



Program Development Overview

Northeastern University Social Enterprise Institute

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Table of Contents

Introduction	page 2
Design Thinking Method.....	page 3
Journey Maps.....	page 4
Children's Point of View.....	page 4
Facilitator's Point of View.....	page 4
Scope of Work.....	page 5
Our Observations.....	page 5
Our Research.....	page 6
Focus Group Testing.....	page 7
Qualitative Interviews.....	page 8
Curriculum Overview.....	page 10
Conclusions.....	page 11
Appendices.....	page 12
I. References	
II. Focus Group Lesson Overview	
III. Program Costs Budgeting	
IV. YouTube Channel	
V. Facilitator Manual & Activity Glossary	

Introduction

Welcome to the Activate! Program. Here you will find a comprehensive write-up of the processes, research, and testing done in order to develop this program.

The Activate! Program is a 45-minute session that follows the midday meal at the urban government schools. Currently, this period of time is under-utilized and an unstructured time for students to do whatever they want before afternoon classes begin. We have been assigned to fill this gap with a structured module that can be used and replicated between schools. We found that this kind of structure can really impact the lives of primary and secondary school kids, however in the time allotted we decided to focus in on the primary school program. The India Literacy Project representative we met with suggested that primary education would be the best place to start a module like this.

Our goal here was to emphasize functional English literacy, building self esteem, and expressing creativity for the primary school children. Specifically, we developed this program to work for the class levels 1 through 5. The materials we have produced are somewhat specific to the needs of the India Literacy Project, as we worked very closely with them in order to create this module, but the program can easily be adapted for different organizations.

Our team is incredibly passionate about the innovative solutions social entrepreneurship can supply to problems in education. Each one of us have a unique, insightful background with education that has greatly informed our research and shaped our program.

- **Sarah Pease** has worked at a non-profit in Haiti for seven years teaching children ages 4 to 14 and developing the curriculums used at that nonprofit for classes in science, English, physical education, and an after-school program, as well as teaching those same classes. She has also worked with several Boston-based organizations in literacy and development programs.
- **Kayla O'Neill** has experience working with a student-led NGO that addressed the needs of students in rural Karnataka through innovative technology solutions and she tutored disadvantaged American primary school students and English language learners for six years.
- **Sarah Mohamed** has worked in the United States for the non-profit organization Jumpstart that works with low-income 3 to 5-year-olds and helps them start school prepared to succeed. She has also worked in various other education programs including Breakthrough and Peer Health Exchange with students ranging from 2 to 15 years old.

- **Aekta Shah** has four years of experience tutoring children, ages 3 to 7, in subjects including Math, Reading, and Writing as well as experience developing and implementing a one-week recycling curriculum in a Haitian-immigrant public school in the Dominican Republic.
- **Mariel Natanawan** spent four years tutoring and mentoring children ages 4 to 17 in reading, writing, and math after school programs. She has continued her passion for teaching in Jumpstart, a nonprofit organization that works with low-income 3 to 5-year-olds and helps them start school prepared to succeed. Last summer she worked as an English and math teacher in Ghana and worked with community leaders to identify methods to provide young adults employable skills.

Design Thinking Process

Empathize

The initial project scope of work was "working with schools located in poor localities, with the objective to promote social and emotional skill development and the popularization of creative thinking skills." We asked ourselves, "How might we promote social and emotional skill development and creative thinking skills in school children using minimal resources?"

Observe

We went to Madhapur Mandal School in Hyderabad for an observation session. We observed students and volunteers interacting with each other. We also interviewed the India Literacy Project Projects Coordinator Shravan Guntuku and volunteers from the Youngistaan Foundation.

Analyze and Define

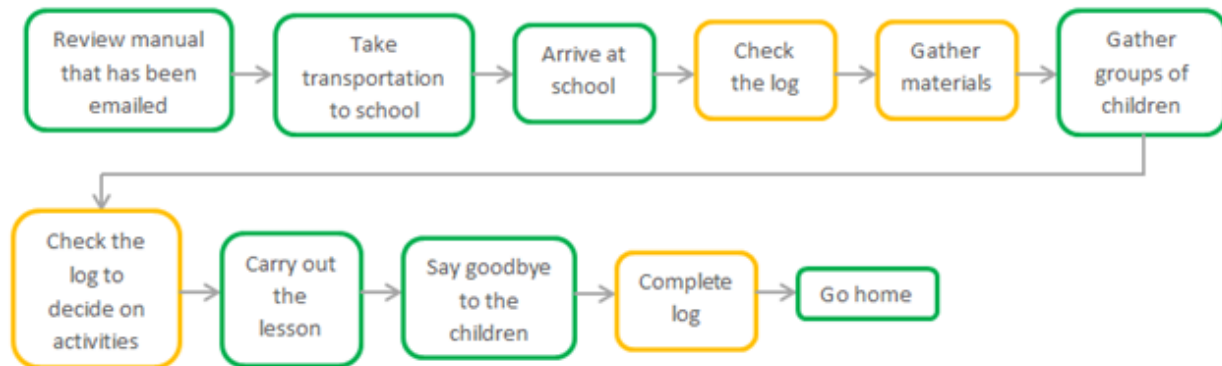
To reflect on our observations and analyze the data, we created two journey maps - one for potential facilitators and one for children participating in the program. From here, we identified key questions. Some of the questions that came from the facilitator journey map were:

- How do volunteers get the manual?
- How do they gather materials?
- What are the closing activities?

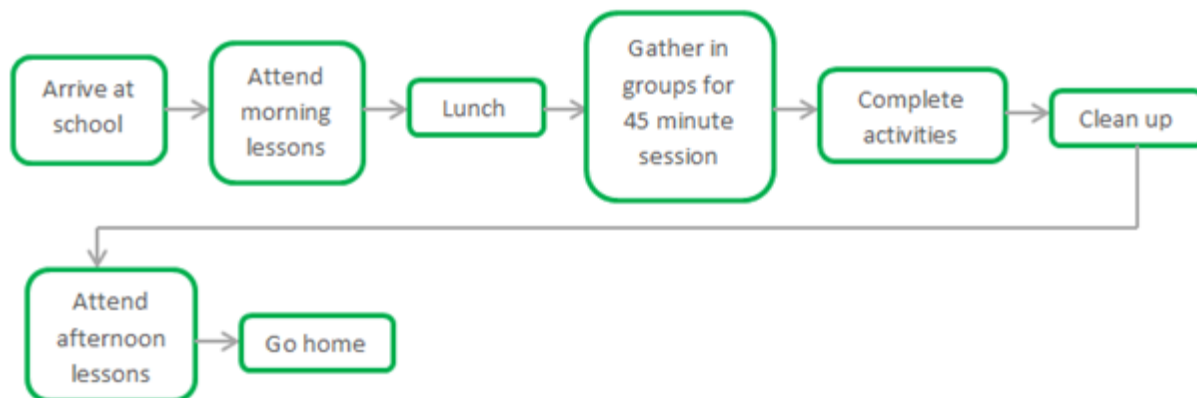
At this point, the key question that came from the child journey map was "What are the activities?" Overall, this process allowed us to see potential steps in the application of the Activate! Program that we had previously failed to consider.

Facilitator Journey Map

*Orange boxes were steps that we previously failed to consider



Child Journey Map



The journey maps also informed our point of view statements. Going forward, these statements acted as anchors for our work, allowing us to check that each portion of the Activate! Program satisfied our overarching goals. These statements also guided our research and materials compilation.

Children's Point of View Statement

Primary school children in urban, government schools need an outlet that helps them increase functional English literacy, build self-esteem and express creativity so each child can realize the value of learning

Facilitators' Point of View Statement

Facilitators (teachers or volunteers) need an easy to use guide for preparing and leading 45 minute creative sessions that help them feel confident about delivering meaningful material so they can effectively help students realize the value of learning.

Ideate

Our team drew on our experiences and secondary research to develop the components of the Activate! Program which include short-term projects like crafts, science experiments, and activities as well as long-term projects such as murals and handmade books.

Prototype

We developed a sample day which included a song, a word of the day, a creative activity, a physical activity, and a poem.

Test

We briefed a facilitator on how to run the Activate! Program sample. He ran the session with a focus group of primary school children at Masthan Nagar Government Primary School in Jubilee Hills. Our team observed and assisted when necessary. We also took note of the reflections and suggestions from Projects Coordinator Shravan Guntuku. From here we were able to further refine the Activate! Program to better reflect context and application by asking ourselves.

Scope of Work

Originally, our scope of work was defined as:

"Design learning modules for CSIM, working with schools located in poor localities, with the objective to promote social and emotional skill development and the popularization of creative thinking skills."

Based on conversations with the India Literacy Project and through our Design Thinking Process, we refined our scope of work as working on developing learning modules specifically for primary school students, which promote social and emotional skill development, the popularization of creative thinking skills, and increasing functional English Literacy. We also found that there was a need for a concentration on communal engagement.

Our Observations

We completed a site visit to the Madhapur Mandal School in Hyderabad where we observed volunteers from Youngistaan Foundation's new Women of Courage project and their students and spoke with the Hyderabad India Literacy Project chapter co-founder Manmohan Jain and Projects Coordinator Shravan Guntuku. The students were completing a one-day extracurricular summer camp that taught self-esteem, respect, sanitation, and the importance of education. The students were mostly female

and from all primary grade levels. The school was built with the help of corporate social responsibility programs and thus was a very large and comparatively nice building. It included large grounds with a courtyard, concrete slabs useful for sitting and playing outdoors, and a small playground area.

We learned that the school had an NjoyLearning Device from BodhaGuru that worked together with its television to provide a uniquely visual learning experience. A randomized control trial had recently proven that students performed better with the help of the NjoyLearning Device in their classroom.

A large team of Youngistaan Foundation volunteers led the students in activities such as Simon Says, Duck Duck Goose, presentations about hobbies, and conversations about the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation.

The students were enthusiastic and engaged. Some wore school uniforms and many lacked shoes. Most were first-generation learners and some had dropped out of school. We learned that some parents did not see value in allowing their children, especially their female children, to continue in school. This was particularly prevalent when parents observed students who graduated the 10th Class and failed to find employment in anything other than the family trade. When there are no job opportunities, the value of education is viewed as diminished.

Our Research

Our curriculum draws from existing research and from the advice of social entrepreneurs who have completed work in India and other less economically developed countries, as well as our own backgrounds working in child development.

We conducted an interview with John Williams, founder of an NGO called LAN Academy which developed education solutions for students in Karnataka. He emphasized that the inclusion of STEM education can increase buy-in from many investor groups and from some students' families, and that the students he worked with enjoyed hands-on science learning.

Our remaining research comes from vetted secondary sources, such as the resources available from Jumpstart, a U.S. NGO that prepares underprivileged preschool children for the classroom, and Peace through Play, a U.S. NGO that promotes peace and cooperation through fun games.

We reviewed the India-based NGO Smile Foundation's list of completed and ongoing projects to understand what types of development projects are common in India. We believe that crowdsourcing activity and other curriculum ideas can be very productive,

though we have not used this process ourselves. For example, the IDEO Amplify Refugee Education Challenge has brought in hundreds of innovative submissions.

We also drew from Professor K.L. Srivastava's presentation which reviewed the work done by Kiran Bir Sethi with the Riverside School in Ahmedabad, ProjectKHEL's holistic approach to education, the Hubli Sandbox from Deshpande Foundation, and other creative approaches to education (see Appendix I for References).

Focus Group Testing

On Tuesday, May 19th, we conducted a focus group at Masthan Nagar Government Primary School in Jubilee Hills in conjunction with India Literacy Project in order to test a prototype lesson plan consisting of various activity types (see Appendix II for lesson overview). Beforehand, we gave a small briefing of our lesson plan to our volunteer facilitator, who grew up locally in Hyderabad and had some background in working with children. We kept our instructions to him short and simple in order to mimic the content available in the Facilitator Manual that volunteers are likely to read or skim in preparation right before the class session.

Our classroom's students differed from the typical target group because they were of very different ages, some did not regularly attend school, and they agreed to come to an extracurricular summer program. We were very impressed by the enthusiasm and concentration of our focus group of approximately 30 mostly female students ages two through 12. Transitions between activities went smoothly. There were few students with disruptive behavior, with the exception of one very young student (age two or three) who likely lacked previous classroom experience. Our classroom space was very small, but it was decorated in a colorful and kid-friendly way.

We noted that many of the students helped one another and they were quick to sit down and stand up as instructed. The majority of these students had no difficulty introducing themselves in English, but most did so very quietly, either because they were shy with the new volunteer or because they lacked confidence in what they were saying. Some students were very confident and quick to show off their performance skills and artwork in front of the class, while most remained shy throughout the session.

Word of the Day

Our volunteer facilitator chose the word "sun" as an English "Word of the Day." The students appeared very confused on how to use the word in a sentence and made a few attempts which were not fully successful. He then tried out the word "school," which resulted in the participation of more, mostly older students. It seemed that they were repeating sentences that they had already learned. From this experience, we recommend the use of a chalkboard, if available, to draw a picture of the Word of the Day and spell

out the word, possibly in English and the local language. The more interactive and interesting that this activity is, the better.

Self-Portrait

The children appeared confused by the self-portrait task they were asked to complete. Very few children drew themselves, instead they drew houses, flowers, trees, bananas, and the Indian flag. We hypothesized that the students were unused to being asked to draw themselves, and their typical school instruction does not include the freedom to choose whatever they want to draw. When we showed interest in their drawings many students were proud to show them off. We realized it would be useful to provide the facilitator with examples of thoughtful questions to ask the children while they work on art projects in order to connect vocabulary/themes to their art assignment.

Next Sumedh, our primary facilitator, led the class in a game of Simon Says (where students are instructed to do something only if the phrase "Simon Says" is inserted before the command). He then passed the leadership of the activity off to a string of the older students. The vast majority of the students were familiar with the game. Next they played Four Corners, where a focus group orchestrator held a sign in each corner of the classroom with a English color word written on the sign in that color. The facilitator named a color and the students ran to the color corner that had been named.

We concluded the session by teaching the short, interactive poem 10 Little Fingers, by saying goodbye, and by thanking the students for participating in our focus group by distributing a biscuit snack provided by India Literacy Project. We asked Shravan to evaluate our work and were assured that he was confident that a program like this would work and would be implemented in one school for a year as a pilot. Before and after the the pilot, the students participating would take some sort of assessment to measure the effects of the program and evaluate its success.

Key Takeaways

The prototyping and testing process allowed us to see that the students, though very receptive and enthusiastic, were not accustomed to self awareness activities. This allowed us to ask ourselves an additional question: How might we lead children to explore creatively without telling them exactly what to do?

Qualitative Interviews

Throughout our whole process we had the opportunity to ask many questions and conduct qualitative interviews with a number of people. We interviewed Shravan Guntuku, the Projects Coordinator of the India Literacy Project, twice, as well as Manmohan Jain, the Hyderabad chapter co-founder. We also interviewed a sample

facilitator, Sumedh Panchadhar, who was our test facilitator. Lastly, we had a chance to interview a potential volunteer from the India Literacy Project.

Projects Coordinator: Shravan

We had the great opportunity to have met with Shravan twice: once at the first government school we visited for our initial observations, and again at the government school we conducted our focus group test.

At the first meeting, we discussed many different aspects of the free government run school system in India. We learned that the school day of most of these schools start at 8am and end around 4pm. He also told us about the issue of students not attending preschool, which causes the students' literacy levels to be much lower than what the government materials expect them to be. We also learned about the three distinct types of government schools in India: urban, rural, and forest/tribal and how they vary in the issues and complications they face. This helped us refine our work to focus in on just urban government school.

We also found that in the southern Indian states the dropout rate is generally equal between the two genders, which we found a bit surprising as we have primarily studied how so many girls drop out because of the issues with puberty. This influenced us in the way we developed the program to treat each child equally.

From this interview we also were able to find some of the key focuses of the program which include developing functional English literacy and addressing communal engagement. Shravan truly believes that more familial engagement will play a role in inspiring children to continue learning and developing their minds.

Sample Facilitator: Sumedh

Our teaching assistant, Sumedh, played a role as a sample facilitator for our program during the focus group. We instructed him to follow our manual and gave him a sample schedule to test out on the children and his efforts truly made a difference in how we further made changes to the Facilitator Manual.

In an interview following the focus group, we discussed with him how he felt about the program, how it ran, and what sort of ideas needed to be addressed in the manual. He was extremely helpful in recognizing that these programs need preparation time and that it would greatly benefit the facilitator to read the manual and plan their session at least one day before conducting it.

He also suggested that in our Reflection Log we highlight some of the kids who are a bit shy or kids who are struggling so that their development can be tracked overtime. We found this information to be instrumental in the assessment of impact that the program has in the long run.

Volunteer

We briefly discussed how the program was going with a volunteer who came to observe from the India Literacy Project. We asked her questions such as: *Would you and most volunteers be able to use a manual like this in English?, Would you benefit from having a compilation of videos on YouTube to assist in learning some of the songs and projects?, How do you feel about your ability to implement a program such as the one we tested out today?*

Fortunately all of her responses were positive. She said that an English language Facilitator Manual would work fine for her and for most volunteers, that the YouTube channel would be extremely useful and easily accessible, and she said that she felt as though she would definitely be able to implement such a program given a manual such as the sample one we have produced.

Curriculum Overview

We have provided a detailed Facilitator Manual and an Activity Glossary for the facilitator to utilize and reference over the course of the program.

In the Facilitator Manual we included an introduction that familiarizes the facilitator with the philosophy of our program, the impact we wish to create for disadvantaged urban children, and standards we expect our facilitators to adhere to. We believe that responsible volunteerism demands that volunteers have a deep understanding of the community they work with and acknowledge the diverse existence of beliefs and values. As a result we also outline the proper guidelines for entering and exiting a community. The manual continues on to explain the specific structure each class should have. Each class has the following structure:

1. Introduction/Name Game
2. Opening Song/Poem
3. Word of the Day
4. Creative Activity
5. Physical Activity
6. Closing Song/Poem
7. Last five minutes fun time
8. Goodbyes

Every facilitator is expected to fill out a reflection log at the end of every class in order to measure impact, identify challenges, and emphasize successes. We end our Facilitator Manual by encouraging volunteers to draw on their own strengths, to thoughtfully

modify lessons to children's abilities, and to always remember the core purpose of the program.

The Activity Glossary is an extensive resource for facilitators to prepare their 45 min class. In the glossary we include 36 activities, 11 songs, 10 arts & crafts projects, six science projects, and three long-term projects. All activities and projects include modifications that can be made for different age levels and learning abilities. During the compilation of the Activity Glossary, we emphasized the importance of using the least amount of materials possible and remembering the common characteristics of urban, government schools (lack of playground, small classroom space, concrete floor). Overall, it is our goal that the Activity Glossary will be a resource that can be applicable in all sorts of spaces and provides evidence that stimulating, inspirational learning can happen with little or no physical resources.

Conclusions

Included in this report is a great deal of work that we feel will be helpful and ready to immediately implement in schools, including 36 activities, 11 songs, 10 arts & crafts projects, six science projects, and three long-term projects.

Based on our focus group and interviews, we received positive feedback from the India Literacy Project on the feasibility and usefulness of the program we have developed. Shravan Guntuku of the ILP also expressed interest in testing the pilot program in many of the schools where they are currently active. While there is still further refinement to be done, much of it depending on specific schools, we were greatly encouraged by the results of our focus group and qualitative interviews.

The combination of an Activity Glossary, Facilitator Manual, and this summary form a complete and cohesive guide to implement the Activate! Program in schools immediately, and provide the flexibility to make the program adaptable to fit the format of various schools and educational settings. We are confident that the product that we have outlined here is thorough and will be an excellent resource to educators and students alike.

Appendices

Appendix I: References

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Appendix II: Focus Group Lesson Overview

This is the schedule we used for the focus group led by Sumedh (and assisted by our team)

- 1.) Names
 - a.) Go around and say your name and standard.
NOTE: almost all students were able to do this in English
- 2.) Song - Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (supplemental video available to help if needed)
 - a.) In Telugu, explain that you are all going to sing a song about some parts of the body. Demonstrate the hand gestures.
 - b.) Sing the song with hand gestures once through.
 - c.) Have the children sing along and make the hand gestures with you.
 - d.) Go over the Telugu translations for each of the body parts mentioned in the song.
- 3.) Word of the day
 - a.) Choose a word in English that somewhat follows the theme of your session. Teach them the word in English and then explain it in local language.
 - b.) Show them how to use it in an easy sentence. Have them repeat.
 - c.) Some options to choose for:
 - i.) Dream
 - ii.) Art
 - iii.) Light
 - iv.) Sun
 - v.) Write
- 4.) Draw a self-portrait
 - a.) Distribute paper and crayons.
 - b.) Instruct the children to draw themselves doing their favorite thing
 - c.) Ask the children individually a few questions while they are drawing(walk around)
 - i.) What are you doing in your drawing?
 - d.) Have the children share their drawing with a partner
- 5.) Game - Simon says
 - a.) You say, "Simon says..." and insert an action such as:
 - i.) Touch your nose.
 - ii.) Touch the ground.
 - iii.) Stand on one foot.
 - iv.) etc.
 - b.) Explain that they **only** do the action if you say "Simon says..." first. If you just say "Touch your head" without "Simon says..."

- c.) Pointing to different body parts or objects in **English first**, *then* local language.
- 6.) Four Corners Game
 - a.) Each corner is a different color
 - b.) Red, Blue, Green, Yellow
- 7.) Closing song - Ten Little Fingers
- 8.) Goodbyes

Appendix III: Program Costs Budgeting

Here are some sample budget materials that you may need.

Facilitators	Free volunteer labor
Classroom Space	Free, provided by government
Paper	200 rupees per ream
Crayons	10 rupees per pack
Acrylic paint	500 rupees per 250ml color tube
Paint rollers	200 rupees each
Large paint brushes	600 rupees each
Small paint brushes	5 brushes for 500 rupees
Seeds for planting	100 seeds for 75 rupees, depending on plant variety

Appendix IV: YouTube Channel

Login: CSIMactivate@gmail.com

Password: *activate4india*.

Appendix V: Facilitator Manual & Activity Glossary

The Facilitator Manual & Activity Glossary are attached.