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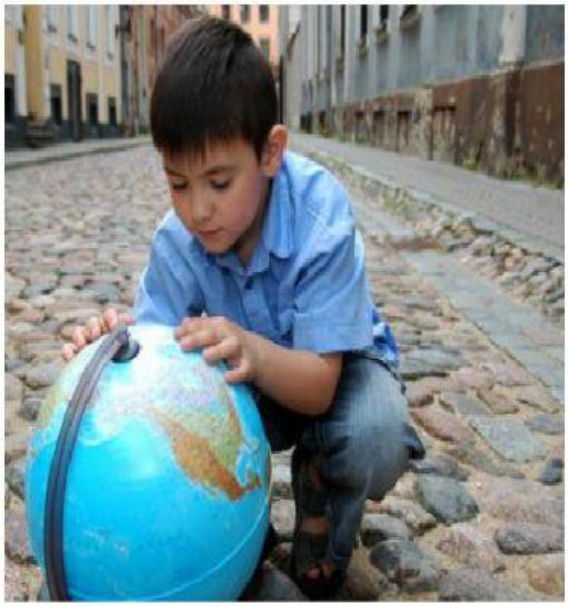
Learning in Unusual Places

How can we teach children who work, and can't go to school?

Millions of children living on the streets or in the slums of India can't go to school. They're busy working or begging for money and food. But two people found ways to educate some of these children.



In 1985, Inderjit Khurana saw large numbers of children working in train stations in the city of Bhubaneswar. Dirty, and dressed in rags, they were shining shoes, sweeping trains – anything to make money. Khurana knew what she had to do. She set up a school on a train platform in Bhubaneswar's central station. This way, after the morning rush hour, the children could take a break from work and go to class.

To make learning fun, Khurana used games, songs, dance, and puppets. She gave students food, vitamins, and baths, and taught them about hygiene. Soon, Khurana's school had 100 students. She gradually opened more platform schools. Khurana died in 2010, but her schools continue.

In 2013, 67-year-old Shyam Bihari Prasad went each day to a temple in New Delhi. And each day, he saw children begging for food outside the temple. Prasad wanted to help them. He decided to give them something more permanent than food – an education. Prasad taught the children on the sidewalk outside the temple. Neighbors saw Prasad's improvised school, and donated supplies and food. Today, Prasad's "pavement school" has 35-40 students. They learn subjects such as math, Hindi, and English. "He gives us knowledge and wisdom," says 10-year-old Pooja about Prasad.

With caring and creativity, Khurana and Prasad have given impoverished children a chance at a brighter future.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1.What problem did Khorana want to solve?

A) Children were working and not going to school.

B) Students in her school were causing trouble.

C) She could not find teachers to teach in her school.

D) She didn't have books or supplies for the students.

2.What is NOT true about platform schools?

A. They use games and puppets.

B. They teach students about hygiene.

C. They give students food.

D They give students new clothes

3.Where did Prasad start a school?

A) In a temple

B) In his home

C)On a sidewalk

D) On a train

4.Neighbors wanted to help Prasad with his school.

A) True

B) False

C)We don't know.

5. Both Khurana and Prasad.

A) started schools in Bhubaneswar.

B) taught in train station

C) brought schools to students

D) lived in poverty.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Glossary

Slums: a poor, crowded neighborhood

Rags: old, shabby, worn-out clothes

Platform: a place where you get on or off a train

Hour: 60 minutes

Hygiene: rules and practices for keeping healthy.

Gradually: gradually (adv.) slowly; step by step.

Temple: a building where people come to pray or worship

Permanent: *permanent (adj)* for always; for good

Improvised: *improvise (v)* make up music on the spot.

Pavement: pavement (n) (Brit) a place to walk along the side of a street.

Impoverished: impoverished (adj) made poor; without money.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS