

Government of Mizoram, SSA Mission and Magic Bus India Foundation Programme

Sport for Development Pilot in 50 schools in Aizawl

Key Findings from the Magic Bus Research Studies

Over the academic year (2014-15), Magic Bus India Foundation in partnership with the SSA Mission, Government of Mizoram, rolled out a Sport for Development programme during Physical Education classes in 50 schools in Aizawl. Based on a Situational Assessment report prepared by the organization, a curriculum for children of Classes V- VIII was developed, shared and approved by the SSA Mission leadership. 50 teachers from the selected schools were trained to deliver the curriculum. Magic Bus also appointed a team located in Aizawl- a Project Manager, and two Training and Monitoring Officers to support the teachers and ensure quality delivery of the programme.

In February- March 2015, Magic Bus conducted two studies with a sample of children in the schools in which the programme had been rolled out. One study was an endline measuring specific learnings basis the inputs given during the Magic Bus sessions. This study focused on Education, Social and Emotional Development and Gender attitudes. It also included measures of Physical Fitness including flexibility, agility, speed and leg strength. All findings from this study were compared to a baseline study that was conducted on the same domains at the beginning of the academic year.

The second study was conducted only in two schools, to assess whether Magic Bus had made any impact on the learning levels and academic achievement of children in schools.

The key findings from both studies are as follows:

Social and Emotional Development

The earliest impacts and adjustments in children's outlook as a result of being part of Magic Bus sessions, are seen in the domain of Social and Emotional Development (also called Life Skills). Since they are encouraged to regularly reflect on their own and others' behavior, children show an increased awareness of themselves and the importance of knowing how they impact the lives of those around them. The findings in this domain will progressively improve in terms of depth through successive years in the programme.

There is an **increased level of self-awareness** among children with more of them being able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Currently, 73% children are aware of their strengths and 71% are aware of their weaknesses.

Children also now feel more **confident talking to people in different situations** – a 7% increase from the baseline, and in setting their own short and long term plans – 10% increase from baseline.

The most encouraging sign is that 8% more children now feel that they have the **power to change their lives**.

Physical Fitness

The Fitness Tests were conducted with children in May 2014 and then in Jan-Feb 2015. The findings are encouraging, with **children showing improvements on all four tests**. 87% children showed improvements in speed, 87% also showed improvements in agility, 12% showed increase in leg strength and 11% demonstrated improved flexibility.

Education

There is an **increase in educational aspiration** among the children, with all children surveyed during the endline wanting to study beyond graduation.



During the baseline 32% children were unaware of **benefits under the Right to Education Act**. The endline showed a marked improvement with only 5% children reporting a lack of awareness of provisions of the Act.

The study of learning outcomes in two schools showed that **96% children demonstrate a high level of engagement in the classroom**, and **95% have a positive outlook towards their teachers**. In both schools, the children were able to read at the level of the sentence comfortably, and in Classes 7 and 8 all children were able to do division.

Attendance of children has shown a decline at the endline. While this may be due to the tapering off of class sessions towards the end of the academic year, it will be focused on in the programme for Year 2.

Gender

By virtue of being a programme centred on the playground children realise early on, that gender differences are constructed, and that all children, if given equal opportunities on the playground, can excel equally. 93% now agree that **sports is equally important for boys and girls**. This is the beginning of rethinking gender discrimination norms.

48% children also accept that even as they reach adolescence, **girls and boys can play together**. This is a 10% improvement on baseline scores.

8% more children now agree that men and women both make **equally good leaders**. The endline score on this is 92%

16% more children are **confident of saying 'no' if touched inappropriately**. This is a significant impact since children are learning that they have rights over their own body.

However, there needs to be a focus on helping children realise that they must ensure consent before engaging in any kind of physical contact with another person.

Conclusion

The overall findings therefore reinforce the faith of the SSA Mission Mizoram and Magic Bus India Foundation in the potential of Sport-for-Development programmes to make a positive impact in the lives of children. The evidence indicates a need to continue with the programme and monitor specific outcomes.

Post Script

Magic Bus India Foundation extends its heartfelt thanks to the team at the SSA Mission, Aizawl for its continued engagement and support on this project. Warm thanks must be extended to all 50 schools who have been part of this pilot – particularly the Headmasters/ Headmistresses and the teachers, who have shown commitment and dedication in the roll out of the programme.

The Magic Bus India Foundation team in Aizawl has operated with great responsibility, representing Magic Bus in the true spirit of the organization.

We feel confident that this report sets the stage for a larger and longer engagement in Mizoram, and seek the continued guidance and partnership of the SSA Mission in the same.