

# Bringing 21st Century Learning to the AGS, Dras located at 2nd Coldest Place on Earth

Rohit Prakash · 31 October 2024

*Describes iDream Education's installation of 9 Smart Classrooms at Army Goodwill School in Dras, Kashmir (near the second coldest inhabited place on Earth), giving every class from KG to 8th its own dedicated smart classroom setup, supported by the Indian Army and M3M Foundation. Cites earlier results from other Army Goodwill Schools during COVID showing proficiency gains for 45% of students and attendance rising from 70% to 90%, and highlights offline content as key for connectivity- and climate-challenged regions.*

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Hi,

As winter sets in, regions like Dras—the second coldest inhabited place on Earth—are blanketed in snow. Yet, the drive to learn and grow remains undeterred by these challenges. This month, I am excited to share with you an inspiring example of this resilience.

Earlier in November, we implemented 9 Smart Classrooms at Army Goodwill School (AGS), Dras in Kashmir. AGS Dras is located in Dras, at approximately 10,800 feet above the sea level and is also known as 'the Gateway to Ladakh'. Despite the tough terrain, the school, with 290 students and 17 teachers, now has the tools to embrace 21st-century learning. With state-of-the-art Interactive Flat Panels, curriculum aligned digital learning content, and thorough teacher training, the vision of Major Harvinder Singh who leads the schools is coming to life. He envisioned turning AGS, Dras into a model digital school.

## Behind the Initiative

This project came about as a result of a request from the Indian Army, which manages Army Goodwill Schools in Kashmir and Ladakh, to digitize AGS Dras. One of our social sector partners Dr. Aishwarya Mahajan from M3M Foundation supported this initiative, marking a beautiful gesture of collaboration for the region's educational development.

What excites me most about this implementation, under the leadership of Dr. Aishwarya Mahajan, is the fact that every class in AGS Dras, from KG to 8th, now has its own dedicated smart class setup. There will be no complicated timetables, no scrambling to match teacher schedules, and no "waiting for the smart class slot." Subject teachers can simply walk into their respective classrooms, use the smart class setup right there, and seamlessly align their lesson plan with digital content. This makes blended learning so much easier and ensures that all classes consistently get the benefit of smart learning content. Isn't that a practical and impactful approach?

This is not our first collaboration with Army Goodwill Schools.

During the pandemic, alongside the Indian Army and Powergrid Corporation's CSR program, we had:

- Set up 30 Smart Classrooms and enabled Tablet-Based Digital Libraries in 10 AGS
- Provided free access to the iPrep learning app, helping students study from home and prepare for exams, during COVID-induced lockdown

2 years into the intervention, we conducted a midline assessment of Grade 6 to 10th students to assess their improvement. The results are below:

- 45% of students in Grades 6-10 reached advanced proficiency levels from basic
- Attendance jumped from 70% to 90%, a clear indicator of increased student engagement.
- Over 3,000 hours of Smart Class usage were recorded, along with extensive use of tablets in digital libraries

Why I wanted to share this with you:

These projects prove that, with the right resources and infrastructure, learning flourishes—even in the most tough terrains. For AGS Dras, this initiative will support the teachers and students in many ways as highlighted below:

- Access to digital content is hindered by frequent internet outages, this initiative can enhance teaching. With preloaded digital content, teachers can now teach through digital content entirely offline, overcoming connectivity issues.
- The region's extreme climate often leads to shutdowns, disrupting classroom activities and syllabus completion. However, with the availability of digital content, teachers can explain complex concepts more quickly, ensuring easy comprehension and syllabus completion even during tough times.
- Repository of practice questions, enables teachers with the flexibility to conduct practice sessions or assessments without the need for prior preparation, streamlining learning outcomes.

Based on our previous implementation in Kashmir, we know that students and teachers often face extreme conditions, but the EdTech solutions designed for resource-constrained environments are helping them learn and do their best, despite the odds. We are deeply grateful to the Indian Army and our dedicated social sector partner for their support and trust in making this initiative possible.

If you are working to ensure that every child, regardless of geography or climate, has access to quality education, we would be happy to plan with you to bring 21st-century learning to any school. You can reply to this email to connect with me.

I hope the students and teachers at AGS Dras make the most of the smart classroom and digital content provided to them. Our in-ground team will stay in regular touch with the teachers to guide them in using the setup effectively. I'll also share usage insights with you in a few months!

Thanks and Regards,

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