

THE PAST QUARTER IN A GLANCE



THE SCHOOL ADOPTION PROGRAM

The School Adoption Program remains our flagship program where we work with several thousand disadvantaged children studying in rural government schools, to build a strong foundation in the English language, and create familiarity with computing and computer literacy. While the pandemic disrupted our standard model since the schools were all closed, we did not let this deter us. We leveraged our own network on Community Teachers, and designed creative ways for them to engage children in learning. We did this by having our teachers form small groups and teach children in open community spaces like panchayat office compounds or temple premises, or in some cases, even open fields; we also had our teachers go door-to-door and distribute worksheets for children to learn from; and for a couple of hundred children who had access to smartphones and digital devices, our community teachers ran WhatsApp based learning sessions. At its peak, we used to cover slightly more than 3000 children each day.

Apart from this, we also embarked on an experiment to teach children using video-based lessons. Considering that many of these children did not have access to smart devices and that they would prefer to learn at their own pace – we created Video-based lessons covering certain key aspects of the language, and augmented this with exercises that tested their understanding of those concepts; these were then loaded on tablets and given to the children to learn from.

ELEVATE: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

One thing that we at OBLF are clear about is that in the business of education and learning, we have to keep evolving; if there is a better way to do things, we will do try and make that part of our repertoire. With that aim, we started a project to completely rethink our syllabus and our curriculum. Under the guidance of Professor Rajeevan, a very accomplished scholar of the English language and a widely

published author of several books on English, we are in the process of developing curriculum that is based on the Common European Framework [CEFR]. This provides us a very well-established and standardized mechanism to approach the teaching and assessment of non-native speakers of English. As part of this, we will have standardised student workbooks, student activity books and detailed teacher manuals. As one can imagine

this is an onerous project and currently as we speak, it is all-hands-on deck to get everything ready in time for the start of the next academic year, in June 2021. We are very excited about the possibilities that this offers the children we work with – as well as possibilities for future scaling of the program.

