

Access to Education- A Right for all children

An IPER-REACH India Project



Implementing agency:

Institute of Psychological and Educational Research

Report on Plan for Action Research

2006-07

Prepared by

BONDHU



grow with feelings



The Beginning....

First Steps

January 2005-August 2006, marks a span of time within which Institute of Psychological and Educational Research (IPER) is committed to implementing the project Access to Education – A Right for All Children, with support from REACH India, an organization engaged, among other things, with supporting and ensuring the Right to Education of Children in our country.



Coverage: The project being implemented in **7 wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation** purports to cover 1800 and 7200 children directly and indirectly, in that order. Addressing the needs of vulnerable children belonging to the marginalized sections of society, this is a pilot project visualized for demonstrating a strategy of empowerment of stakeholder groups to ensure Universal Elementary Education for Vulnerable Children.

FOCUS: The focus is on universal access and retention of children at primary levels of learning with special focus on girls.

Milestones Crossed



- Sensitization of Formal School Teachers about the project.
- Selection and Capacity Building Sessions for Community Teachers and Quality Management Team (QMT).
- Preparation of new and selection of existing Teaching and learning materials to be used.
- Selection of 40 formal schools for admitting children once they are adequately prepared for appropriate levels.
- Identification of minimum learning skills for different grades.

Milestones Crossed...continued



- Continuous habitation based activities to reach children's households, interact with guardians and community influencers, setting up of Mother-Teacher Associations.
- Operating Schools on Wheels and Mobile Visual presentation units.
- Educational camps to gauge mid-term progress of skill development of children.
- Admitting batches of children to formal schools.
- Setting up of MIS for process monitoring.
- Reporting progress and documentation.

Milestones Crossed...continued



- Receiving training and feedbacks from Reach-India.
- Eliciting external capacity building and monitoring support.
- Identifying gaps and addressing problems to upgrade and add value to existing activities.
- Training of formal school teachers.
- Strategizing, planning and Initiating Action Research.



Proposed Activities for Action Research -

**Action Research-
Steps taken to
initiate...continued**

*Learning from what we have
achieved*

MONTHS

Proposed Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Review of extant documents and reports	■						
2. Feedback from QMTs			■				
3. CLC Observation	■	■					
4. Feedback from CLC Teachers			■				
5. Action Plan Document Based on above Review and Development of Action Research Plan				■			



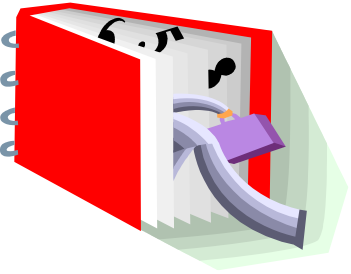
Action Research-
Steps taken to
initiate...continued

Proposed Activities for Action Research -

*Learning from what we have
achieved*

MONTHS

Proposed Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dissemination of Critical Action Points with QMT and Teachers							
Document preparation for final Indicator Framework for Monitoring Action Research followed by activities							



Review of extant documents:

Training Reports, Reporting formats, Education Camp Reports

- Training programs have been extensive, in-depth and inclusive of all aspects of teaching, communicating, orienting oneself to the realities of the target group, curriculum and lesson plan development and community mobilization.
- There is a wide variation in application of multiple teaching methods among teachers.
- Specifically, report from the Education Camp, December 2005 indicates that many children have problems with letter recognition.
- Teachers are engaged in large volume of paperwork for reporting and documentation purposes.

Review of extant documents

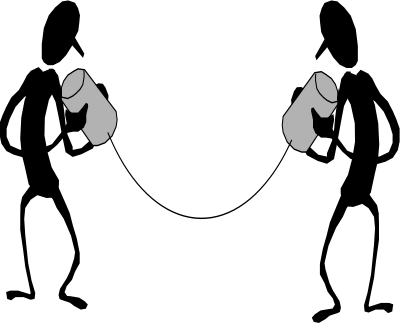
Quality Management Team Reports

- While regular activities are chronologically recorded, analysis and comments are not always clear in QMT reports. This can have serious repercussions and lead to miscommunications with teachers and perceptions of project functionaries.
- QMT reports can be used as future resource materials for both project replication and orientation of new staff, but, the current quality of the reports does not warrant the same. The reports require more precision and analysis.

Review of extant documents

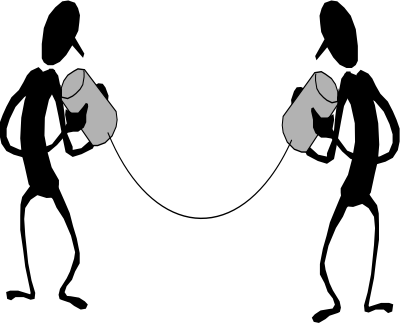
Teachers' Reports

- Teachers have presented detailed reports on their training experiences. They have recorded their appreciation for the trainings and the Resource persons and their Action Plans. However, they have rarely reflected on their own tasks and application of the trainings.
- Teachers have recorded their daily activities for example, of coming in, going out and breaking for lunch, but there is hardly any reflection of the technical aspects of their work or problems faced.
- Teachers have documented slate work by drawing out what the child has written on the slate which seems to be too time consuming.



Observations based on verbal feedbacks from Quality Management Team Members

- Since the attrition rate among teachers is very high, it is difficult to maintain standardized quality within and among CLCs.
- Formal school authorities have not been very open to the idea of training and consequently there has been fewer trainings than expected. However, IPER has received excellent feedbacks from the formal school teachers who have received training.
- The current reporting system has left less than desired space for the QMT members to interact with the students directly and they are over-dependent on the reports of teachers for their assessments.



Observations based on Verbal feedbacks from Teachers

- Intra-group communication between teachers is poor and despite weekly meetings, there is lack of true sharing of teaching ideas and experiences among them. This has affected the overall quality of teaching.
- QMT-Teacher relationships are also in many instances so hierarchically dictated that it hampers inter-personal communication.
- Some of the teachers find the reporting format and paperwork too cumbersome. It undermines their teaching schedule. In the process, they give more importance to filling out formats as per the skill guidelines than teaching.
- There is a quality variation in the format, content and understanding of the concept of lesson planning.

Observations based on visits to CLCs

CLC infrastructures

- All CLCs are located in the heart of the communities and have mostly in their unique ways made the best of the space available to them in terms of accommodating children.
- Although size-wise variations exist, most CLCs have adequate spaces. In about 4 CLCs building conditions are very poor and require wall and roof repair work to be done.
- Drinking water facilities vary. In some CLCs water is canned in jugs and plastic bottles, while in others children are taken outside to queue up and drink from public stand posts and hand pumps. There is no provision for drinking water glasses.
- Only a few CLCs have toilets with either running tap or stored water. In others, children urinate outside in the open in designated places.

Observations based on visits to CLCs Teaching-Learning Resources and facilities



Understandably, it is difficult to put up or accommodate too many materials in the club rooms where the CLCs run since the spaces are filled with club materials. Given that, a few observations are in order:

- Charts of shapes in monochromatic marble paper shades and uninterestingly and at times illegibly (due to small size) written alphabets adorn most of the CLC walls. Barring 2 CLCs, none of the wall materials are by children.
- Each CLC has a steel-gray resource ‘trunk.’ Inspections revealed that they do not always contain the basic materials they are supposed to (based on program guidelines of IPER). In some CLCs, for instance, the First Aid box was empty.



Observations based on visits to CLCs Teaching-Learning Resources and facilities ..cont'd

- In CLCs accommodating a 'library' cupboard, the books are mostly kept locked up and they seem mostly unread and untouched.
- Levels of the books do not match that of the children.
- Resource Center assistants 'hand out' books for children to read at the end of the classes.
- In many cases, library contains books written in 'Bangla' language, where the children read only 'Hindi.'


Observations based on visits to CLCs Teaching Methodologies



- Barring two CLCs, teachers seem to follow the conventional methods encouraging rote learning and there is not much reflection of the given trainings in their teaching styles (despite the positive feedbacks).
- Emphasis on rote learning limits children's learnings primarily to recognition of alphabets and numbers at the preliminary level and simple writing skills at an advanced level. In the process comprehension and application skills are not addressed.
- Teaching-learning materials in the trunks are either not used at all or 'under used.'
- Majority of the teachers are too obsessed with 'completing the syllabus' for admission tests, which they feel can be done quickly and timely through rote learning and teaching to the 'prescribed' texts.

Observations based on visits to CLCs

CLC- Community Linkages

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- Barring a few exceptions, CLC attendants act as the primary 'linkers' between the community and the CLC. Since they belong to the community, parents and guardians communicate freely and comfortably with them and do not hesitate to send their children to the CLCs if the attendants accompany their children.
 - Teachers are able to link with the parents through the attendants.
 - Attendants, especially the youths and adolescents (majority of whom are either passed out from or are studying in secondary schools) are extremely enthusiastic about their work and of great help to the teachers even inside the classrooms as they help to oversee and look after the class.
 - CLCs are well accepted by the community and the predominant feeling expressed by the community members is that the CLCs have been "very useful and of great help."
 - Despite formation of Mother-Teacher associations, mothers still do not seem to play any active role in meetings or in other activities of CLCs.

27 point program for Action Research

Reporting Formats

- Review and Overhaul some reporting formats if necessary. Specifically,
 - Eliminate replication of each child's slate drawing by teacher on paper.
 - Eliminate descriptive feedback and create formats for analytical feedbacks focusing on problems faced and training applications of training for both Teachers and QMTs.
 - Create independent QMT assessment formats based not just on Teacher's feedbacks but also QMT's interaction with and assessment of children and observation of CLCs.

27 point program for Action Research

QMT Activities

- QMTs to form 'Quality Circle' with their respective Teacher Groups to address CLC specific problems and break away with the hierarchical norms.
- Interact and assess students directly once a week and report on the same.
- Keep tab of inventories in trunks, assess their usage and note requirements for replacement, refilling and upgradation.

27 point program for Action Research

Teaching Activities

- Follow guideline linking training prescriptive with learning skill sets while teaching
- Share teaching ideas in weekly meetings to be documented by IPER functionary and create teaching idea bank.
- Share and exchange at least one lesson plan per week in weekly meetings.

27 point program for Action Research

CLC Infrastructures

- Initiate repair work where funds permit.
- Procure earthen pot with long handled ladle and colored plastic glasses and inculcate hygienic practices of drinking water among students.
- Cover designated open spaces for urination with cloth on three sides around bamboo poles with the help of club members.

27 point program for Action Research

Usage of Resources and Facilities

- All learning materials on walls to be done by students following lessons and changed on weekly basis.
- Include club materials and equipments in the rooms as teaching-learning resources (for instance pointing at the shapes of equipments, hung portraits of reverential personalities to talk about their lives and achievements and so on).
- Paint, stick colored papers and so on to decorate the outside of the trunk as part of class project with students.
- Use the colored plastic glasses procured for drinking also as teaching materials.

27 point program for Action Research

Usage of Resources and Facilities –continued

- Procure books, specially catering to the interests of the neo literates and sensitive to the vernaculars of students.
- Activity kits supplementing books will be more helpful.
- Keep non-textual books in the open (either on the trunks or in cane baskets –*jhuris*) for children to handle and look at themselves, changing the set every week.
- Have book making sessions as part of class activity wherein children create a story together and draw pictures, which is then stapled and becomes a book.

27 point program for Action Research

Community Linkages

- Involve attendants in book making sessions and give them basic training in class management.
- Involve mothers, club-members and other community members more interactively in CLC activities (as per guidelines provided in Teacher and QMT training).
- Initiate a lending library facility for wider community in CLCs which have book storing arrangements. Attendants can be made responsible for procuring membership, registering members and lending and borrowing of the books.

27 point program for Action Research

IPER Functionaries

- Recruitment policy of teachers and QMT to be reoriented. A detailed report must be prepared to document reasons for high attrition rate of teachers and steps taken for retention accordingly.
- Recognition and reward system for 'lesson plan of the month', 'CLC of the month', 'Quality Circle of the month' to be introduced to increase teacher motivation and participation.
- Guideline to be created linking all teacher training contents to learning skill sets of students, to demonstrate applicability of trainings received.