

IFERB Pilot with Child Action Lanka

Background:

Many of our kids have a marginalized family background and struggle to enjoy a pleasant childhood due to poverty. Our kids believe that to break the cycle of poverty, they have to be enriched with knowledge and education. CAL's approach to education is not only aimed at educating a child with a curriculum but also to develop the skills, leadership qualities, personality, talents, and characteristics to reach a new world, stand up for their rights, and bring success to them and their loved ones. We continuously make necessary changes to our education system with the expertise of professionals and experts in education. We conduct periodic surveys and screening programs to evaluate the success of our education program.

During a survey conducted in 2021, a set of very important findings and recommendations were made about the hindrances and challenges that weaken the education of our kids. Approximately 1200 children participated in the survey. The survey results paint an overall picture of the attitudes of parents and children toward education, the state of the families our kids belong to, the challenges and hindrances they are facing, and the disparity of wealth and resources. It is apparent that the majority of kids and parents are willing and positive about education, but they lack awareness, guidance, resources, and confidence to get the maximum benefit of education for a brighter future. We expect the generous contribution of the "Education Above All Foundation" to overcome the above-mentioned challenges (6 findings of the survey) through adapting, developing, and using the "IFERB" model effectively in a way that suits our target group and our currently implemented "CAL" education program.

Beneficiaries

Total Number of Beneficiaries	104
Total Number of girls	50
Total Number of Boys	54

Method of Implementation

IFERB (Internet Free Education Resources Bank) is an innovative program implemented at the Child Action Lanka - Child Development Center in Kandy. It aimed to provide children with access to quality educational resources without relying on internet connectivity. The program focuses on enhancing the learning experience by utilizing offline teaching materials and promoting active engagement among children. IFERB is implemented at the Child Development Center in Kandy, which serves as the primary site for delivering the program. The center is equipped with suitable infrastructure and resources to support the program's activities and ensure an optimal learning environment.

To overcome the limitations of internet connectivity, the program utilizes a manual method for delivering educational materials. Teachers re-write the given teaching materials on kids' books, ensuring that the content is customized to the needs and abilities of each child. This approach promotes hands-on learning, encourages active participation, and allows for personalized instruction based on individual learning styles. CAL - Child Development Center serves as the implementing body of the IFERB program. It provides the necessary infrastructure, resources, and support to facilitate the program's activities. The center also oversees the coordination and collaboration with Education Above All – EAA and they generously provide all the needful guidance and teaching materials.

The teachers at the Child Development Center play a crucial role in implementing IFERB. They are responsible for rewriting the teaching materials onto kids' books and delivering the program to the children. The teachers also provide guidance, support, and individualized instruction to ensure effective learning outcomes. The primary beneficiaries of the IFERB program are the children of the preschool and grade 1 – 5, attending the Child Development Center. They actively participate in the learning activities and engage with the offline teaching materials provided. The children are encouraged to explore, inquire, and develop their early reading and writing skills in a supportive and inclusive environment.

The IFERB program incorporates monitoring and evaluation activities to assess its effectiveness and make data-driven improvements. Two assessments are conducted: one before the program's implementation and another after its completion. These assessments evaluate the children's reading and writing skills, allowing for the measurement of progress and identification of areas for further development. In addition to the assessments, on-going monitoring takes place throughout the program. Teachers observe and document individual progress, noting improvements, challenges, and specific areas of focus. Regular feedback sessions and discussions with the teachers provide an opportunity to share insights, exchange best practices, and address any concerns that may arise.

Furthermore, the Child Development Center conducts periodic reviews and evaluations of the program's overall impact. This involves analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, including feedback from teachers, children, and parents. The findings inform program adjustments and enhancements to ensure continuous improvement and better outcomes for the children. By implementing IFERB at the Child Development Center in Kandy, the program aims to provide children with access to high-quality educational resources, foster their early reading and writing skills, and create a nurturing learning environment that empowers them to thrive.

The five days of the week were reserved for different subjects. Two days were allocated for English, two days for Mathematics and one day for Environmental Studies. Mathematics and Environmental Studies were taught in local languages, because almost all the children who come to our center receive their schooling in local languages. The teachers edited the teaching materials provided by EAA to suit the knowledge of our children and translated the necessary lessons into local languages and rearranged them.

Baseline and Endline

Overall Average Baseline	11.28	Overall Average Endline	16.48
Average Baseline for Boys	11.77	Average Endline for Boys	16.4
Average Baseline for Girls	10.28	Average Endline for Girls	16.5

Our goals have been met by the differences in scores between the baseline and endline tests. This accomplishment can be attributed to EAA's high-quality teaching resources. The materials have shown to be appealing to children, grabbing their interest. Children can simply access and interact with the content because of the materials' user-friendliness. The resources have also shown to be quite beneficial in assisting with the development of early reading and writing abilities. Their efficiency has made a big difference in the favourable change in scores that was seen during the assessment procedure.

% of students that found the program engaging?	100%
What % of teachers felt like the program enhanced students' learning	100%

Satisfaction with the program:

Our satisfaction with this program is very high for a number of convincing reasons. First off, both students and teachers have been enthralled by its creative and interesting approach to education. The program is a favorite with students of all ages because it has been carefully created to promote interest and pleasure in studying. The days of pupils dreading repeating the same boring tasks found in traditional schooling are long gone. Instead, people look forward to this program's original and interesting content.

This program's deviation from the traditional educational materials generally seen in classrooms is one of the main reasons why kids like it. It provides a wide variety of fascinating topics and engaging activities that go beyond the requirements of the common core curriculum. This newness gives the learning process a sense of energy and keeps students actively involved.

Teachers also value this program a lot because it gives them a thorough curriculum to follow and a well-structured framework. It takes away the need for them to spend a lot of time making lesson plans and looking for pertinent resources. With a clear plan in place, educators can concentrate their efforts on providing high-caliber instruction and meeting the unique requirements of each student.

Furthermore, teachers can experiment with new teaching techniques and integrate contemporary technologies into their classrooms thanks to the program's original character and dynamic content. In addition to increasing student engagement, this technological integration gives them the digital literacy skills they need to succeed in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, this program's capacity to motivate and enthrall both students and teachers accounts for our satisfaction with it. The traditional learning process has been transformed into an engaging adventure of discovery because of its creative methodology, wide range of content, and thorough structure. By accepting this program, we have seen a dramatic change in teacher empowerment and student excitement, which has ultimately resulted in a more effective and fun learning environment.

Satisfaction of support from the ID Team:

We are extremely satisfied with the support we have received from the ID team for several reasons. Firstly, the ID team has consistently provided us with valuable guidance and assistance throughout this project. Whenever we have faced challenges or needed clarification, they have been readily available to offer their expertise and advice. Their prompt responsiveness and willingness to help have been instrumental in ensuring a smooth and successful implementation of the program.

Additionally, the ID team has demonstrated a proactive approach by scheduling frequent meetings with us. These meetings have served as valuable opportunities to discuss our progress, address any concerns, and brainstorm innovative ideas together. Their consistent presence and open communication have instilled a sense of confidence and trust in their support.

Moreover, the ID team has gone above and beyond by not only meeting our needs but also going the extra mile to enhance our teaching methods. Whenever we have expressed a desire for different and interesting approaches to instruction, they have promptly shared fun activity suggestions and alternative teaching techniques. This proactive approach has greatly enriched our teaching practices, making the learning experience more engaging and enjoyable for both students and teachers.

Furthermore, the ID team's genuine interest in our success and their commitment to ongoing improvement have been evident throughout our interactions. They have continuously sought feedback from us, actively listened to our suggestions, and incorporated them into the program's development. This collaborative approach has made us feel valued and empowered, knowing that our input has a direct impact on the program's evolution.

In conclusion, our satisfaction with the support received from the ID team stems from their consistent guidance, frequent meetings, and proactive approach to enhancing our teaching methods. Their dedication, responsiveness, and willingness to go the extra mile have fostered a strong partnership that has positively influenced our implementation of the program.

Challenges:

During the implementation of the program, we encountered several challenges that affected its smooth execution. One prominent issue was the lack of English knowledge among both teachers and students. While the program aimed to enhance English language skills, the limited proficiency of teachers in English sometimes posed difficulties in effectively delivering the content. It created a barrier in fully grasping the program's objectives and conveying them accurately to the students. This challenge required additional training and support for teachers to improve their English language proficiency and ensure effective communication in the classroom.

However, the main hurdle we faced was the poor English knowledge of the students themselves. The program's content was designed to be delivered primarily in English, but many students struggled with comprehension and expression. This language barrier hindered their ability to fully engage with the material and inhibited their progress. We realized the need for targeted English language instruction to build a solid foundation and enable students to grasp the program's concepts more effectively.

Another significant challenge we encountered was the lack of facilities to print learning materials. The program relied on visual aids, worksheets, and other printed resources to supplement the lessons. However, the absence of printing facilities posed a major obstacle. Teachers had to resort to manual writing and drawing on the board, limiting the effectiveness of the visual components and resulting in additional time and effort spent in preparation. This issue highlighted the need for adequate resources and infrastructure to support the program's requirements, such as access to printers or alternative methods of providing visual aids.

To overcome these challenges, we initiated measures to address the English language proficiency of both teachers and students. Internal help was given to enhance teachers' English skills and equip them with effective teaching strategies to bridge the language gap. For students, additional English language support was provided, and teachers translated the Math and ENV subjects to their mother tongues.

Regarding the lack of printing facilities, teachers re-created the lessons and the worksheets on students' writing books, and they put the necessary points on the boards to copy. Efforts were made to secure the program's implementation effectively.

In conclusion, the challenges we faced during the program implementation included the limited English knowledge of both teachers and students, as well as the absence of printing facilities for learning materials. These hurdles required targeted interventions, additional training, and exploring alternative solutions to

ensure effective delivery of the program and mitigate the impact of these challenges on student learning outcomes.

Comments for Improvement:

The IFERB program has proven to be a valuable resource for providing access to free educational materials. To further enhance the program and cater to a broader range of learners, it would be beneficial to incorporate the subject of Information Technology (IT) into the existing offerings. Including IT as a subject within the IFERB program would enable students to develop essential digital literacy skills and expand their knowledge of technology-related concepts. IT is a rapidly evolving field that plays a crucial role in our modern society and incorporating it into the program would equip students with practical skills and prepare them for the digital age.

Testimonies:

How were your students impacted by the program?

Primary students have been greatly impacted by the program, experiencing positive changes in their learning outcomes and engagement. The program has provided them with innovative and interactive learning materials that captivate their interest and foster a love for learning. Students have shown improved understanding and retention of concepts, as well as enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The program's diverse content and engaging activities have made learning enjoyable, resulting in increased participation and motivation among primary students. Overall, the program has positively influenced their academic growth, daily attendance, instilled a sense of curiosity, and created a dynamic and fulfilling learning experience for primary students.

How were your teachers impacted by the program?

Teachers have been significantly impacted by this program, experiencing positive changes in their teaching practices and professional growth. The program has provided them with a well-structured framework and a comprehensive curriculum to follow, eliminating the need for extensive lesson planning. It has empowered teachers by equipping them with engaging and innovative teaching materials, fostering creativity and enabling them to explore new instructional methods. The program's support and guidance have enhanced teachers' confidence in delivering effective lessons and meeting the diverse needs of their students. Overall, the program has positively influenced teachers' teaching abilities, job satisfaction, and professional development, resulting in a more effective and fulfilling teaching experience.

What was the highlight of the program?

The highlight of the program is its innovative and engaging approach to education. It goes beyond traditional teaching methods and offers a diverse range of captivating subjects and interactive activities that foster curiosity and active participation among students. The program's comprehensive curriculum and well-structured framework provide teachers with a clear roadmap, empowering them to deliver high-quality instruction. Overall, the program's ability to inspire and engage both students and teachers is the key highlight, creating a dynamic and enriching learning experience.

Continuation of the Program:

Would you consider using IFERB after the Pilot ended? **Yes**

Quotes from students:

1. Student Statement: "This programme changed everything. I used to find school uninteresting. With the help of the interactive courses and activities, learning has become a lot more enjoyable and exciting. Now, I eagerly anticipate each class. — Farzana, a second grader.

2. The programme has transformed my teaching, according to the teacher. My lessons are now more interesting and engaging thanks to the thorough curriculum and fun resources. My students now learn with greater enthusiasm and motivation. It really transforms!" - First and second grade teacher, Ms. Dharshika.

3. Student Proverb: "I never imagined that education could be so thrilling. The programme introduces us to new topics and gives us fresh explanations for them. It's like discovering a whole new world of knowledge!" — Dahamsa, fifth grader.

Photos:





