



ORGANISATIONAL LEARNINGS

'Learnings' has always been a means to an end for Educate Girls where improved organizational effectiveness is concerned. We have a willingness to learn from experience – whether that experience comes from our staff, our partners, and our beneficiaries or from other sources. Our learnings have helped us understand what program approaches work best in what circumstances. This has led us to make improvements in our program designs for greater efficiency. Some of the major learnings have been listed below.

How did we arrive at the Team Balika model?

Natural Leaders: After the completion of our pilot we witnessed that one of the common threads in all the successful schools has been the emergence of a natural leader through the process of community motivation and involvement. Wherever Educate Girls was able to successfully motivate the community members towards the issues of education, communities witnessed the emergence of local leadership to take the process forward in their village.

However seeking assistance from these leaders had its limitation. Though these natural leaders seemed extremely motivated to bring about a difference, their efforts were not consistent. It was also observed that in certain villages the process of emergence of a natural leader was every time-intensive; it could take months at times. There have been instances where no such leader could be found.

Shiksha Prerak: The lack of the emergence of a natural leader within a stipulated time period led us to pilot the Shiksha Prerak model in those villages where we paid the Shiksha Prerak a stipend of INR 500 per month for 3 months to boost learning outcomes in schools. This worked for us as in some tribal terrains and highly secluded villages, money proved to be a motivation to find a literate person who could lead the process for us. This was a huge learning – we realized that if we went 'seeking' for volunteers then we could design the outline as to who the best person is going to look for them. Basically, we now needed to upscale the Shiksha Prerak model clearly defining what we desired our volunteers to be. At this point Educate Girls won the World Bank Development Marketplace competition that gave us the funds to innovate. We now devised an 'evidence-based approach'.

Evidence-based Approach: Here we took three cohorts of approximately 300-400 members each. The members of the first cohort were paid INR 500 per month for 3 months, members of the second cohort were paid INR 1500 per month for 3 months while members of the third cohort were not paid – they were volunteers. Finding members for the first two cohorts wasn't much of a task; our field co-ordinators would spread the message around in communities with a mention of the stipend and queries would come in. While the volunteers got identified through a detailed recruitment drive (that included door-to-door awareness, loudspeaker announcements in villages, wall-paintings, circulation of handout, induction programs etc.) The idea was to spend money on the recruitment process and create an aspiration value that would motivate members to approach us purely for the cause. This process helped us identify those community members who

were passionate about a change in their village. We called these volunteers ‘Team Balika’ thus giving them an identity. Team Balika members were provided training in creative teaching and public speaking. Additionally they were also given basic merchandise and a badge that read ‘Team Balika’.

Over a period of time, the first two cohorts witnessed great attrition – the members stopped showing up post the paid period of three months while Team Balika members continued to work in their villages as well as schools as true champions of girls’ education. Team Balika members worked with complete dedication that showed better outcomes in terms of enrolment of out-of-school girls as well as improved learning levels of students.

The motivation and value-based model of Team Balika proved to be much more successful than the remuneration model. This is how Team Balika model came into existence.

Though our Team Balika members continue to work for the cause for a fairly long duration, Educate Girls is now working on developing a strong retention model that would help them stay with us much longer. For this, we are in the process of conducting a detailed Team Balika Motivation study.

Why did we introduce the mobile tracking system? How is it beneficial to the organisation?

The Field Coordinators (FCs) and the Block Officers (BOs) that constitute about 75% of the organisation’s total employee strength are based in field and don’t have a stationary office. They are required to travel to remote villages daily engaging with communities and schools. The nature of their job made monitoring their movement & tracking their presence in operational area a huge challenge.

We thus introduced the mobile tracking system wherein every staff is given a mobile handset with the tracking application in it. This has helped us in the following ways:

- Authenticate the presence of an employee in a particular location and over a period calculate the coverage of operational areas by employee
- This data becomes a validated attendance for staff which is used for salary processing and travel reimbursements

What were the challenges faced while executing the mobile tracking system and how we overcome these challenges?

Challenge	How we overcame the challenge
The application introduced in the initial phase was an online tool and hence did not work in low network area.	An offline application was developed which works with a GPS connection
Geo-tagging : While logging in a specific village, the village being not part of the standard map and hence not able to login	All villages as per operational area geo tagged in the application

