

Annual report

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Founder's Note

I've always maintained school and college did nothing for me except teach me to read, write and calculate and then I met some kids face to face who did not have the same advantage and I realized how much id been taking what I had for granted.

Over the years one does realize that the process of education, implants many things subtly in our brains that enable us to deal with life situations, so coming across kids who did not seem to have the ability to read write think logically or have the right values gave me pause

Do you believe if we have the power to make a difference we must exercise it? I believe we must.... "If you don't use it, you loose it. Whatever u have, including possibilities or even good intentions will get wasted if you don't act on them when the opportunity presents itself.....

I believe I have stumbled upon an idea which can make a difference and change things for a few and perhaps even for many eventually...that is why I choose to do what I do today.

In his bestselling 1946 book, Man's Search for Meaning, Frankl said that the difference between those who had lived and those who had died at the camp came down to one thing: Meaning.

Those who found meaning even in the most horrendous circumstances were far more resilient to suffering than those who did not. "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing," Frankl wrote — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Research has shown that having purpose and meaning in life increases overall well-being and life satisfaction, improves mental and physical health, enhances resiliency, self-esteem, and decreases the chances of depression.

The pursuit of meaning is what makes human beings uniquely human. By putting aside our selfish interests to serve someone or something larger than ourselves — by devoting our lives to "giving" rather than "taking" — we are not only expressing our fundamental humanity, but are also acknowledging that there is more to the good life than the pursuit of simple happiness.

I believe working with Angel Xpress does as much good for the volunteers and the team members as it does for the children who are the beneficiaries.

I am impressionable. Stories move me... as a child of perhaps 15 I read a story about a French national living in Kolkata, where I grew up, who had adopted five street children. He had changed the lives of these children overnight. From nearly being beggars on the street they became school students with a normal life, enough food and fair opportunities. All because one man did not hesitate to go out of his way to do something for others.

This story taught me a lesson that was to become one of the pillars of Angel Xpress Foundation. "That if you have the power and the capacity to do something that can make life better for others you must use it."

I also believe it's important to watch out for signs and signals from the universe that can guide us to our destiny - To trust that if we follow our hearts somewhere the dots will join, is sometimes the biggest gift we can give ourselves. My story is rather a dramatic one, but I am sure if we wait for the right

moment to arrive, there is drama and excitement waiting to happen in all our lives

Failure is sometimes just the universe telling you that your mission in life is somewhere else; in my case it was being fired from a job I thought I loved and had spent 14 years being successful at... I had a falling out with the same boss who had nurtured me fondly thru most of those 14 years...I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life next... I thought about my childhood dream of doing some good work but the social space seemed very complicated to an outsider. I had forgotten that 15 years ago when I started in the financial services industry I knew nothing about that either but had managed to climb the ladder up a decent distance...

I believe the things that happened at this time and over the next few years were a universal conspiracy of sorts...I got offered a job that brought me to Mumbai ..., I changed 3 jobs in 3 years but in the meantime I had really settled into Mumbai ... I had made loads of friends and had started loving the feel of living in the city, so much so that I decided to celebrate completing 20 years as a working woman by rewarding myself with a year off – of living as a lady of leisure in one of the most expensive cities in the world :-)

Leisurely brunches, days spend reading novels in coffee shops and movies in the afternoon sound really glamorous till that's all you have on your agenda...

the life of leisure soon began to pall. I was itching to do something that gave a structure to my day. An old friend suggested using this time to check out the social space which had remained a distant dream... I set off on a quest for practical exposure by volunteering ... this brought me eventually to a street school of sorts... on my morning walks, daily, I would see some children sitting on mats and a few adults teaching them on the sea side promenade... I offered to bring breakfast for these kids who obviously were from poor homes and got I roped into volunteering to teach...

My first interaction with the kids was a rude shock; 12/13 year olds in grades 6 and 7 struggled with basics. My 8-year-old nephew could read and calculate better... I decided to do the best I could and I started going there every day. A few months later, just as I started to look around to get back into the work space, the topsy turvy stock markets had put the job markets thru the wringer once again. Simultaneously a message I had posted on FB asking for warm clothes for the kids I taught, half of whom came clad in t-shirts on chilly winter mornings drew over 3000 calls over 10 days. Numerous people wanting to help in a variety of ways made me realize that it wasn't just these kids who needed help... there were loads of people who really wanted to make a contribution and just did not know how...

In country of a billion plus people with 70% experiencing various levels of poverty, expecting the system to do everything cannot work, I believe each one of us has the responsibility of doing what we can. I have always been against unproductive giving e.g. giving to beggars, but if one has a chance to do something that will empower and enable we must step up and do it...

Egged on by my mentor/teacher/Guru – who told me that the universe was guiding me to my purpose - I started Angel Xpress to create a bridge between people who wanted to help and kids who needed help.

Anubha Sharma

Director and Co-founder

Introduction

India continues to deal with the problem of poor literacy among first generation learners. At its heart, Angel Xpress is a platform for the affluent to reach out and tutor and mentor needy students.

Vision

AXF aspires to raise consciousness among the educated affluent who display a social conscience; we want the fact that by helping people with a small contribution of their time, the educated can tutor, mentor, guide and hence help first generation learners dwelling in the slums of Mumbai find their true potential become a realization. We want to make the conversion of intent to action easy for willing communities and citizen groups by making our format, curriculum and execution capacities developed over 4 years of hard core ground work available to all.

Mission

To progress the daily lives of underprivileged children in Mumbai while guiding them towards an improved future.

- By infusing in the **children** a love for learning coupled with a desire to excel to the best of their **abilities**.
- By improving and enhancing the **childhood experience** for our children.
- By making **communities** discover their opportunities and potential to action and bring change by contributing to the cause.
- By collaborating to be a knowledge partner and supporter of local communities, **schools**, corporate, government agencies, etc.
- By ensuring transparent and honest use of donors' money so that they know exactly how it is being channelized, at any given point of time.



Model

The AXF model is unusual in that we are a team of people working to utilize available resources in society for the benefit of underprivileged children. It is the sheer will and effort of a number of individuals who have given their time to the cause in varying degrees that has brought us to a pass where over 800 first generation learners receive daily tutoring from their highly educated affluent neighbours and are experiencing fuller and happier lives.

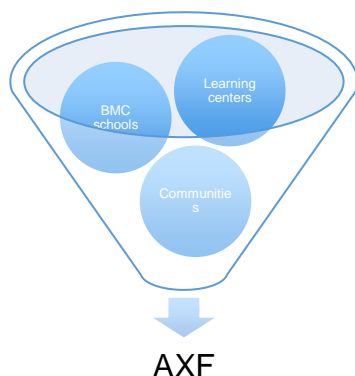
The AXF experience brings for a child not just a better education but also added fun in their lives through sponsored visits to the cinema, amusement parks, educational trips to movies and opportunities to interact with and learn from school and college students as well as with volunteers from corporate houses through knowledge and exchange sessions.

The executive team of Angel Xpress consists of a small group of dedicated people led by the founders Anubha Sharma and Beenaa Advani. Our Founders

have conceptualized and executed this program over the last 4 years; both have given up their commercial careers to bring this idea to fruition.

AXF Learning centres

Through this program, we facilitate free tutoring for school going children from



slum communities with help from their educated, affluent neighbours who volunteer as teachers and also participate as mentors and guides. For an hour every day, 8 locations in Mumbai, mostly shaded corners in public parks are transformed to class rooms where over 200 people from fortunate backgrounds have joined hands with us to tutor almost 800 first generation learners in

their neighbourhoods. For this matter, we would like to highlight the huge effort that we have done and we keep doing for volunteer recruitment and engagement. This whole program would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers.

In-School English program

Children studying in vernacular medium schools have been found to have little or no ability in English. Our In-School English program helps such children with daily English lessons inside schools with permission from the education department by AXF sponsored teachers. We reach out to over 1500 students under this program which was initiated in 2014-15.

Free Franchise for Mumbai Communities

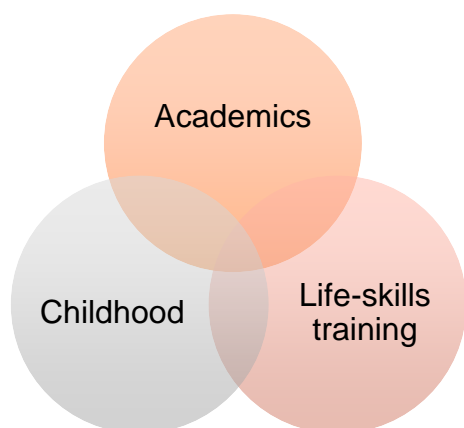
We are a free service provider for Mumbai communities who are interested in helping underprivileged children in their locality.

Our pillars

At AXF, we understand that an individual is much more than formal knowledge and teaching, therefore, we have created a multidisciplinary educational program that involves from non-formal education centres as well as the public BMC

schools in Mumbai to personality development and talent development regular activities.

Our aim is to provide the children from underprivileged backgrounds a set of tools to face a better future while maintaining focus on having an appropriate joyful childhood.



- Complete non-formal education program for underprivileged children.
- Life coping skills and livelihood training for teenagers.
- Childhood improvement programs along with talent and personality development.

Daily-life improvement program

Daily-life improvement program is the 'leitmotiv' of our organization. This happens continuously in parallel with academics in every centre.

- Improving **self-esteem** and self-confidence
- Providing daily **nutritional inputs** (fruits/snacks)
- Regular **health** check-ups (dental, eye, etc.)
- Lifestyle and **educational trips**
- **Talent** development
- **Counselling** sessions

This is only possible thanks to **dedicated groups** and devoted **regular volunteers** in every centre.

Experience-driven curriculum

- **Continuous improvement** of our **own syllabus** and assessment methodology based on more than four years of experience, incorporating the feedback of our volunteers through our comprehensive evaluation and **monitoring process**.
- We utilize expert external consultants for continuous **volunteer training**.
- Our program includes different disciplines such as English, Math, Science, Computer science, Arts and crafts and Music; being **English** and **Math** our main focus.

Community involvement

- **Partnership** with local **NGOs** and **citizen groups** provides us with the capacity of reaching further and faster our targets. **Examples** of this are our partnerships with "Lets Read Program" (an initiative by the NGO United Way of Mumbai), "Team Spreading Smiles" "First Moms Club", and "Angel Dentist Network "via Dr. Diksha Tahilraman among others.
- **Involvement** of **parents** and tutors is done from the beginning, empowering the community to take ownership of the program and start volunteering at their nearest centre.
-

Sustainability and scalability

- AXF is a group of individuals working to utilize available resources in society for the benefit of underprivileged children and creating programs which are both sustainable and scalable.
- We have developed a **team** of **dedicated individuals** who **supervise** the running of the existing **programs** and also put in a lot of effort in scoping and developing opportunities for growth.

- Our attempt is to create programs which are either community run and financed or **corporate sponsored**.
- We offer our **expertise free** of cost to citizen bodies and **schools** which can run the program under their own steam and finances post a reasonable **period of training** and hand holding. The Billabong High Centre for instance is supported by the school and the parent body with nil financial commitment from AXF. We are talking along similar lines with **various schools from Mumbai**.
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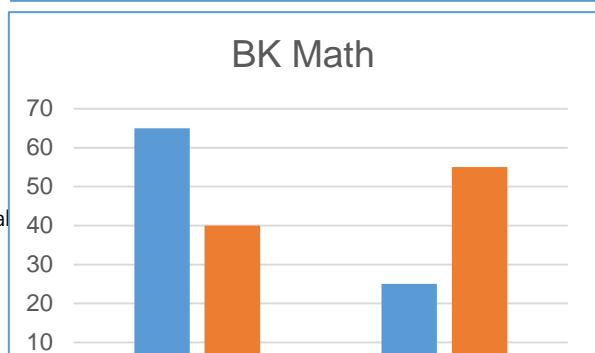
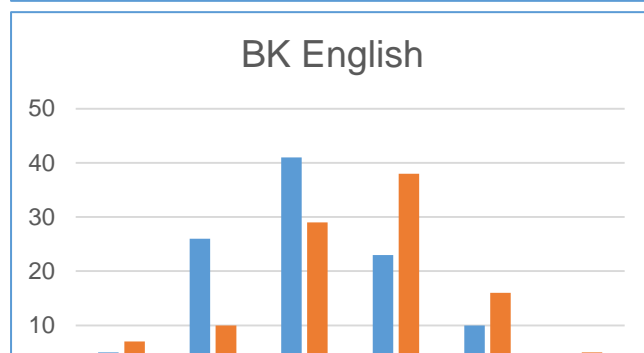
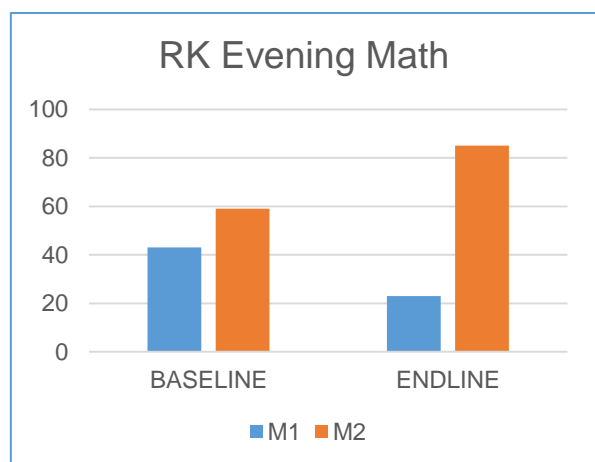
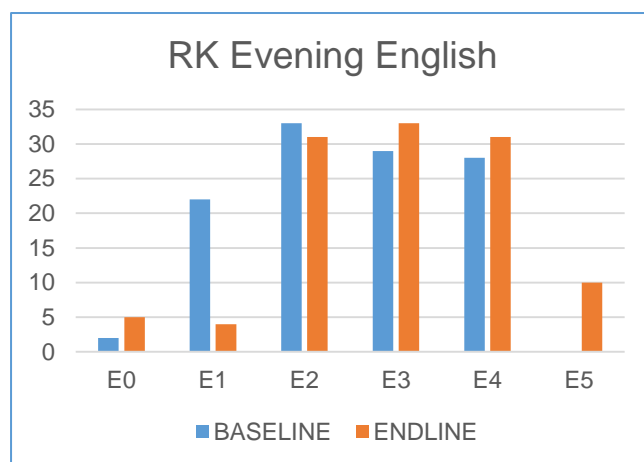
Results and review

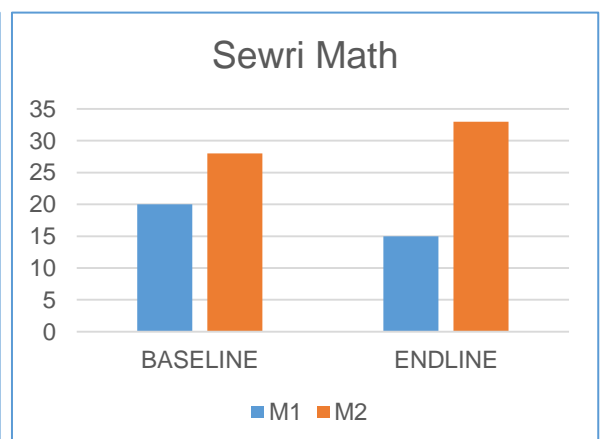
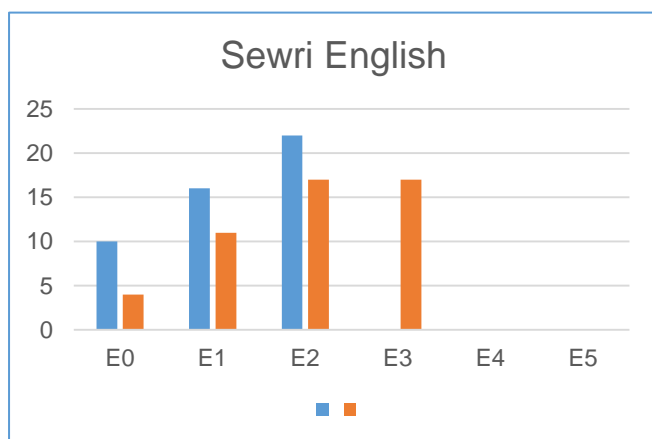
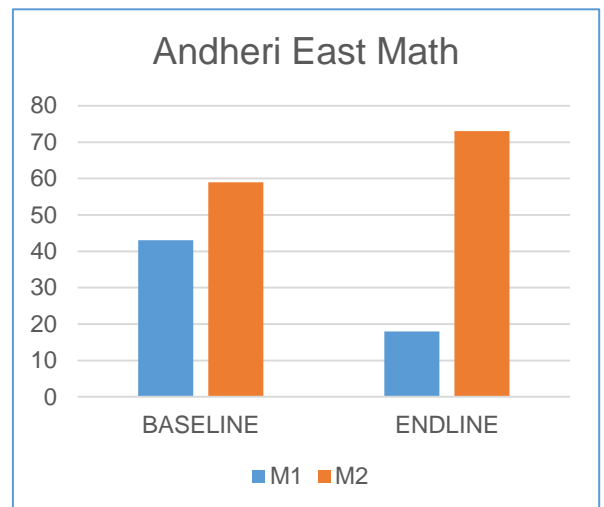
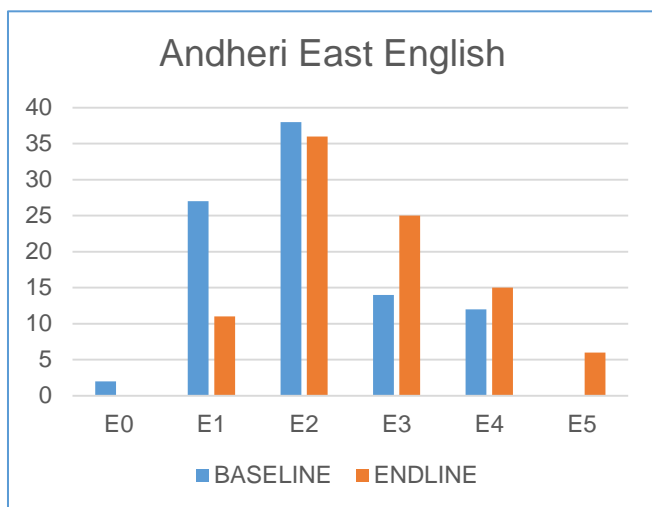
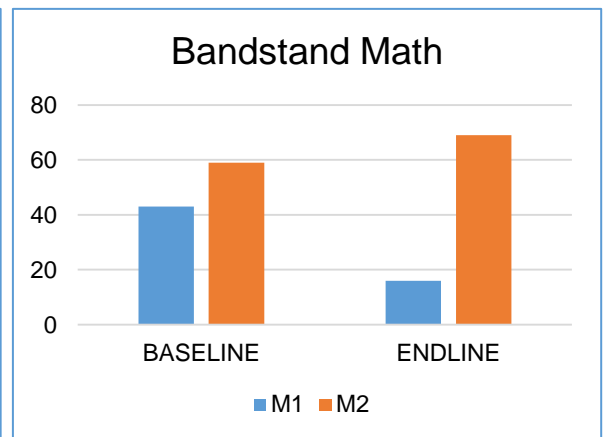
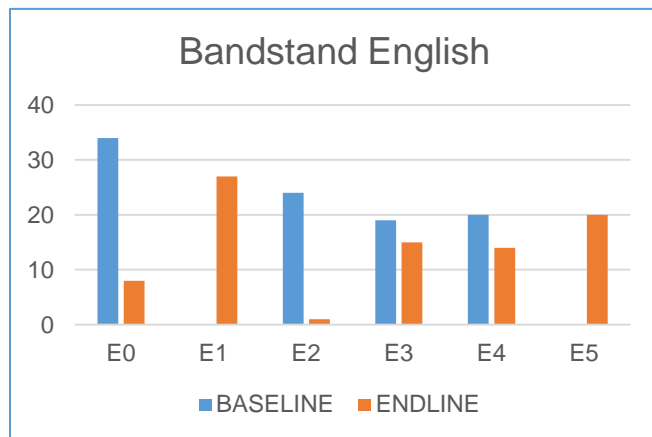
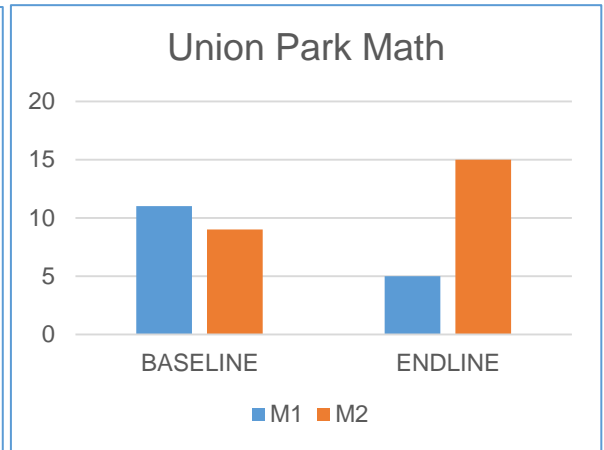
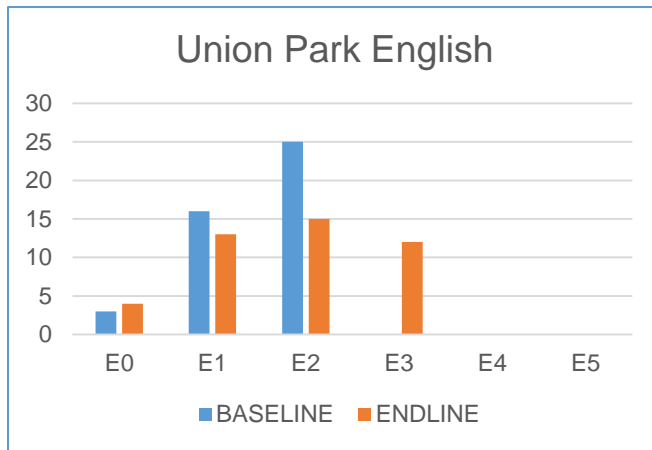
Learning centres academic results

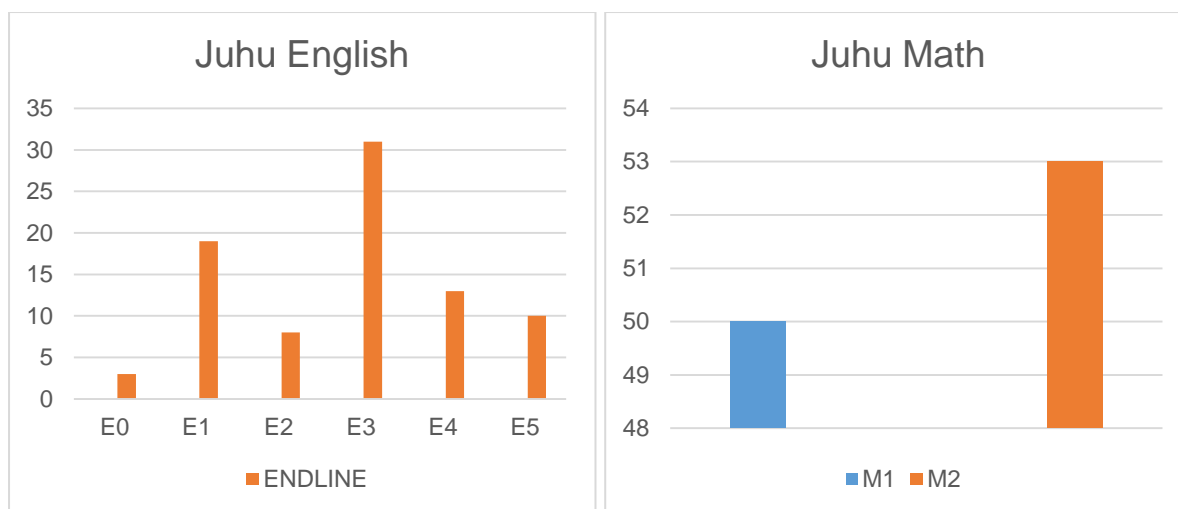
Number of students and their respective levels at the beginning of the year and at the end of the academic period.

EX: English level from zero (E0) to upper-intermediate (E5)

MX: M1 stands for low maths skill for your standard, and M2 high skills for your actual standard







Results review

In general, we can be very happy with the academic results of this year. The majority of the children are following the program with positive results.

The main movement that we can observe, which is common to all the centres, is the expected movement of English and Math students to the next level towards the year.

Small variations between E0 students are due to incorrect identification of the student's level at the beginning of the year.

Specific centre-wise comments will be done in the next section of the document.

In-School English Program

The AXF In-School English program is being conducted in vernacular medium BMC schools in H-West Ward since 2014. This is the third consecutive year that AXF has been granted permission to continue our program in the BMC schools.

Why is this program of so much importance? We at AXF believe that English is a language that can help a child get better opportunities; is ignored in vernacular schools. We took up the onus to fill this gap by appointing teachers for the English language in these schools, ensuring a more complete education for

children. This has shown a reverse in the trend of dropping enrolments in vernacular medium schools which has in turn reduced burden on pockets of parents who cannot afford private schools

In 2015-16, we appointed proficient English teachers in 8 vernacular medium school locations covering almost 1700 children, providing English lessons under our In-school English program. The program ideally runs from June to March every year.

Learning process of the program

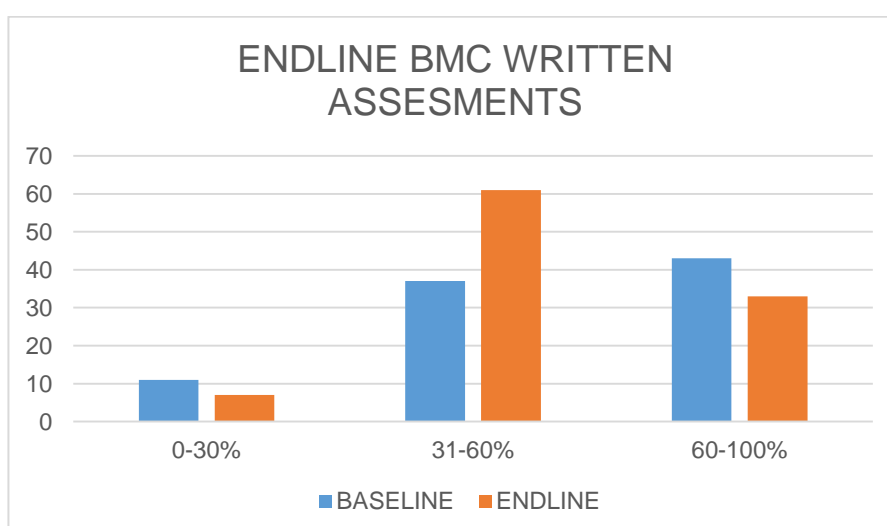
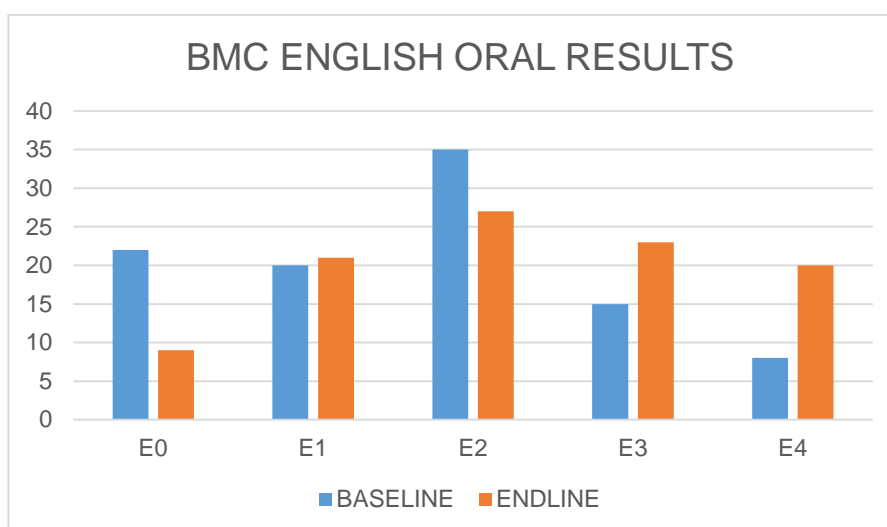
While at a learning centre level, we cater to our kids according to their subject abilities, the same is not possible in the school program set up. At the in-school English program our aim is for every child to understand what he or she is being taught during the English class. An AXF teacher spends close to 2.5 hours every week within a class room and strives to make the children understand the basics of English literature and grammar. A month wise teaching curriculum is put into place, keeping in mind the class syllabus and timelines provided by the school. The same is followed by our teachers through the year.

Academic results

Everything we do for our kids is as important as our assessment of their work and the feedback we give them on it. The results of the assessment influence and encourage them to work harder to improve and excel in their education. The assessments for the English program are also uniquely designed to cater to the required parameters. The kids are testing on various oral and written parameters through the year, which are then recorded to compare and measure progress at the end of the year.

Each child is individually assessed on their oral and written English skills based on the syllabus taught through the semester. With the main assessments taking place at the start of the year and the finals just before year ends. As depicted below in the graphs, we have been fairly successful in imparting knowledge to our kids via the in-school English program both via oral and written studies.

Results Review



Statistic Summary

We present here the main **aggregated** figures for all the centres in the last year:

Number of sessions (All centres)	1600
Duration of each session	60'
Average attendance (students)	800
Average attendance (volunteers)	60
Nº extracurricular activities	>50
Staff training sessions	6

Self-improvement and future plans

New learning centre openings

Launch of AXF Malad

We provide free franchise to communities, corporate houses and affluent schools who are open to adopting our learning center format to help children in their neighborhood. Besides reaching out to citizen groups to pitch for new centers in communities/building societies located close to slum pockets, our focus this year is to bring more schools across Mumbai on board the program and adopt our model as was done by Billabong International School Malad.

The school was keen to provide an opportunity to their parent body and senior students to give back to the community and connected with AXF to start a learning center program in their stilt play area, We have trained and handheld the parent body into starting this program on the school premises. You can see visuals of this center here. (<https://goo.gl/E7kVJx>). Some of the experiences shared by the students/parents of different schools who have volunteered at AXF centers can be found here <https://goo.gl/G50Y8F>

Launch of AXF Powai

This centre finally saw the light of day after two years of effort and multiple unsuccessful attempts to launch. The centre is hosted in the Sai Baba temple in the Saigalwadi area (near Hiranandani Hospital). The summer camp with which the centre has launched has been a huge success as our strength went from 17 to 70 kids in 7 short days.

A big applause for Powai resident Suman Basu who helped us acquire permission for the space and helped us get the kids together. Welcoming all the wonderful ladies of Powai who conducted so many fun activities over this 10 days summer camp that the new bunch of kids who have joined the AXF family are already addicted to all the wonderful new AXF didis in their lives!

AXF at Colaba

When Nepean Sea Road resident Ruchita Kenia, who had been loosely associated with AXF for over two years, attended a workshop for AXF volunteers by life coach and transformation leader Prasad Karmarkar at The Spiritual Company, little did she know it would change her life. While Ruchita had spent two years looking from far and arranging outings for AXF kids in collaboration with Cathedral School, at the workshop she suddenly felt inspired to take the plunge. Ruchita has decided to take charge of taking forward the proposal for an AXF centre at Colaba which had been languishing for months due to absence of a local support for the AXF team.

The Colaba centre will be housed at a covered platform opposite the Sai Baba temple at the entrance to Shiv Shakti Nagar, near Badhwaar Park.

We love it when people appoint themselves officers and crusaders for the Angel Xpress cause. Team AXF welcomes Union Park resident Indriyajit Sethi aboard the Good Karma Xpress. Over the years Indriyajit has used his good offices to promote the Angel Xpress cause among his colleagues and friends. He has now procured not just the permission for the space from which the Colaba centre will operate but also a multitude of volunteers from within the Tata group which he is a part of.

We are pleased to report that this centre will also see support from the Cathedral school student, teacher and parent body as volunteers and contributors.

Syllabus update

English

Besides **extending** the syllabus to **E5** students that is becoming a must for us, we would like to **pilot** a new English syllabus based on game-based learning and Oxford books. For this matter, we have started a collaboration with a **learning** and **teaching expert** actually working on this same matter for schools and universities across India with International Cambridge School certification.

Everything will be **done** considering our volunteer's skills and finding the general **consensus**.

The tentative centre to conduct the pilot is RK evening.

Maths

We would like to **revamp** completely our **math section**. We want to change to **Math around life skills** instead of school textbooks. For this matter, we would use Oxford books around mental math and Vikas Math workbooks which provide another perspective to the same problem.

We will focus on the **basics** and **logical/reasoning** skills for the younger ones, introducing more **complex** maths **concepts** for the older ones always **around life experience** and not based on pure theoretical knowledge.

General knowledge

This is a totally **new section** to include in our syllabus. We want to do once a week/every two weeks a class about general **knowledge about the world**. From geography to food, from costumes to music, etc. We truly believe that providing them basic knowledge about the world will encourage them to be more **open** and think out of the box as well as improving their **critical thinking**.

Reading

We want to concentrate as well on reading skills. We will be **setting up** a **library** in all **centres** with **appropriate facilities** with books the students could borrow to read at home. For that matter, we have setup a **partnership** with **Lets Read**.

Smart grouping

A common **problem** in all our centres have been the **vast** level **differences** among the **same** school standard **class**. We want to stop grouping the students class-wise and **start grouping** them **ability-wise**. We will do this for Math and more effectively for English.

The baseline assessments would be designed in a way that provide us the template to make the groups in a smarter way using a tracker based on the

percentage of completion that would provide directly the group the child belongs to.

This will encourage further the **horizontal teaching** between the students of each class. The younger ones even having the same level of knowledge need more time to process and retain new concepts. This has worked wonders in many educational systems around the world and provides a unique opportunity for the students to interact between themselves on different levels.

Life-skills and reality awareness program

We want to introduce a completely **new program** that we hope leads the students to a better **understanding** about the complexity of **the world** they live in while providing them with the tools needed to **face reality** outside their actual limited environment with a better starting point.

The main points of the program will be the following:

- **Workshops about professions and life experiences**

We would like to present the older students with real life stories and first hand exposure to different professional options they could do in their near future.

- **Computer science**

We would like to extend our current computer science program to reach more students. IT is everywhere now days and we truly believe that this can make a real difference in their future, being college or at any level in their lives.

- **News reading**

We want to introduce news reading in English to our students, being it a short activity of about 10 minutes every week, we want to encourage them to be aware of what is happening in the world and why.

- **Debates**

We want our students to develop fast-reasoning skills as well as public speaking skills while making them meditate about real-life problems that the society is facing now days. All the debates would be guided and moderated by the teachers to ensure proper developing of the activity.

Post IX std. program development

We have started creating a file with all the available opportunities of collaboration and sponsorship for post 9th std. students who want to learn specific abilities. We already have spoken with several corporate and associations willing to provide **free professional training** in many areas for our students after they complete our current AXF scope.

We want to **extend our support** to **10th, 11th and 12th** for this matter, we have started a pilot program with an **e-learning teaching platform** in association with **GenNext** to **actively extend our current program in the future**.

Volunteer testimonials

"I am Anjali; I have always been an enthusiast in all fields of life. AXF has given me a platform to impart and share my time and knowledge with children who need it more than I do. AXF gives me the freedom to help the children enhance their life skills and values... They are always ready to imbibe and are consistently growing and learning in the field of education and activities. AXF is a holistic development for the children and tutors."- **Anjali**

"I am a teacher friend at AXF Bandstand is overwhelmed at the response we receive from the children academics wise, mannerisms wise, day to day dealings with each other. They show deep gratitude towards the teachers and the kind people who often serve them yummy food with all humility

Each day is step towards good academics and excellent humanism. I am sure there is a lot to be achieved in both these fields but nevertheless the onward march is going to yield happy results. The children have shown improvement in the field of Mathematics and English. A lot needs to be still achieved for the students and teachers as well. We are happy we are leading the children towards a strong Secured Future It is a very satisfying endeavour for us too. Thanks AXF for giving us this heart warming opportunity. " –**Sangeet Ballaney**

I am a full time mother of two boys and have been volunteering with AXF for the last 2 years and hope I can keep continuing the same. It's a pleasure to see happy faces anxiously waiting for their respective teachers. The kids do improve to a great extent with a little help from people from the community. AXF has given me a direction to feel complete and useful and I sincerely wish more people could join this wonderful initiative to give back to society – **Zenobia Mody**

A MSc BEd and a teacher by profession, I am extremely passionate about the same. My experience with AXF has been a wonderful journey since last three years, I have seen kids growing and evolving here. I am grateful to AXF for providing me this platform to serve and add meaning to my life. I loved teaching these kids and gave me immense peace and inner satisfaction. I love the response from kids and noticed remarkable changes in their behaviour as well as action. – **Preeti Kapoor**

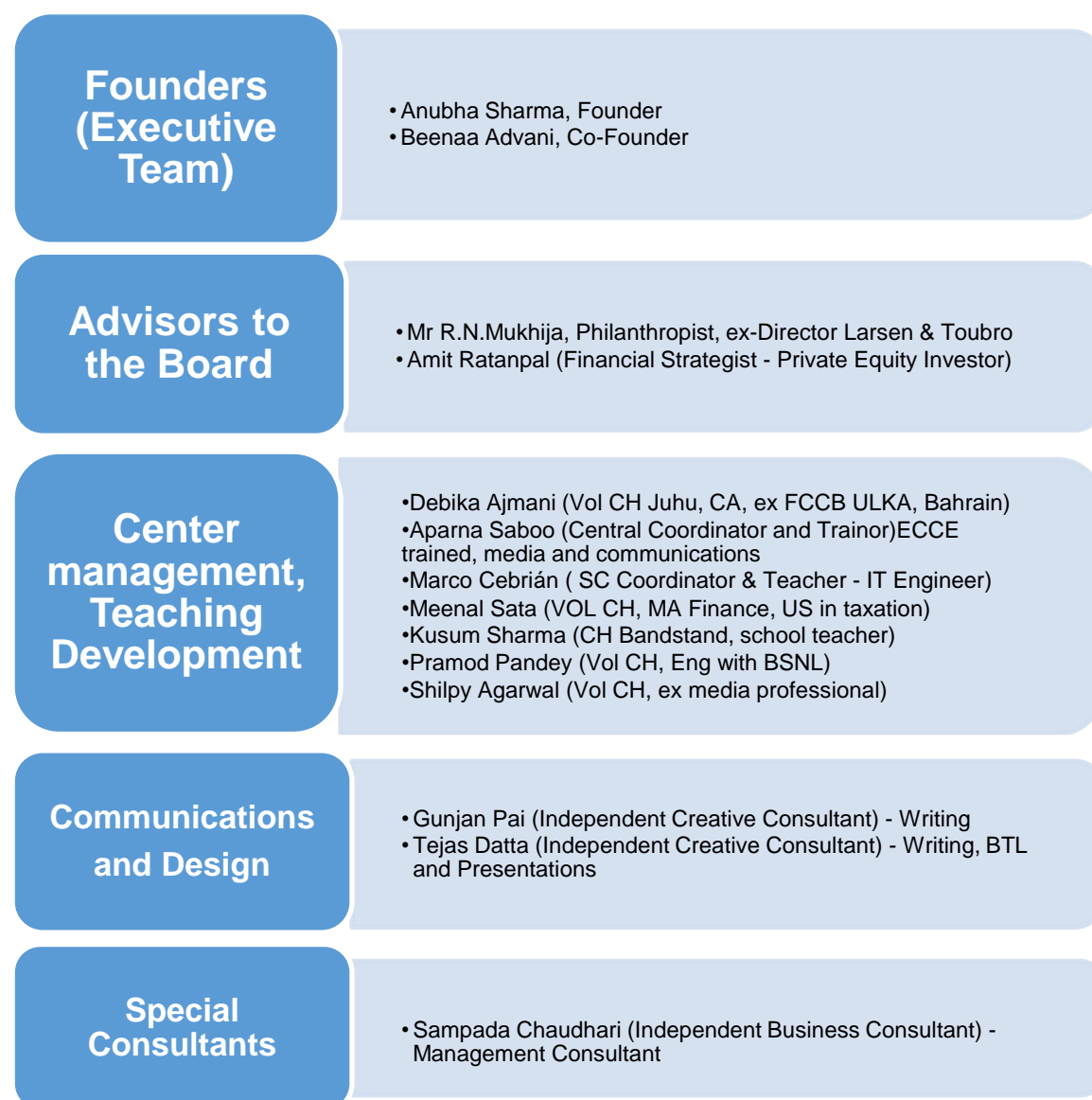
I have been volunteering with AXF to bring some real change in the society. These kids are the future of our country and AXF gives us an opportunity to interact and work with them directly. Any small positive change in their lives will affect the whole society. My passion kept me going as volunteer; which increased with the time I spent with AXF.

I have been working with elder kids and the progress has been good in some kids and some of them are still struggling. During this year I emphasized more on learning than just scoring good marks in the exams. This was my patent dialogue that "if you are coming here to score good marks then you can leave today but if you have come here to learn then you are most welcome" and I have noticed a change in their approach towards learning. Now if anytime I speak about marks then they make fun of me and remind me "sir we are not here for marks." It doesn't mean marks are not important. Marks are anyway important but I believe if kids are focusing on learning then they will surely score good marks. – **Pramod Pandey**

It's my pleasure to volunteer for AXF. It's a fulfilling experience. The children are enthusiastic to learn more. Our students are doing quite well with both English and Math. In my Math class, I have a student Aditya who is brilliant and excellent with his studies and the others are also catching up. In English batch I have students on letter level so they have picked up on their English vocabulary and trying to converse also. - **Pinky Nalawade**

Organizational chart

Here we present the relation of core team members, along with the following individuals there is a group of **200 regular volunteers** and hundreds of temporary volunteers and **school** and **college students** who have aided the execution of the program.



Expansion plans

We hope that in the upcoming academic year we are able to spread our wings wide along with achieving our vision and mission every step of the way. It's imperative to set some goals for ourselves to move forward in our journey:

- It is of utmost importance to us/We want to keep the smooth running of our current learning centres in full force along with making continuous development and progress for the betterment for our kids and volunteers.
- We aim at setting up two new centres.
- Our In-School English program in association with the BMC steps into its third year and we hope to keep increasing the level of knowledge being catered to them along with quality of teaching.
- We are aiming to reach out to more and more Mumbai schools and communities to adopt our program.