

Art1st x Mosamat Budhiya Jeevanshala

Engagement with Teacher Learners

City: Araria
Location: Bihar

Quarterly Report: - May 2026 - September 2026

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Program Overview

Art1st, Artist Educator Grant 26-27 aims towards a collaboration between Artist Educator, School teachers and students to bring art-based creative and critical practices within everyday classrooms. This is a structured mentorship program with a co-owned process of developing art integrated teaching and learning methodologies to enhance both teachers and learners experience.

The first phase of the program was implemented during May 2026 - August 2026, in partnership with Mosamat Budhiya Shiksha Nirman Sangathan (MBSNS) based in Araria, Bihar. At Jeevanshala (the school run by MBSNS: educational trust) we were working with 6 teacher learners and around 40 students.

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Mornings At MBSNS





Framework designed by the mentor

These workshops were designed by a set of frameworks focusing on making an understanding of materials, connections between art and surroundings and opportunities for inquiry based participatory learning.

Dual Stakeholder Approach: We worked with 6 teachers to help them see how art can be used as a part of everyday teaching and to build their confidence in planning and facilitating art-based learning sessions. While working with 40 children to encourage them to develop their own ideas, make decisions, experiment with materials, and find different ways to solve problems. Through shifting roles teachers explore art materials as learners, observe the mentor facilitating, create alongside children as co-learners gradually develop and facilitate art sessions with provided support. The workshops were designed to respond to the learning needs of both groups and create opportunities for shared learning.

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Framework designed by the mentor

Material Understanding: This framework prioritizes spending time on exploring and understanding materials before moving towards making, to understand their properties, possibilities, and potential uses in art-making. The process moves from low-pressure activities to more diverse, tactile, and structural explorations. Teachers and children gradually use their observations and discoveries to experiment with materials in their own ways, exploring how everyday objects can become tools for artistic expression and creation.

Art Integration: Exploring how creative practices can be integrated into academic subjects. The focus was on designing hands-on learning experiences that encourage curiosity, expression, critical thinking, slow dialogue, and active meaning-making, helping teachers and children engage with concepts in deeper and more meaningful ways within regular classrooms.

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Theoretical approaches and Resources

Bloom's taxonomy: We Introduced Bloom's Taxonomy to teachers as a tool for planning learning sessions with children. While all six levels were discussed, teachers primarily used four key questions to structure their sessions: What will children learn? How will we know they are learning? How will children apply what they have learned? And what can they create through this learning process? Analysing and reflecting were also introduced as additional aspects to consider while planning sessions.



Theoretical approaches and Resources

Scaffolding: Introduced scaffolding through hands-on experiences and reflection, helping teachers understand how to identify learners' support needs, anticipate the kinds of support required, and decide when and how to offer, adapt, or gradually withdraw support as learners become more independent. The reflection connected their own experiences of receiving support with how they could apply this understanding while planning and facilitating sessions with children.

Classroom Observations: A classroom observation as tool was used to document teachers' practices across lesson presentation, classroom management, subject knowledge, teaching strategies, and student engagement. The observations provided a starting point for reflecting on existing practices, identifying areas for growth, and recognising interesting approaches. These reflections were followed by session planning and group discussions on what teachers could learn from one another and how they could support each other's growth.

Link of Observation Sheet

Objectives

The core objective of this intervention is to build a strong base for art-integrated learning experiences for both teachers and students.

For Students:

- To nurture imagination, creative thinking, and freedom of expression without the fear of making mistakes.
- To encourage questioning, interpretation, and exploration of multiple possibilities rather than seeking a single correct answer.
- To develop collaboration and sharing of ideas through individual and collective art-making.
- To encourage experimentation with materials, tools, and techniques.
- To develop curiosity and observation skills through exploration of different materials.
- To create opportunities to reflect on their classroom environment and imagine alternative possibilities through art.

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Objectives

For Teachers:

- To experience art-making as learners and explore unfamiliar materials, techniques, and creative processes.
- To understand the importance of the creative process, including observation, imagination, experimentation, and decision-making, beyond the final outcome.
- To explore facilitation approaches that encourage children's curiosity and independent thinking through open-ended questions and dialogue.
- To recognise and support different ways children observe, interpret, imagine, and express their ideas.
- To explore connections between art, materials, and concepts across different subject areas.
- To reflect on existing classroom practices and explore creative, experiential, and participatory approaches to teaching and learning.

Activities Designed by the Mentor

[Link to first visit plan]

[Link to second visit plan]





Outcomes

- **Material Banks:** Created by teachers using materials collected from their surroundings.
- **Weaving Workshop:** Planned and facilitated by teachers as part of the Saturday activities.
- **Creative Session Plans:** Three teachers planned and facilitated creative sessions for Science, Language, and Environmental Studies.
- **Art as Emotional Expression:** A large collaborative drawing sheet using oil pastel drawings as a space for emotional expression through art.
- **Session Planning Chart:** A collaborative chart mapping the key components of session planning and categorising points to consider while designing sessions.
- **Diary Notes and Reflections:** Daily notes and reflections documenting observations, experiences, and learning throughout the workshop.

Art as Emotional Expression



Impact Stories

Shifts in Thinking and Engagement

Classroom as a space: Initially, the open, noisy, and often messy classroom created uncertainty among teachers, who questioned whether children were actively participating and learning. Gradually, teachers began accepting the facilitation approach, taking initiatives to engage with children and supporting a space that encouraged freedom, ownership, and exploration over control.

Teacher's interest in the whole process: Initially, teachers seemed hesitant during art activities when they themselves were participating to explore. Interest grew when the workshops moved towards session planning, art integration, and creative classroom practices. Sangita Didi and Sulochana Didi began actively seeking support, planning sessions collaboratively, and exploring ways to bring drawing and imagination into their classrooms.

Impact Stories

Workshop Experience to Classroom Practice

Learning from Experience: Teachers began drawing ideas from their own workshop experiences. Activities involving sticky notes, grouping, rearranging, and collective meaning-making inspired possibilities for language and social science classes. Some teachers explored using similar materials and processes to encourage discovery, imagination, critical thinking, and collaborative learning. Kaushika asked about using sticky notes in her classroom, indicating an interest in adapting a workshop experience for her learners.

Extending art experiences for children: Teachers extended children's experiences of drawing and collage into classroom learning. Munchun Didi used collage in an EVS class to explore dengue awareness, how the disease spreads, and its prevention. Sangita Didi used drawing as a form of *imaginary documentation*, inviting children to represent their everyday routines, from brushing and bathing to playing, sleeping, and attending classes etc.

Anecdotes and stories from sessions

1. Exploring Materials, observations and Letting Go of Right and Wrong

During the material hunting activity, Sangeeta didi observed that initially she seemed to think there were right and wrong materials to collect. However, during categorisation, they explored different ways of grouping materials based on colour, size, strength, and origin, realising that everything they had collected carries meaning in different ways.

A related reflection came from Srikant sir during the observation activity. He spoke about allowing children to interpret pictures in their own ways. If a child relates something in a picture to metal, tin, or plastic, rather than paper, we can explore their thinking through questions instead of correcting them. This opened up a conversation about giving children the freedom to imagine and interpret without immediately judging their ideas as right or wrong.






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Anecdotes and stories from sessions

2. Teachers as Facilitators and Co-explorers

Munchun didi observed that facilitation does not end with giving instructions. It involves continuously moving between groups, asking questions, listening, and supporting children throughout the activity. Sangeeta didi and Sulochana didi also actively engaged with children, helping them observe, think, and express their ideas.

During the creation activity, Srikant sir supported children with practical aspects of making, including cutting cardboard and figuring out shapes and sizes. Sangeeta didi engage children in conversations about what and how they wanted to create, while Sneha and Sulochana didi began making things themselves alongside supporting their groups. Their initiative was particularly encouraging, as a separate space for teachers' own exploration had not been planned.



Anecdotes and stories from sessions

3. Teachers' Knowledge and Participation

While exploring biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials, I invited Shrikant sir, the science teacher, to help explain the concepts, as I was struggling to explain them in Hindi. Though initially hesitant, he gradually joined the conversation, explaining how leaves decompose relatively quickly, paper and cardboard take longer, and plastic may break into smaller pieces without decomposing in the same way. This became a moment of connecting material exploration with scientific understanding and bringing a teacher's knowledge into the shared learning process.



Anecdotes and stories from sessions

4. Bringing Classroom Challenges into the Conversation

The reflection and planning sessions gave teachers space to articulate challenges from their everyday practice. Munchun didi spoke about responding to different learning levels in the same classroom, Sneha about translating Mathematics concepts into activities, and Sangeeta didi about planning art-based and creative exercises.

Kaushika raised the challenge of managing listening and writing, as children sometimes continue writing when they are expected to listen, disrupting the flow of lessons. The teachers also discussed creating more opportunities for children to speak and use English while learning the language.

These conversations brought everyday classroom realities into the workshop and opened up possibilities for exploring how creative approaches might respond to teachers' existing challenges and needs.

Anecdotes and stories from sessions

5. Rethinking Language Learning

During a conversation with a teacher learner “Sneha” about children forgetting lessons, we discussed how we learn our first language by listening, observing, experimenting, and gradually beginning to speak. We wondered why learning English often creates so much fear, while making mistakes in our first language feels more natural.

She shared an incident where work remained unfinished despite repeated instructions, but began as soon as someone communicated the same thing in English. This made us reflect on the status English and English speakers hold in our society. We also discussed how communication does not always require complete, grammatically correct sentences. Even saying “water” can be enough to communicate a need.

By the end, she was interested in planning language and literacy sessions together and exploring possibilities for future sessions.

Anecdotes and stories from sessions

6. Using Art to Nudge Difficult Conversations

During a curiosity walk, children collected and discussed wild flowers, seeds, fruits, mushrooms, and leaves, sharing their knowledge and questions. Later, while sitting in a circle, I shared my sketchbook to initiate a conversation around visual thinking and interpretation. I pause and remind everyone that an image can have multiple interpretations, and each can be equally valid.

One illustration particularly caught their attention because it included a chillum. I was initially unsure whether to share it, but decided to. Children across age groups immediately connected “chillum” with “ganja.” Their responses stayed with me, making me wonder what they already knew about it, where they had learned it, and what conversations we often avoid having with children.







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Using Art to Nudge Difficult Conversations

Anecdotes and stories from sessions

7. An Informal Invitation to Create

One morning, I sat with children who were cutting vegetables and started drawing in my sketchbook. Soon the children became curious about my drawings. Gaurav was the first to join, followed by Prince, Sapna, Radhika, Sonam, and Anju. I offered them my sketchbook and pens, and they eagerly began drawing.

Most of them drew familiar things such as flowers, leaves, birds, trees, houses, roads, and the sun. Some added more details when I asked them questions about their drawings. What began as me simply sitting and drawing alongside them turned into a shared activity. I did not have to formally invite them to participate. Having the materials around and seeing someone draw seemed enough to make them curious and interested in trying it themselves.





An Informal Invitation to Create



Anecdotes and stories from sessions

8. Young Children's Interest in Art and the Artist

Three younger children from Gulaab group came to me and we spoke about what they had enjoyed in the previous day's session. I asked if they wanted to draw more things and invited them to draw their parents and other family members.

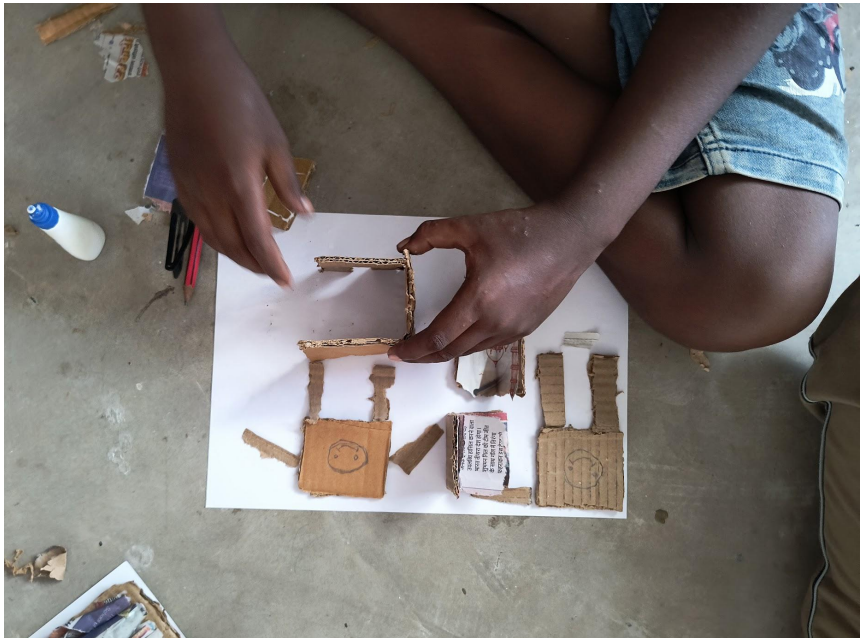
As we talked, I asked them about their everyday lives, how far their homes were, how they travelled, and how they managed things like bathing and washing clothes. When they described using the handpump, they demonstrated the whole action, hanging on the handle and using their body weight to draw water. They were curious about my life too, asking so many questions.

The next day, they returned with drawings of their mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers. I was surprised by the sincerity with which they had taken the invitation and how seriously they had engaged with it.

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Young Children’s Interest in Art and the Artist





Anecdotes and stories from sessions

9. Bringing Subtle Observations into Creation

While creating his imaginary classroom in 3D collage, Dilkhush made a corner where he wanted to hide and stay by himself. Alongside it, he created another room for Kaushika didi. He explained that there was a table in her room and that Kaushika didi was sitting there reading a book because she was always in her room reading.

It was interesting to see how he brought his observations of the people and spaces around him into his creation. His work showed how children draw from what they notice around them and bring these observations into their own imaginative worlds.

Anecdotes and stories from sessions

10. Observing, Imitating, and Experimenting

One evening, I came with drawing sheets and water colour, mainly to sit with the children and draw alongside them. Some younger children sat nearby and watched me painting. After documenting the dinner queue, I left the watercolours on the table and went for dinner. When I returned, I found the children painting on the walls. They had been observing my actions and were now experimenting with the materials themselves. It was interesting to see how their curiosity moved from watching someone create to trying it out on their own.



Challenges

- Large Group challenges and Classroom Dynamics
  - Solo Facilitation: Managing a very large group of high energy children was difficult
  - Quality of the Process: With more than 40 learners of different age groups, it was hard to hold the same level of attention for each one of them.
  - Reflection: Difficulty in maintaining active reflection within a crowded room
  - Finishing the planned activities within the dedicated decided time (Dedicated time felt a little less than required to comfortably finish the activities)

- Schedules and Plannings / Logistics and Timings
  - Material management along with facilitation
  - No pre agreements with teachers about working on holidays
  - Different stakeholders had different expectations regarding time
  - Missing morning check-ins

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Challenges

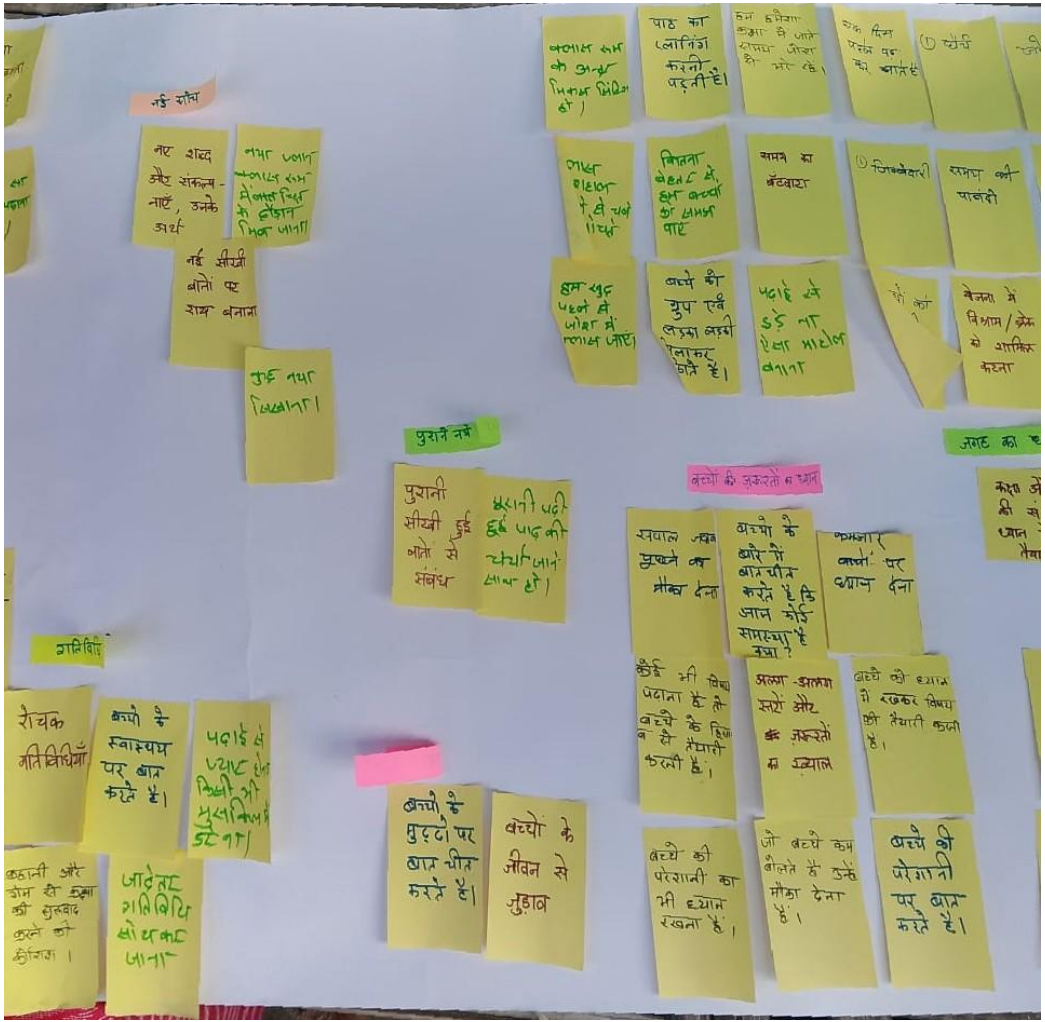
- **Schedules and Plannings / Logistics and Timings**
  - Rushing to finish what all has been planned rushing also because of delays
  - Overlap with the Sunday music class affected the continuity and flow of the workshops.

- **Institutional Challenges**
  - Challenges in communication and coordination around basic workshop preparation and material readiness.
  - Occasional friction and differences in communication made coordination with local support staff challenging.

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Teachers' Documentation

1. Teachers Reflection and Diary notes
2. Exploring Art as Expression
3. What all to consider while session planning
4. Images from Sangeeta Didi's Session



③ सीखी हुई बात का इस्तेमाल

- संस्कृति और त्यौहार के बारे में बात करते हुए विविधता का संज्ञान लेना (भविष्य में)
- संथालियों / जनजातियों को याद रखना भारतीय संस्कृति पर बोलते हुए (भविष्य में)
- बच्चों ने एक अलग कैलेंडर के महीनों और उससे जुड़े त्यौहारों व ऋतुओं की चर्चा की
- DD.MM.YY में तारीख लिखना
- शब्दों के parts of speech की पहचान
- एक-दूसरे को ध्यान से धैर्यपूर्वक सुनना (भविष्य में)
- व्यवस्थित ढंग से बोलना, बारी-बारी से (भविष्य में)

② बच्चों द्वारा सीखने के प्रमाण

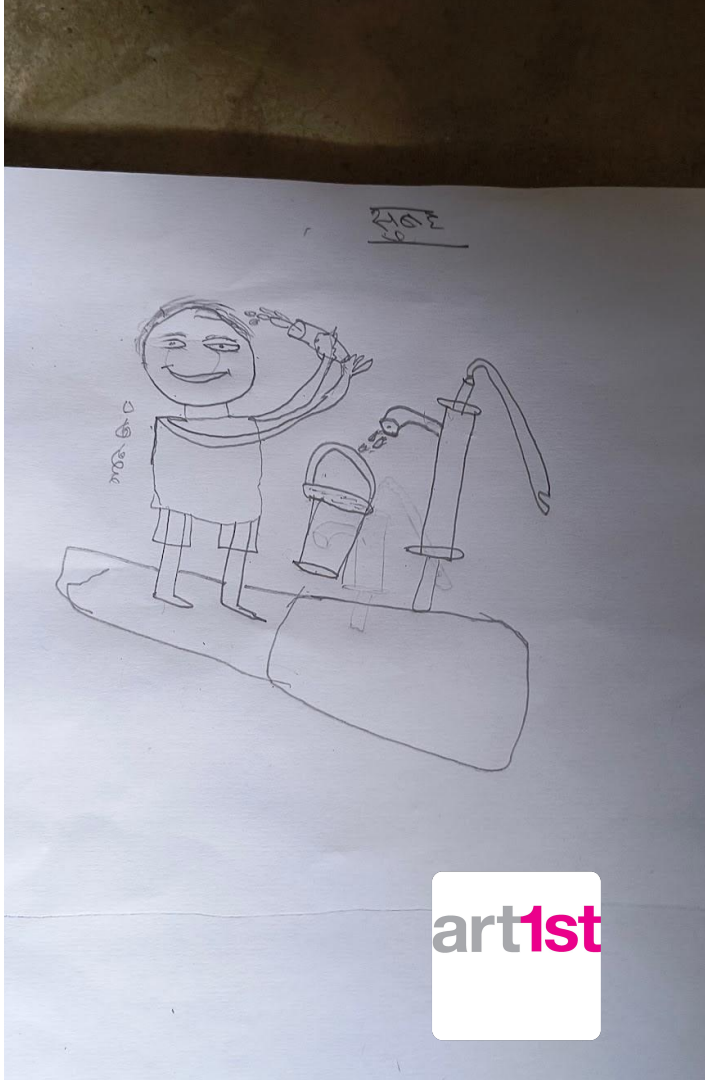
- त्यौहार से जुड़े सवालों के जवाब
- संथाली त्यौहार के बारे में सुना
- मौसों के नाम दोहराए
- कैलेंडर — महीनों के नाम बताए
- DD.MM.YY में तारीख लिखी
- शब्दों का वर्गीकरण किया
- शांत रहकर, ध्यान से सुना एक
- हाथ उठाकर जवाब दिया

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Lesson Plans by teachers and Classroom Outcomes

Teachers took the ownership and responsibility, even if during the working hours we were short on time, three of them found some gap or window and took initiative to design the session at individual levels. They were also able to successfully facilitate the session.

- Language Class: One of the visible things was witnessing silent or not active children carrying excitement for the activity. Openly participating and expressing through drawings. They were drawing without any hesitation or fear like this is the language they know the best. The peers who were constantly conscious and hesitant were encouraged to see these children’s work and get started.



Lesson Plans by teachers and Classroom Outcomes

- Environmental Science class: Each one of them were in full energy of participation because every part was happening through activities or games. The whole classroom was working as two groups. This way of working strengthened the learnings between the peers. Each group used collage as a medium of art to demonstrate dengue awareness, precautions and protection.

- In Science Classroom: Where they were learning about vitamins, their source and their uses. Activities designed needed to be more challenging for the age group 14-16 as the designed activity could not fully anchor their interests.

Mentor’s Testimonial

Facilitating a group of teachers as a single lead facilitator for the first time was a new and meaningful experience for me. I began with some hesitation, wondering how I would navigate the process with educators who had a rich experience of interacting with children on an everyday basis. With the support of the Art1st team and the school, I gradually found my way through conversations, shared explorations, and reflections.

It was encouraging to see teachers step into the role of learners, experiment with unfamiliar materials, and engage with new ways of thinking and creating. Their participation in the whole process reminded me that learning can be a shared process, where everyone has something to offer and discover.

These few months helped me understand facilitation beyond planning and conducting activities. I learned the importance of listening, observing, creating space for exploration, and allowing the process to unfold organically. I carry this experience with gratitude, along with a deeper confidence in my own practice and an appreciation for the possibilities that emerge when teachers and facilitators learn together.



Thank You

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