



Pratham USA

Every Child in School and Learning Well



2014-15 Annual Report

AUSTIN DONORS



The year in review

Academic year 2014-15 was an exciting year of consolidation and expansion for Pratham. We continued to work in the same program areas as before, but decided to make the process more intensive with field staff spending more days per school teaching children. Simultaneously, partnerships with state governments helped us train government schoolteachers and thus indirectly help many more children to read, write and solve math.

Over the past year, we covered over 7 million children through direct interventions and government partnerships. While majority of these children were reached through government collaborations across 9 states, our direct interventions reached more than 1 million children in rural and urban areas across India.

Pratham in cities

Since beginning in the slums of erstwhile Bombay, Pratham has sought to tackle the most complex issues that confront the Indian education system. Issues of enrollment and quality transcend geographic boundaries and necessitated the expansion of programs to other states.

In Gujarat, our work began with early childhood programs in 1999 while programs in Andhra Pradesh (AP) started six years later. Since then, our programs have grown in both size and scope across major cities in these states.

With a presence in three cities in Gujarat (Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Surat) and two cities in AP (Hyderabad and Vishakhapatnam), the urban interventions have attempted to solve the problems of early childhood development (through *Balwadis* or preschools), school readiness and quality of education (via *Support Classes*) and reading (via libraries).

In a city, the nodal point is an **Urban Learning Center (ULC)** which provides supplementary education to children between the ages of 3 to 14 years from underprivileged communities. Multiple programs in ULCs offer learning classes in schools and communities for school-going children or out of school children who are unable to gain access to or cannot afford after-school support.



With your support, we conducted the following programs in 6 ULCs in Ahmedabad, 1 ULC in Baroda and 2 ULCs each in Hyderabad and Vishakhapatnam:

- **Balwadis** or preschools sought to foster the physical, cognitive and linguistic development of children in the age group of 3-5 years. All *balwadi* teachers used age appropriate curriculum along with monitoring tools to teach children. The curriculum contained specific activities considering the children's age and learning capacity. Stories, interactive songs, regular observations and interaction with children proved to be the best approach to learning. Additionally, parents and teachers were informed about the importance of elementary education in the early years of a child's life.

- **CAMaL Classes** (AP only) were for children in the age group of 6-8 years. These classes aimed to develop and strengthen basic reading and numeracy skills to help children adapt to the grade appropriate curriculum in school. The content and teaching learning materials integrated the state curricula and principles of Pratham's Combination of Activities for Maximized Learning (CAMaL) teaching methodology. Curriculum was continuously reviewed taking into account the minimum learning level, age and in-school grade of the child.



Assessment tools were designed and new activities were constantly added to the curriculum with the focus on developing the competencies of the children.

- **Support Classes** were primarily for in-school children (6-14 years in Gujarat and 9-14 years in AP) to grasp grade-specific curriculum in school. In Gujarat, the *Support Classes* followed the same model as CAMaL classes while in AP, *Support Classes* focused on developing higher competencies of comprehension, creative writing and solving advanced arithmetic functions.



- **Libraries** were organized to develop reading and comprehension skills of all children in the ULC. Librarians distributed books with simple sentences, paragraphs and stories based on grade levels, and discussed stories with children from Grades 1-8. This program was constructive in stimulating the curiosity of children through amusing stories and cultivating reading as a habit. The librarian visited a few households daily to circulate books among the children. Once a week, reading activities were conducted with children at the ULC.

	Ahmedabad		Vadodara		Hyderabad		Vishakapatnam	
Program	Units	Coverage	Units	Coverage	Units	Coverage	Units	Coverage
Balwadis	7	140	1	20	13	400	20	641
CAMaL Classes					45	1,565	20	1,874
Support Classes	30	600	5	100	18	375	18	473
Libraries	22	5,350	1	150	21	1,218	20	1,213
TOTAL	59	6,090	7	270	97	3,558	78	4,201

Pratham in villages

When establishing programs in cities, we realized that the quality of education and learning levels in rural areas were lagging. Thus, between 2001 and 2007, we began operations in three key states – Uttar Pradesh (UP), Andhra Pradesh (AP) and Chhattisgarh.

As each of these states went through socio-political upheavals of their own, our programs grew to address issues of education quality (through *Read India* and the upper primary program), dropouts (via *Second Chance*), and vocational skilling and unemployment (by *Pratham Institute*).

In 2014-15 – with your support – we covered 9,560 Grade 1-5 students in four blocks across UP, AP and Chhattisgarh (371,804 children across India) through *Read India* learning camps in 173 government primary schools (6,244 schools across the country).



In 101 schools across four districts **where the current phase of *Read India* was not implemented before**, learning camps were organized for 30 days with intervals of 6-10 days in between camps. A baseline or pretest was conducted at the beginning of the camp to ascertain Grade 3-5 students' initial learning levels followed by four subsequent end lines to assess progress and impact.

In 72 schools in the same districts **where we had worked previously**, 10 day follow up camps were conducted with Grade 3-5 students who could not read despite attending learning camps in the previous year.

State	District	Block	Schools with 30 days camp	Grade 3-5 students reached	Grade 1-2 students reached	Follow up schools	Grade 3-5 coverage through follow up	Grade 1-2 coverage through follow up
Uttar Pradesh	Agra	Saiyan	14	802	395	16	365	637
Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Dantewada	27	790	519	20	262	
	Dhamtari	Dhamtari	30	1,681	963	20	215	
Andhra	Warrangal	Janagaon	30	1,500	895	16	36	
TOTAL			101	4,773	2,772	72	1,378	637

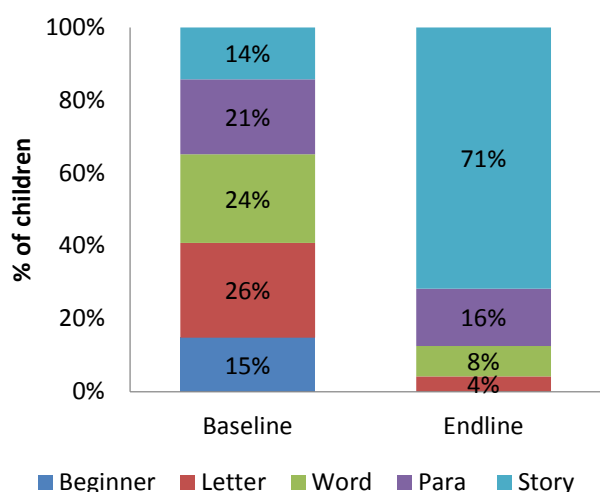
Learning Improvement

Over the year, Grade 3-5 students made considerable progress through interventions supported by you.

Progress was measured with assessment tools developed by Pratham in each regional language and essentially tested the same learning levels in reading and arithmetic irrespective of district or state.

Charts shown in this section depict compiled improvement achieved by children across the four districts in 30 day learning camps.

CHART 1. Improvement in Reading

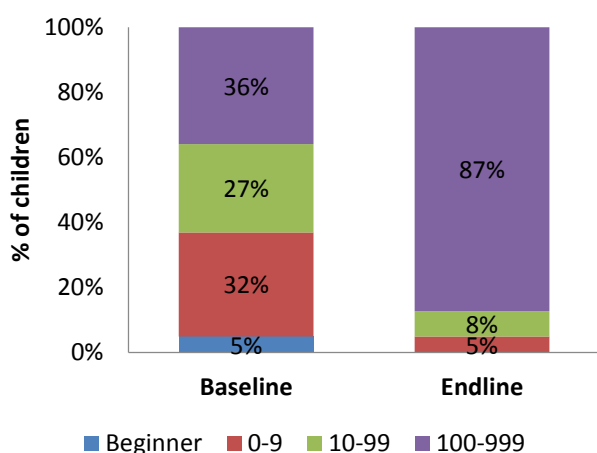


In Chart 1, the percentage of children able to read at story level increased by 57 percentage points over the duration of camps.

Reading progress observed in districts supported by you was slightly higher than the rest of the country with story-readers in the latter increasing by 48 percentage points after 30 days of camp.

From Chart 2, we can infer that children who were able to recognize 3-digit numbers after camps jumped by 51 percentage points. Across India, a similar jump of 53 percentage points was recorded for children who could recognize 3-digit numbers.

CHART 2. Improvement in Number Recognition



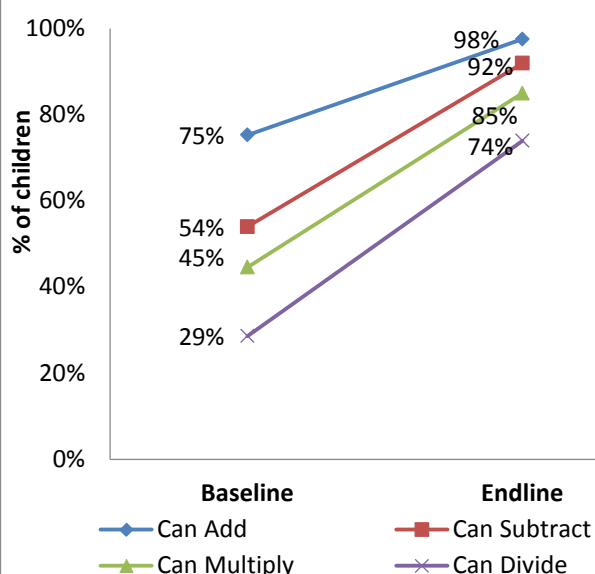
Beginning with a high baseline, addition seemed to be the simplest operation in Chart 3. After 30 days of camp, proficiency in other operations increased as well.

Lessons learnt

Our experience over the years has shown us that without strong foundational skills in reading and arithmetic, children continue to be in school and not learn. *Read India* has demonstrated that children can attain these skills by introducing often small but very impactful changes in our existing teaching and learning practices. Based on our work and analyses, we have observed that:

- Organizing children in smaller learning groups promotes both peer and self-learning and more importantly creates an environment of fun in the classroom
- Building foundational language and arithmetic skills as an independent skill is critical to long term learning and development of children
- Some children tend to slip back into previous learning levels without continuing support from their teachers and/or Pratham staff
- Children are inherently curious and want to learn if they are provided with the right environment and support

CHART 3. Improvement in Operations



Thus, it is an opportune moment to initiate a new approach to adapt to the changing times.

Way forward

Moving from Read India to Read India PLUS...

Pratham aspires to create a system where **children will enjoy being learners and not just readers.**

Through learning camps and years of interacting with millions of children, we have realized that children learn from their surroundings, in school, at home, from their families and the larger community. It is a unique opportunity for parents and community members to take responsibility for their children's education.

Thus, in areas where we have made considerable progress over the past few years in building foundational skills, we are aiming to adopt **the Read India Plus approach** to help children **learn to learn.**

Our objective is to connect children to the changing world and to the infinite opportunities that learning and knowledge offer. We want to create a learning environment in which children can learn independently, with their peers, in groups and by themselves through a spirit of inquiry and discovery. From teaching children, we are aspiring to facilitating their learning.

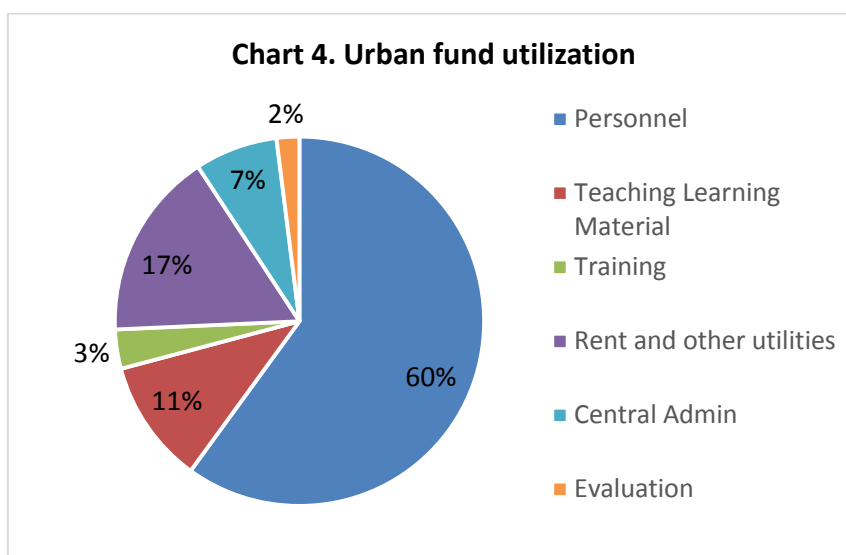
As an organization, we want to create a self-sustaining learning environment by organizing children in smaller groups so that group learning becomes an accepted way of learning. We need to learn how to step back and facilitate and let children take ownership of their own learning.



Financials

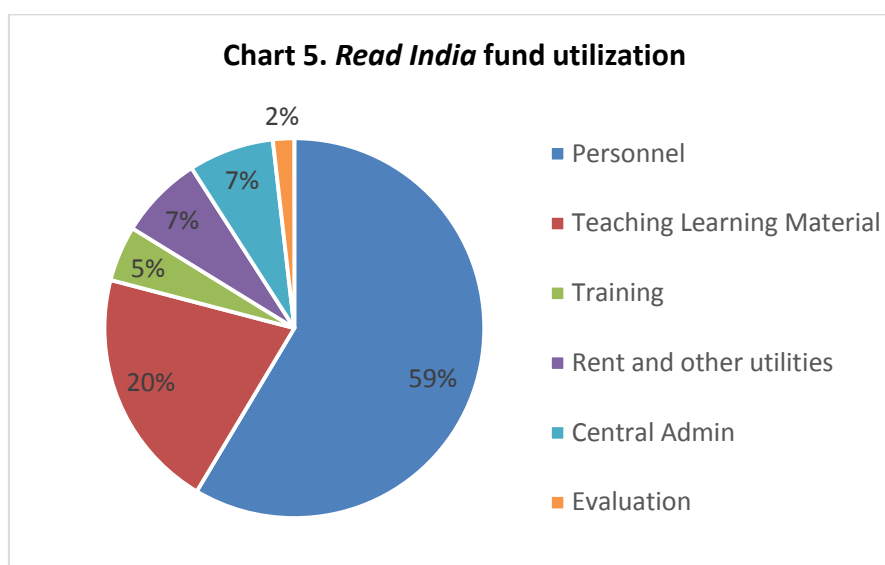
The chart outlines the distribution of your funds for the urban programs in Gujarat and AP.

- 60% was allocated to the salaries of field staff who were recruited locally to teach students while 3% was assigned towards regular training of these personnel.
- 11% was allocated to the development, printing and distribution of language and math teaching learning materials, notebooks, library books and stationary.
- Monitoring and evaluation accounted for 2% of program expenses.
- Central support expenditure amounted to 7% while 17% was allocated to rent and other utilities.



The chart outlines the distribution of your funds for *Read India* across UP, Chhattisgarh and AP.

- Salaries of Pratham staff recruited locally accounted for 59% of funds while 5% went towards regular training of personnel.
- 20% was allocated to the development, printing and distribution of language and math teaching learning materials.
- Monitoring and evaluation accounted for 2% of program expenses.
- Central support expenditure and local office expenses each accounted for 7%.



Case study



Harish Kumar was a Grade 5 student enrolled in the government-run elementary school in Amrupura village in Saiyan block in Agra (UP).

Before conducting the learning camp, the local Pratham staff member known as a Cluster Resource Leader (CRL) went to his school to conduct a baseline survey of all Grade 3-5 students and found that Harish was absent.

As was expected, the CRL went into the community to test children who were not present in class and discovered that Harish had been playing truant for some time. In fact, even locating him in the village proved to be quite a challenge. Finally, Harish was found on someone else's farm where he was paid ten rupees per day to be its caretaker.

The CRL approached Harish and asked him if he could take a short test. Frightened, Harish ran away. Over the next few days, Harish did everything he could to avoid the CRL – running away, hiding, even climbing up a tree and refusing to

come down. Yet, the CRL persisted to understand why the boy did not want to go to school.

One day, when the CRL was speaking to Harish's parents at his home, Harish strolled in and was finally convinced to speak to the CRL. His tests concluded that he could recognize single digits in math but not letters in Hindi.

The CRL decided to spend some more time with Harish and play a few games that were usually conducted in the learning camp. He gave the boy reading materials and worksheets, involved the other children in the house and played some games that got everyone interested. Harish was eventually convinced to come to school to observe and participate in the learning camp.

The next day, much to everyone's surprise, Harish was there in school even before the CRL had arrived. He participated enthusiastically in all the activities. Initially, he had some difficulty in reading stories and doing math problems but continued to come regularly for the remainder of the camp days.

When it came to conducting the endline, Harish was a little nervous but performed very well. The CRL was so pleased with his progress that he even went back to Harish's parent's house to let them know that that Harish could read stories fluently and solve math operations. His parents were even more surprised by his abilities and proud of his progress.

