

LeapForWord

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This document is a bi-monthly newsletter of LeapForWord.

(A) 1st Year of circulation (B) Academic Year: **2009 - 2010**
(C) Period: **March 1st - May 10th** (D) Newsletter Number: **4**

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.

If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first hour sharpening the axe.

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

From the LeapForWord^A Team,

This newsletter is the last of the academic year 2009 - 10.

As The Effort gets ready to ring in the new academic year, we at LeapForWord are experiencing mixed feelings - joy for the results achieved, relief for seeing through yet another year and anxiety as we wait to take on a new set of challenges.

2009 - 10 was a special year because it allowed few of us to work full time for The Effort. We must admit that this was a year well invested both from a personal & professional point of view, arguably the best some of us ever had.

If last year was about reinforcing our ideas of how effective results can be achieved, then the coming year is about replicating these results on a magnified scale. In the 4 years of its existence The Effort has seen its reach increase from 27 to ~ 3000 (*planned for the next year*).

Paulo Coelho in his best selling novel 'The Alchemist' wrote "If you really wish to achieve something then the whole world conspires to make that wish a reality". It cannot be truer in the case of LeapForWord. The world has indeed conspired in various forms - friends, family, teachers, students, well wishers and sometimes just strangers - to help keep this dream called "LeapForWord" alive.

We promise to strive and continue to believe that the world will keep conspiring to help The Effort deliver on its commitments in the coming academic year.

^A : Also referred to as 'The Effort'

About this Newsletter

In this document, we have tried to present the activities from the last 2 months. In line with one of the core beliefs^B of The Effort, we have tried to keep this document objective oriented wherever possible.

Last 2 months were essentially about compiling the results from the just concluded academic year and preparing to deliver on the planned commitments for the coming academic year

Do let us know your views on this communiqué.

Thank You

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

PROJECT UPDATES

I) SCHOOL PROJECT:

Final results from our school projects have been compiled:

- The Effort reached out to ~500 students across grades V, VI & VII in the AY^C 2009 – 10
- A brief snapshot of the results after ~ 40 hours of teaching is tabulated below:
- Objective of each grade is as follows:
 - Grade V - Ability to read
 - Grade VI - Ability to comprehend
 - Grade VII - Ability to construct grammatically correct sentences

▪ GRADE V RESULTS^D:

Results in terms of absolute numbers

GRADE V RESULTS					
		At the start of the program		After ~ 40 hours of teaching	
	No of students reached	Can read paragraphs	Cannot read paragraphs	Can read paragraphs	Cannot read paragraphs
BMC	366	42	297	243	105
Shirpur	34	3	27	28	6
Holy Family	29	7	20	23	4
Total	429	52	344	294	115

~13% could read before the start of the program

~72% could read by the end of the program

QUALITY OF READING			
	L 1	L 2	L3
BMC	7	0	35
Shirpur	0	0	3
Holy Family	0	0	7
Total	7	0	45

QUALITY OF READING			
	L 1	L 2	L3
BMC	21	47	175
Shirpur	8	3	17
Holy Family	3	3	17
Total	32	53	209

Levels		
L 1	L 2	L 3
Struggler	Average Reader	Good Reader

^C : AY = Academic Year.

^D : Out of 429 Grade V students, 396 were tested at the beginning of the program while 409 were tested at the end of the program. The results are calculated as a percentage of total number of students tested.

▪ **GRADE VI RESULTS:**

Results in terms of absolute numbers - After ~ 40 hours of teaching

GRADE VI RESULTS							
		Sentence Comprehension			Paragraph Comprehension		
	# of students	Without assistance	With assistance	No Comprehension	Complete Comprehension	Average Comprehension	No Comprehension
Shirpur	13	5	5	3	6	4	3
Holy Family	24	9	14	1	9	10	5
Total	37	14	19	4	15	14	8

~ 90% can comprehend sentences

~ 78% can comprehend simple stories

▪ **GRADE VII RESULTS^E:**

**Results in terms of absolute numbers - After
~ 40 hours of teaching**

GRADE VII RESULTS			
	# of students	Met the objective	Did not meet the objective
Holy Family	26	16	6
Total	26	16	6

~ 72% met the year end objective

^E : Out of 26 students who regularly attended the program, 22 took the final test (Of this 22, 16 met the objective)

Training of 12 BMC school teachers conducted:

- LeapForWord conducted a 2 day / 8 hour training program for 12 BMC teachers nominated to be a part of the pilot “Train the Teacher”
- Easy Reference Handbooks were designed & distributed to these teachers
- The pilot project will commence from the month of July

BMC school model to be replicated in Shirpur starting June:

- Till date in Shirpur, The Effort operated as an out-of-school effort (*our students were from 2 local hostels*)
- However starting June, The Effort will offer its services to students of a local public school
 - A meeting to this effect was arranged with the school senior management and they have agreed in-principle to extend this program to their grade V students (*2 batches*)
 - This project will also be operated on a ‘Train the Teacher’ model
- Thus in the academic year 2010 –11, LeapForWord should reach ~ 200 students in Shirpur
 - ~90 school students as a part of the pilot project (*delivery by Shirpur school teachers*)
 - ~110 hostel students (*delivery by LeapForWord teachers*)
- LeapForWord’s teacher in Shirpur^F has delivered good results in the last 2 academic years
 - Hence, he has been made an offer to join the payrolls of LeapForWord as a Supervisor / Teacher for the Shirpur school project
 - To assist him in his responsibilities another local youth has been identified. He will be trained to teach students from the lower grades

English training program for 42 rural school teachers conducted

- The Effort conducted a 8 day / 32 hour training program for 42 rural school teachers
- This program was hosted by St.Xavier’s Institute of Management Research (*Mumbai*)
- Encouraged by the capacity built into these teachers during the training period, the program sponsors felt that these teachers will be able to deliver LeapForWord’s school content to their own students (*lower grades only*) back in their villages
 - If this works, ~500 students from these villages will benefit in the coming academic year
 - To facilitate the process, Easy Reference Handbooks designed in Marathi / English were distributed to these teachers

Audio recording of the school content is being arranged for:

- To address the issues of Incorrect Pronunciation & Revision of trained concepts, The Effort is planning to audio record all its school content
 - These audio files will supplement the books and will be provided to all the teachers across all locations

Two new teachers join LeapForWord from June1st

- LeapForWord conducted a campus placement drive across 5 B.Ed colleges in Mumbai. 2 aspirants have been made an offer to join The Effort as teachers.
- In order to get through the ‘right fit’ candidates, a selection process comprising written test, written exercise & interview was designed

^F : He is our own student from the Rural Youth Program

II) YOUTH PROJECT:

Final result of the recently concluded youth project has been compiled:

- The Effort concluded the youth program for a batch of 22 night college students from St.Xaviers College, Mumbai

Starting Level (Relative grading)	Number of participants	Post training % improvement	Relative improvement in levels
Level 1 (Lowest)	8	25%	+1
Level 2	8	32%	+2
Level 3	3	36%	+2
Level 4 (Highest)	3	37%	+1
Total	22		

- The Effort is currently working towards making the measurement of the youth program more full-proof. The endeavor is to completely eliminate any extent of subjectivity in the metric.

III) NPO PARTNERSHIPS:

NPO partnerships gathering steam:

- Since the content & assessments designed by LeapForWord have shown to be working in the recently concluded academic year, the idea now is to extend this benefit to increasingly more number of students
- However it will be difficult to reach out to more students on our own, hence The Effort will partner with other non-profit organizations working in the area of education. The responsibilities in this partnership will be as follows:
 - Partner NPO will be the content delivering body (*teaching students*)
 - LeapForWord will design the content, Train the partner teachers / volunteers & conduct the assessment
- In the last couple of months, The Effort has proposed the above arrangement to many NPO's. Discussions with the following NPOs have proceeded to further levels
 1. REAP: <http://www.reapchild.org/>
 2. Aarmabh: <http://www.aarambh.org/>
 3. Masoom: <http://masoomforu.org/>
 4. Life Trust: <http://www.lifetrustindia.org/>
 5. Dream India: <http://dreamindia2020.org/>
 6. Aseema: <http://www.aseema.org/>
 7. TOUCH: <http://touchmission.org/>
 8. Yuva Pratishtan: <http://www.yuva-india.org/>
- If the ongoing discussions lead to fruition then ~ 2,000 students could be reached through this arrangement in the coming academic year
 - Because the scale is big and such an arrangement is being tried out for the first time, 'NPO Partnership' has been categorized as a distinct project

IV) OTHER UPDATES:

Approvals for Tax exemption:

LeapForWord has been granted registration u/s. 12A (a)^G & u/s. 80G^H of the I.T act 1961 by the Income Tax office.

LeapForWord brochure launched:

The Effort now has a professionally designed corporate brochure. This brochure is courtesy of voluntary contributions from 2 sources^I. The brochure can be viewed at the following location:
http://www.leapforword.org/images/lfw_images/downloads/leapforwordbrochure.pdf

^G : Income of the trust is exempted from tax, subject to fulfillment of necessary conditions

^H : Donors get tax exemption for their contributions

^I : Carat (<http://www.carat.com/>) & Mahesh Wagle (*Freelancer*)

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