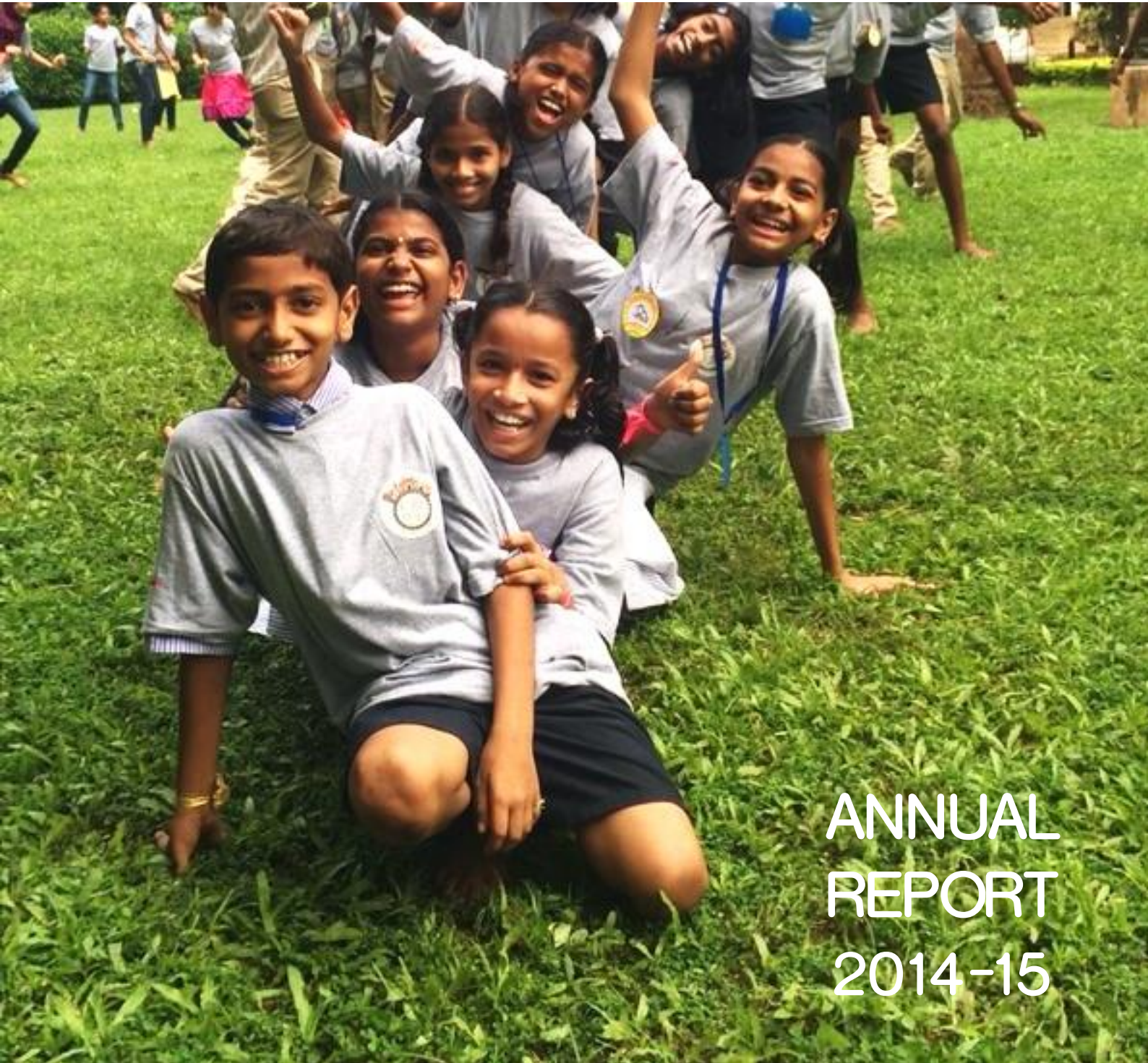




building skills for life



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

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FROM THE CO-FOUNDER'S DESK

Apni Shala turns two and it has been a year of increase! The first and foremost increase is the rise in beneficiaries: from 379 students we touched the lives of 900+ children in 2014-15! This upsurge reinforces our belief in our vision to equip all children with skills they need in order to bring about positive change in their lives and in the world around them.

At Apni Shala we believe in the continuous process of strengthening ourselves and our existing programmes so as to deliver deeper impact. With our current flagship programme – the Basic Life Skills programme – we have infused project-based learning as well as more experiential learning methodologies because we believe they create a journey of transformation that teaches children to question, probe, and become confident individuals who will eventually become a catalyst of social change. We know that we cannot reach this destination overnight and so we make the journey an enriching learning experience.



In order to do this, Apni Shala has, after thorough ideation and research, launched two new service offerings aimed to augment the learning process. The first one – the Service Learning Programme (SLP) is a year-long programme that we have designed and implemented in collaboration with The Akanksha Foundation. It is based on the Gandhian philosophy that each person must give back to the community that they take from and in the process learn more about themselves and the environments they live in.

In December 2014, we launched the Apni Shala Hands-On (ASH) programme, whose hallmark is a short-term project that children carry out with tangible outputs. Both the SLP and ASH experiences, apart from giving children a sense of pride and achievement, are curated to impart valuable cognitive,

critical thinking, analytical and reasoning skills with a problem-solving eye, skills that they can use in all walks of life. **We call this experiential learning.**

Earlier this year we also launched the Teacher Engagement and the Parents' Engagement Programmes. While with the former we aim to create the Ripple Effect by enabling more and more teachers to provide Life Skills Education in their classrooms, with the latter we strive to have parents understand the value of our work with respect to their children; we want to bring in their perspectives as well. By systematically targeting teachers and parents, Apni Shala strives to empower all enablers in a child's eco system.

The year gone by has also been about increased partnerships. We partnered with 5 more like-minded organizations that focus on children's education. This takes our total number of partnerships to 12! We are proud of our association with our new partners including Udaan India Foundation, Sparsha Charitable Trust, Shishuvan School, Vidya-Mumbai and National Kannada High School. Our older trusted partners including Door Step School, Each One Teach One Foundation and S R Foundation haven't left our side either.

As we march forth, we are filled with optimism of the endless possibilities that we can achieve. One more time we pledge our commitment to our vision and dream.

Thank you for being a part of our journey!



Amrita Nair
Co-Founder, Apni Shala Foundation



APNI SHALA FAQ

What is our Dream?

All children are equipped with the skills and attitudes needed to bring about positive change in their lives and in society

How do we plan to get there?

Step 1: Designing programmes that effectively develop life skills in children

Step 2: Directly engaging children in Life Skills Education programmes

Step 3: Capacitating educational institutions to deliver Life Skills Education to their students

Step 4: Advocating for the cause of implementing Life Skills Education in all schools

Who do we serve?

Children aged between 10 to 14 years attending government schools or affordable private schools

Teachers in govt. schools, affordable private schools and educational organisations/NGOs

Why do we want to work with them?

Children from low-income communities deal with a complex external environment. Sometimes, the problem could be an abusive or alcoholic parent or the issues that arise because of a single-parent household. At other times it could simply be that they are shy, not confident enough and that they do not have the opportunities to explore key aspects of their personality like creativity, leadership skills or problem-solving abilities. The schools they attend often do not have the necessary infrastructure to provide resources for such psycho-social development. This means that many children have greater chances of showing either aggression, lack of interests, low self-confidence or having unexplored analytical skills.

What are we doing to help?

Apni Shala Foundation engages children in experiential learning that builds life skills and attitudes to enable children to exhibit positive self-management and inter-personal behaviour. Powerful drama games, theatre techniques, games, art and community projects are the primary mediums through which children are immersed in learning. In the skill-building process Apni Shala often refers to their real world in a bid to address their immediate problems. This, we believe, helps them to start making positive changes in themselves and be reflective and inquiring individuals. Apni Shala currently works with over 700+ children taking their programmes to both classrooms and slum communities.



Getting hands dirty in the ASH programme at Transit Camp, Sion (Sparsha Trust)

OK, but what is a life skill?

Even the youngest of us encounter situations every day that require some decision-making, some problem-solving, some teamwork or even the mental acumen to cope with and express our emotions. So life skills are just abilities that help us bring about positive change in our everyday lives, be it in our own confidence levels or in the way we interact with people and situations in our environment.

What does research say?

“By teaching young people *how* to think rather than *what* to think, by providing them with the tools for solving problems, making decisions and managing emotions, and by engaging them through participative methodologies, skills development can become a means of empowerment.”

- Excerpt from paper titled, “Relevance of Life Skills at various stages of Child Development researched by an Apni Shala intern

We are not the only ones saying it. Worldwide, many organizations that work with behavioural development of children have conducted extensive research on the relevance of life skills. UNICEF as well as other independent studies by eminent behavioural psychologists are all in agreement that life skills is an important and relevant area of work. Write to us if you need more information.

What values give our work direction?

The four pillars that hold us up strong:

Excellence

We do anything to make learning fun

Openness

We never stop learning

Cooperation

We partner with others whenever it means a better education for more children

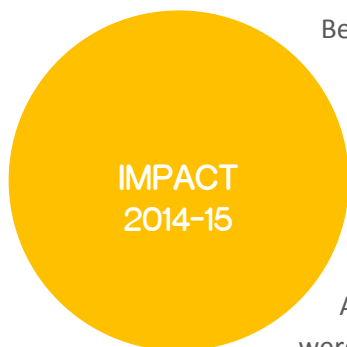
Staying Grounded

We dream big and stay realistic at the same time.

© at Govandi Station Upper Primary School No. 1



Photo Credits: Ruchi Khemka



Before we start off on talking about all that we did last year, let's take a look at what all that work ultimately landed us with in terms of outreach and outcomes. Our primary beneficiaries are children. And we reached out to **935 children** this year - this is more than double the number of children we reached the previous year.

We also reached out to **62 teachers** and **120 parents**.

And we were most keen that we spend sufficient time figuring out what our children were learning from our programmes. From April 2013 to June 2014 we worked hard to come up with a reliable way to assess outcomes. And finally, we proudly dished out a tool that in a very simple manner captured this.

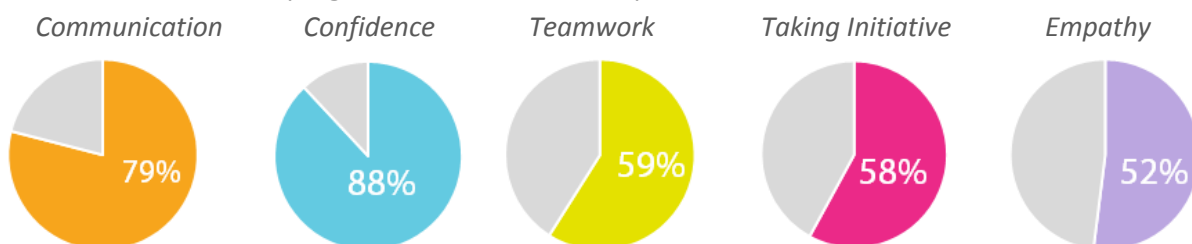
How did we go about it?

First, we made a list of indicators that we thought would best articulate the kind of outcomes we wished to see at the end of our programme. The indicators were a simple list of behaviours that could be observed in classrooms during Apni Shala sessions. We filtered the list based on many aspects, such as practicality, fairness and opportunity for demonstration in class. We then administered a pre-assessment and a post-assessment at the beginning and at the end of the academic year respectively, for all students in the sample. Lastly, we mapped the behaviours to skills that they were potentially indicative of. To make sure, the data was reliable and consistent, we then also did several checks on statistical software to check for any inconsistencies. Turns out, the dataset was a true indicator of improvement in children across our centres.

So what did we find out about the programme's impact?

ALL PROGRAMMES

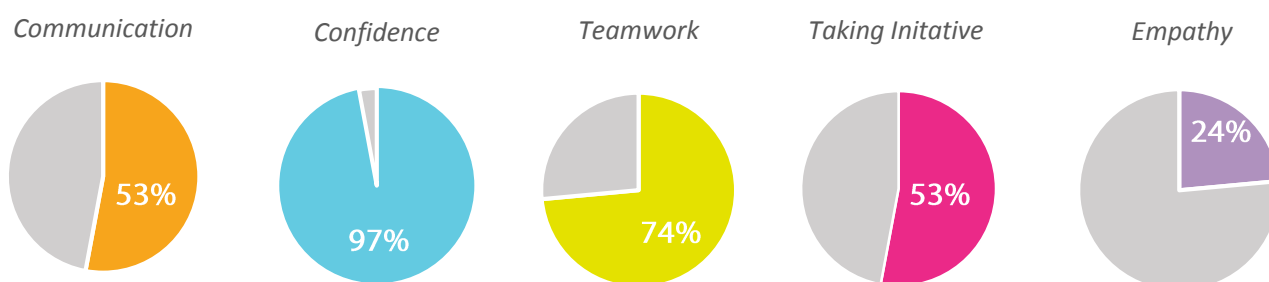
% Children across all our programmes who showed improvement when we marked them were:



SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMME

When it came to the Service Learning Programme, we were really keen on knowing what the children themselves thought. Here's what they had to say:

% Children who say they have seen improvement in themselves in a certain skills at the end of the Service Learning Programme



Beyond Numbers: Most Significant Change

Our staunch supporter, Atma Education has spent several years in helping non-profits strengthen systems. They believed that Apni Shala's impact could not be completely expressed in numbers. So they conducted a Most Significant Change assessment, a widely known form of impact assessment that helps capture the depth and possibilities of impact of any project.

Elaborated below, is the story that was voted the most significant.

Transcript of an interview of Shital Mandavkar, Teacher at Sion Primary School where Apni Shala has been working for 3 years. This interview was conducted by Atma Volunteer Joshua Behiels as part of The Most Significant Change initiative. The interview revolves around mainly one question i.e. Did you see any change as a result of this programme?

Interviewees are free to share both positive and negative change.

Since Apni Shala's engagement with your students, have you noticed changes in them?

I can see an increase in the leadership skills and confidence levels of children. Most importantly they have become very free and speak freely. Usually children are afraid of speaking to the teacher if they do not understand anything in the class but I see that these children speak with confidence. Children have learnt a lot from the sayings like "Try! Try! But don't cry, give respect and get respect". I see a positive attitude developing in children.

Do you notice a change in the way children handle themselves?

In my opinion at least 75% children show improvement as compared to last year. I have been working with them for the past two years but this year I see more improvement. For science we need children's concentration levels to be higher. I see that 30% of children show an increase in concentration. Apni Shala also show a lot of informative videos to children. Not only do the children benefit from the sessions but I benefit too, as I observe all of them.

Do you notice a change in yourself or other teachers?

After observing sessions, I also discuss it with other fellow teachers and see what they learn from the sessions too and I see a change in them. 100% of teachers show a change whereas in children I see 75% improvement. When I teach children now, I give references to the games and activities conducted in Apni Shala sessions, which helps children to learn better and connect with what they do in both the classes. Apni Shala does a lot of activities which are very close to the topics and concepts like in History and Science in sessions. I follow a similar pattern of teaching as Amrita Didi does. It is like doing a drama. Children like Sakshi and Firoja are less shy and show increased leadership qualities.

After observing sessions, I also discuss it with other fellow teachers and see what they learn from the sessions too and I see a change in them. 100% of teachers show a change whereas in children I see 75% improvement.

Are there any other incidents of change you would like to talk about?

As teachers we have to take a parents meeting where we tell them what their children do when they come early to school. Once Amrita Didi took a game especially for the parents to help them understand, the content of the Apni Shala sessions. They understood how children play their roles in their absence, for example like cooking food, doing other chores, paying bills etc. The parents who feel that their children have opened up and look out of the box, other than just constraining themselves have improved the boundaries of School-Teacher-Parents relationship. The children's interest levels to learn something new has also increased a lot - this is what the parents feel. Girls understanding levels are good usually but increasing boys' understanding levels is a little challenging. I use the references from Apni Shala sessions for doing the same.

Theatre Games at a Summer Workshop at Creative Handicrafts, Andheri



Photo Credits: Yogesh Chiplunkar

OFFERINGS FROM THE ASF VAULT

We've studied, researched and experimented different approaches for 2 whole years to come up with programmes that can use experiential learning methods to build life skills to children.

Our 4 programmes are explained below.

Basic Life-Skills Programme

Building Life Skills through class-room intervention using drama, games and art

WHAT	Through this programme Apni Shala takes Life Skills Education right to the door of the place where children spend a great part of their day – the classroom. Apni Shala finds the classroom to be an enabling setting to impart Life Skills Education. Through weekly sessions delivered through a range of mediums from art, drama, theatre, and other learning-by-doing and play-way methods, these programme modules are designed with a high fun quotient in mind so that children enjoy as well as learn.
WHO	Children aged 10 to 12 years who attend government schools or low-fee schools
WHY	Apni Shala understands that the classroom is a place where children not only study but also build bonds, forge lasting friendships and develop life-enabling habits. The classroom environment therefore becomes a place where issues such as bullying, violence, name-calling, low self-esteem can be tackled directly at source.

The Service Learning Programme

Building Life Skills through community service

WHAT	<p>While the classroom-based life skills programme tackles issues that arise in the classroom, we realize that their home environments, i.e, the communities that they hail from also shape their personality. This second offering from the Apni Shala vault has been co-designed in collaboration with Renisience Education and The Akanksha Foundation. It aims to enable children to identify community issues with a problem-solving eye and work towards a feasible resolution. From water problems to alcoholism, from gender related inequalities to women's illiteracy in the area, the issues children work on are real issues. Phase One involves children in scientific questioning of a problem in their communities and is followed by an evidence-based approach to understanding and analysing the problem. In Phase Two children engage in peer review and debates of the topic to gain a deeper understanding of the problem. Phase Three involves children in designing solutions to problems that they have themselves identified. Throughout the process, emphasis is placed on active citizenship.</p>
WHO	Children aged 12 to 14 years who attend government schools or low-fee schools
WHY	<p>When a 12-year old sets out to ask important questions about the world around him or her, and interacts with people, places and communities with the aim to address a pressing issue, he/she is taking on active citizenship.</p> <p>In the process of being an active citizen, life skills are built as children learn to work in teams, learn to question, to probe, to think critically and communicate better. But, most importantly they learnt to stand up for what they feel is important, just and right. And finally, they develop the urge and habit to take initiative and do something about it.</p>

Interviewing a woman about her employment status at Khardev Nagar, Chembur



The Apni Shala Hands-On Learning Programme

Building Life Skills through creative expression

WHAT	The Apni Shala Hands-On is a project-based experiential learning methodology that enables children to create and deliver, within 3 months, a fun project. The process, right from project planning to project completion facilitates the development of life skills.
WHO	Children aged 10 to 14 years who attend government or low-fee schools
WHY	Short-term projects with definite expected outcomes revolve around 'creating something'. And scientific evidence proves that children learn the maximum when they create things themselves. Not only does it provide them an opportunity to ideate, plan and manage people and resources, but also makes them accountable and goal-oriented. The nature of the project, has its own benefits. Such activities enable children to understand their own emotions, values and beliefs, thus making them more self-aware.

Kick Start Life Skills: Teacher Training Programme

Training the Trainers to cause a ripple effect in Life Skills Education

WHAT	In line with our vision to make Life Skills Education a far-reaching phenomenon, Apni Shala provides exhaustive and fun training programmes in life skills education for teachers of NGOs and other educational institutions. The training programmes are designed and conceptualized in such a way that teachers are motivated to bring games, art, drama, and other experiential learning mediums into their classrooms to create an environment that nurtures life skills in students.
WHO	Teachers working in NGOs, government-run schools, low-fee schools.
WHY	The idea is to make Life Skills Education available to more and more children from our target group. By systematically targeting teachers and influencing educators in a positive manner they become messengers and enablers of Life Skills Education.




PARTNER PROJECT PEEP

From little community rooms within a slum colony to classrooms in a government school, a range of project sites host Apni Shala's life skills sessions – all thanks to our diverse group of partner organizations that enable us reach more and more children. Some of these organizations take education to the doorstep of their beneficiaries, others invite education to the classroom. Let's take a look at our experience across our project partners this past year – our session facilitators narrate their experiences.

Door Step School: 200 Children

Door Step School provides education and support to the children from marginalized communities such as pavement dwellers, slum dwellers, construction site families and families with other similar backgrounds. Classes take place both in schools as well as within the colonies where the children reside.



Since they were to select and work on a community issue, they chose to work on women's literacy and designed a small literacy programme for the women in their community.

Facilitator Speak

Since the children were to select and work on a community issue, they chose to work on women's literacy and designed a small literacy programme for the women in their community. When they designed the project, they initially had lot of doubts about their own capabilities. 'Didi, humein unko sikhana hai kya?' Didi, do we have to actually teach these women? But at every stage of the project they discovered something about themselves. By the end of it, they were a lot surer about their abilities. They taught women to write their own names, tally bills and calculate change!

Sparsha Charitable Trust: 50 Children

The organization is a non-profit venture that aims to touch the lives of the disadvantaged in India. The social organization helps low-income communities by providing them access to critical health care, education & general well-being.

Facilitator's Note:

The children of the Apni Shala Hands-On (ASH) project thoroughly enjoy creative expression and some of the children had a fabulous time drawing and colouring. The story ideation process happened in groups and the children worked tirelessly to create and recreate multiple drafts of stories. They strived for perfection throughout the programme. Their drawings were outstanding and the stories they wrote were very profound. It was an extremely gratifying experience for us when on the last day of the project they created at least 7 or 8 thank you cards for us, all beautifully designed and coloured!

Vidya-Mumbai: 50 Children

VIDYA is a not-for-profit organisation that provides nationally-recognized programmes that include schools, remedial education, computer training, adult literacy, skills training, microfinance and social entrepreneurship.

Facilitator's Note

Once we played a game in which we created an obstacle course. The game involved blindfolding a team member and helping that person through a path full of obstacles. After the game was played multiple times, we did the usual round of reflection. "An uncle in our basti is blind!" said one child who was blindfolded, "This is how he must feel right? No wonder he keeps banging into obstacles when he walks around. The next time I see him, I'll use a different approach to speak to him." Although we were working on teamwork, the idea of empathy seemed to dominate the discussion in a beautiful way. These things always happen in a typical life skills session.

Udaan India Foundation: 50 Children

Udaan India Foundation is a Mumbai based not-for-profit organization working with children from low-income communities in the field of education.

Facilitator's Note

I started off with working with them on effective communication in daily life. While this group was one of the most energetic set of children I had worked with, I slowly started to discover a cold war between the girls and the boys. No, they wouldn't talk to each other properly even if they were in the same group. We sometimes tried to reflect on how we could change the way we responded to the 'others'. But I found it hard to break that atmosphere of conflict! It's interesting how emerging issues change the agenda we set as facilitators. Of course, the next time I get to work with them – we'll be working more on *teamwork, respect and gender*.

Sion Koliwada Muncipal School: 50 children

In partnership with S.R. FOUNDATION: S.R Foundation works actively to support, and promote deserving students from disadvantaged communities by providing them sponsorship and access to programmes such as the various life skills related offerings of Apni Shala Foundation.

Over the past 2 years these students have moved from wanting to play games to becoming more involved in serious classroom discussions.

Facilitator's Note:

As part of the Leadership module while working on a project, the question, 'How do you vote for a leader?' came up. The students spent time talking to people in the neighbourhood and asked them questions like, "Who did you vote for and what qualities to you look for in a leader?" Over the past 2 years these students have moved from wanting to play games to becoming more involved in serious classroom discussions.

Govandi Station Upper Primary School No. 1: 100 children

Apni Shala has been working with GUPS for the last 3 years. The school caters to children from Balwadi until the 7th standard. Located in Ghatla Village in east Chembur, this Marathi medium school was the first experimental cradle for Apni Shala.

Facilitator's Note

The 4th standard students are extremely boisterous but very eager to learn. The facilitator needs to have very high energy levels when working with them. Initially they were a very shy group and would not volunteer information or

participate in discussions. But over a period of time, they became very friendly with me. Maybe because they thought that I was not a regular school teacher but an after-school games teacher! My most memorable experience was when a young boy said on opening day, "I didn't want to come to school today but came only because there was an Apni Shala session today!"

National Kannada High School: 25 Children

Located in Wadala, the school is run by a National Kannada Education Society that believes in providing high-quality education to children from low-income communities.



communities residing in and around Worli.

Facilitator's Note

On the first day I asked them to form a circle but the boys and girls were standing separately. When we asked them to form a mixed group of both boys and girls mix and stand they did so reluctantly. The next time, when I told them to do whatever they liked, they stepped forward to form a mixed group comprising of both boys and girls. It brought a smile to my face! Slowly we began overcoming classroom issues.

Rotary Club of Bombay Worli: 40 children

This institution works with the underprivileged in a bid to provide more opportunities for positive life change. They work mainly in

Facilitator's Note:

As part of the leadership project, the children took up the issue of the disappearing greenery in the Worli Koliwada area and discussed this at length. "When our grandparents lived here it was fully green but now there is not a single tree here," they said. The children then planted trees in the community but due to issues beyond their

control, issues such as community politics, the children's efforts went in vain. The trees they planted were uprooted by some miscreants! The children were initially very disheartened but eventually got over it and decided later on to voice their protest. This sort of resilience itself is a great thing to see, as a life skills facilitator

Shishuvan School: 120 Children

The school is a new-age ICSE school that believes in providing lifelong learning to add value to teachers' degrees and previous experiences. This school is the only partnership Apni Shala had where children were not from low-income communities.

Facilitator's Note

While we were discussing non-verbal communication and how important body language is in our communication, a child piqued up, "Teacher! Isn't this how Neolithic man communicated? Because language wasn't invented then!" The students are extremely astute and display complete understanding of the various topics we worked on during the year. Whether it was the question of bullying and exclusion or respecting differences or kindness and appreciation, the children were eager to participate and keen to share their experiences. It was a constant challenge to keep up the novelty value of the lesson plans, else the children would lose interest in the subject.

Short Workshops With 250 Children

We conducted 4 workshops during Diwali vacation and the summer holidays with children at

- Door Step School
- Creative Handicrafts
- Aarambh
- Open Your Arms Foundation



Theatre Games during a Summer Workshop at Creative Handicrafts, Andheri (E)

Photo Credits: Yogesh Chiplunkar

HANDS-ON LEARNING: LITTLE AUTHORS

The pilot project under the Apni Shala Hands-On experiential learning methodology involved children creating a comic-book style compilation of stories drawn and illustrated by them.

Facilitator Lavanya Shanbhogue-Arvind talks about her experience facilitating the Hands-On Experience:

Working on the Hands-On project was a very gratifying experience for me as a facilitator. We're talking about 14 children gathered around you listening and telling you stories! It's creative. It's a nice kind of learning and most importantly it's a lot of fun. In the initial sessions we saw videos of various stories in a bid to understand the process of story-creation and narration.

Since this was a comic book style compilation of stories we initially distributed comic books and asked students to observe the books and give us their insights. Their excitement was infectious!

"Didi! Look! In this picture, the hero is a small boy, but in the next one he has grown up! See how they've drawn him here." "Didi, see how they have shown day and night!" "Didi, see how they've shown these fields. That means the hero has gone to the village from the city."

Over many sessions children learnt little things like how dialogue had to be shown within speech bubbles while thought had to be shown as a floating cloud above the speaker's head or how the facial expression had to change depending on what the character was saying. Along the way, we discussed many things. For instance, where do these stories come from? Why *this* story? Children contemplated on real topics and issues, issues like alcoholism, gender inequalities, the importance of education and the value of friendship when dealing with these problems.

Children contemplated on real topics and issues, issues like alcoholism, gender inequalities, the importance of education and the value of friendship when dealing with these problems.

By encouraging thought and by asking them to express themselves through a creative medium they thought through the problems in a whole new light. And, since they wanted to end the story in a positive light (something that they were keen to do!), they thought hard about solutions. The project ended with all of them having their own printed copy of the comic books they themselves authored and illustrated. I never saw a prouder bunch of children.

On the last day of their Comic Book Project (ASH) at Transit Camp, Sion



Phase 1: PROBLEM RESEARCH

- Identifying a social problem and scientifically studying it through research

Phase 2: SOLUTION DESIGN

- Brainstorming ideas to solve the problem using available resources.

Phase 3: SOLUTION IMPLEMENTATION

- Planning and execution of the entire solution process. Reflection and peer learning.



At a live street play promoting water conservation, at Chembur

Photo Credits: Vivek Kumar



SERVICE LEARNING: CHILD CITIZENS

This year 50 children were engaged in the Service Learning Programme, which has 3 phases to it – Problem Research, Solution Design and Solution Implementation. The problem research phase was conducted based on a programme designed by Renissance Education, namely City as Lab. After 3 months of research, 2 of the 7 teams of children got selected to present their scientifically written research papers at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in September 2014. From October until March, they worked on implementing solutions to these problems. Let's take a peek into 3 such projects:

Project 1: Women's Literacy

Somewhere in Reay Road, a young mother quickly completed her homework and made her way to her Math class. Now this was no regular class! It was started by a group of students (from Door Step School) who were working to address the issue of women's education in their neighbourhood. Through research, these students found out that there were many women in their community who had dropped out of school because of household responsibilities, early marriage and other such reasons. They also found out that was no class nearby to help them learn the basics. Determined to find a solution they decided to start a class and began an awareness campaign to gain enrolment. Their efforts began to materialize when 8 women regularly started attending the classes that delivered lessons in reading and writing basic Hindi and Math operations. They held this study class for women for 15 days.

Project 2: Cleanliness Drive

Be the change you want to see in the world. After a thorough research of the problem of littering and waste, 10 children in Chembur decided to take matters into their own hands and clean up the area themselves. They first held a rally and invited all the residents of their neighbourhood to join them in their cleanliness drive – their dedication attracted immense local support. Over 80 people joined them in their efforts on the final day.

Project 3: Water Shortage

To make sure that the gravity of issues like Water wastage and Traffic congestion reach the masses, the teams working on it decided to take up *street play* as their medium. The plays which were written and directed by the children, were performed successfully in Ghatla village in Chembur, and had an audience of about 60 people watching them in marvel.

Pride Story: Transformation

12 year-old girls like Simran shoulder a lot of responsibility. There's housework, there's schoolwork and then there's after-school work. It's natural to feel overwhelmed. Simran was no different. When Apni Shala announced the launch of the Service Learning Programme in Simran's class at the Govandi school, Simran was tensed. How would she investigate *something* and change this something that even adults haven't been able to change?

After the initial moments of doubt however, Simran's group began work on Women's Safety in their area as they had experienced a lot of eve-teasing in and around their school. Their end goal was to mobilise a signature campaign seeking a patrolling officer who will be stationed outside their school; this was to be submitted to the police.

... Simran realized that she knows better, that it was her campaign, her effort, and only she could explain the situation to the constable.

But Simran faced some pressure within her group; group members had different ideas than her, and there was some passive aggressive behaviour in the group. However, Simran decided to continue working with the group and when she saw people showing interest in their campaign and their efforts to create a safer place she began taking more initiative. Towards the end of the project Simran realised her friends were going away for the holidays, Simran persisted. She would call Amrita Didi time and again to discuss her progress on the number of signatures she had garnered.

Finally, on the last day of school closing Simran and Amrita Didi went to the Govandi Police Station to submit the petition. When they were in front of the concerned constable, Simran was overcome by shyness. She stepped back gesturing to Amrita Didi to speak on her behalf. Amrita, so as to not waste time, began talking about Simran's campaign but along the way Simran realized that she knows better and that it was her campaign, her effort and that only she could explain the situation to the constable. Despite her anxiety about speaking to an authority such as this, she spoke earnestly and confidently about the problems faced by the girls outside their school. She urged the police to take action and most importantly, she made a strong case for the petition signed by 80 women, seeking police protection.

What next? 2 months later, Amrita did get a call from a senior police officer. He said, "This is a call to notify you that we will be taking action on the request that has been filed."

We can only imagine the kind of confidence Simran may have gained at the end of this experience.



360 DEGREE APPROACH

Such stories have convinced us that experiences shape children's values, attitudes, and finally – all their future actions.

The many environments children inhabit shape their personality, affects their thought process and value systems. Therefore we thought that it was necessary to engage with all enablers in a child's ecosystem.

Working with Parents

The largest influence in children's lives is the parents. Keeping this philosophy in mind, in September 2014, Apni Shala piloted the Parents Engagement Initiative at two schools – Sion Koliwada School (5th and 6th) as well as the Govandi Upper Primary School No. 1 (6th and 7th) and also facilitated one at Vidya-Mumbai.

Parents of beneficiary children were given a taste of the kind of learning that takes place in an Apni Shala classroom. We played games with them, the same games that we play with their children. Parents experienced first-hand what it meant to make a tall scrap tower! Behind light-hearted banter about how other parents were cheating, parents understood the learning that their children experienced at an Apni Shala session.

We know it's making a difference

Every Friday he used to come home very happy. I used to wonder why – one day I asked him, and he said that on Fridays, these 'didis' come to school and play games, do activities and that they get to sit in a circle! Now that I know what you'll do, I am going to talk to him about what he learnt every Friday.

Working with Teachers

After parents, it is teachers that we believe are the biggest enablers in a child's life. That was why we designed and conducted the Kick Start Life Skills project aimed at building teacher's sensitivities towards Life Skills Education and their capacity to deliver such education. We worked with Vidya-Mumbai and Maharogi Sewa Samiti, Anandwan to train a total of 62 teachers who in turn work with at least 1800 children, if not more!

Final moments of celebration after a Teachers' development programme at VIDYA-Mumbai



Teachers' feedback

The training was a very beautiful experience for me. Nowhere before have I been through such an experience in a training. On the first day you taught us what life skills were, on the second day you taught the same things more deeply and on the third day we had a practical lesson planning experience.

We engage both parents and teachers in deep, thought-provoking discussions that resulted in their commitment towards creating an enabling and positive environment at home. These initiatives are ongoing and we aim to replicate them in all our other centres.



TRAVELLING TO LEARN

At Apni Shala, the learning never stops! We believe in innovation, reinvention and highest quality delivery. Anybody who joins Apni Shala is not only warmly welcomed but routinely trained. In July 2014, we conducted a formal induction programme in which the Apni Shala's philosophy and values were emphasised.

We also spent ten days roaming the campuses and educational grounds of Digantar Vidyalaya, in the suburbs of Jaipur, Bodh in Jaipur and Shikshantar Unlearning Centre and Swaraj University in Udaipur. While at Digantar Vidyalaya, we saw the most beautiful translation of the values of freedom and democracy blended into the daily curriculum and teaching methods in this revolutionary school, at Shikshantar and Swaraj University, we spent many hours pondering over the idea of 'unlearning' years of information, habits and 'education' to explore newer, organic ways of teaching and learning that defied the regular school system.

In October 2014, we attended the National Theatre of the Oppressed Conference in Bangalore organized by CCDC, a venture that uses theatre for community development. The conference was a great breeding ground for new-age ideas for educators who want to innovate in the classroom. The conference enabled us to leverage the power of Theatre of the Oppressed techniques so as to use it in our work with children.



THE TEAM

Amrita Nair

Amrita is a trained counsellor. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Social Entrepreneurship from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She has previously worked for The Akanksha Foundation in Mumbai as a teacher amongst other things. Amrita eats, sleeps and dreams education. She heads the Programme Development and Delivery arm of Apni Shala.

Swetha Ranganathan

Swetha holds a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and a Master's Degree in Social Entrepreneurship from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She left her IT job after 2 years to work with NGOs such as Pratham and Each One Teach One to work more closely with children. Swetha manages Communications, Partnerships and Monitoring of programmes at Apni Shala.

Anukriti Goyal

Anukriti holds a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering and a Master's Degree in Social Entrepreneurship from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. After a 2 year corporate stint, she discovered her entrepreneurial drive. She dreams of driving social change through the route of advocacy. Anukriti manages Finances and Fundraising at Apni Shala.

Lavanya Shanbhogue-Arvind

Lavanya is a volunteer-turned-Content Development Manager. She holds a Master's Degree in Finance and a Master's Degree in Creative Writing. She is passionate about children and writing. She develops the life skills curriculum for Apni Shala. She is also the primary author of our Annual Reports!

Nikita Thuruwal

Nikita, is not your regular 17 year old college going girl. She is currently in her second year of B.Com. As an alumnus of the Akanksha Service Learning Programme, she brings in a lot of sensitivity and understanding of social issues. When she is not pondering over issues that plague our society, she is busy conducting sessions as a Programme Catalyst at Apni Shala.

Babloo Pradhan

Babloo, is an ever-smiling, ready-to-learn student and teacher. While he studies in the mornings for his Bachelor in Arts degree he also spends time in his community at Mankhurd, sometimes helping others, or volunteering/teaching with an NGO. He shares a passion for social work and education and that led him to take on his role of a Programme Catalyst in the team.

Members of the Advisory Board

Dr. Disha Nawani

Disha is our Trustee as well as an ardent supporter of our work. She is a Professor at the School of Education at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Her knowledge and experience in the field of educational pedagogy is invaluable.

Anand Nair

Anand is our Trustee as well as Advisor for our Branding and Communications. He is Director-Operations at TAG Vinnatti. Our branding, our logo and most of our communication designs are thanks to Anand and his team.

Caroline Nagar

Caroline is our curriculum consultant. An admirable teacher, she is currently a School Coach with the Akanksha Foundation. Caroline plays a crucial role in designing our programme model.

Chetna Duggal

Chetna is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Human Ecology, Tata Institute of Social Sciences. She's a clinical psychologist and an art therapist too. She's walked the journey with us right from the start as our advisor.

Dr. Ravikala Kamath

A Retired Professor of Postgraduate Studies & Research in Home Science, S. N. D. T. Women's University, Ravikala Ma'am is an educationist, researcher and a practitioner of Life Skills Education herself.

Dr. Kavita Anand

Kavita is a visionary and an educationist. As the head of Training and Development for Adhyayan, an expert body of educators, she manages and conducts training programmes for teacher induction, school improvement and leadership.

Sheetal Shah

Sheetal is our Art consultant. She's worked with the Akanksha foundation for many years. She advises us how to incorporate art into our life-skills curriculum so that children not only learn but also enjoy the sessions.



Preparations begin for a Street Play at Govandi Station Upper Primary School No. 1, Chembur

ABOUT US

Identity

Apni Shala is registered as a charitable trust under the Bombay Public Trusts Act (1950). Registration No. E-29950 (M) as of 8th November 2013.

We are registered under section 12 AA of the Income Tax Act (1961), No. 46681 and under section 80G of the Income Tax Act (1961).

Address

Registered: 201, Anand Villa, Buddha Mandir Road, Parel (E), Mumbai – 400 012

Contact: 304, Academic Building-2, Naoroji Campus, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Deonar, Mumbai - 400 088

Financial Details

Bank

Yes Bank, Ground Floor, Shrikant Chambers, Adj R K Studio, Sion Trombay Road, Chembur, Mumbai – 400071

Auditor

M/s Kedar Laghate and Associates, Office No. 113, Bldg. No. 1, Navjeevan Society, Lamington Road, Mumbai – 400 008

PAN

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Board Members

Name	Age	Occupation	Area of Competency
Dr. Disha Devi Prasad Nawani	45	Associate Professor, TISS	Education
Mr. Anand Sudhakaran Nair	34	Director-Operation, TAG Vinnatti Pvt. Ltd.	Marketing, Business
Ms. Amrita Sudhakaran Nair	28	Social Entrepreneur	Education, Psychology

FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS

Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Since the early years of experimenting in 2011, we have been supported and incubated since 2013 by the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at TISS.

UnLtd India

Since January 2013 until date, we have received not just mentoring but also financial support as Fellows at UnLtd India.

ATMA

Since March 2013, we have with us Atma's expert insights in the field of management of education organisations.

DBS Foundation

As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, DBS has, since June 2013, been supporting us through the TISS-DBS Social Entrepreneurship Programme. The co-founders have been supported with a monthly fellowship in their names.

Rotary Club of Bombay Worli

Ms. Kavita Godbole and Mr. Sandeep Shah from Rotary Club of Bombay Worli have been staunch supporters and promoters of the work we do since 2013.

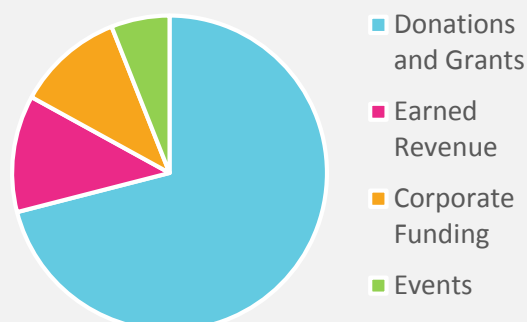
TAG Vinnatti

Our design partner, TAG Vinnatti has helped us extensively in our endeavour to create a visual identity.

And countless individuals

Right from the word go, we have had countless friends who have stepped forward to contribute regularly towards our efforts. Individual contributions form a significant portion of our funding and we are indebted to our supporters for their contributions, both big and small.

Funds Raised 2014-15
Rs.12,17,730



FINANCES

Balance Sheet as on 31st March 2015

The Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950
Name of the Public Trust :- APNISHALA FOUNDATION

SCHEDULE - VIII (Vide Rule 17 (1))

Balance Sheet As At :- 31ST MARCH, 2015

Registration No. E-29950 (Mumbai)

FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	Rs.	Rs.	PROPERTY AND ASSETS	Rs.
Trusts Funds or Corpus			Immovable Properties (At Cost)	
<u>Corpus of the Trust</u> Opening Balance	1,56,000.00		Balance as per last Balance Sheet	-
Add : Current Year (As per Schedule E)	3,88,100.00	5,44,100.00	Additions during the year	-
			Less: Sales during the year	-
			Depreciation up to date	-
Apni Shala Children Development Fund		2,50,000.00		
Loans (Secured or Unsecured)			Investments	
Liabilities			Fixed Deposit with Yes Bank	
Audit Fees Payable	5000.00	5000.00	Other Current Assets	
Income and Expenditure Account			TDS Receivable for Ass.Yr. 2015-16	
Balance as per last Balance Sheet	13,865.97		Fixed Assets	
Add : Surplus of Income over Expenses	3,31,626.31	3,45,492.28	Loans (Secured or Unsecured) : Good / doubtful	
			Advances	
			Cash and Bank Balances	
			Cash in hand	7,599.00
			Yes Bank	6,12,529.79
Total Rs.		11,44,592.28	Total Rs.	

As per our report of even date
For Kedar Laghate & Associates Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration No. 134155W

CA. Kedar A. Laghate
Proprietor
Membership No. 137850 Dated :- 23rd September 2015

Income & Expenditure Account as of 31st March 2015

The Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950

SCHEDULE - IX (Vide Rule 17 (1))

Name of the Public Trust :- APNI SHALA FOUNDATION

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31ST, MARCH 2015

Registration No. E-29950 (M)

EXPENDITURE	Rs.	Rs.	INCOME	Rs.	Rs.
		-	By Rent		
To Expenditure in respect of properties		-	By Interest (accrued and realised)		
Rates, Taxes, Cesses Repairs & Maintenance Salaries		-	On Securities	-	
Insurance		-	On Loans	-	
Depreciation (by way of provision of adj) Other Expenses		-	On Fixed Deposits	24,463.49	
To Establishment Expenses		48,630.00	On Bank Account	38,555.42	63,018.91
(As per Schedule G)		-	On Recurring Deposit	-	
To Remuneration to Trustee		-	By Donations in Cash or Kind		6,06,779.84
To Remuneration (in the case of a math) to the head of the math, including his household expenditure, if any			(As per Schedule C)		
To Legal Expenses		220.00	By Grants		
To Audit Fees		5,000.00	By Income from other sources		2,14,837.56
To Contribution and Fees <u>To Amount written off :</u>		-	(In details as far as possible)		
a) Bad Debts			(As per Schedule A & B)		
b) Loan Scholarship	-		By Transfer from Reserve		-
c) Irrecoverable Rents	-		By Deficit carried over to Balance Sheet		-
d) Other Items	-				
To Miscellaneous Expenses		36,107.00			
(As per Schedule E)					
To Depreciation		-			
To Amount transferred to Reserve or Specific Funds		2,50,000.00			
To Expenditure on Objects of the Trust					
a) Religious	-				
b) Educational (As per Schedule D)	2,13,053.00				
c) Medical Relief	-				
d) Relief of Poverty	-	2,13,053.00			
e) Other Charitable Objects	-				
To Surplus carried over to Balance Sheet		3,31,626.31			
Total Rs.		8,84,636.31	Total Rs.		8,84,636.31

As per our report of even date

For Kedar Laghate & Associates Chartered
Accountants

Firm Registration No. 134155W

CA. Kedar A. Laghate

Proprietor

Membership No. 137850

Dated :-23rd September 2015

Audit Report 2014-15



KEDAR LAGHATE & ASSOCIATES

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

A/29, Anand Nagar, Forjett Street, Mumbai - 400 036. • Tel.: 022-6556 3140 • E-mail : kedarlaghate@gmail.com

AUDIT REPORT

We have examined the Balance sheet of **APNI SHALA FOUNDATION** as at **31st March 2015** and the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date, which are in agreement with the books of account maintained by the said Trust.

We have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of the audit. In our opinion, proper books of account have been kept by the office of the above-named trust visited by me so far as appears from my examination of the books and proper returns adequate for the purposes of audit have been received by me subject to the comments given below: -

In my opinion and to the best of my information, and according to information given to me the said accounts give a true and fair view: -

- (i) In the case of the Balance sheet, of the state of affairs of the above named trust as at **31st March 2015** and
- (ii) In case of the Income and Expenditure Account, of the surplus of its accounting year ending on **31st March 2015**.

For Kedar Laghate & Associates



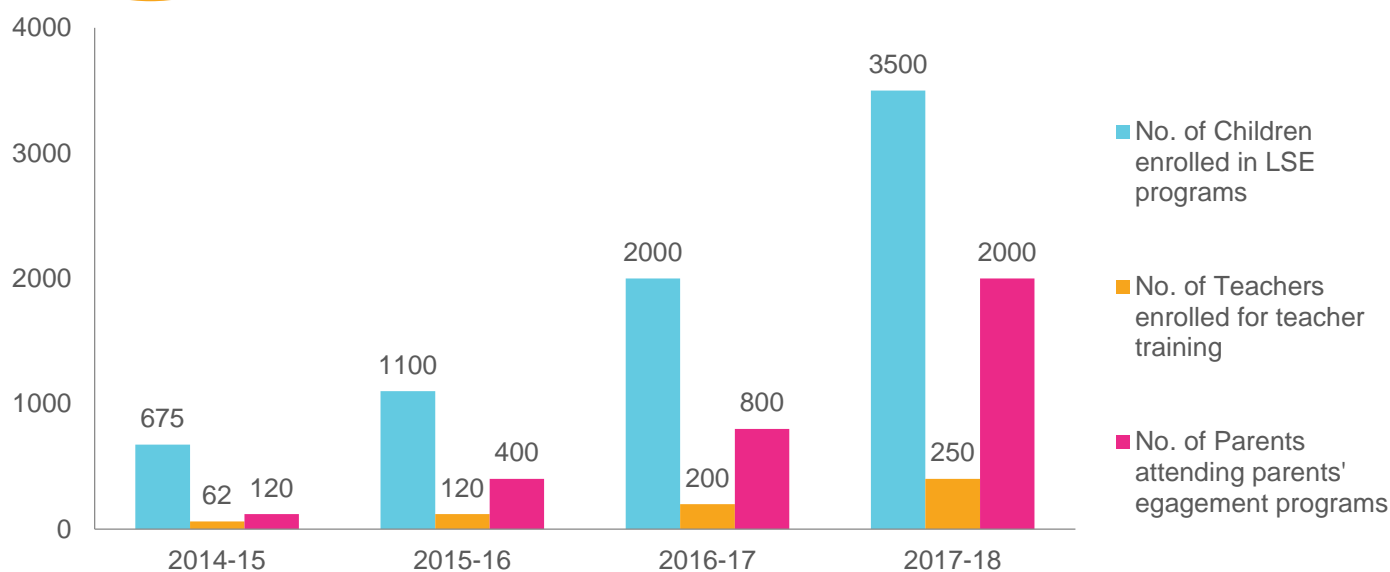
Place: Mumbai
Date: 23rd September 2015.

CA. Kedar Laghate
Firm Reg.No. 134155W
Mem. No. 137850

MR. KEDAR A. LAGHATE
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
MEMBERSHIP NO. 137850

THE ROAD AHEAD: 2015-16

Apni Shala aims to increase its reach by imparting Life Skills Education to over 1100 children! Of these we reach out to 800 children through the Basic Life Skills Programme, 200 children through the Service Learning Programme, 100 children through the Hands-On project even as we strive to train over 120 teachers and 400 parents in Life Skills Education.



We intend to form more direct partnerships with government schools and affordable private schools so as to increase our reach. While our current approach of reaching beneficiary children through other like-minded NGO partners has been successful, our mission remains to work directly with government schools so as to eventually enable them to manage their own life skills programme. This helps us bridge the gap that has been caused by schools' sole focus on academics.

We also aim to devote ourselves to the fortification of the teacher training programme. We envisage many, many classrooms where Life Skills Education takes place through the Ripple Effect.

We believe in the philosophy of creating an enabling environment for our children and that is why we have decided to focus on all enablers in the child's environment – the classroom, the community, their parents and their teachers. We are really excited! Wish us luck!



GAME ON: At Sparsha Charitable Trust's Centre

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

We at Apni Shala owe it to all our supporters whom we count on for our growth. Be a part of our growth story and help us make a real impact in the lives of hundreds of children. You can get involved in several ways.

Volunteer

Apni Shala is a young organization, constantly learning and growing. Whatever your interests and hobbies are - whether photography or writing, teaching or digital design - we are constantly looking for volunteers to expose our children to newer avenues of learning. Please share your specific skills sets with us and the time you can devote to us.

Donate

Do your bit by donating to Apni Shala. Your contributions will be directly used in programmes benefitting children. All donations made receive tax benefits under Section 80G. For more details on how to donate, please visit: apnishala.org/donate

Get In Touch

Visit us at www.apnishala.org

Email us at contact@apnishala.org

Like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/apnishala](https://www.facebook.com/apnishala)

Follow us on Twitter as twitter.com/apnishala

Subscribe to our newsletters at www.apnishala.org/our-newsletters

Catch stories from the field, on our blog at apnishala.wordpress.com

We would love to hear from you to see how we can work together or to simply chat about the dreams we dream for our children.

Call: +91-9820508580 or Mail us at: contact@apnishala.org





building skills for life