



ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2022-2023

ABDUL KALAM MINORITY EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY (AKMES)

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SMILE FOUNDATION – AKMES SKILL TRAINING CENTRE

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Smile Twin e- learning Project (STeP) – Skill training cum Placement support programme

The Background

AKMES organised a skill development training programme for 160 youth aged 18-28 years from the Old City of Hyderabad during 2022 -2023. The broad goal of this project, which was supported by SMILE Foundation, was to enhance the employability of these youth and its specific objectives were to train them in various aspects of Retail & Sales Management and to equip them with soft skills in order to prepare them for productive employment in these sectors.

The project targeted youth from Shalibanda and Charminar areas keeping in view of the dire need to address their employment needs. Most of them have basic education but very few of them possess the skills needed for entry in the job market. These areas also have high employment potential against the backdrop of rapid urbanisation and growing market demand, not to mention the presence of a large number of IT & Retail companies. Further, command over computer skills is a universal requirement for all kinds of employment in this age. However, not many youth from these areas have access to computer training facilities

Mobilisation

As a first step in the project, we undertook field visits to identify potential locations for the intervention, based on which we zeroed in on slums in Shalibanda and Charminar slums, which had significant population of needy and unemployed youth aged 18-28. We reached them through a wide range of means including door-to-door visits, IEC material such as flex banners displayed in central places of the slums, newspaper coverage, pamphlets, word-of-mouth publicity, localised small group meetings and Focus Group Discussions. We also involved likeminded NGOs in efforts to mobilise these youth. We thus contacted 150 eligible youth that had not yet finished their college education and needed knowledge of computer awareness and communication skills. The objectives of the intervention were explained to them in detail and they were asked to apply for the course.



Eligibility Test

We screened the filled in applications and set aside some of them, as the applicants did not meet one or more of the eligibility criteria. We later tested them for their knowledge of English, basics of computers and General Knowledge, using a Questionnaire that the Foundation had designed. The final list of candidates for enrolment in the course was prepared on the basis of their performance in the test.

Enrolment of Beneficiaries

Once we had finalised the list, we invited the shortlisted youth to attend a personal interview. We spoke to them on the importance of the training programme and on how it would help them build a career. We then enrolled them in the course and generated Individual Profiles for each of them. The Profiles contained detailed information on their backgrounds and on their performances in the test, which we used as a baseline to identify their weak areas and give them customised inputs.

The Profiles would also be used to track and monitor their progress during the course of the programme. The youth were required to submit photocopies of proof of their education and their Unique Identity (Aadhaar) Cards. Details of their attendance were also recorded in the Profiles. The table below provides details of youth benefited by the programme:

Batches	Enrolled		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Moring	14	9	23
Afternoon	14	8	22
Total	28	17	45

The Training Programme

The duration of the training programme was six days a week for 3 months. 4 batches training completed with 160 members. Each batch consists of 40 trainees. The trainees were divided into two groups of 10 members each for the purpose of instruction. Two sessions were held a day. The details of batches are as follows:

Batch	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Batch-1	10 a.m. – 12 noon Batch A	Computer (10)	Computer (10)	Personality Development (10)	Personality Development (10)	Computer (10)	Basic & Retail Management (10)
	10 a.m. – 12 noon Batch B	English (10)	English (10)	Computer (10)	English (10)	English (10)	Financial Literacy Management (10)
	12 noon – 2 p.m. Batch A	English (10)	English (10)	Computer (10)	English (10)	English (10)	Basic & Retail Management (10)
	12 noon – 2 p.m. Batch B	Computer (10)	Computer (10)	Personality Development (10)	Personality Development (10)	Computer (10)	Financial Literacy Management (10)
LUNCH BREAK 2:00							
Batch-2	2:30 – 4:30 p.m.	Computer (10)	Computer (10)	Personality Development (10)	Personality Development (10)	Computer (10)	Basic & Retail Management (10)
	2:30 – 4:30 p.m.	English (10)	English (10)	Computer (10)	English (10)	English (10)	Financial Literacy Management (10)
	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	English (10)	English (10)	Computer (10)	English (10)	English (10)	Basic & Retail Management (10)
	4:30 – 6:30 p.m.	Computer (10)	Computer (10)	Personality Development (10)	Personality Development (10)	Computer (10)	Financial Literacy Management (10)

The faculty members prepared subject wise Action Plans for the entire course and submitted them to the Center Coordinator. The content of the Plans included all topics to be covered by them in accordance with the syllabus provided by Smile Foundation.

Faculty

We identified and recruited well-qualified and experienced faculty and resource persons to conduct these programs so that they could expose students to real life situations involving application of the knowledge that they would be imparted during the course. The details of faculty are as below:

Resource Person	Subject Handled	Education
Ishrat Fatima	English & Personality Development (Core Facilitator	Post graduate in English
Surriya Jabeen	Coordinator cum Mobilisor	Post graduate in English
Mirza Mozam Ali Baig	Retail Management	MBA
Siraj Pasha	Financial Literacy	MBA
Mohd Sajid Ali	Career Guidance and Counselling Trainer	MBA, MA

Retention and Follow up

We closely monitored the attendance of the trainees. Whenever a trainee was found to be absent for or more days, the mobiliser would contact her/him and identify the reason for her/his absence and counsel her/him to return. One of the faculty members would personally contact the trainee if need be. Some of the trainees had missed their classes due to personal emergencies. The faculty members plugged this gap by taking time out to familiarise them with these topics outside regular hours.

Teaching Methodology

The faculty made use of the SMILE Foundation Manual to instruct the students. Involving them in brainstorming sessions and encouraging them to evaluate their performance by themselves was an integral part of the programme. They were also regularly given home assignments to work on. All these measures were aimed at reinforcing the desired skills and to broaden the horizon of their thought. English handouts and Learners' Exercise books were also provided to them so that they had practical exposure to the subjects being taught. The faculty members distributed the study material provided by Smile Foundation as part of the course, to all the trainees. One book was given for each subject.





Distribution of Study Material



Computer class in progress



English Class in progress



Financial Literacy Class in progress



Personality Development classes in progress

Pre-Placement Counseling

A pre-placement counseling session was held for all the trainees prior to the completion of the course. Career Counselor and Trainer Sajid Ali reviewed their ongoing performance through the course and suggested to them the profession that would best suit them in view of their strong areas and performance in the course. He also sought feedback from them on their areas of interest and made a presentation on the current market employment trends.

Sajid Ali later gave them inputs on facing interviews with emphasis on presenting oneself, questions frequently asked by interview panels, skills expected of potential employees and handling tricky questions. He stressed the importance of being communicative and added that it always helped to be frank about one's experience. He wished them the best in their endeavours. Time management and goal setting, he added, were the primary skills required for success in any field of activity.



Outcome

The course has given many of the trainees, who could never dream of even accessing a computer, an opportunity to not just handle one but also seek employment in professions that demanded the use of computers. A number of them have been rid of their stage fear and are capable of expressing themselves. Many of them hesitated to ask questions during class in the initial stages of the course but they gradually learnt to articulate their specific training needs, which was helpful not just to them but to the faculty members as well, who could adjust their pace of teaching and supplement teaching with examples where needed. Their communication skills have also been honed and they gained the confidence that they could build successful careers for themselves.