

Case Study

Galli Galli Sim Sim

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Executive Summary

Addressing the need to spread awareness about the importance of early childhood care and education in India, Sesame Workshop India (SWI) has developed a multimedia educational initiative Galli Galli Sim Sim (GGSS) for Indian children between two and six years old.

GGSS was launched in 2006 to provide early education through a play method of learning. It aims to expand the reach of high quality early childhood care and education to children and caregivers across India by developing and promoting innovative educational content through television and various outreach programs.

The central focus of the Galli Galli Sim Sim project is a television series. The series is set in an Indian neighbourhood, depicting the day-to-day life of children and families all across India. The show runs in the Hindi and features animated segments with Muppets, music, stories and art inspired from various dimensions of Indian culture.

The Galli Galli Sim Sim outreach initiative extends the educational message of the television series to those who do not have access to the show. The outreach programme is designed to work in urban slums through mobile community viewings (MCV) and the introduction of facilitated educational kits in local child care centers (balwadis).

The GGSS show is rated among the top five regularly watched children's show in India. It reaches approximately 10 million viewers per year across India. Its outreach efforts have reached around one million children and 300,000 caregivers. GGSS has managed to convince a large section of care givers across India about the absolute necessity of ECCE and about the need to combine education and entertainment.

This document seeks to capture the objective, working design and impact of the initiative hoping to assist in the replication/adaptation of such an initiative elsewhere.

Background

Early Childhood Education in India

The first few years of a child's life are crucial for life-long development since this is the age when a child's mind can be moulded and trained to inculcate basic values and social skills. These years are critical for the full development of a child's brain potential. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) therefore become vital and it is very important that children in their early years of life are provided with an enabling learning environment.

In India, there are 128 million children in the age group of two to six. Only one out of every five of these children has access to early childhood education and care.¹ Further, Indian government schemes like Integrated Child Development Scheme to promote early education suffer from problems of access, poor quality content, low-literate and untrained teachers and inadequate infrastructure. It is crucial to change this current scenario and engage our young minds in a manner that leads to their all-round development.

The importance of ECCE and the play way of learning needs to be highlighted and parents and caregivers need to be trained and made more aware of ECCE techniques.

Sesame Workshop India (SWI) and Galli Galli Sim Sim (GGSS)

Sesame Workshop is a non profit organisation that develops creative educational content for children from birth up till the age of twelve in 120 countries worldwide. Their content focuses on a range of children's development needs ranging from lessons on social to literary and math skills. The workshop uses a variety of mediums including television, books, magazines, internet and community outreach programmes to achieve its objective of promoting educational opportunities for children.

Modeled on its landmark educational television series *Sesame Street*, the Workshop has developed a multimedia educational initiative Galli Galli Sim Sim (GGSS) for two to six year old Indian children. GGSS was launched in 2006 by Sesame Workshop India (SWI) – the Indian branch of Sesame Workshop, to provide early education through a play method of learning to Indian preschoolers.

GGSS has two crucial components- the educational television show Galli Galli Sim Sim and GGSS outreach programmes that aim to take GGSS to places that do not have access to television.

Objective

Galli Galli Sim Sim aims to:

- a) Expand the reach of high quality early childhood care and education to children and caregivers across India focusing on the marginalized sections of society.
- b) Develop high quality innovative educational content across multimedia platforms to foster basic life skills- cognitive, social and emotional in children.

¹ http://www.galligallisimsim.com/ece_special.html

- c) Promote social equality by highlighting the universal values of cooperation and sharing and training children to embrace diversity.
- d) Build the capacity of caregivers and educate them about the importance of early childhood development.



FIGURE 1: Screen shot of the Galli Galli Sim Sim website

WORKING DESIGN

PROJECT COMPONENTS

A) **TELEVISION:** The central focus of the Galli Galli Sim Sim project is a locally produced television series called Galli Galli Sim Sim. Galli Galli Sim im premiered in August 2006 and is

currently broadcast on two channels in India –Cartoon Network and POGO from Monday through Friday at 8:30 a.m.²

The series is set in an Indian neighbourhood, reflecting the day to day life of children and families all across India. The show runs in the Hindi Language and features animated segments with music, stories and art inspired from various dimensions of India's culture and diversity focusing on values such as empathy, appreciation of differences, a sense of civic responsibility and healthy life habits.



Boombah the friendly lion believes that he belongs to a royal Indian Family. He loves eating vegetables and dancing to Bhangra music. He inspires children to inculcate healthy habits.

Muppet Boombah, Source: GGSS website

Five-year-old Detective **Chamki** is highly interested in building her language skills and uses new words. She is an excellent problem solver and excels in games and athletics. She plays the guitar and other string instruments in the Galli Band. Dressed in a school uniform, she encourages young Indian girls to go to school.



Muppet Chamki, Source: GGSS website

Googly, an intelligent six years old is always curious about how the world functions. He loves to read about the outer space and believes that he is an astronaut. He motivates children to read and learn more about the world.



Muppet Googly, Source: GGSS website

Aachoo the gypsy has travelled to places far and wide and has various stories to tell. She narrates her experiences in a unique manner, combining music and rhymes. She represents a blend between the old and new, between traditional values and modern ideas.



Muppet Aachoo, Source: GGSS website

² The show is currently in its fifth season. The first four seasons of the show were also aired on Doordarshan.

GGSS promotes early child development through joyful learning and stars a group of Indian Muppets – Chamki, Googly, Boombah, and Aanchoo – and a diverse human cast of children and adults. These Muppets were designed post extensive research with experts including teachers, language specialists, artists and academicians and have distinct Indian characteristics in their physical appearances as well as their personalities.

B) COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMME : The Galli Galli Sim Sim outreach initiative extends the educational messages of the television series to those who do not have access to the show. The outreach programme is designed to work in urban slums through Mobile community viewings (MCV) and the introduction of facilitated educational kits in local child care centers (balwadis).

- Mobile Community Viewings

Mobile community viewings are community screenings of thematic compilations of Galli Galli Sim Sim episodes. These screenings are held at urban slums in Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Jaipur. Between eight to ten MCV screenings are held in one city everyday and each community has a screening twice during a four-month cycle of the programme.

The screenings are carried out using a re-purposed vegetable cart that houses a standard television set and DVD player. This cart is rolled into the community by facilitators who are employed by a Kolkata-based theatre group. These facilitators show the compilation to the children and their caregivers.

These screenings are often followed by activities such as mask-making and theatre workshops where

children can re-enact scenes from the episode. The facilitators also distribute booklets and leaflets to children and caregivers reinforcing the messages from the television show and highlighting the importance of ECCE.



FIGURE 2: A re-purposed GGSS vegetable cart,
Source: Sesame Workshop

- Educational kits to local Child Care Centres (Balwadis)³

The outreach programme also includes the development and distribution of innovative play-based educational kits to balwadis using the support of partner NGO's. The educational kits include teacher's guides, posters, games, puzzles, theme related props and more. Currently GGSS has 14 themes around which the kits are designed ranging from literacy, maths, science and health. These kits supplement the existing Balwadi programme curriculum.

Written material is published in nine Indian local languages and distributed across the cities of Kolkatta, Delhi, Ahemdabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Jaipur.

One very successful educational kit is the Story Pond. The story pond kit includes a 5' by 5' vinyl mat that contains an image of a large blue pond which has 25 illustrations ranging from that of a person, animal, or thing. This kit is used to build a child's vocabulary and he/she is taught to recognize the illustrations and identify the person, animal or thing. Eventually the children go from illustration to illustration narrating a story about the people, animals, and things on the pond. The kit also includes a teacher's book, which provides guidance on how to use the story pond and a sample story.



FIGURE 3: A Story pond kid, Source:- *Harnessing a Child's Love of Play: Examples from Sesame Workshop India's Community Outreach Initiatives*, Ameena Batada, Sesame Workshop India, New Delhi, India

In some balwadis, *Galli Galli Sim Sim* also uses a little, hand-cranked camera called a bioscope—a traditional form of Indian entertainment to spread educational messages. The bioscope consists of a decorated box with large see through holes. Inside the box, there is a scroll that features images from the television show. A teacher or a caregiver rolls the scroll from the top

³ Balwadi's are NGO run pre schools in urban slums of India.

of the bioscope with pre recorded music playing the background. Bioscopes are available in 500 balwadis in the four cities.

- **Teacher Training and Support**

Balwadi teachers were initially given direct training on using the kits and incorporating play methods in their routine. Gradually a pool of master trainers were trained and made responsible for holding periodic teacher trainings. A telephony model for training teachers will

be rolled out in 2011, the pilot of which has been tested in Mumbai . Through this model, teachers can call 1800 258 2580 and listen to pre recorded calls related to content activity, they can also ask questions and clarify their doubts. Teachers can also share there success stories and inputs about the teaching material and listen to the experiences of other teachers. (See the diagram below).



FIGURE 5: Children viewing the GGSS bioscope, Source: Sesame Workshop India

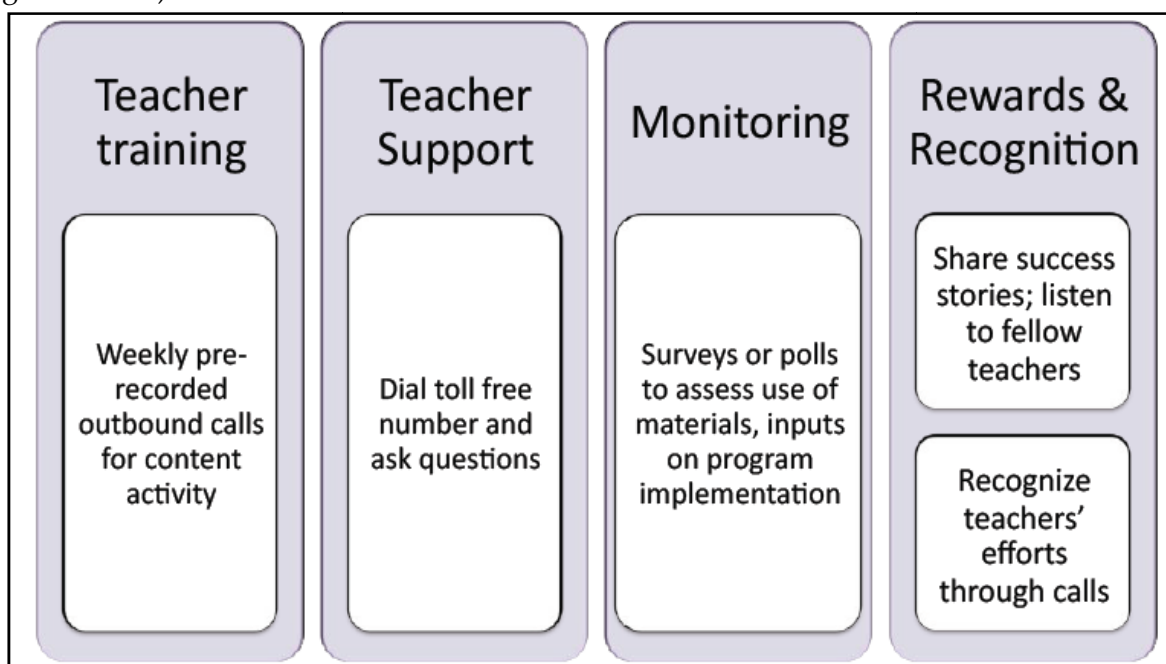


FIGURE 4: GGSS Telephony Training & Support Programme, Source: sesame Workshop India

Content Development and Research

Sesame workshop focuses strongly on a locally-based educational content development process. Keeping this in mind, development of the content for GGSS began with a series of papers written by Indian educational experts on six topics of relevance to children living in India: health, family and community life, culture and religion, elementary education, gender and language. A paper was also commissioned on the media landscape.

An Educational Content Seminar was held in 2005, which was attended by experts on child development belonging to a wide variety of backgrounds. Insight gained from this seminar and the papers led to the development of the Statement of Educational Objectives, which serves as the curriculum for the project.

Educational content is produced and distributed through training opportunities, books, pamphlets, posters, educational games, and electronic media. GGSS draws on partners and existing networks of community-based organizations, NGOs, and government agencies to help create and distribute the materials.

Studies that evaluate usability, appeal, and impact of the series and outreach initiative also help in developing vibrant and up to date content.

Financial Support and Partnerships

Funding for the initial development of the project was provided by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Turner Broadcasting serves as the series' co-producer and main distributor. Miditech – an Indian-owned and operated production company produces the series. Michael and Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) is the primary funding agency for the outreach activities.

Methodology

The Governance Knowledge Centre (GKC) team conducts extensive research to identify initiatives that contribute towards the betterment of public service delivery in India. The Galli Galli Sim Sim (GGSS) project with its focus on using innovative play-way and child centered approaches to train young children and spread awareness about the importance of early childhood care and education is a unique initiative. While the interest in such approaches to teaching and learning is growing in India, they are still the exception rather than the norm. It is very important that such approaches be replicated and incorporated in the Indian schooling system for the all round development of students.

Keeping this mind, GGSS was established as a best practice. The GKC team conducted thorough secondary research using web sources to understand how the initiative works. An interview was held with a representative of the key stakeholder Sesame Workshop India which helped clear gaps in the team's understanding of the initiative and provided deeper insight into the operations and impact of the initiative.

Key Stakeholders

Sesame Workshop India manages, coordinates and promotes the GGSS initiative.

Funding Partners

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Turner Entertainment Networks Asia

ICICI Bank Limited

Production Partners

Miditech

Turner Entertainment

Broadcasters

Doordarshan

Turner (Cartoon Network, POGO)

TABLE 1: Key stakeholders, Source: Sesame Workshop

Lessons Learned

Proper need assessment and Local adaptation of content

Special care was taken to ensure that children and caregivers can relate to GGSS. Hence before the initiative began, Sesame Workshop India's unique approach brought together local educational experts to determine GGSS's educational goals keeping in mind the specific needs of Indian children and caregivers. The aim was to make the content as relevant as possible to Indian culture.

The central focus of the GGSS content is to train Indian children of different abilities, regions, religions, castes, genders to appreciate and celebrate their similarities and differences. GGSS is successfully doing so, as most of the characters on its television show have



FIGURE 6: GGSS Muppets, Source: Sesame Workshop

cultural traits from across India. The art, music and themes used also reflect an Indian flavour.

Innovative tools for reaching a wider audience

GGSS combines play + learning. It promotes fundamental skills in an enjoyable and entertaining manner which attracts children towards its methods. Using multimedia platforms like the television and internet it has generated mass appeal amongst children and caregivers alike. The highlight of the television show is its uniquely designed Muppets; each of them has some characteristic that a child can relate to.



FIGURE 7: Children using a GGSS kit, Source: Sesame Workshop

Its outreach programme uses music and theatre skills to engage children. Children don't view GGSS as an educational initiative, for them it is about fun and colours. Usually the GGSS kits contain colorful and child-appealing illustrations, and stand apart from anything else in the classroom. They invite play and learning. The bioscope has a nostalgia value and engages both children and caregivers.

These tools involve the teachers, children and parents in an interactive process.

Impact on children and caregivers

GGSS partners with consultants⁴ to monitor the progress and impact of the initiative. The GGSS show is rated among the top five regularly watched children's show in India. It reaches approximately 10 million viewers per year across India. Its outreach efforts have reached around two lakh children and caregivers.

Children in non Hindi speaking areas are learning Hindi through GGSS. Children using GGSS educational materials show improved narrative skills and a positive attitude towards issues of



FIGURE 8: GGSS advocates talk to parents about the importance of early childhood education, Source - Sesame Workshop

⁴ TNS Global Research Foundation, GFK mode and BGM policy innovations have surveyed and monitored the impact of GGSS on Indian children and caregivers.

health, hygiene and nutrition.

Teachers and caregivers show greater awareness about the necessity for early childhood education and care and encourage children to participate in GGSS activities and watch the show.

Creating Awareness About ECCE

GGSS's has been successful in developing progressive attitudes towards early childhood education. Overcoming challenges of breaking mind sets and garnering local support for the initiative, GGSS has managed to convince a large section of care givers across India about the absolute necessity of ECCE and about the need to combine education and entertainment.

Way Ahead

Along with catering to the balwadi's run by NGOs, GGSS is also increasing its involvement in anganwadi centres across India and collaborating with the ICDS. In 2011, it has started providing GGSS educational material to anganwadis in Mumbai. This collaboration with a national level scheme increases the impact potential of the initiative vastly and will modify the early education scenario in India.

SWI is currently also working on launching a project that will collectively utilise a community radio platform integrated with mobile technology to spread its educational messages and provide educational content on air and via the mobile.

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Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire

Interview Questions

1. Why was Sesame Street brought to India? Since Early Childhood education is still not given as much importance in India, what steps were taken to convince the stakeholders and target group about its importance and bring them on board?
2. Sesame Workshop India, Turner Entertainment, Miditech , Doordarshan, Cartoon Network and Pogo are the major stakeholders in the Galli Galli Sim Sim(GGSS) project. What are their respective roles? Are there any other stakeholders?
3. GGSS hopes to reach Indian children through innovative education methods combining both play and learn. It runs via the medium of the Hindi language.
 - i. How was the content built and localized?
 - ii. Why was the Hindi language chosen?
4. The television programme 'Galli Galli Sim Sim' is one of the main components of the initiative. The show tries to educate children using various elements from Indian culture and the diverse regions of the country.
 - i. How is this incorporated in the show? Were the muppets designed around this?
 - ii. What are the show timings?
 - iii. What is its coverage area i.e its reach?
5. The community outreach programme supplements the television show in extending the project's reach and impact. Mobile Community Viewings (MCV) is one component of the outreach programme.
 - i. Who runs these community viewings?
 - ii. Where are these viewings organized?
 - iii. How is the community encouraged to participate?
6. GGSS Educational kits are distributed in local child care centres (balwadi's) as a part of the outreach programme.
 - i. How are these centres identified?
 - ii. How are the kits designed?

- iii. Are the teachers trained in the use of these kits? Does the telephony model assist in their training?
7. What were the major challenges in the implementation of the various aspects of GGSS? How were they overcome?
8. How has GGSS impacted and been received by:
 - i. Children
 - ii. Caregivers
9. How does Sesame Workshop India monitor the working of GGSS?
10. There are plans to integrate GGSS tools with the ICDS in Mumbai. How will this be carried out? Are there any other enhancements in store for the future?
11. Can you share the following data with us:
 - i. Viewer ship of the show over a time period
 - ii. Number of Balwadi's reached
 - iii. Number of MCV's held monthly
 - iv. Any other data that highlights impact.