

# LeapForWord

Non profit Trust registered under Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950  
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**This document is a bi-monthly newsletter of LeapForWord.**

**(A) 1<sup>st</sup> Year of circulation (B) Academic Year: 2009 - 2010**  
**(C) Period: December 1<sup>st</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup> (D) Newsletter Number: 3**

## **DISCLAIMER:**

The information presented in this document is based on the data collected by LeapForWord during the course of its operations. This data is collected *(and will be collected in future)* **ONLY** for the following purposes:

- 1) To understand the Ground Realities thereby enable LeapForWord to customize its deliverable
- 2) Measurement of the Impact.

LeapForWord **DOES NOT** intend to present this data to point out deficiencies **if any** in the prevalent system.

I will study and prepare and one day my chance will come.

*Abraham Lincoln,  
16th President of the United States*

**From the LeapForWord<sup>A</sup> Team,**

As the projects for the current academic year near completion, results of our actions are becoming visible and because of the emphasis on measuring every action, the results that are coming out are clearly visible.

Initial feelers suggest very encouraging results thereby lending a lot of satisfaction to the LeapForWord team.

We realize that there is a scope of significant improvement in all that we do, and hence these results will be thoroughly analyzed in the next 2 odd months (*Schools will close down for summer vacation thereby reducing teaching responsibilities*)

In this document, we have tried to present the activities from the last 3 months. Inline with one of the core beliefs<sup>B</sup> of The Effort, we have tried to keep this document objective oriented wherever possible.

**A brief summary of the activities from the past 3 months is as follows:**

- Final assessments almost complete for all our school students
- Urban Youth project scheduled for the current academic year satisfactorily completed
- Formal arrangement with BMC to use the services of teachers from within the system, to deliver the content. LeapForWord to retain content design & assessment
- 12A registration received from the Income Tax department
- Arrangement with the Information Technology department of Ramnarain Ruia College to develop an assessment software

The status of the various projects is as follows:

	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
1	School	Will complete as scheduled
2	Urban Youth	Completed as scheduled
3	Rural Youth	Did not start

We would definitely like to hear from you ways of improving this communiqué.

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<sup>A</sup> : Also referred to as ‘The Effort’

<sup>B</sup> : One of our 7 beliefs is “An action is effective only if its results can be measured”

## PROJECT UPDATES

### D) SCHOOL PROJECT:

#### Conclusion of final assessments at all our schools in Mumbai:

- ~ 400 students of grade V from 6 BMC schools were assessed over a period of 2 weeks in February. This was an oral assessment and the last in the current academic year. In order to accurately measure the value added during the period of association, students were asked the same questions that were administered at the beginning of the course.
- Assessment for ~100 students of grade V, VI & VII from Holy Family High School (*Marathi medium*) is also complete
- Final assessment of ~75 students at Shirpur<sup>C</sup> will be conducted sometime this month
- Results of all these assessments should be compiled and ready for circulation by the end of this month.

#### Results from interim assessments:

- Since the last newsletter released in December, interim tests<sup>D</sup> were administered for all our school students. A snapshot of the results is as follows

(First Table is for BMC school students, second table is for Shirpur school students and the third table is for Holy Family school students)

BMC SCHOOL RESULTS	Sep, 2009	Nov, 2009	Jan, 2010	Value Added
	Mapping Test (Start of the program)	Test 1 (After ~15 hours of teaching)	Test 2, 3 & 4 (After ~40 hours of teaching)	
Number of students assessed	346	316	337	NA
Cannot identify alphabets	124	63	39	Yes
Can identify alphabets	192	285	301	Yes
Can read 3 letter words	42	239	265	Yes
Can read words conjoint at end	35	Not tested here	236	Yes
Can read complex words	24	Not tested here	227	Yes

SHIRPUR SCHOOL RESULTS	Sep, 2009	Dec, 2009	Feb, 2010	Value Added
	Mapping Test	Test 1	Test 2, 3 & 4	
Number of students assessed	30	37	37	NA
Cannot identify alphabets	3	1	1	Yes
Can identify alphabets	27	35	36	Yes
Can read 3/4 letter words	1	30	31	Yes
Can read words conjoint at end	9	Not tested here	25	Yes
Can read complex words	5	Not tested here	24	Yes

<sup>C</sup> : Shirpur is a taluka in district Dhule, state Maharashtra

<sup>D</sup> : Results tabulated are only for our grade V students across Mumbai & Shirpur

HOLY FAMILY SCHOOL RESULTS	Jun, 2009	Aug, 2009	Sep, 2009	Nov, 2009	Value Added
	Mapping Test	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	
Number of students assessed	60	32	30	26	NA
Cannot identify alphabets	1	0	0	0	Yes
Can identify alphabets	59	32	30	26	Yes
Can read 3 letter words	26	31	30	26	Yes
Can read words conjoint at end	16	Not tested here	30	26	Yes
Can read complex words	11	Not tested here	Not tested here	24	Yes

### Proposal to train BMC school teachers accepted:

- In order to reach more number of students in a capital light model, The Effort had made a proposal to the BMC<sup>E</sup> suggesting the following
  - BMC school teachers will
    - Deliver the content to the students
  - The Effort will
    - Offer required training to these teachers
    - Design the content
    - Conduct the assessment
- The proposal has been approved and 12 teachers<sup>F</sup> from 5 schools have been nominated to work as per this arrangement in the next academic year (**Pilot Project**)
  - If the results of the proposed arrangement are as good as they have been this year, then the reach can be significantly increased in further years
- Thus in the academic year 2010 – 2011, LeapForWord should reach ~ 900 students across 11 schools
  - 5 schools as a part of the pilot project (*delivery by BMC teachers*)
  - 6 schools to continue with current engagement (*delivery by LeapForWord teachers*)

### In principle offer to translate our content into 8 other regional languages<sup>G</sup>

- Post the interim assessments, LeapForWord team got an opportunity to present its work & results to ~75 school principals<sup>H</sup> (*different mediums of instruction*)
- The Administrative Officer (*school – K East ward*) has offered to translate LeapForWord content which is currently aided in Marathi<sup>I</sup> to be translated into 8 other regional languages
- We intend to get this translation done towards the beginning of the next academic year

### Arrangement with Ramnarain Ruia College to develop the school assessment model:

- LeapForWord has got into an arrangement with the Information Technology department at Ramnarain Ruia College (*Matunga*) to develop a software program<sup>J</sup> that will automate the performance analysis of all our students

<sup>E</sup> : Administrative Officer (AO) – Schools, K East ward

<sup>F</sup> : 6 teachers of grade IV (*Association with our students will be a year earlier*) & 6 teachers of grade V

<sup>G</sup> : Currently available only in Marathi

<sup>H</sup> : All school principals from the municipal ward that LeapForWord operates in

<sup>I</sup> : Content is a combination of English & 1 regional language. The extent of the regional language used decreases with progressive grades

<sup>J</sup> : Development of this program was already initiated by a LeapForWord volunteer

- In coordination with the HOD<sup>K</sup>, 6 students from this department will work on this assignment as part of their final year university project
- The department has also agreed to lend infrastructural support in form of lab space
- From LeapForWord's side, this project will be managed by a volunteer who currently works for a leading IT company and has ~8 years of relevant work experience
- The tool is expected to go live by October 2010.

#### **English training program for ~60 rural school teachers scheduled**

- St.Xaviers College (*Mumbai*) will host ~60 rural school teachers for 10 days in the month of May
- LeapForWord will conduct a ~30 hour English training program for these teachers

#### **Prize distribution for overall performances in the current academic year:**

- Students across all BMC schools who had excelled on the following 4 parameters during the course of the program were shortlisted and encouraged by giving away prizes
  - Extent of improvement (End level<sup>L</sup> v/s Start level)
  - Attendance
  - Discipline
  - Scores in interim tests

#### **Potential Challenges:**

##### **Challenge:**

The biggest challenge in the coming academic year will be to make the pilot project successful.

##### **Intended Action:**

Significant energies will be invested in the next 2 months to make the content full proof. Periodic training programs will be arranged at regular intervals<sup>M</sup>. Additionally in the coming year, we will audio record all our content to facilitate convenient reference for the teachers. Focus on assessment will have to be stronger than before in order to correctly measure the effectiveness<sup>N</sup>

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<sup>K</sup> : Head Of Department

<sup>L</sup> : Results from the final oral examination were considered

<sup>M</sup> : Discussions are currently on with the BMC teachers to work out a mutually convenient training calendar

<sup>N</sup> : The software tool should aid in this endeavor

## II) YOUTH PROJECT:

The Effort concluded the youth program for a batch of night college students from St.Xaviers College, Mumbai

- 22 students completed the program<sup>O</sup>
- The profile of these students was homogenous – *Could comprehend English but Could not speak*
- In all, 70 hours of teaching was conducted over 29 sessions<sup>P</sup>
- Structured assessments were introduced for the first time in our youth program
- Visible improvement in the spoken English levels of all the participants was observed at the end of the program
  - Part of this improvement is currently been captured, while work is in progress on the remaining
  - It is our endeavor that by the end of the next academic year, complete objective assessments will be in place even for our youth project
- The Effort will again establish contact with these 22 students sometime around Nov '10 and do the following<sup>Q</sup>
  - Train them in CV building & personal interviews
  - Forward their CVs to companies and arrange for interviews across deserving jobs

### Assessment & Results:

- Through a combination of written & oral assessments, all our students were tested 3 times during the program (Start – Half Way – End) in the following areas
  - Grammar
  - Comprehension (Reading & Listening)<sup>R</sup>
  - Reading, Conversation & Public speaking
  - Essay writing

We are currently working on quantifying the improvement in the last 2 areas. The performance of our students in Grammar<sup>S</sup> can be summarized as follows:

Grammar Scores (out of max 264)			
	Start	Half Way	End
Average Score	123	139	156
Minimum Score	81	96	121
Maximum Score	171	173	194

<sup>O</sup> : All in their second year of senior college currently

<sup>P</sup> : Started on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2009 & concluded on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2010

<sup>Q</sup> : Our youth program is employment oriented, where the objective is to help our students avail deserving job opportunities using the acquired ability to speak good English

<sup>R</sup> : Since this was a batch which could already comprehend English, value added in comprehension is considered to be incidental and hence not mentioned here

<sup>S</sup> : Since proficiency in grammar is correlated to proficiency in spoken English, improvement in grammar can be considered as a dependable indicator of judging the overall improvement

### **Potential Challenges:**

#### **Challenge:**

Our biggest challenge is to be able to quantify the different levels of spoken English skills. Since our endeavor is to completely eliminate any extent of subjectivity the task becomes that much more difficult.

#### **Intended Action:**

Significant energies are being invested to design the metric<sup>T</sup>. We will administer this test across a larger number of respondents to be better able to validate our assumptions. Advice is also being sought from subject matter experts to make the assessment more robust.

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<sup>T</sup> : Considerable progress has been made in this area in the past 3 months

## **Other Updates:**

### **Approvals for Tax exemption:**

LeapForWord has received 12A<sup>U</sup> registration from the Income Tax office. Application for donor exemptions under section 80G<sup>V</sup> has been made and an approval is expected in the next couple of months

### **Capacity building of BMC teachers:**

In addition to training BMC school teachers to deliver our content, LeapForWord has offered to conduct Spoken English program for any interested BMC teacher. This project is intended to build (*English*) capacity in teachers. The response to this offer has been encouraging and we might start a training program customized for BMC school teachers in the next academic year

### **Compilation of results across projects conducted in the year:**

Final results from our school project are currently in the process of compilation. We will follow this newsletter with our school academic report card

### **NPO<sup>W</sup> partnership:**

The current academic year will see an increased impetus from our side in aligning with other non-profits working in the area of education. Since our content & delivery are bearing positive results, it is important that it gets shared with other NPOs thereby reaching more & more under-served communities.

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<sup>U</sup> : Income of the trust is exempted from tax subject to fulfillment of necessary conditions

<sup>V</sup> : Application for 80G can be made only after 12A is received (*80G filed on January 27<sup>th</sup>*)

<sup>W</sup> : Non Profit Organization. In this case it could even be individual initiatives

## **LeapForWord**

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