

# Preparing children for life through life...



“If I were a poet, I would write poetry  
on the possibilities of five fingers.  
Those who do not train their hands,  
who go through the ordinary rut of education  
**lack music in their life.**”

*Mahatma Gandhi*

**Disha India Community School** is an Experiential Learning school where we use real-life experiences from the local context of the child, as a pedagogic medium for teaching the required curriculum, skills and values. The vision is to create an innovative model of school education where the community takes a shared ownership of providing quality, contextual, personalized and equal education for all children at an affordable price. The idea is to demonstrate how a community can design its own education program based on its context, possibilities, aspirations and challenges. Education in our school is rooted in the local context and prepares children for a future that the community aspires for.

Disha India Community School, an initiative of Disha India Education Trust, was started in year 2020. The school is in Padha, a village in Karnal district, Haryana. At present, the school has grades Nursery to Four and will add one grade every year. We have 100 students now and eight educators.



## Values that guide our school

- 1. Experiential Education.** The idea is to truly design a contextual and personalized learning for children and we believe that Experiential Learning in the local context has the potential to be a truly personalized learning.
- 2. Shared vision and collective responsibility.** We aspire to build a shared vision and responsibility with parents and community members. There is an Education Leadership Team (EL Team) that comprises parents and community members and it works in collaboration with the school management to realize the shared vision.
- 3. School is open to all children of the village.** No child is refused admission in the school irrespective of financial, social and gender differences.
- 4. No withdrawal of profits.** The Trust is committed to not withdraw any profits from the school.
- 5. Complete Transparency.** There is complete transparency in managing the funds and resources of the school. The annual budget, balance sheet and monthly expenses are shared with the EL team and parent community on a regular basis.
- 6. Self-sustaining.** The school aspires to be financially self-sustaining in the long run.
- 7. Strengthening the village government school.** Disha India aspires to support village government school in improving the quality of education, so that all children of the village get quality and equal education.

# Learning design principles that guide our teaching and learning

- 1. Contextual and Personalized education.** We use local experiences as the context and pedagogic medium for teaching the required curriculum. The idea is to connect the teaching and learning to the immediate surroundings of the child. We go from near to far, concrete to abstract...
- 2. Productive Work.** We use productive work (from the local context) as a pedagogic medium for teaching and learning the required knowledge, skills and values. In our context, it is primarily farming - we use natural farming as the pedagogic medium. The idea is not to prepare children for the vocation but to use it as a pedagogic medium. It not only leads to a better understanding of the curriculum and local context but also develops a creative and abundance mindset.
- 3. Free and Integral child.** The idea is to focus and develop the whole being of the child - physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual. We aspire to help children on the journey of self-awareness and empowerment leading to a free and integral Soul.
- 4. Self-directed personalized learning.** Curriculum and pedagogy are designed in such a way that there is a learning and development plan for each child - and it starts with personalized experience as a source of learning and development.
- 5. Bilingual medium of instruction.** In the initial years, we use bilingual medium of instruction. Gradually we will move to English language as a medium of instruction. We have a strong curriculum for English as a language from the beginning.
- 6. Diverse and Inclusive.** We aspire to build a diverse and inclusive school community. We would like children to experience and understand the value of diversity and inclusiveness very early in life.
- 7. Sustainable living.** We aspire to practice sustainable ways of living and being in the school and community - the idea is for children to experience and understand how to use natural resources in a sustainable way.
- 8. Non-violence.** We would like to develop a deep understanding of non-violence among children and use it as a core value and practice in building the culture and character of the institution.



## Curriculum and Pedagogy

**Our curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are inspired and informed by the following:**

1. Dr. Kolb's theory and principles of Experiential Learning
2. Gandhian principles of Nai-Talim
3. Expeditionary Learning design principle and core practices
4. Theory and principles of Systems Thinking and Sustainability
5. Integral Education based on the principles and teachings of Aurobindo



## Theory of Change - Building community schools across the country

The big idea is to build community schools in partnership with diverse communities across the country. An important prerequisite for opening a community school is that the community is willing to take shared responsibility of providing quality, equal, contextual and personalized education for its children at an affordable price. Community schools will demonstrate how a community can design its own education program based on its context, possibilities, aspirations, and challenges. They will prepare children for the future that the communities aspire for.

Community schools will work in collaboration with local government schools to improve the quality of education in the given geographical area. They will be more of innovative model schools to demonstrate the kind of education that the community aspires for.

The vision is to give a new direction to education in our country by demonstrating how a community can take charge of educating its future generations and how education can be used as a process for bringing the desired change in society at large.

## Our Learning Partners



**HERITAGE  
XPERIENTIAL  
LEARNING SCHOOL**

**Heritage Xperiential Learning School (HXLS)**, with its commitment to an experiential project-based pedagogy and integrated curriculum,

has established a formidable reputation for itself as a progressive, innovative school in just over a decade that it has been operational.  
[www.hxls.org](http://www.hxls.org)



**EL Education, USA** is one of USA's leading pre-K-12 education organizations committed to creating classrooms where teachers can fulfil

their highest aspirations and where students can achieve more than they think possible. For more than 20 years, Expeditionary Learning has helped new and veteran teachers – in all types of school settings – strive for a vision of student success that joins academic achievement, character, and high-quality work.

[www.eleducation.org](http://www.eleducation.org)

**Anand Niketan, Sevagram, Wardha** draws its inspiration from Nai Talim and Gandhi's larger vision of an equitable, non-violent and sustainable society. Anand Niketan, restarted in 2005, inherits its space, philosophy and spirit from the earlier Nai Talim experiment (1937-1970s) and continues to explore their relevance in today's context. The school aims to create democratic environment where holistic development of the child can be nurtured such that all three faculties Head, Heart and Hand are developed to its fullest potential.



Experience Based Learning Systems, Inc. USA

**Experience Based Learning System, USA** is a research and development organization founded by Dr. David Kolb

and Dr. Alice Kolb for the advancement of the theory and practice of experiential learning.

[www.learningfromexperience.com](http://www.learningfromexperience.com)



**Waters Foundation, USA** is recognized worldwide for making systems thinking accessible and practical, both for children in classrooms as well as

executives in boardrooms. Their team of experienced facilitators work across the U.S. and around the globe to develop systems thinkers.

[www.watersfoundation.org](http://www.watersfoundation.org)

**Disha India Education Trust** is striving towards redefining education and learning based on the principles of Experiential Learning and Nai-Talim, thereby facilitating the reinvention of schools and our country's education system at large. The big idea is to construct a theory and practices of Experiential Education that uses real-life experiences from the child's local context as a pedagogic medium for developing knowledge, skills and character. The underlying assumption is that learning through real and contextual experiences has the potential of truly making education personalized for each and every child. Secondly, teaching through real life experiences leads to an integrated and systemic understanding of the curricular goals and context, which prepares children for life.

Disha India is setting up its first community school in village Padha, Karnal, Haryana with the vision to understand and re-invent Gandhian principles of Nai-Talim in today's context. We are designing an experiential curriculum based on natural farming and local crafts as pedagogic medium for developing the required curricular goals and contextual understanding. We are also working with Anand Niketan, a Gandhian school, in Sevagram, Wardha to deepen our understanding of Gandhian principles of education.

For more than fifteen years now, Disha India has worked intensively with Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Gurgaon on the design and implementation of experiential curriculum and pedagogy in its elementary program and also in Heritage Xperiential International School. We have designed integrated learning expeditions based on the curriculum and contextual needs.

Disha India through its open program, Courage to Lead - a certified program in Experiential Education - works with educators and organizations to develop their capacity to design and implement experiential curriculum and pedagogy in their context. Courage to Lead was launched in the year 2008. Every year around 50 educators from all over India participate in the program and Disha India works with them intensively. The vision is to build a community of EL designers and coaches.

Disha India designs and facilitates KHOJ Learning Expeditions for children, based on curriculum needs, children's interests and life skills. Every year around 1200 students experience KHOJ as part of their curriculum. Some of the schools that have participated in KHOJ are The Heritage Xperiential Learning School, Gurgaon, Bombay International School, Mumbai, American International School, Chennai, Daly College, Indore, DPS Surat, etc.



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**disha india  
community  
school**

**Village Padha, Karnal, Haryana**

Call 9810646129 | [www.dishaindiaeducation.org](http://www.dishaindiaeducation.org)