

DEVI Sansthan

2020 Annual Report



Children from Tehri Pulia literacy centre enjoy an outing to the Lucknow zoo (January 2020)

“Dreams are not that which we see while we are sleeping, it is that which prevents us from sleeping.”

Dr APJ Kalam

Note from the Founder-Director

Dignity, Education, Vision International is a non-profit organization serving underprivileged populations since 1992. The aim of DEVI is to be a catalyst in creating replicable models of change. It is collaborating with donors and NGOs to initiate changes in diverse fields like education, income generation, skills development, entrepreneurship, health care and awareness building campaigns. Global Dream is the primary project of DEVI Sansthan, aiming to bring literacy to the people of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, and beyond.

The first section of this report includes general information about DEVI Sansthan's mission, objectives and history. The second section outlines our literacy-related activities. New initiatives taken to assist with Covid relief and development work in marginalised and vulnerable slum communities are described in the third part. The fourth section reports financial figures from the past three years.

Dr Sunita Gandhi,

Founder-Director,

DEVI Sansthan

1. DEVI Sansthan Background

1.1 DEVI vision & mission

Dignity, Education, Vision International is a non-profit organization serving the underprivileged populations since 1992. With the slogan ‘each one teach one’, we hope to inspire a people’s movement for literacy throughout the nation. Our vision is that no one should be left behind in the spread of literacy. Our mission is to be a catalyst in creating replicable models of change.

1.2 Why Literacy?

Literacy is the first stepping-stone to formal education and a path to freedom for many. The positive benefits of literacy are numerous – a Cambridge study in India found that a mere 4% increase in literacy rate would have the same positive effect on reducing child mortality as a 25% reduction in the poverty rate. And literacy has been found to be the only significant predictor of public health on the state level. Sadly, over 25,00,00,000 illiterate adults, nearly 40% of the global total, are in India. And there is no program for the lakhs of Indian children aged 6-14 who are currently out of school.

1.3 Why Global Dream?

Global Dream is the product of years of trial and error based on international research. This research shows that a student-directed program based on increasing the student’s thinking time supplemented with immediate feedback and positive reinforcement is the ideal way to accelerate a student’s learning curve. By implementing this research, the Global Dream Toolkits perform far faster than other existing primers and curricula. An average person can begin to read within 2-3 months with a single 15 minutes teaching session per day.

Advantages of Global Dream learning program

- **Simple** steps that build on learner’s already existing ability to speak in their language.
- **Learner-driven** so that thinking time, and therefore cognitive benefit, is maximised.
- **Positive reinforcement** that develops learning strategies into habits.
- **Immediate** sense of achievement that keeps them *motivated*. Nurtures intrinsic motivation.
- **Creates** a sense of self-worth, dignity and hope.

1.4 History

- Field tested with school children and volunteers in local slums.



- Large-scale pilot with thousands of schoolchildren. Such is the power and the ease of using the Global Dream Toolkits that even a school-going child can be trained to teach an illiterate person to read. Thousands of children of more than 158 schools of Lucknow, Kanpur and Barabanki participated in the “Each one teach one” campaign.



- Encouraged by this overwhelming response, DEVI gained the moral support of the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The Chief Secretary of UP, Mr. Alok Ranjan, along with Mr. G.B. Pattanaik, Chairperson of India Literacy Board, Lucknow are the Co-Chairpersons of the Global Dream People’s Movement for Literacy.



2. Literacy Activities Overview

2.1 Global Dream Literacy Labs

Global Dream Labs offer the hope to bring underprivileged learners and their mentors under one roof. These labs bring mentors into one-on-one and small group teaching encounters with illiterate children, teenagers, and adults in a learning-friendly environment. The labs can be in someone's house, workshop, school or even in open air. Through these labs, over 350 previously illiterate adults and children have learned to read and hundreds of others are receiving enrichment in their literary and academic skills.

Global Dream labs have been operating in the following locations in Lucknow:

Phool Mandi

The lab in Phool Mandi (behind Bada Imambara) is our newest, operating since November 2020. There is an enthusiastic group of children, the majority of whom were totally illiterate before we started. We teach in an open area to be able to have adequate social distancing, and often do exercises and sports after the classes.



Daliganj

We have been working for over two years in the slum under Daliganj bridge, by the side of the Gomti river. Members of this kacchi basti, many of whom are ragpickers and kabadiwalas, have warmly welcomed us. Recently we have been teaching adult literacy also, and several of our former students are now helping teach others.



Nai Basti



Jawahar Nagar Railway Patri



Tehri Pulia



2.2 Collaborations for Literacy

Talks and events were held promoting literacy and service learning to thousands of children and adults in UP (Lucknow, Kanpur, Meerut & Gorakhpur), Telangana (Hyderabad), Rajasthan (Ajmer), Karnataka (Bangalore & Gulbarga), Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore and Chennai). Some events brought in participants from across India enthusiastic to try using the Global Dream Program to serve their own communities.

These events prepared the soil for an expansion in our literacy lab efforts. At every event DEVI asked administrators and students to commit to spreading literacy in their communities. They followed up with training sessions where prepared to be master trainers, while students were taught how to use the program to teach illiterate persons themselves.

Over several years, DEVI has met and collaborated with numerous organizations in order to develop new outlets for expanding the literacy mission. These organizations have provided funding, volunteers, advocacy, and in some cases even set up their own literacy labs!

- Samarth Foundation
- Sarthak Foundation
- MS Education
- OXFAM
- Rotary India Literacy Mission
- Swayam Foundation
- Navjyoti Delhi
- School Ke Baad Schools (SKBS) Delhi & Gurgaon
- Sankalp initiative of the Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare
- Pace Foundation Lucknow
- Lucknow Management Association
- Read Alliance
- Teach for India
- Shaheen Group of Institutions
- Magic Bus Foundation



A high school student of Ajmer district teaching literacy, after a Global Dream training



A peer-to-peer literacy program in a Mumbai primary school

2.3 Government Partnerships

UP primary schools

Through a collaboration with the Director of the BSA, DEVI Sansthan is looking to expand upon last year's teacher training pilot program with a much larger and more rigorous randomised control trial. Over 100 schools will take part in the project, which will train teachers to use the Global Dream program in their classes and provide them with materials such that they may advance the literacy of students at their schools. Half of the schools will be trained in the Global Dream program while the other half will maintain their regular program as a control group, such that the exact impact of Global Dream on the literacy of students may be evaluated. If the program is successful, the Global Dream program will then be instituted in more schools across Lucknow and beyond. We are waiting to re-engage in discussions with the Government of UP to decide how to take this project forward, after a substantial interruption due to Covid-19.

Telangana

The Telangana state government has been very active in promoting literacy. In the later part of 2019, DEVI has been engaged with negotiations with the Telangana government as to what role we can play to assist their noble mission. DEVI has also been working with partner NGOs in the area to improve our Telugu and Urdu materials and trial them in a variety of contexts.



Women in an adult literacy centre in Hyderabad, operated by our partner NGO, SAFA

2.4 Global Dream Shaala

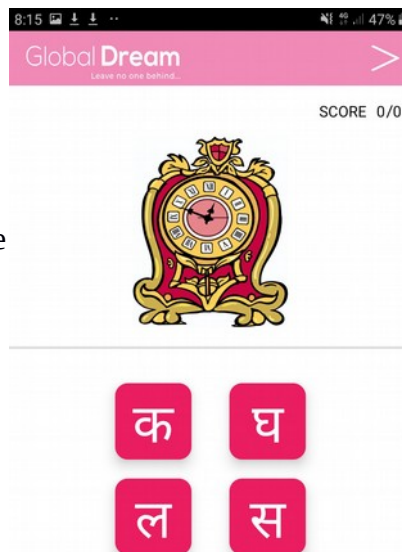
In early 2020, we were grateful to receive funding from SBI Life Insurance for a project to help the children of Chandan and Sugamau slums fully literate. While the project was severely disrupted due to Covid, we were please to inaugurate Global Dream Shaala in December 2020. Children from these kacchi bastis enjoyed performing dance, songs and aerobics for a virtual audience. We are excited to use a combination of one-on-one and small group teaching (with appropriate safeguards) and technology - online classes, videos and apps – to help these eager children gain a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy, and then progress to higher education.



3. Covid-19 Relief & Development

The Covid-19 pandemic has dominated the year for the whole world, and it impacted every aspect of DEVI Sansthan's work also. While our usual in-person literacy work was disrupted for much of the year, we have recently resumed, with appropriate safety precautions. The pandemic has also prompted us to reinvigorate our efforts in innovating to use technology to promote literacy. Within every challenge lies an opportunity, and the huge disruption to children's education nationwide leads us to redouble our efforts to close the literacy and numeracy gap and help children gain these crucial foundational skills.

In the midst of the pandemic crisis, we also felt compelled to do our bit beyond literacy for communities we were working in. We have significantly broadened our scope to distribute relief and help people access government services and healthcare.



A screen from a game in the Global Dream literacy app.

3.1 Distribution of masks and soap; Covid prevention training

Early in the pandemic, people were frightened and misinformation on Covid-19 was rife. Many people also lacked access to basics for preventing Covid transmission. To help remedy the situation in some of the slums we work in, DEVI workers commissioned the sewing of 500 masks and distributed them to around 100 households, while also training people in Covid prevention. This also helped provide emergency employment to a family reeling from the impacts of the lockdown. We further donated 50 masks to hospital workers at King George Medical University.



3.2 Distribution of emergency food rations

Many families in slum communities faced a huge economic crisis during the lockdown, as unemployment levels skyrocketed. DEVI workers did what they could to help in this emergency, organising food distributions for over 1500 families in fifteen slums (primarily kacchi jhuggi bastis). It was particularly encouraging that many friends and local community members volunteered to help packing the parcels and helped us carry out the distributions in an orderly manner.



Volunteers pack food ready for distribution

3.3 Assisting people to access government services

While we do what we can to help directly, ultimately it is critical to help people access government services. This year we realised afresh that many people in the communities we serve

lack basic identity documentation, making it challenging for them to access much-needed government services. Consequently, we have assisted more than 300 people make or update their aadhar cards, over 200 people apply for PAN cards, and helped 18 people apply for pensions.

3.4 Empowering fuel transitions

Around 500,000 Indians die each year due to indoor air pollution, the primary cause of which is cooking with biomass on inefficient stoves.¹ Furthermore, there is a strong link between air pollution and susceptibility to Covid. Sadly, many of the families in the communities we work in rely on inefficient, dirty wood choolhas. The upfront cost of a gas connection puts it out of reach for many slum dwellers; others can afford it but lack the requisite documents. The DEVI team has started helping people fill forms for the gas connection, as well as gifting half the upfront cost. As of December, we have subsidised over 220 families to get gas connections. This



One of the project beneficiaries, with her new gas connection

has a huge positive impact for people's health and the environment, as well as helping families save money in the long term.

3.5 Enabling people to access medical services

Amidst the Covid pandemic, many medical resources were diverted, impacting people's access to basic healthcare services. Further, many people were reluctant to go to hospital – for fear of becoming infected, and of quarantine. Thus underprivileged communities, including those in which we work, have been severely impacted in their access to healthcare.² In this situation, our workers have stepped in to help people go for Covid tests, book online appointments for OPD, take people to hospital, and much more.



Waiting for the results of a Covid test

1 <https://www.pnas.org/content/97/24/13286>

2 <https://thewire.in/health/covid-19-lockdown-health-services-decline>

4. Financial report

All figures in Rs		FY2019-20	FY2018-19
Opening Balance		17,90,966	18,26,288
Income	Donation	6,51,552	1,61,201
	DEVI School fees	4,98,265	5,21,570
	Interest & Miscellaneous	1,10,395	1,02,876
	Total Income	12,60,212	7,85,647
Expenditure	Salaries	5,74,350	5,72,700
	Printing Learning Materials	7,26,086	1,99,726
	Office Expense, Bank charges & Depreciation	42,838	47,205
	Total Expenditure	13,43,274	8,19,631
Closing Balance		17,07,904	17,90,966



*Children helping each other learn how to read. Global Dream Shaala, Chandan slum
(December 2020)*

*Join us in a movement to make India literate!
We look forward to hearing from you.*

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