

# PRATHAM'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

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Over the past 25 years, Pratham has worked at scale across India to address the education crisis facing the nation's children and youth. Today, as we confront an unprecedented challenge, we are leveraging our experience and agility to navigate the pandemic and fulfill our mission. Here are a few of the ways we are adapting to the situation:

## 1. Keeping People Safe and Informed

Pratham has taken meaningful steps for the safety of our employees and volunteers. In early March, job-related travel was suspended and in-person training sessions were postponed or held virtually. Students at our residential centers were sent home. And on March 17, 2020, all Pratham offices were closed. The 6,500 full-time employees are now working remotely.

Our many communication channels have been streamlined into a single cascading system. Using WhatsApp, we are disseminating information on COVID-19 to Pratham staff and the 5,000 communities we serve. In addition to creating handouts and posters on safety and hygiene, we have [translated WHO videos](#) into several regional languages.

## 2. Connecting with Children and Communities in a New Way

By shifting from in-person interactions to remote learning, we are maintaining a connection with children in communities where we have a direct presence. Our approach during the lockdown period is to leverage our technology tools and digital content to keep children engaged, with support from parents and caregivers.

Using WhatsApp and text messages, we are sharing daily activities with parents for children of all ages called [Karona: Thodi Masti. Thodi Padhai](#) (*Do it: a little fun, a little study*). These messages feature video and audio content that facilitates hands-on activities in various subjects. A Pratham team member follows up with a weekly phone call to the families in the five to ten villages he or she normally supports. These calls boost spirits, spur conversation around the activities and provide an opportunity for family members to ask questions about the health-related materials they have received.

### **3. Sharing Resources to Support Learning for All**

Pratham has made critical investments in digital content and technology for education in recent years. These resources are now being shared widely through open-source sites in cooperation with governments and 36 partner organizations. Our [digital library](#) is being utilized by several state governments for teacher resource platforms and student engagement. Efforts are being made to expand this repository and ensure its accessibility.

### **4. Collaborating for Essential Humanitarian Aid**

We are assisting with relief efforts that address immediate hunger and health challenges. Our Mumbai team is working closely with the municipal government as well as a consortium of NGOs and corporations to coordinate the [Mumbai Food Project](#), which aims to feed 100,000 individuals during India's 21-day shutdown. In addition, Pratham's vocational training centers in Aurangabad, Ralegoan and Latur stand ready to be converted into regional quarantine facilities for COVID -19 patients if the need arises.

### **5. Planning for Near- and Long-term Economic Uncertainty**

Like other organizations, we are grappling with serious financial issues and preparing for an uncertain future. We are carefully examining our finances and taking measures to reduce expenses while speaking with our supporters to ensure job protection and livelihood for our employees.

More broadly, we are also looking at what effect the closure of the schools will have on children's learning, how the economic downturn will impact India's sizeable rural youth population and what impact the overall disruption will have on communities we serve. While the full implications of the global shutdown will remain unknown for some time, we are beginning to plan for the post-pandemic landscape, analyzing how our strengths, capabilities and reach can be effectively employed for recovery.