Engaging with communities for children’s learning:
The Pratham Experience

International Workshop on
Innovative Efforts for Universal Quality Education
About Pratham....

• Started in Mumbai in 1994
• Mission: “Every Child in School and Learning Well”
• Founding principles:
  • Citizens can and must help to supplement and strengthen government efforts
  • Simple, replicable, low-cost models and techniques in which ordinary people can participate
• From inception to now... Rapid scaling up and growing participation of citizens, corporates and government.

CURRENT COVERAGE: 2013-2014

• Presence in 26 cities across India reaching 350,000 children
• Direct Activities in 163 rural blocks in 15 states reaching 250,000 children.
• Impacting about 4 million children through partnership with government at different level in 7 states.
About: Annual Status of Education Report: ASER

- **ASER 2005 - 2013: A citizens view of elementary education**
  - How far have we come? Done every year since 2005.
  - Randomly selected 15,000 villages. Schools in villages visited too.
  - ~320,000 households and 600,000 children between 3 and 16
  - Children’s schooling and learning status assessed in the household
  - Schools observed for basics: teachers, rooms, textbooks, water etc

**Operational aspects of ASER**
- Sampling design
- Basic tools: floor test
- Simple fast analysis
- “Digestible” findings

**Participatory aspects of ASER**
- 550+ districts participate (total ~ 600)
- In each district, a local group for survey, dissemination and action
- 20,000 volunteers participate each year including students of DIETs.
- Funded by individuals, corporate and foundations.
Setting the stage at ground level:

Every child in school & learning well

Every child in school or not is visible and easy to understand, but Every child learning well or not is less visible and not as easy ....

QUESTIONS: At local level, in communities & schools.....

How well do we really know our children? Large families / multi grade classes

- Parents “send” children to school and are concerned about “inputs”. Parents often over-estimate what children can do (JPAL study)

- Teachers “teach” the course for the grade level. Teachers often over-estimate what children can do (SchoolTELLS)

- Schools not structured to identify or to help those who fall behind

Learning delayed is learning denied. Children need to learn satisfactorily at the right time to make adequate progress through the education system to complete at least the elementary stage. Otherwise “at risk”..
What is our strategy?
How to link evidence to action?

• In every community where we work, we can identify many gaps and many needs....But given scarcity of resources, constraints of time, where are we making the most difference? How do we find out?

• Curiosity within Pratham, internal attempts to understand impact, collaboration with MIT and others

• From 1998 on, Pratham’s own assessment efforts and collaborative research projects: Apart from findings, together we learned a lot:
  – What tools & methods are “do-able” on scale?
  – What can our volunteers or citizens relate to?
  – What do teachers find interesting?
  – What do parents understand?
  – How to link evidence to action?
EXAMPLE 1: Can children read? What to do?

Simple assessment tool was useful for instruction and also for engaging parents and teachers about what to do.

**Grade 1 level text**

सोनू बाग में खेल रहा था।
वहाँ आम के बहुत पेड़ थे।
सोनू ने एक आम तोड़ा।
आम बहुत मीठा था।

**Grade 2 level text**

मैं और मेरी बहन छत पर खेल रहे थे। अचानक आसमान में बादल गरजने लगे, बिजली कड़कने लगी। बड़ी-बड़ी बूंदें पड़ने लगीं। हम जल्दी से भागकर नीचे आ गए। तभी भैया गरम-गरम समोसे और पकोड़े ले आया। हमने खिड़की के पास बैठकर समोसे-पकोड़े खाये और बारिश का मज़ा लिया।

**Letters**

ल प स
क र ट

**Simple common words**

लाभ दूध पैर
चाकू कूड़ा छोटा
### EXAMPLE 1: “Learning” chart for the class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading level</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Mid Point</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Story&quot; (Grade 2 level text)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Para” (Grade 1 level text)</td>
<td>Mallika, Balvinder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Ashish, Ajit, Sanjay, Salim, Nuzhat, Sanjib, Farida, Meera, Madhuri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not even letters</td>
<td>Usha, Reshma, Ron, Balaji, Chandra, Sunita, Vivek, Brij, Pushpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher listens to each child read one by one using the simple tool. She knows where each child is beginning and also the distribution of the class. How effectively can she help to make all children to become “readers”? How simply can parents ask about progress?
Discussion in small groups in each hamlet/school:

Local people help in making the Village report card.

Report card focuses on whether child goes to school & on whether child can read simple text and do basic arithmetic.

"Demo" camps run in the village for 8-10 days to show how children can learn to read quickly.

Big meeting in village to discuss village education report card.
Attended by parents, villagers, village committee members, headmaster and teachers.

Agree on next steps...
On what can be done in village

Start action.
Track measurable changes in children’s learning over next 2 cycles of camp lasting 30 days.

EXAMPLE 2: Village report cards...learning camp.
EXAMPLE 3: Learning from village report cards

ENGAGE AND EVALUATE
Generate curiosity
Encourage participation
Engage via simple activities
Use basic tools & methods
Generate your own data

UNDERSTAND EVIDENCE
Digest information as it is being generated close to the ground
Move from anecdote or personal experience to aggregate picture

_COMPARE WITH PROVISIONS
Local demands for information about plans & provisions
Push for institutional mechanisms for linking govt and citizens

THINK ABOUT SOLUTIONS
What can we do as citizens?
Local strategies, common goals, collective involvement

De-mystifying research and assessment

Enabling analysis based on evidence

LINKING ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS TO ACTION

Demanding accountability & working out collaborations with government
What about action?
Evolution of READ INDIA as a national campaign

Simple accelerated learning technique
For reading & for arithmetic
Three months to fluency
And for catching up
Good for age 8 & above

First, Pratham teams practiced with children in Pratham programs.
~ 170,000 children
2001-2003

Balsakhi study
Remedial education

Then, Pratham teams catalyzed & convinced teachers and village volunteers to help their children learn to read
~ 120 districts
2004-2006

Jaunpur study
Village volunteer


Today, demonstration learning camps in about 160 rural blocks involving communities and teachers and state level partnership in 3 states.

Learning camp Study by JPAL in UP
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOBILIZE VILLAGES</th>
<th>CATALYZE SCHOOL SYSTEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For learning focus in community</td>
<td>For focused learning inside school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via “demo” classes &amp; discussions with parents, panchayats</td>
<td>Via normal school functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify simple goals &amp; timelines</td>
<td>Specify simple goals &amp; timelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand current learning status</td>
<td>Understand current learning status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do “demonstration” of activities, do village assessments, discussions in community meetings</td>
<td>Do a large scale pilot with 100-250 schools with key members of the school system staff as leaders-trainers and monitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale up phase-wise by seeding blocks in district &amp; ramping up</td>
<td>Scale up using district-block-cluster level government people in same way as pilot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Via volunteer training &amp; materials</td>
<td>Via teacher training &amp; materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give village volunteers materials and training on technique- issues of sustainability</td>
<td>Provide technique, goals, materials and practice to the school system- uncertain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IN INDIA: 200 MILLION KIDS
94% ENROLLED IN SCHOOL
AFTER BEING IN SCHOOL FOR 5 YEARS ~ 50% CANNOT READ FLUENTLY OR DO BASIC ARITHMETIC

THE SITUATION CANNOT BE CHANGED BY GOVERNMENT ALONE.....AS CITIZEN’S WE HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY...TO GIVE A BIG PUSH