

# Background Information on Kajoli Pre-school Model for Replication Purposes

## Kajoli Early Childhood Learning Model: Learning is Joyful

### Introduction

The Kajoli Early Childhood Learning Model is a community-based pre-primary education programme designed to prepare children aged 4–5 years for a successful transition into formal schooling through joyful, play-based learning.

Developed by Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB), the model focuses on building confidence, curiosity, and foundational skills in early childhood. Rather than relying on conventional textbooks and rote memorization, Kajoli emphasizes interactive learning, creativity, and community participation.

The core philosophy of the Kajoli Model is simple:

Children learn best when learning is joyful, inclusive, and connected to their everyday lives.

### Background and Rationale

Despite Bangladesh's progress in expanding access to primary education, early childhood education remains uneven, especially in rural and marginalized communities.

Many children from disadvantaged families face significant barriers before even entering school, including:

- Limited access to pre-primary education
- Lack of stimulating early learning environments
- Poverty and social exclusion
- Fear or anxiety about formal schooling
- Early dropout once enrolled in school

These challenges often lead to weak foundational learning and higher dropout rates later in the education cycle.

Recognizing these gaps, Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB) launched the Kajoli Model in 2003 in Kajoli village of Magura district. The goal was to create a low-cost, community-owned early childhood learning system that prepares children for school while strengthening community engagement in education.

Since its inception, the model has expanded to multiple districts across Bangladesh and has become a proven grassroots approach to early childhood education.

## Programme Objectives

The Kajoli Model aims to:

1. Prepare children for primary school through joyful and engaging learning methods.
2. Build strong foundations in literacy and numeracy.
3. Develop children's social, emotional, and cognitive abilities.
4. Promote confidence, curiosity, and creativity among young learners.
5. Reduce school dropout rates by ensuring children enter primary school ready to learn.
6. Strengthen community ownership of early childhood education.

## Key Features of the Kajoli Model

### 1. Learning Through Play

Kajoli classrooms are designed to be interactive and child-centered.

Instead of traditional textbooks, children learn using:

- Pocket cards
- Learning boards
- Interactive games
- Visual learning materials
- Storytelling and creative activities



This approach allows children to actively participate in learning rather than passively memorize information.

### 2. Early Literacy and Numeracy

The programme introduces children to essential academic skills in a simple and engaging way.

Children learn:

Language

- Reading and writing in Bengali
- Basic English literacy

- Mother-tongue learning where applicable

#### Mathematics

- Counting
- Addition
- Subtraction
- Introduction to multiplication and division
- Number recognition and problem-solving

By the end of the programme, many children develop strong foundational skills that help them excel in primary school.

### 3. Holistic Child Development

The Kajoli Model emphasizes the overall development of children, not just academic learning.

Activities include:

- Rhymes and poetry
- Singing songs
- Creative storytelling
- Role play and drama
- Indoor and outdoor games
- Physical exercise
- Group activities

These activities help develop:

- Self-confidence
- Social interaction skills
- Leadership qualities
- Discipline
- Cooperation and empathy

Children learn to express themselves, work with others, and develop a love for learning.

### 4. Nutrition and Community Care

Nutrition and community involvement are central elements of the Kajoli Model.

At Kajoli centres:

- Mothers prepare midday meals for the children
- Cooking responsibilities are shared by rotation
- Parents actively participate in the functioning of the centres



This creates a strong sense of collective responsibility and ensures that children learn in a supportive and caring environment.

### **Community-Owned and Sustainable Model**

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Kajoli Model is its community ownership.

Unlike many education programmes that rely entirely on external funding, Kajoli centres are locally managed and supported by communities. Since the beginning, RIB has been providing the funds for the learning materials and teachers' training, while monitoring the centres, arranging for exchange visits. The day to day running of the centres, however, was left to the local communities.

Usually, a centre opens because someone hears about the model and decides to replicate it in their area. This person becomes the "champion" of the project. They do the necessary advocacy with the local community, so that community leaders are mentally prepared to undertake the responsibility of running the centre collectively, without outside funding. Then the community has to find a place where some 26-30 children can meet around four hours a day, six days a week. This is often provided by the local community, or the teachers hold the class on their own premises.

Parents have to be motivated and mobilized to enrol their children at the centre. Mothers and fathers have to be willing to provide midday meals to all the children once a month; through this arrangement, the parents share and take turns to feed all the children. The group has to identify a local woman to be trained as the teacher. Most importantly, arrangements have to be made through parent contributions to pay the teacher a monthly remuneration – the only recurring cash requirement for a centre.

### **Community Contributions**

Communities typically provide:

- Space for the learning centre
- Local teacher honoraria

- Cooking and food contributions
- Support for daily centre operations

**Support from RIB- Research Initiatives, Bangladesh provides:**

- Learning materials
- Teacher training
- Refresher courses
- Curriculum support
- Monitoring and coordination
- Annual gatherings for teachers and students

This shared responsibility model ensures sustainability and strengthens community engagement in children's education.

**Programme Impact**

Over the past two decades, the Kajoli Model has demonstrated significant positive outcomes.

Key Achievements

- 150,000+ children have completed the programme.
- Over 200 Kajoli centres operated before the COVID period.
- Currently around 65 centres are fully operational.
- Kajoli graduates show significantly lower dropout rates in primary school.
- Many students progress to secondary/higher secondary education and universities.

Academic Performance

Many Kajoli graduates:

- Enter Class One or even Class Two directly after the programme
- Often rank among the top students in their classes
- Show higher levels of confidence and classroom participation

These results demonstrate that early investment in joyful learning has long-term educational benefits.

**Why the Kajoli Model Matters**

The Kajoli Model provides an innovative, low-cost solution to early childhood education challenges in Bangladesh.

It shows that quality early learning does not require expensive infrastructure. Instead, it requires:

- Engaged communities
- Trained local teachers
- Creative learning methods
- Supportive environments for children

The model demonstrates how community-driven education can transform children's futures.

### **Opportunities for Expansion**

There is strong potential to expand the Kajoli Model to underserved communities across Bangladesh.

Expansion priorities include:

- Rural and remote communities
- Ethnic minority areas
- Fishing and riverine communities
- Marginalized urban settlements

With additional support, Kajoli centres can reach thousands more children who currently lack access to quality early learning.

### **Cost Overview**

The following cost break is indicative, *grosso modo*, of the **likely annual cost** involved in supporting existing 65 centers and to increase the number to 100 centres with around 25 to 30 children in each centre all over Bangladesh.

The main budget categories include:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Annual Estimate</b>
Teacher Training & capacity building	\$35,000
Learning Materials & class room resources	\$30,000
Monitoring & evaluation	\$20,000
Networking & coordination	\$15,000
Centre revival support	\$25,000

Programme Management & administration	\$25,000
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Estimated annual budget: **USD 150,000**

### Partner With Us

Communities, donors, and partners are invited to collaborate in expanding the Kajoli Model and ensuring that every child can begin their educational journey with confidence and joy.

If your community wishes to establish a Kajoli Centre, Research Initiatives, Bangladesh is ready to provide guidance, training, and technical support.

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