

**FINDING WHAT A COMPANY CAN DO**

Perhaps many people were looking forward to lessons using video materials in their school days. The shining eyes of children in the classroom watching the video must be the same around the world. Such “joyful lessons” are emerging in India now.

Ricoh Company Ltd., manufactures and sells imaging devices and software including office copiers and duplicators, in about 200 countries and regions. After a discussion on what they could do for MDGs, Ricoh started educational assistance on poor people in India from 2011, aiming to manage social contribution and grow their main business at the same time.

Although India has many challenges in educa-

tion sector such as access and quality of the courses provided, it is expected to grow considerably as a market. At an early stage, Ricoh aimed to improve the quality of education by utilizing duplicators in rural areas, in cooperation with Save the Children, a worldwide organization that assists children around the world.

Kumiko Akabori, senior specialist of CSR Promotion Section in Social Environment Department Sustainability Management Division, Ricoh, said, “As the area had many social problems, our assistance had a significant meaning. However, in practice, it was difficult to continue assistance due to deficiencies in government budget and the system to support teach-

ers, as well as lack of teachers’ capacities”. Ricoh then started new initiatives from 2013, utilizing JICA’s framework to promote business for low-income groups in cooperation with private companies, putting future commercialization in perspective.

**MAKING LESSONS MORE JOYFUL USING VIDEOS**

The three core activities are making digital materials such as video and audio contents, explaining effective teaching methods using them, and giving lessons with Ricoh’s projectors in classrooms. The project aimed to improve the quality of education through research on school needs, teacher training and pilot lessons. Total of 30 government primary schools were chosen, consisting of 10 schools in each of the three areas; Delhi, the capital of India, Bihar State, and Telangana State (then Andhra Pradesh State).

“Digital materials are suitable for lessons on natural science such as the structure of the human body and water cycle which are difficult to understand only with textbooks. Also, we took efforts so that the students can utilize what they learned in real life by not only showing them videos, but also combining them with a simple hands on experiment kit”, said Akabori.

In India, there are peasants who do not let their children go to school in the farming season. Therefore, the project especially focused on enlightening those parents by having students talk about lessons at home and enabling them to utilize what they learned in their life.

Furthermore, Akabori added that they also provided training to enable teachers not only to operate the equipment but also to make visual contents by themselves, since it is better for them to give lessons with an understanding on what videos should be used in what kind of situation. While there were some teachers who had not used computers before, they gradually became able to edit simple videos.

In pilot lessons conducted over a two-year project period, the level of visual contents were improved every time and teachers came to incorporate experiments in which the students learn from the contents they can touch and feel. In India, lessons were generally taught by teachers who talk one-sidedly; however, in those pilot lessons, there were more questions from the teachers in addition to the videos and



**Above:** Each teacher made a plan on using digital materials and experience in a lesson.



**Below:** Some schools provide lessons using digital materials in the afternoon to prevent the students from early-leaving and ensure them finish all the lessons of the day.

experiments, and the children enjoyed the lessons. Above all, the teachers themselves became energetic, making the lessons lively.

In the final debriefing session held in Telangana State in August last year, there was a teacher who came over from where he was transferred and gave a presentation on the project’s results. Furthermore, some parents transferred their children from private to government schools after hearing the reputation of the pilot lessons.

“In response to the adoption of the SDGs, we are discussing in our CSR department anew how Ricoh can contribute to society through its business in the future. While we aim for the commercialization of the current project, we hope to continue to work on social challenges, in cooperation with the business departments,” said Akabori.



The way of utilizing batteries is under consideration so that it could be easily used in India where power cuts are common. Use of videos and experiment kits made lessons more interactive.



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Akabori (center) conducting a survey of parents in Telangana State.



# Spreading the Joy of Learning to Schools around the World

In India, it is not always easy for the students to fully understand the school lessons as many teachers just talk at students and experiment equipment is insufficient. To improve the quality of education, a Japanese private company has started projects utilizing their company-made projectors in the classroom.