

Case study — Teacher Resource Centre

For Darshan, all of ten years old, Maths periods used to be plain drudgery. Studying in class 5 at the Government High Primary School in Kamalamahadi, Kolar district, Karnataka, Darshan's 'math phobia' was shared by most of his classmates. However, the students were not entirely to blame.

Recalls Sowmya, Darshan's teacher, "I was basically a teacher of languages and was never confident of teaching Maths effectively. Infused with the common perception that Maths is only about computations, I was boring my students no end. Added to this, the resources for teaching Maths went as far as a dull blackboard and a few cut-outs. All these factors reflected adversely on the classroom environment. I desperately wanted to do something about it."

In June 2006, Darshan's school became a part of **Suvidya's 'Teacher Resource Centre (TRC)'** project. His teacher, Sowmya started attending **TRC workshops**, which were a treasure house of pedagogical aids, both instructive and entertaining.



"I took to the training immediately, and liked the way in which difficult concepts were explained through simple games and activities. I re-discovered Maths in a different way, which subsequently changed my ideas of how to teach Maths. Today, I want to be a Maths teacher, and I believe I can do a decent job," says Sowmya excitedly, as her class works its way through a Maths exercise, made enjoyable and interactive through colourful puzzles and worksheets.

Though Sowmya continues to use the regular textbook syllabus, the manner in which she teaches Maths has made a world of difference to her students.

With over 800,000 primary schools, employing over 3.2 million elementary teachers and reaching out to 118 million school going children, the country has made remarkable inroads over the past two decades, providing access and enrolling children in primary schools.



On the flip side, however, high dropout rates, low levels of learning, and inadequate infrastructure continue to plague the elementary education system. Undoubtedly, teachers play a critical role in determining the classroom environment and transacting the curriculum. Non-performance of teachers is commonly seen as one of the primary causes of the failure of the education system. However, pre-service and in-service teacher education continues to be weak.

Recognising the importance of robust professional development of teachers for sustaining lasting changes in elementary education, the Trust has focused upon setting up and supporting '**Teacher Resource Centres**', which:

Provide space for sustained programmatic intervention for growth and learning of teachers

Enable continuous teacher development inputs that are closely linked with classroom practice and the needs of teachers

Provide for a variety of professional support services to teachers ranging from subject-based training, classroom-based research, pre-designed training programmes, etc.

The Trust is implementing the **TRC** initiative in a phased manner. Five **TRCs** have been set up in Bangalore, Mysore, Mangalore and Chamrajnagar, in partnership with **Suvidya** and **The Teacher Foundation**, both based in Bangalore, and **Deenabandhu**, located in Chamrajnagar, Karnataka.

Suvidya's Bangalore based **TRC** works with teachers from ten schools in the vicinity, and facilitates their professional development through sustained classroom-based support. The Trust has recently collaborated with **Pravah**, a Delhi based non-profit organisation, for setting up a **TRC** in Delhi, focusing on life skills and citizenship education. It has also collaborated with **Delhi University** for setting up a Regional Resource Centre in order to create a forum for the professional development of teachers.