

ANECDOTE

Pratham Newsletter

February 2014



Pratham USA
Every Child in School & Learning Well



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Dear Pratham Supporters,

Many years ago, an English friend and a keen observer of Pratham remarked that our organization is built on stories and not so much on manuals. This seems to have happened almost naturally in a society that has a long aural tradition. Fables, legends, and stories have been passed on from generation to generation, which have shaped who we are and how we live. In that sense, naming this newsletter *Anecdote* is most appropriate. I hope we can bring you interesting stories that tell you what we do and how we do it.

Pratham's story is shaped by what happens in the external environment. But we have also been building the capacity to change the external environment to make schools more effective. The year 2014 will prove to be an important one in this respect. We launched the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER: ah-Sir) in 2005 and the Read India campaign in 2007. These two instruments were designed to quantify the problem of learning outcomes in schools and to show how it can be rectified.

Pratham USA and the Hewlett Foundation have supported this dual strategy generously for more than half a decade. We can take pride that we have worked quietly and contributed to a palpable change in the Indian and global environment in favor of learning outcome-oriented schools. The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals for the post 2015 period are likely to be heavily in favor of a focus on learning outcomes rather than just inputs. USAID has launched a 100 Million Children Reading campaign. The Planning Commission of India has set the direction of defining and achieving learning outcomes. As a result, I expect that we will have greater opportunities to work with various State governments to impact the learning of tens of millions of children every year.

Another development in India is the new law shaping CSR initiatives. Indian businesses will now be obliged to spend a portion of their profits systematically on development initiatives. Thanks to the reputation we have built over two decades, backed by rigorous evaluations and a culture of measurement, we are able to establish strong partnerships with corporations in the areas of education and vocational training.

Success creates its own problems, two of which we are gearing up to deal with now: we need to invest in higher levels of content in education, beyond basic reading and arithmetic, and we need to build human resources that can deliver this content.

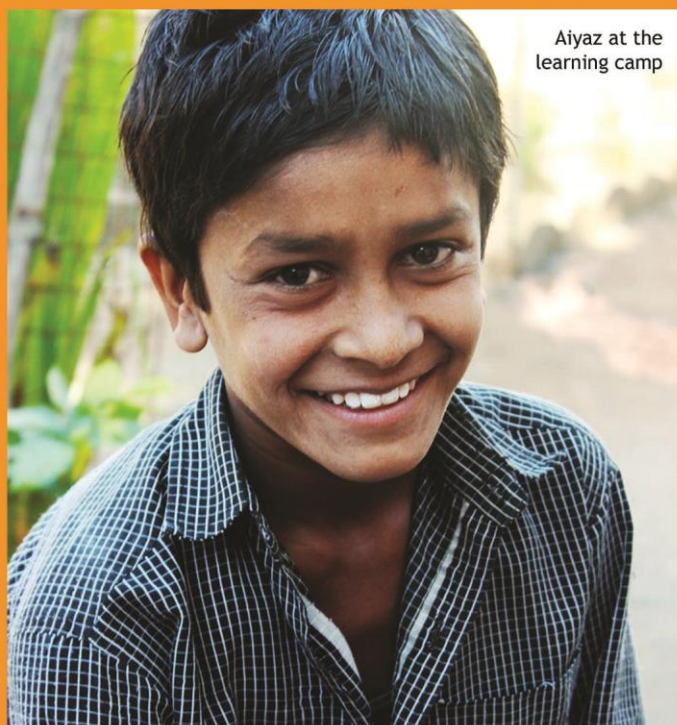


ASER survey 2013 in Bihar

Demystifying science and math, freeing children from school regimentation to think and learn, and impacting learning beyond the primary schools are our priorities. There is no question that technology will be an important factor, but whether we can use it effectively will depend upon several variables. As always, there's much to be done.

I know that you will continue to support Pratham in this new phase of our growth and learning, as millions benefit from our efforts. My best wishes for 2014!

In Profile



Aiyaz at the learning camp

AIYAZ FINDS JOY IN READING

In the Khuldabad District of Maharashtra, through the pink walls of a government school building, the faint clanging of a bell, signifying the end of lunch break, can be heard. Upon hearing this, some children rush back into their classrooms while others head for Pratham's learning camps in the courtyard.

Archana, the Pratham coordinator, playfully chats with the children while setting up the camp. Here, children who are struggling or unable to read are taught basic reading skills with the aid of interactive activities. 'Learning camps' were initiated by Pratham as part of its Read India program as an accelerated way to help children reach simple learning goals in reading and math.

The children sit in a circle with Archana in the center. Their books are open to a story about a mango tree. "Who will read to us?" asks Archana. A number of hands go up. She selects Aiyaz, an active participant in the class, and as he reads aloud, the other children follow by running their fingers over the words.

When Aiyaz first came to the Pratham camp, he could barely recognize the letters of the alphabet. In Grade 5, Aiyaz went from one class to another without showing much interest or improvement. He lacked confidence and always sat at the back of the classroom. After participating in three learning camps, today Aiyaz can not only read stories but also loves to invent his own.

Archana asks the children to circle their favorite words from the story and jot them down on the board one by one. Then the students make sentences with the words they have chosen. Having developed a newfound love of learning, Aiyaz is happily contributing to the discussion and eager to give answers!

The Annual Status of Education Report 2013 was released in January 2014 by Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission in New Delhi. ASER 2013 covered 550 rural districts, surveying almost 600,000 children in over 16,000 villages with the help of 30,000 volunteers. The report highlighted some interesting trends:

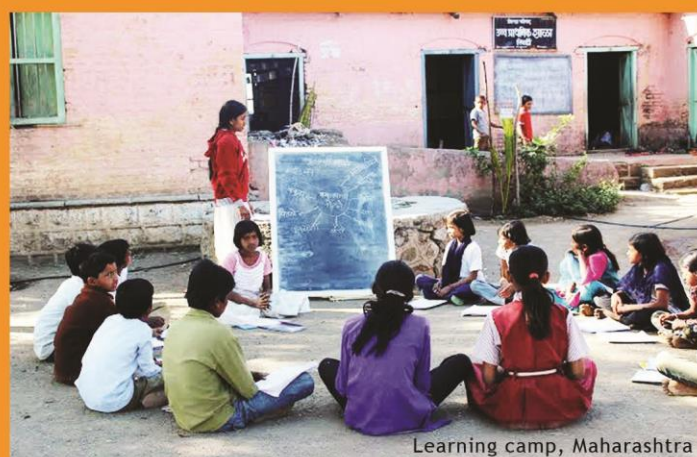
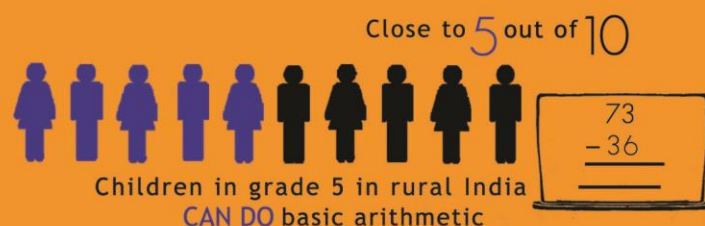
- Enrollment of children in elementary schools remains at 96%. However, a growing preference for private schools was observed, with over a quarter of enrolled children in rural India attending private schools.
- There is little or no improvement in children's reading abilities from the previous year, with the exception of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, which showed steady improvement. Nationally, close to half of all children in Grade 5 cannot read a Grade 2-level text.
- Basic math continues to be a challenge for children, with only a quarter of children in Grade 5 being able to solve a basic division problem.

A copy of ASER 2013 report can be found at www.asercentre.org.

Are children learning?



Can children do arithmetic?



Learning camp, Maharashtra

PUTTING YOUR DONATION DOLLARS WHERE THEY MATTER MOST!

Pratham's work would not be possible without the generous support of its donors, both individual and institutional. In 2013, individual donors to Pratham USA gave \$5.6 million for Pratham's programs in India. Please note this figure does not include contributions by US corporations and foundations. The use of these funds across programs can be observed in the chart below.

| Support & Revenue | \$ MM | (% of total) |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Read India | 2.4 | (43%) |
| Pratham Institute | 1.6 | (28%) |
| ASER Centre | 1.0 | (18%) |
| PCVC | 0.3 | (5%) |
| POSE | 0.1 | (2%) |
| REMAINING FUNDS* | 0.2 | (4%) |
| TOTAL | \$ 5.6 | (100%) |

* Since the accounting period in India (April - March) differs from the one adopted in the US (January - December), any remaining funds will be utilized on programs in the first quarter of 2014.

Programs & Impact

Pratham's principal interventions include the flagship Read India program; ASER, a nationwide survey which tracks learning outcomes and influences India's education policy; Pratham Open School of Education (POSE), which provides support for children who have dropped out of school or are at risk of doing so; and Pratham Institute, which offers vocational training to young adults.

Over the last year, Read India, a program largely supported by Pratham USA, reached about 800,000 children through its direct intervention. Pratham also reached an estimated 2 million children through partnerships with the State governments of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. An assessment of children in Pratham's learning camps shows:

- **Reading levels** - Children's reading levels increased by almost 50%. The number of children able to read only letters decreased by 1/3 from the start of the camps.
- **Arithmetic levels** - The number of children able to recognize 2- and 3-digit numbers rose from 38% to 83%. The number of children at the beginner level able to recognize only single digits fell by nearly 40%.

We expect Read India interventions, urban and rural, to grow and sustain gains in learning quality in the next academic cycle.

In 2012-13, POSE saw enrollment of 4,135 students. Of these students, over 2,000 completed the program and appeared for their Grade 10 examination, with over 46% passing the examination across the seven states where the program currently exists. In 2013-14, enrollment at POSE increased to 4,783 students. Although early results are promising, POSE is a relatively new program directed at a marginalized population and needs further experimentation of its content and delivery systems in the coming year.

Through its residential and non-residential vocational training centers, Pratham aims to impart skills in a variety of professions while simultaneously disseminating information about jobs, access to training, certification of skills, and provision of subsequent employment or entrepreneurship opportunities. The target audience for these programs is youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in rural and semi-urban areas in the age group of 18-30 years. Pratham Institute reached 4,700 youth in industry-specific programs in 2013 through the Pratham Arora Centre for Education (PACE) and has created a launch pad for 120 entrepreneurs across the country since its inception.

Deepika in a demonstration class



DEEPIKA DISCOVERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES AT PACE

21-year-old Deepika lived with her family in a village in Maharashtra. She sewed dresses, earning a meager living to help support her family. Despite her situation, Deepika counted herself among the more fortunate because her parents, in the face of extreme poverty, had managed to send her to school. She studied until Grade 10, but there seemed to be no avenues open to her after graduation. More importantly, she was not even aware of the kind of opportunities that existed.

One day, she heard friends talking about a place called PACE where people were finding employment. She made inquiries and learned that Pratham Arora Centre for Education (PACE) offered vocational training to young adults. The idea excited her!

The programs offered at PACE include hands-on training in various sectors such as hospitality, construction and bedside assistance, and at the end of the 3-month residential courses students are provided with job placement.

Deepika wondered, “People study for two to three years and still can’t get a job. What is this course where I can study for only two to three months and get help finding a good job?”

She was thrilled with the prospect and immediately joined the Centre in Aurangabad, enrolling in the hospitality program supported by the Taj Group of Hotels. Here, Deepika gained confidence through the support of her teachers while broadening her horizons through interaction with peers from all over India.

Now Deepika works at a 3-star hotel in Shirdi in Maharashtra and enjoys her job immensely. Looking back at her time at the Centre, she knows she gained much more than just vocational skills - she gained a new lease on life!



Deepika at PACE Aurangabad

Our Presence



Pratham is one of India's largest non-governmental organizations providing quality education to underprivileged children in India. With a budget of less than \$14 million, Pratham uses low-cost, scalable methods and works in collaboration with the government, local communities, parents, teachers, and volunteers across the country to educate millions of children every year. Pratham's mission is "Every Child in School and Learning Well."

Pratham USA, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a four-star rating (the highest possible) from Charity Navigator, accepts tax-deductible contributions from US donors to create educational reform throughout India.

For more information, visit www.prathamusa.org