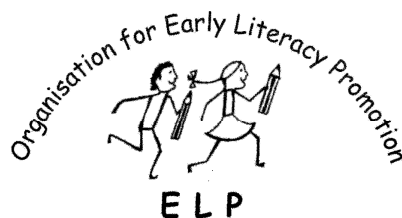


Organisation for Early Literacy Promotion (OELP)

Annual Report – 2011 to 2012



Submitted by

Secretary OELP

OELP Annual Report - 2011 to 2012

The Early Literacy Project (ELP) intervention

One of the main activities of OELP is the implementation of the Early Literacy Project (ELP) in rural Rajasthan. The objective of ELP is to develop classroom methodologies which equip children from marginalized backgrounds and oral traditions to build strong foundations for reading and writing with understanding, in Hindi, so that these children become independent readers and writers who can engage meaningfully with written texts within and outside school. ELP has worked intensively over a sustained period of time inside classrooms and developed methodologies for this purpose.

Work within the ELP project has been taken up at two levels:

- a) For young beginning level readers and writers the methodologies focus on building the foundation knowledge, attitudes and skills required for engaging meaningfully with print.
- b) For young readers and writers who are at a more advanced level the methodologies aim to strengthen reading and writing with understanding and develop a supportive print rich classroom environment to encourage these young readers and writers to build a sustained and deeper involvement with reading and writing.

Some lessons from the past year

Through our work with *out of school* children we have learnt:

1. Enrolling children in schools is not adequate; these children require support to equip them to make successful transitions into the unfamiliar and sometimes threatening world of school, especially since the classrooms are often not accepting and inclusive spaces for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. Sustained qualitative support is required to ensure that these newly enrolled children participate in the classroom processes. This support needs to be provided in non threatening and sensitive ways which are based on an understanding of the child's background and knowledge base, and the resources that the child brings. Such support has been provided through child support centers or Bal Sahyog Kendras (BSKs) which are located either in the community or in the government primary schools. Our experience suggests that these BSKs can serve as safe buffer spaces between the children's home environment and the unfamiliar and often hostile environment of the schools, and can help to equip these children for the demands of mainstream schooling.
3. In addition to curriculum based activities we have found that it is important to create an active reading culture in the classroom by setting up various spaces such as poem and reading corners, word walls etc and then using these in a variety of ways which excite children and draw them into the world of books and reading. In

addition to the weekly mobile libraries which have been introduced in ten villages have been well received and have, to some extent, been useful in enhancing the children and community's interest in books and reading.

4. We have learnt the value and importance of sensitizing the regular government school teachers to the special needs of first generation school goers from marginalized backgrounds. For this purpose we have found 'exposure based teacher training' is effective, since it helps to base discussions of pedagogy and classroom practices within the complex and challenging realities of resource poor rural school classrooms. Based on this positive experience ELP is proposing to utilize the BSKs as demonstration sites for exposure based training, in future.

Work undertaken

During the time period of February 2011 to April 2012, the activities undertaken by OELP can be categorized as follows:

1. Implementation of the ELP intervention
2. Training and resource support
3. Advocacy / Dissemination
4. Consultation on Early Literacy

1. Implementation of the ELP intervention

a) Setting up of 18 Bal Sahyog Kendras (BSKs) for equipping out of school children for the enrolment in the Government Primary School, and /or remedial centers within government schools for supporting newly admitted children.

The total number of children being covered in these is approximately 600

There are two categories of BSKs

- a) Remedial centers within existing government schools
- b) Community based centers for out-of school children.

An important component of these BSKs is the reading corner, and a community support programme, which includes work with the School Management Committees (SMCs).

This process of setting up the BSKs has included the following:

- Selection of suitable villages where there were a substantial number of out of school children. The list of existing BSKs is given in Appendix 1
- Identification of out of school children through the SSA CTS data, as well as village surveys and meetings with the SMCs.
- Selection and appointment of 20 workers and 2 supervisors
- Capacity building and sensitization of the above workers and supervisors through training workshops
- Baseline test for all newly admitted children
- Setting up learner tracking mechanisms.
- Implementation of the *varan samoocha* approach for building script knowledge

- Setting up of reading / book corners, poem corners and word walls in all the 20 BSKs, for sharing, reading, talking, and responding to books; story telling, story writing and using stories for getting children at different levels to engage with reading, writing and drawing in meaningful and creative ways.
- Developing active print rich classrooms, which encourage children to engage with the written forms of language in a variety of ways

Learner progress

The progress of the BSK children from the baseline conducted in February to the First round of evaluations in May 2011 is given below.

Learner progress in the Bal Sahyog Kendras (BSKs) from Feb to May 2011

Evaluation	Exam Month	Total Student	B	G	Absent	Student Level		
						A	B	C
Base Line Evaluation	Feb-11	518	215	303	19	306	193	0
First Evaluation	May-11	419	176	243	190*	84	76	69

* Since May is a very hot month in Rajasthan, there is a very high absenteeism. Also, there are a large number of holidays and hardly any teaching activity takes place until mid June. The first evaluation is therefore currently being undertaken for the 190 children who were not present during the evaluation in May 2011.

Meetings with Village School Management Committees (SMCs)

The first round of meetings with the village School Management Committees were held in the month of February. The focus of these meetings was on the following:

1. Identification of out of school children
2. Decision on location of the centre
3. Selection of BSK worker
4. Support from SMC for monitoring the BSK, as well as the government school
5. Rights of the SMCs under the RTE Act
6. Proposed involvement of the SMCs in the School Development Plan along with the government school teachers and management

The schedule of the first round of meetings which were held in the month of February is given in Appendix 2.

Minutes of all the meetings are available in the OELP records

- b) **The Mobile Library programme** was launched in July 2011. Weekly mobile libraries have been started in 10 villages.. This programme is being supported by UNESCO. This has been a successful programme and the libraries are well attended not only by children but also by some older members of the community. The children read books, there are read aloud sessions , as well as activities. At a later stage OELP will start a lending facility. It is also proposed to upscale the mobile libraries to 20 villages in the next phase, as well as, consolidate and streamline some of the library processes to make it more efficient and effective..

2. Training and resource support

I) Consolidation of the BSKs as sites for exposure based training for teachers/ education workers from other GOs and NGOs.

This has been done by streamlining the BSK programme to include the following components:

- a) *Varna Samoocha* approach for engaging children with the *Deva nagari* script in meaningful ways
- b) Reading corners and introduction of a variety of extension activities based on reading
- c) Introduction of skill practice worksheets to cater to the individual reading and writing needs of children
- d) Development of a print rich classroom and activities based on its different components, which include:
 - Word walls
 - Poem corners
 - Children's corner with displays of children's writing ,drawings and other work
 - Book corner
 - Calendar
 - Written captions and instructions

II) Training workshops and monthly planning and review meetings for the capacity building of the OELP BSKs to function as demonstration sites for exposure based training. The following training workshops were held

S. No	Date	Place	Workshop
1	5 – 7 Feb	SWRC Singla	3 day workshop for 70 teachers in groups of 20 to 25 per day
2.	4-5 March	Tilonia	Workshop for Education workers in two batches of 17 each (included the SWRC education workers)

3.	27-28 March	Singla	Workshop for the BSK workers and night school teachers. Total number 48 in two batches of 23 and 28
4.	27-28 March	Singla	Workshop on Story telling for 46 teachers
5.	3 April	Singla	BSK workers meeting. Total present 22
6.	28-29 April	Singla	BSK workers meeting. Total present 41 (28 April -18 workers; 29 April -23 workers)
7.	29-30 April	Singla	Teachers meeting. Total number – 174; 29 April – 87; 30 April-87

III) Resource support to other NGOs

a) Jan Sahas capacity building programme

ELP entered into an agreement with Jan Sahas Social Development Society, Dewas, Madhya Pradesh, for building the capacities of their teachers towards improving access to quality education to children, through enhancement of their early literacy interventions. This work is being undertaken with children from excluded communities in 6 villages and slums of Dewas and Ujjain districts of Madhya Pradesh, for which Jan Sahas had received a grant from SRTT

The following activities were undertaken by the OELP resource towards this objective:

Dates	Activities
13 -16 March 2011	School / centre visits and detailed feedback from ELP resource team. Workshop for capacity building of JS team
3-6 May “	School / centre visits and detailed feedback from ELP resource team. Workshop for capacity building of JS team
14 – 17 July “	End term review and future visioning exercise
27-29 Jan 2012	The Jan Sahas resource team participated in a three day exposure based capacity building workshop at the OELP work sites. This workshop was planned to equip the Jan Sahas resource team for Phase 2 of the ELP project in Madhya Pradesh.

b) Participation in the Annual Work Plan (AWP) exercise for Sir Ratan Tata Trust, (SRTT) Mumbai. Inputs were provided by OELP for the Early Literacy component of the SRTT AWP.



c) Submission of strategy paper on a Conceptual Framework for Early Literacy for SRTT. This paper was developed as a follow up of the Consultation on Early Literacy, and focused on building a common understanding and conceptual clarity in the area of early literacy with the partner organizations of SRTT.

d) Resource support for 3 day Workshop on Learning and Evaluation for 17 partner organizations of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) in Lucknow.

The workshop has participants from UP, Bihar, Jharkhand and J&K. The workshop was held from the 27 to 29 June, 2011 in the Sahbhabhi Shikshan Kendra, Lucknow. The OELP team was invited as a resource group for conducting this workshop. It aimed at reviewing the existing programmes being implemented by the various SDTT partners, as well as, building deeper understandings within the field of Early Literacy, and looking at ways in which these can be incorporated into the existing interventions so as to bring in qualitative improvement. A detailed report on the workshop has been submitted by OELP to SDTT.

3. Advocacy and dissemination

a) Meetings and presentation to GoR

A round of meetings was held with the Commissioner SSA, Rajasthan and representatives of her department. This resulted in a power point presentation made by OELP on 18 March, 2011, to the Pedagogy and Technical Support Group of SSA. Representatives of SCERT, DIET and UNICEF were also present at this presentation. This presentation was followed by a surprise field visit by an SSA, Rajasthan team to the ELP Bal Sahyog Kendras in early April. The GoR team responded very positively to the work being carried out by OELP. Ways in which this work can be carried forward were discussed.

b) Visit by UNESCO team

A high level team from UNESCO, which included the South Asia Director, visited the Barefoot College, Tilonia in the month of April, 2010. During this visit they also came to visit some of the BSKs which were being run by OELP. We were happy to receive a positive feedback from them.

c) Distribution of OELP flyers and pamphlets

4. Early Literacy Consultation

A four day Consultation on Early Literacy was organized by OELP from the 25 – 28, April 2011 for a select group of ten partner organizations of Sir Ratan Tata Trust. The venue of the Consultation was the Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi. The idea behind this Consultation was to provide an opportunity for the Trust to benefit from the expertise available with its experienced partners, towards developing a suitable framework for building conceptual clarity in the area of Early Literacy. This Consultation was also supported by inputs from external resource persons. The Consultation aimed at facilitating consistency in the perspectives of different SRTT partners who are working in

the area of Early Literacy, and to help to bring clarity of vision within the programmes which are being supported by the Trust. This collective visioning exercise also aimed at identifying some crucial aspects of sound reflective / innovative pedagogical practice within an Early Literacy programmes in the Indian contexts. The key note speaker at the Consultation was Professor Krishna Kumar. The consultation received inputs from several eminent resource persons during the first two days. On the remaining days the focus of the discussions focused on the existing programmes and ways in which these can be enhanced. A detailed report on the consultation has been submitted to SRTT by OELP.

Material development and improvement in methodology

1. OELP has **developed 80 skill practice worksheets and story and poem posters** to supplement our existing resource material. This work has been supported by grants from SRTT and UNESCO

2. OELP has **developed a competency based learner tracking system**. This includes:

1. Building Learner profiles
2. Periodic assessment through competency based test items, which are designed for three level groupings
3. Observation based checklists to be filled in by the education workers periodically for qualitative assessment of individual learners

Presentations and networking

- In early September 2011 OELP was invited to make a **presentation of our work at a South Asia UNESCO Conference on Community Learning Centers**, which was held in Bangkok. 25 countries from South East Asia participated in the conference. The OELP presentation was very well received.
- **Sir Ratan Tata Trust held its Quarterly Review Meeting** from the 17 – 19 Jan in Singla, i.e. within the OELP project area. 16 representatives of SRTT Partner organizations from 4 states, along with the senior team members of the SRTT Education Teams participated in the QRM.
- **OELP made a presentation of its work at the National Seminar of Early Literacy** which was organized by the Reading Cell under the DEE, NCERT, New Delhi on the 24th February, 2012. The title of the “ The Journey of a Reaing Programme “
- **An article by Keerti Jayaram has been published in Vol 1, No 1 of the journal called Language and Lahguage Teaching** which has been launched by the Azim Premji Univeristy and Vidya Bhawan Society. The title of the article is “Towards a Conceptual framework for Early Literacy: A balanced and socially Sensitive Approach



Website

Work on the OELP website was undertaken by the Website Club of Pathways School, as a part of their Social Service endeavor. OELP was not charged for this. A payment of 230 MYR (i.e. Rs 2,500 approx) was made by OELP for purchase of domain space for the website. The students in the club worked under the guidance of their teacher Mr. Dinesh Bakshi. The website was created through close interaction with OELP, and effort has been made to reflect the philosophy and current work being undertaken by OELP. The website link is www.oelp.org

Capacity building

Workshop on action poems – was undertaken by Mallika Taneja in August 2011. This workshop was planned in response to an expressed need by the teachers. Exercises to help the teachers to communicate more effectively with children through facial expressions and their body language, were also undertaken

Workshop on extension of reading and setting up mobile libraries – was undertaken by Sujata Noronha on 20th January, 2012. This workshop focused on a) streamlining the mobile library processes b) Ways of engaging children with books. The focus of this workshop was both on the mobile libraries, as well as, on the classroom reading corners.

Team building through regular review and planning meetings – regular monthly planning and review meetings are held with all the supervisors and education workers. In addition to a review of the day to day functioning, these meetings also take up need based academic issues.

Future plans

1. Further strengthening of the Bal Sahyog Kendras (BSKs) for strengthening foundations in early reading and writing.
2. Strengthening the reading programme, by enhancing the reading and poem corners and developing a shared reading environment in the school and also in the community
3. Setting up of Mobile Libraries in a neutral space in the village, with books for a varied age group and designing special activities for the mobile library.
4. Setting up of an OELP Training and Resource team
5. Extension of resource support to other GOs and NGOs in Rajasthan and in other Hindi speaking states.
6. Development of skill practice material as laminated cards which can be used in various locations including resource centers for out of school children.



7. Accessing financial support for sustaining the OELP intervention and training programmes since the available grants for supporting the BSKs and the OELP resource team will run out very soon.

Balance sheet and profit and loss accounts for year ending 31.03. 2011

Will be presented to the OELP Executive meeting shortly

Grants

1. NRTT SGP grant for organizing a Consultation on Early Literacy – Rs. 6,97,000
2. UNESCO grant for enhancing the ELP Reading Programme – Rs.7,03,938

Local Contributions Rs. 9,77,006

S. No.	Name of the Donee	Amount
1.	Sr. Mariola	10,006
2.	Dr. Shruti Gandhi and Mr. M. Gandhi	10,000
3.	Ms. Preeti Bhargava	11,000
4.	Ms. Amrita Patwardhan	1,000
5.	Mr. Monojit Kumar	1,00,000
6.	Mrs. Meera Nath	50,000
7.	Ms. Roopali Singh	5,000
8.	Mrs. Jean Menezes	50,000
9.	Mrs. Kunti Sawhny	20,000
10.	Ms. Bindia Thapar	25,000
11.	Dr. Meena Metre	15,000
12.	Seth Sohan Lal Educational Charitable Trust	10,000
13.	Mr. R.K. Sawhny	70,000
14.	Social Work and Research Center	6,00,000
	Total donations received	9, 77,006

Bankers

Axis Bank Ltd

Chartered Accountant

Adeesh Mehra & Co, Chartered Accountants

7/3 IInd floor,

Jangpura Extension

New Delhi 110014

Appendix 1

List of OELP Bal Sahyog Kendras in the Silora Block of Ajmer District (Rajasthan)

	Village where BSK is located
1.	Nohria
2	Bagrion ki Dhani
3	Kankiniawas
4	Singla
5	Devji ki Dhani (Mundoti)
6	Pedibhata
7	Buglio ki Dhani
8	Bhojiawas
9	Kalyanipora
10	Kariyon ki Dhani
11	Nalu
12	Thal
13	Poswalon ki Dhani
14	Ramgarh
15	Chundri
16	Bavrion ki Dhani
17	Rampura
18	Nayagaon
19	Paladi
20	Phaloda

Appendix 2

Schedule of the first round of meetings which were held with the Village School Management Committees (SMCs)

Date	Village	Participants
22.01.2011	Nayagaon	SMC members and parents – 12 persons
08.02 .11	Garda ki dhani	SMC members and parents – 14 persons
11.02.11	Nohriya	SMC members and parents – 13 persons
	Pedibhata	SMC members and parents – 14 persons
	Sursura	SMC members and parents – 10 persons
12.02.11	Bugliya ki Dhani	SMC members and parents – 13 persons
	Mundoti (Devji ki Dhani)	SMC members and parents – 14 persons
	Ramgarh	SMC members and parents – 19 persons
	Thal	SMC members and parents – 13 persons
	Nallu	SMC members and parents – 11 persons
14.02.11	Badgaon	SMC members and parents – 13 persons
	Singla	SMC members and parents – 10 persons
	Keriyon ki Dhani	SMC members and parents – 13 persons
	Bagriyon ki Dhani	SMC members and parents – 9 persons
15.02.11	Chundadi	SMC members and parents – 14 persons
18.02.11	Motipura	SMC members and parents – 20 persons
21.02.11	Kalyanipura	SMC members and parents – 14 persons
22.02.11	Phaloda (Sinora)	SMC members and parents – 16 persons
25.02.11	Bavriyon ki Dhani	SMC members and parents – 14 persons
02.05.11	Bhojiyawas	SMC members and parents – 12 persons