



VIDEOSHALA

FOUR EDUCATION COMMUNITY VIDEO UNITS (ECVUs) CREATED BY
DRISHTI MEDIA, VIDEO VOLUNTEERS AND UDAAN WITH THE SUPPORT
OF THE QUEST ALLIANCE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL NGOS.





Prior work in education showed that though providing teachers and school infrastructure can mitigate the issue of access to education, enormous rates of dropout and abysmally low learning levels are far more complex, difficult to understand and change. Content which is homogenized and not linked to the child's reality, pedagogy which rests on fear and authority in classrooms, rote learning and prejudices of teachers came across as some of the vital issues. Videoshala thus evolved as an attempt to demonstrate an alternate view and trigger change in some of the factors influencing education.

Locally trained producers from the community produce educational videos and screen them in schools. The videos address difficult spots in the curriculum, seen through the prism of social values, while stressing active learning and localised, relevant content.



Videoshala is more than just an education technology project, it is unique in that it empowers local communities to actively participate in the education of their children. It combines a powerful visual medium with a strong pedagogy to address 'hard spots' in the curriculum, while simultaneously incorporating the values of citizenship, diversity, democracy and inclusion in the video films.



Towards this end Videoshala is creating independent and sustainable units that have an independent, thoughtful voice and a stake in how the schools in the community function.




Udaan-Meghdhanush, Sahyog, Hind Swaraj Mandal and Navsarjan are the four NGOs where the ECVUs have been created. Each ECVU has a team of a trainer, coordinator, producers and classroom facilitators. The founding NGOs train, coordinate and give feedback to the ECVUs.



The producers have been trained in film making, scripting, editing, story telling and instructional design and have attended workshops to understand how children learn and how values can be incorporated into educational content.

The producers have a video ready after a detailed process of research and implementation. These videos are screened in local schools, after which the facilitators guide the children through activities that reinforce the lesson.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a silver digital camera. The person is wearing a green sari with a gold and white floral pattern. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with green foliage. A red rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

Videoshala is an innovative attempt at changing the tone and character of our classrooms- to encourage active learning and demonstrate that tough spots can be addressed creatively and to encourage students to be alive and open to their lives and their locality.

The Videoshala Project is a unique and innovative intervention that trains local community members to produce educational videos imbued with the values of diversity, democracy and citizenship for schools in their own marginalized communities. Created by three NGOs - Drishti Media Arts and Human Rights, Video Volunteers and Udaan (Education Resource Centre) - it is funded by the QUEST Alliance and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and was launched in Gujarat in July 2007.

The Education Community Video Units (ECVU)

Under the aegis of the founding NGOs who bring expertise in media, video films, community empowerment, human rights and education, Videoshala has created four Education Community Video Units (ECVU) in partnership with local NGOs. These NGOs, Navsarjan Trust, Sahyog Charitable Trust, Udaan-Meghdhanush and Hind Swaraj Mandal (HSM), work in underdeveloped communities in eight districts across Gujarat. Udaan's experiences while working on issues of meaningful access to education also led them to feel the need for a more relevant response and take collective action.

Videoshala works towards a sustainable model of using community-produced videos as classroom tools to enrich education and empower the community by inculcating values of diversity and inclusion within classrooms.



Below are some of the core strategies adopted by Videoshala towards this goal:

Community Driven

Each ECVU has the necessary equipment for making videos and consists of locally trained community members who produce the educational videos and screen them to students across their community. The humble educational backgrounds of these community members demonstrate that one's education is not always a prerequisite for improving the education of others.

Commitment to Diversity

The program works with four very different groups of children and educational NGOs as a further sign of its commitment to diversity. For example, educational videos made by Navsarjan are screened in Bhimshalas, which are learning centers for rural Dalit primary school students, while Sayhog shows its videos to children attending schools in slums. HSM shows its

videos in the Naitaleem Gandhian schools and Meghdhanush works in riot affected and interior adivasi areas.

Relevant Content

Videoshala creates videos that address the 'hard spots' the students and teachers face in their curriculum. The videos also try to make learning fun and interesting for the students while imparting better teaching and facilitation methods to the teacher. The videos further integrate values of citizenship, caste, gender, democracy and religious equality into the subjects and sub themes being addressed.

Value-Focused Pedagogy

Videoshala's pedagogy is built on the notion that values are the prism through which subjects and themes should be taught. The videos also stress on active learning and localized content that is based on the contextual experiences and realities of teachers and students.

It also empowers the community to impact their local social contexts and the schools in particular, through an honest and observant voice. Breaking down biases and prejudices, Videoshala also promotes inclusion and diversity. It looks at moving forward by reaching out to more communities and schools, while making learning experiences richer.



THE VIDEOSHALA FRAMEWORK

SUPPORT ORGANISATION

QUEST Alliance

QUEST Alliance is a multi-stakeholder partnership promoting the effective and responsible use of educational technologies to enhance the quality and relevance of formal elementary education and training for disadvantaged children and youth.

ANCHORING ORGANISATIONS

Udaan (Education Resource Centre)

Udaan is an education resource centre that aims to create access to and improve quality of education. The core endeavour is to integrate values of citizenship, democracy and diversity in primary education.

Video Volunteers

Video Volunteers is a New York based NGO that aims at creating a global social media network, which provides solutions-based media for marginalized and poor communities around the world.

Drishti

Drishti is a leading human rights and development organisation that uses media, communications and the arts to strengthen India's social movements, in order to extend their reach and to increase the participation of marginalized communities.

GUIDING IDEOLOGIES

Inclusion

Quality

Relevance

Technology

Social Inclusion

Local Empowerment

Communities of Practice

**Project
Pillars**

**Value
Driven**

**Locally
Created
Knowledge**

**Community
Empowerment
Sustainability**



Videoshala Human Resources

Each ECVU has a team of –
6 producers, 2 - 5 Classroom Facilitators,
1 Trainer, and 1 Co-ordinator

who have all been trained by Drishti, Video
Volunteers, Udaan, QUEST, and other external
experts through a series of workshops.

The Producers

The producers have been trained in video
film making, editing, scriptwriting, shooting,
story telling, creating creative content,
instructional design, educational pedagogies,
learning from songs, dramas and illustrations,
classroom facilitation, and values of diversity

and democracy. They have also been given
guidebooks and other reference materials
including textbooks and sample video films.

The Classroom Facilitators

The classroom facilitators have been trained on
classroom facilitation and teaching techniques,
on how children learn, administering
worksheets, carrying out student activities
and involving teachers in the video screening
process.

The Trainer & The Co-ordinator

Each unit has been assigned a trainer who
has been trained in video production and can
guide the team through the project cycle. A
coordinator who has been trained to organize

Videoshala Infrastructure

The equipment required for video production
has provided to each ECVU and this includes:

Cameras, Batteries & Camera Bags,
2 Computers, 3 Televisions,
3 DVD players, 1 Tripod, Headphones,
Microphones (3 boom and 3 lapel), 2 Digital
cameras, Required jacks and cables,

and a designated Studio space within the four
implementing NGOs' office

and manage the production and screening of the videos is also deputed to each ECVU. Most of the coordinators have worked on issues of education. They have a basic understanding and perspective on education and pedagogy.

The trainer and the co-ordinator have attended workshops to understand the production of value-centred educational content, how children learn, and information about knowledge change and its analysis with documentation.

Videoshala Central Coordination Unit (CCU)

The Central Coordination Unit (CCU) includes officials from the three founding NGOs and a program manager who oversees and manages each Videoshala. The CCU provides

constant direction and vision to building and strengthening of the ECVUs.

It also organizes a planning, review and sharing meeting every month to help different stakeholders understand the project's changing needs better, to share implementation concerns of teams to identify new areas of support for them.

The CCU also has weekly phone conversations with each unit's trainer and coordinator to monitor work and find out if additional support is needed. Based on the individual needs of each ECVU's producers, trainers, facilitators and coordinators, the CCU organizes specialized workshops as and when required.



Video Production Model

Brainstorming for Opportunities

The production of video begins when the producers from each unit collectively identify what students and teachers - in their target schools - are finding difficult to understand and teach. Based on this feedback they start exploring topics and sub-themes for their videos.

Research & Knowledge Creation

Producers then visit some target schools to test the students' knowledge in the subject and sub-themes that are being explored. Subsequently they begin a research process to acquaint themselves with relevant content available in class textbooks and other reference materials. They also interact with resource persons and subject experts, understand community perceptions on the topic, and visit educational sites like the community science center.

Script Writing & Pre-production

Producers then think of the values that can be incorporated in the teaching of the subject, and prepare a preliminary script for the video. They also plan activities that will be carried out during the screenings, which reflect the knowledge as well as the values to be imparted in the film. Feedback workshops are then conducted by the CCU with an aim to sharply articulate objectives, review the content and

reiterate scripts. Shooting plans and locations are decided by the producers, who also select local actors from the community.

Production

Once a rough cut of the video has been produced, additional workshops are conducted by the CCU to provide feedback, and the producers implement the recommended changes before producing the final copy. The production process for each video is typically in the range of 40 - 50 days.

Parallel Inputs

During the entire video production process additional workshops are held by the CCU with inside and outside experts, catering to the individual needs of each ECVU in areas such as...

*understanding hard spots,
scriptwriting & editing,
choosing and designing activities,
incorporating values in films,
implementation in schools
measuring learning, and
knowledge gains of students and teachers.*

All of these strategies are supported by examples and references which are localized and contextualized to the realities of students and teachers.

A man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a white shirt with a purple pattern, is focused on operating a video camera. He is wearing large headphones and a boom microphone. The camera is mounted on a black tripod. In the background, another person wearing a white cap is partially visible, also holding a camera. The scene is outdoors with green foliage in the background.

Selection of themes and scripts

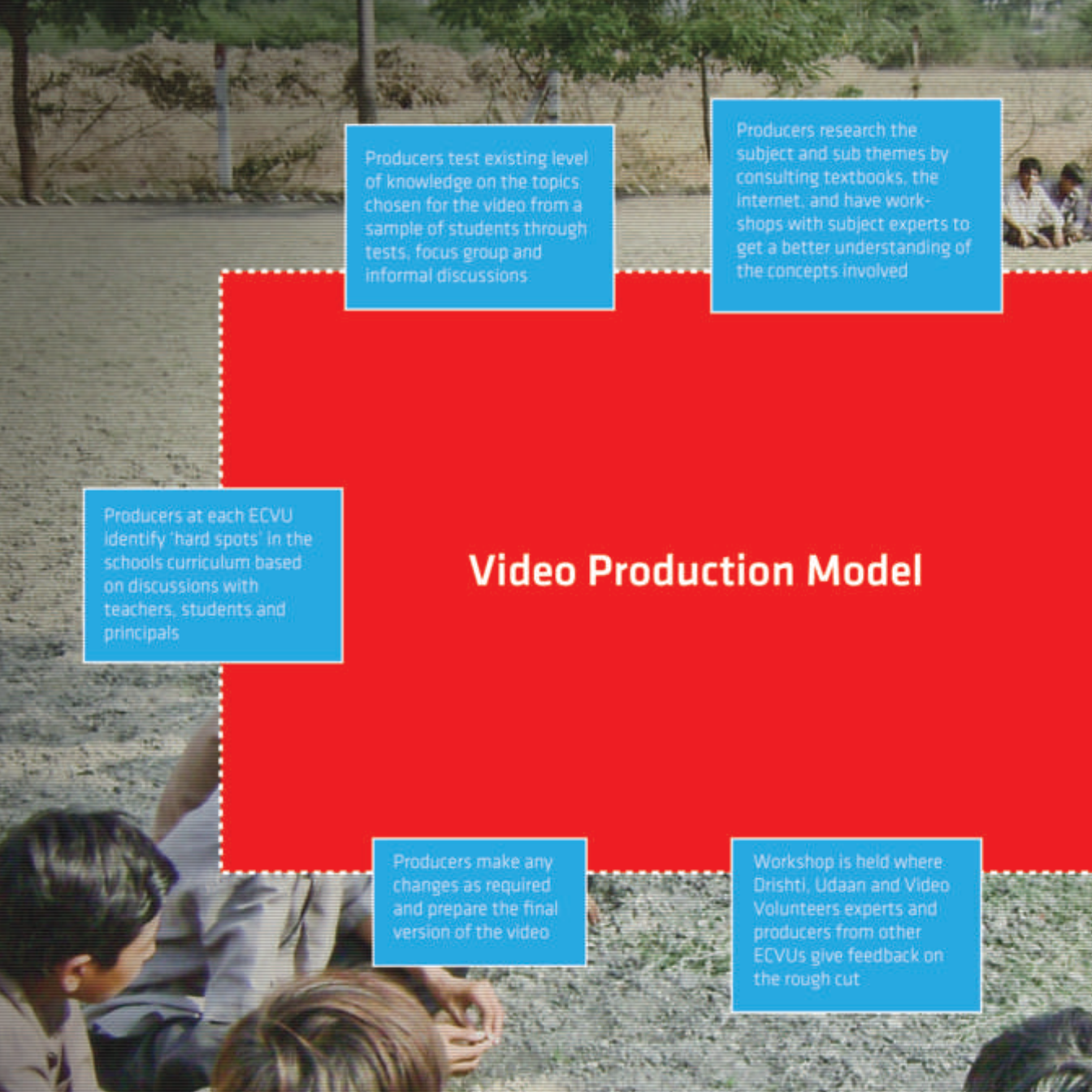
While each ECVU chooses its own topics for its videos, nonetheless each video is based on the key pedagogical strategies...

to approach the hard spots chosen from the lens of the values of inclusion and diversity;

to target a dual audience of students and teachers;

to make learning entertaining, interesting and fun; and

to model instructional guidance for teachers by demonstrating examples of teaching methods.



Producers test existing level of knowledge on the topics chosen for the video from a sample of students through tests, focus group and informal discussions


Producers research the subject and sub themes by consulting textbooks, the internet, and have workshops with subject experts to get a better understanding of the concepts involved

Producers at each ECVU identify 'hard spots' in the schools curriculum based on discussions with teachers, students and principals

Video Production Model

Producers make any changes as required and prepare the final version of the video

Workshop is held where Drishti, Udaan and Video Volunteers experts and producers from other ECVUs give feedback on the rough cut



Producers prepare a concept note and a storyline including the activities and values to be included in the video & solicit any inputs from other unit members

Producers finalize and write the script paying special emphasis on the students' contextual experiences and realities

Each ECVU is assigned a trainer who provides guidance during the production & implementation phases. Workshops on pedagogy, value incorporation, design of follow up activities, video production, script writing, editing are also held based on the requirements of each ECVU.

Workshop is held by Drishti, Udaan and Video Volunteer experts to give the producers feedback on the script and it is rewritten as required

Producers prepare a shoot plan and choose shooting locations

Producers shoot and prepare the rough cut of the video

Producers select actors from the local communities and conduct workshops to train them for the shoot



Screening Videos in Schools

Each ECVU has a schedule for screenings its videos in its target schools, which has been formulated in agreement with the schools principals. The screenings, meant for student and teacher audiences of around 40 in number, are made on a TV and a DVD player that the facilitators bring with them. Each video is accompanied by an activity guide which informs facilitators on the organization of the session. During the screening, they stop to discuss topics or carry out any activities as designated by the pauses in the video.

Post-screening discussions and additional activities with the students help to initiate discussions and engage students in activities to experience and learn, while teachers are encouraged to pay attention to teaching techniques and interact with mix-gender groups of students.

Knowledge Evaluation

Videoshala has a robust system in place to evaluate knowledge gains in children and teachers. After the children watch the video, some of the units administer a test to the students to gauge what they have learned. The responses to, and results from the activities that are carried out reveal further clues on the impact of the video. Furthermore, the facilitators visit the schools till weeks after the screening, to initiate dialogues surrounding the content and values addressed in the video. This gives them a better sense of the impact of the video.

Videoshala has been extensively documented through quarterly reports, case studies on individual ECVU's and through observations, field visits and discussions with teachers and students by the units, the CCU, the founding and implementing NGOs and outside consultants. This process has delivered crucial insights and shed light on the progress of the project, its impact and the challenges that face it.

Impact on the Schools

The response of the students to the videos has been overwhelming, and can be seen in the levels of interest, their questioning and equitable participation in discussions and activities of both boys and girls. This behavior of the students is at odds with their regular classroom behaviour, where they are typically quiet during teacher lectures, and rarely participative in any discussions.

The videos have helped students by evincing a new found interest in the 'hard spots' they face, in clarifying and retaining difficult concepts and giving them a better ability to visualize concepts.

The activities accompanying the videos have received very positive responses as they aid the students in picking up ideas and thoughts on subjects with which they have struggled when only verbal and written methods have been used.

Since the activities have been designed to accommodate a healthy range of intelligence types, they have been especially helpful for

students at the level of personal learning and growth. The screening of the videos has also revealed enriching dialogues and interactions within younger students in classes I to IV.

Videoshala has demonstrated that the appropriate creation and use of media can catalyze students of various age groups to examine their context and think about values like inclusion, diversity and religious tolerance. Students, when shown examples of different behaviors amongst children like them, can experience a transformation of their imagination and attitudes towards change.

Educational videos showing children and adults engaged in healthy and open interactions also seem to encourage teachers to question and broaden the scope of their own teaching practices.

Teachers attending the video screenings have revealed that the films have helped them build and enhance content, learn new teaching methods, activities and ideas which they can employ in their own classrooms.





Impact on the Community

Videoshala has empowered communities with technology tools that are new in the context of their applications in this project. Videoshala's role as a capacity-builder is evident in eight districts in Gujarat - where members of local communities have been transformed into storytellers and producers of relevant media that impacts the local community's future.

Videoshala has demonstrated that it is possible to set up a capable, community-based education video unit within nine months, employing a team that is low on formal education, media and technology skills.

This is a Community Video Unit that is then capable of researching a classroom subject, developing a conceptual idea for its presentation in a classroom with the assistance of video, producing such a video and finally working with local teachers and schools to integrate this material with existing teaching practices.

Carrying out the tasks at each ECVU is a rewarding experience in itself for the people involved. Individuals at each ECVU have a greater confidence on their abilities to learn new and technical subjects without formal education.

There is also a new awareness that the community can partake in the education of its children, and in the dissemination of the values such as democracy, citizenship and religious tolerance.

Team members have gradually become 'change agents' - who have accomplished individual goals while contributing valuably to the students, teachers and parents in their own communities in a significant manner.

Producers at each unit also make their own individual short videos addressing pressing social and economic issues faced by their communities, which they screen in local villages.

The community members have been forthcoming in providing aid to the ECVUs as well as services and shooting locations on goodwill. In return, Videoshala has provided children and adults of diverse backgrounds, an opportunity to mix with and learn from each other - that goes towards breaking some of the prior apprehensions individuals from different religions and castes had about each other.

Challenges

Videoshala faces operational and logistical challenges like most social development projects, and these are addressed jointly by the CCU, the ECVUs and all the participating NGOs. Yet the most important challenges this project faces emanate from its uniqueness.

Activating the intellectual development of a community so that it can in turn impact its future education requires time, commitment, trust and belief in the community. It is important to reiterate that Videoshala is not merely a service to deliver educational content. Rather, it is a sustainable process of creating educational content in the community, while disseminating values of inclusion and diversity.

A significant challenge faced by the project relates to the role of teachers - who are critical cogs on its path to sustainability. Classroom facilitators are not substitutes for teachers. But the project has found it an uphill process while involving teachers in the video screenings with an eye on changes in their learning and teaching methods. The task then, is to encourage classroom activity for diverse intelligences using external video tools, while honouring the teachers' presence as a facilitator in a live context.

One of the near-future goals is to involve the teachers in the video production and screening

process and in the activities conducted during and after the videos. It is also critical to fulfill the expectations of the teachers with respect to their appreciation of the values embedded in the activities.

It is also obvious that to facilitate change in teaching practice, the presentation of interesting videos is not enough by itself. The teachers in the targeted schools urgently require training in pedagogy, content and classroom facilitation, but finding and accessing appropriate and additional development opportunities for them is not easy.

Another challenging area for the project relates to the evaluation of students. While demonstrating the recall value of video through administered tests is easy, it is a tougher ask to create learning activities that truly deepen the students' and teachers' understanding of the themes and values being disseminated.

For the above reason, Videoshala is presently working towards establishing a balance between administered recall tests and the larger aim of supporting the development of learning and teaching capabilities of both students and teachers in the subject areas as well as the desired values.

Organizations attempting to learn from or replicate Videoshala should appreciate that in reality, the model is complex and has many moving parts coalescing around community, video, education and values. What is paramount for success in this model is therefore, an experience in education, a commitment to innovation, community based approaches, a focus on teachers, and taking the requisite time to create sustainable local processes.



Profiles of films

EVCU – *Sahyog*

1. Vanaspati (Vegetation) - Grades 1 to 4
2. Juda Juda Kaamo (Different Vocations) - Grades 1 to 4
3. Aapno Dharmo (Different Religions) - Grades 1 to 4
4. Khushi (Communal Harmony) - Grade 3
5. Karo Ramkada Kuch Kadam* (Poetry in Gujarati Language) - Grade 3

Audience : Children come from formal schools and non formal learning centres of urban slums and other areas of Vatva, one of the worst hit areas in communal tension

ECVU – *Hind Swaraj Mandal*

1. Bhoomi (Land and Soil) - Grade 8
2. Urja (Energy) - Grade 8
3. Aapna Hako (Our Rights) - Grade 9
4. Lokshahi* (Democracy)
5. Khorak, Poshan ane Svasthya (Diet, Nutrition & Health)*

Audience : Children come from villages of Bhavnagar & Surendranagar in Rajkot district and are mostly from economically and socially marginalized communities. They go to the Nayi Taleem (Uttar Buniyadi) schools and stay in the hostels “Chatralyas” from 1st to 12th grades. Videos are screened in two government schools too





ECVU – *Udaan Meghdhanush*

1. Pani (Water) - Grades 1 to 4
2. Prithvi (Earth) - Grades 3 & 4
3. Sandesho Avyo Vahan Vyahvar No (Communication & Transportation) - Grades 3 & 4
4. Svashan Tantra (Respiratory System)* - Grades 3 & 4

Audience : Children come from villages and towns of Halol, Kalol, Ghoghmba and Godhra talukas of Panchmahal district. These were some of the most severely affected parts during communal tensions in 2002 in Gujarat. Children attending the sessions are from two formal schools of Meghdhanush and learning centres of Meghdhanush within the government schools.

ECVU – *Navsarjan*

1. Vanaspati Etle Shu (Vegetation)- Grades 5 to 7
2. Pradooshan (Pollution)- Grade 7
3. Paryavaran ane tenu Santulan (Environmental Balance) - Grade 7
4. Sthanik Swaraj ni Sansthao, Gramya* (Institutions of Local Self Governance, Rural) - Grades 5 to 7

Audience : Children come from Sami, Harij and Chanasma blocks of Patan district, Dehgam and Kalol blocks of Gandhinagar district and Kadi block of Mehsana district of Gujarat. The children are mainly from Dalit communities, a mix of those who attend Bhimshalas – schools run by Navsarjan; and Government schools.

** – planning & production stage*



Looking Forward

In addition to its programmatic goals, Videoshala wants to answer a fundamental question that was a driver for the conception of this unique project :

Is community produced educational video content, imbued with values of inclusion and diversity, more relevant and beneficial to local students and teachers compared to educational video content that is produced and provided from outside that context?

Sustainability of the Videoshala Project is a critical future goal – if trained community teams are to consistently produce content that promotes learning and teaching with values of democracy, citizenship, inclusion, diversity and religious tolerance in the local schools and the broader community.

To achieve this long term vision, Videoshala plans to have a greater engagement with the existing government education system to be able to reach a wider audience of students in a systemic manner and promote teacher training. Teacher training is also crucial in establishing a collective sense of ownership of Videoshala.

Videoshala wants to explore the synergies that can emanate from this project to bring additional benefits to the community through locally produced videos for health, livelihood, and capacity building, by working with newer, domain-specific NGOs.

Videoshala will also lay greater emphasis on strengthening the abilities of the ECVU Producers by deepening their understanding of education, child-centered practices, media, democracy, citizenship and diversity.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS



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TECHNICAL PARTNERS



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
VIDEOSHALA@QUESTALLIANCE.NET