

# Literate India

A large number of children in India are unable to achieve grade-appropriate learning levels, leading to a high percentage of them dropping out of school. The ASER report 2016 states almost 50% children in grades 3 - 5 in the target districts cannot even read grade 1 level text. This leads to persistent negative patterns in children such as under-achievement and low enthusiasm for learning.

Most children in the project area find it difficult to cope with the system because of the deep disconnect between the home and school environment. This linguistic and socio-cultural disconnect only deepens with time and lack of special attention and encouragement eventually forces them to drop out. Resultantly, their schooling experiences are usually characterised by non-comprehension and feelings of inadequacy about their own culture and language.

**Aim:** To enable children from marginalized communities in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan to achieve age appropriate learning outcomes by bringing together all elements of ChildFund India's demonstrated reading for leading initiatives. Also, by adopting a literacy model that places language and socio-emotional skills at the foundation of sustained learning, with active participation and ownership of the community.



**Vision and Approach:** ChildFund India has a vision to mainstream under-served children in the formal education system and support them with resources to perform well in their academic sphere, reduce dropout in high risk areas, strengthen community participation in school governance, eliminate corporal punishment in schools and provide children with essential life skills to enable them to take decisions affecting their lives.



**Target area:** 10 schools in Kotra Block, Udaipur district of Rajasthan and 10 schools in Bargad block, Chitrakoot District of Uttar Pradesh.



**Beneficiaries:** Almost 1500 children in 7 primary and 3 secondary schools in Uttar Pradesh and nearly 5000 children in 8 elementary and 2 secondary schools in Rajasthan.



**Project Period:** 2 years

# Highlights



## **At the level of children:**

Learning centers have been established within schools to help children overcome learning gaps and achieve desired outcomes. These are operated by young facilitators selected from the villages and trained to teach. The CLC also serves to demonstrate activity-based child friendly teaching approaches to government school teachers.

**At school level:** All the schools selected under the project are in very remote areas and were in poor condition. The project worked with the school system and local communities to get the basic infrastructure in place. Among other initiatives, child friendly libraries were established in the schools.



**At the level of teachers:** An evidence based model called Stimulating and Active Learning and Teaching (SALT) has been developed that completes a whole cycle of first identifying training needs of teachers, conducting participatory training and then providing in-classroom support and observing teachers practice these approaches. The observations then feed into the next round of training.

**At community level:** School Management Committees (SMC) were trained on Right to Education, and their roles and responsibilities in relation to the same. They were also trained on developing school development plans and to support the learning of children at home.

**At the level of education system:** Project staff developed liaison with agencies like Ambedkar University and the National Council for education, Research and Training (NCERT), to take the work forward.

## The project also worked towards



- Developing context-based multilingual, gender-inclusive material. Converted traditional knowledge like folk stories, songs and lullabies into bilingual and multilingual print and audio visual material, such as animated films for children. Also, organized awareness campaigns.
- Enhancing role of parents/caregivers as active contributors towards learning and development of children.
- Training teachers to be sensitive towards the cultural context and socio-emotional needs of these children and thereby removing discriminatory and condescending attitudes.



# Impact



**Improved retention rate and enhanced learning levels of children.** The retention rates in these schools have gone up 30-40% within 1 year of project's initiation. Participating children show a very high confidence level. They are able to read story books and read and write text appropriate to their age. They have also shown improvement in numeracy skills.

**Motivated and trained teachers** - Quality circles where teachers learn from each other have been formed and are functioning regularly, after providing them trainings.

**Liaison with government** - Connections have been made with education departments in the districts. Government officials have been regularly visiting schools and appreciating the efforts.

**Strong networks and partnerships** - The project has been able to take a lead role in strengthening the inter agency network on the right to education. Two big workshops were organized to orient diverse professionals about RTE and their support sought in effective implementation of the act.

**Community involvement** - School Management Committees are meeting regularly in the project areas to discuss issues related to education and create school development plans. The project has been able to create a cadre of people at community level who are not only involved in the governance of the schools but also in the learning of children in schools, at home and community.