THE PROMISE FOUNDATION.

ANNUAL REPORT (PAL and WAY Programmes) 1999 – 2000

1. Introduction

The PAL and WAY programmes aim at enhancing Learning Skills amongst Primary-Middle School children and providing Career Guidance Services for High School students from vulnerable sections of society.

The PAL programme identifies learning needs among primary and middle school children and offers systematic and individualised educational programmes. The programme targets literacy skills, especially reading and writing skills, as well as life skills (see Appendix 1 for curriculum themes).

The WAY programme focuses on study skills and careers guidance for high school students (see Appendix 1 for curriculum themes).   Particularly important is the emphasis laid on students' thinking patterns.   The objective here is to enhance their awareness unhelpful career beliefs and enhance their career decision-making skills.

2. Stages in the execution of the PAL and WAY projects

Stage 1 of the project was the identification and enrolment of schools into the programme. A total of 11 corporation and government-aided schools in South Bangalore participated in the programme.

Stage 2 was the negotiating and finalising of timetables for sessions with the target groups.

Stage 3 PAL programme: was a pre-intervention screening. Class teachers were asked to identify children based on the following criteria:

*   Those under performing in class
*   Those with behavioural problems
*   Those likely to drop out

A total of 135 children in the five schools were referred to the programme. Each child went through an individual assessment. A total of 129 children who had obtained the lowest scores on assessment attended the **small group intensive sessions** (See Appendix 2 for the school-wise break up). All children, including those performing at and above class level participated in our **large group/ whole class interventions**.

Stage 3 WAY programme: was also a pre-intervention assessment. Career Beliefs and Self Efficacy Beliefs of the target group, of high schoolers, was collected. An interesting trend in the information gathered at this stage was the greater accuracy in careers beliefs and self efficacy beliefs among the girls in these schools when compared to the boys.   Boys tended to show greater career belief distortions (e.g. 'Even if I study well I cannot get a job') and lower levels of self efficacy beliefs about their potential.

Stage 4 of the project was the actual implementation of the PAL and WAY programmes. This stage spanned a total of two academic terms. In the month of November a mid-project assessment indicated the following:

- The rate of improvement had been varied across schools and individual children.

- Children had gained an average of 3 to 5 points on the reading and spelling test. On the numeracy section of the assessment gains in test scores were for 6 to 18 points.

- On an average the group with the least gap between child's level and the class level (identified as group 5) gained the most from the programme. Children in group 1 (greatest gap between child's level and the class level) showed a slower pace of skill learning.

3.   End of Academic Year Assessment
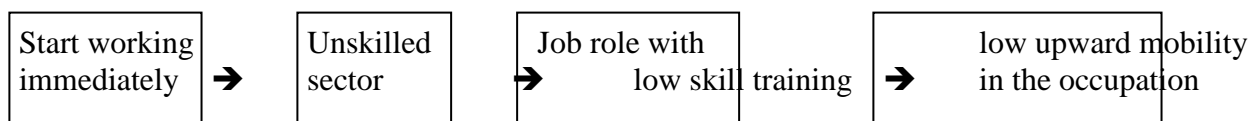
3.1.   PAL (March-April, 2000)

All children attending the small group programme in the participating schools were evaluated at the end of the academic year for skill attainments.

Children sampled for Post-Intervention Assessment

SCHOOL	N
1.00	26
2.00	17
3.00	17
4.00	29
5.00	26

3.2.   End of Academic Year Assessment: WAY (May-June, 2000)

The assessment for the WAY programme started after the final school leaving exam. This is when students have to start making decisions for the next step. Often students plan for long drawn out theoretical courses for which the family does not have adequate financial resources. Unable to seek admission into degree courses because of either poor marks or poor family resources, the most common post-school path is:

Start working immediately	➔	Unskilled sector	➔	Job role with low skill training	➔	low upward mobility in the occupation

An important focus of the WAY programme had been to target opportunity awareness, especially about short term, low cost skill diplomas and certificate courses. May- June was considered an important time to support and guide the target group into skill courses. The group that was expected to be most vulnerable was those who would fail the Std. 10 exam. Approximately 40% of the group who had been met during the school year stayed in touch with our project assistants. Telephonic counselling was found to a particularly strong medium. A cross section of the telephonic counselling themes are given in the table below:

Queries & Anxieties	Counselling Targets
I have failed. What should I do?	Find a part time skill-training course. Complete SSLC in next re-exam or as an external student.
I have got a first class. My parents want to know where I should apply.	Names of colleges, government polytechnic and ITIs in Bangalore South.
What is my talent? Should I take any work that I find?	Best to take on an apprenticeship where skills will be taught. Negotiate for certificate for skills learned.

The WAY programmes have been successful in ensuring that the target group continues to use our counselling services even after they have left school. Tracking children outside the institutional setting has proved to be extremely difficult and an important focus of next year's programme will be to establish post-school contact programmes.

4. Dissemination of Information about the PAL and WAY methodology

One of the main aims of the project was the dissemination of the PAL-WAY methodology to children's workers. By December 1999, three teacher workshops had been held about the PAL methodology, Life skills and Study skills in the classroom and Physical and Social Development in the classroom. Dissemination of information was also planned for NGOs and other institutions working with children. Details of our efforts in these areas are given below.

4.1. PAL and WAY methodology for Teachers in the Participating Schools

Three teacher workshops were help to disseminate information about the PAL and WAY programmes that were being conducted in their schools. While most schools signed up for the programme many teachers did not attend all sessions. This is in spite of a letter of permission form the Education Department allowing us to conduct the training programme during a working day. The head masters and head mistresses of the participating schools have ensured us that there will be better teacher participation in the next academic year.

The few teachers who did attend the training programmes took time to fully appreciate the basic skills thrust of our programme. Many of the teachers did seem to be able to come to the level of children with the learning problems. They seemed to use the performance levels of the *above* average children to set the expected class target, instead of the minimal levels of learning (MLL),

as prescribed by the education department. This is a teacher attitude that makes the under-achievement of the children in the PAL programme particularly stark for the teachers. It is anticipated that with continuous interactions between the teachers and the PAL teachers, the basic skills thrust of education will be better communicated.

4.2. PAL-WAY methodology for Out of School children

A series of training programmes were conducted for teachers of Non Formal Education Centres in Bangalore. Educational levels of the NFE teachers ranged from 5th class to post graduates. The Basic Skills thrust of the PAL programme closely matches the targets of NFE centres. Dissemination of the methodology has been structured around intake assessments, continuous assessments and teaching learning aids specifically for reading skills, writing skills and number skills.

4.2.1 National Conference on 'Literacy and Creative Activities among School Drop-Out Children'

The Promise Foundation was invited to present the PAL and WAY methodology at the national seminar on 'Literacy and Creative Activities among School Drop-out Children' conducted by National Institute for Public Co-ordination and Child Development (NIPCCD). Our presentation focused mainly on the assessment and ability grouping initiatives of the PAL and WAY programmes (abstract of the presentation in Appendix 3). During informal discussions after the presentation, the teaching-learning aids used in our sessions were discussed.

4.3. PAL-WAY methodology for Institutionalised children

The Promise Foundation has been invited by the Department of Women and Child Welfare and the Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare to introduce the PAL and WAY methodology in the Juvenile Home for Boys in Bangalore. The Juvenile Home and After Care Home for boys in Bangalore has approximately 250 boys between the age of 12 and 21, who come from different parts of Karnataka and neighbouring states. Phase one of the project was the individual assessment of every boy for his literacy skills and vocational needs. An action plan report was then be submitted to the department for literacy and careers planning through the in-house school and vocational centre in the Home. Individual reports were made available for each student. It is anticipated that these individual reports will be useful for the following boys:

- those who will go back to their districts once their family has been traced
- those who have been placed in inappropriate classes. (e.g. currently in Std. 2 but with skills level of Std. 5)
- those who need a clear literacy programme not bound by the formal school curriculum
- those who have been receiving only vocational training and no literacy inputs.

Phase two of the project is teacher training and transfer of core skills for the PAL and WAY methodology. It is expected that teachers, wardens, house-fathers and house-mothers from remand homes from four other districts in Karnataka will participate in the teacher workshops. TPF staff supervised the implementation of the PAL and WAY methodology over a six month period to ensure greater skill transfer.

5.   Feedback About The PAL and WAY Programmes

One important source of feedback for the PAL programme is the changes that can be brought about in class room behaviours. Feedback from teachers across all schools indicated that the PAL programme has been consistently positive.   Teachers have specifically commented on better concentration in class and lesser numbers of errors during class activities like answering questions or completing sums.   Interestingly teachers have commented that several children also show an improvement in spontaneous participation in class activities and greater initiative in clarifying doubts.   In the case of children who had been labelled as rebellious, distracting to the class and restless, the consistent feedback has been an increase in concentration and improved discipline. Teacher feedback also indicates that most of the children who were inhibited and reticent in class, now appear to be much more responsive and participative in class. Most importantly feedback from parents and teachers has been that the child's attitude to school has changed and she is much happier to come to school everyday.

Another measure of the success of the programme is the continued support from the management of participating schools to continue the programme for the next academic year.   Further, the participating schools have recommended the programme to other neighbouring schools.

5.   Getting Ready for the Next Academic Year

5.1 Revisions in the Screening Tools

In the course of the workshops for the teachers of the participating schools we held a review of the skill levels that are expected at the end of each class. The PAL screening tools had been developed with the Minimal Levels of Learning (MLL) as the norm against which an individual child's performance is graded.   Based on discussions revisions have been introduced in the Std. 5 skills targets.   Among the revisions are the increased role of reading skills in numeracy activities (e.g. statement sums) and writing skills for short essays by the end of Std. 5.

5.2 Teacher's guide for movement and physical education activities

Over the months of December to March the PAL programme trial tested a series of movement and physical activities for different age groups in the 11 participating schools. Along with volunteers a teachers guide was developed for use by teachers in Government and Corporation schools, Anganwadis, NFEs and children's institutions. The teacher's guide acknowledges the absence of playgrounds and open spaces and the reality of overcrowded classrooms.   The movement exercises thus focus on either using only hands or upper torso or in small batches. Class management tips when conducting these activities are included in the guide.

5.3. Survey of education needs and career plans among families in the programme

For most of the academic year 1999-2000 our teachers and social workers worked with the beneficiaries along with their school and their teachers. While parents were considered critical for improving the effectiveness and reach of the inputs, this could not be adequately addressed through the occasional home visits that had been planned for every child. Thus in January of 2000 TPF staff members and volunteers began a survey to gather information directly from parents of the children about their educational and careers needs. 458 families were surveyed representing children from four of the schools where the PAL programme was in use. The details of the survey are as follows:

Approximately 14% of the children had dropped out schools. In our sample a large percentage (64%) left school because they did not like what was on offer. The phrases we heard were 'not interested', 'not nice', 'not interesting'.

The stage of education when most of the dropouts occurred is important to plan preventive and support programmes. In the communities surveyed 6.1% of the drop outs occurred at Primary school level and another 36.7% at the middle school level. Almost 55% of the dropouts occurred at the high school level. It would be relevant to ask what do these children do after they leave school? In our sample approximately 63% were at home. This group was not planning to go back to school, get into any skilled training or seek any form of employment immediately. Of the rest of the 38% who were employed and earning, 90% were helpers with no skill training in the job. The future prospects of this group is one of unskilled labour and continuous under employment and chronic unemployment in the long run.

Awareness of opportunities available for young persons today and the nature of careers planning that occurs within the families of our target group was another area focussed on by the survey. Traditional ranking of courses continued to be prevalent among the families with Science being ranked as the best and only 13.4% considering a diploma or skill based course as 'good'. Only 20.2% of the families had basic awareness about skill based and job oriented courses. On the issue of gender it is important to note that only 2% of the families surveyed undervalued education and career planning for girl. In other words as high as 98% of the families in this survey saw education and career planning as equally important for both girls and boys.

Some important implications of the survey for the PAL and WAY programme in these communities are as follows:

- community based dissemination of information about study methods at the middle and high school level.
- community based dissemination of information about job oriented and skills courses for drop outs.
- monitoring of skills opportunities and training opportunities within the sector where the out of school child may already be a helper.
- planning literacy programmes for the out of school child who has received upto Std. 4 level of education. Planning of programmes that go beyond literacy acquisition to programmes about reading comprehension, information gathering and information interpretation.

- community based dissemination of information about job oriented and skills courses after high school.

5.4 Links with the community and government departments

An important focus of TPF activities in the months of March and April, 2000 was to consolidate links within the communities where the children and young persons in the PAL and WAY programme live.   Interactions have been initiated with community leaders.   Discussions have focused mainly on educational and leisure activities that are available within the community for the children and young persons of the community. TPF has also been working on consolidating links with government departments who offer services that are directly linked with the PAL and WAY project including the office of the Deputy Director of Public Instructions, the Education Department, the Bangalore Mahanagara Pallike, DSERT and the Department of Women and Child Development.

APPENDIX 1 :   Curriculum Themes

PAL : Intensive, Small Group Programmes:

AREA

TEACHING TARGETS

Arithmetic: •*Recognition of Numbers 1-100 (sequentially and randomly)*
                              •*Recognition of the plus sign*
                              •*Concept of addition*
                              •*Ability to add on fingers*
                              •*Ability to work out single digit addition*
                              •*Recognition of minus sign*
                              •*Concept of subtraction*
                              •*Ability to carry out single digit subtraction*
                              •*Concept of multiplication*
                              •*Tables upto 7 and random presentation of the same*

Reading: •*Recognition of vowels and consonants*
                              •*Recognition of signs*
                              •*Word attack skills -simple cvcvcv words*
                              •*Ability to read simple words with /a/ matraa.*

Writing: •*Formation of letters and spacing*
                              •*Ability to write vowels and consonants*
                              •*Ability to write two and three letter words.*

Life Skills: •*Personal Responsibility*
                              •*Turn Taking*

Health education: •*Personal Hygiene.*

PAL : Whole Class/Large Group Programmes:

TOPIC   **METHOD**

Health education :
Nutrition and proper eating habits   *Song, story telling and games.*
Food Groups and Food Sources   *Mask games and quizzes.*

Design and creativity building activities :
Toy making   *Mask making (food masks)*
Origami   *Basket and Box*

All toys made in the large group programmes are taken home by the participants.

WAY : **Programmes for Class 8:**

TOPIC **METHOD**

Learning Skills :
●What are the Study Skills *Case studies & students as peer counsellors*
●Paying Attention *Breathing and Concentration Exercises*
●Scheduling Ski1ls *Making daily timetables*
Introspection :
●My talent areas *Toy making   (stick puppets)*

WAY : **Programmes for Class 10:**

TOPIC **METHOD**

Career Guidance:

●Understanding Myself *Aptitude and Interest Test.*
●Understanding my Beliefs *Case Studies and Role Plays.*
●Planning for the Future: *Case studies and Role Plays on career*
preparation self-efficacy.

●Understanding the World of Work *Careers information.*
●Developing Career Alternatives *Work Sheets and Discussion.*
Case studies and child as peer counselor.

Learning Skills :

●What are Study Skills *Case studies and students as peer counselors*
●Paying Attention *Breathing and Concentration Exercises*
●Scheduling Ski1ls *Making daily timetables*

APPENDIX 2:   List of schools in the PAL and WAY programme

Primary and Middle Schools:

1. Adugodi Government Middle School
2. Ejipura Government School.
3. Viveknagar Higher Primary Corporation School
4   Vivek Nagar Kannada Government School
5. Kormangala Government Model Boys Primary School

High Schools:

1. Government Pre-University College, Madivala.
2. Government High School, Wilson Garden.
3. Srimathi Gangamma HobbeGowda High School, Wilson Garden.
4. Government High School Adugodi.
5. Corporation High School, Shanthinagar.
6. Corporation High School , Byrasandra.

All schools in the PAL-WAY programme are either government or corporation schools located in South Bangalore.

PAL and WAY Assessments undertaken for the Department of Women and Child Development:

1. The Juvenile Home School for Boys, Hosur Road.
2. Students in the Juvenile Home who are studying in 3 high schools and 2 ITIs and PUC centres

APPENDIX 3 :

Literacy and creativity among School Drop-out Children
Our experiences with the PAL-WAY Programme.
Abstract for the One Day workshop conducted by the National Institute for Public Co-operation and   Child Development (NIPCCD) on   Jan. 27th, 2000.

The PAL and WAY programme is for children and youth in the age range of 6 to 16 years and living in difficult circumstances.   The programme is conducted

a) as an in-school programme, for children who are already in school but are vulnerable to failing and dropping out of school, becoming child labourers, developing anti-social attitudes and being underemployed or unemployed when they grow into adulthood.

b) as an out-of -school programme, for children who have dropped out of school and are either attending non-formal education centres or have been brought together for an occasional workshop.

This presentation will focus on our out-of-school experiences with school drop-outs in Bangalore.   The presentation will only present the literacy aspects of our project and not go into the creativity aspects of our project.

The PAL programme specifically targets learning skills.   The presentation will briefly introduce the methodology used in our project to screen child, identify their ability levels and make ability groups for literacy inputs.

The WAY programme targets study skills and career guidance.   The presentation will briefly focus on some of the main study skills   difficulties and career guidance needs reported by our target group and our attempts at developing programmes for them.

Paper Presented by:

Sonali Nag Arulmani, Associate Director, The Promise Foundation.
Ms. Swaroopa, Project Assistant - WAY
Ms. Tea Liatinen, Volunteer - PAL-WAY
Mrs. Rathna Latha,   Project Co-ordinator - PAL