

Samajshala

Name of the project: A multidimensional approach to educational excellence in rural Maharashtra, India following the concept and principles of Samajshala (community school)

Name of the partner NGO:

- Kalapandhari Magaswargiya & Adiwasi Gramin Vikas Sanstha (KMAGVS), District Latur, Maharashtra, India
- Rural Development Centre (RDC), District Beed, Maharashtra, India
- Rajarshi Shahu Gramin Vikas Prakalpa (RSGVP), District Beed, Maharashtra, India
- Lokhit Samajik Vikas Sanstha (Lokhit), District Osmanabad, Maharashtra, India
- Savitribai Phule Mahila Mandal (SPMM), District Beed, Maharashtra, India
- Social Institute Program For Rural Area (SIPRA Gramin Samajik Karya Vikas Sanstha) - SIPRA, District Nanded, Maharashtra, India

Project duration: 2007 – 2010. Initially the project was approved for period July 2007 to June 2009, now it has been reformulated and extended until June 2010

Thematic focus: Essential Services

Geographic focus: in Marathwada region of Maharashtra State.

Targeted population: School children who are already enrolled in the 10 schools and those who will be enrolled as a result of the enrolment drive in this project in Marathwada, one of the most underdeveloped regions in Maharashtra state, India.

Number of beneficiaries:

- At present, there are 808 children (418 girls and 390 boys) in the age group of 6 to 11 years studying in the selected 10 schools.
- The indirect beneficiaries of the project will be the 10 communities (a population of around 9,000) and approximately 25 teachers of the 10 schools. In addition to this, the project aims to improve the quality of education in other government primary schools in the region.

Strategic fit:

There is an established and widely accepted need for improving quality of education in government schools in Maharashtra. Primary education is a fundamental right of every Indian child guaranteed in the Constitution of India (93rd Amendment to the Constitution). However, the Government has not been able to fulfil this Constitutional commitment. Civil society participation and ownership is the key to the successful development of any community. In this context, Samajshala model attempts to improve its primary education delivery system in tandem with the development of the community. The project being implemented in Government primary schools will ensure that (1) there is no re-invention of the wheel and there is only revitalisation of the system, (2) there is greater pressure on the government to accept the model and promote it in other government schools, and (3) the model will be proved feasible and well taken by the people.

Objective of the project:

To promote quality and equity in primary education through the *Samajshala* model in 10 primary schools in the State of Maharashtra and showcase the model to advocate for educational policy changes in Maharashtra.

Key activities:

- Regional level training workshops for the 10 Education Development Committees (EDC), teachers and Shikshan Sahayakas
- Participatory Rural Appraisal for identifying key issues related to primary education in 10 villages

- Orientation and regular discussions for active participation in Gram Sabha (village assembly) for addressing issues related to education
- Setting up and maintenance of computer labs and Bal Bhavan (recreation and education center) in 10 schools and training the 20 Shikshan Sahayakas (Education Assistants) and teachers to operate and use the computer
- Co-curricular events and Educational Exposure for children in ten schools
- Assessment on the provision of mid-day meals and lobby to improve quality
- Health and hygiene awareness sessions, and health check-up camps for school children in collaboration with nearest Primary Health Center (PHC)
- Child centric development activities such as Bal Panchayat (Children's assembly) including child-to-child learning, child-to-community initiatives.
- Monthly parents teachers meetings
- Interactive motivational sessions with Community Based Organisation (CBO)
- Meeting with and reporting to block and district level government officers in Education Department by community representatives
- Regional Consultations and State Convention on Quality Education
- Process Documentation and Media Campaign

Key results delivered so far:

- 100% Enrolment and retention of children in all the 10 primary schools.
- Promotion of Girl child education.
- Reduction in School Dropout rate and seasonal migration of children.
- Children enjoying and participating in each activity and exposed to use of computer.
- Improvement in performance of children – some children awarded for their performance at the District level.
- Some Samajshala schools adjudged best by Government assessments.
- Greater awareness about importance of quality education in communities.
- Supervision of School's Activities by the Community.
- Strong rapport between the teachers, community members and children.
- Enhanced physical amenities as a result of community participation and advocacy efforts at the Block level.
- Increase in number of children enrolling for high school education, after completion of primary education.
- Acceptance and appreciation of the Samajshala model among Block Education Officers (BEOs).

Expected results at the end of the project implementation period:

- Community will be trained and prepared to initiate change and actively involve in the quality and access education program.
- Sustainable partnership between government authorities and the community.
- Schools to be sensitive to community needs and responsible towards quality of and access to education
- Parents reciprocate to enhance school functioning.
- A holistic education that caters to the curricular, co-curricular and psychomotor development of each individual student is provided in rural schools.
- 100% enrolment including children from marginalized communities and girls.
- Drop-out is reduced to no more than 10% at the end of the fourth class of those who entered school in first class.
- Children are able to take the role of change agents working towards the development of their community and demand rights and address their own and their community's aspirations
- Increased pressure on the government to improve the delivery and management of education services and facilities
- Better dissemination of the Samajshala model

