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CONVENTION REDEFINED

Technology Used to Teach English in Anganwadis

April 1st, 2009 marked a momentous day for LIFE Trust India with the launch of 'Learn For LIFE', an innovative and first of its kind program to teach English to Anganwadi *teachers in the slums of Dharavi. It is presently launched as a two month pilot project for 25 teachers and based on its success it will be extended to reach 950 teachers. The teachers will be taught with the help of our in house English DVD`s, that have been developed by our 2D animators. These DVD`s have been created with visuals and a voice over with the aim of making learning the English language interesting for the Anganwadi teachers. The classroom sessions are planned to be interactive with discussions, role-plays and quizzes in order to sustain the interest of the teachers and to deliver quality learning. The teachers with the help of additional English CD`s developed by us. LIFE Trust will document the results of our pilot project so that the program is used to pan across the country.



Teachers learning English in Dharavi

An interview with the teachers brought out some interesting reasons for why they wanted to learn English. This is what they had to say:

"I want to learn English to better understand my son when he shares his experiences with me, since he does so using words in English, after attending regular classes at a BMC school. " - Bharti David

" This program will help me to teach English to children in Anganwadi`s as well as my own children at home." - Shoba Sinde

" A lot of visitors from foreign countries come to Dharavi and ask us questions in English. Even if I learn basic English words I will be able to understand them better and answer some of their questions."- Rekha Narad

Based on the response from the teachers it is evident that the pilot class for LIFE Trust`s newest initiative, 'Learn for LIFE', was an astounding success. As our Managing Trustee, Mrs. Poonam Lalvani states "An initiative that replaces the traditional blackboard with a modern, technologically advanced medium of education is sure to produce constructive results. For us, this project is a foundation of a dedicated effort to make every child in India school-ready, in a more fun-filled and modernized atmosphere."

We at LIFE Trust are confident that our newest initiative will be extremely effective in empowering children to embark on an exciting journey of innovative education.

* Anganwadi`s are pre-schools centers established by the Central Government to support children from the age of 0-6 in order to ensure their proper growth and development in rural and tribal slum areas across India. There are an estimated 650,000 Anganwadi centers employing 1.8 million, mostly female workers and helpers from the local community. LIFE Trust supports 475 such Anganwadi`s in the Bandra and Dharavi slums of Mumbai, reaching out to 9500 children and 950 teachers.

"If I am able to speak English well as a result of this program, I will be a role model in my community. This program will also contribute to my future success as a teacher."
-Manisha Abnawe

TRUSTEE SPEAKS

Warm Greetings from LIFE Trust. The months of Feb and March have been one of high energy.. The final coaching for 10th exams were our priority. Not just the coaching but the LIFE team personally went to the 8 adopted schools to wish the students good luck.

We are hoping for a atleast 80% results from the schools.



The Anganwadi project has been having many parent guidance workshops. Communication skills was the topic of training for all the 475 anganwadi teachers. The Womens's Day celebration was attended by 3500 women from the self help groups. LIFE Trust initiated the LIFE Awards for some of the exceptional women's groups. Vocational Training in Para Social work, tailoring and Mehndi was conducted. Through our collective effort,, we at LIFE believe in Changing Lives- Changing Destinies.

PIECE OF LIFE

CHENNAI

'Our Home', the orphanage for destitute children in Chennai, run by LIFE Trust, had a number of reasons to begin the year with celebrations.

- The 25 children living in our home, passed with flying colors in their examinations.
- Our children Ramya & Kirtana won 5 medals in the field of sports.
- Our founder trustee, Mr. Micky Jagtiani, lovingly called "papa" and our managing trustee, Mrs. Poonam Lalvani lovingly called "amma", on March 3rd, visited the children at 'Our Home', who were thrilled to see them.

To learn more about the Integrated Child Development Scheme, refer to our recommended books:

- Integrated Child Development Services, Pasupuleti Usha Rani & Lakshmi Devi
- Role of Anganwadi Workers in Integrated Child Development Services, Paladugu Kumari
- Parenting & Child Development in Non-Traditional Families, Michael E. Lamb

MUMBAI

LIFE Trust Mumbai began the New Year by working hard towards making a difference in the lives of many children:

- On 23rd January, a drawing competition was held, which saw 98 students participating with great interest.
- A republic day program was conducted at the Worli Sea Face School and was attended by 400 students.
- A parent teacher meeting with the aim to increase parental involvement in the school and community at large was conducted at 'The Worli Sea Face Municipal School' with 75 parents participating
- 21 sessions on "Effective Study Habits" for students of Standard 10 and 14 sessions for the students of the 9th standard were also conducted.
- Learning Disability Training for primary school teachers was organised in co-ordination with the Nair Hospital
- Extra training classes during vacations of the students focusing on Hindi, English, Math and History were conducted in all the 49 secondary BMC schools.

BANGALORE

Life Trust Bangalore, kick started its 3rd year with a view to develop the quality of children's education programs.

- Nutrition programs teaching good food habits were organized for the parents at the Sarabandepalya, Hari colony, Pragathipura, Iliaz Nagar and Ambedkar Nagar Anganwadis, with 135 parents participating
- Interactive discussions were held with participants at Sarabande Playa on how to further enhance the skills they have developed as a result of the classes on embroidery conducted in the past.
- An HIV/AIDS awareness program was conducted at the Receiving Center for Women & Child Development and had 55 participants.
- In the month of March, LIFE Trust Bangalore started a mobile phone repair and service course at the Boys Home of the Women and Child Development Department.
- A meeting with the HR Department of Arvind Garments was also organized in order to discuss the job opportunities available for those members of the slum community who have finished a tailoring course from LIFE Trust.



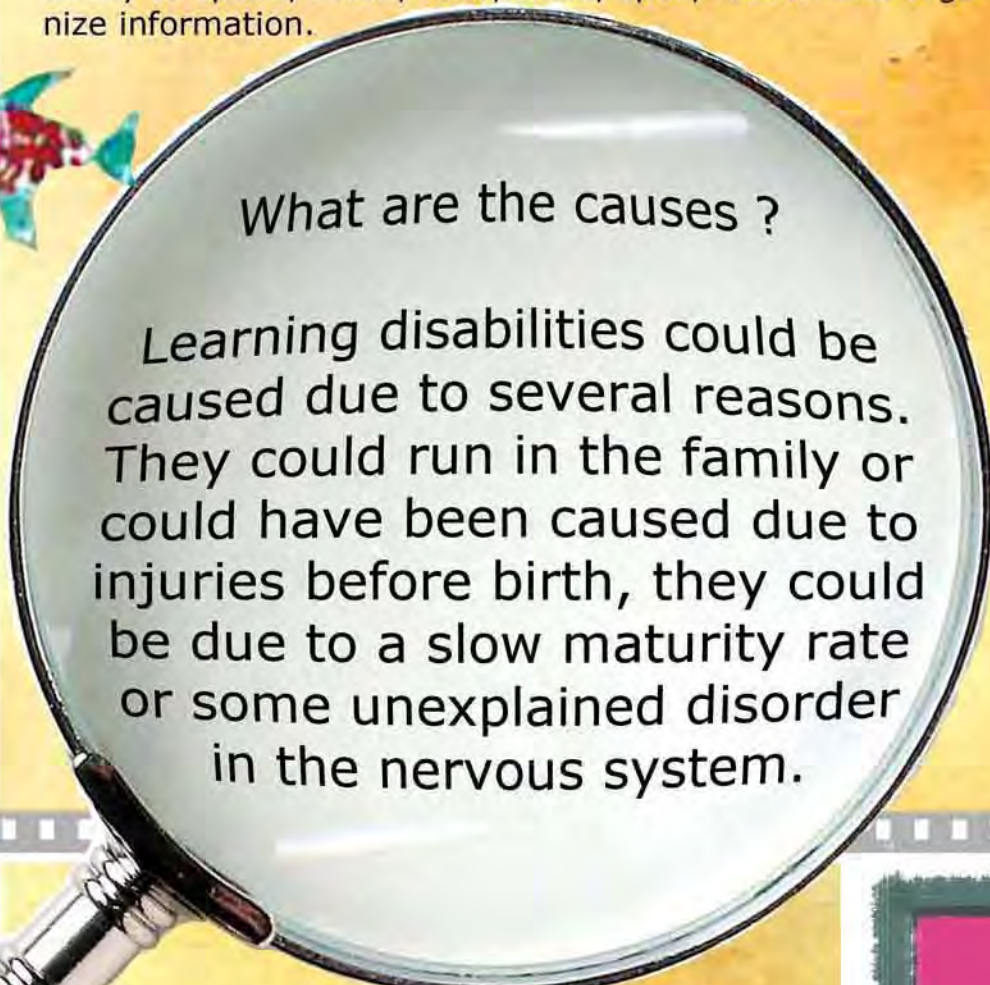


SPOTLIGHT ON LEARNING DISABILITIES

In May 2007, LIFE established the LIFE Centre for Learning Disabilities in collaboration with Nair Hospital. The centre is the second of its kind in all of Maharashtra and the first private-public partnership clinic in Maharashtra. This center offers a comprehensive facility for identifying, physical examination, testing, remediation, as well as counseling and certifying students with learning disabilities.

What is a learning disability?

Learning disabilities refer to a group of disorders that affect a broad range of academic and functional skills including the ability to speak, listen, read, write, spell, reason and organize information.




What are the causes ?

Learning disabilities could be caused due to several reasons. They could run in the family or could have been caused due to injuries before birth, they could be due to a slow maturity rate or some unexplained disorder in the nervous system.

CELEBRATING LIFE



An exciting event in the month of April was Mrs. Poonam Lalvani's completion of 5 years with the organization. On the 10th of April, the entire team of LIFE Trust including ex-employees got together for a great lunch at the restaurant, Flora. We discussed her numerous achievements and her vision and dream for LIFE Trust. Her passion for the cause of improvement of educational standards for children in BMC schools, and determination to continue to change Lives and Destinies, was inspiring.



Is there enough awareness?

When a student is a slow learner, his parents and teachers might criticize him and think of him as stupid, or maybe just too lazy to want to learn. What they don't realize is that the child might have a learning disability. So the answer is no, someone needs to create awareness and that's where our Life Center for Learning Disability steps in.

What is unique about the LIFE Center for Learning Disabilities?

The LIFE Centre for Learning Disabilities is accredited to issue certificates to SSC, ICSE, and CBSE Boards. It is manned by extremely experienced and committed psychiatrists, psychologists, special educators and counselors. The clinic is the only clinic in Mumbai using the Woodcock-Johnston test, which is specifically used to identify learning disabilities. The services of this center are free to every student who comes in.

What difference has this center made towards the cause of Learning Disabilities?

In the past two years, 2500 children registered at the LIFE Center for Learning Disabilities. 506 Learning Disability Certifications have been issued. Regular teacher training programs in learning disabilities are conducted throughout the year covering more than 1600 Head Masters and teachers of BMC schools. The identified children have now been able to receive much needed concessions on their exams, like giving exams on computers instead of giving written exams, getting extra time for exams etc and thus are able to fully achieve their potential as students.



COMING UP...

Cut out this section and keep it handy. You do not want to miss out on the exciting and fun events we have planned ahead.

- April 20th-23rd - A Summer camp in Anganwadis for 100 children between the age of 4-10 years. Fun activities will be organized in the midst of the slums of Bandra and Dharavi.

- April- Special classes for 120 Anganwadi children to make them school ready.

- May- Volunteer meet: We at LIFE Trust encourage volunteers to be a part of our creative and innovative initiatives. Email us at empower@lifetrustindia.org to be part of this meet.

- June- School Chalo Rally: Every year we conduct a 'School Chalo' rally, where we walk through the slums of Mumbai and motivate children to join schools.

CHANGING LIVES

The girls gathered around as a lady walked in, "Meenal didi" they called her. As she walked down the road, ladies looked up to her and greeted her. Meenal would have been just another face in the crowd before LIFE touched her.



Meenal loved children and believed that like her, every child should grow up worthy enough to earn his/her own livelihood. She spent half her day teaching in a nearby Anganwadi school. After working for another 5 years she

realized that the world hadn't changed much, the plight of the children remained the same. But she kept trying with the hope that one day she will make a difference.

Soon she realized that her house was falling apart. Delayed payments and no improvements in the teaching system crushed all her hopes. This is the story of many Anganwadi teachers.

However, things have changed since LIFE started supporting the Anganwadi project in 2007. It brought back hope to these teachers. With LIFE's support Meenal has got her motivation back. Today she has been appointed by LIFE to head a social women's group consisting of 60 women. The women bring to her the problems of the community and she brings them to LIFE trust. Life provides them with necessary aids and puts in tremendous effort to solve their problems. It promotes vocational training of women in the community and monitors government schemes to make sure that every Anganwadi gets its share of the benefit provided.

Meenal is the story of one girl whose destiny has been changed by LIFE Trust. Our aim however, is to change the lives of millions. We will continue to make a difference.

VOLUNTEER SPEAK

What inspires you to work/volunteer at NGO's like LIFE?

My passion for creating sustainable change in the field of education led me to LIFE TRUST. It's commitment to provide quality education for all is a noble and necessary goal that I wanted to be a part of.

How do you think LIFE Trust is contributing to society?

Well, where do I start, LIFE Trust conducts various projects at all the secondary BMC schools in Mumbai, supports 475 Anganwadi's (informal schools), runs a Learning Disability centre at Nair hospital and conducts vocational training in Mumbai and Bangalore. It also runs 'Our Home', an orphanage for destitute children in Chennai. Need I say more?

Which is the one experience you have had while working for LIFE Trust that you cherish the most?

When I entered the LD centre I was overwhelmed with the whole setup. The clinical psychologists, special educators and psychiatrists were extremely professional in their work and passionate about the cause of assisting students with learning disabilities. Moreover, seeing the children receiving help from them was an awe-inspiring experience. The kids who had been ignored and made fun of throughout their lives, now had a place to go to that provided them with a sense of comfort and security. They felt as though they were in their own home, their own space, where no one would trouble or hurt them, and while leaving, the smile on their faces was priceless.

Volunteer Kartik Vaswani

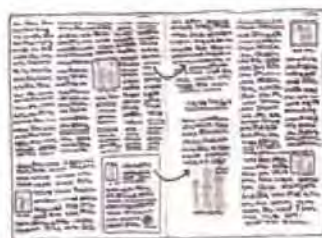
LEARN FOR LIFE

Since LIFE Trust is an organization committed to education and learning, you, our reader can look forward to learning something new with every new issue of our newsletter.

PAPER PUPPETS

MATERIALS
newspaper
paints
long sticks
stapler
scissors
glue

India imports around 250,000 tonnes of waste paper each year from Europe & the USA, all to be recycled.



1 Fold 1 sheet of newspaper in half and draw puppet head (with a long neck).



2 Cut out the head+neck, holding the two sheets together.



3 Stick the top half of the 2 heads together. (ONLY along edges)



4 While your puppet head is drying paint a large single sheet of newspaper with any colors you like.



5 Glue long stick inside to the back of puppet head. (stick should reach middle of head)



6 Stuff puppet with crumpled newspaper and staple shut open sides of the head & neck



7 Pleat painted sheet and staple it to the neck of your puppet. (leave open at back)

Source: Center for Environmental Research and Education

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LIFE IN THE NEWS



CONTACT LIFE

If you would like to know more about our organization and our various initiatives email us at empower@lifetrustindia.org or call us at 022-24910287/022-24910288