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# Mala News

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## Project Mala's Community Outreach – Coaching Centres

As we have had to make the decision to focus on the most able children from the poorest homes in the districts that our schools serve, we are very aware that there are many children who need help with their basic education but will never be able to attend a Project Mala school.

So last year we launched a new initiative – Project Mala Primary Coaching – aimed at giving free tuition to primary school children who are falling behind at school, attending inadequate government schools or who want extra help with their schoolwork. Project Mala has established seven centres, all very simple, generally outdoors in the shade of a tree, or on a verandah and taught either by our primary school teachers or by some of our old students who are at home while studying in higher education.

We pay each teacher for an hour after school each day and they register up to 25 local primary age children for a course of 3 months. The aim is to teach Hindi

reading and basic maths as well as the English alphabet sounds and to give a little individual attention to children who are struggling.

In the first six months 339 children completed the coaching with us. Now, in the third batch, there are more than 150 children, which indicates the extent to which even the poorest families here value any chance for extra education.

I visited some of the centres and it was lovely to see our primary teachers using some of the skills they have learned at Project Mala, for the benefit of children in their own villages. Our old students are also proving to be dedicated teachers and in Hasra, Sanjiv, an ex Project Mala student himself and now a teacher in Patehra school, was ably assisted by one of our class 6 students who had volunteered to come after school and help him.



Deepak is a primary school teacher at Turkahan school and he teaches a group of children outside his home after school. The skills he has learned at Project Mala keep these children focused and engaged. It is lovely to see him with the class.

Premlata is one of our old students who is now studying for a degree while living at home. She teaches one of our coaching groups outside her home and is sometimes assisted by other students who live in the same village. When I visited her coaching centre recently I was delighted to be greeted by several old students who had passed out of Project Mala school over the past decade. I was particularly struck by how confidently they spoke to me in English, and how affectionately they remembered their teachers and their school, so it was especially good to see them encouraging the children in their village to study.



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