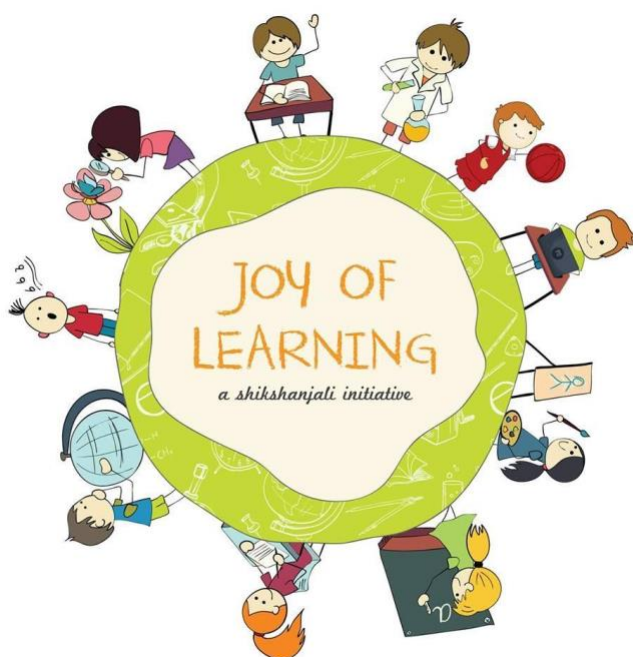


February 2018 – April 2018

'Joy of Learning' (JoL) Progress Report



***10 Government Schools in
Hathin Block, Palwal District- Haryana***

Initiative of



Implemented by

TARRAQI FOUNDATION

‘Joy of Learning’ (JoL) Progress Report

Feb to April’18

The Joy of Learning (JoL) Programme jointly implemented by Tarraqi I Foundation and Shikshanjali Edutech Team has covered 10 selected villages of Hathin block, (Palwal, Haryana), namely Hunchpuri, Swamika, Malai, Uttawar, Chhainsa, Buraka, Ransika and Mathepur. The JoL team has been consistently visiting the selected villages, other than engaging with students within the JoL Centres at the GPS and the GGPS of the respective villages. This report summarises the details of the activities undertaken during March till April 2018.

Student’s Socio-Emotional Baseline Assessment

In the month of February, under the Joy of Learning Programme, a Socio-Emotional Baseline Assessment was initiated for students in classes 3 and 4, which continued till mid March. The assessment was divided into two parts: verbal and non-verbal. Before the commencement of the assessments, mentors were given a rigorous training by Mr. Amir Abidi and Ms. Kumud Chaddha about understanding the nuances of good research and assessment and the care to be taken when administering questionnaires and making observations with children. Following instructions were also given:

1. Non-verbal baseline assessment must be carried out three times.
2. There should be a gap of 3-4 days between each time an observation is conducted.
3. The environment or location where the assessments are conducted should differ every time. For example, once in the classroom, once outside the classroom during recess and once during verbal assessment.
4. The time of the assessments should also differ. For example, once in the morning, once in the middle and once at the end of the school day.



Thereby, mentors conducted assessments for children present in classes 3 and 4, at different times of the day, in different locations and during different activities. Mentors were able to gain information about each child’s conduct, body language, likes and dislikes, relationship and behaviour with parents, friends, classmates and teachers. This information was collated into a Student Journal, made for each child and uploaded on the Shikshanjali App. Table 1 below summarises the number of children for whom the Socio-Emotional Baseline Assessment was conducted.



Table 1: Number of students covered under the Socio-Emotional Baseline Assessment

S.No.	School Name	Total Number of Students	
		3 rd Class	4 th Class
1	GPS- Malai	17	30
2	GGPS- Malai	11	29
3	GPS- Uttawar	80	57
4	GGPS- Uttawar	49	55
5	GPS- Swamika	33	37
6	GPS- Chhainsa	38	31
7	GPS- Mathepur	46	34
8	GPS- Buraka	34	25
9	GPS- Hunchpuri	14	27
10	GPS- Ransika	54	59
		376	384

Revision for School Exams

After conducting the Socio-Emotional Baseline Assessment, JoL Mentors, upon the request of the local School heads and teachers, assisted students in revising for their upcoming school exams. This helped the team to understand the learning levels of the children and also to know their strengths and areas of improvements. The JoL approach is to strengthen the confidence and pedagogical skills of the Government School Teachers by sharing information, resources and working collaboratively. JoL Mentors assistance in the subject revision of the students strengthened the bond with the Govt. School teachers. Parents also greatly appreciated the support.



Community Interaction and Admission Mobilisation

Other than engaging with students at the JoL centres, Mentors have also been spending time in the villages to meet and bond with parents and the community at large. The initial plan was to hold meetings with the School Management Committees (SMCs). However, obtaining the contact details of SMC members of all schools was taking longer than expected and so the JoL team re-worked its plan. Mentors and JoL Project coordinators organised meetings with the village community, and with SMC members wherever possible, to establish dialogue, raise awareness amongst them about their rights and the importance of educating children in schools, informing them about the JoL Programme and its features such as the Reading Room, heard out their concerns about the current condition of government schools and discuss suggestions to improve it. They invited the community to take part in their child's education and the functioning of schools and support the implementation of the programme. Most meetings were held in the JoL centres in the villages.

Three types of meetings, organised up 30th April, 2018 are summarised in Table 2:

1. Meetings with SMC members
2. Meetings with the village community with a mixed composition
3. Meetings with the community with either only men or only women



Table 2: Area wise meetings organized by the mentors

S.No.	School	Category	Date	Venue	No. of Meetings	Participants			
						Male	Female	JoL Staff	Total
1	GPS MALAI	Community Meeting	3/27/2018	JoL Centre	1	13	2	6	21
2	GGPS MALAI	Community Meeting	4/27/2018	JoL Centre	1	4	17	3	24
3	GPS UTTAWAR	Community Meeting	3/30/2018	JoL Centre	1	6	6	4	16
4	GGPS UTTAWAR	Community Meeting	3/28/2018	JoL Centre	1	20	5	4	29
5	GPS SWAMIKA	Women Meeting	3/19/2018	JoL Centre	1	0	22	5	27

6	GPS CHHINSA	Community Meeting	3/26/2018	JoL Centre	3	12	0	4	16
		Community Meeting	3/29/2018	Jhabru ji Ki Baithak		16	0	4	20
		Community Meeting	3/29/2018	Balram ji Ki Baithak		20	0	4	24
7	GPS MATHEPUR	Community Meeting	3/24/2018	JoL Centre	1	22	0	4	26
8	GPS BURAKA	SMC Meeting	3/16/2018	JoL Centre	4	7	0	4	11
		Male Meeting	3/20/2018	JoL Centre		15	0	4	19
		Women Meeting	4/11/2018	JoL Centre		0	17	3	20
		Community Meeting	4/25/2018	JoL Centre		3	7	5	15
9	GPS HUNCHPURI	SMC Meeting	3/17/2018	JoL Centre	2	4	7	4	15
		Community Meeting	4/28/2018	JoL Centre		21	0	2	23
10	GPS RANSIKA	SMC Meeting	3/21/2018	JoL Centre	2	10	0	4	14
		Community Meeting	4/27/2018	Nagla Shop		6	0	2	8
					17	179	83	66	328

Several issues came to the fore during the meetings:

- 1. Desire for change in the condition of government schools and attitudes of teachers:** Villagers complained that government teachers were negligent, did not take classes regularly and lacked punctuality. There were also complaints about teachers asking students to carry out personal errands. They reported that currently mid-day meals are unhygienic and lacking nutrition, children do not have uniform and shoes and that their level of learning is rather low compared to what it should be as per their class. They wished for a school environment where children would want to study and learn and for attention to be paid to children's socio-emotional wellbeing and on the studies of weak students.
- 2. Need for infrastructural improvements:** The community also made suggestions to improve accessibility to schools, such as constructing boundary wall or a gate for the school to ensure children do not leave in between classes or after lunch, or providing a school vehicle to pick up and drop students. Schools should have a playground for sports, computers and adequate books for the students.



going to school. However, if the first two were improved then the parents will also be far more careful to send the children and children themselves will be keen to go. They committed to sending their children to school every day.

4. **Community's preference of Religious education over School Education:** A charge one often hears from the Government School teachers is that the parents and community prefers religious education over school education and that while many students go for their religious education they do not come to the school as much. On closer assessment this was found to be a minor issue for only some parents, In some places the timing for religious education and schools overlapped. At many places when this issue was discussed with the Religious teachers and parents, they said that they will be happy to change the timings; however, the School teachers must ensure teaching the children when they go to them during that time. This is something the community needs to further resolve.
5. **Special attention to girls' education:** A community meeting with women in **Swamika** revealed that girls who want to study after class 8 are unable to continue their education as there is no provision of secondary education in government schools in these villages. In **Buraka**, community members also expressed a need for more teachers especially lady teachers in the middle school. It seems there is only one teacher who is also the Head Master who is coming there regularly. In **Uttawar** and **Swamika** community meetings, older girls and women, who cannot attend school, showed a strong interest to gain education and study under the guidance of the mentors.
6. **Preference given to private schools:** Villagers also shared that parents who can afford it, prefer to send their children to nearby private schools. Private schools have mushroomed as they see a market to make profit out of the desperate desire of the illiterate/semi literate parents to educate their children. Had the Government Schools ensured proper learning, there would have been no market for the low cost private schools. Madarsas are also providing general education and also are another popular alternative.
7. **Involving SMC members is the need of the hour:** Meetings with SMC members were crucial in understanding the extent of their current involvement, which is rather low. In some villages, the community agreed that SMC meetings should be held once a month. The concept of School Management Committees is revolutionary step introduced through the RTE Act 2006. It is believed that economic growth of a country, to a large extent, depends on the growth of its educational system, which in turn depends on the degree of participation of the community. It makes educational management much more democratic and contextual, besides tapping local knowledge and resources for good governance. It has been established that improving community participation in educational management leads to tremendous improvements in the school and learning. The Government School Principals and officials need to proactively and sincerely support the JoL team's efforts to strengthen community participation in the school and capacity development of the SMC.

The positive outcome of the meetings was that the community is beginning to trust the JoL mentors and is happy with their work. In several meetings, villagers have promised their cooperation, shown inclination to organise more meetings with the mentors and spread the word amongst others who could not attend the meetings. The JoL team took further steps to reach out to people. At one village the announcements were from the mosque's loudspeaker to send children to school on time. One step but a remarkable one which needs to be appreciated and encouraged for others to also do the same. This will strengthen trust and collaboration between the Government Schools and the local community.

Another good example of cooperation for common good is of JoL mentors and Government school teachers jointly conducting a rally to raise awareness about the provisions in Government schools and rights the of students.

The team also had performed Nukkad Nataks at six villages upon the request of Mr. Hukum Singh, Additional Programme Coordinator (APC), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Further rallies, nukkad nataks and community meetings have been planned.



Household Visits

An important measure undertaken by the mentors to increase awareness about the JoL Programme and mobilise admissions was door to door household visits. Mentors visited around 803 households in month of April as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Household visits organised by mentors

S.No.	School	1st Week	2nd Week	3rd Week	4th Week	Total
1	GPS MALAI	29	36	9	13	87
2	GGPS MALAI	25	35	8	7	75
3	GPS UTTAWAR	42	28	11	11	92
4	GGPS UTTAWAR	68	50	10	11	139
5	GPS SWAMIKA	26	26	7	4	63
6	GPS CHHAINSA	35	57	6	6	104
7	GPS MATHEPUR	18	17	8	6	49
8	GPS BURAKA	35	40	6	6	87
9	GPS HUNCHPURI	26	19	6	5	56
10	GPS RANSIKA	15	28	3	5	51
		319	336	74	74	803

Mentors made visits in teams of two to three, each responsible for one of the 10 schools. This was an opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation with parents, create a closer

bond with them, answer their individual queries and support and encourage them to admit their children to schools. Mentors also inquired about the status of children's education in each household: the number of children who are enrolled in schools, number of children who have dropped out or are not enrolled in schools. This was done to enable mentors to focus more on the households in which children were not going to school.



Upon talking to parents, mentors received several grievances regarding the state of the schools and the behaviour of teachers, as well as queries about certain administrative processes:

- **Mistrust of government schools:** Overall, parents held a negative opinion about government schools and reported that their children did not benefit from going to school as that there was hardly any growth in their learning levels.
- **Lack of awareness about the admission process:** Parents were also unclear about the admission process, when it began and which documents were required for it. Most did not have aadhar cards or birth certificates for their children and thought of it as a hindrance in admission.
- **Grievance over scholarship money:** Parents reported not having received the scholarship money given by the government for the education of their children.
- **Children's education after elementary school:** Some parents also expressed concern about the continuation of their children's education after elementary schooling as nearby schools do not teach beyond classes 6-8.



accessible and empathetic like JoL mentors. They felt reassured to see the mentors coming to their door and showing concern about their children’s future. It also helped to involve parents by sharing with them what their child was learning at school. Some mentors also informed parents about SMCs and their role. In Ransika, SMC members have started visiting schools more often. A challenge faced by male mentors during household visits was that they mostly found women at home, who would usually be unwilling to talk to them, in the absence of a male family member. Similarly, in a few places where there are only female Mentors communicating with fathers or community elders was a bit challenging. Going forward Mentors will be supporting each other as per the need.

Admission Mobilisation

Schools began admission of students starting 2 April, 2018. Mentors used household visits in April as an opportunity to increase admission to schools. Efforts in this direction took two forms. One was the direct facilitation of admissions of students, where during house visits, mentors supplied parents with forms, helped them in filling the forms, gathered copies of Aadhaar cards of parents and students as supporting documents for admission, and submitted it all to the government teachers in charge. The second way in which mentors supported admissions was by acting as the bridge between parents and school. Through their mobilisation efforts, several parents went to schools to get their children admitted.

Table 4: Number of student admissions facilitated by JoL mentors

School	Class-1	Class-2	Class-3	Class-4	Class-5	Class-6	Class-7	Class-8	Class-9	Total
GPS MALAI	28	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	30
GGPS MALAI	20	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	22
GPS UTTAWAR	82	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	83
GGPS UTTAWAR	71	6	5	4	9	2	0	0	0	97
GPS SWAMIKA	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46
GPS CHHAINSA	37	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	39
GPS MATHEPUR	46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46
GPS BURAKA	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	49
GPS HUNCHPURI	37	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	40
GPS RANSIKA	33	0	0	1	0	14	1	0	1	50
	449	8	7	8	10	18	1	0	1	502

Challenges and Solutions:

Through extensive interactions, JoL team was able to learn about Parent's negative opinion of government schools. While some issues like irregularity of students and problems like inadequacy of drinking water and toilets etc. could be resolved through community's support, issues of teacher's effort to educate is something which the Government teachers and officials need to reflect upon and improve. The other challenge during admission mobilisation was the lack of clarity amongst parents about the admission process. As seen in Table 4, most students were new admissions to class 1 and few were admitted to higher classes, owing to their age, or had earlier dropped out of school, or had transferred from private schools. In Uttawar, a girl who wanted to transfer to the government school was not able to gain admission because she did not have a Transfer Certificate from her previous school. Other similar instances of Private schools not issuing TCs were sighted and also at some places the Government School Principals were turning away the Parents and Students desirous of admission and education. Providing information to parents about their rights under RTE and the Haryana School Education Act is crucial to smoothen out the process of admission and demands for documentation from parents.



Mentors also received positive responses as parents conveyed that they wanted their children to be taught by JoL mentors, promised to send their children to school and expressed their faith in JoL to bring about change. This is basically about the respect, affection, child friendly and interactive learning approaches which make the education an enjoyable and desirable experience for the students.

The community interaction and admission mobilisation efforts by the JoL team of mentors have revealed the need for the following next steps:

- JoL team strengthening the bond with the community.
- Bridging the gap between the community and government schools that has widened over the years.
- Connecting the community with SMC members and facilitating a direct dialogue between them.

- Disseminating information about the admission process.
- Visiting more households to increase admissions.

Through its awareness campaign, community meetings and household visits, the JoL Programme has been able to gather the attention of the community and create a buzz on the issue of education of children. A growing relationship of trust between the community and the JoL team is also reflected in that mentors have been able to mobilise admissions of 502 children in the 10 schools in just two months where JoL Centres have been set up. Looking forward to scaling up the programme to at least 20 more schools in this quarter!

JoL Team, Hatin
Tarraqi I Foundation