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IMPACT @ SCALE CASE STUDY:

educate girls

Educate Girls' Measurement Journey

About Dasra

Dasra is India's leading strategic philanthropy foundation. Dasra works with philanthropists and successful social entrepreneurs to bring together knowledge, funding and people as a catalyst for social change. We ensure that strategic funding and capacity building skills reach non- profit organizations and social businesses to have the greatest impact on the lives of people living in poverty.

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The challenges to development in India can be counted in the millions: 758,000 newborns dead within their first 28 days every year, 190 million undernourished people, 11.9 million children out of primary and lower secondary school, 400 million people without access to electricity, 650 million people without access to a toilet. [1,2,3,4,5]

The solution that is often presented to the nonprofits and businesses that work in the social sector is scale; when these organizations work with a large number of people, and have a deep impact on each of them, they are likely to effect widespread and lasting change. While few would disagree with that solution, there are some questions that are often asked in response: How is an organization to create impact at scale? What is a realistic timeframe for this result? Years? Decades? How can organizations speed up a process that has often been painfully slow? How does an organization make critical resource decisions well – allocating time, staff, and funds to the activities that have the greatest impact?

These questions are extremely relevant to the leadership of social sector organizations as well as to those who provide them with funding. Without a clear strategy to scale impact, an organization will not succeed in transforming the lives of a large number of people, or it will scale so slowly that another generation or more will struggle with the same challenges before change occurs.

This case study focuses on the journey of Educate Girls (EG) and their use of impact assessment as a means of developing a scalable model. EG is a Rajasthan-based nonprofit that works on girls' education in the worst gender-gap districts of India – areas where a vast majority of the illiterate population are women. Within a decade EG grew from working in 50 schools to providing their services in 10,500 schools. The organization expanded its impact through program replication in other gender gap districts and has brought 80,000 girls back to school. Its effective use of measurement has enabled EG to adapt quickly, respond to its target beneficiaries better, demonstrate continued impact, build partnerships with the Government, and attract significant resources to scale.

Unfortunately, many social organizations approach impact assessment primarily as a funder driven reporting activity. Organizations greatly reduce their odds of demonstrating the success of their work to attract and satisfy funders in the future when they do not build an internal commitment and capacity to measure performance effectively and learn what is working, or not, to improve.

Dasra's experience has made it clear that organizations at different stages of growth have vastly different monitoring and evaluation needs. Also, it is not feasible, or even desirable, for all organizations to develop metrics at all levels of their results chain, from immediate outputs to long term societal impacts. The more important challenge is one of alignment: designing metrics and measurement systems to support the achievement of well-defined mission objectives.[6,7] According to Mike Belinsky, Co-Founder at Instilgio*, *"there are three steps to measuring the effectiveness of organizations: Are inputs being applied correctly? Are activities being conducted correctly? If the answers to the above two questions are yes, then is impact being created?"*

Dasra's key learning has been that impact assessment practices evolve as the organization evolves. Since 2010, when *Dasra's Girl Power* research report culminated in the selection of EG into Dasra's portfolio, Dasra has worked closely with EG's leadership team to help them with the development and execution of their expansion strategy. An account of EG's journey presents learning for organizations at different stages of growth, working in diverse sectors. The following story demonstrates how EG was able to harness the potential of impact assessment as a learning tool to improve program design and delivery, strengthen their model, and grow effectively. While EG still has a long way to go to achieve their vision of scale, they are using measurement to ask the right questions of their work.

* Instiglio is an organization that promotes results-based contracting in international development with a focus on social impact bonds.

The Challenge of Scale

About Educate Girls

India is home to the largest number of illiterate women in the world (over 200 million) with over 3.7 million eligible yet out-of-school girls. Estimates show that girls in India average less than four years of education, roughly 40 % leave school before they reach class 5, and for every 100 girls only one reaches class 12. Additionally, most school facilities in India are not girl-friendly, which significantly hampers attendance. For instance, only 55 % of schools in India have toilets for girls, and only 42% of teachers are female. Several socio-economic factors contribute to the poor state of girls' education in India including limited attitudes towards education of the girl child, low quality of education, teacher shortage, poverty, and a lack of support from parents and communities. Given these issues, enrolling and retaining marginalized girls in schools poses an immense challenge.

According to the Ministry of Human Resources Development, there are 26 gender gap districts in India - areas where a vast majority of the illiterate population are women. This gap in Rajasthan is particularly significant as 9 of the 26 gender gap districts are in this state alone. Additionally, Rajasthan has a high rate of underage marriages – 68% of girls are child brides of which 15 % are below the age of 10 years.

The Model

EG was founded by Safeena Husain in 2005 to address the challenge of gender inequality in education. They do this by reforming government schools through an innovative model of community ownership. The EG idea was to engage teachers, parents, community members and girls themselves through five key interventions to ensure enrollment, retention, and improvement in learning outcomes:

1 **Increasing Girl Enrollment:**
EG invests in identifying out-of-school girls via village door-to-door surveys and the government's child tracking survey. Once girls are identified, Gram Shiksha Sabhas (village meetings) are held to prepare community-based enrollment plans and to share responsibility between village leaders, elders, school administration and EG staff to bring girls into the school system.

2 **Reforming School Administration:**
EG trains existing School Management Committees (SMCs), a 15-member council of parents, teachers, and village leaders, to take responsibility of school governance and administration and of making school infrastructure more girl-friendly. EG supports SMCs throughout the year to conduct school assessments and prepare and execute school improvement plans. EG also helps SMCs to access government funding for school improvement projects.

3 **Facilitating Community Ownership through Team Balika Members:**
EG recruits and trains a cadre of village-based youth leaders called Team Balika to work as champions for girls' education and catalysts for school reform in their communities. By assigning one Team Balika member per village, EG ensures that the community has a liaison who is responsible for monitoring girls' enrollment and retention in school in that community.

4 **Improving Learning Outcomes:**
The organization trains government teachers in Creative Learning and Teaching (CLT) methodologies to bring child-friendly, activity-based learning techniques to the classroom, with the vision to increase learning levels and outcomes.

5 **Creating Girl Leaders:**
EG facilitates the formation of Girls' Councils or Bal Sabhas in every upper primary school. This comprises of an elected 13-member association, wherein each member is given a leadership position in the school and trained in life skills that boost her proficiency in communication, leadership and problem solving. These councils are meant to stimulate girls participation in matters concerning their growth and development.

The cornerstone of EG's model is a strong partnership with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA), the Government of India's national scheme for universalization of primary education. By aligning its model with the SSA mandates, EG minimizes opposition to its field operations from village members, ensures that the government is aware of its impact, and leverages government support and funding. This public-private partnership also makes EG exceptionally cost-effective and scalable.

Results

EG's work began in Pali - one of Rajasthan's gender gap districts - in 2005 and has since expanded to six districts. The vision is to grow to all 26 gender gap districts throughout India. Since inception, EG has:
- Brought 80,000 girls back to school
- Increased attendance in school from 62% to 87%.
- Grew the proportion of schools with girl friendly infrastructure - 36% more schools have drinking water and 27% more have separate toilets for girls.
- Improved learning outcomes amongst girls and boys - Hindi story reading abilities have increased from 15% to 35% and Math skills have improved from 11% to 29%.

The vision of Educate Girls is to achieve behavioral, social and economic transformation for all girls towards an India where all children have equal opportunities to access quality education.

Educate Girls' mission is to reform government schools for girls' education by leveraging existing community and government resources. The goal is to improve access and quality of education for 3 million children living in underserved communities in India by 2016.

Educate Girls - A Story of Scale

To help explain EG's story, Dasra has adapted and applied a framework that describes a stage-based growth trajectory applicable to most social organizations. The stages include: blueprint, validate, prepare, and scale. Aspects of this framework are adapted from Monitor 's "From Blue Print to Scale,"* UnLtd's "Social Entrepreneurship Toolkit," and "Lifecycle and Organizational Capacity Models."[8,9,10] These frameworks all call out distinct growth stages and traits in an organization's journey from drawing board to scale. Organization leaders can better prepare for the next stage of their organizations' growth by first understanding the various stages and transitions that most social organizations undergo. This case study explains how EG's measurement systems evolved as the organization moved through the four stages. Its journey provides valuable lessons for social organizations on effectively using measurement to scale impact.

Four Stages of an Organization's Growth Journey

BLUEPRINT	VALIDATE	PREPARE	SCALE
STAGE			
Develop a blueprint for the future	Test and refine the model	Enhance conditions required for scaling	Roll out the model to reach large numbers of people
KEY ACTIVITES			
Understand the problem/social issue	Conduct research to test what parts of the model are working and what needs improvement	Develop organizational capacity to scale by increasing and strengthening personnel and support functions	Expand to new geographies
Identify target beneficiaries			Leverage scale efficiencies
Develop blueprint of model	Test model assumptions made in the blueprint	Enhance systems and processes to support scale	
Define vision of success			
Develop and run a pilot	Refine and re-work the model		
END MILESTONES			
Compelling initial business plan; Demonstrated pilot efficacy	Refined model; Validation of viability and scalability of model	Continued refining of model if necessary; Organizational systems in place to support scaling	Sustainably reaching all target beneficiaries

This summary table briefly explains how EG's measurement systems evolved as the organization moved through the four stages. Subsequently, each stage is explained in more detail.

Evolution of Educate Girls - Highlights

	2005-2008	2009-2011
Year		
Stage	BLUEPRINT	VALIDATE
Focus	Developing a blueprint for the future	Testing and refining the model
Number of Schools	0-500 schools	500 – 3,100 schools
Geography (districts)	Pali	Pali, Jalore
Team Size	27	103
Annual Organization Budget*	INR 7 lakh (~USD 11,600)	INR 2.3 crore (~USD 380,000)
Number of Children Reached	70,000	348,000
Key Program Activities (Aside from continuing and refining existing activities)	• Conducted door-to-door surveys to identify out-of-school girls • Community mobilization meetings (Gram Shiksha Sabhas) to raise awareness about girls' education • Meetings with government officials to build relationships for future collaborations	• Increased focus on School Management Committees (SMCs) to improve school infrastructure • Training teachers in Creative Learning Techniques (CLT) • Formation of Bal Sabhas (Girl Councils) in schools to improve life skills

Evolution of Measurement

	2005-2008	2009-2011
M&E Team Size	0	9
M&E Budget (% of Annual Budget)	2-3%	3-5%
Key Measurement Activities	• Focused on clarity of metrics - worked with a set of easy-to-define and measure metrics • Started with short term indicators • Conducted door-to-door surveys and used Government of Rajasthan's Child Tracking Survey to gather baseline data	• Measured impact of CLT on retention and learning outcomes. • Measured impact of girl-friendly schools on retention • Introduced excel based information management system for data analysis
Types of Indicators (examples)	• Activity indicators. • Examples include baseline and end line data on school enrollment and attendance of marginalized girls	• Activity and output indicators. • Examples include number of schools with pre and post CLT tests, number of teachers trained in CLT, increase in girl friendliness of schools, number of Bal Sabhas formed, number of SMC members trained

Milestones

	2005-2008	2009-2011
Organization & Measurement Milestones	• Won government approval to start a pilot project in 500 schools in Pali	• The Government of Rajasthan became a major supporter of EG's program, funding ~45% of the organization's annual expenses. • Signed MOU and began expansion to another district, Jalore
New Funders	Educate Girls Globally*	LGT Venture Philanthropy, Dasra, Government of Rajasthan

Evolution of Educate Girls - Highlights

	2012-2013	2014 and beyond
Year		
Stage	PREPARE	SCALE
Focus	Enhancing the conditions required for scaling	Rolling out the model to reach large numbers of people
Number of Schools	3,100 – 5,000 schools	10,500 plus schools and counting
Geography (districts)	Pali, Jalore, Sirohi	Pali, Jalore, Sirohi, Ajmer, Rajsamand, Bundi + other new districts
Team Size	131	460
Annual Organization Budget*	INR 4.3 crore (~USD 720,000)	INR 19 crore (~USD 3.2 million)
Number of Children Reached	495,000	947,000
Key Program Activities	• Recruited and strengthened base of village volunteers (Team Balika) to supplement field staff	• Team Balika to increase community ownership • Full-fledged model scaled to new districts

Evolution of Measurement

	2012-2013	2014 and beyond
M&E Team Size	20	32
M&E Budget (% of Annual Budget)	3-5%	5%
Key Measurement Activities	• Transferred some data collection burden from field staff to Team Balika volunteers • Introduced monitoring and research team • Introduced mobile based data collection • Implemented School Assessment Charts (SACs) in schools	• Implemented additional outcome indicators for impact of life skills curriculum
Types of Indicators	• Activity and output indicators. • Examples include number of school improvement plans completed, number of Team Balikas recruited and trained	• Activity, output and outcome indicators. • Examples include pre- and post- impact of life skills curriculum; number of marginalized girls who have stayed in school through the life cycle of EG's intervention

Milestones

	2012-2013	2014 and beyond
Milestones	• Signed MOU to expand to third district, Sirohi • Continued expansion in Jalore	• Launched in three new districts • Launched Development Impact Bonds (DIB) with CIFF and UBS
New Funders	British Asian Trust, World Bank's IDM	Educate A Child (EAC), Mulago Foundation, Jasmine Charitable Trust

*This case study uses an INR/USD exchange rate of 60
*Educate Girls Globally is a US based education non-profit that provided seed funding for the pilot project.

SUMMARY TABLE

> BLUEPRINT

VALIDATE

PREPARE

SCALE

An idea or concept on its own is not a blueprint. There needs to be a compelling initial business plan. At the end of this first stage, an organization is not only required to demonstrate a proof of concept but also to establish a few strong partnerships that will support the organization's journey through subsequent stages.

BLUEPRINT

EG's journey began in 2005 in 50 government schools in Rajasthan's Pali district, with a working blueprint and a statement of purpose: "to provide opportunities for girls and women to achieve their full potential." While developing its problem statement, EG had rightly identified that gender inequality was a result of several complex social issues, which limited life opportunities of millions of girls in India. Very early on, EG zeroed in on education reform to tackle gender inequality and started out with clear objectives: 1) to bridge the difference in male and female literacy rates in the worst gender gap districts; 2) to create a model that can be scaled to all 26 gender gap districts in India at low cost and maximum impact; 3) to leverage existing government infrastructure and resources and enable community ownership for sustainable change. Right from the blueprint stage, partnering with the Government of Rajasthan was critical to EG's mission to scale.

Challenges and opportunities

1) Narrowing the scope of activities.
Deciding on what is in and out of the scope of an organization's activities is one of the most challenging tasks for leaders committed to developing a scalable strategy. EG faced the same challenge. Initially, empowering girls was about sending them to school, preventing them from getting married early, ensuring they are physically healthy and making them economically independent. By narrowing down on education as its focus for "intended impact," EG clearly defined accountability metrics to measure and improve over time. EG's hypothesis during this stage was that educating girls would have positive spillover effects such as delayed marriages, delayed pregnancies, and greater financial independence. They did not create programming targeted at these latter objectives, but stayed focused on education.

2) Aligning metrics to well-defined objectives.
A good test of whether a leadership team has clarity about their objectives is whether they can answer these questions in a single sentence: Who does the organization serve? What change do they seek to create? How do they define success? Iterative versions of the mission and vision* enabled EG leadership to articulate that the three pillars of their program would focus on enrollment, retention, and improvement in learning outcomes. With these pillars in mind, EG could develop a basic monitoring and evaluation plan and related indicators. For example, the number of girls enrolled and attendance of students would serve as baseline data that could be used to track progress over time. Measures were intentionally simple and easy to communicate, which enabled a common purpose across the organization.

3) Using reliable baseline data.
To arrive at a baseline of the total number of out-of-school girls in the Pali region, EG initially looked to the Government of Rajasthan's Child Tracking Survey* which included enrollment lists of girls in government schools. However, when EG conducted its own door-to-door survey in Pali, it found that many girls were either never enrolled in schools or had dropped out of schools and as a result were missing from the government list. Given how critical having an accurate count of out-of-school girls was to EG's operations, EG invested staff time gathering its own data, but in a manner that did not disrupt relationships with government officials. EG's surveys were initially met with resistance from teachers at schools, the village cluster, and block resource facilitators due to fears about accuracy and overestimation of the numbers of out-of-school girls. EG overcame this resistance by having a process whereby EG's list of out-of-school girls would be verified with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) officials. In this way, EG not only demonstrated to government officials that it was capable of producing reliable surveys, but also established itself as an credible partner with whom the State could work to bridge gender disparity in education.

* Child Tracking Survey is conducted by the Rajasthan government under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) to track all children below the age of 18 years.

Milestones

One of EG's noteworthy milestones was an MOU with the Government of Rajasthan in 2007 to work in 500 schools in Pali under the umbrella of the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI), a public-private partnership formed to generate solutions to extend education in the state. EG, with its 'vision + prototype' that aligned with REI's mission, was one of the first organizations to present a promising pilot for Rajasthan, which helped foster the right relationships for the future.

After the hurdle of proving initial efficacy of their pilot model to the government, EG could now focus its attention on strengthening the model and testing some of the program design assumptions it made during the blueprint stage.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2008, this was the size of EG as represented by the following variables.

INR
7
LAKH

Annual Organization Budget
(~USD 11,600)

27

Team Size

500

Number Of Schools

Pali
(Rajasthan State)

District

70,000

Number of Children Reached

> VALIDATE

Validation is particularly important for organizations trying to create social benefit as it enables them to strengthen their model to best meet the needs of their target community. In this stage, organization leaders should focus on validating the viability of the model described in the blueprint. This involves running trials to test assumptions made in the blueprint, which will often reveal issues and weakness in the blueprint, leading to refinements and more testing. The more organizations are able to approach testing and refinements with rigor and effort, the stronger their model will be. Additionally, they will be more attractive to funders, who will help achieve scale at a faster pace.

When EG moved into the validate stage, the benefits of measurement really became apparent. As the organization expanded the model to more schools in Pali, it learned that retaining girls in school was a major challenge through its measurement systems. During this stage, field staff focused on a deeper level of engagement in schools via the roll out of Bal Sabhas (girls councils). Bal Sabhas received training through role-play and story-telling activities to boost communication, leadership, critical thinking, decision-making, self-esteem and problem-solving skills. As EG refined its model and made changes to its program implementation, it was increasingly convinced that its model was viable and scalable. This culminated in EG successfully garnering a few big funding champions that pushed it further along its growth path.

Challenges and opportunities

1) Making data the basis for decision making.
EG's leadership was committed to measurement. Safeena, believes that, *"in the sector we work in, it is all the more important to know that the work you're doing is making a difference. Because if it's not, there's no point in scaling it. "* EG's challenge was to get its staff habituated to using data and learning from the field effectively. In order to create an enabling environment to facilitate sharing of learnings, EG made data reflections part of regular review meetings. According to Gaurav Shukla, EG's State Manager of Impact, *"data is shared freely at EG; this creates an environment of trust and clarity"*. As a result, in these review meetings, staff was encouraged to reflect on data, analyze it, and take corrective measures. For example, at one of these meetings, staff provided solutions on how to improve the door-to-door outreach plan in areas where communities were resistant to the idea of girls enrolling in school. Another example was provided by Vikram Solanki, EG's Pali District Manager, *"our training is based on monitoring data – when we find that we're not performing, we improve our staff training in that area"* .

2) Going beyond short-term success.
During this stage, monitoring data showed that despite the success of large community mobilization drives that boosted enrollment in the short term, there was little done to sustain retention in the long term. The number of girls who stayed in school until the end of the academic year was still low. EG took up this finding as an area of program improvement. To do this: 1) creative learning techniques were introduced to make learning fun and engaging; 2) special attention was given to girl-friendly infrastructure - such as separate girls' toilets in schools - in school improvement plans. Once the impact of these programmatic changes on keeping girls in school (retention) became visible through a pro-bono evaluation study conducted by a professor at the University of Michigan, EG quickly adopted them as part of its standard model. EG's willingness to act on internal findings significantly reduced the cost of learning; what would have taken the organization several years to realize if it had waited until an end-line assessment was instead detected and addressed at the validate stage.

3) Streamlining the measurement function.
Growing to over 500 schools revealed that paper-based data collection methods at EG's field offices had become a bottleneck. A more efficient way of collecting and processing data was required, and EG moved a large portion of its data from paper to computers. The solution was a simple Microsoft Excel based information management system, in which mid-level program staff entered data after collecting it from field staff that still used paper forms. Not only did this make data analysis easier but going paperless also forced EG to take a critical look at all the information being collected from the field to weed out metrics that were not essential to decision making. For example, the School Information Campaign – a baseline assessment of all schools in the gender gap district, was simplified to include only relevant indicators around teacher attendance and school facilities.

Milestones

EG's work with the government project in 500 schools in Pali demonstrated close to 99% enrollment.

EG signed two MOUs with the Government of Rajasthan, one to expand EG's model from 500 to 2,300 schools in Pali and another to replicate the model in 800 schools in Jalore district. The government also became a major supporter of EG, funding ~45% of the organization's annual expenses. With robust data to support its achievement, EG established the credibility of its model to have the potential to scale.

EG's success was clearly evident not only to the Government of Rajasthan, but also to other supporters like Dasra and LGT Venture Philanthropy that provided capacity building and financial assistance during this stage. These milestones were possible because of EG's commitment to and investment in scaling impact through measurement.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2011, this was the size of EG as represented by the following variables.

INR
2.3
CRORE

Annual Organization Budget
(~USD 380,000)

103
Team Size

3100
Number Of Schools

Pali, Jalore
(Rajasthan State)
Districts

348,000
Number of Children Reached

BLUEPRINT

VALIDATE

> PREPARE

SCALE

The prepare stage is a critical juncture in an organization's development. Many organizations fall into the trap of trying to scale too soon without having the necessary conditions for scale in place. It makes sense for organization leaders to step back and undertake an assessment of readiness for scaling up before investing the time, efforts and funds.

PREPARE

EG was mindful of not rushing to scale. It took time to vet its model and operations in Pali and Jalore before taking on other districts. It invested in building and empowering the Team Balika workforce; it strengthened its measurement- related functions, an important aspect of which was the introduction of mobile technology for data collection, data management and field staff tracking. *"What you can see with your eyes when you're working in one school, you cannot when you've grown to a couple of 1000 schools. That's where strong measurement systems comes in"* , says Safeena. EG operations expanded to all of Jalore halfway through this stage and then Sirohi towards the end.

Challenges and opportunities

1) Strengthening the measurement function.
Social organizations that grow beyond a certain size will eventually confront the question of how to strengthen their measurement function. As EG's school coverage expanded, it became increasingly clear that program staff could not perform data collection, analysis, program management and operations. As a result, EG decided to separate out measurement as a distinct function, and built a team focused on analysis and reporting, while the program team continued to collect field data. Later, as EG expanded to the third district (Sirohi) and the data collection burden on field staff increased, EG decided to transfer some data collection activities, like the door-to-door survey, to Team Balika. This decision freed up the field staff to focus on management and operational tasks. Getting Team Balika involved in data collection also increased their level of engagement within the organization. [Refer to EG's District Organization Structure in the Appendix]

2) Using mobile technology for short-term course correction.
As EG's field staff grew in numbers beyond Pali and Jalore, monitoring attendance and activities became challenging. Also, delays in data collation and compilation significantly delayed analysis of the data. To address this, EG piloted a mobile phone-based data collection system in Sirohi. Field staff members were given low-cost mobile devices to log their time at every field location, which provided managers visibility of staff activities by location. As the mobile data collection tool evolved, staff could enter real-time data about school level indicators which allowed district managers to identify schools that were not improving on their indicators and needed more attention. The transition to mobile-based data collection was not smooth initially as the staff considered it as a burden to their regular program activities. Safeena felt that, *"if you can't get data back to the front-line users, it is hard to get the data entered in the first place,"* so EG made sure that data was also fed back to field staff on a regular basis. EG also adopted interesting approaches such as bottom up planning to involve staff in setting targets for their area themselves, and promoting greater ownership and accountability in delivering results.

3) Community-led measurement.
Given how rooted in community ownership EG's model was, transferring ownership for some of the measurement to the community came as the natural next step. During this stage, EG introduced a monthly School Assessment Chart (SAC) for parents who were a part of the School Management Committee (SMC) to track the "well-being" of their school. Indicators on the chart included availability of separate girls' toilets, attendance of teachers, and accessibility to a playground. EG trained SMCs on ideal learning environments at the school level, from which they created school improvement plans. Based on the completion of school improvement plans, progress on the chart was updated. EG saw a visible jump in the level of engagement of the parents once these charts were introduced as EG's accountability in working on the underperforming areas of the school also increased.
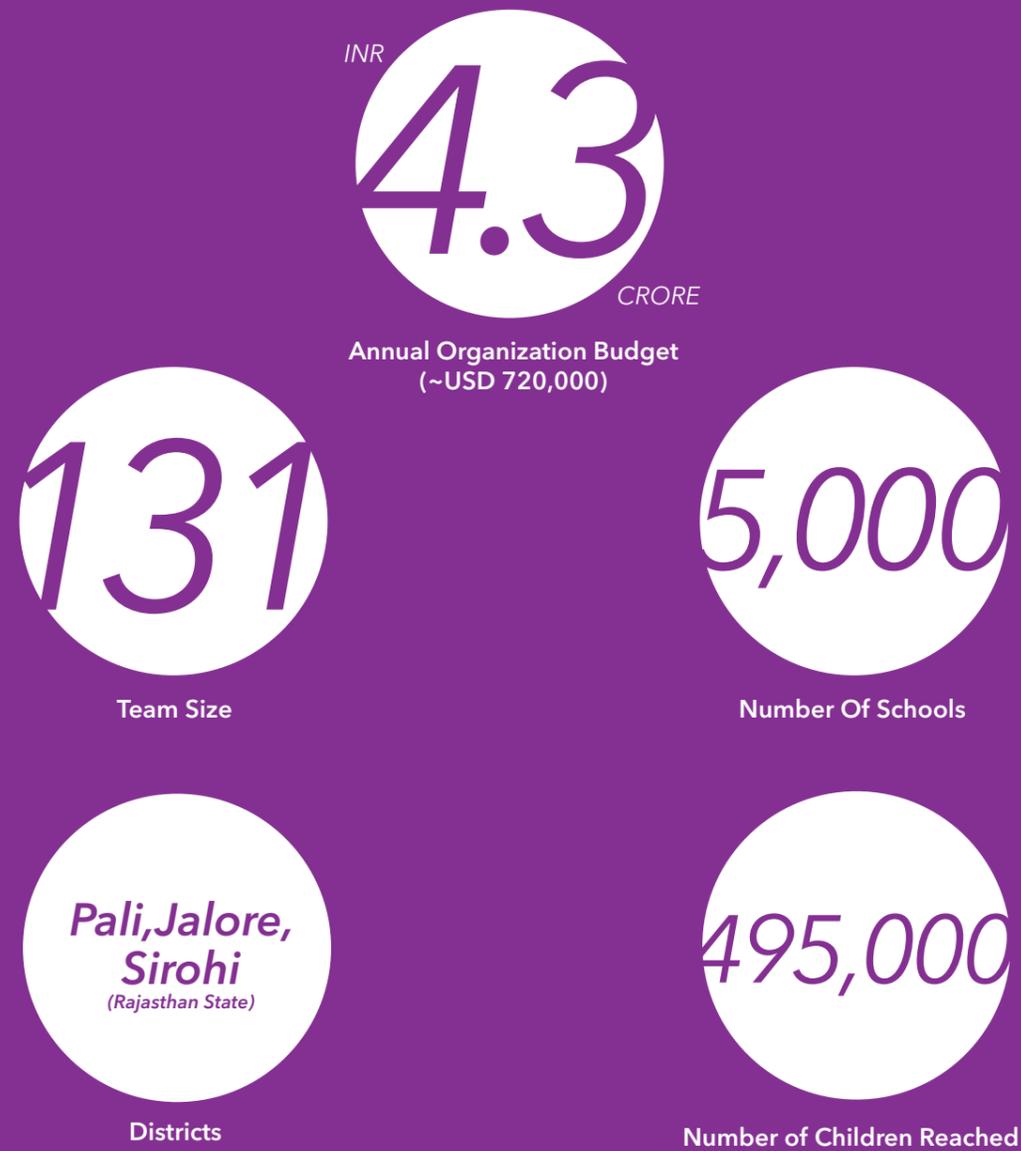
Milestones

During this stage, EG expanded operations outside Pali into Jalore and Sirohi.

During this stage EG attracted grant awards from prestigious organizations, such as World Bank's India Development Marketplace and the British Asian Trust. Despite the rigorous process of screening and assessment these grant awards involve, EG was able to successfully demonstrate its strong culture of continuous improvement.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2013, this was the size of EG as represented by the following variables.

INR
4.3
CRORE

Annual Organization Budget
(~USD 720,000)

131
Team Size

5,000
Number Of Schools

Pali,Jalore, Sirohi
(Rajasthan State)

Districts

495,000
Number of Children Reached

The school assessment chart developed by EG, used by parents at SMCs
to track the wellbeing of schools

हमारा विद्यालय – एक नज़र

educate girls

विद्यालय का नाम : _____   ग्राम पंचायत : _____
विद्यालय नामांकन : _____   जिला : _____
                                      खण्ड : _____

उत्तम विद्यालय	क्र.सं.	मुख्य घटक	RTE के अनुसार	वर्तमान स्थिति	प्रगति 1	2	3	4	कमजोर विद्यालय
✓	1	भौतिक संरचना							✗
		कक्षानुसार कक्षा कक्ष		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
शिक्षक और माता-पिता में बच्चे के विकास के बारे में वार्तालाप ।		सुरक्षित पेयजल व्यवस्था		○	○	○	○	○	छात्र विद्यालय नही आते है क्योंकि शिक्षक मारते है ।
		छात्र छात्राओं के लिए पृथक–पृथक साफ व चालू शौचालय		○	○	○	○	○	
बच्चों को जीवन कौशल सिखाया जाता है ।		बिजली		○	○	○	○	○	शिक्षक कोर्स पूरा करते है, मगर बच्चे सीख नही पा रहे है ।
		खेल मैदान		○	○	○	○	○	
बच्चों को उनकी उम्र के अनुसार शिक्षण दिया जाता है ।		झूले फिसल पट्टी		○	○	○	○	○	लड़कियों के लिए पृथक शौचालय नहीं है ।
		चार दीवारी		○	○	○	○	○	
सभी बच्चे सुरक्षित महसूस करते है ।		रसोई		○	○	○	○	○	बंद और गंदे शौचालय ।
	2	नामांकन							
विद्यालय समय से खुलता है ।		6–14 वर्ष के सभी बच्चों का नामांकन	– स्कूल में नामांकन	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	शिक्षक बच्चों में आपसी वातचीत नहीं होती है ।
शिक्षक समय से आते है ।		नियमितता / ठहरना	– स्कूल छोड़ दिया	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	विद्यालय में बैठने की उचित व्यवस्था नही है ।
			– स्कूल में प्रवेश नहीं लिया	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
30–35 बच्चो के लिए एक शिक्षक उपलब्ध है ।	3	शिक्षकों की उपलब्धता							विद्यालय में बैठने की उचित व्यवस्था नही है ।
		विद्यालय में शिक्षक	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
	4	शिक्षण सामग्री							शिक्षक बच्चों से निजी काम करवाते है ।
सही समय से व अच्छा मिड-डे मील दिया जाता है ।		सुसज्जित कक्षाए		○	○	○	○	○	
		CLT किट से काम		○	○	○	○	○	विद्यालय में पेड़-पौधे नहीं है ।
		पुस्तकों की उपलब्धता		○	○	○	○	○	

				बी टेस्ट	मध्य टेस्ट	पोस्ट टेस्ट	
विद्यालय प्रबंधन समिति के लोग और अभिभावक विद्यालय के कामों में रूचि लेते है ।	5	शिक्षण					बाल सभा का संचालन नहीं होता है ।
	शिक्षण	कुल नामांकन कक्षा – 3, 4 व 5	☐	☐	☐	
	हिन्दी भाषा स्तर	कहानी पढ़ना	☐	☐	☐	छात्रों में आपसी मारपीट ।
		वाक्य व शब्द पढ़ना	☐	☐	☐	
		अक्षर पढ़ना या कुछ नही पढ़ पाना	☐	☐	☐	
	अंग्रेजी भाषा स्तर	कहानी पढ़ना	☐	☐	☐	विद्यालय का नियमित निरीक्षण व सहयोग नही होता है
		वाक्य व शब्द पढ़ना	☐	☐	☐	
		अक्षर पढ़ना या कुछ नही पढ़ पाना	☐	☐	☐	
	गणित स्तर	दो अंकीय गुणा – भाग कर पाना	☐	☐	☐	
		जोड – बाकि कर पाना व दो अंकीय संख्या कि पहचान	☐	☐	☐	
		एक अंक संख्या कि पहचान या कुछ नही पहचान पाना	☐	☐	☐	

● उपलब्ध नहीं है ।   ● काम चल रहा है ।   ● उपलब्ध है ।

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BLUEPRINT

VALIDATE

PREPARE

> SCALE

Like many buzzwords, "scale" conjures up different meanings for different people. Recognizing this, grant makers of all kinds are shifting the way they think about scale, emphasizing not size or reach but impact. As Jeff Bradach, co-founder of the Bridgespan Group, has put it, "The question now is 'How can we get 100x the impact with only a 2x change in the size of the organization?'"

EG has made substantial progress along its journey to scale, having reached out to 10,500 schools and 974,000 people across six districts (including three new districts, namely Ajmer, Bundi, Rajsamand). However, the challenge now lies in figuring out a plan to reach all of the 26 gender gap districts in India, while maximizing impact. *"Given the magnitude of the problem, we can't be satisfied with reaching only a fraction of the eligible 3.7 million yet out-of-school girls,"* says Safeena. *"We need a more resilient growth path to close the gap between what we've achieved to date and what we still need to accomplish."*

Challenges and opportunities

1) Scale for impact.
EG has yet to answer questions about how best to scale for impact: Should it replicate the existing model by hiring more field staff? Should it partner with other small-sized independent non-profits by providing the necessary funding and guidance? Or should it consider a franchise-model involving individual social entrepreneurs? Each approach has its pros, cons, and financial implications and EG is in the process of evaluating which of these options aligns best with its vision.

2) Getting to the next level of measurement.
Moving towards measuring more outcomes is challenging and requires a level of rigor far beyond tracking on-going activities and outputs. EG continues to focus on gaining clarity on its long-term outcomes such as effects of the CLT curriculum and efficacy of Bal Sabhas. Going forward, EG hopes to evaluate learning outcomes at an individual level, rather than at a class or school level. Such micro-measurement will enable EG to further tailor its program to individual needs, thus significantly enhancing its impact. EG also hopes to track girls beyond primary school and measure secondary school completion.

3) Pay by results.
As EG focusses more on outcomes measurement, its launch of a Development Impact Bond (DIB) in early 2014 is timely. It will give them that extra push to strive for more impact through outcomes. The DIB was developed in partnership with Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) and UBS Optimus Foundation. It is the culmination of a Pay-by-Results model that EG had been considering for some time. In this arrangement UBS, the investor, will provide external financing and only receive a return if pre-agreed social outcomes are achieved. Funds to remunerate investors come from outcome payers, usually a donor (such as CIFF in this case) or a government agency. Financial returns to investors are intended to be commensurate with the level of success.

At the end of the first quarter of 2014, this was the size of EG as represented by the following variables.

INR
19
CRORE

Annual Organization Budget
(~USD 3.2 million)

460

Team Size

10,500

Number Of Schools*

Pali, Jalore, Sirohi, Ajmer, Bundi, Rajsamand + other new districts (Rajasthan State)

Districts

974,000

Number of Children Reached

* Number of schools includes schools reached since inception, counting ones that EG has exited from.

Reflections

From Safeena Husain
Founder, Educate Girls

"I realized at the very beginning that impact assessment would be the backbone of our program. Ideally, the impact that we are trying to achieve has to be woven into the vision, the mission, program strategy and logic framework. Unless we are outcome-oriented, unless we are certain about the impact that we are out to achieve, I am not sure how we can manage to be true to our vision and to our beneficiaries.

When we started Educate Girls, we were certain about what our impact was going to look like. Enrollment and retention - simple yet efficacious impact areas that were rooted in common sense. And that is how it has been since inception. While subsequently adding learning as another impact, we have maintained simple focus areas.

In hindsight, given the paucity of resources that we faced, I feel we have done well for ourselves with regards to impact assessment. From a few hundred dollars to almost 5% of our annual budget; from 1 impact assessment officer to a full-fledged 32 member team led by a State Impact Manager, our investment in recruiting the right human resources and equipping them with training and infrastructure has gone up considerably over the years. Though we would have loved to invest in and adopt technology a lot earlier, I feel we have a head start here. Mobile tracking has become an integral part of our impact assessment and by next year, it will become the only way for us to gather, vet, and analyze data.

I was quite involved in impact assessment while we were designing our program strategy. Since then, we have got some great resources in-house and some phenomenal partners, who have continuously helped us improvise and improve our impact assessment process. With our recent Development Impact Bond (DIB), we are back to the drawing board refining our process because of the way the Bond is structured; we will get paid only if we achieve the desired impact across some very stringent parameters.

Had we not been outcome focused, had we not adopted a rigorous impact assessment process, we would have never been ready to gain support from large institutional partners to continuously push the boundaries of scale."

From Dasra

Over the past fifteen years, Dasra has worked closely with social organizations in different sectors and helped them move through the different stages of growth – blueprint, validate, prepare and scale. These experiences have shown that social organizations can transform the lives of a large number of people, provided they are willing to develop the capabilities that enable them to scale. An organization such as EG that is built for scale will have a very different vision, strategy, team, and organizational culture from one that is built to create deep but localized impact. Both kinds of organizations do excellent work but it is important for the leader to be clear about which kind of organization she/he desires to create. If, as in the case of Safeena, the leader is convinced that the organization must achieve scale, then the following aspects should be considered.

Planning for scale: If an organization's objective is to scale, then it will need to decide on a model, especially on whether to offer a broad or narrow set of services. This decision is typically taken during the blueprint or validate stage. For example, when EG began its work, it could have chosen to work not only on girls' education but also on improving access to healthcare and increasing employability of young women. Even within the realm of education, EG could have worked on training school teachers or providing better infrastructure for schools.

Instead, EG decided to focus on enrollment, retention, and learning outcomes while simultaneously strengthening community ownership of schools. A narrow focus enabled EG to scale without getting distracted by too many activities, or from trying to achieve too many ambitious outcomes, which would not only be difficult to measure but also to justify to funders and partners.

While the organization will pick a model that it believes is scalable, Dasra's experiences indicate that refining the model takes years of trial and error. The use of measurement plays a critical role in helping the organization's leaders assess different options and then choose the right model. For instance, in EG's case, extensive use of measurement was largely responsible for all aspects of its model coming together at the 'prepare' stage.

Measurement for learning and reflection: There are multiple reasons for using measurement, including evaluating effectiveness, satisfying funder expectations, and guiding organizations to make program decisions. [6,7] Dasra's experiences lead us to conclude that in the end, an organization's success in scaling has less to do with what is measured and more to do with whether the organization is able to create and sustain a culture that values the process of self-evaluation. In the case of EG, the commitment of leadership toward measurement and the empowerment of staff to share, reflect and act on results - good and bad - were critical to building its culture of self-evaluation.

Investing in measurement: Measurement does not have to be complex or expensive. EG's investment in measurement right from start-up-to scale has been under 5% of the organization budget. This should offer a clear signal to other social sector leaders that a lot can be accomplished with regards to measurement without a huge investment.

Organizations that are at the blueprint stage do not need dozens of indicators, advanced IT systems or technical experts. Dasra has worked with several organizations that began by recording information with pen and paper, or on a simple spreadsheet, and then invested in measurement systems as they grew further.

Making the critical transition from the 'validate' to 'prepare' stage requires technology and a dedicated team for measurement. For EG it wasn't until its 'validate' stage that it moved from paper to a Microsoft Excel-based information management system. However, after it expanded beyond Pali, mobile phone-based data collection and field staff tracking helped optimize its measurement systems. Depending on the measurement needs, leaders will need to strategize on how best to collect, manage and optimize data using technology. Similarly, the measurement team does not necessarily need technical expertise. What is more important is the ability of the team to form partnerships, bring in external expertise when necessary, and analyze data in order to drive improvements. For example, EG's M&E team was able to drive partnerships with university professors who agreed to support evaluations on a pro-bono basis.

In conclusion…

Achieving scale is an inherently complex process. Scale does not happen spontaneously or organically. Organizations needs to be designed to scale and create transformative impact. EG's journey presents valuable lessons for social organizations at different stages of growth to evaluate their own ability to scale. For funders, EG's story is an affirmation of the importance of investing in measurement. It highlights the essential support that funders must provide to social organizations as they build M&E capabilities and systems. As EG has demonstrated through its evolution as an organization, measurement is a critical driver for social organizations to make a difference to millions of lives.

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Bal Sabha – A group of girl students that act as role models and lead various cultural and sports activities, maintains discipline in schools and encourage girls' participation in matters related to their growth and development. The concept of Bal Sabha already exists in the government school framework, but is often not followed. Because of EG, the Bal Sabha meets once a week to work on 10 life skills. These activities are focused on 10 life skills as identified by the WHO: problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, communication, self-awareness, creative thinking, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, coping with emotions and empathy.

BRCF – The Block Resource Center Facilitator is a government official appointed under the "Education for All" or SSA for a block. The Pali district has 10 blocks and each block has various clusters.

CLT – Creative Learning and Teaching techniques are one of EG's main program interventions. The CLT techniques comprise two methodologies: An accelerated "Catch Up" methodology ensures that children who are lagging behind other children in the classrooms can be taught effectively to catch up with the rest of the class. The "Peer Group Learning" methodology emphasizes peer group work and involvement in the teaching and learning process.

GSS – Gram Shiksha Sabha, or "Village Education Meetings", are held to initiate and sustain change in girls' education. They sensitize the village community towards the Educate Girls project. The GSS also elects a School Management Committee. For Educate Girls these meetings are an important staring point towards intervention.

SIC – The School Information Campaign is the EG baseline school survey. It provides relevant information about school infrastructure, the quality of primary and upper primary schools and the composition of neighboring villages with a particular focus on girl students.

SMC – School Management Committee is a 15-member team formed at each school. This government body is responsible for allocating government funding towards girl friendly school infrastructure. The SMC's role is to establish a link between school and community, to establish a School Improvement Plan and Enrollment Plan. In addition, they are also expected to take up the task of managing the school and ensuring community participation.
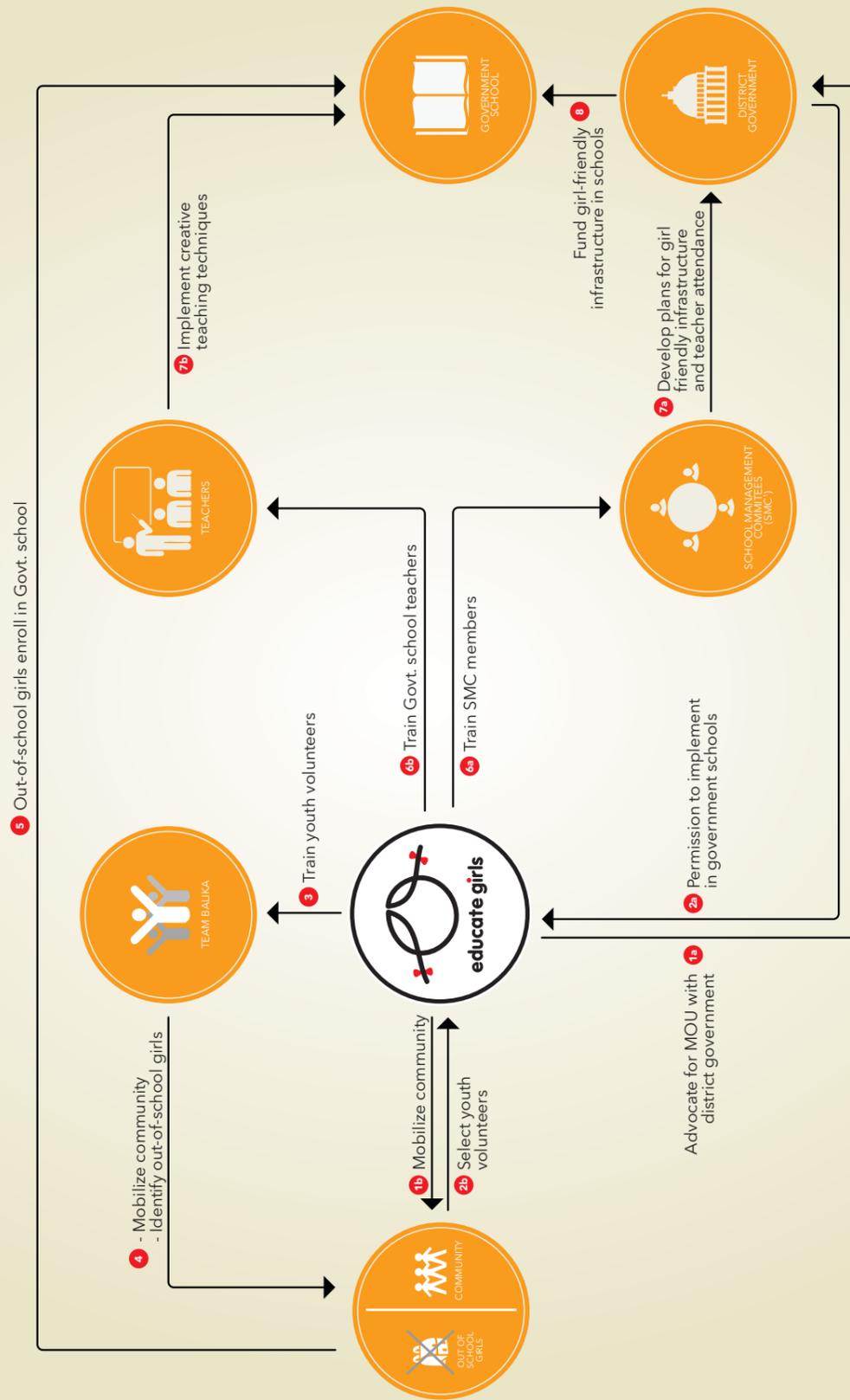
SIP – School Improvement Plans are made at the GSS and SMC meetings to improve school infrastructure in the village's schools. The most important improvements are separate girl's toilets and available drinking water. EG trains the SMC members on how to receive funding from the government to implement these plans.

SSA – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is the Government of India's flagship program, achieving universalization of elementary education. As per the 86th amendment to the Constitution of India, free and compulsory elementary education is a fundamental right. The program seeks to open new schools in areas which do not have schooling facilities and strengthen existing school infrastructure through the provision of additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance and school improvement grants. SSA is implemented in partnership with the state government.

Team Balika – They are the 'foot soldiers' of EG's program. They help identify and enroll out-of-school girls. They support the SMCs, Bal Sabha meetings, and teachers to introduce CLT modules in the classroom.

End Notes

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Educate Girls: Bridging the gender gap one girl at a time

Diagram labels:
- GOVERNMENT SCHOOL
- DISTRICT GOVERNMENT
- TEACHERS
- SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES (SMC)
- TEAM BALIKA
- COMMUNITY
- OUT OF SCHOOL GIRLS
- educate girls

- 7b Implement creative teaching techniques
- 8 Fund girl-friendly infrastructure in schools
- 7a Develop plans for girl friendly infrastructure and teacher attendance
- 5 Out-of-school girls enroll in Govt. school
- 6b Train Govt. school teachers
- 6a Train SMC members
- 3 Train youth volunteers
- 2a Permission to implement in government schools
- 4 - Mobilize community / - Identify out-of-school girls
- 1b Mobilize community
- 2b Select youth volunteers
- 1a Advocate for MOU with district government

EG's Indicators for Monitoring

Process (activity)

Number of Team Balikas recruited
Number of out of school girls identified and validated
Number of Primary Schools and Upper Primary Schools with Creative Learning & Teaching Techniques pre-tests
Number of Primary Schools and Upper Primary Schools with Creative Learning & Teaching Techniques post-tests
Number of Bal Sabhas reformed
Number of School Management Committees reformed
Number of School Management Committee members trained (6 members on School Management Committee)
Number of School Improvement Programs prepared for school improvement (4 School Improvement Programs in a school in a year)
Number of Gram Shiksha Sabhas (GSS) held (4 GSS meetings in a village in a year)

Output

Number of girls supported by the project in primary education in total
Number of boys supported by the project in primary education total
Number of Team Balikas (1 Team Balika per village) appointed
Number of Team Balikas trained
Number of teachers (1 teacher per school) trained in Creative Learning and Teaching methods in 3 years
Number of Bal Sabha (Girl Councils) members (13 per upper primary school) trained in leadership and personality development in 3 years
Number of parents trained as School Management Committee members
Number of School Improvement Programs completed (60% of total School Improvement Programs/year)

Outcome

Number of out-of-school marginalized girls enrolling in primary or lower secondary school
Percentage attendance rates of marginalized girls in primary and lower secondary education
Number of marginalized girls who have stayed in school (or equivalent) through the life cycle of the project
Number of marginalized girls that have increased their learning
More effective school governance and an increase in girl-friendly infrastructure
Enhanced leadership skills for girls

EG's District Organization Structure

The District Office employs the largest group of people. This includes the field coordinators, Block Officers and Team Balikas who are integral parts of EG's field agents. As EG's organization structure evolved, the impact measurement function was separated from the program function.

District Manager

Office HR
- Admin Assistant (2)
  - Guest House Assistant (1)
  - Office Assistant (1)

Officer Impact
- Impact Assistant (1)
  - Research Assistant (4)
  - Data Entry (1)

Accountant

IT Assistant

District Prog. Officer
- Block Officers (3)
  - Field Coordinators (30)
    - Team Balika (261)
- Program Assistant (2)
  - Help Desk (1)

RDM Fellow /Innovation Block
- Support
  - Office Assistant
- Block Officer
  - Field Coordinators (10)
    - Team Balika (117)
- Program Officer