Innovative Pedagogy

Broadclass Listen to Learn (Pakistan)
None of them want to miss a single lesson. They wait for Broad Class lesson very anxiously. I feel good when I help them. I must say that Broad Class is doing a great service. It is spreading light of learning in every corner.’

Local school teacher in Haripur

Introduction

The ‘Broadclass - Listen to Learn’ Programme is an interactive, pedagogical approach for Teaching English as a second Language, improving literacy, numeracy and healthy habits among young school-aged children (KG-Grade II) of marginalized communities. The programme is implemented in the public schools of Islamabad, Abbottabad and District Haripur (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province) Qutta (Balochistan Province) and District Vehari (Southern Punjab). The Broad Class program fulfills specific needs of religious schools (Madaris) in Pakistan. The program equipped the millions of children studying in religious schools with not just knowledge and practice of English language but critical knowledge, tolerance and skills. The programme uses daily radio broadcasts to bring student-centred instruction covering the basic skills in the National Curriculum (including literacy, numeracy, English and life skills) into the classroom.

In Pakistan, there are widespread concerns about poor academic achievement and school attendance, particularly that of girls and children living in rural areas. The education sector has weak governance and budget constraints, schools lack resources, and teachers are ill-trained and often lack accountability. These constraints are compounded by the entrenched use of pedagogical practices not suited to very young children: classes are teacher-led, have limited teacher-child interaction, and lessons focus on skill transfer, often through rote learning, with little space for children to explore ideas outside the realm of the text book. Gender inequities occur because parents of girls often do not favour sending their girls to schools because of accessibility and cultural barriers.

‘Broadclass – Listen to Learn’ was designed as an outreach programme to improve the quality, equity and inclusiveness of education. With the ultimate goal of improving school achievements, the approach aims to:
• improve attendance, especially among girls and those children in ‘hard to reach’ rural areas
• improve quality of teachers through several capacity building measures
• promote child centred practices at primary level in the target areas and reduce dropout
• Improve the classroom learning environment and provision of learning materials
• Sensitize parents, community and teachers to the importance of girls’ education and health.

Description of the approach

The Power99 Foundation developed the ‘Broadclass – Listen to Learn’ Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) approach, which delivers daily 45-minutes radio broadcasts promoting active learning and are designed to improve educational quality and teaching practices in schools. Radio lessons guide the teacher and students through activities, games, and exercises that teach carefully organized knowledge and skills. During short pauses built into the radio scripts, teachers and students participate in the radio programme, reacting verbally and physically to questions and exercises posed by the radio characters. In this way, IRI exposes learners to regular, curriculum-based content and models effective teaching and activities for teachers.

With geographical, environmental and energy-resource constraints in mind, special wooden radios with rechargeable dry batteries, built-in sound systems, and USB/memory card options were designed and provided to classrooms. With the approval of the Federal, Provincial and District Education Departments, and the cooperation of individual school leadership bodies, this allows FM radio to broadcast 152 days across the academic year, providing 2 introductory lessons and 75 lessons for each grade level. The programme is also publically broadcasted and thus benefits out-of-school children, teachers of non-formal/private schools, parents and members of school councils/communities and the general population.

POWER99 Foundation through its partner Radio broadcasts 45 minute lessons daily on a timetable agreed with school management. The content of the programme is mapped out on the basis of Pakistan’s national curriculum, and the broadcast’s scope, sequencing and master plan has been developed by curriculum experts, IRI specialists, professional scriptwriters and primary school teachers who collaboratively develop the content and generate activities and story ideas for programmes. The sequence and content of each broadcast is presented below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Duration (minutes)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Prayer (dua)</td>
<td>3m</td>
<td>Prayer on Love, Peace and Harmony written by National Poet (Allama Iqbal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aaj ki Achi Baat (Tip of the day)</td>
<td>3m</td>
<td>Doctor/Expert interactive message on health / hygiene and social/moral values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Thematic Lesson</td>
<td>30m</td>
<td>The lesson starts first with review of previous lesson and then the selected themes of content starts through verbal activity, physical activity, performing/singing rhyme based on the specific theme of programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher Guide</td>
<td>5 m</td>
<td>Guide includes preamble of next day lesson and required teaching aids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. National song</td>
<td>4 m</td>
<td>The lesson ends with playing of national song for smooth transition from broadcast-based to teacher-lead learning.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The curriculum content is delivered through a series of structured learning lessons/episodes in which students are prompted to respond, do individual and group work, and perform a learning task. The programmes have been designed to promote high interactivity amongst teachers, children and radio characters. Every lesson has rhyme segments that reinforce math and literacy or health concepts taught in the programme for the day. The application of student-centred strategies such as cooperative learning is strongly encouraged. ‘Broadclass- Listen to Learn’ also emphasises links between educational domains and content areas. Scientific knowledge (dependent upon vocabulary building), cultural practices and arts are taught through the performance of rhymes about letters/numbers in traditional styles. Inquiry, curiosity/excitement about learning are communicated in each programme. The Broadcast is facilitated by the provision of resource materials and a teacher guide which supports the teacher in supporting the smooth delivery of the content.

In addition to radio-delivered instruction, the program enriches the learning environment by engaging resources already available (including, for example, teachers, local cultural artifacts such as rhymes/songs, games and the environment, instructional materials in the classroom such as books https://www.facebook.com/broadclass/videos/1527641654020618 and the blackboard, the expertise of local community members, and locally available material (such as bottle tops and sticks) to create a blend of good teaching and learning practice.

What makes this approach innovative?

A child-centred, holistic, culturally relevant approach

The radio programme supports teaching by making learning more fun for the children. This is something totally new in Pakistan’s classrooms.


Broadclass – Listen to Learn’ is based on the principle that effective education for young children needs to be active, interactive and relevant to children and their families. In many areas in Pakistan, education methods are didactic and there is little adaptation to the learning styles of young learners. In the ‘Broadclass – Listen to Learn’ programme, the learner is regarded as the principle driving force, with the teacher and radio characters as facilitators of the learning process. Many active learning approaches are employed, including cooperative learning activities, listening exercises, speaking activities, riddles, sound games and role playing. The pedagogical techniques have been devised in such a way that they incorporate social, linguistic, cognitive, and emotional contexts.

The content of the programme has also been developed to ensure social and cultural relevance. As well as its academic goals, ‘Broadclass – Listen to Learn’ aims to facilitate the social, moral, health and hygiene related values which will support cultural socialisation as well as development and learning. Lessons include content on health, hygiene and safety (including nutrition, sanitation, self-care; traffic rules) and moral issues (for example, respecting elders, politeness, refraining from abusive language, punctuality). All of these local and cultural character traits are taught in the form of rhymes and games with the aim of making them as tangible and relevant as possible to the learners.

“I like Broadclass very much. The characters are so lively they have taught me how to learn names of animals/vegetables and identify sounds.”

Emaan, Student in Grade II
Inclusive educational practices

Due to the public broadcast, wide accessibility and community acceptability, ‘Broad Class – Listen to Learn’ makes educational input accessible to remote and highly mobile populations on a sustained basis. The use of low-cost technology has resulted in widespread uptake by schools which experience difficulties with school attendance and teacher engagement in new teaching practices. The use of radio broadcasts as the primary medium of instructions has the following benefits:

- As the broadcasts are available to the whole population, they reach children and families who are not currently attending formal schooling as well as teachers. While television and other forms of broadcast may not be culturally acceptable or geographically accessible, radio is widely acceptable and accessible by all. This exposure helps to capture children’s and their family’s attention, thus promoting interactive, fun learning techniques and ultimately supporting increased school attendance.

- Family and community participation fosters increased awareness which supports growth and educational sustainability. Through the medium of radio, the approach reaches a shadow audience of community members, whose understanding of their children’s education is enhanced, enabling them to better support their children and engage in a dialogue around improving Early Childhood Education. Due to the public broadcasts, many parents listen to lessons, for example, while shining shoes in the market, selling fruit and driving taxis. Parents listen at home, at work, or even attend school with their children. Parents have thus become more aware of educational content, and the ways that this content is taught in school. Not only are they more inclined to send their children to school, but they have become more involved themselves. Many parents now support the school through provision of resources and facilities. For instance, when one school had no water, the community arranged water supply to the school from a nearby Madrassah (religious school).

Radio-waves can broadcast in remote areas that are otherwise inaccessible to other broadcast mediums. Furthermore, the radios are designed using low-cost, self-powered technology, so are able to be cheaply installed and maintained in schools that are poorly resourced and in remote locations. This brings educational instruction to children and teachers who may not otherwise have the educational or learning environment resources to deliver this approach. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBGZ26S1oKM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBGZ26S1oKM)

The programme has been designed in such a way that it responds to all the diverse needs of the learners. The programme is working on the agenda of providing equal quality education opportunities to the early grade children of marginalized communities, especially girls [Noor Haram](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBGZ26S1oKM). More than 60% of the programme beneficiaries (heads of schools and teachers, students, members of school council and communities) are female. As well as focussing on gender equity, the programme focuses on social and regional equity (urban/rural areas; marginalized communities). Currently, more than 75% of the beneficiaries are from marginalised communities in rural areas.
Sustainable pedagogies

The educational benefits, delivered by the low-cost, technological aspects of the programme, would not have been possible without the on-going support of the educational bodies, school leadership and the teachers. If the programme is to be sustainable, it is important to ensure the approach is introduced into an environment that is responsive to change and that there is a plan for shared ownership. Enabling policies, strong and active community participation, and local champions are elements in such an environment. The programme has been designed to ensure the involvement of government officials and local communities at every step of implementation. The following measures are adopted when introducing the programme into a new school or area:

- Power99 Foundation works in close coordination with the education department officials in order to develop a better understanding of the actual requirements of project implementation. The programme team guides heads/school administrators about proper maintenance of radios, and motivates them to include funds from the budget to support the programme into the future.
- Full-day orientation sessions/meetings are held with members of School Councils, parents and communities where they are informed of the goals and methods of the programme. These meetings often take an advocacy role, and focus on the importance of attendance and girls’ education. They also encourage parent involvement in the classroom.
- Power99 Foundation recognizes that teachers need ongoing support in order to be able to develop their teaching capacities. A cohort of ‘Master Trainers’ and the programme director provide training and work with the local teachers. These teachers have been trained on long-life, low-cost teaching techniques with the stress on indigenous material usage such as recycled bottles, newspaper, boxes, buttons, beads etc. These trainers also model and role-play lessons so that the teachers themselves experience the more interactive teaching techniques first hand. The local teachers’ response toward this teaching approach is very positive, and leads to teacher-led initiatives to develop learning aids and to adopt more child-centred teaching techniques.
As a result of this broad involvement, Government officials, schools and communities take ownership of the programme, and show interest in its replication. POWER99 Foundation also approaches local CBOs/NGOs and administrators of private schools to take ownership of the programme for continuation, replication and contribution towards the airing cost. In this way, the effectiveness of the approach can be maximised, benefitting as many children and families as possible.

Ms. Farzana Tabbasum is Principal at Islamabad Model School for Girls. She has been directly involved with Broadclass and found it to be very effective. In this interview, she tells us how Broadclass helped her to achieve what she has been looking for.

**What challenges have you been facing and how has Broadclass helped you to overcome them?**

My school fulfils the educational needs of daughters of poor farmers and low-paid workers. So, it has always been a challenge for me to engage parents in school activities. However, I invited parents, briefed them about the Broadclass programme and requested them to visit the school and observe the responses of the young children to the radio lesson. I told them that through this way they can learn with their young kids.

I was surprised to see the parents’ response. They came to attend the programme and were so involved in it that they said, ‘Learning has become fun, not just for young children but for us too’. Now, the parents never miss Parent Teacher Meetings (PTMs). It is, of course, the quality of education at the same time as parents know their responsibilities even better.

**Do you feel that Broadclass is doing more than improving the learning of young children in the schools?**

Yes, it is not just improving learning but, I believe, it is helping us to bring up more peaceful and forward-looking generations.

The programme is also helping inclusion for children and community involvement. In my opinion, with the help of this programme, parents too are developing their communication skills, which are necessary for conflict resolution and peace building. They are, for example, learning the art of active-listening which would surely make a difference. A mother, who often visits our school, said, ‘I see several signs of growth in my girl’.

 Mostly, the parents are not educated, so it is a very useful programme for them too. Now, there are a few parents who regularly visit the class. Kids remain so impatient for the programme that they are energized and active as soon as the Broadclass starts. They feel so happy. There is a physically challenged young girl in this class whose active response really encourages me. She becomes active as the class starts. After the implementation of this programme, I am seeing that students no longer react but respond.

**Do you see any promising signs of improvement in students?**

Initially young children were not as confident as they are now. Teachers also wait for the programme as they have also learnt many new things like phonics. Teachers have got new and interactive ideas for teaching their courses. Broadclass has infused new life into classrooms. I am really glad that my students are learning through advanced methods.
Conclusion: Achievements and next steps

*This programme should have started decades ago so that I should have made best of my time too. Whatever they (students) learn here, they share their learning with their parents and other family members. I feel really happy as they are learning new things. Radio has become a delightful learning tool. My young daughter comes from school happily; because she feels that learning is no more dry drudgery but fun.*

Father of a young daughter who attends Islamabad Model School for Girls

A number of formal and informal programme evaluations have demonstrated the success of the ‘Broadclass- Listen to Learn’ programme. Formal evaluations of the programme have demonstrated that:

- The academic outcomes for children who are participating in the ‘Broadclass – Listen to Learn’ programme are better than those in control schools who are not using programme.
- The programme is well placed to address some of the issues surrounding quality in teacher preparation and pedagogy. The teacher-training aspect of the programme is highly successful. Most teachers report that they have increased their confidence and competence in the delivery of child-focused instruction methods, and external assessment confirms the increase in interactive, child-centred pedagogies.
- Parent satisfaction with the programme is high, with parents expressing appreciation for the way in which the programme fosters physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Outcomes of the Broadclass – Listen to Learn programme are also evident in the qualitative responses of parents and community members. Maimona, mother of a Grade I student of GGPS Qalandarabad (Abbottabad) shared:

‘Clear difference can be seen in attitudes, etiquettes of our children. They are now more concerned about respecting elders, keeping themselves clean, rhyming lessons all day long to relate them with rest of day activities at school or home. After school in home my daughter teaches me and her siblings about the health and hygiene tips, fruits/vegetables names, how to greet and modes of transportation.’

Another mother, Mrs. Shamim from a village community shared:

‘My husband is a labourer and he works very hard to earn livelihood. We like all other parents want our children to learn and educate themselves so that they can acquire better opportunities than us. This new intervention at school has given us hope that our children can learn. I and my little son listen to the programme daily. We as parents both feel happy to see our son who is only 4 years of age, loves listening programme and responding to questions asked by radio teacher. His interest and like towards programme has motivated us to send him and his sister to the school.’

Next steps

As a result, there is a demand from federal, provincial and district governments for scale-up/expansion of the programme. Power99 Foundation plans a two pronged strategy (both horizontal and vertical) for the scale-up of the programme.

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• **Horizontal** scale up will focus on tailoring programmes for specific geographical and regional contexts in other geographic areas i.e. districts and provinces across Pakistan where there is a need for quality education for young children.

• **Vertical** scale up will focus on the enrichment and development of lesson content based on National Curriculum for education in emergency spaces. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h4K529W52w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h4K529W52w) and children with special needs [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlDk5jXgXhQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qlDk5jXgXhQ)

In addition to this expansion, Power99 Foundation is taking measures to increase content to build ‘sustainable peace’ into the curriculum. Through its broadcasts, the programme aims to promote active listening skills, respect for diversity and human rights, democratic values, anger management skills, critical and scientific thinking skills, and innate creativity in children. Environmental sustainability is also a focus of current development, with Power99 Foundation working in coordination with educational experts to develop an extensive radio-based course which would help children to think critically, scientifically and take responsibility for protecting the fragile environment. Finally, Power99 Foundation would like to take the approach to Pakistan's religious schools, which are renowned for didactic, teacher-controlled practices. These future ventures aim to transform education practices in Pakistan and will equip students and teachers with higher-order thinking skills as well as a strong civic sense of responsibility as members of the greater human family.
Achievements

The program is winner of TESOL The Mary Finocchiaro Award for Excellence in Nonpublished Pedagogical Materials Award, 2018. [http://www.tesol.org/enhance-your-career/tesol-awards-honors-grants/tesol-awards-for-excellence-service mary-finocchiaro-award]


Pakistan permanent Ambassador in UN Dr. Maleeha Lodhi Tweet on broadclass program. [https://mobile.twitter.com/LodhiMaleeha/status/863118615595421696]

The program has won First Prize in *Most Innovative Development Project* category during 17th annual Global Development Network conference held on 18th of March 2016.

The Broad Class program is documented as *innovative pedagogical Approaches* in Early Childhood Care and Education(ECCE) in the Asia-Pacific region: 2016) to support ECCE practitioners, researchers, international development partners, and policy development professionals as they work and advocate for inclusive quality early childhood care and education in various contexts.

*DW, program Global 3000,* Telecasted a report on the “Broad Class – Listen to Learn” and declared it „minor revolution in the field of education , in Pakistan.

On 29th April 2015, BBC News (TV) telecasted a special story about the program and declared that it is the program which can help Pakistan in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as Pakistanis trailing far behind in education.


*CEI* as the innovative program that is Expanding Access to Early Childhood Education Technology that uses traditional form of technology – the radio – to help children from marginalized populations in Pakistan gain numeracy and literacy skills. Shreya Shah (December 04, 2015)

**Help Children to Learn by Your donations US$10 per child/year**

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