

STUDY HALL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Celebrating 10 years of Vidyasthal School, Digital Study Hall and DOSTI

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2016

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Special Initiative

Digital Study Hall, Vidyasthali and DOSTI

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



Dr. Urvashi Sahni

Founding President & CEO Study Hall Educational Foundation, Asoka Fellow Non-Resident Fellow The Brookings Institution, USA

Study Hall Educational Foundation began its journey in January 1986 in my garage with 6 children with the aim of providing 'quality' education to all sections of society. Our goal was to redefine 'quality' in a broad and comprehensive manner, to include social, emotional and political learning. We defined the goal of education to be that of enabling students to explore the important question - "Who am I and how am I related to the Universe and others in it". Education must go beyond narrow academic learning to include a deeper understanding of the self, contextualised in personal, social and political worlds. The goal of education after all is not just to know, but to learn to live. (Boleslavsky)

Our goal and mission is to increase our reach as far, wide and deep as possible to students, teacher's parents and policy makers and to share our vision and definition of education with them, to influence them thereby helping to shape the future of our

city, state and country. To this end, we have been working thoughtfully, diligently, committedly, caringly and persistently for the past 30 years. 2015 marks the 10th year anniversary of 3 of our ventures - Vidyasthali, Digital Study Hall and DOSTI.

Vidyasthali, our school for rural children in Kanar, Malihabad, was founded in 2005, with the aim of providing a high quality education at affordable cost to rural children and I report with some pride that over the past 10 years we have created a model that demonstrates how that is possible. Children from 55 villages in a 30 km radius attend our school, taught by a dedicated staff of 20 teachers, 80% of who travel to and from Lucknow every day. Our goal is to enable the boys and girls who come to our school to think deeply, critically and imaginatively about their rural context, so that they begin to see possibilities and opportunities for development right there in their own villages and look proactively for solutions.

DOSTI - our section for children with special needs and abilities also began in 2005 with the goal of providing an educational and enabling space for children who were born differently abled, so that they might achieve their potential and lead functional lives. Study Hall is perhaps one of the few schools in the state that has integrated program for such special children. Our dedicated staff of 16 teachers is now helping 100 children. Parents deeply appreciated the program and consider themselves fortunate to have found a safe and caring educational environment for their children.

SHEF pioneered the use of technology in education in the state of UP. In 2000 we partnered with Sugata Mitra's Hole in the Wall project and together we installed the first computer in a rural primary school, using solar panels for power. This showed us the possibilities that technology affords to leapfrog some of the difficult challenges faced by the public

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Study Hall Educational Foundation through its work, vision and dedication has committed to adopt 13 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) identified by the UNITED NATIONS at the UN Summit in September, 2015 in New York City, USA. Key areas where Study Hall Educational Foundation is making an impact and adding to Global Development through its work in India and across the globe are - Quality Education, Gender Equality, Good Health and Well being, Partnerships for the goals, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, No poverty, Zero Hunger, and Reduce inequalities.

education system, especially in rural areas. This led to the founding of Digital Study Hall in 2005.

Digital Study Hall, is our main outreach arm, through which we share our best practices with schools and communities with much fewer resources than us. We use very simple, easy to access, use and maintain, video and mobile technology to enable our outreach. Our program is different from other technology based programs, in that it puts technology firmly in its place, viewing its role as being primarily that of an enabler and not as a replacer of teachers. The program is BY teachers FOR teachers. Our program, simple though hugely impactful has received world wide acclaim and appreciation, several international awards and recognition by organisations like UNICEF, the Asoka Foundation, The World Innovation Summit of Education and The Brookings Institution. We are reaching out

to Government schools across the state of UP, in Maharashtra and have recently begun to work with the Government of Rajasthan as well. We have created over 2200 videos on subjects ranging from in Hindi, English, Maths, Science; Social Studies to Gender based Critical dialogues and plays, for students from class 1-12. Our content is open source and is available free of cost on our YouTube channel Digital StudyHall to anyone anywhere in the world. We currently have 1,087 subscribers and 451,848 views.

Though much has been accomplished, the journey has just begun and there is a long way to travel. Even after 30 years, I think of SHEF as a start up, probably because we are always starting something new. As soon as we recognise a need, we rise to meet it. We started the Studyhall Centre for Learning in 2014, for children who are lost in the main stream but flower under dedicated care and attention with the freedom to develop their special abilities. It is thriving and growing every day, serving several grateful parents and children. Recognising the need for high quality teacher training programs, SHEF rose to the occasion and began the Study Hall Nursery Teacher Training program in 2015.

And finally, we are moving into higher education and will soon be starting the Study Hall College, because we realise the need for high quality college education in our city and state. The possibilities are immense and the opportunities for growth enormous! I am confident that SHEF, a unique universe of care, will continue to grow as it has done in the past 3 decades, thoughtfully, caringly and imaginatively.

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Member Chief Minister's Advisory Council Govt. of Rajasthan

NIOS - AT STUDY HALL: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL



Dr. Pratima Srivastava

Director, Study Hall NIOS Centre & Principal, Study Hall Centre for Learning

Study Hall became an accredited institution (AD) of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) on 11 December, 2014. AI Centre Code is 210644. At Study Hall we believe that - 'All Children are unique, powerful, important persons, worthy of our respect. They have a right to enjoy their childhood, which is an important phase of their lives and deserves to be understood respectfully rather than treated simply as a preparation for adulthood.' We believe that all children have enormous potential waiting to be tapped by caring, imaginative adults and institutions and Studyhall as an institution has tried to reach out to children of diverse abilities and capabilities.

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) formerly National Open School is the Board of Education for Distance education, under the Union Government of India. It was established by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of Government of India in 1989 to provide education to remote areas under the motive to increase literacy and aimed forward for flexible learning. Its curriculum is at par with the CBSE, but made simpler and more accessible. It also has a wide and flexible choice of subjects along with a very low stakes, low stress, in our view very sane, assessment format, allowing students to take examinations in as many subjects at a time as they feel confident of. They are also allowed several chances to improve their grades, without a 'fail' mark on their final transcript. It is recognised by all colleges and universities in India and abroad.

NIOS at our school is guided by the same ethic of care as the rest of our foundation. It has certain special features like online and offline registration, supportive guidance provided for proper documentation, registration, choice of subjects, solved and unsolved question papers, and regular tutoring through contact classes, along with special guidance for preparation of practical files and Tutor Marked Assignments. Study Hall NIOS centre is well equipped with lab facilities. Ex-Secondary/Senior Secondary students of the various regular Boards of School Education who have passed in at least one subject, but have not qualified in the course, can also get admission in the respective course at NIOS and avail facility of Transfer of Credit in 2 subjects.

In a short span of nine months of its accreditation, the NIOS center at Study Hall has successfully registered around 200 students in arts, science and commerce streams in secondary and senior secondary courses.

An honest attempt is being made to reach out to as many students as possible specially drop outs from the school system and facilitate the completion of a high school education. We have recently begun an outreach program in rural areas as well with a focus on girls and women who have been prevented from completing their education because of early marriage. We hope to increase our intervention in rural areas progressively.

Nursery Teachers Training: Study Hall Educational Foundation

Priya Kakkar

Director Studyhall Nursery Teacher Training Program

"If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher". A.P.J Abdul Kalam Precious words from a great leader! So meaningful and at the same time imposing a huge



responsibility on teachers! Yes, considered to be the backbone of the society a teacher plays a key role in the life of a child. A builder of the future generations, she instills the love of learning and contributes in the development of a child's mind, body and soul. The Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF) is always striving hard to strengthen society by creating resources. What better resource for a healthy society can there be than able, caring and compassionate teachers! SHEF extended itself in the field of education once more and started The Nursery Teacher Training Programme in The Prep School at Vishal

Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow in July 2015. Guided by the conviction that teachers learn to teach by teaching, our program puts student teachers in the classroom from the first day. Our program follows the apprenticeship model. Teachers spend atleast 3 hours everyday in a classroom, mentored by a master teacher. Our course strikes a balance between theory and practice. Learning is further enriched as the trainees acquire teaching skills by being with children and watching experienced teachers at work. During the nine month training programme in the school the trainee teachers are given

ample opportunity to observe and understand the young learners along with theory classes. Regular seminars and workshops are conducted by eminent experienced teachers of Study Hall and by eminent experts in the educational field. Practice teaching in Studyhall, The Prep School and Prema schools towards the end of the training further empowers the teachers. With this unique apprenticeship approach the teachers trained in The Prep School will certainly be the kind of teachers the children and the changing education scenario of the 21st century needs.



Study Hall Centre for Learning A school with an open sky



Utpal Misra

Director, Study Hall Centre for Learning

In keeping with our tradition of extending our outreach to ALL children and pioneering change in a static education environment, the Study Hall Educational Foundation has introduced a new innovative and dynamic stream of learning through their new co-educational Center for Learning.

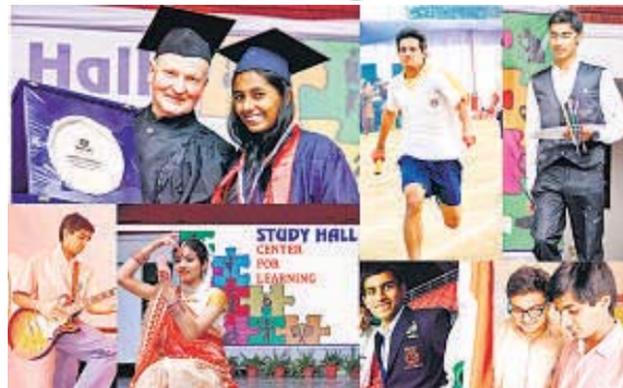
Guided by Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, the Center caters to individual students with different learning needs.

Each year numerous students fail their examinations, and drop out of school because their different learning needs go unnoticed in large classes. These students find it difficult to cope with and fit into the regular pattern of teaching and assessment and are sidelined and termed as 'slow learn-

ers', 'dreamers', indisciplined etc. Center for Learning strives to bridge this gap by adopting innovative teaching techniques, small classes and a team of caring, skilled and dedicated teachers.

Unlike regular "coaching Businesses" for "failed children" that have mushroomed all over, Center for Learning is a regular school maintaining regular hours with a strict minimum attendance of 80 percent. It has a caring, nurturing approach with the goal of helping our students gain their lost self esteem and find their untapped potential.

We foster happy and confident children in classes with a teacher-student ratio of 1:6, helping them to develop a sound sense of self worth and a healthy respect for their individuality. We create a friendly, secure, caring, comforting, yet stimulating and collaborative learning environment in our classrooms. We encourage our students to develop freely, at their own pace and move towards optimizing their potential, without the fear and humiliation of unfair comparisons with other children whose learning mode is more suited to mainstream education. Our goal is to give them a school which is a happy place, where they are rescued from feelings of alienation, boredom, hurt, humiliation, being bullied, academic stress or performance stress. We have found that once our students begin to feel secure, happy and unafraid of learn-



ing, they develop the capacity to aspire and are eager to learn and grow.

Our effort has borne fruit in the short time since we began our work. Students have moved from achieving less than 33% marks to getting 80% and 90% in academic subjects.

Several of our students have found the space and place to pursue their special talents and have represented India in sports, put up outstanding art exhibitions, dramatic and dance presentations. After graduation almost all our students have found placement in colleges and are pursuing courses in medicine, engineer-

ing, media and fashion technology to name a few from high quality institutes like NIFT, SRM, National PG College, Manipal University, Lucknow University and the Pearl Institute of Fashion.

The reputation of our Centre has spread rapidly and Principals of several prestigious schools in the city like La Martiniere Girls are sending needy children to us. We hope to grow our outreach each year and are working on developing an online platform as well, so that we may reach out to boys and girls from other cities as well.

THE STUDY HALL COLLEGE: EXPANDING OUR UNIVERSE OF CARE

Expanding our universe of care still further, Study Hall Educational Foundation is extending its arms upwards into higher education this year. We hope to inaugurate "The Study Hall College", a high quality undergraduate degree college, affiliated to Lucknow University in the academic session 2016-2017. The construction of the building is underway, supported and funded generously by the late Shri Satpal Malhotra, beloved father of Dr. Urvashi Sahni and past Chairman of the Malhotra Weikfield Foundation. We hope to extend the same spirit of caring and a dedication to high standards of academic excellence, creativity and innovation.

Like the rest of our foundation, the Studyhall College will be an inclusive place for students of all abilities, from all socio-economic backgrounds, from rural and urban regions, fostering collaboration, creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation. A college with a creative and entrepreneurial climate, where academics prepare students not just for future careers, but also for social responsibility and democracy. Here emphasis will be on critical thinking with a social and political perspective, experiential learning and developing a problem solving and a solution oriented approach. The syllabus will be an integrated curriculum focused on thematic units and will be designed to meet each individual's personal goals. Industry oriented courses like Bachelor in

Journalism and Mass Communication, Bachelor in Performing Arts, BBA, B.com (Hons) have been chosen for the students keeping creativity and placement in mind. An extensive bandwidth of subjects for the Bachelor of Arts program like education, psychology, economics and sociology are also envisaged. The college will have state of the art infrastructural facilities with 40+ learning centers, off-line & on-line library facility, very advanced technology facilities, an auditorium with more than 1500 seating capacity, cafeteria and a playground with basketball, volleyball, badminton, lawn tennis and cricket (net practice).

Semester based assessment process, research environment and off-line/on-line lectures from visiting professors of top universities like Berkeley, Ontario Institute of School Education, Cornell University, and ensures quality not only in the teaching learning process but also in the holistic development of the students.

Study Hall Educational Foundation with its 30+ years of experience and learnings in innovative methods of teaching and learning, hopes to graduate a future generation of young men and women from the Study Hall College, all of who we are confident will be caring, responsible, citizens who will develop creative and imaginative solutions to the problems that beset India and the world and will work towards a better world.

Dosti - An Unstoppable Journey of Courage, Hope & Joy

Mrs. Surabhi Kapoor

Founding Principal, Dosti

DOSTI, Study Hall's Inclusive School for specially-abled people started its journey in April 2005 with 10 children and today, 2015, over one hundred children, are taken care of in its Early Intervention, Home-based programs and regular school programs.

DOSTI practices in campus as well as Home Based programs identify children in the initial stages of schooling and include them in an Early Intervention Program designed to help (those who can) catch up with their developmental milestones. These regular school going special needs children are trained to take their place among the rest of the students in mainstream education and co-curricular activities, as per their individual potential and skills, thus getting the necessary support for becoming happy, well adjusted, contributing members of society.

This practice is called Inclusive education and Study Hall's DOSTI wing, the first such holistic educational initiative in Uttar Pradesh, began its decade long work of specializing in working with special needs children + care givers + teachers, providing all a platform for interacting with and helping each other, while striving together to integrate every child into mainstream schools in 2005.

All staff working with the children at DOSTI is qualified to teach and manage special needs children and counsel parents. What started with 2 staff members and 10 children has now grown into a community of 16 professional Rehabilitation professionals and 10 Para-professionals + 100 children!

All students are provided with a holistic education proportional to their overall physical, emotional and mental abilities making them useful and productive members of society.

DOSTI and parents, who worked tirelessly together, reflect on their achievements: Nine children have been integrated in the mainstream.

All children with varying degrees of disabilities have been educated to a certain level and have been trained in social skills and behavior to exhibit appropriate social behavior and practice ways to live independently.



AN AWARD FOR DOSTI 2015

Dosti Section of Study Hall School, was announced as the best school for specially-abled students on World Disability Day 2015 in Lucknow. Sahab Singh Saini, cabinet minister for backward class welfare and handicapped development, felicitated Mrs. Surabhi Kapoor, founder principal of DOSTI for her selfless contribution towards the welfare of children with special needs. "Dosti school plays an important role in bridging the gap between the regular and specially-abled students as it has strengthened the bonding among them. I feel proud to be part of this."

Mrs. Surabhi Kapoor,
Founder Principal DOSTI

Six students have passed their class 12 NIOS board examinations.

DOSTI participants have won six gold, seven silver and 10 Bronze medals in national events since 2005.

Drama based education is also a part of the students' curriculum coupled with singing and music in English and Hindi besides dancing. DOSTI organizes different cultural meets in-house and encourages children to participate in all such activities happening in the city for which they qualify. DOSTI had its first Independent Annual Concert in 2006, which was a kaleidoscope of dance song and drama in both languages Hindi and English followed with full fledged concerts annually. Dance, drama and singing is an ongoing process whether it be in a concert, or Balmanch or Yuva Manch for students to showcase their

drama and cultural skills.

DOSTI participants won One Gold, One Silver and one Bronze medal at the International Special Olympics in 2013.

Eight DOSTI students successfully received vocational training according to their abilities.

One of these eight students, Madhurima is currently pursuing her Visharad in music after passing her class 12 NIOS board exam. She recently performed in a concert along with Sonam Kalra, the internationally renowned Sufi Gospel Project singer and earned accolades for her effort. Another student is presently pursuing her B.A. from Kanpur University, while another is helping his father run the family restaurant.

A three-member team comprising a chaperone, a special child and a Study Hall student represented India in 2009 as a part of a Global Youth Messenger program in Boise, Idaho, U.S.A as part of a campaign against the use of the 'R' word (Retarded) when referring to children with special abilities.

Students from DOSTI, Study Hall school won awards at the Innerscape competition held at an international level in the year 2012 and 2013, organized by the City Montessori School, Lucknow.

Sahil Singh from DOSTI received an all rounder student award from the UP Govt. on World Disability Day and was also felicitated by the LMA association with the Young Achiever's Award 2014 in a public ceremony to celebrate his endeavors.

The UP State Government felicitated DOSTI on World Disabled Day 3rd December, 2015 with an award for "Exemplary Work in the Field of Disability."

Parents are very happy with the school's cohesive education policy and all round development of their child in a happy and vibrant atmosphere. They have always responded with glowing accolades whenever asked for feedback, which DOSTI relies on hugely to continuously improve ways to help children with special needs.

As the Founding Principal of Dosti, Mrs. Surabhi Kapoor, sums up the school's USP as, "The school is also bridging the gap between the regular and especially-abled students by strengthening a bonding among them, hence creating a society which will be more empathetic towards youth with special abilities."



Dosti - Learning through playing.



Dosti - Watch us Calculating.

studentspeak

Dosti is just like a dream come true for me. Here I enjoy playing and studying with my friends. I get love and support of my dear Aunties who give me lots of joy and happiness. I love you Dosti.

Divye Chopra

I like to go to my school, Dosti, it is the best school. I feel good and happy here. I have many friends. I like to study, play and have my lunch with them. I like yoga, swimming, and music classes very much. We have many sports activities like football, basketball, volleyball etc. I enjoyed doing march-past and fan drill in our sports day. I enjoy taking part in plays and drama. Now I can speak my dialogues on stage myself I like dancing on stage. We performed Dandiya along with our mainstream friends. I am very proud of Dosti.

SAHIL

My classroom is very big and colorful. The soft boards are very attractive and decorative. There is an AC in every classroom. We get individual desks to sit comfortably. We have swimming and also Indian and Western music classes. Our playground is big where we enjoy playing different games with our friends and teachers. My teacher teaches very nicely and always encourages us to participate in all the co-curricular activities. My teachers are our true friends and guide. I love to be a part of DOSTI in Study Hall

RIYA "My School, DOSTI is the Best School"

I am a student of Study Hall School, "DOSTI" section. We have special trained teachers who take care of all our needs. They teach me good habits and lessons. All my teachers are wonderful and my class teacher is my favorite. There are many activities like sports, swimming, yoga, dance and music and art and craft etc. I enjoy going to school as I learn and also have so much of fun there. We have concerts and PT display every year. We go in the playground to play every day. My school canteen provides us with variety of healthy eatables.

ABUL



Sports day



Puzzle World.



Fun at Dosti.



Ceramic Craft.



Yoga champion : see my medal.

Dosti School student's parents speak



We, the proud parents of Sahil, Shruti, Geetika, Praharsh, Vani Arnav congratulate from the bottom of our hearts DOSTI and its entire team on completion of its decade. Dosti is a highly accomplished integrated school for children with special needs. It promotes true integration and inclusion with main-stream students. It not only provides a normal social atmosphere for the children with special needs but also sensitizes the main-stream children, teachers and staff (hence society) towards our special children. Under the guidance and supervision of Mrs. Surabhi Kapoor, Head DOSTI, this special wing of Study Hall has expanded nearly ten times in ten years. The growth has not only been in numbers but in quality as well. Some of the DOSTI children are being prepared to take NIOS examination (open schooling to pass 10th and 12th classes) and a few have already passed. Earlier the stage performances by DOSTI needed assistance and voice for dialogues by main-stream students. But now the children are capable of performing on their own. This has been possible only with the hard work and perseverance of DOSTI teachers.

The team of DOSTI is highly dedicated and empathetic towards children with different needs. They do not sympathize with children for having special needs but rather turn them into confident, independent and self-reliant individuals through their faith and confidence in their abilities and capabilities and loads of hard work. DOSTI has an excellent team of teachers, special educators, psychologist and assistants who teach and train them to be independent in day-to-day activities and to interact and work with mainstream children. They make them enjoy learning academics, yoga, sports and other extra-curricular activities. They give our children all possible opportunities to take part in various activities in school and outside. It is amazing to see these children who can barely talk, delivering dialogues on stage and perform in plays. The students of DOSTI have been taking part in Special Olympics at District, State, National and International levels; and have won several awards. Regular performances on stage and participation in various activities have indeed boosted their self-confidence tremendously and improved their personalities. As a result, Sahil has achieved a lot. The credit for all his achievements goes entirely to DOSTI. We express our sincere gratitude towards DOSTI and its team. We wish them lots of success and achievements ahead.

Written by - Bhawna, Sangeeta, Poorva, Seemit, Shilpi and Anand
(Dosti School student's parents speak)

VIDYASTHALI: PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION IN RURAL AREA



Dr. Pratima Srivastav
Director, Vidyasthali

Vidyasthali Kanar High school is a co-educational, dual medium school situated in Malihabad, 32 kilometers away from Lucknow, established in 2005 by Study Hall Educational Foundation, with the goal of providing affordable but high quality education to rural children. It started with 84 children from 55 villages in a 25 km radius. In 2011, the Kewal Ramani foundation joined our effort and has been generously supporting it financially. The school runs pre-school to class 12 classes and is affiliated to the UP State board. A dedicated staff of 20 teachers provides quality education to over 433 students in science, arts and the commerce stream. The school has an inclusive approach and has a diverse student body in terms of class and caste. The mission of the school is to provide a caring, nurturing learning environment to students, to maintain high academic standards, develop critical thinking, and an innovative, entrepreneurial, solution oriented approach. Our aim is to help students to aspire for strong professional careers and to equip them for these, but

more significantly to enable them and inspire them to contribute meaningfully to the development of their own villages as well. The school has a strong reputation in the region and we are now working at full capacity. With the kind support of the Kewal Ramani Foundation, we are expanding our building in order to increase our outreach to a larger group of students. Our larger goal is to make Vidyasthali a hub of rural development, for education and other entrepreneurial experiments in rural areas. We are actively working to develop partnerships with other organizations towards this end.

Vidyasthali is equipped with high quality facilities, and well trained teachers, most of who travel from Lucknow ever day. The curriculum is activity based and interactive, enriched with sports, drama, dance and music. The teachers ensure that individual attention is given to each child in a nurturing, caring environment. Academic learning is rooted practically in real life rural contexts as students are encouraged to think critically and creatively about the social and physical problems of their regions with the aim of finding effective solutions. The school is equipped with computers, projectors and the internet. Multimedia is effectively used in teaching all the subjects. Students are also encouraged to prepare multi-media presentations on their own. All attempts are made to provide students with much needed exposure by way of travel to urban cities in India and participation in international exchange programs. One of our students, Renu Yadav, qualified for a year long scholarship to a high school in the United States of America, where she acquitted herself with honours! Several international students have visited the school in internship programs. Interaction with them adds to their exposure and develops in them a cosmopolitan understanding of the world.

During the board exams the school resembles Tagore's Shantiniketan. Students are



■ Vidyasthali Class Activity Learning through creativity

kept in residence so that they can be prepared intensively by their teachers who also reside with them. A majority of our students are first generation learners with very little academic support at home. The community participates generously by keeping the students and teachers in good supply of food. Teachers are committed to helping their students perform competitively with students who have the support of educated parents who not only value education more but can afford expensive coaching classes. Understanding the financial constraints of rural populations, we have kept our fees very affordable, subsidizing them by almost 60%. An average monthly fee of Rs. 450 is charged with scholarships for students, particularly girls who are unable to afford even

that. Our students have graduated with good results and are pursuing college degrees in the arts, sciences, law, engineering, medicine and computer studies. Along with their studies, students take up one social problem from their region each year.

They have worked at improving a local government primary school, raising awareness against Child Marriage for girls, against gender based violence and campaigned for girls education in their villages. They have formed a students group called Pravartak, which engages in activities aimed at social change in their communities.

We believe that 'quality education' must enable students to become agents of transformation in their personal lives as well as in their social worlds and we have been working at this for a decade now. We hope our alumni will join us in our endeavour, carry the work forward and make Vidyasthali a hub of excellence in the region.

An average monthly fee of Rs. 450 is charged with scholarships for students, particularly girls who are unable to afford even that.

THE SCHOOL IS EQUIPPED WITH COMPUTERS, PROJECTORS AND THE INTERNET. MULTIMEDIA IS EFFECTIVELY USED IN TEACHING ALL THE SUBJECTS. STUDENTS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO PREPARE MULTI-MEDIA PRESENTATIONS ON THEIR OWN. ALL ATTEMPTS ARE MADE TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH MUCH NEEDED EXPOSURE BY WAY OF TRAVEL TO URBAN CITIES IN INDIA AND PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

PARENT'S SPEAK VIDYASTHALI SCHOOL, STUDY HALL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

As a parent, I feel that having such a school as Vidyasthali in village like atmosphere is a big thing. No other school around Malihabad is running coeducation. There is good combination of academics and other activities like sports, music, plays, singing etc. It is good to see our child is winning medals, prizes.

There is healthy atmosphere in school. Teachers look busy every time. Students are learning good moral values. Teachers are developing sense of responsibility in them. The institute has provided many facilities such as bus, van for conveyance, there is science lab, computer lab, and library etc. there is proper arrangement for drinking water and sanitation. Teachers are good and responsible and giving personal care to our children. Our children are always eager to come to school. They always praise their teachers.

There is also arrangement for remedial class for low achievement students. We are seeing total personality development in our children. Access program is also beneficial for our children. We feel proud when they speak in English, and talk in English. Name of parent?

CELEBRATION TIME



■ Vidyasthali Kanar High School students celebrating 10 years of excellence

Students speak

The school offers all the facilities like quality education, sports activities and other extracurricular activities for the children of rural areas. I even got the opportunity to go to England for one week for a drama work shop.

Our teachers always encourage all the students to participate in all the school activities which motivate us to do better in school.

I feel proud to be a student of Vidyasthali Kanar High School. It has given me enough exposure in the sports. The school gives an opportunity to the students to visit many other parts of the world. My parents are also proud of me. I love Vidyasthali.

The school provides me with opportunities to participate in drama workshops, Access program etc. I have also got an opportunity to visit London under an international exchange program from the school.

Vidyasthali Kanar High school pays respect attention towards the education of girls. The school provides free education

to students from underprivileged backgrounds. I have received a scholarship from the school for my studies.

Teachers of this school are very special to me. The school has made me a confident student in the last two years.

This school is full of opportunities and motivates the children specially girls from rural areas to complete their studies.

I love the greenery around my school. It helps us to concentrate on our studies. Vidyasthali Kanar high school provides wonderful opportunities for girls.

I consider myself lucky to be able to study in Vidyasthali. I have a lot of friends in school. Everyone supports and encourages me to take part in all extracurricular activities.

This school encourages all its students to participate in all the extra curricular activities.

ON COMPLETION OF 10 SUCCESSFUL YEARS



Deepak Tripathi
Principal, Vidyasthali.

I took over as Principal of this school 3 years ago, with some nervousness but a lot of enthusiasm. I am very grateful for the guidance provided by our President, Dr. Urvashi Sahni and my predecessor, Dr. Pratima Srivastava, who led this school very competently almost

since its inception in 2005 and is largely responsible for bringing it up to where it is now. Supported my very dedicated and capable team of 20 teachers, I have been doing my best to make Vidyasthali the best school in this region. My dream is to establish Vidyasthali as an institute where students not only excel academically but also think critically about the problems of their villages. Vidyasthali is not just a school; it is a vision of our Foundation to provide quality education to girls and boys from villages so that they can make their own villages better.

Students of Vidyasthali are always eager to accept challenges. They are willing to take initiatives in all fields. Here students learn not only in class room but also beyond the class room, on the playing field, when they learn classical music, when they learn dancing, when they paint their imagination, when they perform plays on the school stage or



■ Student achievers

Nukkad Natak in their villages. Vidyasthali provides the best atmosphere for students, teachers and for parents. Students come by school bus, cycle,

private vans and also by public transport. My students are highly motivated. I have seen eagerness in their eyes when they come to school. And our teachers

are helping in channeling their students eagerness in positive directions. Here students are learning work collaboratively with their classmates and respectfully with their teachers and other elders.

One day every week we organize a class for critical dialogues. In these classes, facilitated by their teachers students raise a social problem and together they think about it critically in their discussions. They explore the problem and analyse the causes and try to find practical short term and long term solutions.

In Vidyasthali we provide a happy, stress free atmosphere, so that teachers and students never feel excessive pressure. Teachers feel free to experiment, to take the initiative and implement new ideas for the betterment of their students. Teacher use you tube videos, projectors, internet and other modern technologies for upgrading their own knowledge as well as that of their

students. Here we are trying to produce citizens who not only have bookish knowledge but also have social responsibilities. This year we have completed 10 years of our school. Many of our teachers have been with us since its establishment in 2005. They join me in expressing their pride and joy. They feel proud to be a part of Vidyasthali and say they have enjoyed the ten year journey with the school.

As a teacher and principal I feel very fortunate. I think I have been lucky to get one of the best institutions to work with I feel very supported by the management and never feel any hesitation in applying new ideas because the management has given me their trust and complete autonomy. In turn, I hope I am giving my teachers the same support.

My staff joins me in felicitating Vidyasthali and in hoping and praying for a very great future for our lovely school.



■ Music Lessons in school



■ Sports Day - Sumati House during march past



■ Learning through singing - Inter house singing competitions



■ Sports Day



■ Self Defence Training at Vidyasthali



(Left to right) A teacher from a government school in Malihabad mediating video lesson, Empowered Teachers in a dialogue with girls from Maharjaganj, Uttar Pradesh and Patelpuram slum children at the Nonformal Education Center

Aarohini: Empowering Teachers



Shibani Sahni

Director Strategy, Marketing & Partnerships Study Hall Educational Foundation

Our digital journey of discovery continues – with 10 years of experience tucked under our belt, we're looking forward to a lifetime more of constructive creation! Digital Study Hall (DSH), the technology wing of Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF) is the main outreach arm of SHEF through which we create, disseminate, share our best practices with schools that have a paucity of human and material resources. DSH disseminates educational content to government and private primary and upper primary schools and Government residential schools for girls from very poor families, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV), across Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Our vision is to take this nationwide, through sustainable and scalable forms of technology, which are able to tackle various challenges like, lack of connectivity, electricity, infrastructure, accessibility and skilled teachers. Our content benefits students, and also builds teacher capacity. Apart from the academic curriculum in Math, Science, Hindi, English, Geography and EVS, we have developed digital content for girls empowerment in the form of Critical Dialogues. Our Theory of Change: At SHEF we have expanded the definition of school education to include the development of a social and political consciousness as part of the official curriculum, and critical pedagogy is an integral part of our teaching methodology. We want students to learn true 'democratic citizenship' as part of their official cur-



riculum. Our theory is, that an education model that is purely technical, i.e. literacy, numeracy, science and social sciences, without being contextualized in the lives of children, in their communities, and in the social issues that they face - does not bring about social change or empowerment.

To be truly empowered, it is extremely important for us and our students to critically discuss these issues and understand the role that they play in development – "of the self" and of the community. In our classrooms at SHEF we ensure the integration of critical dialogue around such social issues, into our official curriculum. This is how we change and impact society. The Aarohini Program is one of our major offerings at DSH. Aarohini is a Girls Education and Empowerment program, which trains teachers to successfully conduct Critical Dialogues with their students on issues that impact their lives severely like – child marriage, gender based violence, discrimina-

tion, Patriarchy, Dowry, sexual violence amongst others. The program trains teachers to become advocates of girls rights themselves and to empower girls to become self advocates, helping them to develop a consciousness of their rights and the ability to take constructive actions to overcome personal and societal challenges.

Our DSH – Aarohini program was perceived and created at our Prerna School - A school for girls from very disadvantaged groups. We have captured our critical dialogues in the form of short videos and in the past 4 years, have taken our program to 10000 students in a 100 KGBVs in the most backward districts of UP. We are currently expanding the program to 84000 girls in 840 KGBVs in UP and Rajasthan. Our digital and educational efforts at Study Hall Educational Foundation are growing stronger through local and international partnerships with multilaterals, social ventures and not-for-profit organisations.

Going beyond digital literacy to actually learning through computers - Making learning more joyful!

SUCCESS STORIES: DIGITAL STUDY HALL MONA SCHOLARSHIP



Pinki Paswan is a resident of Revalia village in district Shravasti. Pinki's family lost their house in last year's flood, and her father is a rickshaw puller. Pinki's parents were delighted to enroll her at the KGBV (residential girl school). The tuition at KGBV was free, a residential school with free meals, clothes and other supplies. At the time of

admission Pinki who was completely illiterate took it upon herself to learn and by the time of her graduation, she scored a magnificent 88% in grade 8 examinations and won several other prizes. The news of her amazing examination result was bittersweet. Pinki knew that she will not be able to study further and that her family could not afford it. It was then that Pinki's teacher suggested her name for Mona Scholarship. Within a month, Pinki received money to enroll herself in grade 9 at a local school in her village. Pinki's parents are delighted to see their daughter go to school and learn.

AAROHINI PROGRAM

Megha Saxena, a class 7 student in the KGBV, managed to postpone her early marriage with the help of the warden and teachers of the KGBV. When she heard about her parents' plans she discussed it with her friends and teachers. The teachers counselled the parents and they agreed to postpone her marriage. The teachers still follow-up with the parents to ensure they keep their commitment.

Shama Shah of class 8 feared that she would be forced into an early marriage and she would be helpless to prevent it. However, during the Aarohini sessions she realized that child marriage was a criminal offence and that anyone involved in the process could be punished by law. She has now resolved to oppose child marriage and will seek legal action if anyone tries to force her into marriage against her will.



THE LAST FRONTIER - Non Formal Education Centres



Shalini Chandra

Head Pedagogy Digital Study Hall

Fetching heavy buckets of water, cooking, cleaning, looking after younger siblings, their little hands do all this when they should be holding

a book, playing with a toy or coloring pictures. Even when they step out, it's not for going to school or for playing with friends. They go out for collecting garbage, mending punctured tyres, washing utensils in a dhaba or working in the fields. Yes, they are the children who have been forced to sacrifice their childhood for helping their families. They have no dreams and no one dreams for them!

Then there are the slightly more fortunate ones, who do go to a school but have no one to help them cope with their studies. No one to help them understand the lessons and no one to tell what they learn.

All such children are welcome at the Gyansetu Non formal Education Centres (NECs) running in the slums and in the outskirts of Lucknow. Each centre has a single teacher 491 children are currently enrolled at the 14 Gyansetu NECs. Around 60 children are studying in the two NECs in Kolkata. These makeshift teaching-learning spaces, being managed by the Digital Study Hall wing [DSH] of the Study Hall Educational Foundation, reverberate with the happy sounds of learning for two hours every day. Besides Hindi, English, Maths and EVS, the children are encouraged to explore the world around them through art, music, drama, storytelling and games. They also access digital content through the multi media player.

The children are inspired to join a school. Efforts are on to get the children to sit for Class three and Class five exams through the OBE [Open Basic Education] programme for the Govt. certification.

For the children, the centre becomes their window to the world. Not only do they learn new things, they begin to dream and to aspire. Parents, especially the mothers too are being counseled for making them understand the value of education. Together, we hope to be able to guide them towards a better future.



Teachers to critically think & understand gender issues. An essential ingredient to successfully conduct dialogues with girls



Both Siksha Samiti, Rajasthan scaling good teaching practices in collaboration with Study Hall Educational Foundation (right) One of Our Nonformal Education Center under a tree in a village named Dundia Khera, Lucknow.

Digital Study Hall: Making children tech savvy



Anand Chitravanshi

Project Director Digital Study Hall

Founded in 2005 by Urvashi Sahni and Randy Wang, Digital Study Hall (DSH) touches the lives of over 40,000 students, teachers and teacher educators across the state of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal and Maharashtra. DSH has designed and developed an innovative community based video production and sharing system which has improved the quality of

both, the teaching and learning processes. DSH films live classes conducted by the best grassroots teachers and distribute these lessons to partner schools called "spoke schools" connected to DSH in a hub-spoke fashion. While these videos help teachers improve the quality of their lessons the teachers also train themselves in the process. It is the only technology based education program that is BY the teachers and FOR the teachers.

DSH has developed over 2000 videos so far covering the state mandated curriculum, critical dialogues based on critical feminist pedagogy, special education, digital stories and teacher-training videos. DSH content is not only used as a tool for enabling teachers to impart quality education but also as a tool to motivate and empower, furthering the agenda of gender equity and social awareness, DSH has recorded



The video provides a framework, a lesson plan and a test plan.

"Critical Dialogues" on topics like domestic violence, sexual abuse, child marriage and the problems faced by young girls and women in India. DSH content is available free-of-cost on YouTube and also distributed on memory cards, flash drives and DVDs. The video provides

a framework, a lesson plan and a test plan. While the mediators may not be highly skilled in a particular domain, they can still easily provide the crucial interactive element and use the domain knowledge of the model teacher in the video. DSH not only maintains reg-

ular communication with spoke schools but engages them in educational activities using a mobile phone-based Voice Forum. Voice forum allows the teachers to seek advice, receive feedback, share experiences, conduct virtual student and teacher activities.

In order to reach out to the out-of-school children, SHEF has established Non-formal Education Centres (NECs) and currently educating over 400 children in 10 such centers in Lucknow and Kolkata. DSH tracks the student's progress and attendance on regular basis with the help of a data collection and information system.