



IMPACT @ SCALE CASE STUDY:

Educate Girls' Measurement Journey

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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Educate Girls (EG)

EG is a Rajasthan-based non-profit that strengthens government primary schools and brings girls into the education system in the worst gender-gap districts of India. It does this by recruiting and training young adults as community ambassadors who help to enroll out-of-school girls in schools and ensure that they stay in school by helping to improve school infrastructure and quality of education.

www.educategirls.in



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The Challenge of Scale

The social sector in India has long been challenged by the fact that the critical issues that need addressing – girls’ empowerment, healthcare, employability, education, sanitation – are so widespread and deep-rooted that creating social change is a formidable task.

A solution that is often presented to the non-profits and businesses that work in the social sector is *scale*; when organizations work with a large number of people, and have an impact on each of them, they are likely to effect widespread and lasting change. While few would disagree with this solution, some questions arise: How is an organization to create impact at scale? What is a realistic timeframe for such a 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, such as allocating time, staff, and funds to activities that have the greatest impact?

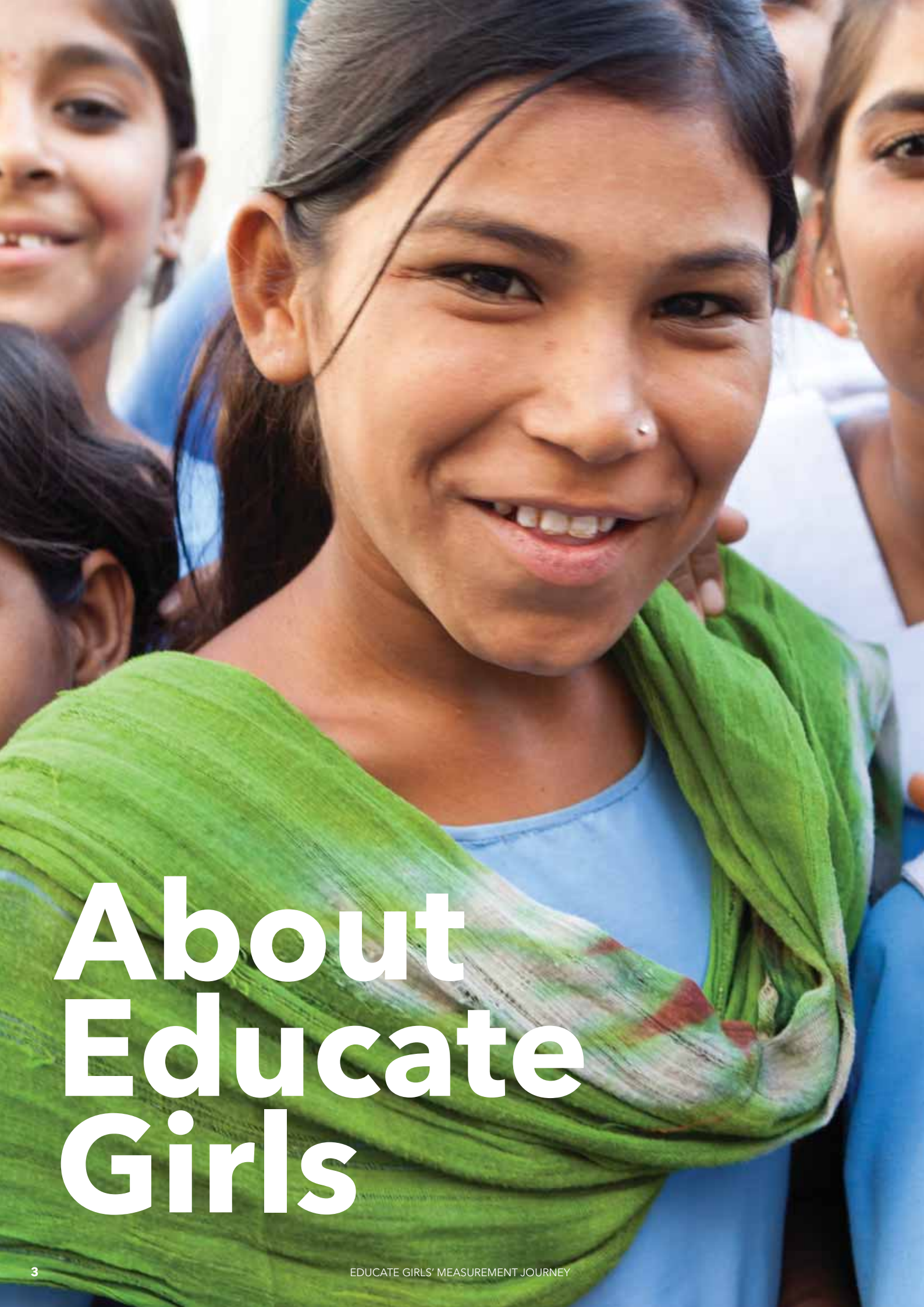
This case study focuses on the journey of Educate Girls (EG) and its use of impact assessment as a means of developing a scalable model. EG is a Rajasthan-based non-profit that strengthens government schools at the primary level, and brings girls into the education system in the worst gender-gap districts of India – areas where women are subject to high levels of discrimination. Within a decade, EG has grown from working in 50 schools to over 8,500 schools. By replicating its program in other gender-gap districts of Rajasthan, EG has impacted the lives of nearly one million children. The effective use of measurement has enabled EG to adapt quickly, better respond to beneficiaries, demonstrate continued impact, build partnerships with the government, and attract significant resources in order to scale.

Unfortunately, many social organizations primarily view impact assessment as a funder-driven reporting activity. In failing to build an internal commitment and capacity to measure performance effectively, organizations do a great disservice to themselves. They have much less insight into what is and is not working in order to improve and be dynamic. They also reduce their odds of demonstrating the success of their work to current funders and attracting new ones.

Dasra's experience has clearly shown that organizations at different stages of growth have vastly different impact measurement needs and practices – which evolve as the organization evolves. 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 impact. But what is most essential is mission alignment: metrics and measurement systems that are designed to support the achievement of well-defined mission objectives.^{1,2} According to Mike Belinsky, co-founder of Instiglio*, *“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?”*

Since 2010, when Dasra’s Girl Power research report resulted in EG entering Dasra’s portfolio, Dasra has worked closely with EG’s leadership to assist in the development and execution of its expansion strategy. An account of EG’s journey offers valuable lessons for organizations working across diverse sectors, at different stages of growth. The following case study demonstrates how EG was able to harness the potential of impact assessment as a learning tool to improve program design and delivery, strengthen its model, and grow effectively. It focuses on EG’s key lessons that highlight the value of impact measurement for organizations. While EG still has a long way to go to achieve its vision of scale, it is using measurement to ask the right questions of its work.

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



About Educate Girls

The state of education in rural India:

- India is home to the largest number of non-literate 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 five, and only one in every 100 girls reaches class 12. Of the children that do stay in primary school, only 15% can read a simple story in Hindi.
- Most school facilities in India are not girl-friendly, which significantly hampers attendance. 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 limiting attitudes and the lack of importance given to educating the girl child, low quality of education, teacher shortage, and poverty. Given these issues, enrolling and retaining marginalized girls in schools poses an immense challenge.



According to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, there are 26 gender-gap districts in India. The gap in Rajasthan is particularly significant as nine of the 26 most severe gender-gap districts are in this state alone.

The state's female literacy rate is the lowest in the country - 76% of males are literate compared to only 44% of females.

Rajasthan has a high rate of under-age marriages - 68% of girls are child brides of which 15% are below the age of 10 years.

Educate Girls' model

VISION

"We aim to achieve behavioural, social and economic transformation for all girls towards an India where all children have equal opportunities to access quality education."

MISSION

"Leveraging existing community and government resources to ensure that all girls are in school and learning well."

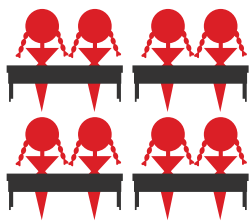
EG was founded in 2005 by Safeena Husain, who brings 15 years of experience working in the development sector with both rural and urban underserved communities in Ecuador, Mexico, Bolivia, and South Africa. In 2004, Safeena returned to India to drive the agenda closest to her heart - gender inequality in education.

EG seeks to address this challenge, beginning with Rajasthan, one of the worst gender-gap states in India. EG does this by enrolling out-of-school girls in government primary schools and ensuring that they stay in school by strengthening the infrastructure and quality of education. EG's model, as it is today, is explained in more detail in the remaining section.

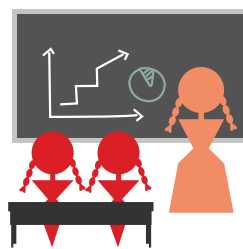
EG's interventions and activities are centered on three main areas of impact for primary schools that clearly align with its mission:



Increasing enrollment of girls



Increasing retention of girls



Improving learning outcomes (all students)

EG strives to keep its model capital-light, scalable, and sustainable. It achieves this by leveraging the government's existing investment in schools and by ultimately getting communities to take ownership of schools.

- EG mobilizes and empowers communities by raising awareness about the importance of education for the girl child, convinces parents, village leaders and elders to send girls to school, improves the functioning of School Management Committees, equips teachers with child-friendly teaching techniques, and equips girls with life and leadership skills to stimulate their all-round development. EG thus ensures that an increasing number of girls get enrolled in school and have access to quality education.
- EG leverages government resources and investments in public primary schools mandated by initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right To Education Act, and strengthens the implementation of these mandates. While the first is an Indian government national scheme for the universalization of primary school education for children six to fourteen years of age or up to class eight, the latter requires by law that local and state governments conform with these mandates. Key SSA provisions include building new schools, creating alternative schooling facilities with appropriate infrastructure including toilets and drinking water, and ensuring regular teacher trainings.

EG enables community ownership through the following initiatives.



RECRUITING AND TRAINING TEAM BALIKA VOLUNTEERS.

EG builds a cadre of village-based youth leaders, called Team Balika, to facilitate community ownership. It recruits and trains volunteers who then go on to work as champions for girls' education and school reform in their communities. By assigning one Team Balika member per village, each community has a liaison who is responsible for monitoring girls' enrollment and retention in schools within a community. They are unpaid volunteers, often between the ages of 16-25, who are among the most committed to improve girls education and passionate about driving social change.



FACILITATING COMMUNITY ENROLLMENT PLANS.

EG facilitates the creation of community enrollment plans via Team Balika and EG staff. After using door-to-door surveys and government data to identify out-of-school girls in the area, village meetings are organized to prepare community-based enrollment plans. Responsibility is distributed between the village leaders, elders, school administration, Team Balika and EG staff to bring girls back to school. This often involves Team Balika and EG staff attending village meetings, and going door-to-door to convince village leaders and parents to send their girls to school.



STRENGTHENING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.

EG strengthens school administration by training School Management Committees (SMCs), a 12-15 member council of parents, teachers, and village leaders, to take responsibility of school improvements and administration. EG provides SMCs with support all year round to prepare and execute School Improvement Plans and conduct school assessments. EG also helps SMCs access government funding for school improvement projects.



IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES VIA TEACHERS AND VOLUNTEERS.

EG improves learning outcomes by training government teachers and Team Balika in Creative Learning and Teaching (CLT) methodologies to bring child-friendly learning techniques to the classroom, with the aim to increase learning levels and outcomes among all children (girls and boys). Standard lessons are supplemented with game-based education activities. Tests are conducted at baseline and after CLT techniques are introduced, to assess the improvement in learning levels of each child. Classroom hand-holding support is provided by EG staff and Team Balika.



CREATING GIRL LEADERS.

EG facilitates the creation of girl leaders in every primary school through the formation of Girls' Councils or Bal Sabhas. These comprise of an elected 13-member association, where each member is given a leadership position in the school and trained in life-skills that enhance her communication, leadership and problem-solving abilities. These councils are meant to stimulate girls' participation in matters concerning their growth and development.

Key Highlights of the Model

Comprehensive
school strengthening model designed for schools in rural regions with gender-gaps

Cost-effective
by leveraging the government's existing investment in primary schools

Measurable
program results in enrollment, retention and better learning outcomes

Scalable
program that is replicable in schools across districts in India

Sustainable
as it creates 'community ownership' of schools requiring minimal EG investment over time

Results

EG's work began in Pali, one of Rajasthan's worst gender-gap districts - and has since expanded to six districts. The vision is to work in all 26 gender-gap districts across India. Since its inception, EG has:

- Impacted over a million children and brought 80,000 girls back to school.
- Increased average attendance of children in schools from 62% to 87%.
- Improved learning outcomes for over 350,000 girls and boys in Hindi, English and Math by 35-60%.
- Grew the proportion of schools with girl-friendly infrastructure - 36% more schools have drinking water and 27% more have separate toilets for girls. Overall, improved school infrastructure in over 8,000 schools.
- Engaged over 4,500 Team Balika volunteers.
- Bridged the literacy gap in Pali in a decade.



Educate Girls' Journey to 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. This framework is adapted from Monitor and Acumen Fund’s ‘From Blueprint to Scale’ report. Other similar frameworks include UnLtd’s ‘Social Entrepreneurship Toolkit,’ and ‘Lifecycle and Organizational Capacity Models.’^{3,4,5} These frameworks all call out distinct growth stages in an organization’s journey from drawing board to scale. According to the Monitor report, most organizations working in the social sector are in the early blueprint, validate and prepare stages, which is when maximum support needs to be provided.

This begs the question: How will promising organizations get to the later stages of growth?

- From a funder’s point of view, impact assessment can play an important role in advancing organizations through the stages by identifying what works and why. This in turn helps funders discern how best to support organizations, by developing a firm understanding of their needs, which change as organizations evolve.
- From a leader’s perspective, measurement and evaluation helps him/her assess his/her organization’s readiness for planning and implementing the scaling process itself. By understanding the various stages and transitions that most social organizations undergo, leaders can better prepare for the next stage of their organizations’ growth.

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 ACTIVITIES			
Understand the problem	Conduct research to test which parts of the model are working and which need improvement	Develop organizational capacity to scale by increasing and strengthening personnel and support functions	Expand to new geographies
Identify target beneficiaries	Test model assumptions made in the blueprint	Enhance systems and processes to support scale	Exploit scale efficiencies
Develop a blueprint of the model	Refine and re-work the model		
Define the vision of success			
Develop and run a pilot			
END MILESTONES			
Compelling initial business plan	Refined model	Continued refining of model, if necessary	Sustainably reaching all target beneficiaries
Demonstrated pilot efficacy	Validation of viability and scalability of model	Organizational systems in place to support scaling	

This summary table briefly explains how EG evolved it moved through the four stages. Subsequently, each stage is explained in more detail.

Evolution of Educate Girls - Highlights		
YEAR	2005-2007	2008-2011
STAGE	BLUEPRINT	VALIDATE
Focus	Developing a blueprint for the future, with a focus on piloting community mobilization approaches	Testing and refining the model, with a focus on addressing challenges around retaining girls in school
Number of schools	Phase 1: 50 schools Phase 2: 500 schools	3,100 schools
Geography (districts)	Pali	Pali, Jalore
Team Size	40	103
Number of Children Reached	70,000	348,000
Annual Operational Budget*	INR 1.2 Crore (~USD 200,000)	INR 5.5 Crore (~USD 917,000)
Annual Cost per Beneficiary*	INR 171 (~USD 2.85)	INR 157 (~USD 2.63)
Annual Cost per School*	INR 24,000 (~USD 400)	INR 17,700 (~USD 295)
Key Program Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed and implemented a pilot in 50 schools, and then 500 schools. Conducted household surveys to identify out-of-school girls. Attended Gram Shiksha Sabhas (community mobilization meetings) to raise awareness about girls' education. Held meetings with government officials to build relationships for future collaborations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated formation of Bal Sabhas (Girl Councils) in schools to improve life-skills. Engaged teachers through training in creative learning techniques. Increased focus on training School Management Committees to improve school infrastructure. Encouraged and improved parents' participation through Gram Shiksha Sabhas and <i>mohalla</i> (neighborhood) meetings.
Milestones		
Organization & Measurement Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Won the Rajasthan government's approval to start a pilot project in 500 schools in Pali. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed two MOUs with the Rajasthan government and began expansion to Jalore district.
New Funders	Mostly individual philanthropists	LGT Venture Philanthropy, Dasra

*This case study uses an INR/USD exchange rate of 60.

SUMMARY TABLE

Evolution of Educate Girls - Highlights	
2012-2013	2014-2017
PREPARE	SCALE → (E)
Enhancing necessary conditions required for scaling to multiple districts	Rolling out the model to maximize impact and children reached
5,500 schools	8,500 → 30,000
Pali, Jalore, Sirohi	Pali, Jalore, Sirohi, three new districts (Ajmer, Rajsamand, Bundi) + other new districts over time
195	570 → 1,400
500,000	950,000 → 4,100,000
INR 11 Crore (~USD 1.83 million)	INR 19 Crore (~USD 3.2 million) → INR 50 Crore (~USD 8.33 million)
INR 220 (~USD 3.66)	INR 200 (~USD 3.3) → INR 122 (~USD 2.06)
INR 22,000 (~USD 366)	INR 22,352 (~USD 370) → INR 16,130 (~USD 270)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited and strengthened the base of Team Balika volunteers. Trained Team Balika to take on more program responsibilities to reduce reliance on EG staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Balika to increase community ownership. Full-fledged model scaled to new districts (Ajmer, Bundi, Rajsamand +others).
Milestones	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed MOU to expand to third district, Sirohi. Continued expansion in Jalore. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government of Rajasthan as a visible supporter of EG's expansion into new districts. Launched Development Impact Bond with UBS Optimus Foundation and the Children's Investment Fund Foundation.
British Asian Trust, World Bank's India Development Marketplace	Educate A Child, Mulago Foundation, Jasmine Charitable Trust

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

Evolution of Measurement - Highlights		
YEAR	2005-2007	2008-2011
STAGE	BLUEPRINT	VALIDATE
Monitoring and Evaluation Team Size	0	9
Monitoring and Evaluation Budget (% of total budget)	2-3%	3-5%
Monitoring and Evaluation Budget*	INR 3 Lakh (~USD 5,000)	INR 22 Lakh (~USD 37,000)
Mode of Data Collection	Paper-based	Microsoft Excel-based
Key Measurement Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on articulating a theory of change and clarifying metrics - started with a set of metrics that were easy to define and measure. • Conducted household surveys and used Government of Rajasthan's Child Tracking Survey to gather baseline data on out-of-school girls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measured impact of creative learning techniques and girl-friendly improvements on retention. • Introduced Microsoft Excel-based information management system for data collection and analysis.
Types of indicators (examples)	<p>Activity-based indicators.</p> <p>Examples include baseline and endline data on school enrollment and attendance of marginalized girls.</p>	<p>Activity and output-based indicators.</p> <p>Examples include number of Bal Sabhas formed and trained, number of SMCs formed and trained.</p>

*This case study uses an INR/USD exchange rate of 60

SUMMARY TABLE

Evolution of Measurement - Highlights	
2012-2013	2014-2017
PREPARE	SCALE→(E)
20	72
3-5%	5%
INR 44 Lakh (~USD 73,000)	INR 95 Lakh (~USD 160,000)→ INR 2 Crore (~USD 300,000)
Microsoft Excel-based	Mobile phone-based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in an impact evaluation study conducted by the University of Michigan. Built a separate team focused on monitoring and evaluation. Implemented School Assessment Charts, an assessment tool to be used by School Management Committees. Conducted a pilot for mobile-phone based data collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolled out mobile-based data collection across all districts. Introduced organization-wide dashboards. Implemented additional outcome indicators for impact of life skills curriculum.
<p>Activity, output and outcome-based indicators.</p> <p>Examples include baseline and follow up subject tests, improvements in school infrastructure (drinking water, toilets for girls, kitchen shed)</p>	<p>Activity, output and outcome-based indicators.</p> <p>Examples include baseline and follow-up life skills survey .</p>

> 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 establish a few strong partnerships that will support the organization's journey through these critical early stages.



EG's journey began in 2005 in 50 of the poorest performing 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 for millions of girls in India. Very early on, EG zeroed in on strengthening government schools 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.
 - 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 has been critical to EG's mission to scale.

Challenges and opportunities

1) Narrowing the scope of activities.

Deciding on what should fall within and outside the scope of an organization's activities is one of the most challenging questions facing leaders committed to developing a scalable strategy. EG faced the same dilemma. Initially, EG defined girls' empowerment to include sending girls to school, preventing them from getting married early, ensuring they are physically healthy and making them economically independent. By narrowing its 'intended impact' to ensure marginalized girls get quality primary education, EG identified the scope of its accountability early on. EG's hypothesis during this stage was that educating girls would have positive spill-over effects such as delayed marriages, delayed pregnancies, and greater financial independence. Thus, it did not create programming targeted at these latter objectives.

2) Pilot testing and planning.

While EG was clear on the scope of activities, the model had to be tested. It adopted a "learn by doing" approach right from its inception. EG started with a small-scale pilot in 50 poorly performing government schools and started gathering direct feedback to understand how receptive the community was to its efforts. Initially, EG staff were not allowed to enter government school premises - so all of its activities were forcibly carried out outside the school. During this pilot, EG focused on testing community mobilization approaches to increase awareness about the benefits of educating the girl child and increasing their enrollment in schools. EG staff used Gram Shiksha Sabhas (village meetings), and door-to-door meetings with village elders and family members' of the girl child as avenues to mobilize community support. Having observed EG's success on a small scale, the Rajasthan Education Initiative, a public-private partnership, formed to generate solutions to extend education in the state, was more easily convinced about supporting EG for a larger-scale pilot involving 500 schools across Pali. It was during this pilot that EG tested and improved its approaches around engaging and sustaining community ownership by enabling parents and the community to participate in the school administration.

3) Clarifying objectives and aligning metrics with the mission.

A good test of whether a leadership team has clarity about its objectives is whether it can answer these questions in a single sentence: Who does the organization serve? What change does it seek to create? How does it define success?

Iterations of its mission and vision, and feedback from its pilot-testing efforts enabled EG's leadership to focus areas of impact on enrollment and retention. With these areas defined, EG could begin to develop a basic monitoring plan and identify 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 shared sense of purpose across the organization.

4)) 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, conducted under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, which tracks all children below the age of 18 years. While this data did provide rough estimates of out-of-school children, this information was dated and thus not reliable enough. When EG conducted its own household survey in Pali, it encountered omission errors, with many out-of-school girls not making it to 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 employees and officials. EG's surveys initially met with resistance from teachers at schools, the village cluster, and block resource facilitators because of discrepancy in the count of out-of-school girls between EG's survey and government records. EG overcame this resistance by developing a process whereby EG's list of out-of-school girls would be verified with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan officials. In this way, EG not only demonstrated to government officials that it was capable of producing reliable surveys, but also established itself as a credible partner with whom the State could work to bridge gender disparity in education.

Milestones

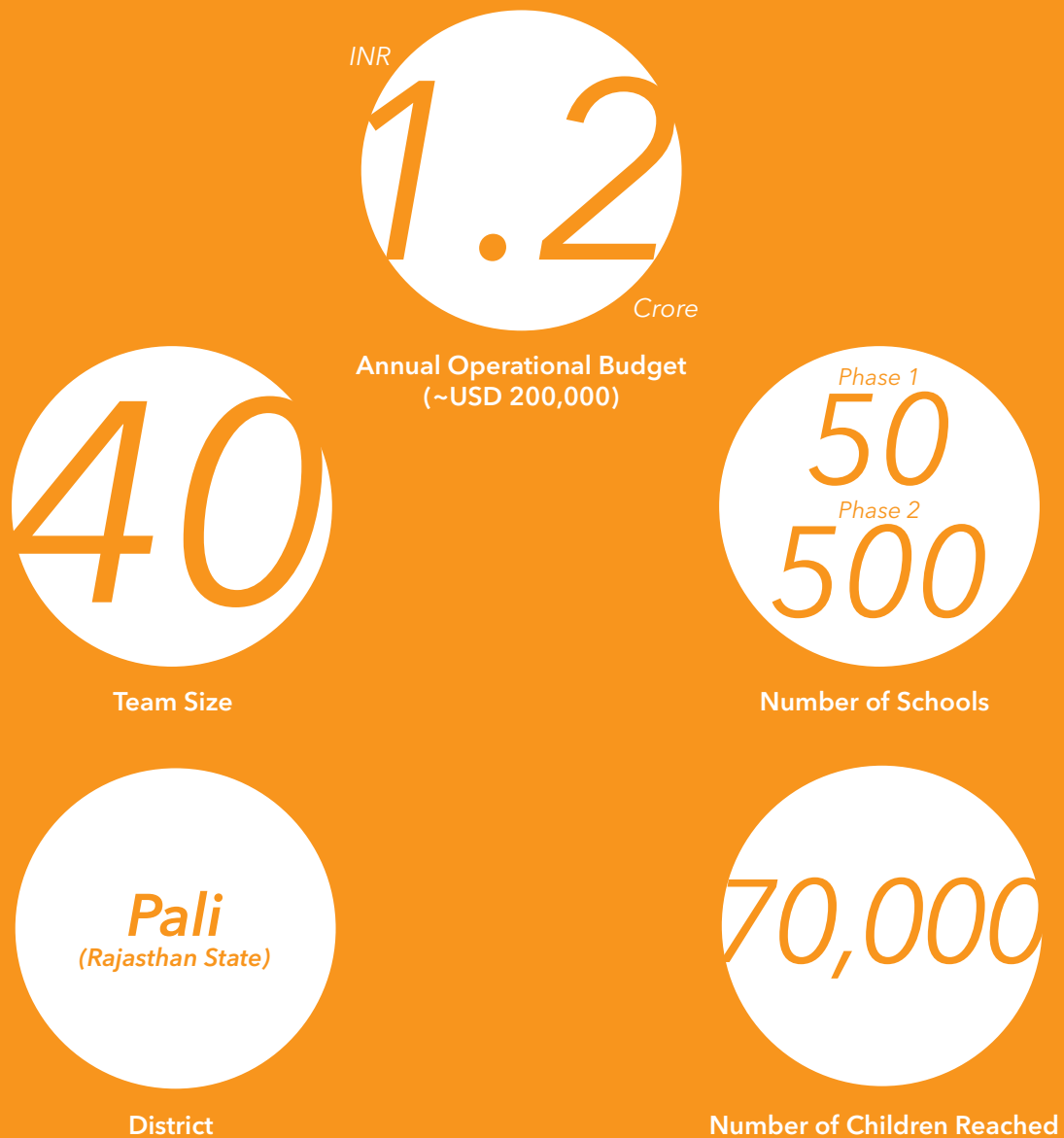


EG was one of the first organizations to present a promising pilot tackling the literacy gender-gap in Rajasthan. This first-mover advantage helped EG foster relationships with the Rajasthan government for the future.

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



At the end of the fourth quarter of 2007, following was the size of EG as represented by:





BLUEPRINT

> **VALIDATE**

PREPARE

SCALE

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 communities. In this stage, organization leaders should focus on validating the viability of the model described in the blueprint. This involves testing assumptions made in the blueprint, which will often reveal issues and weaknesses in the blueprint, leading to refinements and more testing of the model. The more organizations are able to approach testing and refinements with rigor, the stronger their model will be. Additionally, they will be more attractive to funders, who will help them achieve scale at a faster pace.

During this stage, EG turned its attention to retaining girls in school as measurement data revealed that this was an area for improvement. To address this, field staff focused on a deeper level of engagement in schools through the introduction of creative learning techniques in classrooms and 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 able to convince a few large funders that its model was viable and scalable. This influx of funds pushed EG further along its growth path.

Challenges and opportunities

1) Using data to inform decision making.

EG's leadership has always been committed to measurement. Safeena believes that, *"in the sector we work in, it is all the more important to know that the work you are doing is making a difference. Because if it is not, there is no point in scaling it."* EG's challenge, however, 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 reflections on data 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, at these review meetings, the staff were encouraged to reflect on data, analyze it, and take corrective measures. For example, at one of these meetings, staff provided solutions for improving 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 staff and teacher training is based on insights from our monitoring data - when we find that we are not performing in a specific area, we improve our training content or the way we conduct our trainings, or both, 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, the number of girls who stayed in school until the end of the academic year remained low. EG took up this finding as an area of program improvement. To address the low retention rates: 1) creative learning techniques were introduced to make learning fun and engaging 2) special attention was given to girl-friendly infrastructure in school improvement plans, such as separate girls' toilets in schools. Once the impact of these programmatic changes on keeping girls in school (retention) became visible through data, EG quickly incorporated them into its existing model. It was during this stage that improvement in learning outcomes was added as an area of impact, in addition to enrollment and retention. EG's willingness to act on internal findings significantly sped up its learning time, improved resource utilization and reduced the cost of learning much later along the process. What may have taken the organization several years to realize if it had waited until an endline assessment, was instead detected and addressed early on at the validate stage.

3) Streamlining the measurement function.

Once EG's work had expanded to over 500 schools, traditional paper-based data collection methods at EG's field offices increasingly came to be seen as 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. Mid-level program staff input data into the system after collecting it from field staff who still used paper forms. Not only did this make data analysis easier, but going paper-less also allowed EG to critically evaluate all the information that was being collected from the field, and weed out metrics that were not essential to decision making. For example, for 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 (drinking water, toilets for girls, kitchen shed).

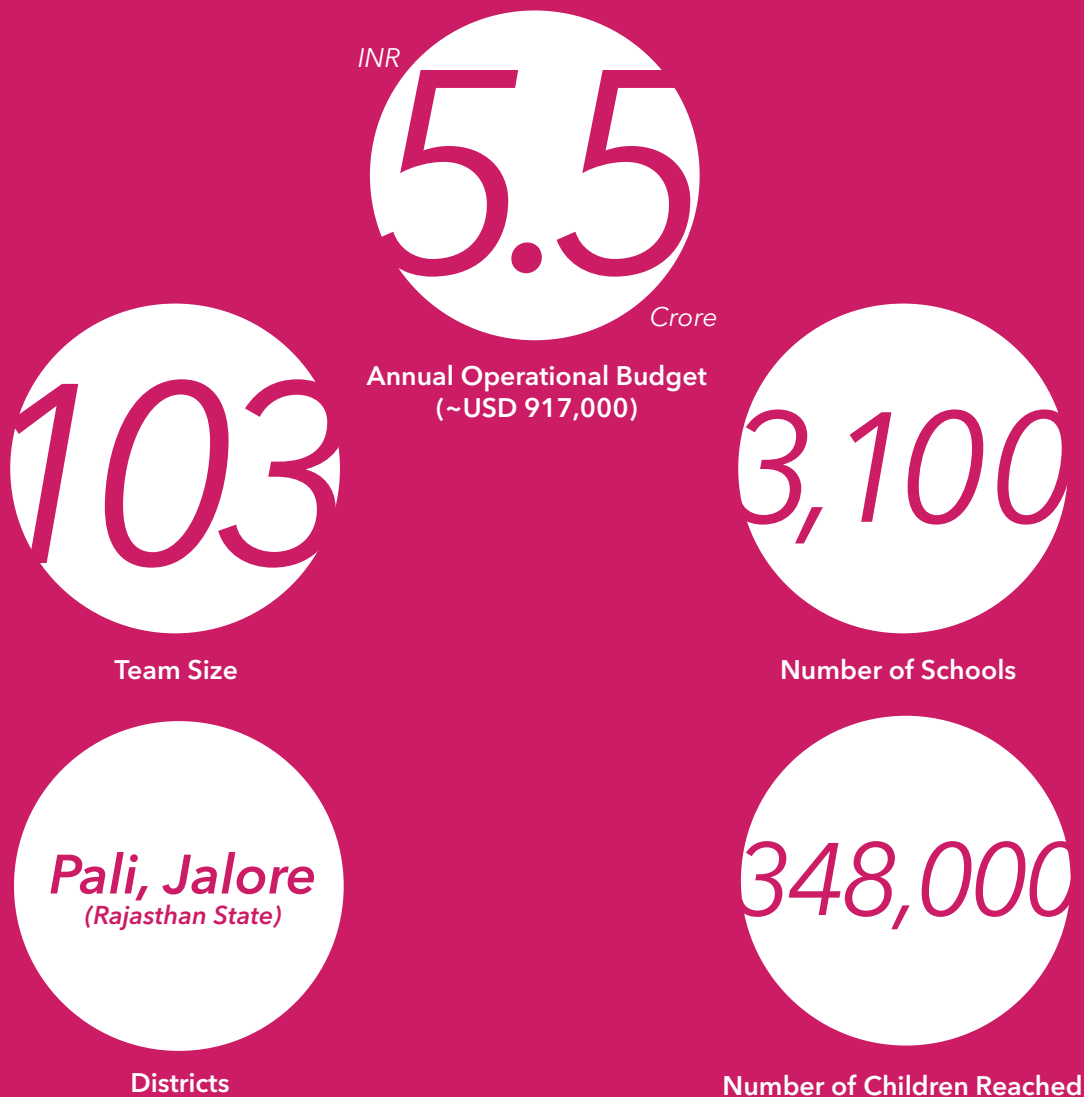
Milestones

As part of the project with the Government of Rajasthan, EG demonstrated close to 99% enrollment in 500 schools in Pali.

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 the Jalore district. With robust data to support its achievement, EG established the credibility and scalability of its model with the government.

EG's success was evident not only to the Government of Rajasthan, but also to other supporters such as Dasra and LGT Venture Philanthropy who provided capacity building and financial assistance during this stage.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2011, following was the size of EG as represented by:





1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
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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, effort and funds.



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 participated in a third-party evaluation study of its program, invested in building and empowering the Team Balika workforce, and strengthened its measurement-related functions. EG's operations expanded to all of Jalore halfway through this stage and then to Sirohi towards the end.

Challenges and opportunities

1) Receiving an external 'stamp of approval' through impact evaluation.

Typically, a rigorous evaluation is only conducted after a program has undergone many years of testing and refining with staff regularly using measurement data to drive improvements, and before investing time and resources in scaling efforts. External evaluations have various levels of rigor, the highest of which are employed in studies that use Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) to establish causality. During this stage, EG chose to put its program through an external impact evaluation to check whether its programs were in fact generating intended and desired effects around enrolment, retention and learning outcomes. While RCTs can be expensive, EG managed to tap into its networks to get Dr. Rebecca Thornton, a professor at the University of Michigan to agree to design and plan an RCT pro bono. She helped identify villages to be included in the control and test groups, as well as develop the methodology and timeline for data collection. EG incorporated this additional data collection into its on-going monitoring, and it continues to collect this data. The data analysis done at the end of two years, led by Dr. Thornton, showed that EG's activities were significantly improving girls' enrollment, retention, and learning outcomes for girls and boys. This stamp of approval gave EG the confidence it needed to plan and fundraise for scaling to new districts.

2) 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 simultaneously perform data collection, analysis, program management and operations. As a result, EG decided to structure measurement as a distinct function, and built a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team focused on analysis and reporting, while the program team continued to collect field data. Later, as EG expanded to a third district (Sirohi) and the burden of data collection on field staff increased further, EG decided to transfer some data collection activities, such as door-to-door surveys, to Team Balika. This decision freed up the field staff's time to focus on management and operational tasks. Getting Team Balika involved in data collection also increased their level of engagement within the organization.

3) Facilitating community-led measurement.

Given how rooted EG's model is in community ownership, transferring ownership for some of the measurement to the community was a natural next step. EG introduced a monthly School Assessment Chart for parents who were a part of the School Management Committee (SMC), so they could track the "wellbeing" of their school. Indicators on the chart included availability of water, separate girls' toilets, attendance of teachers, and accessibility to a playground. EG trained SMCs on ideal school environments, based on which they created School Improvement Plans. EG staff also helped SMCs access government funding for these improvement projects. Progress on the chart was updated as and when items on the School Improvement Plans were addressed or completed. EG saw a visible jump in the level of engagement of the parents, mostly non-literate, once these charts were introduced. This also increased EG's accountability in its work with schools.

Milestones

EG expanded its operations in Pali, Jalore and Sirohi.

By successfully demonstrating its strong culture of continuous improvement, EG attracted grant awards from prestigious organizations such as World Bank's India Development Marketplace and the British Asian Trust.

At the end of the fourth quarter of 2013, following was the size of EG as represented by:



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

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BLUEPRINT

VALIDATE

PREPARE

> SCALE

Like many buzzwords, 'scale' means different things to different people. Recognizing this, grant makers of all kinds are changing the way they think about scale, emphasizing not size or reach, but impact. As Jeff Bradach, co-founder of the Bridgespan Group, puts 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 in its journey to scale, having reached out to over 8,500 schools and close to a million children across six districts (including three new districts, namely Ajmer, Bundi, Rajsamand). During this stage, EG transitioned from Excel-based to mobile-phone-based data collection, data management and field staff tracking, to keep pace with its efforts to scale. *“What you can see with your eyes when you are working in one school, you cannot when you have grown to a couple of 1,000 schools. That is where a strong measurement system comes in,”* says Safeena. The challenge now also lies in figuring out how to reach all of the 26 gender-gap districts in India, while maximizing impact and being cost-effective. *“Given the magnitude of the problem, we cannot 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 plan to close the gap between what we have achieved to date and what we still need to accomplish.”*

Challenges and opportunities

1) Using mobile technology for short-term course correction.

As EG grew the size of its field team and the number of schools it worked in, and spread across many remote locations, keeping track of staff activities and school level improvements became challenging. With ever-increasing data coming in from the field, EG's Excel-based data collection system was no longer good enough. District managers struggled with poor access to real-time data, limited visibility into staff and school performance, delays in data analysis and timely course correction. EG turned to mobile technology to address these challenges. EG piloted a mobile phone-based data collection system in Sirohi. Field staff were given low-cost mobile devices to log their time at every field location using geotagging, which provided district managers visibility of field staff by time and location. As the mobile data collection tool evolved, field staff could enter and update real-time data about school-level indicators, from the school assessment charts. This allowed district managers to quickly identify schools that were not improving on indicators thus needing more attention, enabling timely course correction.

However, the transition to mobile-based data collection was not smooth initially. The staff considered it a burden they had to shoulder in addition to their regular program activities. Safeena realized, *“if you cannot feed data back to the front-line users, it is hard to get the data entered in the first place.”* So district managers started to make sure that data was fed back to field staff on a weekly basis. EG also adopted interesting approaches such as bottom-up planning to involve field staff in setting targets for their area themselves, promoting greater ownership and accountability in delivering results. It has taken EG a year to roll out phone-based data collection and currently all data collection is done through mobile phones.

2) Developing dashboards to track activities, outputs and outcomes.

EG's commitment to being a learning organization is most evident in its use of an organization-wide strategy dashboard. The data from the phones is aggregated and analyzed by the M&E team in a monthly dashboard shared with EG's leadership, to track performance against set targets at the school, village and district level.

For outcome indicators related to learning improvements and the effectiveness of its child-friendly learning techniques, results are also compared against the control group of 113 schools, data for which is being collected on an ongoing basis. These schools were part of the RCT conducted by the University of Michigan.

The following indicators are part of the monthly dashboard. Operational efficiency is measured by analyzing activities and outputs in the following performance areas:

- (a) Number of out-of-school girls identified via EG's door-to-door and government-conducted surveys.
- (b) EG field staff recruitment at the block office, field coordinator and Team Balika level
- (c) EG staff training of Team Balika, SMCs and teachers
- (d) Training of Bal Sabhas (girl councils)
- (e) Infrastructure-related improvements in schools, such as the number of toilets for girls

Outcome indicators are focused on the three areas of impact most important to EG's mission.

- (a) Enrollment of out-of-school girls: Comparison against the baseline of out-of-school girls in the area through both EG-conducted and government-conducted surveys; number of girls eligible vs. actually enrolled in primary school.

- (b) Retention of out-of-school girls: Number of girls enrolled and retained in school as per school registers.
- (c) Learning outcomes: Improvement against baseline and control schools in Hindi, English and basic arithmetic over the course of the academic year. Improvement is monitored by subject and gender for a more nuanced understanding.

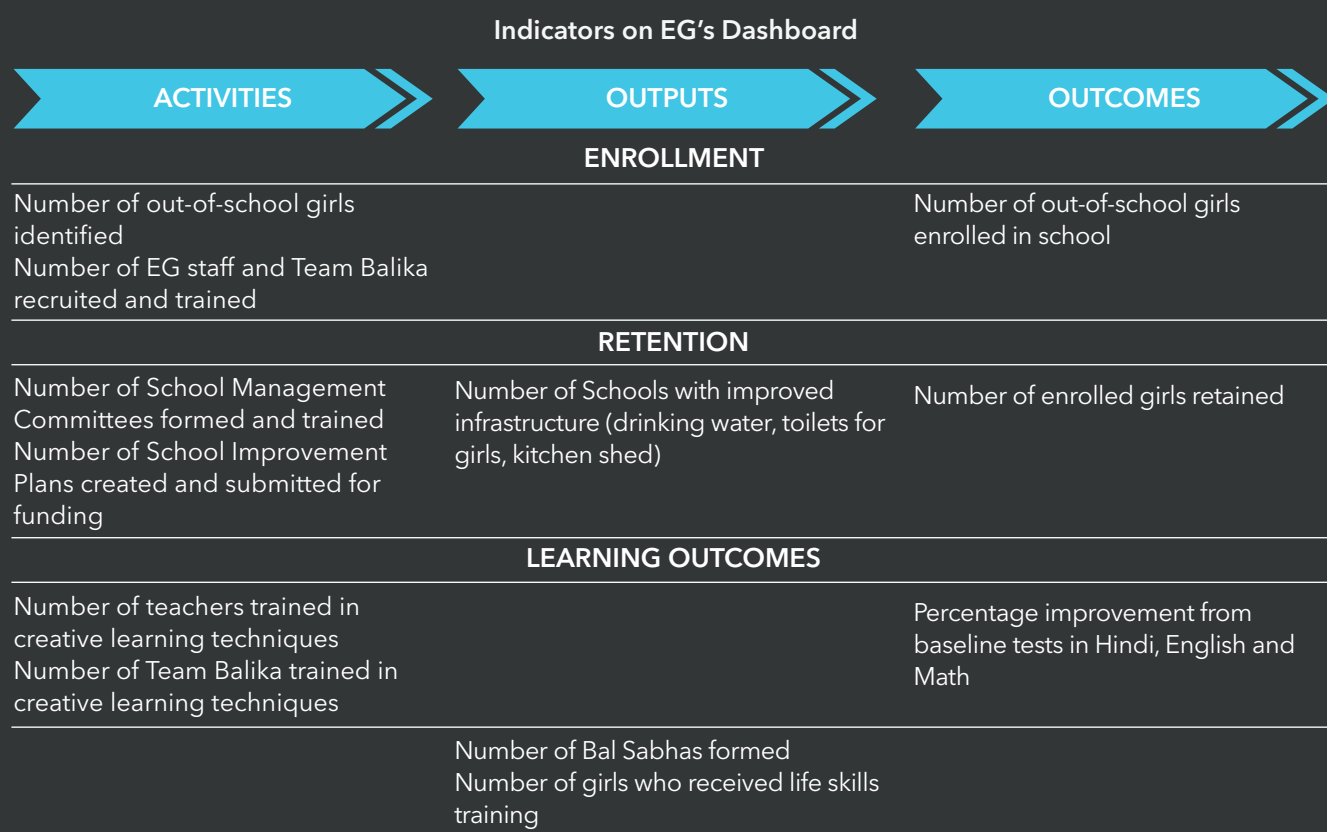
For all the above mentioned performance indicators on the dashboard, a Red/Orange/Green status is given as visual cues for performance below, at, or above set thresholds or targets. The M&E team then discusses the dashboard with district managers at monthly meetings to address areas of improvement. It is also shared with EG's leadership to inform organization-wide decision making.

3) Getting to the next level of measurement.

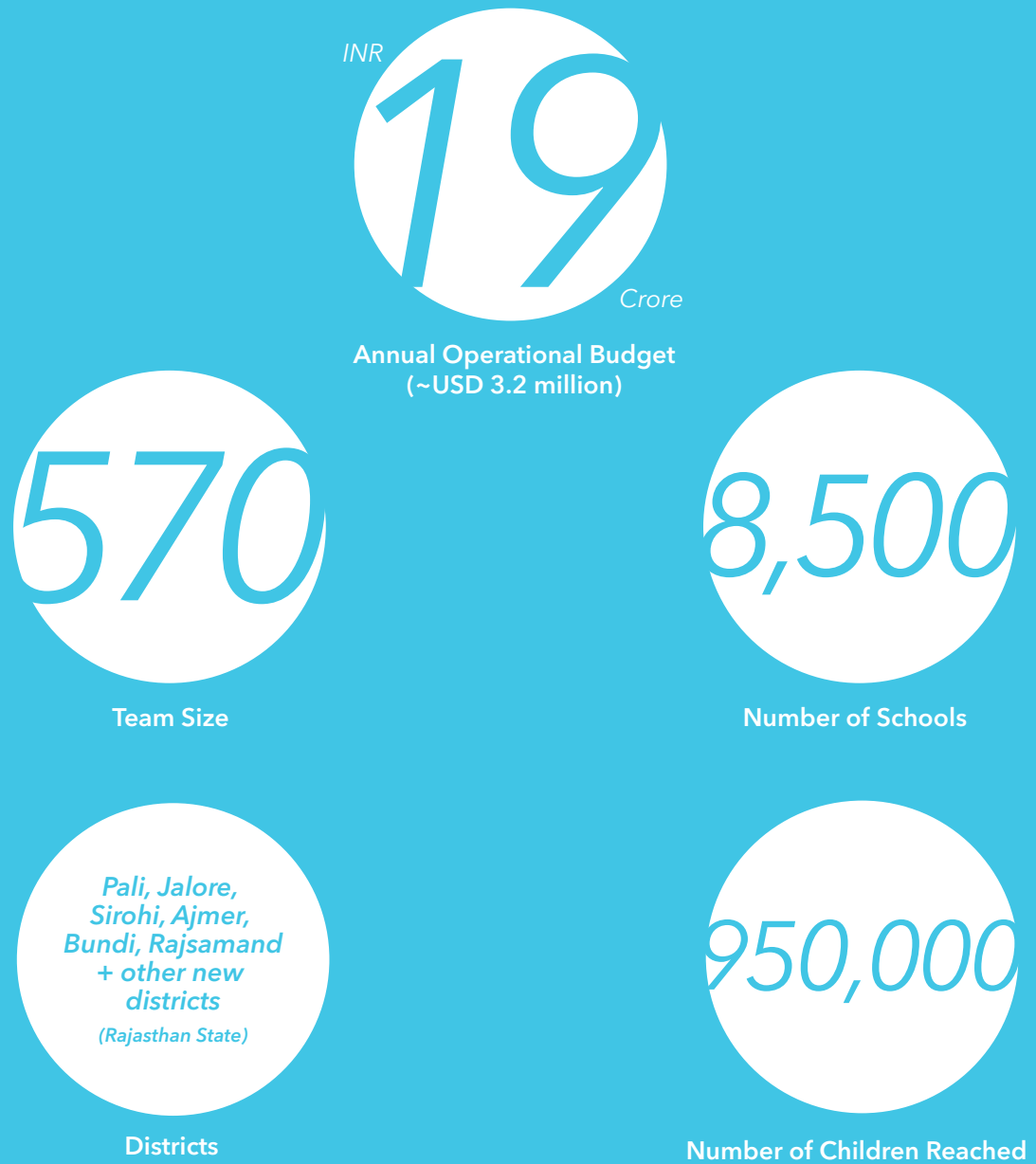
Moving towards measuring more outcomes is challenging and requires a level of rigor far beyond tracking on-going activities and outputs. EG continues to focus on gaining clarity on its long-term outcomes such as the effects of creative learning techniques and efficacy of Bal Sabhas in imparting life skills to girls. 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 and improvement in life outcomes.

4) Scaling for impact.

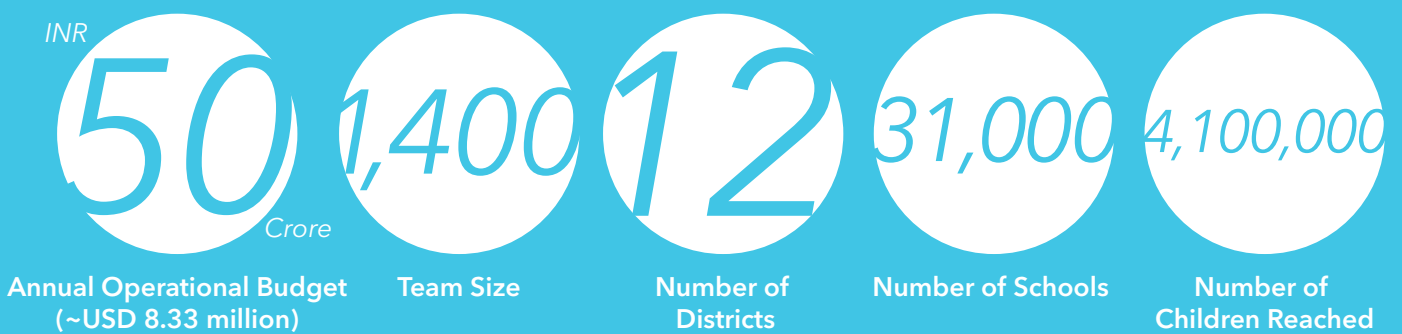
EG has yet to answer questions about how best to scale for impact: While its model is designed for scale, for how long can it sustain an organic self-driven growth trajectory? Should it continue replicating its existing model by hiring more field staff? Should it spread its innovative model by partnering with other small-sized independent non-profits, providing the necessary funding and guidance? Should it consider a franchise-model involving individual social entrepreneurs? Or should it consider a hybrid approach of organic self-driven growth and partner-franchise-model? 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 of maximizing impact while being cost effective.



At the end of the fourth quarter of 2014, following was the size of EG as represented by:



The following are EG's projections for 2017:



The Next Phase in Educate Girls' Journey to Scale

EG is structuring a Development Impact Bond (DIB), which is the first of its kind in India, and the first in the world involving an educational social organization. Impact bonds are part of a larger movement around effective philanthropy to channel the allocation of funds to social programs that work, to shift incentives and accountability to outcomes, and to increase efficiency in program implementation.

Impact bonds involve a few partners, each with a specific role, coming together to tackle a social issue to achieve pre-agreed on outcomes. They include:

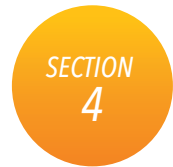
- Service providers, typically nonprofits, that manage service delivery and have flexibility to innovate and improve programs to achieve agreed-upon outcomes.
- Private investors that finance the cost of the program aimed at achieving these outcomes. They can be individuals, foundations or investment firms.
- The outcomes payer, typically a donor or government agency, that repays the investors their initial investment and additional returns commensurate with program success and achievement of desired outcomes.
- An independent evaluator that assesses the achievement of outcomes.

Impact bonds do not act as a magic bullet for financial sustainability of organizations, and are not appropriate for organizations with complicated interventions, long-term outcome objectives; and for organizations that find it difficult to attribute results to a single program. But they hold potential for some programs in global health and workforce development, including recidivism and employment, where measurable results can be seen in less than 10 years. At their core, they channel funds that would never have entered the sector by providing a risk-neutral investment, and incentivize organizations to show evidence-based results.

In EG's case, UBS Optimus Foundation is the private investor and Children's Investment Fund Foundation is the outcome payer. Instiglio is the project manager co-ordinating the different stakeholders. This is a pilot initiative, involving approximately 170 schools. EG is uniquely suited for such a pilot as its model is amenable to measurable results, and it has a robust impact measurement infrastructure in place. Given this is the first DIB in the education sector worldwide, this is EG's opportunity to demonstrate a proof-of-concept financing mechanism with the potential to attract more private capital in the future. If successful, DIBs could be a viable funding option to aid EG's ambitious vision to scale. Safeena believes that *"The Development Impact Bond pilot is a watershed moment for EG as it will allow us to innovate, adapt and tailor our programs to achieve the best possible results for marginalized girls and ensure that funders only pay for results achieved. This will help us fuel scale as we attempt to reach over a million girls, helping to expedite transformation in the lives of girls and their communities."*



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 one 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, 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 enrolment, 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 was not 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 EG 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 need 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 for millions of people.

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Glossary

Bal Sabha - It comprises of a group of girl students that act as role models and lead various cultural and sports activities. This group 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 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 starting 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 an 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 girls' 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, aimed at 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.

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