

THE STORY OF A STRUGGLING SCHOOL IN JAISALMER

“children become confident and alert and excited and began to look forward to what would happen next .They began to actively participate and grow. Unlike earlier now each one wanted to participate or give their response. Children who were earlier disinterested and inactive, and who we had almost given up on, also become active.”

- Smt. Aruna Mehacha



The Government Primary School **Babbar Magra** is situated, in the Kacchi Basti, located in the heart of Jaisalmer town. It has a fairly small building with two rooms which accommodate five classes. Classes 3 to 5 are held in one room and classes 1 and 2 in the other. Most of the children that come to this school are from the marginalized sections of society and many of them belong to the Bhil community. The average enrollment in classes 1 and 2 is about 45 to 50 children. Most of these children come from low literate homes and get very little support from their parents.

OELP began work with this school in 2019. It was an uphill task. There was initial resistance from the teachers, who were skeptical and did not take well to any change. Efforts from the local OELP team failed to give results in the beginning, and efforts continued. It was during this time that the CBEO* of Jaisalmer Smt Balvir Tiwari visited other schools where OELP was supporting local teachers implement its pedagogies. She had observed OELP classes and was happy at the response from the children and the teachers. She now visited Babbar Magra and shared her experience of other schools where OELP was working, and encouraged the teachers and Principal to adopt the OELP methodologies.

Following the visit of the CBEO the Head Mistress Smt Aruna Mehacha decided to take charge of the OELP class. She familiarized herself with the OELP pedagogies and did not miss a single meeting or training. She practiced what she was learning and very soon began to enjoy teaching. Children now began to learn through fun and games. Their engagement in class dramatically increased, they became more regular and actively participated in the classroom processes. The class now became alive and showed some progress.



Reflecting on her experience with OELP Smt. Aruna Mehacha says -

“I started practicing what I had learnt in the OELP workshop for teaching Hindi .I made the children draw pictures of words, recite poems, and we played games and did the activities. Children started taking interest and learnt quite a lot. I felt very good.”