

Celebrating 6 years of Engaged Youth

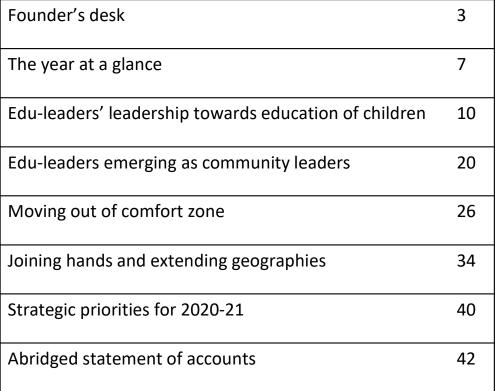
Annual Report 2021



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

I-SAKSHAM EDUCATION AND LEARNING FOUNDATION

#### **CONTENTS**







#### FOUNDER'S DESK ...

Dear friends of I-Saksham,

We trust that you and your near-dear ones are safe and healthy.

Covid-19 induced situation brought an unprecedented challenge posed before everyone across the world. i-Saksham faced the challenge of continuing the education of the children in rural Bihar. Its edu-leaders pivoted the delivery model completely.

Through 'kar-ke-seekho' initiative the edu-leaders ensured that children keep learning even during the lockdown. They used phone-line teaching, activity and project based learning and engaged parents actively. The edu-leaders spread awareness about covid-19 prevention in the villages they were present in. i-Saksham expanded its operations to Gaya and Muzaffarpur districts during 2020-21.

The challenge of covid is not over yet. Our team and our edu-leaders have grown and evolved to the challenges and we are sure that with your support, we shall overcome.

Ravi Dhanuka CEO, i-Saksham





# MARGINALIZED RURAL INDIA EXHIBITS POOR DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES AGAINST THE NATIONAL AVERAGE AND WOMEN ARE THE WORST SUFFERERS

Only 30.8% of Grade 5 children in Jamui can read a Grade 2 textbook. The national average is 50.3%

Average education level is Grade 7

43% of women are married before the age of 18

**40%** of women in Bihar are not able to make decisions regarding their own health care, large household purchases, however, they can decide on visits to family and relatives

#### I-SAKSHAM FOR GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP

#### Vision

A society where people from excluded sections are well educated, skilled and self-reliant

#### Mission

Build community Edu-leaders to enrich education experiences of underserved children for their continued success

#### **Values**







Trust







Respect



#### **EDU-LEADERS GO THROUGH A TWO-YEAR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

i-Saksham builds a cadre of young boys and girls as community edu-leaders who undergo a two-year training under the fellowship program. The edu-leaders are encouraged to grow across three leadership tracks.







#### **Personal leadership**

Coaching and mentoring to build positive sense of identity, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and beliefs about future

#### **Educational leadership**

Capacity building on pedagogy skills and onsite support

#### **Community leadership**

Leadership skills on civic engagement, alliance building, campaign development, and communications

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#### THE YEAR AT A GLANCE





i-Saksham became 6 vears old



Project "kar ke seekho" brought in new experiences



Education level of children retained during COVID



Edu-leaders prepared themselves to lead change in the community



Phone- and worksheetbased learning for children



New edu-leaders joined through increased collaboration



Witnessed increased support of parents during COVID



Organized two events: Ground Speaks and Annual Day



Edu-leaders showcased great leadership during COVID



Expanded work in two more districts of Bihar



Created an alumni engagement program and started alumni learning circles

#### 2020.21

#### IN 2020-21, WE GREW TO BE A CADRE OF 150EDU-LEADERS



**150** 

**Edu-leaders** 

**New edu-leaders** recruited

Alumni

Alumni in team

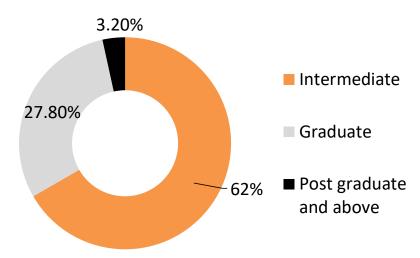
With support from





### WHO ASPIRE FOR BETTER LIFE CHANCES

#### **Edu-leaders qualification**



"The fellowship has given me an opportunity to change the mindset of my community. Today, girls are enrolling for primary education in equal numbers as boys in my village'."





#### **Aspirations**



Government job



Community empowerment



**Higher education** 



Teaching



**Nursing** 

# EDU-LEADERS SHOWCASED EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP TOWARDS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN



Edu-leader Rajni distributing worksheets during difficult times of COVID

#### THEIR CONTINUED EFFORTS TO REACH EVERY CHILD DURING COVID-19

The unprecedented times of Covid-19 brought several uncertainties, with regard to health, livelihoods, education, etc. It was more challenging to provide education in deep interior pockets of the country as compared to the urban areas where education had completely shifted online. Our edu-leaders faced this difficult situation in high spirits and ensured continued learning of almost 70% of their students despite the pandemic restrictions. They tried different mediums to reach out to the children. They distributed worksheets, took phone call based sessions, motivated parents to support children learn at home, etc.



Distribution of books to children to read stories at home.



Project-based learning at home to enhance 21st century skills like critical thinking ability, ,communiation, etc.



Phone call-based teaching with simple mobile phones at home



Worksheet distribution to children at beginner level or those who could not be reached through phone

#### 12 PROJECTS FOR 12 WEEKS WITH 5,000

#### **CHILDREN**

Through collaboration with Education Above All (EAA), we implemented project-based learning in the difficult times of COVID-19 to make children more interested in their studies. The project:

- Promoted activity-based learning
- Included creative exercises and critical analysis
- Engaged parents in the learning journey of their children
- 10% increase in the competence of children against baseline status of their competencies.
- While the average score of children in the baseline was 69%; it peaked to 79% in the endline after children did the projects.







#### **Projects Covered**

- Creating their own ABC book
- Understanding money, opening model shops
- House rules to keep COVID away
- Why all plastic?
- Paper figures
- Water is life
- The world of trees
- What's the news



### LEARNING DIVERSITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

#### Ram Babu wants to be an IAS officer

Ram Babu is a student of our alumni Sonam Bharti. When our students were learning through activities and group projects during the lockdown, Sonam asked them a question: *If you were shopkeepers, what would you have in your shop*?

To this question, Ram Babu replied: Didi, I do not want to become a shopkeeper. I want to become an IAS officer.

Sonam was amazed to see his confidence in sharing his aspirations and she motivated Ram Babu more by telling him that he will surely accomplish his dream.



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#### Word Mapping was a lively experience

Through different forms of word-mapping conducted throughout the year, our children built their vocabulary and showed a significant transition from word to sentence levels.



#### Learning through activities

Through activity- and TLM-based approach, children were given an understanding of different shapes.



#### Learning rhymes and baalgeet

Rhymes and baalgeet played a very important role in building children's confidence and engaging them in classrooms. Children have started taking a lead in conducting rhymes in the classroom.



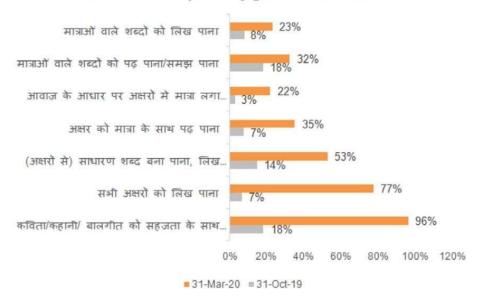
### Encouraging children to think innovatively through storytelling

Through different storytelling methods used by edu-leaders, children have started falling in love with storybooks. They are curious to learn more about the characters and are analyzing the contexts of stories in relation to their daily lives.

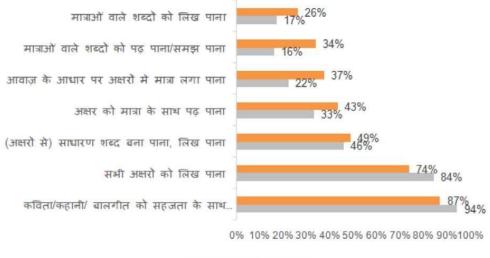


### WE SAW SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEARNING COMPETENCIES AMONG CHILDREN

#### Pre-covid competency growth-Hindi level 1



#### Post-covid competency growth-Hindi level 1



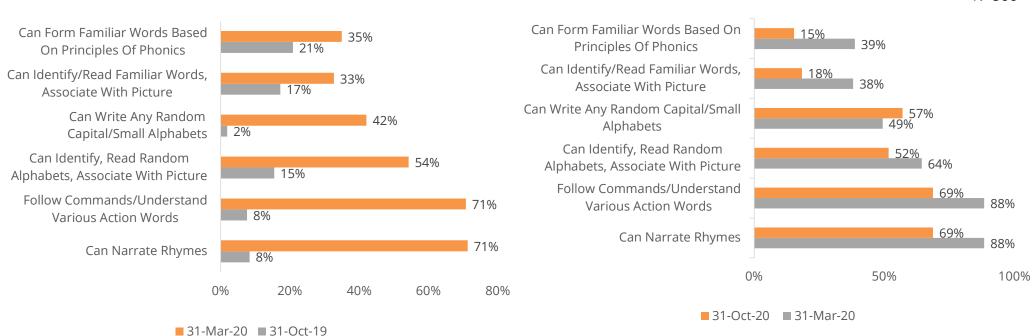
■31-Oct-20 ■31-Mar-20

### THERE WAS A DECLINE IN ENGLISH COMPETENCIES DUE TO LIMITED COMMUNITY-LEVEL INTERVENTION

Pre-Covid competency growth- English level 1

#### Post-Covid competency growth- English level 1

N = 300



- Children gained new learning competencies at a significant pace during pre-Covid times
- There was a decline in the percentage of learning competencies achieved among children in post-Covid times due to limited parental and community-level support to supplement edu-leaders' efforts

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### EDU-LEADERS WITNESSED CHILDREN EMERGE AS LEADERS IN AND OUTSIDE CLASSROOMS

With edu-leaders promoting group-based learning, multi-level teaching approaches and maximum use of activities and stories to teach children, we saw a shift in the behavior of children along with their academic achievements. Children have shown huge peer support and leadership in the classrooms. They are expressing themselves better and are showing high collaboration in classrooms. They are creating teaching and learning materials with edu-leaders and are always excited to take part in role plays. The child-centric pedagogy of edu-leaders led to increased involvement and commitment of children as well as parents.









#### The tap outside the classroom...

Rupa was teaching in a community space and following all the social distancing and hygiene norms when the schools were closed due to COVID. However, she found that there was no drinking water facility around her teaching space, due to which the children had to walk a distance to drink water.

Rupa took leadership and talked to the head (mukhiya) of the village about the issue. She requested him to put a tap of drinking water outside her teaching space. Soon the mukhiya of the village approved her request and she had a tap outside her teaching space.

The children are very happy, now that they don't have to walk so far to drink water. Rupa is glad that she was able to sort out a big problem, not just for her students but also for the people around the community space she was teaching in.



Rupa Kumari Edu-leader, Batch 7 Muzaffarpur, Bihar

### OUR KGBV TEAM MOTIVATED GIRLS TO CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES...

#### **ENGAGING THROUGH PHONE**

- Phone-call-based sessions for classes 6, 7 and 8 girls
- Whatsapp-based tasks for class 9 girls

#### **PROJECT "KAR KE SEEKHO"**

 Project-based conceptual learning for classes 6, 7 and 8 girls

#### **REGULAR FOLLOW-UP WITH PARENTS**

 Seeking parents feedback on sessions being conducted with their daughters. Phone-callbased sessions for classes 6, 7 and 8 girls

#### **PROVIDING TEXTBOOKS**

 Arranging textbooks from different sources and providing them to girls in their homes



### ...AND MOTIVATED PARENTS TO TAKE PART IN GIRLS' EDUCATION

KGBV team's regular interaction with parents helped them become more sensitized to their girls' education, which resulted in parents' extraordinary efforts to keep their daughters' learning going. They would leave their mobile phones at home for their daughters to attend classes, would follow-up with the team over phone to know what their daughters had been learning, etc.



"When I have to go outside for **any** personal work, I leave my phone at home so that my daughter does **not miss** her classes."

Father of a young girl at KGBV

"We do not own a smartphone, but we didn't want this to be a reason for our daughter to not attend classes via WhatsApp. So, I took her to her grandmother's home where she could study using her aunt's smartphone".

#### Father of a young girl at KGBV



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## EDU-LEADERS EMERGING AS COMMUNITY LEADERS



#### LEADERSHIP BEYOND CLASSROOMS

Our edu-leaders proved themselves as true leaders of the community during the difficult times of COVID. They tried every possible way to sensitize the community about the necessary precautions and contribute their bit in preventing their village from getting affected by the virus. From sticking posters to stitching masks, they have gone beyond their daily comfort to set meaningful examples of hard work and dedication.

Edu-leader Anshu distributed worksheets to every customer who came to her kirana store so thatit reached the children in her villageand theycould read at home



Edu-leaders created posters on precautions to be taken in times of COVID and pasted them on the walls of their village to sensitize people. Here, edu-leader Rajmani is sticking posters.



Edu-leader Lalita stitched masks for her community and went door to door to motivate people to wear them



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### EDU-LEADERS BUILT DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR COMMUNITIES

We introduced community leadership as one of the major modules in the second year of fellowship. We believe that developing edu-leaders to lead change in their community through direct and collective action will make the community take ownership of their children's education. As part of this module, our edu-leaders through their training sessions, built an understanding of:

- The leadership structure of their village/panchayat
- PRI (Panchayti Raj Institutions)
- Stakeholders in their community and their roles
- Creating resource maps and doing need analysis

#### They are now able to:

- understand village dynamics and know whom to approach in any kind of situation
- communicate better with parents and increase their support in the learning journey of their children
- do a need analysis of a situation and identify the loopholes in the process up to a certain extent



Meeting the ward member of the village to understand his thoughts on education



Drawing a village resource map to understand the allocation of resources in village

### ...AND SHIFTED COMMUNITY'S OUTLOOK TOWARDS EDUCATION

Along with edu-leaders and children, the idea of learning through phone calls and projects was new for parents too. In the initial days, they were very skeptical about their children learning through phones, projects, worksheets, etc., and almost 40% parents didn't approve of it.

When edu-leaders convinced the parents and showcased them how these immediate solutions can help their children remain connected despite the closure of schools, parents started supporting the edu-leaders' efforts. They started participating in phone-based sessions to support children, conducted storytelling at home for children, helped them with their homework, etc.

This gave edu-leaders a relief and motivation to continue their efforts to reach out to children through different mediums.

Seeing the motivating participation of parents in the education of children during COVID, we started conducting monthly training sessions with parents.

We piloted training with 200 parents in 7 villages.

The parents were trained on different TLMs that their children could use in the classroom to learn. We also had meaningful discussions with parents about how they see their children growing, the contribution they can make in the learning journey of their children, etc.

We saw increased participation of parents over time and amazing leadership efforts by a few mothers to ensure regular engagement of parents in the sessions.



#### Let no parent miss training!

Radha Devi is a parent from Daniyalpur village in Munger, Bihar. For the past 4 years, she has shown amazing contributions towards children's learning and motivating other parents. She has not missed a single Parent Teacher Meeting in the past few years and is now playing an important role in monthly sessions of parents (a pilot program by i-Saksham). She makes sure that all the parents participate in the monthly sessions, for which she goes door to door to call them out for the session, leads group discussions in the session and applies whatever she learns on her children. Radha Devi is an inspiration for other parents in the village who sometimes feel inferior to support children due to lack of awareness and knowledge."



#### WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY SAYING?

हमें बच्चों को पढाना नहीं आता, पर जिस तरह से कोरोना के इस समय में आरती बच्चों को पढ़ने के लिए कार्य दे रही है, हमें पूरा भरोसा है की बच्चे सीख जायेंगे।

(We don't know how to teach children but the way Arti is giving tasks during COVID, we are assured that our child will learn.)

- Lalmuni Devi

(Mother of a student)

मैंने बच्चों को कभी इतने मज़े से पढ़ते हुए नहीं देखा। (I have never seen children enjoying their studies so much) -Niranjan Beem

Father of a student

पहले मैं बच्चों के फ़ोन के माध्यम से पढ़ने की बात से सहमत नही था परन्तु आज जब उन्हें फ़ोन पर मन लगा कर पढ़ते देखता हूँ तो दिल खुश होता है।

(Earlier I was skeptical about my child learning through phone. But now when I see him studying with full attention on phone, it makes me very happy.)

-Father of Dilkhush Kumari(student)

# MOVING OUT OF COMFORT ZONE



#### Mona Kumari, a mother balancing home and school

Mona Kumari is an edu-leader from our 5th batch of fellowship. She is the mother of edu-leader Sweta Madhu from the 3rd batch. Mona Kumari always had a keen interest in what her daughter was learning during her fellowship. She always loved being around children, but after marriage she got completely involved in family and household responsibilities. When Mona Kumari was asked if she was interested in being a part of the i-Saksham fellowship, she was skeptical. Eventually, she decided to give it a try and got selected too! Today, she finds the fellowship training a completely different environment that brings out the best in her. She says "I have never felt so motivated in my life and I feel now I can do something for myself along with my family and household." This mother-daughter duo of Mona Kumari and Sweta is working together to ensure the children in their village are learning. We salute the courage of Mona Kumari and her efforts to go beyond her comfort level to do something for herself and her community.



#### **EDU-LEADERS BUILT A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF SELF**

This year, we saw our edu-leaders' increased knowledge of self and understanding the importance of sharing through engagement in activities involving identity, agency, life maps, leadership, listening with curiosity, etc.

Due to these developments, we found them taking some bold steps in their communities and setting examples for others.

One of the edu-leaders, Rajmani, shares "मैं खुद को अब बेहतर समझ पाती हूँ"(I am able to understand myself better now).

- •The sessions on leadership, agency, coaching, identity, listening with curiosity etc., helped our edu-leaders build their confidence and aspire for better in their lives.
- •They raised their voices against dowry, convinced families to continue the education of their daughters, emerged as mentors to children, etc.
- •Their increased confidence is preparing them to build their identity and emerge as role models in their community.



Edu-leaders' responses on what leadership means to them

#### Let the girls study: Courageous Alka

Since Alka has joined us as an edu-leader, she has talked to almost all the parents of her village about their children's education. A few days back, Alka got to know that 3 families in her neighborhood had made their daughters drop out of school. The girls were going to enroll in 8th, 9th and 11th standard in the first week of March.

Alka immediately went to talk to these families. She got to know that one family did not want to teach their daughter because she had to walk to school alone. Another girl who had to enroll in 11th was made to leave school because her family wanted to get her married. Alka couldn't take it and talked to these parents about the importance of education in their daughters' lives. She convinced them by mentioning how their daughters could emerge as strong and educated women and would have a lifestyle better than their own.



Alka herself took these girls to school and got them enrolled in their respective classes. She feels proud of herself and glad that the 3 girls are now back in school – where they should be.

i-Saksham salutes the efforts of Alka and the leadership she has shown towards her community

#### "No more choolah!": Meet our strong Babita

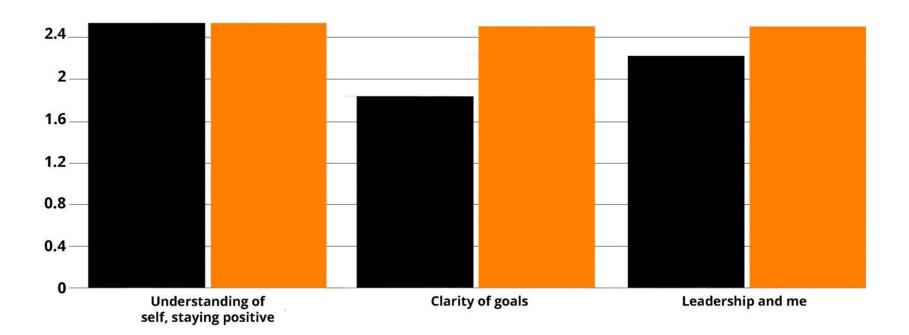
Didi they have gone to pick up wood from the forest." This is what Babita was told by her students when she asked about some children being regularly absent from her class. Babita is an edu-leader from Bhagichak village in Munger, Bihar, who had been teaching children at her home till the schools were closed due to COVID. After learning why some of her students were absent, she immediately went to talk to their parents. She got to know that firewood is essential for them to cook food and there is no one else available to get it from the jungle. Babita discussed the issue with her mentors and talked to the mukhiya (head) of the village about the Ujjwala Yojna launched by PM in 2016 to provide LPG connections to women of BPL families. After understanding the procedure of getting LPG connections, she convinced a few parents of her students to apply for the connection. firewood cooking



A few days later, one of her students Pallavi's mother told Babita that she had finally got an LPG connection and she no longer has to cook in excess smoke. A lot more connections are on the way and Babita hopes that soon she will have all her children enjoying studying in the classroom, and the mothers no longer affecting their health due to

#### A: Understanding of self

Internal survey conducted by i-Saksham





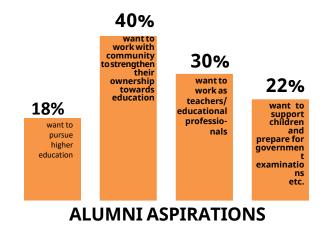
### POST-FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT TOWARDS THEIR ASPIRATIONS THROUGH ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

For the past few years, we saw their aspirations growing towards:



**Strategy**- To support our alumni in achieving their aspirations, we look forward to providing them the following services:

- Learning circles
- Support in applying for prestigious universities
- Connecting them with other organizations for jobs
- Quarterly alumni meets
- Support them in initiating projects of their choice in the community, etc.



This year, our alumni pool grew to 40 edu-leaders. In the course of 2 years of their fellowship, our alumni's aspirations have changed, with regard to themselves and their communities. Through a survey, we found that a majority of them wanted to pursue either higher education, work towards community leadership or emerge as educational professionals.

#### WHEN NALINI FOUND HER ASPIRATION

Nalini is an alumnus of i-Saksham fellowship program. During her fellowship, she worked with the girls of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya.

She always loved teaching but the fellowship exposed her to the education space as a whole. She started developing a deeper interest in education.

Nalini was also interested in dance. Near the end of her fellowship she got selected for a course in Dance Meditation Therapy (DMT) at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai.

The course was an enriching experience for Nalini. When she came back to Jamui after completing the course, her interest in education remained intact. Hence, she applied for a Masters in Education at Azim Premji University (APU) and cleared the examination. Nalini has now completed her Masters and will soon be joining as a teacher in western UP.



#### **HOW ARE OUR ALUMNI CURRENTLY PLACED?**

#### 11

of our alumni have joined our team as buddies to the new batch of eduleaders

#### 9

of them are pursuing courses like B.Ed./D.El.Ed. to emerge as educational professionals

Rest continue to serve their communities by either working on children's education or increasing communities' participation in the education of children.

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## JOINING HANDS AND EXTENDING GEOGRAPHIES



#### **EXPANDED GEOGRAPHIES**

We started operations in Gaya and Muzaffarpur districts of Bihar to replicate the fellowship model in these geographies.

**17** 

#### female edu-leaders

Joined the fellowship program from 2 blocks of Gaya and are providing quality primary education to 700+ children with partnership support from SAVE India.

10

#### female edu-leaders

Joined the fellowship program from 1 block of Gaya and are teaching around 300 children.



#### **NEW COLLABORATIONS**

#### **RBL BANK PVT. LTD.**

We partnered with RBL Bank Pvt. Ltd to develop 50 young females as edu-leaders who can work together in their communities to enhance the overall education ecosystem and emerge as role models for others.

#### **SAVE INDIA**

We partnered with Save India and replicated the fellowship model in a new district of Bihar. Through collaboration with Save India, we are working to develop 10 community leaders as eduleaders to enhance the education ecosystem in marginalized communities of 2 blocks in the district.

#### **TICKLINKS**

We partnered with Ticklinks to standardize and communicate the lesson plan templates to edu-leaders efficiently and effectively

# WHERE DO WE STAND TODAY?



#### **CURRENT STATUS**



5000+ children receiving quality education inputs



150 edu-leaders



government schools + learning centers



60%
children have shown improvement in learning outcomes



90% alumni growing as education professionals



alumni are pursuing higher education from prestigious universities.

#### **IN THE NEXT 5 YEARS**



#### **500**

Female edu-leaders in backward districts as role models in the community





alumni excelling in their aspirations:

- 10%- higher education
- 25%- education professionals
- 60%- change leaders in the community



300

schools providing quality education inputs to children



15,000

girls and vulnerable children achieve desirable learning competencies and 21st-century skills



50,000

girls and vulnerable children tracked to be retained in schools



2,500

villages with vibrant learning ecosystems where communities prioritize and celebrate education

#### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2021-22

#### **Build community engagement program**

- Regular meetings with SMCs
- Sharing tools to enable SMC members
- Participative action projects for productive engagement of community with school administration
- Collectivize parents and support active members for leadership

#### Strengthen alumni engagement program

- Support alumni to pursue their aspirations
- Pilot an initiative to promote alumni initiatives in the community
- Alumni in buddy roles (as team members)
- Collectivize
- Create an M&E structure for the program

#### **Streamline HR Process and Policies**

- Develop policies
- Strengthen organization structures
- Develop a capacity-building framework and HR manual
- Team training on policies and framework

#### **Strengthen M&E System**

- Build tools for KPI
- Streamline monthly reporting
- Integrate and operationalize dashboard
- Identify feasible IT solutions

#### **Corporate Governance and Partnerships**

- Identify potential advisory members
- · Create an advisory council
- Create board advisory sub-committees
- Reach out to potential donors for new partnerships

#### SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS

#### **Funding and Implementation partners**













#### **Incubators and Mentors**













#### **Content & Technology Partnerships**









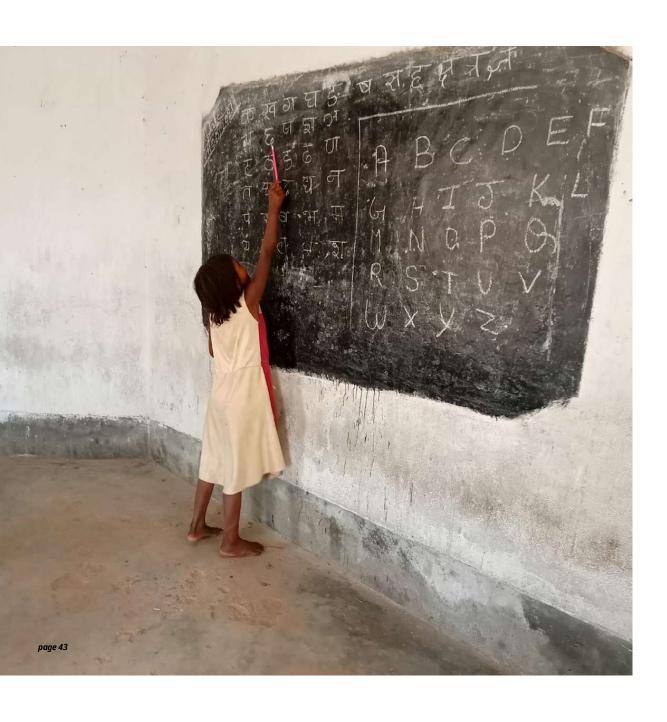


#### **ABRIDGED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

		March 31, 2020
7	7,960,518	7,274,569
8	557,678	286,404
	8,518,196	7,560,973
9	3,225,449	2,564,165
10	2,868,599	2.119,503
4	66,844	72,864
	6,160,892	4,756,532
	2,357,305	2,804,440
		1/17/0/1911/99
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Membership No. 099805

DIN 07437626 DIN 01793868



"All the wealth of the world cannot help one little village, if the people are not taught to help themselves."

- Swami Vivekanand

### Thank you!

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