

# **German Nepalese Help Association (GNHA)**

## **Education Program**

### **Multi Grade Multi Level (MGML) Methodology**

Multi Grade/Multi Level (MGML) methodology offers the students and teachers of primary schools a reliable framework for both individualized and community-oriented education. The MGML methodology allows mixed groups of students of different age, grade and performance levels to be educated together in one classroom by one teacher. MGML is activity-oriented with free working processes which are managed by the children themselves. Hence, the overall focus shifts from teacher to student, from the lecturing aspect to the learning aspect. In this way, the foundation for lifelong learning is laid as children learn how to acquire knowledge. The innovative methodology allows teachers to spend more time to guide children individually in their learning process.

### **Typical Problems of Primary Schools in Nepal**

Schools in rural, mountainous areas of Nepal with problems of accessibility often have

- ❖ a small number of students at different age levels
- ❖ too few students to set up classes for children of the same age group
- ❖ children and youths who miss or drop out from classes due to their social background, or because they have different performance levels,
- ❖ and because the government cannot afford to post and pay teachers for each grade
- ❖

### **Origin and History**

This educational method was developed in the 1980s by the Rishy Valley Institute for Educational Resources (**RIVER**). It started with an educational pack, “School in a Box”, a flexible tool for individual learning, which gave children the opportunity to get an education in inaccessible villages. The MGML Method was developed to offer these children an individual, socially supported and well-structured way of learning on the basis of their own cultural roots and background.

### **Aim**

- To educate children with different social backgrounds, varied natural talents and a different intellectual capacity together in a “One Teacher - One Room” set-up
- To offer these children access to formal education so that they can develop in an individual way, at their own pace
- To train and enable teachers to initiate, guide and support the children’s individual learning processes
- To have an enjoyable and inspiring learning environment without fear or pressure
- To prevent an unwanted and untimely dropout of children from school
- To lay the foundation for solid knowledge and to develop the ability to adapt to a constantly changing environment.

- To harness curiosity, learning abilities and attitude, and to constantly seek knowledge and skills so that one can stay ahead.
- To reduce the financial burden on the part of the government, because less, but nevertheless highly qualified teachers will be needed to run a fully-fledged primary school with a better quality of the education.

## Method and Characteristics

The “**Learning Ladder**” guides the children through their tasks. The ladder is an appropriate and motivating symbol of reaching greater heights of knowledge - with due effort, step by step. The tasks are structured into milestones (learning sequences) which are based on the primary school curriculum.

- Most surprisingly there are no textbooks in the MGML classes.\*  
\*By not using any textbooks, teachers are enabled to adapt to the regional and cultural context of the students – texts, songs, traditional stories, etc. can be the basis of the learning material instead of culturally alien textbooks which are without any relevance to the social and regional background of a specific area.
- All learning is activity-based, individual and self-organized, in a heterogeneous learning environment.
- Learning takes place in groups, by learning together and from each other, independently of a teacher and/or assisted by a teacher.
- Children learn at their own pace.
- The curriculum is scaled down into small, meaningful and manageable activities. Whenever an activity has been completed, the children experience a sense of achievement and success at every stage of the learning process.
- Even if a child is absent from school for a longer period of time, with the “Learning Ladder” there is no frustration of being behind with the curriculum. After being absent from school each child continues its learning from where it left off.

## Teaching and Learning Materials

The curriculum is broken down into small units which are subdivided into useful and manageable sections. These sub-divided activities are depicted in the learning cards. Worksheets are available for the students and exist for every unit.

The learning material consists of systematized sequences (milestones), which build on one another.

Each 'milestone' contains:

- ❖ introduction
- ❖ practice
- ❖ evaluation
- ❖ remedial measures
- ❖ enrichment

The learning material can easily be identified by the children:

**Colors** stand for different grades of performance: Pink for Grade One, Green for Grade Two, Yellow for Grade Three, Red for Grade Four, Purple for Grade Five and Sky Blue applicable to all grades.

**Numbers** show the chronological order

**Logos** stand for the subjects:

- ❖ Birds for mathematics
- ❖ Mammals for the Nepali language
- ❖ Fruits and Vegetable for the English Language
- ❖ Insects for Environmental studies

The material requires different types of learning set-ups in a classroom, arranged around four tables:

- ❖ teacher-supported learning table
- ❖ partly teacher-supported learning table
- ❖ child-group-supported learning table
- ❖ individual learning table

### **Main Difference between the MGML and other Pedagogic Concepts**

The “Learning Ladder” system is fully curriculum-based and a closed system as opposed to other systems, which are freer and have more open contents and curricula.

The “Learning Ladder” enables the children to have the freedom to learn at their own pace, but not the freedom of choice. The teaching and learning materials in the “Learning Ladder” system initiate learning and the educational processes.

In contrast to this, the well-known Montessori education concept thrives on interest and motivation. Each child decides for itself what to learn, when, with whom and at what pace.

### **Role and Tasks of the Teachers**

The MGML method and the use of the ‘Learning Ladder’ require a complete shift of the teacher’s role. Teachers do not lecture in front of a class or give instructions all the time. They guide and support the children and facilitate their learning. As the learning material is very well structured, the children have more time for individual and independent learning. At the same time, teachers are able to support and counsel children individually.

- ❖ Preparing and cultivating a positive, fearless learning environment
- ❖ Initiating and planning of the learning steps
- ❖ Observing and accompanying
- ❖ Counseling and supporting
- ❖ Bearing responsibility for the child’s learning process
- ❖ Documenting the learning progress
- ❖ Reflecting the process and result
- ❖ Communicating with the parents

## **Role of Mother Group**

A Mother group is to be formed in each school. Mothers are chosen because,

- ❖ they are the natural caregivers and are the source of social skills and life skills.
- ❖ they need to understand what they can expect from the teachers and the school.
- ❖ they have to be made aware of the importance of regular and nutritious meals.
- ❖ they will collect regular savings for the benefit of the school community.
- ❖ they will take preventive action when a child is at risk to drop out.
- ❖ they can assist teachers in conveying local traditions, tales and skills.
- ❖ in contrast to men, mothers tend to be non-political, non-aligned and result-oriented.

## **Role of the Children's Club**

Children's clubs are intended for providing extracurricular activities. Club members assist each other in developing their innate creativity, increasing their sense of responsibility for inclusiveness, fairness, adherence to rules and self-confidence. Therefore a Children's Club is to be introduced in all the MGML schools.

## **Role of the GNHA as Promoter of the MGML Methodology in Primary Schools**

Across Nepal there are presently (2015) 120 schools implementing the MGML system. The GNHA has taken on 62 of these schools. The Government intends to scale up the number of schools to 750.

The GNHA will be introducing the MGML methodology in all its partnering primary schools and accompanying them for a period of 5 years, in order to cover the full cycle of the primary education curriculum (Grades 1 to 5). Intervention takes place at different levels:

- ❖ MGML components will be introduced in ECED classes (Early Childhood Education and Development).
- ❖ Teachers will be trained intensively in the methodology.
- ❖ Preparation will comprise comprehensive and activity-based training in a residential training center.
- ❖ Follow-up will comprise trouble shooting, support and coaching on the spot in the teachers' own classrooms.
- ❖ Classrooms will be fitted out and set up to meet the specific requirements for an MGML learning environment.
- ❖ Teachers will learn from each other by taking part in organized cluster meetings for adopting best practices.
- ❖ Teachers will be taught to reflect their approach and achievements and to plan an academic year.
- ❖ Teachers, stakeholders and mothers' clubs will be made partners for children's learning in order to sustain the methodology.

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