# The Promise Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT

2015 - 2016

Introduction

The Promise Foundation (TPF) is a registered Charitable Trust established in 1987. Our programmes focus on the psychological factors linked to socio-economicdevelopment and wellbeing. We specialize in behavioural and social science research on the multiple interwoven issues related to the child in poverty. We are particularly concerned about the pernicious hold that absence of opportunity for literacy and a decent livelihood has on the life chances of the young in disadvantaged communities.

We aim to develop culturally resonant and evidence-backed interventions. We also develop resources for training and sensitization on topics ranging from early childhood stimulation and home literacy and language environments, to livelihood planning and transition from education into work.

What we do: An illustration of the scope of our work
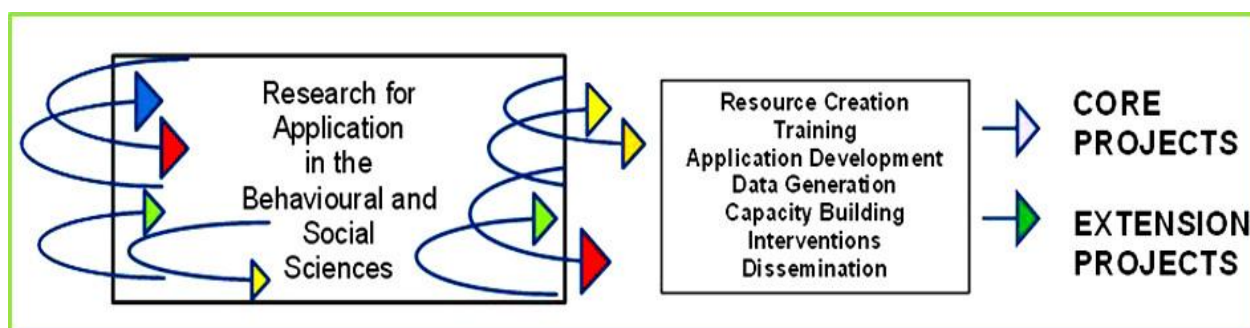
More specifically, our interventions follow the growing child targeting three age bands: the early childhood years, the primary and middle school years and the adolescent years.

The early childhood year: focus on cognitive stimulation

- Poor early childhood stimulation contributes to shaky foundations and lowered attainments in later years.

- Our early childhood programmes reach children between ages 3 and 6 years.

- Our programmes are designed to provide a comprehensive teaching and caring facility to young children who are at risk to remaining cognitively under-stimulated.

- Our programmes prepare the young child for school.

In the primary and middle school year: focus on literacy

- Shaky learning skills in the primary and middle school years are a disturbingly common problem in India. These poorly consolidated early skills cause an attainment gap in the later years.

- Our programmes for assisted learning use insights from the social, developmental, cognitive and language sciences to provide students with enriched inputs that help them attain the expected levels of performance and remain engaged and learning within the classroom.

- Our lesson plans are loosely structured around four periods (for more details see Appendix 1):

  a) The Talk period focuses on spoken language, encouraging children to express themselves.

  b) In the Hands-on period the activities make use of manipulable material such as flashcards to teach language and literacy skills.

  c) In the Text period the focus is on reading full sentences and paragraphs. This is an experience of written language unlike the Hands-on period where text is broken-up into smaller chunks.

  d) In the Publish period children write what they have experienced and this is then displayed (hence, 'published').

In the adolescent year: focus on career development

- Many important decisions are expected to be made during the adolescent years and the young person is often unskilled to make these, potentially life-changing, decisions. One such important decision is subject and career choice at the end of high school. Absence of information about courses and scholarships, limited funds, peer pressure and negative career beliefs at home and in the community also influence these decisions.

- Our career and livelihood planning programmes prepare the young person for transition into higher education and the world of work. We focus on the 13 to 18 year old living in poverty.

- Our programmes are structured around four themes:

  a) Sessions on Understanding Myself focus on awareness about one's interests, aptitudes, career beliefs and career aspirations

  b) Sessions on World of Work focus on learning about pathways to specialization in different fields of study, the eligibility and scope of courses and professions.

  c) Session on Career Alternatives focus on mapping children's potentials with locally available opportunities.

  d) Sessions on Career Planning focus on developing possible next steps after school completion (and in some instances, when after failure in school).

Core programmes

Community outreach programmes targeting early childhood, and the primary and middle school years.

Our programmes for the young child focus on developing an enriched literacy and language environment. The aim is to increase access to quality stimulation and literacy experiences within their neighbourhood and at home. We do this through a mobile toy library, a mobile book library, village camps and the shabd majaa programme.

Mobile library reaches 235 children in five villages and one school

Our mobile library carried toys and books into the community. The library also supported a culturally embedded phonics programme for children in classes 1 and 3 in a low-fee paying school in a neighbouring village.

Every Saturday Laxmi & Yelappa go village to village with a trunk load of toys

The toy trunk for each village typically has 60 to 70 toys. Examples of toys in the trunk are board games and puzzles, balls, bats, rackets and skipping ropes, soft toys, kitchen sets, toy vehicles, wooden toys (building blocks, tops), craft sets, masks and musical instruments.

Different toys are popular with different age groups. Children up till the age of 4 enjoy musical and sound making toys. Their parents come and borrow with them. Children between the ages of 4 and 6 like soft toys and dolls. Those between the ages of 7 and 10 enjoy board games. Boys in general tend to borrow cars, *buguri* (tops), sound making toys (drums, whistles, *tutturi, khanjira*). Girls tend to borrow skipping ropes, rubber rings, books, puzzles, and rangoli plates.

Over 2015-2016, the mobile toy library ran entirely on a generous donation of about 700 toys from individuals. Donors included members of parent networks from more privileged schools, librarians who had been asked to review educational materials and families who were re-locating out of Bangalore.

Children reading their personal invitation to the Library programme.

The book library runs on a three month cycle, roughly scheduled to span children's school vacations with breaks during exam times.

Each wave of the programme begins with a door to door campaign and an announcement on bright yellow posters. These posters go up on shop fronts, temple walls, community halls and school notice boards, and are explained to neighbourhood children and their families by key village-level supporters of the programme.

We have come to realize that the non-return of books (and toys) while a common occurrence, need not be seen as a problem. Rather, it may be a sign of growing ownership and even attachment to a book! Other reasons for non-return over the last two years are:

Jayamma, a volunteer in Yemare village, helps manage the book trunk (*petaari*).

- children like the book very much and don't want to return it (on occasion, they offer to buy it from us),
- they feel they are getting something wonderful for a very reasonable rate and so do not feel like returning it,
- they may move houses and fall outside the area of our village outreach,
- they may be away from the village on the days we visit (vacation, festival),
- the books disappear from the hands of the borrowing child because they are lent to/taken away by cousins and siblings, and
- the books may have been damaged.

Narayanammaa, a village volunteer, giving a letter of appreciation to Madhu, a student volunteer.

On an average day: outreach at a glance

SARJAPURA
10-30 CHILDREN

KADAGRAHARA
5-17 CHILDREN

HOSAHALLI
5-27 CHILDREN

CHAMBENAHALLI
5-30 CHILDREN

YAMARE
5-13 CHILDREN

Infographic by Sherin Balachandran
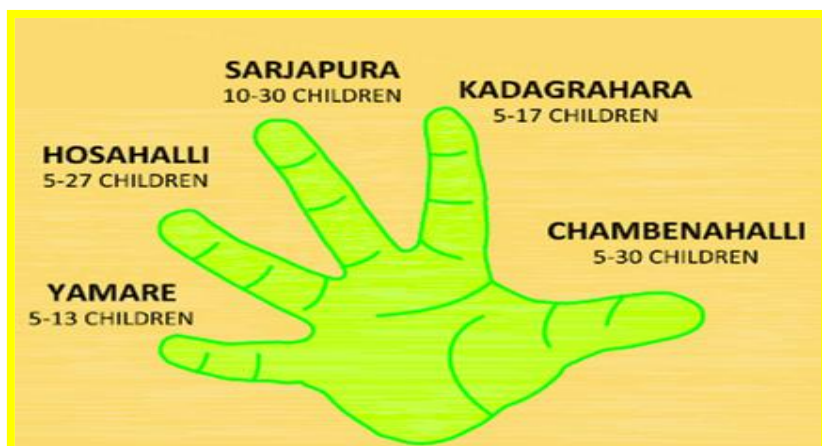
Village camps and the Promise Shishukendra reach 62 children

2015 camps:
Summer vacations (above), winter vacations (below)

Our camps are run in community-provided spaces like the courtyard of a temple, an unused shop, a community hall, and open spaces along a village road.

Themes for each camp differ. See Appendix 2 for a report on the 2016 village camp on Traditional Games.

In 2015 an additional one hour programme was run in the Promise Shishukendra for pre-school aged children from families working on construction sites around the Foundation office. These children, if not brought into the programme, would have loitered unprotected on the construction sites. Excerpt from observation reports:

Children are eager to come to the programme and while in the beginning, Laxmi, needed to call out to them to come, now they come on their own most times and sometimes are even seen waiting at the gate and calling out to be let in before time!
–Sajma Aravind, July 2015

In addition to social skills, improving the duration of their focused attention is also needed. Connecting what they learn in class to real life could be improved. For example, if they are learning the colour green, linking what they see in the book to all the green things around them (leaf, grass, dress etc), is needed. The exercise of asking children to bring something for someone else in their class would improve socialisation. For example, one child could be asked to bring a leaf for another child and so on.
–Gideon Arulmani, July 2015

Shabd Majaa Boards reach one shanty settlement, four villages and one locality in a small town

Through these boards we are attempting to create community learning spaces.   More generally, we are attempting to change the literacy environment in the child's neighbourhood.

Over 2015 – 2016 a total of 12 new boards were developed. Themes ranged from fun titles (Kabbadi – a traditional village game) to fantasy stories (Moon struck – the story of owl siblings who want to fly to the moon).

Other themes for the Shabd Majaa Boards were taken because they were in the school lessons of participating children.

Jiva: the career and livelihood planning programmes

In traditional Indian thought, work is pictured not as a job to earn a living but as an extension of one's life.

Our career and livelihood planning program for the high school and post-high school student has been named *Jiva* which means *life* in almost all Indian languages.

The *Jiva* approach rests on the central idea that work and occupation are interwoven into life as a whole.

- *Jiva* is designed to meet the career development needs of the disadvantaged adolescent.

- *Jiva* combines traditional methods of career counselling such as aptitude testing and career information, with interventions that address the young person's attitudes and mindsets.

- *Jiva* provides the young person with career development skills that could place him/her on a trajectory toward gainful employment.

Jiva programmes addressed career beliefs such as the following.
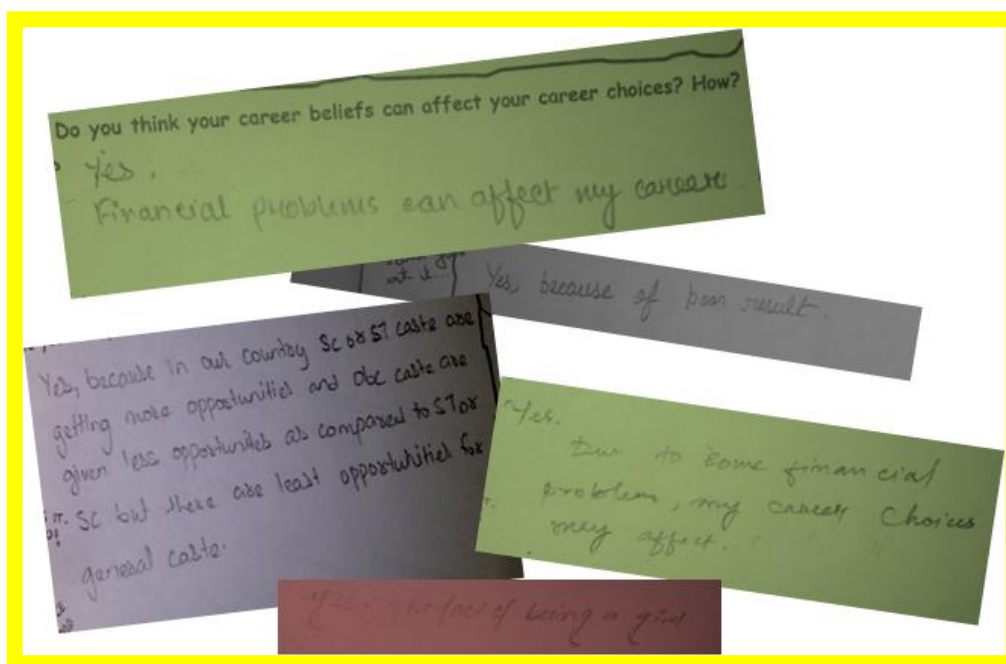
Do you think your career beliefs can affect your career choices?

Yes, financial problems can affect my career.
Yes, because of poor result.
Yes, because in our country SC or ST caste are getting more opportunities and OBC caste are given less opportunities as compared to ST or SC but there are least opportunities for general caste.
Yes, due to some financial problem, my career choice may [be] affect[ed].
Yes, the fact of being a girl.

All tests and techniques used in *Jiva* are culturally validated and statistically standardised for the Indian context.

Appendix 3 gives a sample of the Jiva tools used in the workshops.

School-based workshops reach 2243 children

The Jiva programme in schools run either as a one day workshop or a series of sessions spread across a school term. The Deputy Director of Public Instruction is the government functionary entrusted to monitor external agency programmes in government schools. In Anekal district (where our Foundation office is located), our team directly receives this permission. In other locations the permission is taken by our local partner (e.g., in Dhaligaon in the north-eastern state of Assam permission taken by the Bongaingaon Refinery Staff of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.) In private schools, permissions come from school managements and, occasionally, directly from parents after a parent-teacher meeting. The following table gives details of the location where we met children through school workshops.

Name of Institution	Location	Number of students
English workshops		
BGR Higher Secondary School	Bongaigaon, Assam	561
Delhi Public School	Dhaligaon, Assam	438
Sri Kumaran Children's Home	Bangalore, Karnataka	433
Sri Kumaran Public School	Bangalore, Karnataka	192
Sri Kumaran Children's Home (TSF)	Bangalore, Karnataka	174
Sri Kumaran Children's Home (DKS)	Bangalore, Karnataka	133
TVS Academy	Hosur, Tamil Nadu	78
TVS Academy	Tumkur, Karnataka	40
Kannada workshops		
Government High School	Kugoor, Karnataka	50
Government Girls High School	Anekal, Karnataka	47
Government High School	Attibele, Karnataka	38
Morarji Desai Residential School	Attibele, Karnataka	31
Government High School	Sarjapura, Karnataka	28

Sajma and Rayan during student workshops in Assam

H. N. Nikhil and his siblings

Sixteen year old Nikhil lives with his family in B. Hosahalli village from where he cycles to the Government High School in Sarjapur about two kilometres away. He is an average student and has participated and won prizes in sports events. His family's primary occupation is agriculture. Apart from this, Nikhil's father works as a press reporter for a local Kannada channel and weekly magazine, and has been serving as the president of the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC), having been its member since 2006.

The Promise Foundation has been conducting the *Jiva* programme in Nikhil's school since 5 years with the permission of the Block Education Officer (BEO, a government representative). The staff in the school have taken career guidance very positively. Nikhil actively participated in the *Jiva* programme during the academic year of 2015-16. Of his three siblings, two have also gone through the *Jiva* career guidance programme.

In the *Jiva* workshop, we found Nikhil's highest three potentials to be in the Linguistic, Spatial and Physical Mechanical areas. His highest interests were related to activities like writing reports, essays and articles, leading a group of workers, changing the appearance of people and things, and making models of things. Taking together this profile of potentials, the career alternatives recommended to Nikhil were Mass Communication, Company Secretary, Police Officer, Ceramic Designer and Animation Designer. These options appeared to fit his expressed interest in taking up careers related to humanities.

Presently Nikhil is pursuing his higher secondary course in Commerce.

Nikhil's father feels that the *Jiva* programme has been very helpful for his children. When asked to share his opinion about the programme, he said,

> "*shaaleyalli Promise Foundation bagge oLLe abhipraaya ide, ella makkaLige oLLe benefit sigtaa ide. nam kutumbakkuu tumbaa anukuula aagaite. nan makLu nimminda tumbaa prayoojana paDediddaare*".

> (There is good opinion about The Promise Foundation in the school, and all children are benefiting from it. It has been a great help to my family. My children have received a lot from you.)

Parent Sessions reach 953 families

The Jiva parent workshop is usually a one to two hour session. In this session the parent is introduced to the Jiva programme and shown what we have done in the student workshop.

The session also gives parents a quick overview about the current trends in the world of work. Mindsets and attitudes to different courses and careers is an important topic in the parent session.

Parents are also explained the structure of the career report that they will receive after the workshop. This report will carry information about the child's potentials and our recommendations.

Over the last year, the Jiva training programme has continued to increase in reach across India. The table below gives the details of trainees, number of students reached in each programme and the location of the *Jiva* programme that they conducted.

Counsellor	Number of students reached	Geographical Area
Noor Mohammed Farishta	18	Hyderabad
Nourine Bhimani	52	Mumbai
Shamshuddin Vadsariya	11	Hyderabad
Meera Mawani	7	Bangalore
	6	Pandharkawada
Salim Amirali Jiwani	15	Ahmedabad
	15	Surat
	12	Botad
	15	Surendranagar
	6	Chennai
Lareen Charania	50	Vapi
	19	Pune
Naushad Awadia	30	Dhari
	21	Una
	51	Surat
	27	Mahua
	29	Porbandar
	24	Keshod
Heena Virani	14	Aurangabad
	17	Andheri
	25	Pune
Sultana Padania	-	-
Laila Vinod Thakkar	19	Raipur
Sahil Jafarali Himani	-	-
Nabila Dhamani	-	-

Appendix 3 gives the profile of two Jiva counsellors working in different locations in India.

Extension Programmes 2015-2016

Resource development

<u>**Web resources for researchers and practitioners**</u>

The Promise Foundation continued technical and administrative support for the following resources:

- Lingua Akshara (<u>www.linguakshara.org</u>) with resources on literacy, language and cognitive development
- Indian Association Career and Livelihood Planning (<u>http://www.iaclp.org/</u>) including the association's open access journal and the member-accessed resources.

<u>**Open access materials**</u>

The Promise Foundation supported the development of a rigorous review of Assessment of Foundation Learning and Literacy in Developing Countries. The review was commissioned by the Department for International Development (UK). The final report, an evidence brief, and two policy briefs will become available in 2017. An excerpt from the executive summary is given below:

Lessons learnt

4.1   There is a need to safeguard against token localisation. Good practice to establish fairness in test design includes use of both impressionistic procedures (e.g. cultural relevance, cultural and linguistic appropriateness, adequate conditions for test taking, etc.) and empirical procedures (e.g. Differential Item Functioning analysis).

4.2   There is a need for sensitivity in communicating assessment results because there are several instances of exceptionally unitised use of survey data. Assessment routines can serve the development of grounded education programmes when communiques about assessment results are alert to a pedagogical framework.

4.3   There are several instances of successful implementation at scale, including tests of symbol knowledge, reading accuracy, reading fluency and reading comprehension. The following areas also hold promise for use at scale: emergent writing, spelling, narrative writing, vocabulary, listening comprehension and grammatical awareness.

4.4   There are good examples of tasks that can be included in a toolkit for teachers. A full toolkit to complement routine classroom assessment includes tasks to assess vocabulary and spoken language, CAP, symbol knowledge, reading and spelling accuracy, reading comprehension and narrative writing. A light toolkit to serve teachers with lower skills and proficiencies could include tests of picture vocabulary, symbol knowledge, and reading and spelling accuracy. An advanced toolkit comprising the full toolkit, and additionally, tests of phonological processing and with non-words, can support early recognition of developmental disorders and inform decisions for specialist support.

- *Excerpt from Assessment of Literacy and Foundation Learning in Developing Countries, Nag, S. 2016*

We partnered with Personalised Learning Platform Foundation (PLPF) to make a vocabulary test (*Chili Pili Padakosha – ippatterudu*) into a mobile-based app. This assessment is from our programmes for assisted learning. Children are shown four pictures and they have to point to the picture of a word they hear. This test has been successfully used with children in low income contexts, and examiners with limited training. The app is expected to become available by 2018. Given below is a sample of the test.

Item	Target	Distracters			Comment
P1	ಚಪ್ಪಲಿ				
*					
P2	ಆಮೆ				
*					
P3	ಸೀಸೋಪಕರಣ				
*					

Public lecture

The Promise Foundation organised a Public Lecture in the area of literacy development on the 29th of January, 2016. The lecture was led by internationally acclaimed academic Prof. Ludo Verhoeven who was visiting the Foundation to see our programmes and research sites. Ludo is the Head of the Learning and Plasticity Programme at the Behavioural Science Institute, Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands.

A total of 38 participants from 10 NGOs, 5 schools and 2 publishing houses attended the session.

The lecture focused on current understanding of literacy development in a second language sharing evidence from psycholinguistics and cognitive neuroscience.

Sonali interpreted the lecture for the bilingual and multilingual context in India. Gideon facilitated the programme. The pictures below capture moments from this very successful evening.

Invitations and Dissemination

- Gideon was invited to contribute to a course conducted at the Tata Institute for Social sciences (TISS - Mumbai). His module on career counselling was offered to students taking the Elective on Counselling Children, Adolescents and Parents in School and Other Settings, for MA in Applied Psychology (Specialisation in Counselling Psychology).

- Gideon led a course entitled: *Career Guidance: Policy and Practice in Employment, Education and Training*, delivered through the ILO-International Training Centre in Turin, Italy, to representatives from 32 different developing countries.

- Gideon led the review of the Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioner (EVGP), an international competency framework. As the chair of this IEAVG sub-committee Gideon is working towards addressing non-Western practices in the field of career guidance.

- Gideon was invited by GIZ to develop a career guidance system for vocational training officers in Sri Lanka who work in the Northern Territories with Tamil youth.

- Gideon was commissioned by the City of Gothenburg (Sweden) to develop a training programme that would enhance the sensitivity of Swedish counsellors to the career development needs of immigrants to Sweden. Approx. 200 counsellors are engaged in the training and mentoring process.

- Sonali was invited as a panellist in the National Consultation on Early Grade Reading: Deconstructing the Role of Fluency in Reading Instruction called by Room to Read, an NGO with a library and reading programme in multiple countries including India

- Sonali was invited to a dialogue on the role of native language literacy in multi-literate societies called by the National Brain Research Center (NBRC), New Delhi.

- Sajma was invited to submit a paper on her research related to livelihood planning in children with special educational needs. Her paper can be found in this journal: Aravind, S., Nag, S., & Arulmani, G. (2015). A learning skills approach to the career assessment of individuals with dyslexia. *Career Planning & Adult Development Journal,* 31(4), 162-171.

- Rayan was invited by Snehadaan to meet adolescent HIV Aids survivors who were under Rayan's care when he was the programme officer in their care facility five years back. A key finding from Rayan's interaction was that these young persons who are HIV positive are neglected within their communities, are despondent about their future and are in urgent need for career counselling. Rayan is working to develop a programme for them for 2017.

- Sonali was invited as a panellist by USAID to a Special Interest Group Symposium titled *The Next Generation of Reading Interventions: The Importance of Assessing and Teaching Oral Language Skills in L1* held during the Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society.

- Sonali and colleagues published a peer reviewed paper from the rigorous review done in 2013-2014. Details of the open access paper are as follows: Nag, S., Snowling, M.J. & Asfaha, Y. (2016) Classroom literacy practices in low- and middle-income countries: an interpretative synthesis of ethnographic studies. *Oxford Education Review,* 42 (1), 36-54. doi: 10.1080/03054985.2015.1135115

- An interview with Gideon appeared in *LoopbaanVisie* (CareerVision) of the Dutch Association of Career Professionals (NOLOC).

End note

Global economic trends have increased the availability of opportunities to citizens of developing countries. Despite this however, these resources are not yet optimally accruing to the largest sections of our population--the poor, the marginalised and the vulnerable.

The Promise Foundation's vision is to adapt contemporary findings from the behavioural and social sciences into culture-resonant applications for the realisation of personal potentials amongst children and youth from disadvantaged homes.

Sonali Nag and Gideon Arulmani,
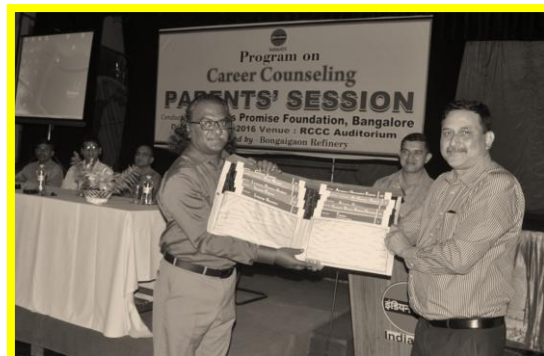
15th December, 2016.

Appendices

Appendix 1:   Excerpts from the assisted learning programme for migrant children

Appendix2:   Excerpts from a report on vacation reading camps in two villages

Appendix 3: The Jiva tools

Appendix 4: Introduction to two Jiva counsellors

Appendix 1:   Excerpt from the assisted learning programme for migrant children

Sapota farm, a Shabd Majaa Center

The Sapota Farm sessions occur Tuesday to Friday from 9 to 10 am. The programme has the following segments: a) the Shabda Maja Board (a playground board with stories and worksheets), b) the Petaari (a book and toy trunk) and c) the four part teaching programme (Talk-Hands-on-Text-Publish). The programme is interactive as captured in the following note from one of the sessions:

Today had a story reading session about a monkey and a tortoise. Children were asked to identify words with opposite meanings in the story. These set of words were represented pictorially by the children and labelled by me. This was displayed on the board, with children actively involved.

Mini Krishna, May, 2015

Profile of the Residents: In Sapota farm mainly migrant workers live with their families. The families are from different parts of Karnataka like Raichur, Hubballi, Gulbarga, Bidar and Yadagiri. Also people from other states like Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand live in this settlement. When they come looking for work in Bangalore they move along with their children. These children have very little access to schools. When the parents go to work the elder children remain at home to take care of their younger siblings.

About the Programme: Our programme happens through the *Shabd majaa* board. Children in the age range of 2 to 14 years come to the programme and are offered a wide range of stimulation activities that would lay foundations for later learning as they grow up. A central focus of the session is story telling with plenty of dialogic reading and discussion. We also do hands-on activities, drawing and colouring. The programme is conducted in English and Kannada language.

Improvements seen after the 2015 programme:

- Children go to nearby school regularly.
- Some children have taken part in school competitions and won prizes.
- Children are less shy and try to speak in English (e.g., wishing others).

Community Involvement: To start this programme we had very good support from the landlord of the Sapota farm, who agreed to setup a roof to put our *Shabd majaa* board. The landlord family also are in constant touch with us to know what we do in the settlement. The roof of the *Shabd majaa* was constructed with the help of workers and well-wishers of TPF.

Challenges:

- Our main challenge is to protect the materials on the *Shabd majaa* board. The materials put on the board are torn and taken off by idle workers or sometimes by the smaller children who are not yet enrolled in our programme.
- Sometimes the place is kept untidy and even the board is destroyed. This happens because the new workers who do not know about this programme are destructive.

Rayan Miranda, January, 2016

The number of children is typically between 10 and 15 children, with the average duration of stay of a migrant family being between 2 weeks and 10 months.

Appendix 2: Excerpts from a report on vacation reading camps in two villages

Small steps, big lessons

Introduction: The theme for this year's camp was Traditional Games (mostly, but not necessarily native to India, for example, the board games Seega and Awithlaknannai were from America and Egypt respectively). Most of these games are known, but often forgotten with the passage of time, and have no formal documentation and dissemination. Their value was lost somewhere along the way. Games require different kinds of learning; hand-eye coordination, strategy and logic, team work. The idea was to encourage play with these forgotten and dying games, and to use these as topics for reading, writing and speaking activities.

Some of the outdoor games we played were *lagori* (seven stones), *gilli daanDu, hasu huli aaTa* (cow and tiger game)*, huli huli eshTu ganTe* (tiger, tiger, what time is it?)*, poshampa*. Some the indoor games included Snakes and Ladders, Ludo, *oodi naTisi* (dumb charades), *chitrisi uuhisi* (Pictionary). The games were a mix of outdoor and indoor games, full group, team, and individual games, running games, strategy games, games that needed reading, games that needed numbers. Apart from games played, the names of many games were included in Hands-On and Talk activities (for example, carrom, *kunTe bille* (hop and catch), and kabaddi).

An uneven playing field: Individual differences and contexts

The reading level of many children did not correspond with their age or grade. Most Kannada speaking children between the ages of seven and nine were almost at the same level in terms of reading and writing, and language proficiency. This was not the case for the English students; there was a clear difference of fluency and skill in the language corresponding to age and grade in terms of vocabulary, spelling, and sentence construction. Few children, like Navin and Sathyavelu in Kadagrahara and Ayesha in Sarjapura were well ahead of the others in both languages. Sathyavelu often liked to impress the others by reading texts in both English and Kannada with equal fluency (he can also speak fluently in Tamil and Hindi!).

On the other hand, Nathasha, from Kadagrahara, had failed the second grade twice, and had only recently been promoted to the fourth after changing to an English medium school. She knows some words in English, but cannot read at all. She recognizes familiar words by sight, but cannot read what they are. She gets confused even with two-letter words like 'it', 'he', 'is' and cannot spell them out. On seeing a familiar word, she would sometimes guess from the set of words she knew till she got it right. By the end of the two Hands-On activities[1], she knew words like 'people, players, games, home' by sight. She did show a lot of interest in learning, and was willing to do the same exercise over and over till she got it (she couldn't get the word 'what' for two days till we came up with a short mnemonic ...!).

Her sister Nikitha is in second grade, and very bright. Her language proficiency is well past Nathasha's and reads much better than her. She often makes fun of her sister for being so slow.

Children in Kadagrahara were generally quite helpful to one another, and liked to work in small groups and discuss amongst themselves. They asked if they needed help. Sathyavelu and Navin,

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[1] We did two Hands-On activities, each split over two days. The first we called Player/Players, in which the children had to form sentences with words printed on flashcards. The second activity we did was with question words What, When, Where, Why, How. Children had to match different words to the correct question word. For example, 'school' would be matched to 'Where', 'holidays' would be matched to 'When', 'chess' would be matched to 'What', and so on.

close friends, enjoyed working together, and often competed with each other while playing games. The two excelled in all the outdoor games.

Attitudes to work varied, as demonstrated above. Akshaya from Sarjapura enjoyed doing the writing work by herself, but was quite uncomfortable in a group. She never once did the homework, and on one occasion, simply left it behind and went home. She was one of the few who came on all days, but needed to be pushed to do work. Many in Sarjapura just copied from one another to finish the task at hand. Zainab for example, would sometimes have her work done by her older sister Ayesha (who did it quite happily!). She came because she liked to be with others and mingle.

Children in Sarjapura were generally quick to get angry. Whenever they got something wrong or someone was bothering or teasing them, or hurt their pride in some way, they got angry. Viswanath, for example, when passed over to be leader in a game, got angry and sulked in a corner for ten minutes. Akshaya, when scolded for leaving a game halfway to chase some pigeons, refused to come back to any of the games for some time and stood on the side with her friends, Ayesha and Zainab. Fighting and swearing among the boys was common. At times, when playing outside, some of the older boys would watch from the side and taunt and heckle.

Early divisions in Sarjapura

Sarjapura was significant because of tension along two axes: religion and gender. The village itself is Muslim dominated, but the small minority of Hindus are economically better off. The children grow up in a religion-conscious environment. We found that there were barely any Hindu-Muslim friendships among children (with the exception of Akshaya and Ayesha). Whether these are conscious considerations, we do not know. The division is more obvious among the boys, where all the Muslim boys form a big gang.

Perhaps language plays a part, as Urdu is the first language of the Muslim families in the area. When I worked with Tahera and Mahushree in Sarjapura, Tahera would refuse to translate what I said to Madhushree claiming she did not know Kannada, though I have heard her speak it before. Madhushree, two years younger than Tahera, struggled as a result, and had to take help from Laxmi.

The other axis is that of gender. In no game, would girls and boys (except siblings) sit next to each other, or play together on the same team, especially in games like *poshampa*, where they had to hold hands, or in Statue, where the catcher has to go up to someone while they stand still and make them laugh. Inevitably, the boys went to boys (more specifically, Muslim boys went to Muslim boys), and girls went to girls. At most, they would go to a sibling of the opposite sex, but would go past them soon.

Snapshots from the Camp

1. Shashirekha in Kadagrahara learning how to play Brainvita 2. Naveen calling out, "It is eight 'o' clock!" in *Huli huli eshTu ganTe* (tiger, tiger, what time is it?). 3. Vishwananth Drawing with his eyes closed in a game of *chitrisi uuhisi* (Pictionary). 4. The two teams cuaght in a game of *poshampa.* 5. Nandish taking aim at the stones in *lagori* (seven stones) 6. Spurti in *hagga jigitha aaTa* (double dutch). 7. Chamarathna letting off some steam during tic-tac-toe with our student volunteer, Nandish. 8. Nathasha trying her hand *at gilli daanDu.* 9. Laxmi helping out Goutham during dumbcharades.

Takeaways: Overall, little changes and improvements were visible in most children, whether it was learning to identify some words by sight, learning spellings, adding words from What, Where, When, Why, How to one's vocabulary, learning to write sentences by themselves, getting the confidence to speak in public, learning to answer a question systematically, covering all the question words, picking up a skill through one of the games, learning to ask for help when needed (and learning that it was okay to ask for help), or conversely, to give help when asked. In this way, each one took away some learning from that week, including me.

On a more personal note, the camp has been one of the things that has stood out for me so far during my time at The Promise Foundation. It gave me an idea of what it is to work in the field, a microscopic glimpse into the lives of the children I interacted with. It helped me understand the demands of working with children here, learning to detect and be sensitive to underlying currents and tensions of community, gender, socio-economic status, and schooling. I also caught a glimpse at the schooling system and predominant teaching style, one that encourages rote learning, blind reproduction, with no solid foundation to build on.

It brought to light the centrality of language and effective communication. I could only help as well as they could understand what I said. I struggled a bit with language, stringing together Kannada sentences of my own, or speaking in Hindi or Tamil in the hope that they understand. Even in Sarjapura, where we anyway speak to them in Hindi, it was difficult to understand each other, because our dialect was so different from theirs, which is strongly influenced by Urdu (as well as contractions of several Hindi and English phrases, for e.g. *hoga* for *ho gaya*, *tishan* for tuition). And imagine, we had to help with English/Kannada through a language that is not even their first.

If one can see progress (however miniscule) in the short span of a week simply by providing effective models of learning (games, flash cards, pictures), rich text and a stimulating environment, one can only imagine the possibilities beyond this. To see improvement or even interest was heart-warming, and reassuring.

Meghna C. N.
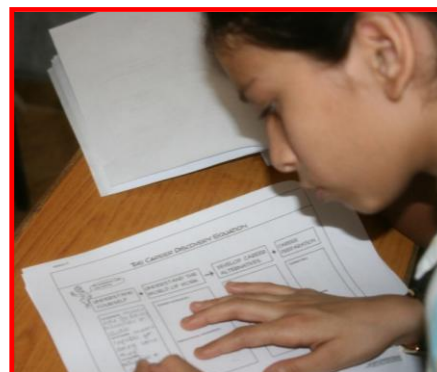*Intern at The Promise Foundation*

Appendix 3:   The *Jiva* tools

Jiva materials for student workshops

Over 2015-2016 a total of 2726 students used the Jiva materials through student workshops.

The Jiva Tools

FLIP CHARTS

WORKSHEETS

CAREER CARDS

CAREER DICTIONARY

LEARNING CARDS

WORKBOOK

Appendix 4: Introduction to two Jiva counsellors

Salim Amirali Jiwani

Salim Amirali Jiwani hails from Warangal district in Andhra Pradesh. Salim has completed his Post graduation in Software Engineering. He works as an Assistant Professor in Vaagdevi College of Engineering where he teaches undergraduate and post graduate courses in the engineering disciplines, MBA and MCA. He is also a research scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU), Kakinada in the Department of Computer Science Engineering.

Involvement with student activities: In college, Salim has been involved in numerous student activities to bring out the talents of his students (for example, he has formed an association and organized programs like elocution, debates, group discussion, panel discussion, mini project exhibition, extempore, seminars on non technical topics, essay writing). He has worked to form clubs like music club, sports club, and a magazine. He has provided leadership to his students to organize a national level techno-cultural fest named *Anchariga*.

Role as an AKESI-Jiva career counsellor: Salim completed the certificate course in Basic Skills for Career Counselling from The Promise Foundation in November 2012 and the Upgradation course in March 2016.

Though based in Warangal, Salim often travels to remote locations in north and west India to conduct Jiva workshops. Over the summer months of 2016 for example, he conducted workshops in four locations in Gujarat (Ahmadabad, Surat, Botad and Surendranagar), with two workshops on consecutive days occurring in two remote villages.

After workshops conducted on 12th May in Botad and 13th May in Surendranagar:

"…as far as feedbacks are considered the program has been received well in a few centers in Gujarat. But I found that the students could not answer more than 75% of the questions. So wanted to know if that was okay or the number of questions answered has an impact on the way the potential is found."

Naushad Didarali Awadia

Naushad Awadia has completed his graduate degree in psychology from Gujarat University and a post graduate certificate in basic skills for career counselling from The Promise Foundation. He is a certified trainer and has more than 18 years of experience in various industries.

Involvement with student activities: Naushad has the experience of serving as Local Chairman and Regional Chairman of Aga Khan Youth and Sports Board for Northern Saurashtra. He has participated in national level planning / designing of new programs for youth as per the need of the *Jamat* (the community). He had been involved Co-ordinating, executing and monitoring of various programs for the youth. He was also involved in managing finance and programs as per the budgetary plan. He was an active participant for designing "*Aashaye*" and "*Hum Honge Kamyab*" programs. He has successfully executed the newly launched programs through strategic marketing activities and detailed planning. He enhanced Scouts/guides activity in NS region. There was 100% programmatic achievement in NS region and was brought the region up front to the National level.

Role as an AKESI-Jiva career counsellor:

Naushad has conducted several workshops in different parts of Gujarat and has reached more than 200 students. He also has his own page on Facebook 'Discover My Career' https://www.facebook.com/discovermycareer/?fref=ts. He conducts workshops and uses this page to reach his client group.

After a workshop conducted on 26th May 2016 in Mahua:

Yes, I enjoyed a lot the workshop, participation of students was good, and they are keen to have their career reports because they just got their 10th and 12th results.