

“Enhancing Rural Schools Education through Building As Learning Aids (BaLA): A Social Work Service Learning Initiative”

- **PREPARED BY :**
- Department of Social Work-PG
- St. Edmund's College

PRESENTED TO :

The State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan & Director of School Education and Literacy, Government of Meghalaya, India.





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The Team

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Project Coordinators:

Dr. Hazel Berret Wahlang & Mr. George Kerry Sunn
Field Work Coordinators, Department of Social Work-PG
St. Edmund's College, Shillong

SL. NO.	NAME OF VOLUNTEERS
1	Medaaishisha Suna
2	Barsha Rani Sonowal
3	Eliana Areng
4	Daialin Lyngdoh
5	Ibadapbiang Wahlang
6	Phibatriti Marbaniang
7	Poonam Ray
8	Vicky John Lamare
9	Siddhant Das Senapati
10	Emdormi R. Mairom

SL. NO.	NAME OF VOLUNTEERS
11	Liiveinai Helena Ng
12	Kimberly Pyrtuh
13	Donaliza Kurbah
14	Enrich Well Toi
15	Balakordor D. Pariong
16	Bankitborlang Hynniewta
17	Evanstone Thangkhiew
18	Athan Kharkongor
19	Delfrina Lyngdoh
20	Richweaver Lyngkhoi



Project Overview

Background of the Project



Introduction

Building as Learning Aids (BaLA) is an innovative approach to enhance the quality of elementary education through the innovative use of school buildings. The objective is to maximize the educational value of school assets, particularly the physical spaces in order to create a learning environment that is child-friendly and interactive. In this project, BaLA is being integrated with service learning to address community needs, with a particular emphasis on rural schools while also fostering holistic development of college students.

During the Rural Camp Pre-Visit to Mawlyndun Village on the 14th of May 2024, the Department of Social Work-PG, St. Edmund's College team had the opportunity to interact with the teachers of Mawlyndun Presbyterian Lower Primary School regarding the educational needs of the students. The teachers expressed that the students significantly lack proficiency in English and requested that the college team can address this area during Rural Camp 2024.

Responding to this, the Department of Social Work-PG, St. Edmund's College, Shillong developed the **"Enhancing Rural School Education through Building as Learning Aids (BaLA): A Social Work Service Learning Initiative"** project.

This project is supported by the State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan & Director of School Education and Literacy, Government of Meghalaya, India.

Objectives of the Project

1. To transform the rural school infrastructure into a dynamic learning aid that facilitates active and experiential learning.
2. To create a child-friendly learning environment in the classroom.
3. To provide college students with hands-on experience in meeting the needs of the community and learning by getting in touch with real-world issues.

Background of the Project Area

Mawlyndun is a village within the Pynursla Block of the East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya. The majority of households follow the Indigenous Religion, with a few Christians belonging to different denominations. A major cash crop in the village is the cultivation of broomsticks, which has recently been experiencing a decline in the market. It is also the main source of income for the villagers, as well as daily labour.

Mawlyndun Presbyterian Lower Primary School

Established in 1960, Mawlyndun Presbyterian L.P. School, managed by the church, stands as a beacon of hope in Mawlyndun Village. This is the only primary school in the village, providing education from classes 1 to 5 with three dedicated teachers.

Despite its limited resources, the school supports a co-educational environment, including a pre-primary section, catering to a total of 150 students, both boys and girls. The medium of instruction is Khasi, reflecting the cultural heritage of the community. The student body consists entirely of children from scheduled tribes, with parents who are predominantly farmers or daily laborers. This background underscores the school's role in uplifting the most vulnerable sections of society, offering these children a chance to break the cycle of poverty through education and empowerment, especially since most of the children are the first generation learners in their families.

We chose Mawlyndun Presbyterian L.P. School for this project because of its critical role in the community. As the sole primary educational institution in the village, it provides a foundation for learning and growth. By supporting the renovation of the school's walls to create a child-friendly environment, we aim to enhance the educational opportunities for these children, helping them achieve a better future and creating a lasting impact on the community.



Project Strategy



Phase 1 (May 2024)

On-Site Visit and Needs Assessment

- 1. Needs Assessment:** An on-site assessment of Mawlyndun Presbyterian Lower Primary School was conducted to identify the students' weaknesses, and the teachers claim that students are particularly lacking in English skills.
- 2. Proposal and Permission:** Obtain permission from the school to implement the project and discuss the use of the building for educational purposes.



Phase 2 (May & June 2024)

Resource Mobilization and Planning

- 1. Resource Mobilization:** Write a project proposal and secure funds from the State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan & Director of School Education and Literacy, Government of Meghalaya, India. Prepare and purchase the necessary materials, including paints and sketching materials, as well as any other tools required.
- 2. Designing a Strategic Art Plan:** Develop a strategic plan for integrating educational content into the school's physical spaces through creative art and design, considering the educational needs of the students.

Project Strategy



Phase 3 (June-July 2024)

Implementation and Handover

- 1. Wall Preparation and Artistry Design:** Based on teacher suggestions, two classrooms, Classes 3 and 5, were chosen for the project. The walls of these classrooms were whitewashed in preparation for the artistic designs that would be painted on them. In each classroom, volunteers sketched and painted educational and interactive designs that were tailored to the needs of the students. The students were actively involved in the painting process, which enabled them to become active participants in creating a new learning environment.
- 2. Project Handover:** Upon completion, the team handed over the new learning spaces to the school through the Headteacher, to ensure that they can be maintained and used by the school. In addition, the team suggested how teachers could utilize the wall as an activity based learning area where they could engage students with games.



St. Edmund's College, Shillong

The Concept

Building as Learning Aids: Class III



Students from St. Edmund's College have created an educational canvas for younger school students by illustrating key concepts from Class III and Class IV curricula. The following concepts were incorporated into building learning aids in order to enhance students' learning and understanding:

- **Class III:**

The use of colorful depictions of geometric forms in Class III is beneficial for elementary students in developing a visual understanding of geometric forms. The representation of the four seasons acquaints children with seasonal changes and cultivates a sense of appreciation for nature's rhythms. The days of the week and months of the year are displayed in an artistic manner to assist in the learning of the basics of time and calendar. The height measurements are vividly displayed for users to gain a better understanding of size, and as a fun activity, they may use them to measure themselves and their friends. In addition, the inclusion of different shades of color within the artwork enhances the ability of the children to differentiate colors and identify shades, thereby stimulating their sense of sight. With the inclusion of a "Visual Symphony of Air, Water, and Land", an immersive exploration of natural environments is created that sparks curiosity and learning.

The Concept

Building as Learning Aids: Class V



Class V:

In Class V, college students have used their artwork to illustrate important social and temporal concepts. A bilingual set of classroom etiquette guidelines serves as a visual reminder of proper behavior as well as encouraging a respectful learning environment and enhancing their ability to speak English. Positive social interactions among students are reinforced by paintings demonstrating good manners. In their drawing, the colors of the rainbow are vividly depicted, capturing the fascination and wonder of natural phenomena while reinforcing the knowledge that has already been acquired. In this class, time concepts, such as the length of a minute and a year, are creatively illustrated to present students with a better understanding of time and the passage of time, enhancing their ability to manage their time effectively. The use of these visual representations not only enriches the educational experience of younger students, but also inspires them to explore and deepen their understanding of these concepts.

Integrating Service Learning with Sustainable Development Goals



The objective of this initiative is to meet the educational needs of rural communities and to establish partnerships that can lead to long-term positive outcomes.

Creating a child-friendly learning environment at Mawlyndun Presbyterian Lower Primary School enhances student curiosity and motivates teachers to engage more actively, fostering a fun and stimulating classroom atmosphere with vibrant colors that directly supports SDG 4 (Quality Education). This initiative not only contributes to improved learning outcomes but also provides college students with a meaningful opportunity to enhance educational experiences for rural children, thereby promoting inclusive and effective learning environments essential for sustainable development.

Successful implementation of this initiative hinges on valuable partnerships that harness diverse resources. Collaborating with St. Edmund's College has provided crucial human resources, with students and staff contributing expertise and dedication. Additionally, securing funds sanctioned by the State Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, and the Director of School Education and Literacy, Government of Meghalaya, India, ensures adequate capital.

Through these partnerships, we emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving sustainable development through education and community involvement, aligning with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).



St. Edmund's College, Shillong

Statement of Expenditure

AMOUNT SANCTIONED	RS. 17,500 /-
AMOUNT SPENT	RS. 17,500 /-
PARTICULAR	AMOUNT
RAW MATERIALS & STATIONERY	Rs. 11820
REFRESHMENT	Rs. 1120
BANNER	Rs. 960
TRAVEL EXPENDITURE	Rs. 2600
DOCUMENTATION	Rs. 1000
TOTAL	Rs. 17500

Please Note:

The details of the expenditure are enclosed in a separate file.





Barsha R.
Sonowal

Working together allowed us to share ideas and perspectives, making the process both enjoyable and educational. Each element we incorporated had its significance.

Medaaishisha
Suna

Our ability to finish the wall painting on time can be attributed to group collaboration, as well as the teachers' direction and assistance.

Eliana R.
Arengh

I learned to work as part of a team and to use my abilities to the best advantage. I also learned how art can be used as a teaching tool and as a way to bring people together within a school setting.

Kimberly Pyrtuh

Painting the room was a heartwarming experience that taught me more than just how to wield a paintbrush and seeing the children's excitement and eagerness to contribute made it even better. Reflecting on this project, I realized the profound impact such a simple act can have on children's lives.

Liiveinai Helena Ng

As a social worker volunteer, I felt proud of the work and enjoyed the creative expression it allowed. This project will benefit the community by making education more accessible and enjoyable, it also encouraging the student engagement and retention

Overall Student's Reflection

Our project aimed to create a friendlier school environment for rural children. We wanted their classrooms to spark curiosity and interest. Using these renovated spaces, they could grasp their lessons better by seeing how things work in real life. As student social workers, we felt fulfilled using our skills to make learning enjoyable and foster curiosity among rural children, encouraging them to stay in school. Being part of this effective learning solution has helped us see the value of our education.

Conclusion

The transformation of rural school infrastructure into dynamic learning aids led to a profound shift in how education within the community was perceived and experienced. Efforts to create a child-friendly learning environment had a significant impact on rural education. The renovated infrastructure also instilled pride in the community and fostered a sense of belonging as they witnessed tangible improvements in their school.

A significant contribution to the success of this project has been the state government's financial support, the dedication of college students and teachers as well as community involvement in this rural school. This project can serve as a model for other schools and communities to utilize the walls as a means of advancing innovative educational practices in order to help shape a brighter future for our children.

Event Poster

Enhancing Rural Schools Education through Building as Learning Aids (BALA): A Social Work Service Learning Initiative



Date: June 2024

Venue: Mawlyndun Presbyterian Lower Primary School

Organized by

Department of Social Work-PG, St. Edmund's College, Shillong

In Collaboration with

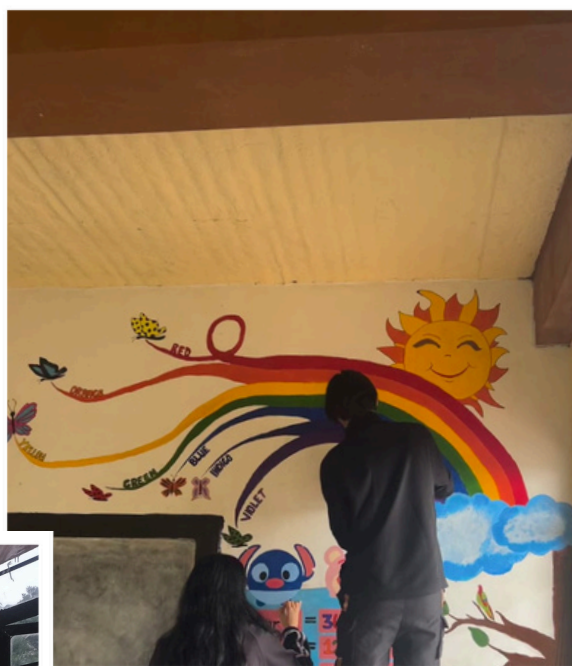
Office of the State Education Mission Authority of Meghalaya:
Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Shillong, Government of Meghalaya,



St. Edmund's College, Shillong

MAY-JULY
2024

Service Learning



Department of Social Work-PG
St. Edmund's College, Shillong