



kshamtalaya

Delhi

Bringing the Learning Festival to the National capital



**Tech
Mahindra**
FOUNDATION



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United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2018 - 2022



Through the LF we aim to contribute to the goals highlighted with a tick



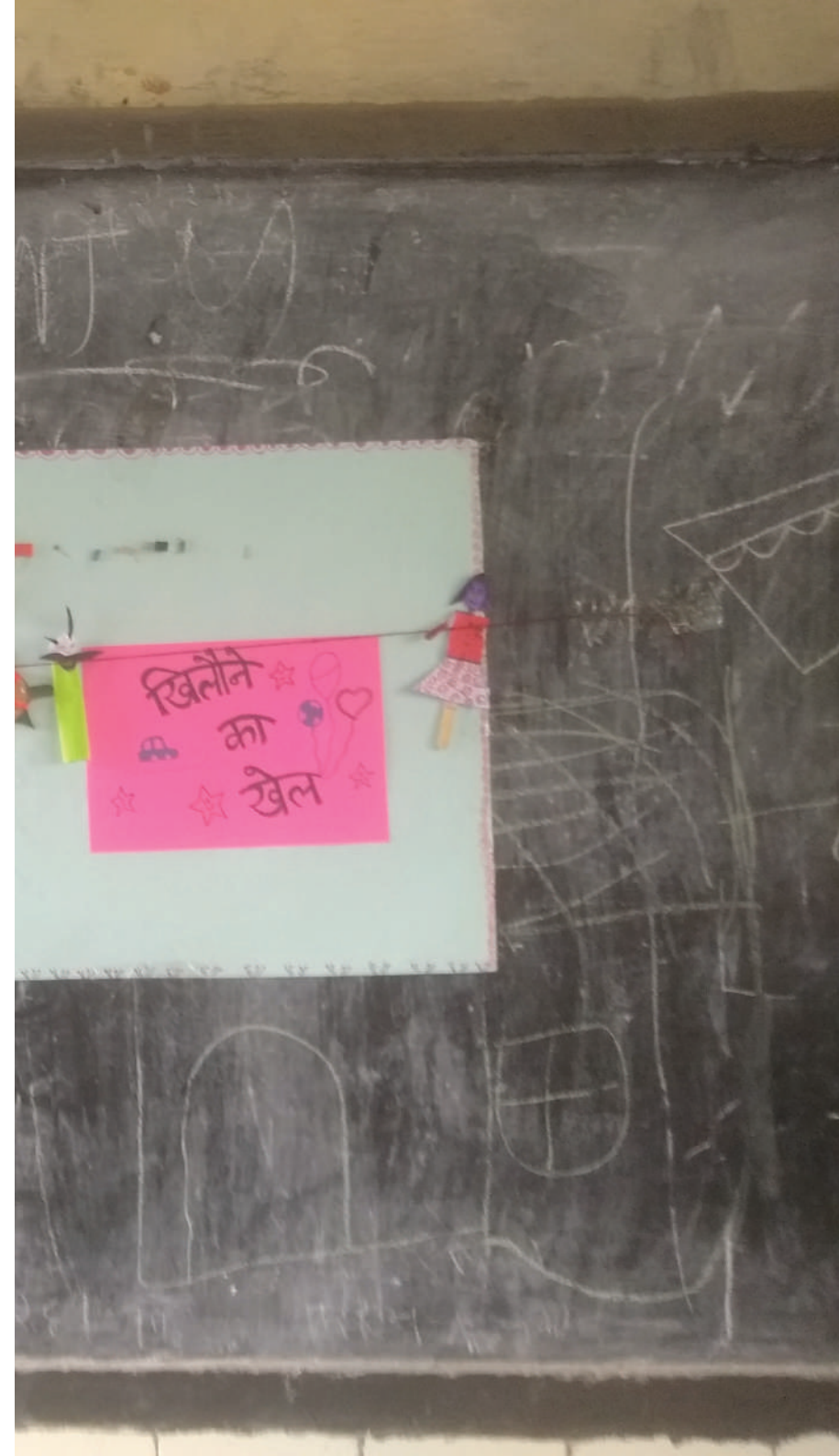


FOREWORD

Kshamtalaya Foundation is a non-profit organisation, that envisions a world where every individual realizes their true potential. And we believe this is possible if every child completes age-appropriate schooling and attains quality education. To operationalize the same, we are working with two government schools under East Delhi Municipal Corporation with the objective of a whole school transformation. We are working towards bringing a shift in the present education system through continuous engagement with teachers, community and state institutions at multiple levels. Our partner, Tech Mahindra Foundation who has been continuously supporting us in foundation and implementation of the programme has also been supporting several non-profit organisations, working towards providing quality education in government run schools. We are also present in rural parts of Rajasthan where we have actively been working with schools and local governance to build a deeper understanding and engagement with the system. We continuously strive to bring a change in the way a school as an institution operates, with the objective of creating a safe and healthy environment for children where their skills and potential can be nurtured. This report elucidates our efforts to address the deep rooted problem of the education system through engaging with relevant stakeholders involved in learning of a child and focusing on the idea of re-creating the learning environment inside the schools.

CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOLS IN INDIA

The crisis in the education system is prolonged and is interconnected with a lot of factors where multiple stakeholders are involved. Intuitively, part of the problems involves children's accessibility to these schools and the other part involves the quality of education being provided to children in these schools including availability and capacity of teachers, ensuring basic infrastructure in schools and other necessities. Right to Education Act 2009 has been regarded as one of the major initiatives by the government towards minimising the gap and ensuring the accessibility as well as quality of education to children in all government run primary schools. Despite the enactment of the Act, the situation in schools does not seem to change much. It is relevant to think around what makes it difficult for the system to provide children with good quality education. And this obviously covers a wide range of factors. However, no significant change has been observed despite interventions for a long period of time and all of us to some extent would agree that this shift demands a deeper and a systemic intervention.





SCHOOLS IN DELHI

If we bring our focus to the situation of government schools in Delhi, it would not be surprising to acknowledge the fact that Delhi does not provide us a very different picture except the fact that recently the Delhi Government has made education as its top most priority at the policy level and a considerable amount of fund has been allocated towards changing the condition of the schools in different parts of the city. According to government statistics, in the past five years enrolments in MCD(1) schools have fallen from 8,69, 540 in 2013-14 to 7,24, 627 in 2017-18. Share of enrolments in state government schools to total students has fallen from 38% to 35% while in other schools has risen from 39 to 45% in the last five years(2). It's important to bring our focus to this figure which reflects the drop outs of the children from these MCD schools. Looking deeper into the issues would provide us with a range of factors for drop outs like dissatisfaction of parents(3)- with the way the school functions, non-availability of basic amenities like toilets, water, proper classrooms and other things which usually force parents to take their children out of these schools and enrol them into other private schools, if they can afford the fees. Even those parents who enrol their children in MCD schools rely more on private tuitions for education than the schools. To bring a shift in the status quo certainly requires a multi-dimensional approach to be adopted and a deeper engagement with all the stakeholders who are directly and indirectly contributing to the learning of a child. All of the above mentioned factors lead to a drop in children's interest and feel no connection with the formal education which schools offer them. The reason that they come to school does not align with their individual purpose or goal in life. Undoubtedly, schools as institutions have failed to cater to the needs of the children and alienated them with the value that a formal education can bring in the lives of the children. Thus, it certainly arises a need to make school more accessible to the children where children not only like to attend school on a regular basis but also get engaged and be involved in the process which becomes an essential part and fundamental to the change we envision with our objective of school transformation. Moving towards the objective of engaging each and every child in the process of learning in schools, Learning festival is an initiative of Kshamtalaya Foundation which focuses on providing children with a platform to explore different mediums of learning and in the process pushing them to explore their individual skill, something which we do not see as a part of present-day mainstream education.

(1) Municipal Corporations of Delhi

(2) http://www.edudel.nic.in/mis/schoolplant/school_information.htm

(3) Report on State of Public (School) Education in Delhi 2009 by Pragya



WHAT IS A LEARNING FESTIVAL?

The Learning Festival (LF) is a program conducted over 6 days in schools or local community spaces. The days are designed to explore diverse mediums, with a set of activities within each of them. The activities are facilitated in a manner that allows the children to familiarize themselves with the medium, in a natural progression. The children discover newer methods of learning and construct knowledge from their immediate environment. Guided by the community facilitator, the children in groups move from one medium to another. The children use their learning from the exposure days and with the guidance of the facilitator, blend learnings from two or more mediums to create a production that helps them best express themselves. This is shared and celebrated with the local community's presence. The LFs are equipped with diverse set of resources and methods (physical & people infrastructure) to encourage questions, curiosity and learning by doing. The community facilitators will be trained in theories and practices of multiple intelligences. The learner then deepens her understanding of her particular choice by investigating, doing, creating and sharing with support from the facilitator. On the last day of the festival, they celebrate the spirit of learning with all concerned stakeholders responsible for a child's education. The parents come to school and witness their children's journey of learning over the week.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

WHY

Identify needs & aspirations



Collaborate & gather support



Help children realize creative potential



Parental engagement in children's learning



Assess alternative approach to learning



School transformational plan with teachers, community & local governance

PRIMARY PROCESS

Dialogue



Local level planning



Learning Festival



Parental participation in LF



Map learning outcomes



Dialogue

WHAT

Interviews through audio & visual



Planning – time, space & roles



Exposure to various learning mediums



Dialogue on significance of learning in schools



Data Analysis



Community meeting

LF

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Co Creation

The LF is organised with equal participation and engagement of all the stakeholders involved in learning of a child. The design of LF is embedded in the context and the needs of the children and communities.

Freedom with Responsibility

We believe that children can learn best when they have freedom to choose, explore and create on their own, yet being responsible and accountable for their own learning.

Safe Space

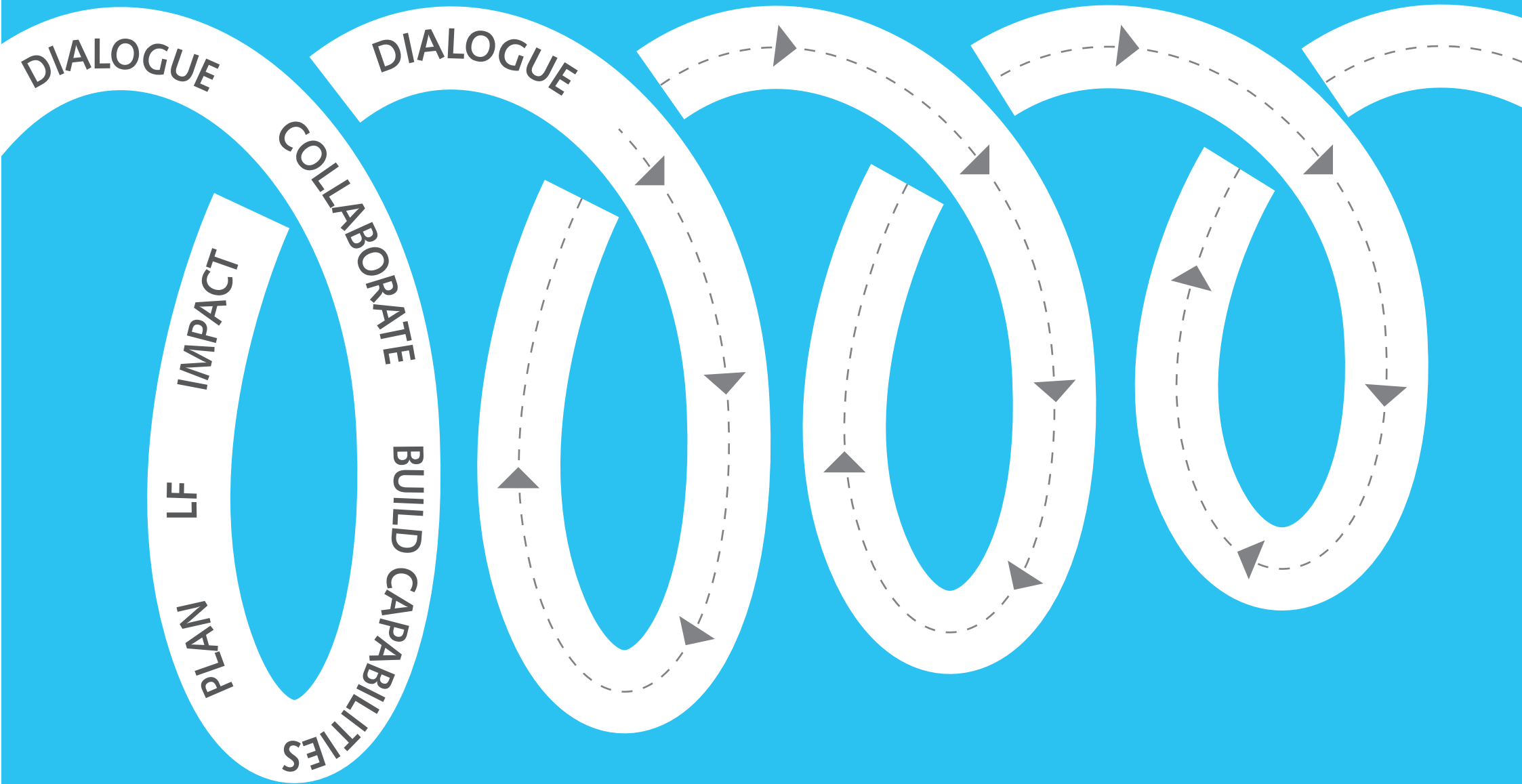
A non-threatening environment where children are encouraged, not looked down upon and feel secure enough to build relationships where they can confidently express themselves without the fear of judgement or ridicule in any manner.

OBJECTIVES OF THE LF

1. To create equal opportunities to learn and demonstrate every child has creative potential and organize local contexts of infinite learning possibilities.
2. To create equal opportunities to learn and demonstrate every child has creative potential and organize local contexts of infinite learning possibilities.
3. To revive the spirit of learning within schools where a learner has access to people, resources and tools, which allows the child to explore and investigate based on their own interests, access to diverse mediums and their best expressions.
4. To establish meaningful relationships between teachers, students, communities on the premise of reviving the spirit of learning.



OPERATIONALIZING THE APPROACH





LF APPROACH

Our approach intends to work in close collaboration with the state institutions, local communities and teachers to enhance the quality of learning and better the lives of their children. The idea is to make each stakeholder responsible for the learning of the child and work collaboratively to provide children with an enabling environment with a sustainable approach.

To operationalize the approach, a three day kshamta utsav (Training of the facilitators) is done. The facilitators are trained in an experiential format, who would ready themselves to setup and transform the school spaces as they experience similar simulations through the training.

The facilitators plan the set-up of learning studios and get teachers on-board to support facilitators in the learning studios.

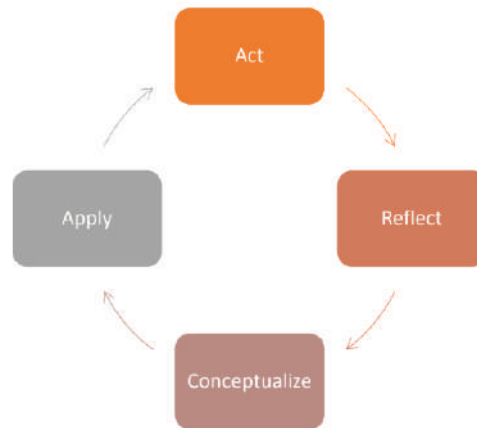
The learning studios create a space for children to investigate, try and experiment multiple mediums of learning. The studio gives ample resources to children to encourage them to learn and explore new mediums. The studios are fully driven by the facilitators everyday who try to create a safe and joyful place of learning. They are designed and organized to be visually appealing and the functioning of these studios is based on the guiding principles of LF.

SIMULATION OF THE LEARNING FESTIVAL

The three days Kshanta Utsav provides a platform to the facilitators to go through the experience and perform the same in the school with the children. This covers four stages. First, the facilitator is exposed to the experience who then reflect on the same. Post reflection, they conceptualize the whole experience and then prepare themselves to apply the same with the children. Simulation of the LF is quite an enriching experience as it leads you to go through the experience before applying with others.

In the Delhi edition of the LF, it was conducted with 10 facilitators. All of them experienced different studios of 6 days of the LF in 3 days.

Below is the diagram to reflect the process for the facilitators:



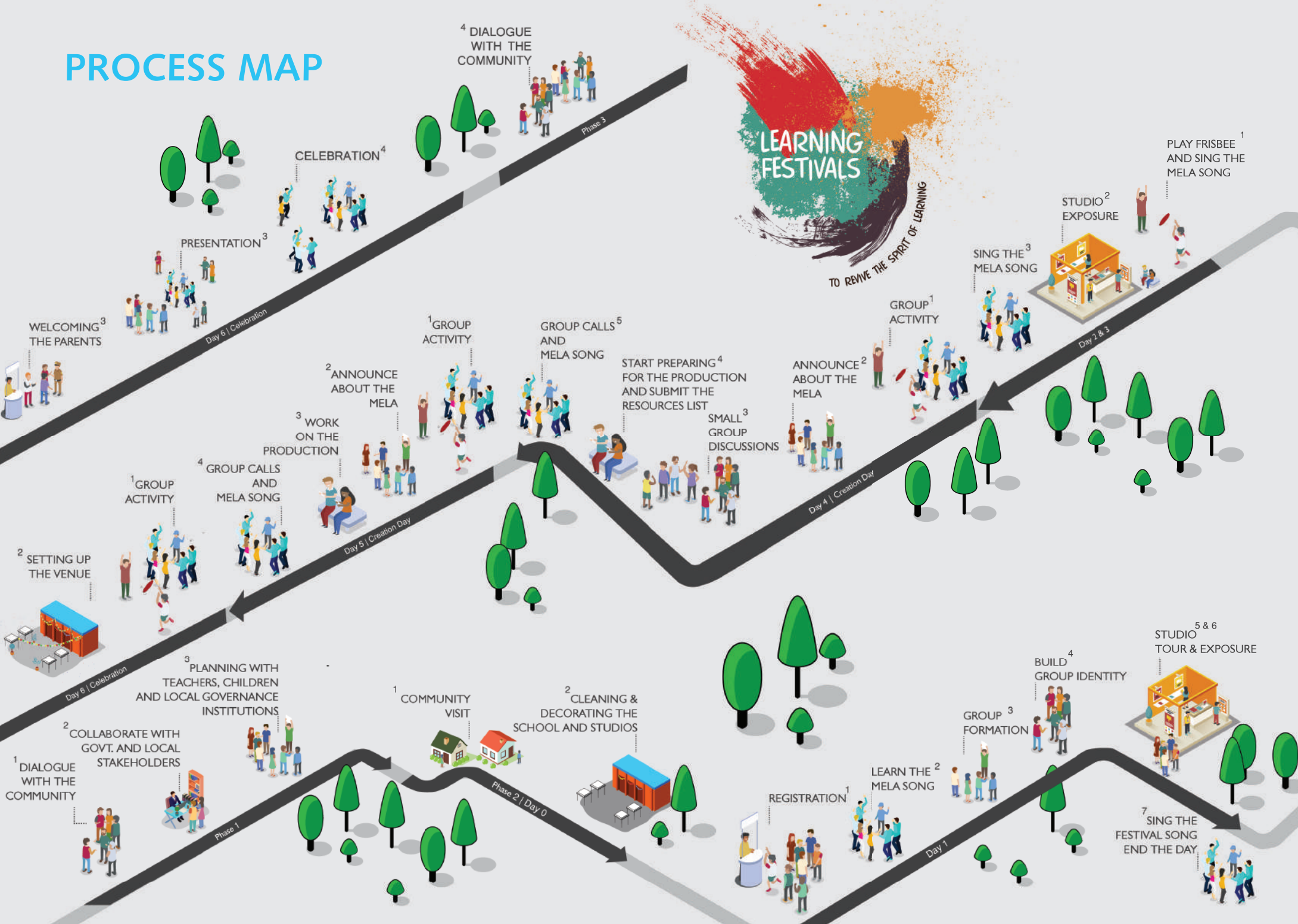
Additionally, in the last day of the simulation process, the facilitators are given an option to either be a group facilitator or studio facilitator. A studio facilitator is to choose one studio and has to facilitate a session, each time a group comes to visit the studio. Whereas a group facilitator is to be with one particular group on all six days and focus on developing skills of children on team work, making rules with the team, respecting each other, giving space to voice, collaborate and co create. Both the facilitators play a very important role in implementing the processes of the learning festival.



PROCESS MAP

LEARNING FESTIVALS

TO REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF LEARNING





KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The Learning Festival was able to create a spirit of learning and encourage the community to reimagine the idea of learning where learning does not just involve understanding of classroom information being delivered by teachers but to think and reflect upon the essentials for a child's learning and how children can take ownership of their own learning. The Learning Festival in Delhi was conducted for six days in two schools where we engaged with a total number of 196 students.

There were a total number of 172 community members who were involved in the festival through different levels of engagement. This also includes 4 local government representatives who attended the final day of the festival. 130 parents of school children were involved in this event and ensured their participation in the final day of the event, witnessing their children participating in different studios and presenting their work which they learnt in the past five days. Also, a total number of 36 teachers were involved in the final event day. Some of these teachers also showed an interest in carrying out similar activities in their respective classrooms.

In terms of skills, LF focused on inculcating the following among children:

Creative confidence - The feeling that one can create on their own was developed in the children.

Thought processing - Doing something without whole instruction. Children came up with their own ideas and not what the facilitators asked them to do. This helped in breaking the stereotypes of classroom teaching.

Peer Learning & Team work - We also observed children supporting each other in group activities. Since, the resources were limited, children were found supporting each other and sharing resources with each other.

Taking ownership - Children took ownership of their own learning. Be it creating a story, or making a toy or making a song. They were involved and created with freedom taking equal ownership of the space.

Joyful learning - A sense of freedom to choose their own medium of learning was experienced by the children. There was no compulsion or enforcement to learn a particular activity. They were free to choose what interests them and refuse what does not.

CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Giving a platform to the children where they could choose what they wanted to learn reflects one of the important objectives of learning festival. Through this LF, we were able to provide a platform to the children where they were exposed to different studios, work in a group and then decide what they want to create. This process keeps children at the centre and need of the learning comes from children and not as instruction by facilitators. To create, it is imperative to try and even if you fail you should not give up and this is something we created for the children and made successful efforts to establish a notion that every child has the potential to create. The LF created that space for children where they were able to utilize the space according to their needs.

A child's reflection

Nida's teacher Manju mam shared when she sent this child to Learning Festival that she is very shy in expressing herself and generally doesn't respond in class. On the Third day of the LF, during a sharing of personal highs and lows Nida shared in GF's ear that her low moment is when a shop-keeper near her house stares at her and it makes her uncomfortable. She was hesitant to share it with her group. After some interaction on the topic we wanted to choose for production, when the "Magic Top" group zeroed in on the theme of Consent and shared few more harassment incidents they had come across, Nida voiced out her story and also agreed to lead a role in the role play. She, with the entire group seemed confident and presented their story with a message 'Ladkiyon ko koi unki marzi ke bina chuye to unhe accha nahi lagta' to an 800+ audience which consisted of their peers, teachers and parents in a clear and assertive way. This journey from a whisper in an ear to a shout-out to the world on the necessity of consent underlined for me the importance of spaces to cultivate such confidence and a safe feeling.





FACILITATOR'S LEARNING

The learning of a facilitator does play an important part in the learning festival. Both the studio facilitators as well as group facilitators spend a good amount of time with the children where they have liberty to facilitate the session with their own understanding and individual creativity. As no facilitator is bound to abide by any uniform structure, it depends on the facilitator to use their knowledge and do what they find the best. This also helps them develop their skills of engaging with children. Every day they repeat the processes with different sets of children, which creates opportunities for them to reflect, identify their highs and lows, and to give it their best. The idea was also to provide facilitators with an insight into the life of the child. In the process of engaging with a child, it becomes very important to know where a child is coming from, what are the challenges they most likely face in their day to day life.

LF brought community and school together. Children got exposure to dance, music, making and brought confidence in them to learn new things. Being a group facilitator of a group of 18-19 children in both the morning and evening shifts for continuous 6 days, my belief of giving children a choice of choosing their path gets stronger i.e. if children are given such an environment where they can do what they feel to do under some facilitation, wonderful things happen which anyone can't even imagine.

My high point was when all the children in my group had lunch together and shared food with those who didn't bring their lunch.

Also, after spending long days in school, team debriefs and reflections made me to think critically and I was able to give my suggestions which were not judged. It was a first time for me to speak in front of such a big gathering where teachers, children and parents all were present and this made me confident in public speaking as an organizer.

Those 10 days became one of my memorable journeys. I am looking forward to more such events in future!!!

- Bharat



दिल्ली
Learning Festival

MORNING P...

PS

BRITISH TROPHY

JACK JONES

As I enter the festivities children are all excited to engage in a list of activity surprises....and I was all pepped up with inhibitions and awareness. Day 1 started with getting to know new names and songs. As a group facilitator I needed to observe them and make them experience learning. To take them through the various studios where they will be exposed to joyful learning. I was a new face for all. Still they had an underlying trust that they will experience new things here.

In the first studio, my group created various art work. They progressed from easy to difficult and got motivated to create things on their own. The group had a mix of 3rd, 4th and 5th graders of this school. I could see the skill set were different and peer learning was clearly visible in cutting, pasting and folding. A girl started saying things that made others (sitting next to her) giggle and even laugh. They kept laughing while create their masterpiece. Children learnt art with supportive facilitation. They demonstrated cognitive engagement. It was a quick day that passed in a jiffy. I learnt that I still had the spark of working with kids. Day 2 came with clarity and closeness. Now the group and I knew each other a little. A girl comes to me and gifts me a pen and starting the day with a gift is awesome. One(Uzaifa) girl will always be next to me. Even in the break she'll be standing and giving me company. Today when we created some ground rules for better utilization of time and resources kids could not think of secular rules. Their sharing were like- I will tell kids not to fight, I will tell others how to stand in a queue, I will make them quite, I will remind them rules, etc... co-creating these rules made them little more connected. Two girls (Upashna and gungun) were always ready to support others work, the group's quick functioning was visible. One girl (alsifa) would not wait for others as she would be bored waiting for others to finish. By the end of day 2, she asked, "ma'am, uska nahi bana abhi, main uski help Kar Doo". When we tried to reinforce that 'we need to wait for everyone, we need to help others in their work, we need to be together as a group like a family'. We had also decided some roles to follow and cleaning was always ignored.

Kids started cleaning on day 3. After making puppets one group presented child marriage with a beautiful story but the other group couldn't create any story. Kids in this group were unable to express freely with puppets. But one girl (sanya) created a red tree and shared that, "ye ek laal ped hai, aur Sab iski Pooja Karne aate hai." I saw her speaking in the group for the first time. While creating puppets, she made a tree, a boy and a flower pot. But kept the tree and threw the other two. When I asked her why she said, "I could not make them like I wanted to, now they are spoiled". I replied- but still you can use them, they are not that bad. But she said, "maine theek se nahi banaya, kagaz isliye kharab ho Gaya na to phuk Diya". As kids finished with the studios, they wanted to know about tomorrow. What will they do? Our parents will also come? Kya hum nachenge bhi? Aur Kya hoga?

Few have made new friends, and few are still in their own world. Few are given a spark of learning, fun and togetherness. Overall these three days were fun filled and enriching for all.

- Stephany

Learning festivals are not just about new experiences, new friendships but also about bringing down the walls of conventional teaching methods, expectations and fears. Anything that makes a boundary for a child whether it is the school, the education system, and even personal ones- Learning festivals are an opportunity to break that. During the nine days of volunteering for the LF, one instance had an impact on me. One girl during the movement and expression studio shared that she enjoyed and loved the entire session a lot. She belonged to a conservative family, where she is not allowed to dance. At a very small age, she has accepted what her family has made her believe- "Dancing must not be performed by girls". But one such experience of a studio, she was able to believe that she can dance and dance is not all about mainstream types such as Bollywood, Jazz etc . She could now embrace each movement as a form of dance, a form of expression- something which is not against her family beliefs, or religious sentiments. It was during the session that she found her new self!

- Apoorva

I feel quite proud after facilitating the Movement and Expression Studio with children. I executed the same session a total of 12 times with children and each time I was able to facilitate the session with equal energy and motivation. Whereas earlier I used to feel disinterested while repeating the same activity. This opportunity helped me to be a better facilitator. What helped me to be motivated to deliver my best for each session was the image I have in my mind of a good facilitator and the effort they are required to put. The constant discussion with children and the team along with regular feedback helped me improve my sessions. The fact that few children were engaging with dance for the first time inspired me to give them the best experience and also helping them understand that dance and movement is much more than it is visible and you can connect to yourself through Dance. I was quite happy and surprised to see boys in the Evening Shift doing M&E sessions with such sincerity. Never expected such high energy children to be able to engage so religiously with M&E sessions and share their emotions during debrief. I felt that I was able to achieve the purpose of the session. The sessions helped me build a better connection with children, form a close understanding and relationship especially with the girls.

- Aditi

This experience, concretely reinforced the idea that if we need to deliver something to children then we as facilitators should experience and inculcate it so that we are able to deliver a program in its spirit and not just as instructed. Kshмата Utsav created such a space for me and as per my observations for other facilitators. We created productions and through that entire process it was reinforced that how safe space is essential for any one to be able to express themselves creatively and be their original selves, it boosted our creative confidence and the process of sharing our individual journeys and then sharing it in form of production helped us to empathize and connect better as a team, the positives of which were very visible during Learning Festival. There were less communication gaps, more synergy and we were able to reach out each other easily for support.

I experienced the value of safe space which then motivated me to create the same for children in my role of Group Facilitator, by using similar methodologies and processes.

- Abhilasha



STORIES

Marijana was very quiet and non-engaging as per her Group Facilitator observation, but during M&E Studio she was very expressive when dancing with the prop and also during debrief, she spoke for the first time and expressed herself with facilitator.

Hussain shared after the activity of feel the music that while listening to the music he remembered his late uncle, the music made him feel he is with him and he shared how much he missed him but this activity somehow reminded him all the good times he had with his Chachaji. Though he was teary eyes, his expression showed a radiance and contentment.

Naieem's mother is super happy with her child, she shared that she has seen changes in Naieem, he has started sitting down for his Homework, after LF he has started building his broken toys. His parents are super happy as their son has started enjoying and taking interest in studies. He regularly shares what he has learnt in school and also his interest to go to school has remarkably improved.

His mother came and informed on her own that Zishan needs to miss the LF because of some personal reason, she promised it would be for just one day but she wanted to inform us as she wants her child to continue with LF.

COMMUNITY'S INVOLVEMENT

One of the important objectives of learning festival is to bridge the gap between school and the community. The idea that learning of a child does not depend only on school and society plays an equally important role is to be understood and reinforced. Going with this approach to revive the spirit of learning we engaged with community members including parents of the children. Community visits were organised twice as a part of the process - pre and post LF, where we interacted with 22 parents of the children to know their responses on their thoughts about the learning methods being practiced by their children in the school.

The focus was also to understand Parents' expectations of the school, their role in educating a child and what are the challenges and gaps they face in their regular engagement with the school. The responses of parents on what they want their children to become were more or less similar. Most of them answered that they want their children to become a good person. Few responded about wanting their children to get into government jobs or to be doctors, teachers, to join the police force and so on. Additionally, on asking how often they visit schools, the responses were limited to picking and dropping the children from school as being their only times of visit. Besides that, no interaction happens between parents and teachers in school. This would not sound unfamiliar to anyone who has been a part of the formal education system, however minimum efforts have been made to bridge the gap between parents and the teachers.

Through LF, community members were provided an opportunity to see their children perform in school. During the initial days of LF, facilitators went to the homes of selected parents and invited them for attending the learning festival. The purpose of teachers meeting with the parents of the students mostly involves teachers complaining about the children. Never having gone beyond that, it is crucial for it to be changed. We also had conversations with parents post LF mainly in terms of their interest in the LF. Did they think that children also learnt through play and fun?

We received balanced views from parents towards experiencing the festival. Most of them thought that learning through fun is very important but at the same time academics are also important. Parents shared that they felt extremely proud about seeing their children performing in the school as it was a first time experience for them and it also happened for the first time that they received a personal invitation to participate in any school activity. Parents were visibly happy and satisfied being a part of this and definitely seemed to find meaning in the conduct of such events in the future.





KSHAMTALAYA'S LEARNING

One of the key learnings we have is of how we can make LF as a space where teachers as well as community can be involved more and how a gap between both of them can be minimised to the extent that they both share an equal responsibility of educating a child. With this LF, we have certainly oriented parents as well as teachers about the idea, but arises the need to work intensively and involve them to make the process more sustainable. The mono culture with regard to the process of learning has to be broken and it needs to become more inclusive. Secondly, despite learning festival considered to be an event, it is important to take the learnings from it and contextualise it in classrooms facilitation and pedagogy. The approaches and principles on which the LF is based on should be applied to a classroom environment where children can be provided with a safe and healthy environment to grow and their potential be nurtured. We have also realised the need for better planning in terms of engaging the community members and parents. Since, their limited availability makes it difficult to get them engaged in the LF processes. We need to build more ideas on engaging the community in the festival resulting in them taking ownership of the LF and reduction in our level of involvement.



STUDIOS

The first theories of experiential learning arose in the ancient Indian tradition of the Gurukul. A Gurukul was essentially a place where students learnt by doing various tasks under the supervision of a Guru. Naturally, the students learnt more in such an eco-system because the activities they undertook were instrumental in their learning process. The students also learnt to keenly observe things around them, learnt from their mistakes and analyze them with the help of the Guru. Students would “learn by doing”, applying knowledge to experience in order to develop skills or new ways of thinking.

Experiential methodology doesn't treat each subject as being walled off in its own room, unconnected to any other subjects. Compartmentalized learning doesn't reflect the real world, while as the experiential classroom works to create an interdisciplinary learning experience that mimics real world learning. The need for experiential learning is immense and is much required for the rote learning stricken Indian education system.

The Learning Festivals comprised of studios which were based on experiential learning. A studio is a workshop set-up space where children come together to learn. The studio was designed keeping in mind the learner. The space enables movement, a dedicated section to store resources and their work area. They are physical spaces that hosted a range of learning medium - arts, science, sports, and environment and so on – any medium that the learner relates or aspires to. The studios were backed with manuals that were designed keeping in mind a progression of activities described in detail and their purpose on each day of the festival. The activities were designed in a manner that takes the learner from familiarizing one selves with the medium, to applying the methodology for creating an output using the same medium. The manuals are guiding documents for the facilitator to create this experience.

There is a general tendency among human beings to take an interest in learning the facts that exist in the real world. The studios of the LF took information from the real world and made the participants aware by performing hands-on tasks. As the participants worked with real life information, it became authentic for them. Each one's learning and understanding was guided by their exclusive past experiences, and thus, each participant approached the tasks in their own unique ways.

“In its simplest form, experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking”

– Lewis and Williams (1994)



ICEBREAKERS AND ENERGIZERS

An icebreaker is an activity, game or event that is used to welcome and warm up the conversation among the participants in a meeting, training class, team building session or any other event. Any event that requires people to comfortably interact with each other and a facilitator is an opportunity to use an ice breaker.

An effective icebreaker will warm up the conversation in a training class or a meeting, reinforce the topic of the session, and ensure that the participants enjoy their interaction and the session. When the participants don't know each other, the icebreaker will help them introduce themselves to the other participants.

Icebreakers are used for fun, to know each other, as initial conversation starters. The key is to ensure that the participants enjoy the session. Icebreakers are followed by laughter and warms up the groups. Icebreakers play a significant role in events in which communication and participant comfort level are important factors. They help ensure that all attendees are equal participants. They break down the barriers that exist inherently and by design in certain spaces.

An energizer is a brief activity that is intended to increase energy in a group by engaging them in physical activity, laughter, or in ways that engage the members cognitively (problem-solving). The seeming nonsense of energizer games works well for many occasions: in the beginning of a session to focus and connect a group, in the middle of a session as a transition point from one activity to another, and in the end of a session to leave the group with a stimulating experience as well as a positive adjournment. Energizers are short, direct, simple and work well with all age groups.

Icebreakers and Energizers create a safe and positive space, because we work with vulnerable children in disadvantaged communities, many have experienced conflict, cultural challenges, bullying and more. During the LFs, the icebreakers and energizers worked to break emotional barriers such as anger, pride and anxiety, which are interfering factors to communicate respectfully, collaborate effectively, and help individuals reach their full potential. The upbeat music, groups, energy created a sense of excitement, liveliness and unity. The facilitator's directions reinforced familiarity, likeness and similarity. And it all worked together to create a peaceful, positive and safe environment for the participants.

In the course of the LFs, after a few rounds of icebreakers and energizers, there were no more visible inhibitions among the children. They created a safe space, empowering the children to willingly act freely and to open up. The activities also seemed to introduce inclusion and gender equality. "Everyone has a different threshold of comfort. So sometimes it takes the girls a little longer to join the group, but when they see how easy it is to talk to boys or someone new and that the female facilitators are laughing and having fun, they start playing too. We never stopped until everyone had a chance to participate" exclaimed one of the facilitators who participated in the LFs.

The energizers and icebreakers of the LFs were crafted with easy-to-follow rules so that anyone could participate in them at any time. They were also adaptable, and could be easily modified to accommodate the physical needs of the participants. There was no winning or losing so that the kids just got to be themselves and enjoyed playing.

Icebreakers and Energizers are physical. They get the blood pumping to the body and the brain. Children need this because it physically and mentally gets them ready to sit in a studio and pay attention. It was largely observed to have increased their attention span.



FUTURE DIRECTION

Learning Festival aims to redefine education in multiple ways. The way forward is to build an idea and actually be able to show that every child has potential and can be engaged in the process of learning through different ways. Also, Learning of a child doesn't depend only on the child but the idea that it takes an entire community to raise a child really needs to be reinforced. Putting teachers at the centre of a child's learning and understanding nullifies the rest of the stakeholders' responsibilities. In reality the boundary between school and community is somewhat of a fiction. A child doesn't really acknowledge what he is learning from where. So, we aim to build an enabling environment where each stakeholder can come together and collaborate to make a joyful and safe space for children where each stakeholder can take the ownership and responsibility. We also aim to scale this up with more MCD schools. This also emphasizes the need for a learning centre, which is a continual approach to establishing the significance of learning within the communities. The centre acts as a support system to strengthen the potential of the child through a diversity of the mediums of learning that it offers. The ultimate focus is to make it a shared space for the various stakeholders involved in the child's life to come together and be a part of her learning processes after school every day.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Kshamtalaya Foundation owes many thanks for the success of the amazingly fun and successful Learning Festival organized in Delhi during the month of February 2019.

Without nurturing and care, it is a huge challenge for a seed to grow into a tree. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to Tech Mahindra Foundation for their love, care and support in making it possible to organize the Learning Festival which reached out to 196 children, 36 teachers and 172 community members with the help of 11 facilitators.

We wholeheartedly thank the EDMC (East Delhi Municipal Corporation), our Facilitators, Art of Play, Principals of the two schools, dedicated and passionate teachers, and the community members for their love and support throughout the festivals.

We look forward to continuing this journey of helping children realize their true potential by ensuring that they attain quality education.

THANK YOU!

धूम धूम चक चक.....धूम धूम चक चक.....
घड़ी में बज गए साढ़े ग्यारह,
अब तो गल दस मेरे यारा ,
धूम धूम चक चक.....धूम धूम चक चक.....
आजा एक बात बता दूँ,
राज़ दिलों का सबको बता दूँ ,
सीखने का अंदाज़ नया
गेम बजा दूँ, गेम बजा दूँ, गेम बजा दूँ
लर्निंग का मौहाल बना दूँ ।
लर्निंग फेस्टिवल.....हे..... हो

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