Every child in school & learning well

Evidence & Action : Pratham 2000-2012
Road map

- What is the context?
- What is the problem?
- What is the solution? What “works”?

How has measurement, evidence and impact evaluation played a role in understanding what to do - both internally within the organization as well as for the government.

What have been the challenges in trying to strengthen the link between evidence and action?
The context

- ~ 1 million elementary schools in India
- ~ More than 90% children have schools in their habitation or within a 1 km distance
- ~ 200 million children in the age group 6 to 14 (of elementary school age)
- ~ 96% of children in the age group 6 to 14 are enrolled in school

India is close to universal enrollment. Enrollment figures meet international MDG goals as well as national goals (SSA & RTE)
But are children “learning”?

- It is time to look beyond inputs & enrollment ...
- How to define “learning”?
- How to measure “learning”?
- Are there available estimates on learning?
- What works in improving children’s learning?
- How can evidence on learning influence policy, planning and practice?
Do policies address this problem?

UNIVERSAL ENROLLMENT !!!!

- Current MDG goals refer to universal enrollment.
- India’s national goals (SSA & RTE) refer to universal enrollment, retention and reduction of disparities.
- In India, from school/village level to state & national level enrollment numbers are collected frequently, published and discussed.

UNIVERSAL LEARNING ??

- Current MDG goals - No definition or reference to children’s learning goals.
- National (SSA & RTE) goals are broad ....“quality inclusive education” ,
- In India, nationally government measurements of children’s learning are periodic (not current) and opaque.
Putting the problem squarely on the table

Defining “learning”....what is basic reading?

Grade II 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।

Grade I level text

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

Letters

ल प स क र ट

Simple words

लाभ दूध पैर चाकू कूड़ा छोटा
How to measure learning?
Generating estimates for the country

Key elements of ASER
- Representative sample of children at district level
- Every rural district in India
- Every year since 2005
- Designed by Pratham – sampling, tools
- Facilitated by Praatham
- Conducted by district level organizations
- Disseminated by district level organizations

ASER 2012 reached:
567 districts. 16166 villages.
(30 randomly sampled villages per district).
331,881 households surveyed.
596,846 children in age group 3 to 16 surveyed.
ASER Findings:
Can children in India read?

Source: ASER 2012 (ANNUAL STATUS OF EDUCATION REPORT) www.asercentre.org

### ASER 2012: Basic reading ability. All India (rural)

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Basic ASER data is useful for understanding the current context.

In Std V about half of all children cannot read at Std II level

Similar data in East Africa via UWEZO and in ASER Pakistan.
Learning Curves: Expected versus Actual “Big stuck” & worrying indications of decline

Big gaps between expected basic level (see red line) and current reading level.

Where does the country want to be by 2015?

How will we get there?

All India (rural) : ASER 2006-2012
Learning profiles over time: Experiences of different cohorts shows falling trend.

Each successive cohort going through the Indian primary school system has been gaining less each year, as compared to the previous cohorts, especially after Std II.

Note: The oldest cohort started Std I in 2006 & has reached Std V in 2010 (red line).
Why are children’s learning levels low?

Could be many reasons ..
Here are some from school & some from home

- Insufficient inputs, infrastructure, teaching materials
- Teachers not equipped to teach well
- Not enough incentives to teach well
- Diversity in learning levels in each grade – hard to facilitate “catch up”

- Parents understand importance of schooling but not of learning
- Parents not sure of what they can do to help
What “works”? Where is the evidence?
What improves children’s learning?

- Schools do not have extra resources (time or people) to help children lagging behind. Can supplementary resources help children learn better? 2001-2003

- Parents are often illiterate. Communities do not know the problem. If they did, parents/community members could focus on solving the problem. Can information help? Do “demonstrations” help? Can there be community based solutions for improving learning? 2006-2007

- Teaching by level rather than by grade? 2008-2010

- If mothers were literate would that boost children’s learning? 2010-2012.
Case 1: “Teaching by level”
From impact evaluation to action

Read India impact evaluation in Bihar by JPAL (2008-2010) showed:
• Teaching by level boosted learning especially in the summer camp mode
• Village volunteers made a difference to children’s learning levels.

Pratham adopted “learning camp” mode in programs across the country. 2.5 + million children reached in 2011-2012.

In 2012-13 school year Haryana govt implementing “teaching by level” intervention for remedial education along with JPAL RCT with support from Pratham

In 2012-13 school year Jehanabad district implementing “teaching by level” with good results.

Bihar state wide program planned for 2013-14 along with summer camps
Case 2: Mother’s literacy and children’s learning

Impact evaluation by JPAL (2010-2012) showed:
• As literacy levels of mothers increased there were positive influences on children’s learning
• Interactive tasks done by mothers with children also boosted learning of children.

Pratham planning teaching-learning materials for mothers to use with their children esp in Grade 1-2 in programs across India.

Advanced discussions in Bihar with “Jeevika” (SHG movement) for adaptation of female literacy package across their state wide programs.
Learnings for practice from participating in impact evaluations: Lessons of 10 years

- Evolution of evaluations parallel the evolution of programs – long run perspective of the power of integrating experience and evidence. Need to learn how to run large scale programs and conduct rigorous research alongside.

- Creating a culture of curiosity, of measurement, of the need to understand impact. “Learning laboratory”.

- Participating in the “process” of impact evaluation very beneficial to programs. Needs serious investment from the practitioners.

- “Replication” & “scaling” to “learning” & “transplanting”
www.pratham.org
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