop interesting projects. The children engage in movie making projects, inter-group sharing and skype-sharing among the centres.

The ITE intervention through Naba Disha centres reached out to more than 300 students.

Three years into implementation of the project, the Tata Trust conducted an impact study where they sent an expert team of two professors from Trinity University, where they not only observed the ITE process but also assessed the students’ ability to use the ITE skills for problem solving. They gave a very positive feedback of our Naba Disha centres. CNBC had telecasted the ITE program of Naba Disha on television.

One of the major highlights of this year was the ITE Mela organized by Suchana, a partner organization in Bolpur where four students of Naba Disha presented their projects on thermo flask model and local history using the movie maker. It was a good exposure and they were highly motivated.

We also worked with 21 upper primary and high schools that have computer labs rooms, and reached out to 1090 students this year. An orientation on ITE for the upper primary school teachers, was organised where we presented an overall concept of ITE, our experiences in Naba Disha & govt. schools. The teachers were very enthusiastic and had a positive response towards the work we are doing in their schools. They actively participated in making lesson plans integrating technology for students to make projects. Overall the program successfully created a good platform for advocacy. The teachers of the respective schools shared their positive feedback of Naba Disha’s intervention at the cluster and circle levels.
ITE Insights from Madrasas

As an interesting development, the programme integrated the concept of Dinni and Duniyavi Talim (IDD) into the ITE lesson plans. The IDD lessons, which, so far worked with charts, booklets and models, now got a new lease of life by using the ITE applications, and a number of innovative lesson plans were developed and executed with great enthusiasm among the teachers and students. For instance, the Zakat (one of the five pillars of Islam) was linked to the teaching and understanding of the concept of percentage with spreadsheets and multimedia projects being created.

The concept of ITE was shared with the Madrasa Board in April last year. Based on the madrasa survey sheets, about 6 madrasas had the required infrastructure to start the programme, namely computer labs. These schools were revisited for concept sharing in a workshop mode. Classes 6, 7, and 8 were selected as participants in the ITE programme.

After we received permission from the Madrasa Board, an orientation of the selected madrasas was conducted in September on how to implement the ITE programme, selection of classes, developing the ITE timetable, subject selection and sharing of strategies for implementation. The dates for the baselines were also taken, and baselines in the selected madrasas were held from September onwards. By February 2016, more than 60 classes were completed and several interesting projects were prepared by the students in science, social science and maths, using the ITE applications.

The ITE classes created a lot of enthusiasm among the teachers and children with attendance shooting up on the days of ITE classes, as reported by the teachers. Some headmasters were very positive and regularly called up to confirm the schedule of classes. Students eagerly wait for our team members to take their ITE classes and urge their HMs to call up at our office to confirm “Aajke Imran Bhai asche toh?” (We hope Imran Bhai is coming to take class today?)

The challenges of frequent power cuts, poor internet connectivity and old computers at the school lab notwithstanding, we got a very enthusiastic response from the students, who upped the attendance whenever there was an ITE class. This led us to carry our own office laptops to be able to maintain a ratio of 1:7 per computer. An analysis of the attendance trends is planned the coming year. This motivated several madrasa teachers to try their hands on the ITE applications as well!
Life skills and career counseling
In the fast changing economy of the 21st century, often referred to as the knowledge era, the very notion of ‘job’ is shifting as workers increasingly seek meaning, purpose and fulfillment in their work roles. ‘Career’ is now viewed as something every human has for a lifetime and ‘work’ is now defined not only by occupational titles and categories, but by skills and values. As a result a new paradigm is needed to help students to make informed career choices and gain the necessary employability and self-management skills to embark on a successful and sustainable journey into the world of work. Skill development has been identified as a national priority and several schemes have been launched by both the state and central governments. Moreover, a lack of awareness about valid career options is resulting in a peculiar anomaly of ‘higher-jobs fewer demand’ and ‘higher-demand-fewer jobs’ and the benefits of the skill development programmes

Coverage: 200 schools across the state; 800 HMs & teachers; about 36,000 students, and parents.
are not reaching the target audience. It is in this context that the government of West Bengal under RMSA has been implementing an innovative project since 2012, called “Education to Employability” with technical support from Vikramshila. The project is in alignment with MHRD’s suggestion of setting up of guidance and counselling cells in every school and the presence of at least one teacher in each and every school, who is conversant with the theory and practice of counselling. The project aims to enhance life and career awareness skills along with developing some employability skills among school students. The project has received recognition from MHRD as one of the best practices adopted by the state govt. in the space of vocational education at school level. Starting with 10 schools in Kolkata in 2008, the project has gradually evolved in its approach and content aligning itself with the changing times and the growing needs of the students. Currently it reaches out to 200 schools covering all 21 districts in West Bengal. Last year, a very important component was added to the project to expand its scope and relevance among the adolescent age group – Life Skills.

**Last year’s highlights:**
An analysis of the written assessment tests taken before and after the E2E interventions is presented below:
An impact assessment of the project has shown that it has been a valuable intervention which provides a wrap-around support inculcating basic employability skills and generating career awareness among the students.

**Development of a new integrated module along with students’ workbook:**
Vikramshila had designed a life skills curriculum under SSA for adolescent girls in KGVB hostels called Dishari and is targeted for girls from Classes V to VIII. In 2014-15, an enriched module was created for Class VIII which had included some ‘employability’ components suited to rural contexts, keeping in mind the fact that some of the girls in hostels may not continue to study after class 8. Seeing the positive impact of the Life Skills project on these students, and considering its relevance for adolescent boys and girls, a decision was taken to take it forward to students of Classes IX and X. Since the E2E project was already in place in 200 schools, it was decided that the Life Skills component would be made part of it, instead of running a parallel programme.

![Overall Baseline and End-line Comparative Result (in percentage)](image-url)
Thus, an integrated module focusing on developing Life Skills, Career awareness and key Employability skills was developed by Vikramshila in a participatory process under the RMSA supported E2E project. The module introduced some life skills that are considered critical for adolescents, as this is the time when young people extend their relationships beyond family and are influenced by peers and the outside world. These are the years when they indulge in risk-taking behaviours, give in to negative peer pressure, take uninformed decisions on crucial issues, especially relating to their bodies and their sexuality, yet there are no platforms or counselling facilities available to them to discuss these issues. The project aims to open up this space where they can reflect, debate, discuss and clarify their doubts. Through these sessions, they will be helped to develop a sense of identity, a positive self-image, and build positive relationship with others including members of the opposite sex. The integrated package is therefore an attempt to broaden the scope of the ongoing E2E programme and make it more relevant to the changing times. The new module is embedded into the school curriculum and is implemented by teachers. The integration of the module within the school routine and its implementation by teachers ensures sustainability of the project.

Orientation of 200 Head Teachers on the new module:
The Head Teachers’ Orientation on the new integrated module was organized in five batches throughout West Bengal by WBRMSA along with Vikramshila as the implementation partner, in December 2015. Head teachers’ from all the 200 E2E project schools, old and new, across the 21 districts of West Bengal, were invited to join in the sessions reviewing, sharing and discussing the modalities of the project. Day long orientation programmes were held in 5 batches in the DIET centres of Jalpaiguri, Malda and Purulia districts and Shiksha Bhawan in Kolkata.
Direct intervention in 30 Kolkata schools:

As our own lab schools, in this intervention supported by the Tech Mahindra Foundation (TMF) we work directly with a sub set of 30 schools based in Kolkata. This helps our team to work directly with children and parents, interact more often with the teachers and school heads, and thus gain valuable insights about the project that help us in refining our content or modifying our strategies. Here is a glimpse of our activities in these schools in the last year:

- In these schools the project is run for children of Classes 9 to 12. There are 10 hub schools and 20 spoke schools. 8746 students in 30 Kolkata project schools have been assessed through end line test and an evaluation has been done to measure the level of their learning which has shown an increment of 20.51 on an average in each of the intervention areas.
- 3685 students went through Group Career Counseling and about 550 students went through one-on-one career counseling.
- 422 students from the previous year (class X & class XII) were tracked to find out their course of study or employment. It was found out that 40% of the students followed the direction that was set during their counselling and chose to pursue their preferred career path.
- A Career Day was celebrated in 29 project schools with around 5600 participating students and more than 50 guests. Distinguished personalities from various regular as well as unconventional professions participated in the career day events to inspire students by sharing their life experiences.
- SMART is a unique initiative of Tech Mahindra Foundation, which aims to link students to post school employment. 626 students from the project schools were oriented on the course and mobilised for enrolling in different centres and 33 candidates among them got enrolled and were placed in jobs.
Our work with BMSP, Bihar:
The E2E project gained traction last year, as we were invited by the Bihar Madhyamik Shikha Parishad (BMSP), Government of Bihar, to provide technical support to them to start a project on Life Skills and Career Counselling. A module development workshop was held in May 2015, with a group of experts. Four modules were developed: Life Skills, Career Counselling, Communicative English and Digital Literacy (IT). The modules were finalized and validated through another workshop and a decision was taken to start a pilot in Patna with 20 schools which would act as demonstration models for 100 schools in 6 districts where the project would be first rolled out. Vikramshila was invited by the Government of Bihar to participate in ‘Bihar Diwas’ in March 2016 to showcase the project.

Placement linked skills training programme – E2E Plus
Vikramshila in association with a Kolkata based social enterprise – ESDECS Edskill Services, had launched a placement linked skills training programme – E2E Plus last year. This programme is targeted for students/ex-students of E2E schools who are looking for immediate employment on completion of their board examinations, in services and allied sectors. In the pilot phase which was completed successfully in January 2015, 23 candidates were selected from E2E schools, trained and placed in jobs in hospitality and business process outsources services.

With the continuation of E2E project in 2015-16, E2E Plus became an integral part of the project and during the Head Teachers’ orientation of the 200 project schools, details of E2E Plus was shared. The concept of placement linked skills training was appreciated by the school heads. In the month of February 2016, E2E Plus started by calling all the schools of E2E project schools who welcomed the idea of starting mobilisation of students from their schools. Schools were spread across all districts and seminars were organised in the schools. Schools made an effort in spreading the word about placement linked job oriented training programme in the locality and in most centres there was overwhelming response. It is interesting to note that the response to this programme is better in schools which are far from the nearest town or cities. After the seminar and the selection process 514 candidates were shortlisted for E2E Plus training.

In the second phase 116 students have been trained till date and we will be training and placing in total 200 candidates by September 2016. These students are spread across 13 districts of West Bengal. Students who have completed their training have been placed well.
PLACEMENTS

- Hospitality – Speciality Restaurants, Bar-B-Que Nation, Cafe Coffee Day, Sodexo, Koshe Kosha
- BPO – Tatwa, Hinduja Global
- Retail – Pantaloon, Khadims’ India Ltd

Students are placed in Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Siliguri, Pune, Chandigarh and other cities. All outstation placed candidates get company accommodation. The average salary in Kolkata ranges between Rs. 5,500/- to Rs 6,500/- + other benefits. All outstation candidates get a salary ranging from Rs.8,500/- to Rs. 10,000/- + other benefits including accommodation.

Candidate Speak:

Raja Gayen is a 25 year old youth who had completed his Plus Two and had no clue about how to go about looking for employment. He had no plan for further studies. The situation was such that Raja needed to work given the situation at home. Raja had undergone an operation the previous year because of which he could not travel a lot. He heard about the E2E Plus programme from a teacher of Nimpith Ramkrishna Vidyapith and with his friends went to the school to learn more about the programme. The assurance of employment made him join this training. After completing the training Raja appeared for an interview and got an offer from Khadim’s. He was asked to join a showroom in Bhawanipur in the month of Feb 2016 with a salary of Rs. 5500/- plus incentives. In the month of May he got a raise of Rs. 1500/- and moved to the Gariahat showroom. Raja is very happy and feels now there is a direction in his life.
Life Skills and Career Readiness Camp

This year, our work in the area of life skills, citizenship education and career readiness programmes went one step further when we collaborated with the American Centre, Kolkata to plan and organise a 21-Day Life Skills and Career Readiness Camp for adolescent girls. The camp aims to reach out to 100 young girls who have completed their higher secondary examinations and are not yet in colleges. The idea is to offer short targeted modules on Business English, Life Skills, Communication and other social and workplace skills together with career direction setting and counseling to enhance the ability of urban girl students for a brighter future and a successful career path. While the camp is slated for April 2016, our preparations began in 2015 itself with school selection, baseline test of girls, and selection process after baseline, meetings with the school HMs and teachers, preparation of camp module and facilitators’ trainings. The partnership with U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata for running such a Camp was a unique opportunity which we felt would give us opportunities to synergise, learn and grow – as an organization.
Selection of girls
As a strategy, we opted for something different from our usual practice of working only with the most under served, under-resourced, and at-risk communities. This time Vikramshila chose to work with girls on the other end of the achievement spectrum - the high achievers in government schools, the ‘talented and gifted’ but lacking in exposure and services in their community and in their schools that would nurture their talents and provide them adequate guidance to determine their future paths. We saw this as an opportunity to enhance our work with urban government schools in life-skills programmes, one of Vikramshila’s key areas of expertise. Our team went to some girls’ high schools and spoke to the Heads, and were happy to get their concurrence. 1600 girls appeared for selection tests of whom 100 were finally screened and selected for the camp. The final selection was in the form of an oral interview, which was held at the American Center, and mostly conducted by their staff.

Preparation of the Camp Curriculum
It was decided that the Camp would have two strands – one focusing on essential life skills such as communication, team work, problem solving, critical thinking along with Business English, and the second would focus on career awareness building and digital literacy. Capacity building of Vikramshila’s curriculum development team was undertaken with support from the Regional English Language Office of the U.S. Consulate General. Ms. Jane Hoelkar (Education Specialist) MBTI practitioner equipped the team on experiential learning framework and helped them with techniques in module designing in December 2015. Under her guidance, the curriculum team developed the sessions based on Kolb’s experiential learning cycle and blended it with the 4 language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. The sessions began with a rich, resourceful input – such as role-play/audio-visuals and...
the sessions ended with student artifacts as outputs in the form of worksheets, speaking activity etc. In between there were opportunities for reflection and comprehension through reading.

**Training of Trainers**

In March 2016, another workshop was organized at the American Center, Kolkata to capacitate the camp facilitators (Vikramshila team with the American centre alumni teachers) in module delivery mechanism. Ms. Jode Brexa, (English Language Specialist) conducted this 3 day workshop on the ways of delivery. Her transaction module was based on Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory. The trainers were greatly enriched by the strategies to build positive, resource-rich and engaging classrooms. The strategies included defining objectives, cooperative learning methods, reflection activities, motivators and reinforcers, energisers, and protocols. The team worked to embed the strategies into the curriculum seamlessly.

**Forging partnerships**

Several meetings were held to include distinguished Alumni teachers identified by the U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata into the process. They also took part in Ms. Brexa’s workshop.

**Plan Ahead**

In the coming year, the camp is scheduled across April, in two venues with a high-energy inauguration programme to motivate the girls followed by scheduled sessions across 21 days. There is an assessment and certification planned as well which will further encourage the girls to put in their best. We plan to follow the students along their journeys for a while, in order to track their progress, and end with a dissemination programme.
Naba Disha-
Our Flagship Learning Centres in Kolkata

With a strong commitment to strengthening the existing government system and years of expertise in working with a large group of children from less privileged homes, Naba Disha witnessed a rigorous intervention in 75 government schools, with support from TATA
TRUSTS. These are the schools that are situated in proximity to the education centres. The idea was to transfer Vikramshila’s technical knowhow and skills in education pedagogy from its own Naba Disha centers that runs in collaboration with the Kolkata Police. The objective was to work in specific areas with schools in collaboration with the Sarva Shiksha Mission to bring about changes in the educational practices through creating a good children’s library, supporting Early Grade Reading, learning camps and ITE that are visible, measurable and can be implemented in the curriculum. The programme over the last one year has covered an entire spectrum, covering all stakeholders, from children, community, government schools, and district office to education department. The collaboration with the government has provided a huge platform to reach out to many children as well as teachers leading to a large scale and systematic intervention paving the way towards sustainability. Vikramshila’s teachers, who have been trained in the organization’s philosophy, as well as have hands on experience in running the supplementary centres for more than 15 years, were selected to work in the government school outreach interventions. They have successfully piloted all the interventions.

Let us look at the major highlights in each of the components-

**Early Childhood Education (ECE)**

The ECE program of Naba Disha takes into account the foundational years and ensures an enabling environment for the child’s lifelong learning and makes the child school-ready. The program is currently reaching

The Annual Speak IT Festival 2015 was held at Childrens’ Little Theatre (CLT) to showcase the library as a powerful learning space through various activities such as reading, recitation, drama, conversation, etc. It was a 10-week long process where volunteers from SUAS, Ireland mentored the children with the support of Naba Disha teachers. It was an overwhelming success with the presence of various stakeholders and partner organizations and more than 200 Naba Disha children were present. Children of Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy shared the platform with Nabadisha children.
out to 361 children.

**Learning support**

In the Naba Disha centres, learning support is the core support given to children from class 1 to 8. The major work is focused on basic literacy and numeracy (building concepts of math, science and several activities that foster language development). Students are assessed on the learning standards spelt out by NCERT.

In government schools, learning support is provided in the form of remedial camps. A five-day remedial camp for Maths with a variety of worksheets, resources and TLMs was conducted in 32 government schools, for class 3 to 5 based on the school’s requirements. It reached out to about 1000 students. The camps were carried out in Urdu, Bengali and Hindi medium schools.

31% improvement was achieved as a result of the remedial camps in essential competencies such as number concept, four operations, place value, patterns, concept of time etc.

**Integrated Technology in Education (ITE)**

Reaching out to 280+ children in the centres and 1000+ students in government high schools, the Naba Disha team continued to empower students’ through technology enabled learning. We made inroads into the government school system this year, taking our learnings of ITE into 21 high schools with computer labs to induct their students and teachers into the process of creating student led learning artifacts in the form of projects and presentations. Details of this work are captured under the ITE initiatives on page 43.

**Library as a learning space and Early Grade Reading**

Over 1100 students have accessed the library facility of Naba Disha centres. Library continues to be an active learning space for language development where children from print deprived families enjoy reading independently. They actively engage in peer reading and learning. Colourful books have transformed the children who were once very passive. The library has opened a whole new world to these children. It has become their personal space where they have an easy access to books and freedom to read.

Where previously schools did not have an active library, there was a lack of sufficient graded books and materials, a separate time table, at the end of the year functional libraries were set up in 27 government schools. Vibrant library rooms were showcased as model libraries. Out of these 27 schools, 24 schools opted to conduct early grade reading classes for their students. These classes were held for class 1 in the first year, reaching out to about 500 students.

Vikramshila had organized a two day orien-
“In one Library class, the school teachers came in the classroom and saw the charts made by the students. They were surprised to see the word walls and other charts prepared, as they had no idea of the capability of the students. We saw an interest from the parents as well. There’s also a visible change in the behavior of the students. Previously students who were not at all interested in studying or sitting with a book, are coming to the classroom and completing their pending drawing and writing activities. They are also engrossed during storytelling and shared reading activities”, said Nazneen, one of Vikramshila’s teachers.

Fostering Citizenship Education for Adolescents

During the rampant dengue season this year, the Civic Action Groups of Naba Disha centres studied about the disease and gathered information. They organized awareness camps, door-to-door surveys, visited health centres and the local councillor. They studied about the problems and reported cases of dengue in the community. This was also brought up in the parents’ meeting as a major area of concern.

With the digitization of the ration cards, the students also identified this vital area for discussion where they had no knowledge of such schemes. They developed questionnaires and conducted surveys for spreading awareness in their families and the larger community with the help of the teachers. This project has helped them to learn about the Public Distribution System functioning in our country.
Employability Support

“My name is Madhu Kumari Pan-dey. I had joined Nabadisha in the year 2005. Since then, Nabadisha has become an integral part of my life. Today, I can proudly say that my Nabadisha teachers are candles who burn themselves to give light to others. Thank you for inspiring me, for encouraging me and also standing beside me in all circumstances.”

Madhu, who had joined Naba Disha in 2005, is now a second year student in college studying Commerce. She joined the National Cadet Corps in 2014. She won several medals and certificates last year. Similar to Madhu, there are many alumni students of Naba Disha who are now working in retails such as Inox, Story, Shopper’s Stop and many more. There are students who have taken up higher studies in colleges while helping in their family work such as zari work, kite making, box making etc.

Where students are unable to explore career options, Naba Disha gives wings to their aspirations by offering career counseling through experts who guide them in choosing a suitable career. This is one of the holistic and longitudinal outcomes of the quality intervention that these supplementary learning centres have been aiming to provide to urban deprived, “at risk” children following a life span approach to education – from school readiness to job readiness.
Supplementary Learning Centres in Government Schools in Howrah

Quality with equity has been the driving force that has led us to take on different projects as we firmly believe that it is good quality education that has the power to liberate people from poverty born out of generations of discrimination and lack of opportunities. Last year, Vikramshila entered into a partnership with Mission Sunehra Kal of ITC initiative where they are working for the upliftment of communities located around their newly set up factory, in Joargori, Beldhubi and Kandua gram panchayats through a multi sectoral partnership.

While access has largely been achieved in the primary school education system, it is retention and completion that has now emerged as a major challenge. Closely linked to these issues is the problem of low learning outcomes among children from low income and non literate households, who do not get a conducive learning environment at home. Prolonged ab-
senteeism further results in poor learning achievements. Poor learning environment in schools and inadequate instructional hours in spite of the mandate of 1000 hours year in the RTE Act is mainly responsible for the learning crisis that afflicts our public education system. A sizeable number of students drop-out at the upper primary level when the learning gaps are widened beyond repair. Children need additional help to ‘catch up’ – not by doing more of the same thing, but doing things differently. This is the idea behind the 15 Supplementary Learning Centres that have been set up in these 3 gram panchayats under this project.

**Programme Strategies Implemented**

- Supplementary education spaces were created within government schools to ensure programme sustainability, improvement of school attendance as well as capacity building of school teachers for lasting impact
- A school library was developed in each school to get better participation and involvement of the school as well as ensuring a higher visibility in the community
- A before-school learning support programme was envisaged to ensure better attendance in schools (children go into classes after the learning support programme)
- Convergence with other ITC partners in the area was prioritized to increase impact, create a strong network and synergize efforts for improved results.

"The communities are mostly Scheduled Caste (SC) and Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. The fathers are engaged in daily labour and the mothers of the children work as domestic help or masons. Many are engaged in zari work and the family income of the households range from Rs. 500 to Rs. 3000 per month. The surveys have also recorded that the system of mid-day meals plays a vital role in the lives of many children. Most of the children come to formal schools only for the mid-day meals. Even then, dropouts are common at the age of 10 -12. Most of the dropouts work as labourers to supplement their family incomes."

- An excerpt from the household survey report conducted by Vikramshila last year

**Short Term and Long Term Goals**

While providing additional support to children with the help of local village level education volunteers (EVs) was our immediate objective in order to improve the learning outcomes of children, there was a larger effort to strengthen the public system, by strengthening school-community linkages and establishing a pathway for regular interaction with different stakeholders related to school administration and management to create an environment of shared responsibility and accountability.
Supplementary learning centres

Government System
DM/ADM, BDO, PRI, DPSC, DI, SI, SSA

The School System
Supplementary Learning Centre

ITC Sunehra Kal Partners

Community
Parents, SHGs, Other community members

The School System
Supplementary Learning Centre

Government System
DM/ADM, BDO, PRI, DPSC, DI, SI, SSA

ITC Sunehra Kal Partners

Community
Parents, SHGs, Other community members

Project Initiation Activities
- Meeting with Panchayat functionaries and important community members
- School Surveys for Selection
- Recruitment of Education Volunteers to run SLCs
- Capacity Building of team - trainings and exposure visits

Household Survey
- Preparation of survey - tools, training
- Survey in the field
- Data collection and analysis

Setting up of SLCs
- Procurement of Materials - books, resources, TLMs
- Infrastructure development
- Set up of Library and Activity corner
- Baseline Assessment of Students
- TLM Workshops
- Community Events

Classes Started in SLCs
- Morning classes everyday
- Time table being followed
- Monitoring, Mentoring Visits and Onsite Support
- Refresher Trainings
- Maintenance of student portfolios

Remedial Camp in 15 schools
- Preparation - tools, materials, training
- 5-day Camps
- Data analysis and reporting
A Day at the Centre

Attendance and Warm Up Exercises

Conversation Circles

Rhyme Time

Story Time/Library

Language Activities

Maths Activities

Written Work

Art and Craft
Major Achievements Last Year

- The resource rooms for running SLCs were set up within government school premises.
- Involvement of DPSC, SSA, ADM, BDO and Panchayat and local community members in setting up the SLCs was achieved.
- Involving local youth in the programme as EVs - they have become the face of the project in the community.
- Making high quality resources available to children e.g. library books from NBT, Pratham and Eklavya; Maths materials from Nav Nirmiti, English and Bengali materials from Vikramshila.
- Involvement of school heads, teachers and parents, especially mothers in the programme.
- Increase in school attendance was reported by the school heads, especially after the Camps were conducted.
Audited Account
### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2016

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### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2016

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<td>29777057</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME (A)</strong></td>
<td>29871831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excess Of Income Over Expenditure [A-B]</strong></td>
<td>94774</td>
<td><strong>Excess Of Expenditure over Income [B-A]</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Governing Body of Vikramshila

Dr. Atindra Sen, IAS
President

Mrs. Shubhra Chatterji
Director & Vice-President

Mrs. Tapati Gupta
Secretary

Mr. Asesh Dutta
Treasurer

Mr. P.K. Chowdhury
Member

Mr. Percy Siganporia
Member

Mr. Aspi Kapadia
Member

Dr. Shelley M. Brown
Member

Prof. Hari Vasudevan
Member

Mr. Atanu Sain
Member
Behind the Scenes - People who make it possible

Ahana Dasgupta  
Ajanta Sanyal  
Anupam Bhattacharyya  
Arnab Singha Chowdhury  
Arun Kr. Sain  
Atanu Kundu  
Atanu Sain  
Aynul Sekh  
Babita Dutta Majumder  
Biswadeep Bandyopadhyaya  
Debjani Mahanti  
Dhrubajyoti Nag  
Durga Sarkar  
Garima Sarkar  
Jhuma Ghosh  
Kaberi Prasad  
Lopamudra Chakraborty  
Madhubanti Bhattacharya  
Madhusree Koley  
Manjula Das  
Md. Mehdri Hasan  
Md.imitajuddin Siddiquee  
Md. Mujibbar Rahman  
Md. Sarif Hossen Midya  
Milan Kumar Sarkar  
Moumita Banerjee  
Mujibbar Rahaman SK  
Mustafiz Iqbal  
Namrata Ghosh  
Nayani Ghoshal  
Nazrul Haque Mondal  
Oindrila Chakraborty  
Partha Sarathi Mukherjee  
Payel Ghosh  
Priya Roy  
Priyamrita Bhattacharya  
Quazi Md. Imran  
Rejaul Islam  
Ria Banerjee  
Rita Das  
Riti Mukherjee  
Saherunnessa Khatun  
Samima Seikh  
Samser Ali SK  
Sanchari Ray Chowdhury  
Sanghamitra Roy Majumder  
Sanjay Kr Bhattacharjee  
Sarmistha Acherjee  
Shinjini Sanyal  
Shrabani Debnath  
Sohini Sen  
Soumi Mukherjee  
Soumita Saha  
Soumita Bhattacharya  
Srabanti Basak  
Subhabrata Bhattacharjee  
Subhra Sen  
Sudip Samanta  
Sujata Dutta Chowdhury  
Samana Ganguli  
Suparna Basu  
Sutapa Baks  
Sutapa Chakraborty  
Syed Ejaz Husam  
Uday Samanta  
Vibha Virendra Dutta  
Rausnan Ara  
Roshon Israil  
Ruby Khanam  
Rupali Ghosh  
Sabita Halder  
Sangeeta Dutta  
Shabana Alam  
Shahnam Bano  
Shadma Gulnoor  
Shazia Parveen  
Sbyamali Bose  
Sima Roy  
Soma Saha  
Sucheta Mondal  
Sugata Roy  
Susmita Basak  
Tabassum Begum

Nabadisha Teachers’

Afreen Afroz  
Alam Ara  
Amna Khatun  
Anjana Guhait  
Asma Khatoon  
Baby Deb  
Dolly Mukherjee  
Durga Rajak  
Gulnaz Begum  
Guncha Kahalkha  
Jasmin  
Kanchan Prasad  
Madhumita Das  
Mahasweta Roy  
Melnaz Bano  
Moumita Manna  
Mridula Chakraborty  
Mukta Kundu  
Nagina Parveen  
Nargis Nahid  
Naseem Ara  
Nasim Banu  
Nazneen Begum  
Nikhat Ara  
Noori Begam  
Parveen Bano  
Pinki Kumari Rajbhar  
Piyali Biswas  
Piyali Patro  
Radha Chowdhury

Education Volunteers’ (EV)

Animes Kanji  
Avijit Pramanick  
Avijit Sardar  
Banani Dwary  
Chamely Deshukh  
Chandana Panja  
China Mollick  
Eshita Panja  
Ikbol Mallik  
Indranil Deti  
Joyashree Mondal  
Kaberi Sinha  
Krishna Dalui  
Minakshi Manna  
Mintu Naskar  
Mithun Bhandari  
Modhumita Adak  
Pallab Ghosh  
Papiya Sen  
Priyanka Roy  
Putrani Malik  
Rita Malick  
Sadhana Koley  
Sagarika Hazra  
Samina Begam  
Sanghamitra Dwari  
Soma Parta  
Sudha Hudati  
Suparna Ari  
Swarup Patra
Thank You!

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Most importantly, we thank all our teachers and school heads for believing in our work and encouraging our efforts on the ground.