



Be! an Entrepreneur Skills Training in Secondary Schools in Bihar

Schools visit to Patna – November 9 – 11, 2011

Goal: Explore how 50 Be! Skills books would be implemented in 1,000 Secondary Schools in Bihar, from teacher training to monitoring, with the aim of beginning teacher training in early 2012.

Going to School, the team from Delhi, travelled to Patna to visit schools to talk about the Be! Program. The visit was coordinated by Kiran Kumar, Programme Officer, Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad. We spoke to school principals, teachers and children in five schools.

Our leading questions were:

- a. What do you think of Be! Books? What do children think of the content?
- b. How will the books be used in a class? i.e. one set of books for 50 children
- c. What monitoring mechanism will work?
- d. What day of the week and for how much time would be advisable?
- e. What teacher incentives would work?
- f. Do you have a facility to watch movies?

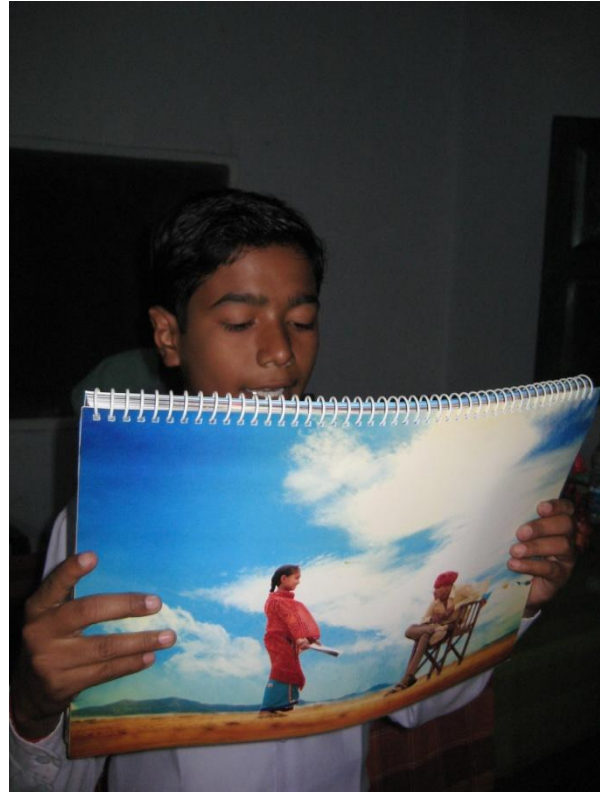
Schools Visited

1. Rajkiya Kanya Uchha Vidyalaya, Shastri Nagar, Patna
2. Government Boys School, Patna
3. Ghanshyam Balika Uchha Vidyalaya, Khagaul
4. Government Boys School, Maner
5. P.N. Anglo Sanskrit School, Patna



What we learned

- **School Principals:** to successfully implement the Be! an Entrepreneur skills training in schools it would be important to have a one day training programme for school principals at the district level (this would be the first day of the three day training that teachers would then undertake). We realised it would be imperative to have a representative from the Bihar Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad to co-facilitate this first day of training, as we saw that Kiranji was best able to explain the program in words and values that the head teachers understood. Government representatives such as Kiran, are familiar with the principals and how the books would be used in schools and can best explain why we are doing this, how it fits in and what it means.
- **Teachers:** it would be important to make the teachers take responsibility to ensure that the training takes place every week in schools, to report to GTS/Government on the progress and submit completed activities on time. So if this can be mandated by the Government that would help the success of the program.
- Teachers would need to be given incentives to motivate them to use Be! books regularly, initial review of the idea of 'winning a flight anywhere in India for a holiday' was given an enthusiastic thumbs up!
- **Book formats:** Each section of class 9 had 70-90 children, so one set of Be! Books for each class is not enough. We will have to re-format the books to become wall charts, calendar style books and individual cards, so large groups of children can read one book at one time. Children had fun putting up the wall charts and walking around the classroom reading stories on the charts, it changed the format from sitting at the desks and learning. We will have to work on the formats and plastic coating, hooks for walls and logistics from moving books between classes to maximize the use of the books.
- **Sets of books per school:** GTS will have to raise additional funds to be able to print and distribute more sets of books to each school than the initial plan of giving two sets of books to each school. There should at least five sets of books for a class of 50 children.



- **Language of books:** teachers and children both thought that the language used in the books was simple and easy to understand. Even though some words were new for children – teachers felt this should not be changed because they can then learn these new words and be curious to find out what they mean.
- **Use of books:** we tried to test the stories by asking a lot of questions during the reading; however, the teachers felt that this may not be necessary for all books. This is because the children enjoyed the stories and understood most of the text and there was no need to take breaks in the reading process.
- **Going to School team:** while teachers will be trained to use the content with children, in some schools this will work well, in others we feel there would need to be a monthly visit to inspire teachers and students to get excited about the program. In collaboration with the Government, GTS would like to send its team members and Government counterparts once a month to each school to read one book with children in a classroom and complete the related skill activity.

What Principals & Teachers said



“Most children are not sure of what they want to do when they leave school, they think of becoming a doctor or an engineer. These books will inspire them to think beyond these professions and explore other opportunities like becoming an entrepreneur.”

“In my experience, children have a desire to do new things, help others and earn money; they just do not know what to do. Be! will help them think of new ways to improve their lives.”

“The language of the books is very simple,

some children thought a few words were new but it's important to keep a few difficult words so that children have the curiosity to find their meanings.”

“I like the style of telling short stories in the Family Tree book. Each child's ability to grasp concepts varies, explaining the same concept through different stories is a great idea.”

“The activities are fun. The activity in the Family Tree story will encourage children to find out about their families and they will find role models in their own families.”

Suggestions for Teacher Training

“Teacher training would be essential for this programme. The teachers will need to be told how to use these books in a fun way and take feedback from children and also on completing and submitting the activities.”

“For active participation of teachers they will need to be incentivised and motivated to do the training. I like your suggestion of keeping an award – like a paid holiday to a destination of your choice in India. It's a very exciting idea!”

Suggestions for Training Children

“On Saturdays we organize extracurricular activities, we could do this on two periods each Saturday – 40 minutes each.”

“Children can be motivated to complete the activities by making it a competition – like best activities will be printed in the local newspaper. This will be really exciting for the children and for the teachers as well.”



“Books in the form of wall charts are a good idea. However, they may not be feasible because then you will need separate wall charts for each class and so the number of copies required per school would be huge. It would be nice if you could figure out an easier way of doing this”

“All children in class nine should be given Be! skills training, all of them should be given an opportunity to learn new skills.”

“Schools with computers can be give CDs/DVDs of Be! movies and radio programmes and they can be played for children to reinforce the message of Be!”

What children said

Be! Book: My Family Tree: Everyone in my Family is an Entrepreneur



The word *Udyami* was used for an entrepreneur. When we began reading the story the children said they had never heard this word before but as the story progressed they understood the meaning of the word. They used words like brave, hard working, driven, does something new – to define an entrepreneur.

“I liked the character of Seema, she wanted a swing and found a way to make one. Girls should be like Seema and find solutions to their own problems.”

“Girls in my family do not know how to cycle, I was the first girl to learn cycling and I had to convince my parents to let me learn.”

“These stories are real because we hear of such stories in our village.”

“The design is wonderful I especially like the page with girl on the tyre swing.”

“The colors of the book are beautiful.”

“I enjoyed walking around the class and reading the charts but I think you should increase the font size because the charts are so big.”

Difficult words – recipe, *bicholiya*, *dastavez*

Be! Book – Bijali Brings a Carnival to her Village



While reading the story children shared their own experiences – how they make friends, instances of when have they built a relationship that has helped them in some way. They understood the importance of building relationships and were able to list their own networks of family and friends.

“I loved the story, it was great to read the story of a young girl who was able to accomplish a big task.”

“I think Bijali wanted to bring the carnival to her village because she wanted to prove that not everything depends on luck and destiny.”

“This looks like a true story to me because my brother also tries to stop me if I want to go out anywhere with my friends.”

While reading the Bijali book a young girls and boys told us how they had collected signatures of people to solve a problem where they live.

“There was no hand pump in my village, we had a lot of trouble getting water. Thirteen girls got together and made a plan. We collected signatures of 50 people in the village, wrote an application and submitted it to the ward councillor. On seeing the work we had all done he agreed to install a hand pump in the village. It was not easy to collect signatures; people would not listen to us because we were so young. But now that the hand pump problem has been solved people listen to us. Now we are making a plan to solve the problem of toilets in the village.”

“The street lights in my lane were broken and had not been fixed for months, so I got together with a group of boys and collected signatures of 25 people in the neighbourhood and submitted it to the electricity department and they fixed our light.”

Difficult words – *muqaddar*