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What I personally find most exciting about our work is that I often witness the power of education in action—how it transforms lives, opens up doors of opportunities, and helps individuals out of their cycles of intergenerational poverty and discrimination. The faces of Pinky, Madhu, Vikas, Imran, Sairunnisa, Shaheen, Ishaq, Sailesh and many others fill my mind. They were all given a second chance to change the trajectories of their lives, and those of their families.

Pinky has gone back to teach in the same Naba Disha centre that helped her pursue her dreams when she had given up all hope. Another has pulled herself and her sisters out of a profession that caused pain and shame to her mother; yet another is now proudly considered equal to a son, because she is the only literate person in her family, helping her father to read and access legal documents; yet another has opened a small business and is the proud employer of three more persons.

I see firsthand, self-confidence, self-respect, and a determination to give back to society. Education has given these young people the learning they need to gain this capital. Understanding the worth of school education in their own lives, they work to ensure that no child from their neighborhood is left behind. In such individual successes, I find meaning in the work we do as a technical support organization when our engagement with the children is relatively short term, yet the intensity of it leaves a deep imprint. A case in point is the Life Skills Camp we conducted last year for one hundred girls who had just graduated from school, in which a small but meaningful intervention created the potential to alter the trajectory of their lives.

Our projects in 2016 centered on the themes of quality and equity, including early childhood education, supplementary learning support, life skills, and career counseling. The geographical diversity was quite wide—from the state of Jammu and Kashmir, to Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Tripura, and West Bengal. We worked with children (from ages three to eighteen), with anganwadi workers and supervisors, with teachers and teacher trainers, and also with members and leaders of village level federations! Each and every intervention has been an occasion to learn more about the myriad problems of our education system: why children are failing, why schools are failing, the complexities of learning language in a multi-lingual society, the gap between aspiration and reality, the intricate relationship of school and society, and diverse other challenges.

We reached out to 2,372 teachers and to 91,107 students through these different projects. Our teams worked tirelessly to design curricular materials in Bengali, English, Urdu, Nepali, Oriya and Kokborok. We hosted international scholars from the US and we were proud to send our team to present a workshop and a poster on English Language Teaching (ELT) at the prestigious International Conference organized by TESOL at Seattle, USA. It was a year of great excitement along with prodigious learning, which helped us retain our vibrancy as an organization. Now that we are twenty-seven years old, I look back at how the entire team at Vikramshila has contributed to making it what it is today! As a team, we look forward to fulfilling our new horizons.

Subhra Chatterji
OUTREACH and COVERAGE

West Bengal • Assam • Bihar • Mizoram • Tripura
Odisha • Jammu & Kashmir • Andaman & Nicobar

359+ workshops/trainings and orientations across our geographies

1922 Teachers and 820 Government functionaries /officials

450 NGO teachers including 77 teachers of private madrasas

176 Community Leaders

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We reached 91,107 children in the year 2016-17 through classes, learning camps, workshops and events.

Vikramshila worked in 40 Anganwadi centers, 36 government madrasas and 8 private madrasas.

We also reached out to 210 primary schools, 294 secondary schools and 13 education centers through our programs and activities.
Teacher Development and Technical Support to Agencies

- State Government of Tripura
- State Government of Jammu and Kashmir
- Partners and Initiatives of Tata Trusts and WIPRO
- Paschim Banga Sarva Shiksha Mission
- Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kolkata District
- Department of Women and Child Development
- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
- Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad
- West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education
- World Vision India
- UNICEF, West Bengal, Bihar and Delhi
- TechMahindra Foundation
The central resource unit, or CRU as we call it, acts as a repository as well as a fulcrum to all our program activities and partnerships. With an outreach to 8 states of India, the CRU has reached out to more than 1000 teachers and education functionaries and this year.

The CRU has the unique opportunity to work across a diverse geography with heterogeneous demographics cutting across class, language, ethnicity and other cultural identities. This has helped us to enrich and develop our understanding of social needs, social issues, aspirations and realities in light of education for underserved and under resourced communities. This is a two way process whereby our own programs enrich and get enriched by the learnings of the CRU.

Vikramshila's interventions generate significant learning that then needs to be converted to organizational learning. Similar to the circulatory system of the human body, the CRU brings together this learning, processes it and communicates it through appropriate standards and policies within and outside the organization. As such, the CRU itself is a very heterogeneous body with some of its members located within other projects. Some undertake specialized functions and others remain versatile and mobile to offer support to the different project sites and partners across the country.
Teacher Development
As an organization we strongly believe that the teacher is the most significant agent in the education ecosystem. It is the teacher who holds the most important key to ensure quality education in the school. As such our core area of work is the capacity and skills enhancement of teachers of both government and non-government sectors. We reach out to the teachers both through the government system as well as through our partners TATA Trust and WIPRO, who work with a number of deeply committed grassroots level organizations.

Technical Support and Resource Development
The CRU has been working with a number of small grass-root organizations to strengthen their capacity as education organizations in their local spaces. Since Vikramshila has been working in the entire spectrum of education from 'school-readiness' to 'job-readiness', the CRU also has to conduct capacity-building exercises for the entire spectrum. Apart from capacity-building and advocacy, developing appropriate resources (e.g. teachers’ training modules, learning packages, teaching learning materials, etc.) for improving the quality of classroom process is another key area of work for CRU. We have also offered technical support to the government for advocacy at the policy level.

Core Areas of Work of the CRU

As a resource organization, Vikramshila worked extensively across in the eastern part of India, both with partner organizations and government systems in an effort to strengthen the school system.

CRU Initiatives

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<td>Technical Partner of TATA Trust in their Tripura State Initiatives</td>
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Partnership and Collaborations with the Government Systems

Collaboration with SSA Tripura
We have conducted a series of module development workshops in collaboration with SSA Tripura in three phases. The first phase focused on Science and Mathematics, the second phase on Social Science and the third phase on Language. Through this process we have reached out to around 105 teachers, BRPs, CRPs and District Pedagogy Coordinators. All draft modules have been prepared and are at the final stage before sending them for print.

Intervention in Science and Math Education
The Government of Tripura has initiated a Science Teachers’ Forum in all 8 districts. This forum is working towards improving the quality of Science and Mathematics education by promoting low-cost and no-cost experiments at upper-primary level in government schools. To support these efforts, Vikramshila conducted workshops for 60 high school teachers in the North District of Tripura on Science and Mathematics teaching. This workshop was jointly organized by the Science Teachers Forum and district education department. We conducted a series of science experiments to demonstrate some science lessons at upper-primary level.

Collaboration with SSM, Kolkata on Science and Maths
Two workshops on Science and Mathematics education were held for 50 (30 Science and 20 Mathematics) teachers in Kolkata. As a part of this programme, we also developed science and mathematics training modules.

(Details of the Science and Maths intervention is available on page 51)

Engaging with the Madrasah Board
We have conducted a workshop for 100 HMs and 120 teachers in North Bengal in collaboration with the West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education. The objective of this workshop was to orient teachers about accelerated learning techniques and approaches. We have shared the structure of the entire remediation plan and strategies adopted by the Board.

Engagement with RMSA and SCERT
In the year 2015-2016, we had developed a training module on ‘Career Counseling and Inclusion’ for West Bengal RMSA in collaboration with SCERT. In the same year we trained 160 Key Resource Persons (KRPs) from both north and south Bengal, who then further trained around 4500 secondary level teachers. This year, with the same module, we have trained around 410 KRPs, who will further conduct training for 19,000 secondary level teachers in the all over West Bengal. We have conducted training of nine batches of KRPs (two days for each batch). All these workshops on ‘Career Counseling’ have been highly appreciated by participants and the department.

Engagement with Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad
The Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (BMSHP) has adapted the Education to Employability model of our state. The program model was conceptualized and piloted by Vikramshila from 2008 and in 2012, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad took it up as one of its programs. Since then Vikramshila has been a technical partner to the RMSA in upscaling their efforts in West Bengal.
Support to Government of Jammu and Kashmir
As technical resource partner of UNICEF, Delhi, we are working in 3 areas of education in J&K.

SPECIAL TRAINING
We supported the state in designing an implementation strategy to develop non-residential special training centres for out of school children. We helped them in designing the teaching learning materials for the centres, developing a module for master trainers, training 160 master trainers and supporting district level training in one of the focus districts.

EARLY LANGUAGE PROGRAM
We also supported the state to develop a strategy for early language learning and an implementation plan for running an early language programme for primary classes.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
In ECE, we are supporting the state develop model centres across the state, with focus on 3 districts – Leh, Rajouri and Budgam.

Working with the Department of Social Welfare and Department of Education, our attempt is to bring about a convergence in providing high quality preschool both in the anganwadi centres and in the kindergarten sections of primary schools. The model centres are intended to establish quality standards and create benchmarks for good quality early childhood education centres.

Working in the state has been a heartwarming experience for us because of the enthusiasm, dedication and the positive attitude of master trainers who seemed to be imbued with a sense of mission to bring about qualitative change in the school environment. Their attendance and punctuality amidst adverse conditions was something which inspired our team.

Direct work with Grassroot NGOs

Assam

- Ajagar Social Circle
  - Teachers'/Volunteers' training (Need Based)

- JMECT
  - Refresher courses and field-based orientation programmes through onsite support visits
  - OD process to develop an administrative and functional structure in the organization, with activities linked to organizational goals.

Odisha

- SPREAD (Koratpur)
  - Foundations of Education course offered to 32 teachers along with their supervisory staff.

Uttar Pradesh

- PVCHR (Varanasi)
  - Workshops on Language, Maths and EVS conducted for teachers from 26 Madrasas

West Bengal

- CESR (Purulia)
  - Capacity-enhancement of 30 volunteers/teachers of the organization; support to learning camps in schools and orientation for government teachers

- The Samaritan (Howrah)
  - Foundations of Education course with focus on primary subjects

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Technical Partner of World Vision India

Since 1995, World Vision India has been operating through their long-term community development programs called Area Development Programs (ADPs). Each ADP works in a cluster of 40-50 villages in a block in selected vulnerable districts. Since 2012, some of these ADPs have started working through Remedial Education Centres (REC) to address the issue of poor learning achievements of students at primary level. This year WV India appointed us as the technical support agency to provide support towards running these centres. We started working with Bhubaneswar ADP and Kalimpong ADP.

As a technical partner to World Vision India, we have worked in Odisha, offering a capacity building program for 52 REC facilitators. In Kalimpong, in West Bengal, a similar workshop was organized for 61 facilitators who run the remedial education centers.

We have been providing continuous mentoring and monitoring support through regular field visits and also developed children's workbooks on learning Oriya, Nepali, English and Mathematics. Vikramshila has developed specially designed teaching learning materials and provided them to both ADPs.

Technical Partner of TATA Trust in their Tripura State Institutions (TSI)

We engaged with TSI towards implementing the ‘Reading Improvement Programme’ successfully at Tulashikhar block in Khowai district. Apart from capacity-building of government teachers through centralized workshops and regular school visits, we also developed a bi-lingual material package, celebrated language week, conducted English sessions through Virtual Learning Classes (VLC) and provided hand-holding support to teachers to organize and conduct learning camps for children at upper-primary level. The bi-lingual package has been highly appreciated by the department and they have taken it for state-wide circulation. Our English class through VLC have been recognized as effective sessions by the ‘Tata Trusts’ internal study. The Language week was inaugurated by the Minister in Charge of Tribal Development and Affairs and has had a good impact in the area.
In-House Development Programmes

Over the last couple of years our work and reach has expanded manifold. From a single office of operation, we now have project offices in Howrah, Bankura, Tripura and Kolkata. As the depth and magnitude of work has increased, we have been extremely fortunate to attract new talent in the form of young professionals joining our network and working with us in our aim to attain our goals. These new members are highly committed and focused individuals who have undergone a series of workshops to enhance their sector knowledge, deepen their pedagogical understanding and understand organizational values.

Capacity building of the team within a very short span of time was a challenge for the CRU. Different in-house capacity building programmes were the key to address this issue. We conducted a series of capacity building exercises for all staff-members in diverse areas such as – ECE, Child Rights and Protection, English Language Teaching, facilitation skills, module development etc.

Experts from the U.S. Consulate General Kolkata and the Regional English Language Office, with whom we partnered for some programs, have also provided a strong network of experts who have supported our in-house staff development and mentorship efforts.

In addition 20 programme members representing different project teams visited pioneer institutions working in the sphere of education to gain first hand field experience, sector knowledge and understanding of working conditions in different parts of India. The visits were graciously accommodated by Digantar in Jaipur and Eklaya, Samavesh and Muskan in Madhya Pradesh.

During these visits, the team members were exposed to diverse areas such as – strategies to engage with the government system, strategies for community involvement, teachers’ training and designing training module, functioning of supplementary learning centre, language and science teaching etc.
Some Successes to Celebrate!

The Bilingual resource materials we developed to ensure language proficiency and smooth transition across languages was accepted by the SSA Tripura as exemplary resources that Tripura wishes to replicate all over the state.

The idea of 'Language week celebration' was appreciated by all stakeholders including the Tribal Development and Affairs minister. It has brought to attention the criticality of language proficiency in enhancing achievements in all areas of learning.

Workbooks and teaching learning materials have been developed in different languages such as Nepali, Oriya, Hindi, English etc.

Our partner, CESR, Purulia has been recognized as a resource agency for government schools in the district. They are now working with the government schools at the district level.

An MIS Portal and a number of programme documents have been developed to showcase the innovation and depth of project initiatives.
Learning to Read and Reading to Learn

Language is a social phenomenon best learned through social interaction. Our language bears the mark of our culture and society. In Tripura however, language has proved to be more of an impediment to learning. Many children, with little exposure to Bengali, have to start with a new language and it becomes an additional burden for them. Children do not have exposure to different kinds of reading materials in Kokborok or Bengali because there is hardly anything available for young learners other than the textbooks.

As Language is the basis of all learning, lack of proficiency in language leads to low achievement in other subject areas, particularly where the home language of children is different from the official medium of instruction. Vikramshila, with support from the Tata Trusts, launched the Reading Improvement Programme in Tripura. Through this project we tried to understand the problems and seek possible solutions for children growing up in a multilingual environment. The pilot started from 2015 in the district of Khowai in Tripura, where children usually come from Kokborok speaking tribal families.

**Reading Improvement Programme – Khowai, Tripura**

Tripura has a high population of ethnic groups which consists of 19 tribes and many sub-tribes. Tulashikhar, our project area, is predominantly tribal where most of the inhabitants speak Kokborok, a language that belongs to a different family and has no lexical resemblance with Bengali, the official medium of instruction of all government-run schools.

Due to lack of an effective transition policy from Kokborok to Bengali, there is a huge learning gap among the children. Thus, in Tulashikhar, our main aim is to use Kokborok as a scaffold to slowly introduce Bengali as a medium of instruction. The project aimed to improve the learning levels of children in classes 1 to 8, to achieve grade-appropriate competencies in all the schools of Tulashikhar block in Khowai.

**The Multilingual Education Scenario**

In primary grades, the children learn Kokborok (which follows the Bengali script) and English. From class 3 onwards, the children are introduced to Bengali, which is the official language of the state of Tripura. While this unique situation creates a lot of scope for interesting work on language development, it also poses serious problems of transition of language from the first language to a second or third. The fact that Bengali and Kokborok have a common script but are different languages altogether, is an added problematic.
Activities Undertaken to Strengthen and Support State Efforts in Language Development

**Development of Language Modules**
This year we organized workshops to develop modules for the upper primary school level in Bengali and English. The new MHRD learning indicators were the reference for this where BRPs, CRPs and teachers from various schools worked together to develop the first draft. The modules are being modified which will be followed by a process of validation prior to submission to the SSA.

**Virtual Learning Classes**
In continuing with our efforts to encourage technology enabled learning, this year we designed digital content in English (based on the state syllabus) to conduct classes using the Virtual Learning Medium. These virtual learning classes (VLC) were a convergence of our multimedia resources in English and our learning camp materials for students of class 10, who would be appearing for their state level board examinations. The classes were conducted by English language experts together with local school teachers. Despite challenges with network and accessibility, we did manage to create an innovation that vastly appealed to the students and made learning fun and exciting for them.

**Our Efforts in Multilingual Education**
During our review of language resources available in the state, we found very poor and limited learning materials and written resources available in tribal languages. Whereas Khowai is largely tribal, this omission deeply affects the quality of the teaching learning processes.

In an effort to address this lacuna, we tried to develop a repository of learning resources in the tribal language, Kokborok, that could be accessible and available to all. A resource bank of age appropriate and context relevant reading material with purposeful and attractive TLMs was developed. The materials bank had similar resources developed in Bengali and English, aiming to enable a smooth
transition from home language to the official medium of instruction.
To initiate this work, we roped in resource persons from Tripura who were fluent in all the three languages, had a keen understanding of the local language issues and an experience of working with children. The multilingual materials were designed by a group of external resource persons, teachers, and our programme team, together with language and pedagogy experts of our Central Resource Unit. We brought in artists to illustrate the stories and poems translated from Kokborok to Bengali. The materials developed and drafted were validated by state experts for the MLE package to be finalized for printing.

**Celebration of Language Week**
Language week was celebrated from 19th to 28th of January 2017. The celebration of language week was a part of our intervention in the state language programme. During the week, a series of parallel activities were held, for both Bengali and Kokborok. Several classroom learning strategies were demonstrated, creating ample scope for listening, speaking, reading and writing in both Bengali and Kokborok.
We believe that language should be taught in an environment that is free from fear and anxiety. A friendly, warm and non-judgemental space enables children to express themselves which results in language production – both written and spoken.

**The Problem of Proficiency**
In Tulashikhar, there are a significant number of teachers from the non-tribal community who teach in schools with a high incidence of tribal children. Often these teachers do not understand the child’s mother tongue, which leads to a communication barrier in the classroom. There are also cases where tribal teachers do not have adequate language proficiency in Bengali. This results in the alienation and marginalization of the children. With every passing academic year, the learning gap widens, and children either drop out from school, or continue as low achievers without acquiring even basic literacy and numeracy.

**Enhanced School Environment**
Most of the schools in Tulashikhar wear such an uninteresting look that the children have very little reason to find their school welcoming and attractive. Moreover, majority of the children come from print-deprived families and are usually first generation school-goers. Creating an enriched and attractive classroom that is both appealing and print rich, laden with abundant resources, is very important to get the children to look forward to coming to school and take interest in learning new things.
As a targeted goal we decided to ‘do-up’ the schools and our team literally went around helping the teachers put up class libraries, word walls and other attractive materials. Unfortunately, on later visits, we observed that none of the resources and materials, including the illustrated library books was used by the teachers in the classroom. This led us to work deeper to initiate changes in the overall school environment and we brought in the idea of BaLA— or using the building as a learning aid.

The BaLA (‘Building as Learning Aid’) initiative was formally inaugurated at Bachaibari School by Sri U.K. Chakma SPD (SSA) and Director of School Education (Primary) in November. The BaLA will be implemented in 25 schools in Tulashikhar.

**Teacher Development**

In an effort to support teachers to bridge learning gaps in language among children, we shared our experiences of using learning enhancement camps as an important strategy. This method is scientific, with short targeted goals for concept development, and a good method to scaffold learning on a one-on-one basis that is usually not possible in the classroom. In addition, over the year, more than 450 teachers were included in our capacity enhancement programs, which dealt with English pedagogy and classroom strategies to ensure language acquisition.

**BaLA is an innovative concept which comprises the development of a child-friendly physical environment through changes and alterations in the school infrastructure. It involves using the school’s physical space as an interesting and effective learning resource.**

“Kokborok has not evolved over the years due to lack of care and attention from native speakers… Writing prose, poetry and verses in Kokborok will go a long way to enrich our beloved language.”

Mr. Aghore Debbarma, Minister of Tribal Welfare, Govt. of Tripura
At the language week celebration
Inching Towards Mainstreaming – Our work with Madrasas in West Bengal

While on one hand Vikramshila has been working with mainstream government schools catering to all mediums of instruction including Urdu, we have also been working directly with Madrasas since 2004. We started engaging with both government and private madrasas to offer high quality pedagogical interventions – such as fun learning camps with students, workshops and trainings with teachers, classroom interventions, innovations in science and technology in the classroom processes and whole school transformation programs.

The quality intervention in Madrasas this year was taken on as a continuation of our engagement with the system to modernize both private and government Madrasas.

Our vision converged with the mandate of TATA Trusts, who have partnered with us in the current project since 2015. In collaboration with the West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education (WBBME), the project operated with a view to improve the quality of education in Government Aided Madrasas in Hooghly. Over this period, we have attained saturation in terms of project coverage in Hooghly district.

The Sachar Committee found that the literacy rate among Muslims is much lower than the national average and that the literacy gap between Muslims and non-Muslims is greater in urban areas. 25% of Muslim students in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out. The literacy rate among Muslims in 2001 was 59.1%, below the national average (64.8%) with the gap greatest in urban areas. Distribution of Enrolled Muslim Students Aged 7-16 Years by ‘Type of School’ shows that about 66% go to government schools, 30% go to private schools and about 4% in madrasas. Another major finding of the Sachar Committee is that Muslim parents are not averse to educating their students and often wish to provide them with modern education.

This situation prompted us to work with Madrasas, in sync with our vision to reach out to the most marginalized sections of society and to offer quality education for all children.
Programme Model and Outreach
Vikramshila began work with the Government aided Madrasas of West Bengal, recognizing the crucial role they play in providing access to formal schooling to the Muslim community. As a resource organization, Vikramshila has taken on a number of interventions over time with an aim to offer sustained long term support that would ensure that the Madrasas are empowered to impart quality education that is relevant and meaningful to students. Typical to the nature of resource agencies, Vikramshila creates models of good practices, which can be taken up by the government system for replication and scaling up. Hence, there is a conscious effort to work in partnership with government systems at every opportunity. We chose to work with Madrasas because we wanted to establish some good practices, help create role models — and use them for bringing about larger changes in Madrassa education. Our program model is depicted below.

Over the project period we reached out to 44 Madrasas, 318 teachers and 8200 students of whom – 2676 students were offered technology based learning (ITE) and 2568 students received support in Science education.
Focal themes in the current year
The following were the main themes that we focused on this year. These are interconnected themes, involving working with children directly and with teachers through capacity building workshops.

Major Activities Undertaken in the Year
• Setting up of Science Corners
Science corners were set up in Madrasas to enable students and teachers to move beyond textbooks and actually "do" the science experiments they read about. Through hands-on simple experiments, it is believed that the abstract elusive concepts will become clearer and more interesting for students who will then naturally develop into curious and creative individuals willing to try out things on their own. In an attempt to engage the students in meaningful investigations, particularly of the problems they perceive to be significant and important, a two-pronged intervention was planned – to reach out to teachers and to students, first through capacity building workshops and secondly through setting up on science corners in the classrooms, to encourage students to move beyond textbooks. The students were guided by their teachers to conduct simple experiments with easily accessible materials. The experiments from the physical science text books of classes 7 and 8 have also been listed down for demonstration in the science corners. The science corners have been set up in 13 Madrasas (both private and govt. aided Madrasas) as an attempt to strengthen science education.

• Learning Camps
Learning camps were organized for the students as a sustained effort to help them to improve basic learning levels. An important feature of the camp is a 5-day intensive interaction which makes the teachers and the students learn a lot about each other beyond their names and faces, to understand each others' strengths, weakness, attributes, characteristics etc. This goes a long way in helping the teachers to understand each child, her /his specific needs and abilities to intervene for learning improvement. At the same time, this gives scope to the teachers to adopt through hands on practice, the methods and approaches proved to be effective for learning enhancement. The daily camaraderie that results from the nature of the camp methodology helps students open up to the teachers more freely.
Approximately 1312 students of 33 Madrasas participated in five days or twenty five hours of learning camp. The result of the baseline and endline in three subject areas is represented in the bar graph below.

### Baseline and Endline Comparative Result (In percent)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Endline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>44.75</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>34.62</td>
<td>45.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>39.45</td>
<td>55.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **ITE (Integrated Approach to Technology in Education)**
  An initiative of Tata Trusts, ITE is an opportunity for the marginalized in the form of an organic model for implementing educational technology to bridge the learning divide. This is a pedagogical framework which is basically designed to improve learning of the students and to foster higher order thinking skills using technology. Students use technology to create projects from the textbook lessons that aims at knowledge deepening. Being a teacher driven program, the teacher designs lesson plans based on the curriculum. As such the teachers design and the students create in order for the students to work on higher order thinking skills – creation, synthesis and application.
  In the Madrasas, ITE is implemented in 12 centers, both private and government, where, after a baseline survey and teacher capacity building program, ITE is implemented in an innovative way. Students undertake science experiments in their recently set up science corner, video-tape them and then prepare interesting ITE science projects by inserting these videos as hyperlinks on their presentations. They have also created projects with components of the IDD or Integration of Dinni and Duniyavi knowledge.
A celebration of student achievements in ITE

An Inter-Madrasa ITE sharing meet followed by an IDD workshop was organized by Vikramshila and TATA Trust in August 2016. This meet provided the students the platform that they needed. We witnessed the students creating high quality projects by putting in hours and hours of study and effort. They were practically falling over themselves to get an opportunity where they could showcase all their created artifacts and latent talents! The ITE meet proved to be just that, where Private Madrassa students from class 6 to 9 participated.

It is wonderful to see the confidence and creativity among you. It was really a very inspiring workshop and I am sure our UP partners will be able to take back rich ideas which will strengthen their work on the ground.

Ms. Tara Sabavala
TATA TRUSTS

Nafisa loves her Tech Classes!
The bell rang, announcing the beginning of 3rd period. Nafisa (class VII, UNB High Madrasas)) rushed to the staff room and asked Partha sir “When will you start our ITE class, Sir?” He chuckled a counter question “Well, let me see, what is the attendance in your class today?” and was pleasantly surprised to hear “Sir, we are all present today! Don’t you know we are present every day for ITE classes!
UNB High Madrassa, situated in a remote village, Sudarshan, in Hooghly district, sets an instance of a rapid change among the students as well as teachers doing ITE classes with the help of the Vikramshila team. During the span of a single academic year, we witnessed rapid positive changes in the students' energy and confidence levels, their willingness to try out new things and in the teachers' attitude towards using technology. Sk. Motiar Rahman , Teacher in Charge, spoke to us with a lot happiness “My students have become very attached to the ITE classes….during their course of activities I noticed that they voluntarily take part in work like video shooting, searching information from internet, doing hands on experiments and documenting the same. This make me so happy… a year ago all these were beyond our imagination. After Vikramshila team started working in our schools, our students seem to have become more articulate and ask a lot of questions!”

He added that whenever students have prior information that ITE class will be held, the next day we witness almost full attendance. Nafisa, Hasina, Wakib and Sahil promptly declared together that they love to do ITE classes; they also admit that it's beneficial because only in an ITE class can they do things on their own. They have to struggle to learn new things and find solutions, which forces them to go beyond textbooks.
Mr. Partha Sarathi Roy a teacher from this Madrassa, felt that as we are living in an age where educational technology has become necessary for the learning enhancement of students.
India Today

Technology bringing back madrasa kids to classes

PTI
August 26, 2016 | UPDATED 10:30 IST

Nikhil Agrawal
Shapar (ME), Aug 26 (PTI) A number of madrasas in West Bengal, beset by high dropouts and absenteeism, are seeing a turnaround after integrating Islamic theology with modern education through the power of technology.

After his science class on vitamins, standard nine student Abdul Rashid went to the new computer lab of Dar-Ul-Uloom Siddiquia Madrasa here in Hooghly district to search the Internet about food habits of Prophet Muhammad.

Along with his classmates, he then came up with a digital story on how favourite foods of the Prophet nourished his body with vitamins and other nutrients.

"If we tell them about nutrition they won’t find it interesting but when we link it with Islam then the topic becomes interesting for them. It helps them relate to their education with the community they are coming from," madrasa teacher Somsri Day told PTI.

This idea of integrating dual (religious) and civic education (civically education) with modern technology has been conceptualised by educator Anima Churam from Tata Trusts. The new pedagogic framework for integrating technology in teaching and learning was adopted by the madrasa in 2014 and since then enrolment has doubled for class five students.

"I don’t see any dropouts happening now. On the other hand the enrolment has increased and so has attendance in classes," said Robin Dutta, headmaster of Vikashmancha Education Resource Society who is working for the development of the minority education institutions.
Efforts in Early Childhood Education

Vikramshila's work in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education has always been an area of passion and proven expertise for Vikramshila. We have always believed in the importance of ‘the right start’ and the need to invest in and provide the best of early childhood education. Research from all over the world has vouched for the criticality of the early years in brain development. Recognizing the high significance of stimulation and planned strategic interventions in the 3-6 age group, Vikramshila commenced its journey in 1989 with pedagogical engagements and experiments in this field. India has the world’s largest integrated early childhood programme, (namely the ICDS) which has a spectacular outreach across the country; yet, often the expected vision statements don’t get effectively translated in the implementation. While there have been significant inroads in the area of health and supplementary nutrition, often the early childhood education component gets lost or is neglected. This is mostly due to lack of technical knowhow, absence of a holistic curriculum and capacity and skill building of the anganwadi workers. It is heartening that there has been a renewed engagement in this area when the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) developed a national curriculum and policy on ECCE which has re-emphasized the importance of developmentally appropriate, activity based curriculum and programmes.

Progress and Achievements of Vikramshila's Intervention

Vikramshila has been a designated member in the special task force created by the Department of Women and Child Development. In partnership with UNICEF and CECED (Center for Early Childhood Education and Development, Ambedkar University) we supported the Department in developing a child friendly ECCE curriculum and handbook, Pre-School Education kit, and offered a professional development course to master trainers across the State over the last 3 years. So far, 400 master trainers have been trained and equipped to roll out ECCE training. Vikramshila had played a critical role in this capacity building program, by providing hands-on support to the master trainers. Model centres have been developed to demonstrate the central tenets of child friendly ECCE programme. The West Bengal ECCE programme has been acknowledged as one the best practices by GoI and has facilitated learning visits for many States. Vikramshila has provided extensive support to the state. One hundred and thirty laboratory model ECE (anganwadi) centres had been developed directly by Vikramshila that paved the way to developing 1000 model ECE centres in the state last year and 2000 model centres this year. In course of this work we have developed centres in rural, urban and tribal areas; in plains, hills and near forests and tea gardens. We have had a unique opportunity to work with people speaking mainstream Bengali, different dialects of Bengali, Santali as well as Nepali.
Program Focus of the Intervention This Year
In the reporting period 2016-2017, Vikramshila supported the state in scaling up the programme across all 20 districts of West Bengal. Upscaling and replication of project outcomes often leads to dilution and sometimes a loss of quality standard. This was an apprehension we had when we were taking the project into all the districts of West Bengal. In order to ensure quality standards, there was need to establish a system of regular monitoring and mentoring within the government system itself so that the interventions would eventually be self-sufficient and sustainable.

Vikramshila supported the department in the following ways:

- Training support to the master trainers during the District Level Master Training across West Bengal.
- Support in strengthening the AWTCs and the MLTCs in West Bengal.
- Steps to develop capacity of AWTC/MLTC faculty in three districts were initiated – South 24 Parganas (CINI), Bishnupur – Bankura (Prabudhha Bharati) and Birbhum – Elmhirst Institute, after completion of the Gap Analysis study by CECED.
- A School Readiness manual and Activity Book for children (4+ to 5+) was developed and a print ready copy was handed over to UNICEF for further dissemination.
- A 60 member resource group was formed – 20 in each district, comprising of the AWTC faculty, the concerned DPO, CDPO and selected supervisors, already trained as DRG.
- Pathways for improved interactions (academic discussions) with the CDPO, SRG, DRG, Supervisors and model centres have been created through formation of model centres in their vicinity.
- A school readiness manual along with workbook was designed and is now ready for rollout.
Activities Undertaken This Year
Support to DLMT Trainings in the State

The state government took an initiative to ensure capacity building of all the supervisors and CDPOs of the state, so as to ensure total coverage. This effort was made in compliance with the GoI circular that mandated the training of all the supervisors of the state within the year. This is a step forward in implementing the curriculum in the 1,14,000 anganwadi centres of the state. These trainings were called District Level Master Trainers’ (DLMT) training. As a result, each of the districts underwent several rounds of DLMT trainings. These DLMTs will eventually train all the anganwadi workers of the state in subsequent batches.

The trainings were mostly facilitated by DRGs and Master Trainers; especially trained for the DLMTs. Vikramshila supported the facilitators from twenty batches of DLMT trainings across the state. We provided support more than once in North 24 Parganas, West Midnapore and Birbhum. Our support to each of the batches in the districts helped the facilitators to upgrade their own capacity and deliver better quality in the subsequent batches. Through the DLMT trainings a total of 2,400 people were trained among whom 2,200 were supervisors.

Pilot intervention to support AWTC/MLTCs

The anganwadi/multilevel training centres are officially assigned the task of developing and maintaining the academic capacity of the anganwadi workers and supervisors. They are responsible for conducting job trainings and refresher trainings of the same. It was essential to integrate our efforts with theirs, primarily for sustainability of innovations done so far. These centres needed to be upgraded, updated and capacitated on the lines of the new curriculum so that they could serve as strong academic resource organisations at the district level.

In consultation with the UNICEF, we selected two AWTCs from Bankura and Birbhum and an MLTC from South 24 Parganas for the pilot intervention of working with AWTC/MLTCs. Here we began with a dipstick needs analysis of all of the training centres through interviews with the principal, the instructors and the concerned CDPO in order to understand the current situation of the institutions, their schedules, administration and their own professional development needs. They were asked to review their own institutions and come up with improvement plans. These plans that were developed were very valuable and aided our intervention design substantially.
Based on the findings of the Needs Assessment, we are now supporting the pilot AWTC/MLTCs to develop model anganwadi centres on their own. These centres are within 5 km radius of the institution. They are developed to connect the AWTCs/MLTCs with the grassroots level as they seemed disconnected with the realities of the field. These model ECE centres will eventually serve as laboratories to these training centres; where the faculty can innovate, experiment and try out new activities with the students directly and gain important insights.

A team of 15 members have been identified in each training centre to ensure consistent capacity building of the training centres and undertake quality checks of the newly formed model ECE centres. These monitoring teams consist of the DPO, the CDPO, AWTC/MLTC principal, instructors and supervisors. Fifteen model anganwadi centres so far have already been developed around the training centres; with Vikramshila's support.

Other Activities to Support the State
Vikramshila supported the efforts to finalise the Anganwadi training manual for the state government, which the master trainers will use during the AWW's training. We have developed a school readiness package for children aged between 4 ½ yrs-6yrs that would facilitate their smooth transition to class 1. The package consists of a workbook and a teachers' manual which was developed with inputs from subject and field experts primarily focusing on oral language development, reading readiness, writing readiness, maths readiness and science experiments. A class routine was also provided in the manual for the school readiness portion to enable the worker to run the sessions smoothly. Training on the school readiness package will be a focal area of work next year.

A Graphical Representation of our Efforts
The following diagram shows the different stakeholders who can contribute to the ECE programme of the state in order to make it successful and sustainable as well. All the stakeholders within the green circles have been adequately trained and oriented on the new ECE curriculum of the state. 1.8% of the state AWWs have already been trained in the process of developing model ECE centres or Shishu Aloys; and the capacity building of the remaining AWWs is planned as a part of the programme upscaling. While hitherto the AWTCs and MLTCs could not be included in the mainstream process of scaling up; we had to address their needs separately, as described above. We aim to see that all the circles will eventually turn green!

Voices from the Field
- Anganwadi centres from across the state are reporting increased enthusiasm and participation of the parents and the community in the Anganwadi activities and functioning.
- With greater parental and community involvement, members of different households have started freely donating toys to the recently created 'Toy Bank'. Parents of grown up children, older students, ex-students and teachers of primary schools have contributed to the toy bank of the AWTCs. These toys are then kept at the play corner or used by the AWW for an activity, much to the delight of the children!
- "Amake gunte dao ani toh gunte pani!" (Give me things to count, I can count!) Retorted a little girl who recently moved to primary school from her AWC. Being used to the method of learning by doing, and being quite capable of counting, she refused to follow the rule of rote learning of symbols from 1-10.
• In another district a child refused to take food as she has learnt in the ECE centre “Amra khoaor age o pore bhala kore haat dhui” (we wash our hands properly before and after having food). The child clearly has learned the rules of the anganwadi by heart and wishes to follow them diligently.

Impact – Trends and Changes
In our short period of engagement noticeable shifts in the attitude and relationship between the Anganwadi training centres and the local level administration of the department were visible. While the training centres remained detached from the mainstream processes even during efforts to upscale the curriculum, for the first time the focus of a state level program is on them and the program is customised according to their need to meet their ends. This we feel had the requisite positive impact. At the same time they are made answerable for implementing and maintaining certain quality standards at the field level. These efforts have initiated an improved and increased interaction and relationship between the AWTC principal and the corresponding CDPO. They have started developing plans together, involving each other in decision making and so on. The training centre staff has started setting up model centres along with the supervisors and Anganwadi workers. This improved convergence is expected to yield better results in the future.

“The children are now happy in their Shishu Aloys. Toys, picture books and colouring exercises have won their little hearts. The anganwadi centres are no longer known as ‘Khichdi Schools’ and parents now drop their children timely to the centres. Many parents say that “We struggle to manage one or two kids at home but Didimoni (anganwadi worker) efficiently manages so many children at the centre at a time!” It makes me feel happy and content. I feel humbled that I can touch the lives of so many children and initiate them into the journey of life”

- An Anganwadi Worker in Purulia
Secondary Education is a crucial stage in the educational hierarchy as it prepares the students for higher education and also for the world of work. In spite of various initiatives by the RMSA to improve the access to and quality of Secondary Education, there has still been a huge drop out of students at the upper primary level. One of the major reasons for drop out as reported is that students cannot relate the curriculum with day to day life skills leading to weak linkages between education and livelihood. It has been proved that this gap is one of the major push out factors for adolescents from schools. Analyses of text books have revealed that there has not been enough focus on equipping children with the life skills which will help them in the real world. While regular school subjects are continued in secondary and higher secondary schools, and a minor elective component of “vocational” is available in some schools, there is a complete absence of any programme that enables students to equip themselves for life and for work as envisaged in the RMSA framework.

Education to Employability (E2E) Project was first conceptualized by Vikramshila in 2008 to pilot a holistic career focused life skills solution for students of vernacular medium government schools. The project was adopted by the state government in 2011-12 under the RMSA Scheme. In 2013-14 it was scaled up to 200 government and government aided schools covering all districts of West Bengal. About 30,000 students covering these 200 schools underwent a structured 60 hours’ training on Career Awareness, Communicative English and Workplace IT Skills through nominated school teachers who had undergone a detailed training on E2E subject areas and in turn acted as the nodal persons for the intervention.

**Education to Employability Diagram**

- **2008**: 5 model schools in Kolkata
- **2009**: 10 model schools in Kolkata
- **2010-2012**: Program Upscale 30 model schools in Kolkata
- **2012-2014**: Program adopted by RMSA 30 schools as models in Kolkata Process of upscaling to 200 schools in districts
- **2014-17**: RMSA expands scope to - 170 district schools 50 KGBVs 20 city model schools
- **2017-18**: E2E Project upscale to 1000 RMSA schools

**Headway** - a new pilot launched in 5 selected city schools for intensive work with middle school and high school.
In 2016-17 our outreach has been across 200 schools which include 50 KGBV linked schools, 36,000 Students, 600 Teachers and 200 Heads of schools.

Direct Intervention with 30 high schools in Kolkata integrating both intensive and cascade mode of delivery

Cascade Model in 170 schools across 21 districts, where nominated teachers adopt and implement the programme for classes 9 and 10 in their own school

Model for programme implementation across the state

Major Activities in the Year

(A) Technical Support to the RMSA
In 2016-17 Vikramshila supported the RMSA in Head Teacher orientation and training of teachers (3 teachers of each school in two phases). The schools have been visited 2-3 times – for school survey, baseline assessment and to help them set up career hubs as well as conduct career camps. Vikramshila trained 485 Master Trainers who would now train teachers in their respective districts to help RMSA scale up the programme. RMSA has planned to scale up the project progressively for which they are starting with 1000 schools this year. They have requested us to provide technical assistance during scale up so as to ensure quality control.

The RMSA has been training teachers on Inclusive Education under which career counseling for adolescents is an important component. More than 5000 teachers have been trained.

(B) Support to 50 KGBV Linked Schools
With support from UNICEF, Vikramshila conducted baseline assessment of students followed by student camps in the KGBV linked schools. We also undertook monitoring and evaluation visits to the schools and provided logistical support in distribution of student workbooks to project schools. The response to the career camps from the students has been extremely positive.

In order to help us monitor the quality and effectiveness of the scale up, we have ranked the schools on the basis of the effectiveness of project implementation of the 50 schools. 19 schools are in the ‘very good’ category, 20 are ‘good’ and the remaining is ‘average’. Career Hubs have been generated in all the schools. We provided support in the career counseling classes whereas the teachers are handling the communicative English and life skills classes themselves. The schools have requested some support for the digital literacy and financial literacy classes. Given their limited exposure, we feel the schools will benefit a lot if provided some hand holding support for some more time.

(C) New focus of the E2E module
While last year the E2E module concentrated on Communicative English and Soft Skills, Career Awareness and IT skills, this year the module is broad based and includes 5 strands:

• Social and Interpersonal Skills
• Adolescent Issues: Physical and Emotional well being
• Career Skills
• Digital Literacy
• Financial Literacy

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(D) Direct Intervention in 30 Model Schools

With support from the Tech Mahindra Foundation (TMF), Vikramshila has provided intensive implementation support in all 30 model schools including one-to-one Career Counseling and group career counseling. We have identified 100 candidates from the schools who have completed class 12 or 10 and have attained employment age (those who will not pursue higher studies) and created linkages with TMF supported SMART centres and/or any other relevant service provider for placement linked skills development and training. We also identified students who do not suit the SMART target group, but are in need of employment, and linked them with relevant support providers or helped them start their own small businesses. Cluster wise career day events were organized with cooperation from the schools to reach out to parents for larger awareness building.

All students reached out to in the EZE (WB) project, are from government/ government-sponsored/ government-aided schools. Some of the district schools are in District Head Quarters but all the KGBV linked schools are in rural parts of the district with a large population of minority, SC, ST students.

The percentage of girl students in the EZE (West Bengal) project is more than boy students. Also we have schools in EBB/LWE/minority population areas. The bulk of the students are from the economically backward parts of the state of West Bengal.

In Bihar, the students reached out to have a mixed background- agriculture based as well as daily wage earners & other unorganized sector jobs. A few however come from slightly better background.

An Impact Assessment Study of the programme in West Bengal was undertaken by FICCI. The study shows that the programme is being implemented quite well by teachers in 70% project schools and an average of 35% gains have been evidenced in students in the area of IT, communicative English and Soft Skills in their end line assessment. The school-wise improvement is given below.
Our work has enabled us to interact with some very insightful high school students. Students with big dreams and aspirations, who want to succeed and make a mark in the world. All they need is some guidance, someone to show a direction, offer opportunities and options, possible career choices, support in developing their plans – preparing a backup plan and so on. Some of the interesting case studies are given highlighted.

Satarupa is a speech and hearing impaired girl. She is a student of Laskarpur Rabindra Vidyapith for Girls’, and has struggled to complete her education in a regular school. Her mother was invited as a speaker on the Career Day organized by the school and she inspired everyone with the story of Satarupa’s struggle to complete her education with her handicap. This year Satarupa has successfully completed her HS examinations with 55% marks, which is a big achievement. Satarupa has taken training in SMART PLUS, where she was given speech therapy along with a training on Retail and Marketing. This has boosted her confidence so much that Satarupa is now helping her mother in her sari business and is interacting confidently with customers using sign language and lip reading. She wants to develop the business further and wants to train as a dress designer.

Olivia, of Bethune Collegiate School is a bright student and her heart was set on being a doctor. However, when she was unable to get through the Joint Entrance examinations, she did not break down, as she had an Option B ready; due to the Career Counseling she was given. She is now studying Physiology Honours in a reputed college and wants to pursue research in future.
(E) E2E Outreach – Bihar
The E2E West Bengal project was celebrated as one of the best practices by the MHRD under the RMSA scheme. Immediately after this, the Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad (BMSP) expressed their wish to adapt the module for their state. Vikramshila is supporting the BMSP to conceptualize and implement a Career Focused Life Skills program for class 9 students of government schools in Bihar. The program incorporates 4 modules – Life Skills, Career Counseling, Communicative English and IT.

As a partner, Vikramshila undertook HM orientation, Training of Master Trainers, Training of teachers, Baseline Assessment of students, student camps across the 4 modules, participation in State initiatives for branding and visibility such as Bihar Diwas & Shiksha Mela.

Outreach

100
schools across 6 districts

20
Direct support to 20 schools in Patna district

25000 & 400
Nearly 25000 students 400 teachers
impacted directly from work with 20 schools

80000
Indirectly impacted 80000 students from remaining 80 schools
Community Partnerships for Equity and Quality in Education

- TRI, Tata Trusts
- Pradan
- Indienhilfe e.V. Herrsching
- Seva Kendra Kolkata
- Durbar Mahila Samanway Committee
Inroads into the Community

Developing community partnerships to support educational outcomes

Schools cannot effectively work alone. They need to move from isolated and short-term actions to engaging in a more holistic manner through systemic initiatives. Community partnerships create ways for schools to collaborate with families and community members in support of education. It provides enriched learning opportunities for students and teachers and fosters new ways of thinking about their own practices as they become more aware of community services, resources and opportunities. Community cohesiveness is a natural human goal and local communities must embrace their schools through which students learn and grow into productive citizens. We believe that community-based education fosters interdependence and leads to educational and community practices that have the potential to impact people on a global scale.

Vikramshila undertakes a large number of projects where we indirectly reach out to the community through the students. Often there are conscious efforts to create community linkages through home visits, Mothers’ Meetings, community based meetings and events involving the communities (such as rallies, street theater, exhibitions, etc.).

Recently, Vikramshila began working directly with communities to create changes in the education system. The idea was to build community awareness and vigilance towards the importance of school education and school completion. We believe that an empowered community can ensure equity and quality in the school system—primarily by monitoring issues of student attendance, teacher absenteeism, quality of teaching learning processes, learning achievements, school infrastructure, availability of separate toilets for boys and girls, availability of safe drinking water, food quality of mid day meals and by keeping a vigilant eye on preventing school dropouts, child labour and early marriage.

Our Community based Programs

Promoting Equity in Learning
in Purulia and North 24 Parganas

Transforming Rural India
Bankura
The model we follow in our programs is represented below:

Community Programs

Sensitization to Issues of quality and equity

Capacity Building of Community Stakeholders

Improved School Development Plans

Improved Vigilance of School Quality

Enriched School Environment

Improved Learning outcomes for Children

Community Enrichment Programs for Improved Educational Outcomes
Promoting Equity in Learning

Vikramshila’s work with Seva Kendra, Calcutta and Durbar Mahila Samanway Committee is supported by Indienhilfe e.V. Herrsching. This was the second year of work at North 24 Parganas and the first year pilot at Purulia, aiming to promote equity in learning and to create child-labor free villages.

**North 24 Parganas – 2 Gram Panchayats of Swarupnagar Block**

**Intervention Partner – Seva Kendra Calcutta**
Main Community Partners-
School Heads, Community Volunteers, Child rights Workers

**Purulia – Sirkabad Gram Panchayat in Senabona Village**

**Intervention Partner – Durbar Mahila Samanway Committee**
Main Community Partners –
School Heads, Teachers, and Village volunteers

**North 24 Parganas**
North 24 Parganas district is identified as one of the Muslim minority concentration districts. It belongs to the more backward category set of Socio-economic indicators, which are found to be below the national average (Category-B). The population of the Swarupnagar block consists primarily of migrated families from Bangladesh, with deep seated livelihood problems 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 with their families. Often, in the absence of employment, parents have migrated to other cities like Mumbai, leaving little children behind with older siblings and grandparents. This further accentuates the problem of school dropout and child labour in the villages.

**Purulia**
Purulia is an economically backward district, situated in the western boundary of the state of West Bengal. It is primarily agrarian in nature. Here, the Arsha block has the mixed culture of Bengal and Jharkhand. We came across a distinct folk culture of rich Jhumur, Tusu, Bhadu songs and Bengal Chhau, Nachni dances. People in these villages perform in many cultural events and ceremonies that showcase tribal culture in return for remuneration which is of course very low and the terms of their contracts are usually exploitative. Despite their vibrant cultures, the everyday lives of the people are fraught with poverty, illness, malnutrition and illiteracy. The literacy rate of Arsha block is very low and our field study revealed that it was in 2017 that for the first time a girl in the village appeared for her board examinations.

The program started with a needs assessment and baseline test to understand learning levels of the children, which would help us design and pitch appropriately the training modules and resource materials.

Technical Support to DMSC - As a part of their intervention, DMSC has established a daycare and research centre in the Senabona village to support the children of Nachni and Jhumur communities. From the daycare centre, they provide tuition support to 30 children of Jhumur and Nachni community. As a technical partner, our role was to improve the learning levels of the students in Mathematics, English and Bengali in the primary and secondary grades through capacity building of animators on one hand and by leveraging community networks on the other, to ensure sustainability of outcomes.
Pre-Primary and Primary Level Workshop
Capacity enhancement workshops on pre primary education and primary level education were offered to child development animators and crèche mothers. The training was conducted at the Bigha Resource Centre. The participants were sensitized on the issue of quality and equity from the perspective of the NCF 2005 and the Right to Education Act. In addition, they were oriented on conceptual frameworks, pedagogical processes, concepts of Maths, Bengali and English education as well as on skills of classroom management. Strategies of remediation were discussed as well as the expertise of designing lesson plans, child-wise plans, development of assessment tools and creating teaching learning materials was shared.

Volunteers Sensitization Program
Regular sensitization programs were undertaken to motivate the community volunteers to understand their roles and responsibilities in creating a child-labour free village. To ensure long term success of the programs, these volunteers need to be an integral part of the system so that the children in the community continue to be educated and flourish. A sense of success, appreciation and recognition for any positive action can be a great boost for an individual motivation. Exercises such as goal setting, problem-solving, developing critical thinking and knowing the self helped participants to understand their personal goal as well as their role and duty towards society.

Learning Camps (Maths and English)
Learning camps were effective ways to channelize resources towards the attainment of short targeted learning outcomes on a particular subject area. The camps began with a baseline and ended with an endline assessment to measure progress across the different learning indicators. Typically 3-5 days in duration, the camps offered children a variety of methods, resources and materials through which they could grasp essential concepts meaningfully.

Vikramshila trained and capacitated the project staff and teachers of residential bridge course centers. We undertook the five day camps across two venues with support from our resource persons and project staff of SKC.

Organizing the Learning Spaces
We supported the centers to develop into well equipped learning spaces that are organized and child-friendly, which in turn created an effective learning environment for the children. Learning spaces have been supported in both North 24 Parganas and Purulia.

Consistent Mentoring and Handholding support
Regular site visits, handholding support and demonstration classes were undertaken across the year through monitoring visits, monthly review meets and quarterly review meets. The review meets created space for evaluation of the work done, planning for the coming months, discussing the challenges faced and for trying to find good working solutions to these issues.

Sensitization of the schools and the community
A regular linkage with school teachers and head teachers was maintained. We kept them informed about important activities and reiterated our project aims. In addition, we continuously emphasized on the significance of their role to ensure retention and school completion of children that would in effect create a child labour free village.

We ensured constant liaison with all stakeholders of the community. This is primarily to sensitize them on the objective and means of creating a child free labour gram panchayat. The members are motivated to be active volunteers in the program to identify child labour issues and report them, as well as to sensitize parents on the importance of education and schooling processes.

The community is encouraged to look into quality standards of the learning camps, schooling processes, and problems of attendance and dropouts.
Transforming Rural India (TRI)

In India, the first logical step to ensure holistic development in line with the Sustainable Development Goals would be to minimize the ever-increasing divide between urban and rural India. It is in this context that Transform Rural India (TRI), a Tata Trusts Initiative, is working with various partners like Pradan to improve the quality of life in villages through several successful community-based interventions on health, education, livelihoods and others that conform to an inclusive and equitable vision of growth and development.

Pradan has adopted a multi-thematic and cross-sectoral approach where several interventions are conducted in collaboration with specialized partners to bring about a lasting change on the field. It is in this context that Pradan has approached Vikramshila to be a part of this ongoing intervention. It is hoped that Vikramshila’s experience in education, coupled with Pradan’s existing base in the community will together result in a long-term positive change.

There are about 300 villages in Hirbandh and Ranibandh Blocks where the literacy rates are much less than the district average of 70.26%. The blocks have a predominantly Santhali speaking population. Though the state government has provisions for Santhali medium schools, a miniscule number of such schools are in place in the area. Absence of qualified, trained Santhali speaking teachers also adds to the problem of tribal children having difficulty in coping with achieving grade appropriate learning competencies in the early grades. The traditional sources of livelihoods are dependent on the forest and on cultivation. However, the blocks being situated in a rain deficit area with infertile soil, the agricultural produce is inconsistent and inadequate, leading to requirements for alternate sources of income. Villagers often migrate to the adjoining districts of Bardhaman, Hooghly and other places to meet their subsistence needs. This practice acts as a big obstacle for children to continue with their regular classes in schools.

We are working in 2 gram panchayats in two blocks – Ranibandh and Hirbandh. Our main community partners are Self Help Group Members, of whom 176 have emerged as community leaders. We are also working with Upasanghas and school head teachers.
Vikramshila as a technical partner for education, worked with the schools and the communities of Hirbandh and Ranibandh blocks in Bankura

**Needs Assessment**
The program began with needs assessment that consisted of a school survey. 43 primary schools of Ambikanagar and Gopalpur GP (9% of schools in the project area) were surveyed on the following areas - infrastructure, classroom situations, enrolment and attendance, PTR, Teacher training, medium of instruction and classroom processes.
The needs assessment continued with focus group discussions with the SHGs, parent groups, PRI members and school teachers of both Hirbandh and Ranibandh blocks. These meetings helped us to assess the situation on the ground realistically, providing us with crucial inputs to design our strategies for future intervention.
The vision of the program was shared with the district and block level education functionaries to implement the core ideas in the field and carry out the program activities in a collaborative manner. The proactive response from the DPSC chairperson (Bankura) and constant support from the SI office has played a significant role in creating a positive atmosphere to work closely with the primary schools of the area.

**Program Strategy – Parallel Movements within School and Communities**
Last year, the primary focus was on building a strong base within the local community. As a strategy, we extensively interfaced with the Self Help Groups (SHGs) to understand their needs, aspirations and understanding on matters related to education. For a deep engagement with the community, we chose to work closely with 10 Upasanghas (cluster of SHGs) in Ambikanagar gram panchayat and Gopalpur gram panchayat of Ranibandh and Hirbandh blocks respectively. A series of visioning meetings were held with the individual SHGs to help them develop a perspective on education and initiate a process of dialogue around the notion of quality in education. Over a short span of time we have reached out to 176 SHGs covering all 10 Upasanghas. These meetings helped us to penetrate deep into the community and locate the fissures which need sustained attention in order to improve the quality of education in the area. As a next level of engagement, 170 representatives nominated from each SHG have been trained to develop a deeper knowledge on education. These women leaders have been empowered to initiate the process of building a strong linkage between the community, the school system and the local administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of schools</th>
<th>Visioning meeting held with 176 SHGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 No of Upasanghas</td>
<td>Advanced training received by 170 leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Total no of villages reached</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Highlights of The School Survey**
- Only 21% schools have proper boundary wall
- Around 93% schools do not have a separate place for children to have their MDM.
- Only 19% schools have proper playground.
- 21% schools do not have separate toilet for boys and girls.
- There is an average of 2.5 classrooms in each school – which suggests that each grade does not have its own classroom space
- The average enrolment is 54 percent
- The ratio of Santhali to Bengali speaking children is 1:2
- 23% teachers have no pre service training.
- TLMs are not in use in any school
- We witnessed teaching learning process in action in only 9% of the schools during our survey**
- There are no SMCs in any school
Capacity Enhancement of Self Help Groups
The TRI initiative laid a great emphasis on mobilizing the community to play the role of primary stakeholders in bringing about a positive change in the government education system. Adhering to this principle, we began our community engagement with 10 SHG clusters (Upashanghas), 5 in each block. We undertook the “visioning on education” exercise which attempted to build a perspective on the need to have quality education for primary school going children and followed it up with an advanced training of nominated SHG members which focused on a deeper understanding of RTE act and building the capacity of the SHG members to take on leadership roles. These trainings culminated into a 3 months action plan which includes SMC mapping of the schools, assessing MDM conditions and tracking the attendance/drop-out of the children in the community.
Two separate modules were prepared for both these trainings which involved research, data collection, and analysis, development of content and resource materials.

Engagement with the school system
As a parallel engagement to the continuous dialogue with the community, we have gradually made inroads into the primary schools of the intervention area. We began our journey through the needs assessment survey mentioned above. We shared our program objectives with the DPSC chairperson (Bankura) and engaged with the S.I of Ranibandh and Hirbandh blocks in a sustained manner. As a multi-pronged strategy, 12 primary schools have been selected from the area to conduct learning camps in order to improve teaching learning processes in schools and also to increase appreciative dialogue between the community and the school system. To initiate this process, an orientation program has been conducted with the teachers of 6 primary schools in Ambikanagar GP to acquaint them with the purpose and pedagogy of learning camps.

Actions Speak – Positive results of our capacity enhancement programs
Asha of Lacchipur village in Gopalpur is the founding member of the Village Education Council of Lacchipur primary school. After completing her advanced training on education with Vikramshila, she visited Lacchipur primary school to assess the condition of mid-day-meals. Lacchipur village has six Self Help groups (SHGs) which take charge of the school mid-day meal by rotation. During her visit, she learned of a tussle between the head teacher and the SHG in charge of the MDM over the issue of daily fuel cost. As a fallout, there was no MDM prepared and served for four consecutive days. When she tried to enquire about the close down,
not only did the head teacher refuse to cooperate, but also threatened her with dire consequences. Not to be deterred, Asha arranged a meeting with all the six SHGs in the village and placed the matter before them for discussion. It was decided that four out of six SHGs would take charge of MDMs in the school at the given rate allotted for fuel. After this resolution, she contacted the person responsible for MDM at the block level and shared the situation with him. As a result, on the next day, a meeting was convened by the Block Development Officer (BDO) to find a solution to the problem. The head teacher was asked to cooperate and resume the MDM at Lacchipur primary school with immediate effect.
Lifeskills and Career Enhancement Programs for Women's Empowerment

- U.S. Consulate General Kolkata
- Regional English Language Office
- SSM, Kolkata
- NGOs working with women survivors
Women's Empowerment Programs

Communicative English, Life Skills and Career Readiness

Last year we ventured into a new path by consolidating our learning and expertise in different areas to create an empowerment program that would benefit under-served and under resourced young women. The idea was to create a much needed program where English would be the primary tool for empowerment. With support from a host of experts, a 100 hour module was developed that incorporated essential components of life skills, career readiness, digital literacy and financial literacy. The module was tried out with high school graduates and found to be immensely successful. Within a short span of 21 Days, we were able to maximize impact and learning by making the sessions outcome driven, experiential and targeted. The module was further fine-tuned and revamped to incorporate new ideas and skills for a new program on empowerment called 'Udita', reaching out to under-served women leaders.

Given below is an account of our trials, efforts and new steps in rolling out our new domain expertise!

Life Skills and Career Readiness Camp

With a special focus on women empowerment, the Life Skills and Career Readiness camp reached out to 100 high school girls from government aided vernacular medium schools. The 21-day camp, in collaboration with the U.S Consulate General Kolkata, was an effort to weave together Vikramshila's different strands of experience in Life Skills Education (LSE) to develop innovative content by integrating life skills with the employability domain. The inauguration ceremony was held on April 1, 2016 at the American Center, Kolkata.

Innovative Strategies used in the Camp

- Audio/visuals to introduce concepts
- Use of protocols like think-pair-share, knee to knee, carousel to ensure cooperative learning
- Ice breakers and warm ups to make the camp fun and engaging
- Interactive quizzes, role plays and communication practice
- Innovative grouping and reinforcement strategies to increase motivation
Process
The camp was conducted at two locations, one in North Kolkata and the other in South Kolkata. All the sessions began with rich intensive inputs such as role-play/audio-visuals and ended with student learning outputs in the form of worksheets, posters, speaking activity etc. In addition, there were opportunities for reflection and introspection through reading of resource materials and various collaborative learning strategies. Ms Jode Brexa, an English Language Specialist, was present as a constant support, observing, mentoring and guiding the facilitators - both the Alumni teachers of the U.S. Consulate General Kolkata and Vikramshila staff. She also participated during group activities and energizers, using motivators such as stickers and stamps for those performing efficiently. The high-energy level that was created on the inaugural day was sustained throughout the duration, in spite of a very sustained and unusual spell of heat wave that made the authorities close down all the schools during this time. A number of innovative activities were undertaken during the camp such as the Scavenger Hunt, Earth Day Celebration and the HR Panel Discussion.

Gallery Walk
The Camp ended with a gallery walk, where the tangible outcomes of what the girls had learnt were displayed in the form of visible artefacts at different stations designed and created by the girls. The creation of these unique stations and poster presentations demonstrated their excellent team work and leadership. The girls clearly showed increased confidence and improved soft skills as reflected in their collective presentations. Parents, teachers, and school heads of the participating schools were invited to be a part of the celebration. The closing ceremony started with Mr. Andrew Posner, PAO, congratulating the girls on their successful completion of the camp. Scholarships were given to the girls for successfully completing the camp. Among them, twenty girls were rewarded as outstanding performers and were given a special scholarship. The U.S. Consulate General Kolkata also acknowledged the facilitators and handed them the certificates.

A Hundred New Beginnings
A dissemination seminar was organized on 16th August 2015 to showcase and share the excellent inter-organization cooperation, program design, implementation, best practices, and outcomes of the Camp. It was attended by many of the participating students of the camp (who are now pursuing subjects of their choice in colleges), their parents, teachers of various private and Government schools and representatives from Vikramshila. The seminar proved to be a great opportunity for the girls to use the various skills developed during the camp and demonstrate their remodelled personalities to the visitors with renewed confidence.
ইদুরদীড়ে তাল মেলাতে জীবনপাত্ত ব্যস্ত কনাশীরা

আমাদের সমাজের জীবনে পালিয়ে যাওয়া এই বিষয়টি নির্দিষ্ট অংশের জীবনের ব্যাপার। এই কনাশীরা জীবনপাত্ত ব্যস্ত ছিলেন।

এদিকে সমাজের বিভিন্ন অংশগুলিই এই বিষয়ে সমাজের জীবনের ব্যাপারে নির্দিষ্ট অংশের জীবনের ব্যাপার।

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Beyond Lifeskills and Career Readiness

The learning leap made by the girls after the camp was phenomenal, and we saw visible shifts in their perceptions, attitudes, and body language with every passing day. They grew more confident in expressing their thoughts and opinions. After the completion and certification of the camp, the girls were tracked on a regular basis to get an update of their career paths, course selection and choices. Their progress was very heartening and it was felt by the Consulate that we should continue our association with them, or at least with the ones who received a scholarship. We felt that we must harness the newfound agency developed in the girls and challenge them a little further with activities that would enable higher order critical thinking and to explore creative medium of expression through workshops on film-making, theatre and inspirational talks.

A documentation of the camp process and the post-camp activities was developed to be released in the Final Close-Out Meet. We titled it 'A Hundred New Beginnings'.
Post-Camp Activities

Film making workshop: Four documentary films were developed on women achievers who have successfully broken the glass ceiling in their own individual domains such as sports, theater, dance, film direction, business and entrepreneurship. These women achievers have excelled in their own field and have turned out to be role models and inspired numerous young women. This process of making the documentaries with experts and mentors from Bichitra Pathala enabled the girls to delve into the lives of these women achievers and explore their own selves and lives in their light.

Taking Center Stage: As Empowered Women to Empower Women: A theater workshop was conducted by experts as a medium to build awareness on critical social issues like violence against women, women rights, human rights, gender equality, education etc. The participants came up with their personal experiences in the form of letters and monologues which became the building blocks for the script that was used in the final performance on 3rd December 2016 at the end of the workshop at the American Center.

Inspirational Talks: A series of inspirational talks were organized in collaboration with U.S. Consulate General Kolkata, where we used the space of American Center Library and invited speakers from diverse fields to speak for themselves such as Rishi Kant of Shakti Vahini, Jeeja Ghosh, a Social worker for Disability Rights, and many others who shared their challenges and experiences as they embarked on their careers and the journey of life.
Close out Ceremony of the Empowerment Program for Young High School Graduates

A close out ceremony was organized in collaboration with the US Consulate General, Kolkata, on 25th January 2016 at Rotary Sadan, to re-experience the transition of these young women from being a high school graduate to a college goer. The chief guest for the event was Dr Shashi Panja - Honourable Minister of State- Independent Charge, Govt. of West Bengal. The distinguished Guests of Honour were Ms. Ananya Chakraborty, Chairperson WBCPCR, celebrated singer and music personality Neepabithi Ghosh and Surojit Chatterjee, celebrated dancer Alakananda Roy and Mr. Greg Pardo, Asst Public Affairs Officer of US Consulate General - Kolkata. The four documentaries on the women achievers were screened on the occasion, followed by a performance of the skit by the girls. The event was appreciated by all the guests and saw a lot of participation from the press, who interviewed the young women after the programme.
Udita - Inspiring Empowerment for Young Women

**Udita:** Inspiring Empowerment for Young Women was influenced by the 21-day Life Skills and Career Readiness Camp with 100 young high school graduates, which succeeded in creating an exemplary curriculum that focused on imparting life skills and career readiness modules using communicative English. Vikramshila, in collaboration with the US Consulate General Kolkata, proposed to reach out to young women survivors of trafficking and gender-based violence who had limited opportunities, to offer a capacity building programme on Communicative English, Career Counselling, Digital Literacy and Financial Literacy. This training was provided with an aim to ensure that these young women feel enabled and empowered to speak for themselves and their rights. The program perceives English as an empowering tool, something that will give these women the edge to compete in a variety of life and work situations.

**Sharing meet with partner organizations**
A sharing meet was organized by Vikramshila in association with U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata on 3rd November 2016 at the American Center. The objective of the meet was to share and inform about the proposed project to the potential partner NGOs who work with women that have a history of gender-based violence or trafficking. A total of 22 organizations, 2 Alumni teachers, and representatives of Vikramshila Education Resource Society, U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata and a Counsellor were present. From the inception of this program, the U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata was involved in the design of the assessment tool and planning process with Vikramshila. Ms. Sohini Das, Cultural Affair Specialist, our project contact person from U.S. Consulate General Kolkata, helped us in the planning and conceptualization of the program and supported us in the execution.
Selection Process

Language Baseline

81 young women representing 19 non-profit organizations

The candidates had to complete the written section which had five basic activities on listening comprehension, picture comprehension, writing simple sentences with picture cues and then completing a one on one oral session

Shortlisted 42 candidates for the one-on-one Needs Assessment.

Needs Assessment

The purpose was:
(a) to finalise the participants for this programme
(b) to generate findings that would enable Vikramshila to identify the needs and requirements of the participants
(c) help them to structure the curriculum of the English Empowerment Program

Conducted in a collaborative manner with 15 partner NGOs.

The tool was prepared by Madhu Balasubramaniam, our Program Counselor

During the needs assessment, the candidates shared their ethnicity, marital status, preferred language, organizational information, educational information, employment background, physical health and training related sections with the representatives. They also shared their needs and expectations from the program, and the skills and resources they wanted to learn from the program to be able to utilise them in their future work. Majority of the candidates aim to obtain good jobs after they complete their studies and the working professionals want to learn these skills and apply them in their present career. After completion of the Needs Assessment with the bright young women, the assessor came up with the final selected list of 35 young women for the program.

Our Partner Organisations for UDITA

- All Bengal Women Union
- Destiny Foundation
- Sanlaap
- Emmanuel Ministries
- Freeset
- Hope Foundation
- Jabala
- Jewels in a Crown
- Nari O Shishu Kalyan
- New Light
- Shomota Women Care
- Kolkata Sanved
- Vikramshila (Nabadisha)
- Swayam
Process
The six-month program was launched with an inaugural ceremony on 18th February, 2017. Over the course of the first few months, the main focus was on Communicative English covering self-introduction, small talk, likes and dislikes, idioms, giving directions, explaining a process, social graces and telephone etiquettes. The sessions were gradually evolving with each passing day according to the needs of the participants. The English Language Fellow, from RELO, Ms. Katy McAlary is giving constant support in planning and development of the sessions. The next focus is digital literacy weaved in with leadership, empowerment and other social-interpersonal skills. The sessions thus far have encouraged the women to speak freely and not be afraid to practice their English in a safe space so that they may use it outside the safety of Udita sessions as well. According to one of the participants, the direction activity was excellent because they got to play and practice in English outside and over phone which was very practical for them. It was challenging yet fun.

“One participant was very quiet and reserved in the first sessions - barely interacting or speaking in English at all, but now she is an active participant in the sessions, not only speaking more frequently and with more confidence in English, but also helping those around her as well

Katy McAlary

“
Science, Technology And Social Science

- Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kolkata
- UNICEF, West Bengal
- West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education
- Private Madrasas
- State Government of Tripura, SSM
- TATA TRUSTS
- WIPRO
- Modern Academy of Continuing Education
Science as an 'Approach to the World'

In a world that is becoming increasingly complex, where success is driven not only by what you know, but by what you can do with what you know, it’s more important than ever for our youth to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to solve tough problems, gather and evaluate evidence, and make sense of information. These are the types of skills that students learn by studying science, technology, engineering, and math—subjects collectively known as STEM.

STEM is an educational program developed to prepare primary and secondary students for college and graduate study in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In addition to subject-specific learning, STEM aims to foster inquiring minds, logical reasoning, and collaboration skills.

In India, the Ministry of Human Resource Development aims to inculcate a spirit of inquiry, creativity and love for Science and Mathematics in school children. The Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan (RAA) was conceptualized under which government schools are to be mentored by Institutes like IITs/IMs/ IISERs and other Central Universities and reputed organizations through innovative programmes, student exchanges, demonstrations, student visits, etc. to develop a natural sense of passion towards learning of Science and Mathematics.
In our own state, the status of learning achievements in Science and Maths has been evidenced to be low. Various learning achievement surveys like NAS and Utkarsha Abhiyan at the State level have revealed considerable learning gaps between the expected outcomes of Science and Maths and actual achievements of the students. The large scale assessment of the State reveals poor achievements at the Upper primary level both in Science (44%) and Mathematics (39%). The reasons identified for low learning levels are weak conceptual knowledge, capacity of teachers, and lack of facility for hands on experimentation, among others.

Given these findings, there is critical need for the principles of STEM education and the spirit of the RAA to be implemented in West Bengal. The School Education Department of West Bengal has been proactive to this need and is in the process of starting RAA in upper primary schools. Vikramshila in partnership with UNICEF initiated a pilot programme for the students of classes VI, VII and VIII in 10 selected schools (4,500 children approximately) in Kolkata in 2016-17. The pilot, developed in consultation with School Education Department involved teacher capacity building and resource development. The plan was that the learning materials, strategies and package developed through this demonstration will then be taken up by the School Education Department as part of their intervention. The protocol, guideline of setting up Science corners, teacher education strategies, and the package will be scaled up to the State level.

**The focus of the project has been on modeling hands-on Science and Maths teaching in 10 schools to demonstrate the central tenets of the Rashtriya Avishkar Yojana in the following way –**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>CAPACITY BUILDING</th>
<th>CLASSROOM INTERVENTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Learning Gaps in Science and Maths</td>
<td>Capacity Enhancement of Teachers in Science and Maths Pedagogy</td>
<td>Setting up of 30 science corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a Comprehensive Module on Maths and Science</td>
<td>Textbook analysis, Discussions and Hands-on science Experiments</td>
<td>Conducting Hands on Science Experiments in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Teacher Training Manuals</td>
<td>Exposure visits, creating networks and linkages with experts</td>
<td>Creating platforms for sharing and discussion</td>
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**Continuous School Based Support and Mentoring**
Development of Modules for teachers in Science and Maths
The module has mapped the fundamental concepts of science learning at the elementary stage. It gives a theoretical background of constructivism and its application in science teaching in the classroom, focusing on the learning environment and assessment. The module has session plans on the trainings and detailed procedures of conducting different hands on experiments by using low cost, locally available materials. It is believed that the hands-on experiments are of significant importance in ensuring conceptual understanding.

A teacher training module on mathematics has also been developed.

Equipping teachers through trainings
Capacity enhancement trainings were held for 20 teachers from all 10 schools. The trainings covered themes on the nature and pedagogy of science and maths, problems and concerns for mathematics education at elementary stage, mathematics curriculum, and teacher’s preparation. We also delved deeper into teaching of fundamental concepts. With help of experts from SCERT and college faculty, we demonstrated essential concepts. The science training was an interactive one with lively discussions and activities. Hands on experiments based on the syllabi and text books of physical science for Classes 6, 7 and 8 were illustrated by the resource persons. A significant effort was made by the resource persons to orient the 30 teachers towards scientific enquiry and the process and rationale of science teaching. An interesting session was conducted where the teachers tried to analyze the textbook from a different lens.

Setting up and Activation of Science Corners
Nine math and science corners have been set up in the schools. Demonstrations were undertaken in each school to show how the equipment could be used. Each school has been provided with 3 Maths and Science corners (one section each from classes VI, VII and VIII). An attempt has been made to encourage students to try out hands on experiments. A great deal of enthusiasm has been created around the project and the teachers are willing to try out the new things in spite of time constraints.

Network of Experts and Institutions of Science
IIT Kharagpur hosted two meetings where our team participated. We had the opportunity to talk about our program with different organizations working in the area of Science and Math education. The IIT is trying to develop a repository of existing materials on Science and Mathematics for achieving the goal of RAA, and we were invited to be a part of this initiative to ensure convergence and larger outreach and impact.

A Whatsapp group called 'Scienceapps' has been created where teachers post videos and pictures of classroom science experiments. This network is very popular and motivates a healthy competition among the schools!
Technology in Education

While India still has no pan-India strategy on implementing technology in education; entrepreneurs and nonprofits are braving the odds in the sector. The government estimates that 22% of primary schools have a computer, but the reality is that many schools aren’t using the equipment they have*. In most schools the computers are partly functional or dysfunctional units. Teachers are often skeptical or unwilling to try new technology in the classrooms. Many of them lack the confidence required to deal with new technology. Being more used to the chalk and talk method, they stick to it under the pretext of having to cover the syllabus on time.

ITE’s multifaceted objectives include bridging the digital divide, fostering digital citizenship, creating an active interest for learning, fostering Higher Order Thinking Skills and significantly improving pedagogies and learning processes. In the midst of a number of new interventions in this field, a model of educational technology was initiated by the TATA TRUSTS. The Integrated approach to Technology in Education (ITE) is a pedagogic framework for integrating technology in teaching and learning. It provides children with an opportunity to authenticate their learning at school using technology, while nurturing crucial skills that are fast becoming requisites in the 21st century. In partnership with Vikramshila, the program runs in supplementary learning centres, madrasas and public schools. Technology is embedded in the teachers’ lesson plans and pedagogy. The teacher designs learning activities and students use technology to construct their own learning. Here technology is used as a tool, rather than as an end itself.

*https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/may/07/technology-transform-india-education-system
5450
Students – through regular classes during school hours (class 5 to class 9)

33
Government schools in Kolkata and 12 madrasas in Hooghly district

11
SLGs in Kolkata (before and after school hours)

215
Projects developed altogether

75
Government school teachers and 144 madrasa teachers trained on ITE

HIGHLIGHTS

ITE Mela in Collaboration with SSM, Kolkata

After about two years of consistent ITE interventions in the government schools, the teachers and head teachers began to take keen interest in the projects being created by their students on a regular basis. They were thrilled with the artifacts and requested us to create a sharing platform where all schools could exhibit and make presentations. In collaboration with SSM, Kolkata, we organized the ITE Mela where 29 government schools presented their work.

There were frenzied preparations prior to the event with students creating projects using different applications. They also tried to experiment with different ideas and video documented them to add to the final presentations. Exposure to a variety of media made learning fun and more exciting. They prepared and rehearsed their preparations with great enthusiasm, and on the final day they were outstanding! There was a quiz after every presentation to add an element of fun. The event was attended by a host of government officials from the education department and by representatives from the TATA TRUSTs. All the guests appreciated the efforts and gave a very positive feedback.

An interesting visual tour of the Mela through a Skype session was organized by the students for Ms. Tara Sabavala, Associate Director of TATA Trust. They took her to the different stalls set up by the schools and the students presented their projects and interacted with her. We also had participants from partner NGOs such as Suchana, an organization in Bolpur and Samaritans Help Mission, Howrah who organized and presented a project on the application ‘Scratch’.

“Very inspiring to see government school students adapting ITE. Very confident presentations and efforts to think out of the box! Very good work by Vikramshila and thanks to SSM for providing the platform.”

Dr. Amina Charania, Associate Professor TISS
ITE Sharing Meet with Madrasas in Hooghly

In a similar showcasing event, an ITE sharing meet followed by a workshop on Integration of Dinni and Duniyavi Taleem (IDD) was organized for the private madrasas of Hooghly district. It was a platform to appreciate and laud the efforts of the children and teachers of the madrasas. These institutions, in an effort to remain relevant and meaningful in the fast changing world, have embraced general subjects and a number of new ideas such as ITE and IDD, and tried to merge the two.

Seventy four students of classes 6 to 9 participated in the ITE sharing meet and presented eight distinct projects. Of these, two projects were a mix of IDD in ITE, namely ‘Muslim Astronomers’ and their contribution” from class 6 Geography, “Importance of vitamins connecting with how favorite foods of Prophet Mohammad nourished his body with vitamins and other nutrients” from class 9 life science. Other innovative projects demonstrated how beautifully the students had captured their science experiments on themes such as Reflection of Light, Conductivity of Different Types of Liquids and Effects of Current from their textbooks of classes 7 and 8. They also presented projects using computer applications such as spreadsheets, digital storytelling and multimedia. Each presentation was followed by an interactive feedback session with the audience where the children explained their project rationale and answered the questions asked by the audience regarding their projects and about their future prospects using ITE as a means of their learning. Officials from the education and madrasah departments and from Tata Trusts were present for the occasion, and appreciated the efforts of the children and teachers associated with the project.
Towards Active Citizenship

Our Curricular Development Work on Social Science Teaching

As a resource organization working on education, most of our programmes are a form of action research that is value-based, action oriented and participatory in nature. It involves a collective process of knowledge generation that is analyzed, leading to further action for empowerment.

Framework for Social and Civic Action

Our social science research program follows the above framework to create active citizenship among students. When motivated to think, question and act, children grow up to be responsible and transformative citizens. It is our belief that good quality education begins with changes in the classroom. As microcosms of society, classrooms are where most of the action happens when it comes to school education. It is from this perspective that our curricular experiments aim to create democratic classrooms, brimming with questions, where interaction between peers is encouraged and where there is skilful facilitation by the teacher who encourages creation and synthesis of knowledge by the students themselves, thereby following critical pedagogy.
With a view to encourage such an enquiry based approach in the classroom, we delved into the teaching of social sciences in the classroom. While the social sciences have been gaining greater significance in the national policy guidelines, we found there was very little work in the area in the eastern part of the country. Usually compartmentalized into separate subjects, the holistic nature of the discipline often gets lost due to poor and uninform classroom processes.

We found a complete absence of social science in schools in West Bengal. While it is clearly a felt need among many teachers and HMs, schools were still clueless about what to do. In Tripura, while social science is a specific subject in the school routine, the lessons were usually carried out in a chalk-and-talk mode, often leading to disinterested students and perplexed teachers. The richness of the interdisciplinary nature of the subject can only be captured through a dialogical and enquiry based approach of teaching. This was unfortunately missing in all classrooms.

Keeping this in mind our engagement with the ‘Social Science Project’ since 2012 was with a view to encourage citizenship education to teaching of Social Science. In addition to content development for teaching social science in schools, we were particularly concerned with the pedagogy, laying particular emphasis on the role of the teacher as a facilitator. In the project, the teacher is envisaged as someone who creates scope for dialogue within the classroom process, taking an interdisciplinary approach to learning by including students’ knowledge and experiences for knowledge construction.
Innovations in Classroom Processes in West Bengal

This year we developed three new modules on ‘Judiciary’, ‘Local Government’ and ‘Market’. In order to facilitate conceptual clarity among the students on these abstract themes, a number of innovative techniques were used. We also used technology in a number of ways in the classroom, to demonstrate that teaching matter is not restricted to textbooks alone.

Audio-visual clippings from popular mainstream movies were used to trigger serious discussions around these topics which was very exciting for students. We also used some of the techniques from Augusto Boal’s “Theatre of the Oppressed” through which we tried to get the children to delve deep into their lived experiences and reach a better understanding of issues that were being discussed.

Over the year, we reached out to 845 students in 10 schools in West Bengal reaching out to a diverse demography and geography. This varied sample as illustrated here, gave our team an understanding of how different issues are viewed by children and their responses often led us to reflect and understand their process of socialization. The classes were held with children in grades 6 to 8 and the duration of each module was roughly 10-12 hours. The schools were selected keeping in mind the following criteria: openness of the school head, attitude of teachers, the history of the school’s engagement with the project, a favorable PTR and demographic variety to ensure that different perspectives are brought into our experience of working with children.
Emerging Trends in Pedagogical Shift in Tripura
This year we saw a remarkable shift in teacher perceptions and attitudes that pointed towards pedagogical shifts in the classroom. While working with 45 Government Schools in three districts (Sipahijala, Unokoti, and North Tripura) of Tripura, we had the remarkable opportunity of glimpsing into their classrooms and work with the teachers in a partnership that has been a very insightful experience for us.

The state has created space for social science teaching in their school routine and has adapted the Social and Political Life textbooks of the NCERT. However, the attempt to translate the textbooks, which has been somewhat literal in nature, has rendered the language dense and stilted, often difficult for students to understand or relate to. It was at this stage that we were approached to support the state’s commendable efforts with our experience of social science teaching in schools.

Vikramshila has been working in the state of Tripura since 2003. This extensive and successful history of partnership with the government ascertained ample support and cooperation from all levels of the education system.

Starting from the state level to district level, block level and finally to the headmaster and teachers in schools, we found each stakeholder in alignment with the objectives of the project.

This shared history, familiarity of language and terrain and interpersonal relations went a long way to ensure effective project implementation.

Use of Technology
- Multimedia Presentations
- Audio Visual Clippings from Mainstream Movies

Theatre and Drama
- Techniques from Augusto Boal’s ’Theatre of the Oppressed’
- Theatre Games
- Performative Storytelling
- Role Play

Peer Learning and Review
- Cooperative and Collaborative Learning Strategies
- Group Work
- Debates
- Discussions
- Project work

After some deliberation it was suggested that the 45 pilot schools teach the content developed by Vikramshila instead of the school text book. In order to do this effectively, a short targeted training was organized for the teachers who went back to their respective schools to apply what they had learnt. The training was essentially to familiarize them with the new content, the idea behind it, the rationale for each module and the pedagogy necessary to implement them in the classroom. The focus in the trainings was to motivate the teachers to make a shift in their teaching methods and document the results that could then be shared in the wider group. It was necessary to make the pedagogic shift through which the social science classes would be successful.
Intensive Field Support and Subsequent Learnings – During the pilot, partner school teachers worked consistently with the project team. We were supported by the Block Resource Persons through regular field visits and telephonic calls for feedback. The high quality implementation brought to us an important learning that whenever teachers get a small and doable target with appropriate support, they are more open to accepting changes in their teaching methods. The intervention was time bound, targeted and the boundaries were well defined. They were provided with adequate resource support including detailed lesson plans, and students were given worksheets and small handouts with case studies for group reflection. This was a departure from the usual textbook-centrism and the teachers commendably made a smooth transition to the new teaching methods. The classroom successes enabled them to get motivated enough to take this pedagogy to other areas of teaching as well. This is an important learning in view of the universal challenge of training dilutions.

Training Module on Social Science developed in Tripura – In partnership with the SSA Tripura, we developed a training module for trainers on Social Science. A three day intensive workshop was organized where we worked along with their state level experts. Most of them were already familiar with our methods as they were part of the earlier trainings that had been conducted. The new module is based on the state syllabus for teaching Social Science in the upper primary classes and is aligned to the national curricular objectives. This work gave us the opportunity to apply some of our experiences from the social science project.

Reaching out to private schools through our partnership with MACE
We collaborated with the Modern Academy of Continuing Education, the teacher education cell of Modern High School for Girls, Kolkata (MACE) to offer a 10-hour module on Social Science for teachers for their pre-service training programme. This year we had about 40 trainee teachers in two batches.
Given the positive feedback of the alumni, the module has now become a compulsory paper for overall certification.
Resource Development and Outreach

We have been successful in generating a number of resource packages that have been widely field tested. The intensive nature of this engagement has helped us in developing our own capacities in this area, which has in turn enabled us to explore and get involved with designing various life skills programmes for the students at different levels.

Vikramshila has developed a Life Skills module for KGBV hostels which is currently used by approximately 4500 girls. We have developed Life Skills modules for secondary level in two states – West Bengal (used in 200 schools) and Bihar (used in 100 schools), both of which have been highly appreciated by students and teachers.

West Bengal:
- All districts,
- 200 Sec schools
- 30,000 children
- 92KGBVs
- 4500 children

Tripura:
- 3 districts
- 45 governments aided high schools
- 6500 children
Direct Outreach Programs with Children

- Department of Education – respective districts
- Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kolkata District
- Sarva Shiksha Mission, Howrah
- Sarva Shiksha Mission, Burdwan
- Tata Trusts
- ITC Mission Sunehra Kal
- Child Rights and You
- Kolkata Police, Community Police Wing
The Bigha School and Resource Center

The Bigha School, which started in 1996 under the “Innovative and Experimental Scheme” of Ministry of Human Resource Development, completed its twentieth year in 2016. The school has been our lab of learning and experimentation to integrate indigenous knowledge with mainstream education that results in the school curriculum being contextual, relevant and life centric. Vikramshila strongly believes in the authenticity and richness of home knowledge that children carry into their classrooms in the form of language, culture, values, understanding, beliefs and practices which they share with their peers in the classroom. Through their interaction with friends and peers, they try to examine, verify and validate this indigenous knowledge. In doing so, through continuous social and cultural exchange, the classroom becomes a social arena, where students can discuss, engage in dialogues, and express their feelings and opinions freely. A child acquires knowledge, not as an abstraction, but as a concrete experience, to which he/she can relate at a personal level. This relation helps her to construct meaning out of the available knowledge.

Through our experimentation with the curriculum, a number of good practices have emerged such as environment education where we integrate the three principles of environment education as enumerated in the NCF 2005, i.e. learning through the environment, learning for the environment and learning about the environment. There are also attempts to make writing authentic for children where they capture their lived experiences through creative writing. We find reflections of these in the Bandhur Khata (Biography of a Tree written by children each of whom adopt a tree as a friend), Wall Magazine, Sahitya Sabha (Literature Soiree), and library activities. Mathematics too is introduced among the children with the help of TLMs and other innovative techniques; the Metric Mela (or Fair) is one such example.

Our learning and practices from the Bigha School began to get reflected in the local government schools, when from 2015, we started working with 17 government primary schools and 14 other educational institutions (SSKs, MSKs and high schools) in three Panchayats, Putsuri, Denur and Bamunpara in Monteswar block. We also collaborated with the block level ICDS Department to support their efforts in early childhood education. Together with capacity enhancement of ICDS workers, we developed 10 anganwadi centers as model ECE centers. The Bigha School not only functions as a platform for engaging into innovative pedagogical practices, but also operates as a resource and training centre.
Highlights of our Activities of 2016-17
(1) Educational Activities with Children (Bigha School and Community partnerships)

Literacy Enhancement Activities
We had reading and writing activities to encourage children's creative writing abilities and boost their reading habits. Activities like children's wall magazine, 'Bandhur Khata', creative writing, library session and the 'Sahitya Sabha' have become an integral part of our school. This year we had two such sabhas where students from the Bigha School as well as local government schools participated. Parents and other community members were invited and they highly appreciated the efforts made by our young literati.

Exhibition cum Shiksha Mela
In December we had the 'Education Fair cum Exhibition'. Students from 10 local government schools participated alongside our Bigha school students. More than 500 parents and community members participated along with 300+ students. The students, under the mentorship of their teachers exhibited samples of creative writing, teaching learning materials, and student portfolios to the parents, teachers, PRI members and the larger community who participated in the fair. Our children also participated in 'Maths and Language Mela'. This was highly appreciated by the government teachers, Panchayat members and local community.

Joint events and community participation
This year the Bigha School celebrated quite a few events with the larger community such as Independence Day, Republic day, Education Rights Day and Rabindra Jayanti among others. The teachers, students, local PRI members, village leaders, parents and other community level organizations participated in these events. We also had different competitions and programmes like draw competition, quiz, reading competition and cultural programme where the students of the Bigha School competed with the students from our school and government schools.

Annual Sports Meet
Another example of a joint enterprise was the annual sports meet. It was conducted in two phases. In the first phase the schools held their usual sports event in their respective schools. The 10 best performers from each school were selected for a centralised Annual Sports Meet organised by the Bigha School. 130 participants from 13 government schools along with the children of our school participated in the sports event. In the audience we had members from the local PRI and other village leaders. Our Children's Resource Group, Suchana, was given the responsibility of organising this event. It was a successful effort and the event was well appreciated by the teachers, local PRI members and the larger community.

Annual cultural meet
Like every year we had our annual cultural meet in the month of February. Students from our school and other government schools participated in the programme. They performed to a large audience of 2500 people. We also used this platform to felicitate two of our former students who had obtained more than 80% marks in their Higher Secondary Examination in the previous year.

28 alumni of Bigha School successfully completed their board examinations

These joint efforts and inter school participations have helped to establish a symbiotic relation between Vikramshila and the government schools in Bardhaman especially in the Monteswar block. Vikramshila has always believed in working with and supporting the government school system rather than creating parallel structures. Conducive relations with the government schools in projects sites has helped to take our learning from the Bigha School to these government schools.
(2) Bigha as a Resource Centre
The Resource Centre at Bigha hosted a number of training programmes and exposure visits. A diverse group of development practitioners including government representatives obtained training from our specialised training unit here. Following are the various groups who had come to Bigha for orientation and training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Purpose of Visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shiksha Sandhan</td>
<td>Odisha</td>
<td>Exposure visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMECT</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Workshop on quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolkata Samaritans</td>
<td>Kolkata, West Bengal</td>
<td>Interaction of their children’s resource group with ours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Alliance for People Movement (NAPM)</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>Teachers of tea garden schools attended a 5-day workshop on quality education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jago Foundation</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Senior level officials visited our school to understand school and education structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMSC</td>
<td>Purulia, West Bengal</td>
<td>Trainings on foundations of education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- In addition, the resource center offered three phases of E2E Plus training (a skill development program) for 81 youth from all over West Bengal who have been successfully placed in different service sectors.
- Orientation programs (six in all) were organized for 215 anganwadi workers.

(3) Outreach Program Activities

Our government school interventions reached out to 4,586 children and 1,53 teachers this year

Partnership with Government Primary Schools – we work with 17 government schools (primary) where the best practices of the Bigha School are tried out. Our practices in language development and creative writing are introduced in these schools. In addition, an initiative on environment education is introduced through the upkeep of kitchen gardens in the school premises. The practice of maintaining students’ portfolios through formative assessment, a practice of Bigha School was started in the government schools as well. In the course of our intervention with the government schools the VHEC (presently known as the School Management Committee) has been an important partner along with PRI members in three Gram Panchayats. As a part of the dissemination process, the Bigha team has attended all CLRC level meetings and shared their experiences with CPC, HMs, Shiksha Bandhus and other teachers.
Outreach Program with Anganwadi Centers
As an early practitioner and now a recognised expert in the area of early childhood education, we started work in anganwadi centers to create 10 model centers. This year we conducted a series of capacity building exercises with anganwadi workers of these model centres as well as helped them set up the centers in line with the state and national guidelines. We also held meetings with parents, AWC supervisors and CDPOs to share our learnings and ideas. Pleased with the success of the model centers, the CDPO and his team have requested us to support more centers into becoming model centres. This was encouraging for us as it validated our support over the years.

Children’s Resource Group (CRG) for Quality Vigilance
The CRG, primarily an alumni network of our Bigha School, has always been at the look out to prevent drop outs, child labour, child marriage and other social malpractices. Apart from organizing different events in government schools and in the larger community for awareness and opinion building, this year two cases of dropout had been found in the project area. In both the cases the victims were girls. The CRG intervened in both the occasions and succeeded to re-enrol the girls in their schools.
NABA DISHA
Realizing Quality Education in Kolkata’s Urban Slums

Naba Disha programme is indeed Vikramshila’s new direction towards making quality education a reality for the marginalized children of Kolkata. Being one of the implementation partners to this unique initiative of Kolkata Police’s Community wing, Vikramshila has over the years attempted to go beyond the scope of delivering education to cultivating education. In 1999, when Kolkata Police conceived the idea of integrating under-resourced and under-served children of the slums of Kolkata into the formal school education system, no better opportunity could have come knocking at our doors to materialize our vision ‘to make quality education a reality for all children’. With the help of the then donor partner, Child Rights and You (CRY), we proceeded with the programme by ensuring access to education for the never enrolled or drop out children, at the Naba Disha Centres which are established in and around the premises of Kolkata Police Stations. Carrying forward on this path with TATA TRUST as our present donor partner since 2008, we have been able to take the programme to new heights by bringing in experts, new resources, new methods and innovations. Each learning centre is a hub of diversity attributed to the migrated children from the different parts of India, making Naba Disha an all inclusive programme through diversity of culture and language. It serves children of all ages and encourages multilingualism and diversity in the classroom.

Through this two-pronged mechanism, the program enriches children at the learning support centers and supports government schools into which the children are enrolled through outreach activities.
Enrichment Centers
Early Childhood Education
In 2016-2017, approximately 323 preschoolers were offered early childhood education at our learning centers. Initiating a qualitative advancement in the ECE programme, last year, we organized workshops with the teachers, to introduce the concept of theme based learning.

Learning Support
As we aim to supplement school education and not replace it, the program follows the state curriculum and designs lessons with innovative and enjoyable activities in a way to ensure that the concepts of language, mathematics and science are etched into the minds of children. Naba Disha offers learning support to 862 children from primary to secondary level.

With a focus on enabling the capacities of the teachers on English language that would in turn enable increased second language proficiencies in students, a series of English language training programs and workshops were organized.

In continuation with the bi-annual summative evaluations, the program teachers prepared half yearly and annual assessment papers in Urdu, Hindi and Bengali. The language assessment papers were designed to test the progress of the children in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The mathematics assessment paper was based on a three part test – oral questions, activity based questions and worksheets for problem solving. Both, the half yearly assessment held in June 2016 and the annual assessment held in January 2017, were done on the basis of the assessment papers developed in the workshop.

The library programme in the centres unlike the traditional library system found in our schools, complements our core components enhancing the learning capacity of children. The library programme is a well modeled learning process that also serves as a means to assess their cognitive development. The library program process commences with familiarizing children with the architecture of a book. Once the acquainted with books, children then have the choice of picking their books as per the color gradation. Catering to every child’s comprehension ability and also enabling assessment, the gradation, known as GROWBY (Green, Red, Orange, White, Blue and Yellow), is based on the picture to text ratio. Green indicates big pictures and small texts and by the time a child reaches Yellow, pictures grow fewer to none.
Given the vast linguistic diversity of the centers and respecting the children’s choice of language, Naba Disha libraries provide access to over 1200 books in Urdu, Bengali, Hindi and English. Naba Disha centres use various activities besides reading to yield optimum success of their library programme. In addition to paired and independent reading, the centres undertook activities such as ‘special storytelling sessions’, wherein, the children themselves were the writers, narrators and actors of their stories and were also performers in skits developed from the stories read by them. Other activities conducted to augment their vocabulary were ‘Chinese whisper’ and ‘tell me about yourself’ along with writing down meanings of difficult words.

Citizenship Education
It is essential to understand the concept of citizenship by immersing oneself in their community. In order to do this, we started offering Citizenship education for students between the age of 12 to 18 years, to be aware of their surroundings and be apprised of the events occurring in their community. One of the effective implementation tools of this programme is the ‘Bal Akhabar’, in which children collect information of significance from their community and community members and compile them into a small-scale newspaper that is displayed as a wall magazine. The students took the initiative to create awareness and conduct campaigns on issues of current importance, such as, campaign on digitization of ration card, Adhaar card, awareness programme on dengue, necessity of immunization against Japanese fever, necessity of neo-natal care, etc. They used tools such as role play, skits and posters, showcasing the need to address the above-mentioned issues.

Integrated Technology in Education

Scratch is a free visual programming language developed by the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Media Lab. It is used by students, scholars, teachers, and parents to easily create animations, games, etc. It provides a stepping stone to the more advanced world of computer programming. Scratch helps young people learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively — essential skills for life in the 21st century. With Scratch, you can program your own interactive stories, games, and animations — and share your creations with others in the online community
https://scratch.mit.edu/about/

As an expansion of the learning support component for middle school and high school students, sessions on digital literacy through the Integrated Technology in Education (ITE) programme has been initiated. About 300 children from the Naba Disha centres have embarked on their journey of digital literacy. This year, six workshops were organized by Vikramshila, four for our centre teachers and two for our students. Starting with a lesson plan workshop to create standardized project based lesson plans for the quarter, two more workshops on the use of Scratch application was conducted to incorporate Scratch application in the lesson plans and its implementation in a classroom setup. This was followed by a demonstration workshop. Here, the Naba Disha teachers were the facilitators as well as the participants. Through this workshop, teachers who were better equipped to deal with technology demonstrated the use of the Scratch application and moviemaker hoping to motivate those with limited knowledge to expand their understanding.
The final two workshops on ITE with Naba Disha centers, involved the participation of its children. This workshop was aimed to train children in the application of Moviemaker. It has been observed in the past that moviemaker is an effective tool used by the children to foster their citizenship programme. Our children have successfully been able to relay their concerns on the prevailing problems in their community through this application.

Employability Readiness
Like every year, in 2016-17, 48 students of classes X and XII were offered employability training conducted over a series of sessions, commencing from one-on-one counseling with experts, followed by self assessment tasks, Career Interest Inventory and additional tests to test their aptitude and interest towards a specific line of work. In addition to this, each student was offered a one-on-one counseling to decide on the career path suitable for them by factoring in their interests, skills and aptitude. Post session, the students were helped in creating their portfolios that included their curricular vitae, certificates, mark sheets among others. As part of our backend support, the student employability tracking sheet was updated.

Outreach Program In Government Schools
Library and Early Grade Reading
Encouraged by the demand of the library programme, post the set up of libraries in 27 government schools, we reached out to 23 more government schools through library based language workshops. By 2016-17, we reached out to 50 schools with our library programme. These workshops, ‘The Wonder of Books’, aimed at offering library services to more and more children, were held over a period of three days, to kindle the bonding with books, starting from familiarizing children with books and ending with creating their own Big Books.

An additional intervention was offered at the libraries we set up in the government schools for children of grades 1 and 2 – namely, support in Early Grade Reading. This programme attempts to familiarize children with the printed word, with stories, handling of books, and technically support them in learning to read, develop a good vocabulary, develop comprehension abilities and with achieving overall language proficiency.

Our libraries not only provide children with the opportunity to be lost in the wonderful world of books, but also create a learning space.

Integrated Technology in Education
In an attempt to take digital literacy and digital citizenship from centres to the school system, we reached out to 33 government schools to integrate ITE in their school curriculum and create a linkage between the school pedagogy and technology. About 300 students were offered the service through classes and workshops for both teachers and students.

In January 2017, Naba Disha organized an ITE Mela with the support of Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kolkata at the Shiksha Bhavan. The Mela was aimed to exhibit projects designed by children from the government schools, thus, showcasing their progress in digital literacy. A remarkable characteristic of the Mela was that digital literacy did not substitute book literacy. The projects showcased by the children were reflections of the topics that were studied by them in their textbooks, thus, making text book learning interesting and fun. Moreover, the projects displayed, showcased all facets of life including science, literature and culture. The Mela also highlighted their knowledge in the live use of applications such as Skype and Movie Maker.
NABA DISHA

**School Readiness**

- **Enrichment**
  - (13 NABA DISHA Centres)
  - **Core Components**
    - Early Childhood Education
    - Learning Support
  - **Auxiliary Components**
    - Library
    - Citizenship Programme
    - Integrated Technology in Education

**Outreach**
- (96 Government Schools)
  - **Library Setup**
  - Early Grade Reading
  - Class I and II
  - Class V to IX

**Job Readiness**

- Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)
- Primary and above (6 to 18 years)
- 3 to 18 years
- 10 to 18 years
- 10 to 18 years

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Enabling Action

Educational support to 30 school-based SLCs in Howrah

India is at a watershed moment in education. The focus has shifted from enrolment to learning and there is enough evidence from different sources pointing to the learning crisis facing the nation. The time has come to use this evidence to enable action. Our analysis of the learning data from 10 years of ASER shows that foundational learning levels are low and remain low over time. In 2005, about half the children enrolled in Class 5 were unable to read a Class 2 level text. This number was virtually unchanged 11 years later in 2016. If anything, there are some signs of decline in basic learning levels since 2010. In other words, about half of all children are completing the primary stage of schooling without basic foundational skills like reading.

The need of the hour is enhancing learning achievements and basic foundational skills in primary school. Vikramshila collaborated with ITC Mission Sunehra Kal in a multi-sectoral partnership for holistic development in three gram panchayats in Howrah district in 2015. The partnership focuses on improving learning levels of 3000 primary school children of 30 schools in three Gram Panchayats – Beldhubi, Joargori and Kandua. This is done through the development of foundational reading and writing skills among primary school children.

The community in this catchment area is under resourced and underprivileged, primarily from the Muslim community. Embroidery and zari work is a chief source of livelihood. The literacy rates are very poor and it is seen that despite the Right to Education Act mandating all children in school going age to be enrolled in schools, there are a large number of children out of school.
The program works in collaboration with the government system, the school system, the mission partners of ITC Sunehra Kal and the community.

**Partners and Collaborators**
- Local Community – parents, children, EVs, other community members
- Panchayat Raj Institutions
- Self Help Groups
- DM Office /ADM office
- District Primary School Council
- Block development Office
- District Project Office
- Sarva Shiksha Mission
- District Inspector
- School Inspector
- CINI
- WFP
- ANUDIP Foundation
- BANDHAN
Outreach and Numbers

Student Outreach (percentage) in Project Area (Panchayat Wise)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandua</td>
<td>41.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beldhui</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joargori</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Coverage (percentage) in Project Area (Panchayat Wise)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandua</td>
<td>33.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beldhui</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joargori</td>
<td>43.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Outreach and Numbers

Project Expansion
We developed 15 new SLCs in schools.
We now have 30 SLCs in Howrah

Onsite Support and Handholding
for capacity building of EVs, standardisation of processes and Quality Checks

Program Focus

Office Set Up
We set up a project office at Ranhati for better participation and improved monitoring and mentoring

Ensuring Program Visibility and Sustainability
through camps, events, meetings and orientations

Convergence of Efforts and Networks
For goodwill, advocacy and sustainability

Capacity Building Programs for the EVs
- Induction Training
- Workshop on Lesson Plan Development
- Workshop on TLM Development
- Exposure Visit to Naba Disha and Bigha
- Workshop on Child Protection
Activities Undertaken in 2015-16

Student Baselines for new schools
The baseline assessment in the new 15 SLCs was completed by the Education Volunteers. The children of classes II, III and IV of our project schools were assessed on their language (Both Bengali and English) and mathematics abilities.

Strengthening good practices in existing SLCs
The existing SLCs are running on a regular basis. The Education Volunteers conducted target oriented classes to ensure that all the learning parameters were met. The SLCs were rated on their performance and effectiveness, and the best performing ones of the year were rewarded.

Development of a System Operating Manual
The SOP manual for the project was developed which included details of centre set up, management, recruitment, teaching learning practices, camps, trainings, routines, calendar and lesson plans.

Remedial Camp conducted in 15 new SLCs
Remedial camps were organized across all the 15 Government Primary Schools in September to enhance the learning levels of children. Baseline assessment revealed that a large number of children were unable to read and write. A variety of TLMs and worksheets were used in the camp to facilitate understanding and to scaffold the child’s learning. Seeing visible results in a short time (because the targets were kept small and direct) was a big motivation to those teachers who facilitated the camps. An end line assessment was taken at the end of the camp and a comparison was made. It showed improvements made by children in each of the targeted areas.

Head Teachers' Orientation
A 2-day Orientation program was organized for head teachers of the participating schools. The School Development Plan was discussed by resource persons. In addition, we shared our teaching learning methodologies used in the SLC for concept building and skill development. Discussions on the philosophical foundations of our teaching methods, importance of remedial camps, success strategies, using the library as an active learning space were some of the issues discussed.

Centralized Community level events
A number of community level events were organized over the year. We celebrated Teachers’ Day with head teachers and teachers of 30 schools in 3 Gram Panchayats where a cultural program was put up by our students, education volunteers and supervisors to honor the teachers present on their special day at the BDO office.

INNOVATION: The Writing Program
The project has used a number of innovative strategies intermittently to encourage foundational learning skills in students – reading, writing and numeracy. One such strategy was organizing inter-school competitions on ‘Writing’. The writing program over 6 months culminated into a writing competition on three primary components –
(a) Handwriting
(b) Spelling
(c) Creative writing

Recalling the last importance of writing practice, the initiative was highly appreciated by the headmasters and schools teachers. According to them “The rigour of reading practice and writing drills were common in our time and led us to develop a solid foundation of language skills which is getting lost in the diluted forms of play, joyful learning and unit tests”. They felt the significance of good handwriting; correct spellings and even simple copy writing tasks were important to encourage diligence, concentration and language skills in students. Dr. Sudipta Chatterjee, SPD, PBSSM, chief guest of the day’s programme appreciated the efforts and said that “we need to turn the drab and boring classrooms into a happy environment where learning is fun.”
Reaping Successes- Improvement in Learning Achievements!

Vikramshila was requested to demonstrate the usages of the TLMs to the 80 Sahayikas and other SSK officials. A workshop was arranged by SSK Howrah for their Sahayikas. Our demonstration and activities were highly appreciated by the officials and they reiterated that all SSKs in Howrah should establish model centres like Vikramshila’s SLCs.

We found a decrease in incidence of private tuitions from among the students who attend the SLC regularly. Approx. 1.6% i.e. 49 students have left their private tuitions which is a very small but significant beginning.

Improved academic performance by 55% of students was reported by school heads together with an increase in school attendance by an average of 46%

According to our assessments, 80% of the students who couldn’t recognize Bengali letters have achieved letter level competency, 76.35% achieved Bengali word level competency from letter level, 53.75% moved to sentence level competency from word level.

In English 70.45% have achieved letter level competency, 56.75% have shifted from letter to word level and 23.35% have shifted from word to sentence level.

Rinki’s creative pursuits!

When Rinki first came to our centre we found her disinterested in her studies. She was shy, reticent and often reluctant to answer questions. She was also frequently absent from school, stemming from her disconnect with the school system. Over time we saw that the SLC and its varied activities started attracting her. The bright illustrated library books as well as active story telling sessions led her to come out of her shell and take interest in the work. She started practicing yoga regularly, which we initiated in our routine. Soon we found that Rinki was particularly interested in creative and expressive art forms such as drawing and dancing. We gave her constant opportunities to participate in these activities while gently coaxing her toward other activities including reading, writing and mathematics. Over time, she began to settle down and felt a part of the group. Gradually she started participating in activities voluntarily and taking an active interest in studies as well. Being a quick learner, she moved rapidly from letter and word level into sentence level. While reading her sentences, we find very good expressions and creative ideas. She loves to describe pictures and other creative writing work. She has also grown more regular in school and her increasing attendance in school is noticed and appreciated by all.
## VIKRAMSHILA EDUCATION RESOURCE SOCIETY
256-B, PRINCE ANWAR SHAH ROAD, KOLKATA – 700 045

### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2017

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<th>LIABILITIES</th>
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### ASSETS

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**Notes On Accounts**

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2017

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<td><strong>TOTAL INCOME (A)</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excess Of Income Over Expenditure (A-B)** | **Excess Of Expenditure over Income (B-A)** | **537084**
GOVERNING BODY
of VIKRAMSHILA

Dr. Atindra Sen, IAS
President

Mrs. Shubhra Chatterji
Director & Vice-President

Mrs. Tapati Gupta
Secretary

Mr. Asesh Dutta
Treasurer

Mr. Percy Siganporia
Member

Mr. Aspi Kapadia
Member

Dr. Shelley M. Brown
Member

Prof. Hari Vasudevan
Member

Mr. Atanu Sain
Member
Main Office (Kolkata)
Shubhaya Chatterjee
Atanu Sain
Soumitra Bhattacharya
Ahnaz Dasgupta
Sanchari Ray Chowdhury
Priyanka Roy
Sulata Tripathi
Ashish Sinha
Namrata Ghosh
Soumi Mukherjee
Sumana Ganguli
Sutapa Baksita
Lopamudra Chatterjee
Uday Samanta
Ananya Dam
Rita Das
Sayani Kushari
Arnab Singh Chowdhury
Sibani Chakraborty
Manjula Das
Srabanti Basak
Sanghamitra Roy Majumder
Sutapa Chakraborty
Babita Dutta Majumder
Madhusree Koley
Md. Meheri Hasan
Samina Seikh
Md. Mujibur Rahman
Quazi Md. Imran
Md. Sarif Hossen Midyia
Syed Ejaz Husain
Sk. Abdul dayem
Sk. Jullkanuddin
Srimanti Mukherjee
Suparna Basu
Kaberi Prasad
Oindrila Chakraborty
Irani Bhattacharjee
Momali Banerjee
Koustav Dasgupta
Sunanda Roychowdhury
Sanjay Kr Bhattacharjee
Payal Malik
Riti Mukherjee
Ria Banerjee
Sourav Goswami
Mustafiz Iqbal
Debjoyti Dhar
Madhumita Guha
Jhuma Ghosh
Priyamrita Bhattacharya
Madhubanti Bhattacharya
Satya Gopal Dey
Ritwika Mukherjee
Md. Nurul Hasan Bora

Tripura Office
Rejaul Islam
Subhabrata Bhattacharjee
Dhruvajyoti Nag

Bigha School and Resource Center (Burdwan)
Arun Kr. Sain
Atanu Kundu
Aynul Sekh
Milan Kumar Sarkar
Mujibar Rahaman SK
Nazmul Haque Mondal
Partha Sarathi Mukherjee
Saherunnessa Khatun
Samser Ali SK
Sudip Samanta
Keka Mullick

TRI Project Office (Bankura)
Subandu Roy
Arup Mondal

Nabadisha Centre Teachers, Kolkata
Gulnaz. Begum
Noori Begam
Shabnam Bano
Tabassum Begum
Roshon Irsal
Shabana Alam
Guncha Khaikahsa
Sabita Halder
Mindula Chakraborty
Jasmin
Kanchan Prasad
Sugata Roy
Sangeeta Dutta
Pyali Biswas
Shyamal Bose
Nasim Banu
Sangita Banerjee
Kanchan Paul Naskar
Soma Saha
Dolly Mukherjee
Mehnaz Bano
Durga Rajak
Madhumita Das
Pinki Kumari Rajbar
Simra Roy
Sucheta Mondal
Anjana Guchait
Naseem Ara
Amna Khatun
Piyali Patro
Afreza Afroz
Nagina Parveen
Parveen Bano
Nikhast Ara
Ruby Khanam
Nazneen Begum
Alam Ara
Mukta Kundu
Baby Deb
Mahasweta Roy
Asthma Khaton
Saleha Anjum
Radha Chowdhury
Raushan Ara

Rupali Ghosh
EVS and Supervisors (Howrah)
Modhumita Adak
Monalisa Mann
Chameli Deshmukh
Shrabanti Dhul
Eshita Panja
Shibani Santra (jana)
Jayarini Ghosh
Kaberi Sinha
Joyshree Malik
Sanghamitra Dwari
Krishna Dalui
Rutul Rani Malik
Anushree Karmakar
Jamuna Sinha
Monalisa Bag
Shampa Hazra
Priyanka Roy
Ajit Sardar
Ajit Pramanick
Samna Begam
Suvera Das
Ibab Malik
Manuja Khatun
Papiya Sen
Ajinma Begam
Joyashree Mondal
Sadhana Koley
Animes Kanji
Suparna Ari
Sudha Hudati
Priyojit Panja
Rita Malick
Mithun Bhandari
China Mollick
Samar Kanji
Swarup Patra
Surechita Manna
Pallab Ghosh
Pou Gulou
Piyali Bar
Sulekha Barick
Chiranjit Golui
Milina Begam
Arpita Manna
Soma Patra
Banashree Raut (hazra)
Sagarika Mondal
Mounita Ghosh
Imran Khan
Mita Koley
Indranil Debi
Baby Adak
Sagarika Hazra
Kanika Ghosh
Chandana Panja
Diptanshu Hatt
Tirtha Chowdhury
We would like to thank all our partners, friends and well-wishers who have continued to support us over the years.

We thank the Tata Trusts, WIPRO, CRY, UNICEF (West Bengal, Bihar and Delhi), TechMahindra Foundation, the U.S. Consulate General, Kolkata, the Regional English language Office, Indienhilfe e.V., Herrsching, Germany, ITC Mission Sunehra Kal, TRI, Pradan and World Vision India who have supported us in our mission to make quality education a reality for all children. We would like to thank Dr. Shelley M. Brown, our Governing Body member for her donation through ASTI, to support our cause.

Our appreciation and acknowledgement to the Paschim Banga Sarva Shiksha Mission, Sarva Shiksha Mission, Tripura, the District offices of Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kolkata, Howrah, Bankura and Burdwan. We thank the West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education, the Department of Women and Child Development, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (West Bengal), the Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, the Department of Education of Jammu and Kashmir.

We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all our NGO partners who have worked with us over the year, where each of us has supported the other in our bid to improve the educational situation and amend the learning crisis faced by our children today.

We thank all the school heads and teachers for the untiring hard work they put in each year, for being open to new ideas and challenges in education and in believing in our work and encouraging our efforts on the ground.

Most importantly our community partners – mothers, fathers, elders and well wishers of children who trust us and believe in our work and to the thousands of children who motivate us to keep our expectations high each day!