Deloitte.



IMPACT ASSESSMENT

April 2022



EDUCATION – FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

Blended Learning in Model Schools

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Executive summary



Executive summary

With the onset of Covid-19 and the deleterious impact it had on multiple sectors including education, HDFC supported five Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) namely Akanksha Foundation, Avasara Academy, Purkal Youth Development Society (PYDS), Shanti Bhavan and Teach for India (TFI) to ensure they continued their operations and the students continued to learn.

OVERVIEW

Investment and Project Overview	Cumulative project investment of INR 8.16 crore (inclusive of support to 5 implementation partners)			
		Organisation	Project overview	
	1	Akanksha Foundation	Supporting operational costs at two Municipal schools; Technology support	
	2	Avasara Academy	Support to XCell programme involving socio-emotional, college and career counselling	
	3	Purkal Youth Development Society	Sponsorship of students belonging to Grade I, III, and VII; Technology support	
	4	Shanti Bhavan	Scholarship of education costs of students belonging to grade 10 and 12	
	5	Teach for India	Support towards programme cost of Fellows which includes training and other fellowship completion related costs	
Project locations	7 cities across 5 states (Maharashtra: Mumbai and Pune; Uttarakhand: Dehradun; Tamil Nadu: Baliganapalli, Chennai; Karnataka: Bengaluru and Telangana: Hyderabad)			
Project duration		Academic year 2020-	21	

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The main objective of the engagement was to conduct a secondary study with sector focused approach to understand the impact of the CSR initiatives in the ambit of education with focus on remote schooling during the pandemic. This was captured through:

- Secondary data collection from a sample of representative stakeholders and beneficiaries across the Implementing Organisations
- Use of sector specific tools and evaluation framework customization e.g., OECD DAC framework for analysis
- Discussion with client's identified stakeholders to understand their requirements and sampling plan finalized for virtual study
- Obtain relevant data from primary stakeholders through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)/Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Data and document analysis including MIS/Reports submitted by each Implementing Organisation
- Understand the existing baseline data through sample survey and advise as the client undertakes to evaluate progress against the same
- Analysis of data collected and submit the final reports to client for their consideration

Deloitte used a consultative approach incorporating elements of primary and secondary research. The data collection was followed by a phase of analysis and documentation of key observations and findings. The key stakeholders that were mapped for interactions included – Students, Educators/Fellows, Parents, Device beneficiaries, Counsellor/Career Counsellor, Leadership team, Residential staff, Programme Managers, Principal, City Directors, School Management Committee (SMC) members, Volunteers, Alumni and Social Worker. The team **interacted with a total of 239 stakeholders** as part of this exercise.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Below is a summary of Deloitte's observations and findings of the impact assessment undertaken to evaluate the remote schooling projects implemented by five NGOs:

Relevance/need for project:

- 247 million children across India continued to face disruptions in education due to Covid-19.1
- 6 million children in India are currently reported to be out of school.²
- **56.7% children** enrolled in government schools have access to smart phones.³
- 92% children lost at least one ability associated with languages and 82% children lost at least one mathematical ability on an average.⁴
- Parents increasingly faced challenges in addressing the psychosocial needs of their children amidst the pandemic.

Impact created:

5 implementing organisations impacted	50 schools impacted	4448 students impacted 2895 students impacted in Kindergarten to Grade 7 1553 students impacted in Grade 8 and above	182 educators impacted
176 devices distributed, 151 tabs and 25 smart phones	100 first generation learners empowered towards a better future	100% schools aligned to new age technological interventions	100% children and educators provided with psychosocial support through individual/group counselling or check-in calls
	67.8% average attendance noted across 4 partners	100% students enrolled in the academic year 2020 – 2021 appeared for the yearend examinations	

¹ Education: From disruption to recovery, https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

² ibid

³ Annual Status of Education Report, 2021

⁴ The loss of learning for children during the pandemic, https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/field-studies-in-education/loss-of-learning-during-the-pandemic, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

Student performance:

Primary grades -

Learning outcomes achieved in 6 key areas: reading, comprehension, grammar, spoken skills, concept building, problem solving and reasoning

Average score of students >60% (Akanksha Foundation and PYDS)

More than 60% students show at par or improvements in Math and Reading Comprehension (TFI)

Higher grades -

Average score in grade 10th and 12th students - >80% (Shanti Bhawan)

Pivots to the implementation model due to Covid-19:

The pandemic brought pronounced challenges for stakeholders across the education ecosystem. To ensure learning continues with minimal disruption, support provided by HDFC has been able to aid residential facilities, build capacities of educators, provide access to devices, and facilitate career counselling and psychosocial support.

The following themes form the core of the intervention pivots adopted by the partners:

Continuity of learning

The continuity of learning was affected by various factors during the online mode of learning, the main impediments were-



The organisations under study brought in multiple innovations to address this challenge. The first task that all NGOs undertook was **mapping the student whereabouts in the initial months of the lockdown**.

- Device availability and usability was ensured for students and teachers by all partners via fundraising and crowdsourcing. Tablets and cell phones distribution at PYDS and Akanksha Foundation was supported under the HDFC grant. At TFI, devices were loaned to parents after signing student device loan agreement.
- Addressing network availability by providing data packs and favourable network cards.
- Ensuring health and wellness became a major challenge to be addressed, where all partners engaged in extensive outreach through community, partner organisations, and SMC members for helping those in need.
- Shanti Bhavan ensured that all students were in school and continued schooling as pre-pandemic times to **ensure minimal disruption**. Strict control measures were undertaken to curtail the spread of virus via own medical clinics or forging partnerships with local hospitals.
- Offline support provided through **distribution of stationery and reading materials** to students. Avasara Academy mobilized community members as channels to deliver learning material at the student doorstep.
- Counselling parents/caregivers towards facilitating virtual lessons for their wards.

Capacity building, training, and support for educators

Educators were the key stakeholders in making the online mode of learning effective and sustainable. Hence it became pivotal to the success of intervention to capacitate the educators towards increasing and varied demand of the "new normal" in education. The challenges in this regard were –



The rigorous capacity building interventions undertaken were aligned to addressing the challenges and evolving demands of the education sector -

- Lesson plan alignment trainings through peer learning approaches was a key intervention.
- All partners undertook extensive teacher training programmes in aegis of boards of education where the curriculum was aligned.
- Technological training teams, peer training teams, taskforces were setup for ensuring not just the usability of devices but also ensuring innovation and consistency of teaching learning methods. During the study, 80% educators found confidence in using new age educational technology.
- Training to ensure psychological safety in virtual classrooms All partners have capacitated teachers on Socioemotional and Ethical (SEE) curriculum and trauma informed learning.

Innovations in curriculum, content creation and dissemination

With online learning becoming the norm, the educational content had to undergo aligned changes. Some key challenges that emerged due to shift to virtual lesson delivery modes are summarized below –



Hence, certain pivots had to be brought in for addressing these challenges -

- Socio emotional and Ethical learning (SEE) curriculums were formalized.
- Lesson plans revamped to focus on student engagement. Extensive emphasis on retention of existing learning levels rather than advancement into grade appropriate rigor of learning levels.
- Introduction of asynchronous modes of learning during the academic year 2020 2021 after arrangement of devices, internet connection and data serviceability. The educators disseminated content using mini lesson videos, voice notes, and learning packets. Some of the tools that were leveraged are WhatsApp groups, Edmodo, Edpuzzle,

Xrecorder, Lomo, Jolly phonics, YouTube, StoryWeaver, Raz-Kids, Rocket learning app, Matific, Google Forms, Khan Academy, Google Read Aloud, GeoGebra, Quizlet among others.

- Utilisation of synchronous mode of learning, mainly Zoom and Google Meet. Shorter synchronous sessions to optimize lesson delivery and to reduce screen time. PYDS had multiple sessions in the day as options to students, TFI curtailed the session duration. Shanti Bhavan moved its music programme online in association with Broadway for Arts Education.
- Celebration of major national and international events, to ensure engagement of children.
- Mandate of **ice-breaker activities** and frequent check-in with students. This was achieved by including grounding exercises, fun activities like *Hallabol*, trivia, and quiz sessions at PYDS, Akanksha Foundation and TFI. Shanti Bhavan emphasised on physical training through sports or exercises for 60 minutes daily. Tools like Padlet, Peardeck, Mentimeter, Kahoot were leveraged to make learning a fun activity.
- Use of technology platforms, establishment of technological expertise teams Setup at regional levels to partake in capacity building sessions and to ensure usability of devices distributed to students.
- Play way, project based and experiential learning models Play way learning was utilized across grades to reduce monotony of remote learning and to provide children hands-on learning experiences.

With crucial educational milestones being redefined for students, **career counselling** during the pandemic emerged as a major support mechanism at Avasara Academy and Shanti Bhavan to ensure students felt motivated and guided towards their career aspirations. This was ensured through –

Focus on skilling the aspirant students by provision of virtual internships Career counselling programmes like career talks, and workshops with renowned personalities to create awareness on available career options

Provision of summer school programmes for aspirant students Support with finding internship opportunities, and workshops on resume building

Focus on parent engagement level

Due to discontinued classroom setup and extended association at home, the role of parents and caregivers became primary. This came with its own set of challenges –



The NGOs addressed the challenges by -

- Increased frequency of parent teacher meetings ensured increased involvement of parents in school activities.
- Involvement of community workers and partnership with community-based organisations helped the organizations to continue being in touch with the parents even at the peak of the pandemic.
- The **provision of ration and relief support** ensured that parents were reachable throughout the pandemic and were reassured of continued support.
- Shanti Bhavan provided **periodic contact with parents** to children through phone calls and socially distanced meet ups in school premises.

Meeting the need for psychosocial support

The pandemic impacted socio-emotional wellbeing of all age groups. With reduced physical mobility and confinement to indoors, the need for psychosocial support was felt across the target population. Some of the challenges faced by the organisations on this aspect are listed here –



During the study, five emotions were observed in highest frequency and intensity among the students: distress (20%), feelings of being overwhelmed (26%), anxiety (30%), fear (9%) and lack of motivation (15%). The NGOs worked in varied ways to ensure seamless delivery of education while addressing the psychosocial needs of varied stakeholders.

- Grade band wise solutions brought in to address psycho-social needs of various age groups at PYDS, Akanksha Foundation and TFI. At Shanti Bhavan and Avasara Academy, the school counsellors ensured students received support on a need basis.
- Prioritizing mental health over content mastery was achieved by trauma informed learning.
- Parent teacher interactions were increased for better understanding of psychosocial needs of students for parents.
- Increased frequency of **check-in calls** by school representatives helped case by case response to the psychosocial needs.
- Formal counselling services provided to parents and students having specialized counsellors.
- NGOs also **opened interfaces** for educators to communicate their difficulties.
- Partnerships explored with organisations working on addressing mental health concerns.

Addressing learning gaps

The teaching – learning approaches underwent a significant change that affected the learning levels of students leading to learning gaps. This was compounded by the fact that –



The pivots for addressing the learning gaps looked like the following -

- Prioritizing engagement over achievement of grade appropriate learning outcomes.
- Unique approaches to assess levels of engagement were developed. Schools used online portals including Edmodo to capture the engagement levels of students.
- Focus on formative skills for lower grades and life-skills for higher grade students.
- Bridge curriculums in varied forms explored and introduced to address grade appropriate learning gaps.

Tracking mechanisms for attendance, assessment, and retention

Tracking mechanisms for attendance, assessments and retention changed in response to the online mode of teaching – learning. The adaptation to online tracking mechanisms were riddled with following challenges –

Adaptation	f	Ability of students,
teachers towa	s Availability of devices	teachers, and parents
usage of on	with teachers and	to use the platforms
mechanisms	students	and devices

The pivots for addressing the challenges looked like the following -

- Attendance was tracked on **MS-Excel sheets** and **asynchronous submissions were tracked** on instant messaging applications like WhatsApp. Some also moved to in-house developed tools to track the same.
- For Kindergarten to grade IV A combination of synchronous and asynchronous mode of assessment.
- For Grade V and above Video based assessments and asynchronous assessments
- **Revised grade cards** helped track student performance under certain key performance indicators. Emphasis on recording results of diagnostics and a switch to recording grades rather than marks. Avasara Academy recorded anecdotal evidence of the key students' performance instead of grade cards during the initial transition towards online learning.

Recommendations:

- Blended learning model combining facets of online lesson delivery and opportunities for interaction in traditional classrooms can be leveraged.
- Focus on filling learning gaps through **extensive bridge programmes**. For the primary grades, foundational learning has suffered a greater scale where increased emphasis can be laid on building basic understanding of subjects and interpersonal relationships. While the focus can lay upon grade appropriate learning for higher grades.
- Effort can be extended towards bridging the digital divide to ensure education can reach remote locations.
- Added focus on developing formative skills in students, including empathy, self-control, integrity, and grit.
- Emphasis on awareness, creation and training of educators and parents to build safer spaces for students to express themselves completely.
- Trainings can be moulded to attend to regional specificities to enable educators to respond to contextual concerns of parents and students effectively.

Background



Dhanalakshmi

Background

1.1. About HDFC's CSR initiatives

Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited (HDFC) – Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited is an Indian financial services company based in Mumbai, India. It is a major housing finance provider in India that also has a presence in banking, life and general insurance, asset management, venture capital, realty, education, deposits, and education loans.⁵ HDFC's focus on communities is evident from its pan-India initiatives around following key themes⁶ –



H T Parekh Foundation (HTPF) – The H T Parekh Foundation, a section 25 registered charitable institution, is the philanthropic arm of Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC). HTPF's philanthropic activities are aimed at enhancing the quality of life of people from marginalized and vulnerable communities and creating a stronger and

distribution,

and healthcare

skills and other

education

interventions

⁵ HDFC website - <u>https://www.hdfc.com/</u> accessed on 1st December 2021

⁶ Ctrl Alt Reset – The New Together, Social Initiatives 2020 – 2021, HT Parekh Foundation

inclusive society. It has a sustained focus on community development programs that promote equity and dignity and advance opportunities for all.⁷

o Objectives of the engagement

The primary objective of the current engagement was to conduct a remote study with sector focused approach to understand the impact of the CSR initiatives in the ambit of education with focus on remote schooling during the pandemic which was captured through:

- Secondary data collection from a sample of representative stakeholders and beneficiaries across the Implementing Organizations
- Use of sector specific tools and evaluation framework customization e.g., OECD DAC framework for analysis
- Discussion with client's identified stakeholders to understand their requirements and sampling plan finalized for virtual study
- Obtain relevant data from primary stakeholders through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)/Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Data and document analysis including MIS/Reports submitted by each Implementing Organization
- Understand the existing baseline data through sample survey and advise as the client undertakes to evaluate progress against the same
- Analysis of data collected to create draft based on framework and submit the final reports to client for their consideration as they undertake correction to maximize effectiveness and/or impact of the grant





⁷ HT Parekh Foundation website - <u>http://www.htparekhfoundation.com/index.html</u> accessed on 1st December 2021

1.3 Project overview

Akanksha Foundation

Established in 1991, Akanksha Foundation incorporates a unique public-private partnership model and works with municipal government run schools, transforming them into powerful centers of learning.



MoU period SBP Moshi: Ar

SBP Moshi: April 2020 till March 2021; LNMPS: November 2020 till March 2021



Grant support INR 14,708,514/-

Project outreach Students supported: 587 Total students who received device support (tablets): 120 Teachers supported: 29



The grant support towards operational expenses of two municipal schools - Laxmi Nagar Mumbai Public School (LNMPS) and Savitribai Phule English Medium School, Moshi (SBP). Additional funding support to KC Thackeray Vidya Niketan, English Medium School, Pune towards provision of devices.

The focus of the project was on progressive pedagogical techniques, usage and leveraging of existing resources and creating pathways for new resources, extensive teacher connects through peer learning and capacity building, extensive parental engagement, and an in-depth review process for schools to ensure accountability and sustainability.

Drawing from their primary model of extensive parental and community engagement; the Foundation leveraged multiple digital platforms to deliver synchronous and asynchronous lessons.

Avasara Academy

Founded in 2015, Avasara Academy, also known as Avasara Leadership Institute, is a residential secondary school that centers on girls between the ages of 11-18 years belonging to low-income families from in and around Pune. It focuses on providing holistic educational experience to its students who can hone their academic and leadership skills and equip themselves with skills and abilities that guide them towards becoming successful leaders in their community.





Grant support

MoU period



Project outreach Students supported: 378

Academic year 2020-2021

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Overview of support



AKANKSHA

The grant support goes on to provide for the XCELL program which includes: **Socio-emotional counselling:** Individual counselling sessions for students based on identified need

College and Career Counselling Program: Grade 9th and 10th: Introducing students to higher education and career options through workshops and seminar and conduct psychometric and aptitude assessments.

Guiding students through subject selection, organizing exposure to college and careers and providing specialized coaching for board exams.

During the pandemic, Avasara worked hands-on towards mapping the availability of devices with students spread across locations. Asynchronized learning was initiated with the help of Edmodo, an online classroom app, to meet the needs of students and ensure that all children had access to resources to continue learning. The school authorities printed packages and dispatched learning resources through local buses to certain locations.

Purkal Youth Development Society

Founded in 2003 as an after-school education program, Purkal Youth Development Society (PYDS) now imparts K-12 CBSE curriculum to students from remote villages of Uttarakhand. PYDS-run school has a residential facility and maintains a standard count of 25 enrollments across the K-12 sections. There is multi-stage selection process to identify the most deserving student.



MoU period

Academic year 2020-2021



Grant support INR 6,007,000/-

Project outreach

Students supported: 74

Total students who received devices (tablets and cell phones): 56

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verview of support

The grant support was towards sponsorship of students in grades I, III and VII(B) of the residential school. The activities for each grade are distinctively designed to ensure learning levels. The focus is on 21st century skills, cross-curricular connect and learning-by-doing.

- Sponsorship for the batch of Grade I, III and VII B. The support covered cost of education, residential facilities, food, uniform, mentorship, career counselling and co-curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Capacity building of teachers on innovative learning methods by bringing together cognitive, physical, emotional, and spiritual realms of learning
- Device availability and internet data recharge for students who faced challenges in accessing virtual lessons

With the onset of the pandemic, the residential facilities at the school had to be shut down. Curriculum realignment and teacher capacity building led to an adaptation to online mode of teaching where digital platforms were used to deliver everyday sessions in batches.

Shanti Bhavan

Founded in 1997, Shanti Bhavan is a residential school that works towards providing high quality education to the children from socioeconomically backward communities. The school aims at providing a total of 17 to 19 years of intense intervention and education to the children from pre-kindergarten through 12th while also extending support to them through their college years.



MoU period

Academic year 2020-21



Grant support INR 35,36,000/-

Project outreach

Students supported: 26



Sponsorship to 26 school students belonging to Grade 10 and 12.

Being a residential school, Shanti Bhavan went into an internal lockdown. Throughout this period, strict measures were taken to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. Owing to the impact of the pandemic and ensuing social isolation could have on the student's mental health, the school also partnered with Northwell Counselling Services and referred students on a need basis.

During the pandemic, Shanti Bhavan partnered with BAE - Broadway for Arts Education, a nonprofit organization providing students access to arts and music classes, to ensure students were able to hone their skills virtually. Students were also provided access to connect with their parents over call, and the parents also had the opportunity to visit them in a physically distanced manner maintaining Covid protocols.

Teach for India

Founded in 2009 Teach for India is conceived to be a movement of leaders in education for serving good quality education to the last mile learners

19 March 2020 - 31st March 2021



Grant support INR 47,300,000/-

MoU period

Project outreach

Fellows supported: 97 across 3 locations - Bengaluru, Chennai, Hvderabad



Overview of support

TEACHFORINDIA

children's project

Support towards program cost of fellows which includes providing training and other necessary support to complete the fellowship. Each fellow is responsible for a class for 2 years and are responsible for teaching primary or secondary classes to bring the students to grade level competencies.

During the pandemic, Teach for India created a blended learning task force that strategized the pivot towards online learning. The first roadblock during this process was access to devices that could facilitate online learning. Hence, efforts were vested towards raising funds and distributing devices. With respect to fellows, the 5-week residential training became an 8-week online training taking in account issues around screen time and attention span. Steps were undertaken towards involving parents to ensure student engagement.

Approach and methodology



Approach and methodology

2.1 Approach

Our approach to this project was conceived in line with the objectives and scope of work as well as our prior experience in similar engagements. Our approach was consultative and grounded, based on interactions with key stakeholders, aided by focused primary and secondary study and complemented by domain knowledge.

2.2 Methodology

An impact assessment study of a development project is an analysis of the change, positive and negative, brought about in the lives of intended or unintended beneficiary either directly or indirectly due to the implementation of the said project.⁸ The sectoral assessment was conducted with keeping the objectives of studying the impact of certain interventions which form a trend in the sector over a period and manage to create perceivable changes in the rhythmic functioning of the sector. The current study solely focuses on the impact of the remote schooling programs and aligned innovations brought in by the implementing partners for ensuring continuity in education for the target group while attempting to innovate in the approach towards pedagogy. Some of the indicators that were evaluated through the project included following:

Indicators				
Inputs	Processes	Outputs	Outcome and impact	
 Partnership with government authorities and implementing partners (PPP) model (s) Infrastructure, equipment, and technology Human resources Curriculum 	 Strategy and execution of virtual learning sessions Capacity building and ongoing learning support to students Teacher/Fellow training and capacity enhancement Monitoring and reporting of learning outcomes, student attendance and engagement Grade level assessments 	 Student enrolment Student attendance Student retention Device distribution 	 Access to online learning sessions Use of innovative pedagogical practices Student engagement levels Behavioral changes (parents and students) Social Inclusion Social and emotional learning Safety and security during virtual sessions Parent involvement and feedback 	

⁸ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Evaluation Manual, Feb 2015.

2.3 Stakeholder mapping and sampling plan

The study team conducted interactions with primary and secondary stakeholders to understand the impact of the initiatives and the changes from regular learning models to an online mode of training. The assessment employed a purposive sampling method for selection of primary and secondary stakeholders. The focus was on capturing stakeholder feedback and perspectives, understanding processes and document validation of output and outcomes tracked.

Stakeholder Group	Akanksha Foundation	Avasara Academy	Purkal	Teach for India	Shanti Bhavan	Total
Students	37	29	10	9	5	95
Educators/Fellows	7	5	8	13	9	42
Parents	10	6	8	3	3	30
Device beneficiaries	8		5			13
Counsellor/Career Counsellor	4	6			1	11
Leadership	2		1	3		6
Residential staff			2			2
Program Managers	3	1	1	7	1	13
Principal/Head of academy		1	1	2	1	5
Headmasters/School leader	5		1	2		8
City Directors	2			2		2
SMC members	6					6
Volunteer					1	1
Alumni					1	1
Social worker	2	1	1			4

2.4 Study design

The assessment was carried out in following stages -



Process

The study incorporated digital outreach process through virtual meetings. To meet the needs of the stakeholders who could not access video calls, telephonic calls were also undertaken.

Desk review and secondary study

The study team had an introductory call with select members of each NGO partner to understand the nuances of the program. As a next step, the team undertook a deep dive of the available documents to understand the project at length. Available data sources were identified, utilized, and reviewed to explore specificities during the primary process of data collection.

Below is a list of documents that were reviewed as part of the assessment (non-exhaustive) -

- MoU and Project proposal
- Project level MIS of primary beneficiaries
- Student enrolment register
- Attendance tracking sheet (students and facilitators)
- Student assignment submissions/evaluation tracker
- Briefs/ reports on academic workshops conducted for students and educators during the review period
- Lesson/work plans for educators, counsellors, and social workers
- Meeting minutes for School Management Committee (SMC) meetings

- Diet plans and nutritional outcome trackers (PYDS)
- Class timetable
- Baseline and end line assessments for learning outcomes for students and Fellows
- Device circulation and maintenance records
- Socio emotional wellbeing calls tracker and training reports
- Educational platform training for educators' reports
- Dropout registers
- SMC Committee member's list
- Student retention tracking process and results
- Asynchronous learning sessions (Links to sample lecture recordings)
- Photographs (wherever possible)

Validating outcomes

The study team undertook document validation and verification of the sample basis the following (non-exhaustive):

- Attendance tracking sheet (Virtual sessions)
- Retention rate (students and educators)
- Learning outcomes Baseline and end line grade level results
- Fellow assessment records
- Nutritional Indicators Timeseries analysis pre, during and post resumption of school (wherever applicable)
- Attendance rate of students across co-curricular activities
- Availability and usability of devices across students and educators

Stakeholder consultation tools

The assessment was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods. Virtual interactions with identified stakeholders accounted for the primary study component and were conducted by a team of two to three members of the engagement team in the month of January 2022. The dates and meeting slots were finalized in consultation with the NGO partners. The qualitative tools included focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and case study.

• Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A focus group discussion is a qualitative study method used for collecting data in which a homogeneous group of individuals are facilitated by a moderator towards exploring and unearthing a given topic in-depth.⁹ The method helps in understanding the thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes of the group on several concerns in the interaction that allows the studier to delve deeper into both the individual experience along with the collective narrative of the group. The FGD utilizes a semi-structured set of questions that guide the discussion where the moderator encourages equal participation to the discussion.

• Key Informant Interviews (KII)

A key Informant interview is a tool where the researcher can closely interact with the critical members or "key informants" of the project implementation team. The Key informant interview utilizes semi-structured guidelines to gather insights and observations made by the informant on a wide range of concerns related to the project implementation. These observations are then validated across different stakeholders.¹⁰

⁹ Eeuwijk and Angehrn (2017). How to...conduct a focus group discussion (FGD). Methodological Manual.

¹⁰ MN Marshall (1996). The key informant interview technique.

• Case study

Case study method is an in-depth study of a particular situation or a subject or refer to study of a small group of persons or events regarding analyzing the same in depth. It is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of study into one easily researchable topic. The case studies look intensely at an individual or small participant pool and draws conclusions only about that participant or group and only in that specific context.¹¹ The tool leveraged to ensure the validation of certain outcomes through in-depth case analyses of beneficiaries.



¹¹ (egyankosh.ac.in)



Hey Kids. Meet tree!!!! He's gonna tell that we need to know about tre and plants. Remeber him, we're gonna keep meeting him in our lesson The Covid-19 pandemic induced crisis in education has been described as a "mounting crisis within a crisis". ¹² The pandemic exposed the countries world over, to confront their lack of contingency plans in each sector. The generation in making i.e., the generation of learners worldwide was severely impacted due to lack of mobility, varying levels of digital outreach and usage, and scarcity of alternative educational delivery infrastructure.

The Indian Context

Around 888 million children across the globe¹³ faced disruptions in education since the initiation of the worldwide lockdowns which includes 247 million children in India.¹⁴ The challenge was pronounced in the Indian context, given the fact that the number of children already out of school is 6 million children.¹⁵ Hence the response to the pandemic induced crisis had to come sooner and had to level up to ensure that the number of children out of school did not rise further. In response to the magnanimity of the crisis the sector stepped forward with innovations, grants and shared their expertise with ecosystem partners, while governments came out with various initiatives including widening the scope of the Diksha portal, DTH based learning, and online trainings to educators on usage of digital curriculum platforms.

The great digital divide

The great Indian digital divide was visible in two aspects: 1) due to ownership of devices, 2) due to network unavailability. The ownership of mobile phones in the academic year 2020-21 showed the following trend -

Table - % of enrolled child	ren who have at least	one smart phone	available at home ¹⁶
rable // or childhea child	ien who have at least	. one sindit phone	available at nonic

School Type	Percentage of enrolled children with smart phones (Academic year 2020 - 2021)
Government	56.4%
Private	74.2%
Govt. & Pvt.	61.8%

As a response to the challenge, many initiatives were introduced to address these large gaps in ownership of smartphones/devices. The ownership gaps were bridged to a greater extent in the academic year 2021-2022. For children enrolled in government schools the ownership of devices grew by 7.3% while for those enrolled in private schools, ownership grew by 5.4%. Overall, digital ownership increased by 5.8%.¹⁷ However, it was observed that even though ownership increased, the children who had relocated to some of the most remote locations, away from the urban and serviceable townships faced considerable irregularities in network accessibility.

17 ibid

¹² (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank, 2021),

https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/668741627975171644/pdf/Remote-Learning-During-the-Global-School-Lockdown-Multi-Country-Lessons.pdf (accessed on 03/03/2022)

¹³ Education: From disruption to recovery, <u>https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse,</u> (accessed on 03/03/2022) ¹⁴ ibid

¹⁵ ibid

¹⁶ ASER 2021, <u>http://img.asercentre.org/docs/aser2021forweb.pdf</u>, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

Widening learning gaps

The educational sector suffered on achievement and retention of learning outcomes which led to learning loss further widening learning gaps. Multiple studies have taken place across the world estimating the enormity of learning losses and the under achievement of learning outcomes. For instance, a study conducted in the Netherlands notes that within a period of 8 weeks, there has been a loss of 3 percentile points which is equivalent to one fifth of a school year.¹⁸ Additionally, a recent research undertaken by the Azim Premji University which gauged the loss of learning during school closures amidst the pandemic revealed that as compared to previous academic year:¹⁹

 $\boxed{ \cdots }$

92% children lost at least one ability associated with languages on an average

82% children lost at least one specific mathematical ability on an average

To address the challenges associated with learning outcomes and learning gaps, strategies were devised at a policy and institutional level including giving teachers increased amount of time to work around bridging these gaps by using innovation and remedial initiatives.

The learning momentum

The abrupt discontinuation in learning due to school closure led to major shifts in delivery of lessons. Some of the innovations that the sector adopted are:



- Shaale Baharchi Shaala by Government of Maharashtra which first introduced a topic through a radio program and followed-up with SMS/ WhatsApp messages linked to the session to registered parents' phones.²⁰
- A switch from low tech modalities to high tech modalities was arrived with increasing capacities of the teachers and comfort levels of the students with the technology. The high-tech modalities looked like:

²⁰ Guidance on distance learning modalities,

¹⁸ Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, <u>https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2022376118</u>, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

¹⁹ The loss of learning for children during the pandemic, <u>https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/field-studies-in-education/loss-of-learning-during-the-pandemic</u>, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/7996/file/Guidance%20Continuity%20of%20Learning%20COVID-1, (accessed on 03/03/2022)



Distance learning programs: Teachers could select and promote existing programs on the online platforms.



Virtual classrooms aligned to Ed-tech platforms: Ed-tech platforms became widely known during the pandemic.



Collaboration with the international educational facilities and platforms.

Platforms like DIKSHA (Digital infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) introduced by the Ministry of Education digitized school textbooks and created video lectures around the central curriculums. It was then recognized that to ensure reinforcement of learning levels, a standardized curriculum was required. Initiatives including the National Repository of Open Education Resources (NROER) (a vast repository of educational resources); National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT's) e-Pathshala (audio, video, and e-books for school children); SWAYAM-Prabha (dedicated free DTH channels for e-education for school children in various languages); and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) proved beneficial.²¹

Rising need for psychosocial support

During the pandemic, the exposure of children to societal exchanges and diversified life experiences was minimized which affected their mental health and wellbeing. For instance, one study found that till March 2021, more than 330 million youngsters were confined to their homes for more than 9 months.²²

Furthermore, parents increasingly faced tremendous challenges calming their children's anxieties and fears arising due to uncertainty amidst the pandemic while also dealing with personal, occupational, and emotional challenges. Nearly half of the secondary school students and one-third of parents of elementary school students have reported that their child's mental and socio-emotional health has been poor or very poor since May 2020.²³

Children often questioned their parents about re-opening of schools, and opportunities to play with peers, which led to increased levels of stress in parents.²⁴ Considering the challenges parents faced, psychosocial support for parents was integral during the pandemic.

Need for innovations in curriculum, content creation and dissemination

During the pandemic, curriculums were revamped to support the students' learning needs and grade appropriate learning outcomes by reducing the rigor of the curriculums while maintaining continuity of learning. It was observed that **all major curriculum boards in India reworked their curriculums and omitted certain lessons for the academic year 2020-21.**²⁵ For instance, the assessments and exam schedules were reworked by the curriculum boards and offline examinations were not conducted for majority of the grades during the academic year 2020-21.²⁶ Hence, the curriculums' adjustment led to effective usage of time that could be utilized for lesson delivery during the pandemic ensuring the content delivered was competent with the channels of communication that it was delivered through. The curriculum delivery was also revamped to match the needs of the pandemic. The educators had to adapt to the online mode of teaching. Ed-tech platforms provided extensive customized solutions to children of all age groups. These platforms saw a tremendous increase in the number of enrollments.²⁷ The use of teleconferencing platforms for student engagement also helped in smooth lesson delivery.

²¹ ORF Issue Brief, Issue No. 484, August 2021, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

²²The impact of COVID-19 on children's mental health, UNICEF (accessed on 03/03/2022)

²³ ORF Issue Brief, Issue No. 484, August 2021, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

²⁴ The impact of COVID-19 on children's mental health, UNICEF (accessed on 03/03/2022)

²⁵ COVID-19: CBSE To Be Ready With Rationalized Curriculum Within A Month, NDTV (accessed on 03/03/2022)

²⁶ How Covid-19 has changed the way we look at exams, India Today, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

²⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever. This is how, <u>https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-education-global-covid19-online-digital-learning/</u>, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

Recognizing 'home' as a learning space

During the lockdown, children of all age groups were restricted to their surroundings and the company of their parents and caregivers. Hence, the harmony of a household became a catalyst for a child's education. To aid the harmony and help ease stress arising from the continuous and extended association between family members, parental support mechanisms were devised by educational institutions. In rural spaces community leaders like the Anganwadi worker took up the task of counselling parents while also monitoring children's educational engagement. Online surveys conducted around the world on parental engagement reflected that during the pandemic, 67% parents reported encouraging their children to read books and participate in online classes, 46% reported reading with their children and 19% of the respondents asked someone else to teach their children.²⁸

Need for continuous capacity building of educators

As traditional brick-and-mortar service delivery models were disrupted across sectors, the pandemic presented a critical reminder of the impending need to weave technology into education.²⁹ Significant changes took place and teachers had to be exclusively trained. For example, in Himachal Pradesh, the HarGhar Pathshala initiative was introduced to provide digital education for children with special needs; Uttarakhand's community radio promoted early reading through bite-sized broadcasts; Madhya Pradesh's DigiLEP³⁰ brought the concept of teachers as Eduentertainers. Furthermore, curriculum providers like CBSE and ICSE have also attempted to improve the skillset of the educators to enable them in effectively delivering new age lessons.

Change of approach around tracking and assessments

The assessment system underwent a paradigmatic shift during Covid-19. As curriculum boards reduced the rigor of the curriculums and physical examinations were difficult to conduct, major examinations were held online, at the school level. The standard 10th board examinations, one of the most important examinations in the Indian schooling system were cancelled. Students were awarded marks based on the marks they received in Grade 9. For Grade 11th submissions were received through the interfaces maintained by schools. While for lower grades, the engagement levels were given priority over assessments.³¹

 ²⁸ How parents are supporting their children's learning during the covid-19 pandemic in nigeria, <u>www.ukfiet.org</u>, (accessed on – 03/03/2022)
 ²⁹ The future of learning in India is ed-tech, indianexpress.com, (accessed on 03/03/2022)

³⁰ ibid

³¹ Are students still learning during COVID-19? Formative assessment can provide the answer, blog.worldbank.org, (accessed on – 03/03/2022)

Impact assessment findings



COVERAGE SNAPSHOT





Schools impacted 50 schools



Students impacted

4448* students



2,895 students impacted in pre-primary and primary grades (Kindergarten – Grade 7)

1,553 students impacted in secondary, higher secondary grades (Grade 8 and above)



Educators impacted

182 educators

(97 Teach for India fellows took up leadership roles)



176 devices distributed: 151 tabs, 25 cell phones

*Includes device beneficiaries, approximations to arrive at grade-wise breakup.

IMPACT AND KEY FINDINGS

Attendance

67.8% average attendance recorded across grades (synchronous learning)

Students appeared for year-end examinations

100% reported by 4 organizations

Student performance

Learning outcomes achieved in the primary grades (foundational learning interventions) *



Learning outcomes achieved on: Reading, Comprehension, Grammar, Concept Building, Problem Solving and Reasoning

Primary grade:

- Average score of students >60% (Akanksha Foundation and PYDS)
- More than 60% students show at par or improvements in Math and Reading Comprehension (TFI)
- + × ÷
- Higher grade:
- Average score in grade 10th and 12th students >80%

"Our teachers make learning enjoyable; they teach us in a very different manner. They also give us opportunities to present in front of other students through which we can connect with our friends. Apart from studying they taught us many new things, teacher also arranged activities like experiments for us through which we could easily understand topics. He also encouraged us to participate in competitions."

- Student

*Derived through documents shared by the implementing organizations.

Impact assessment findings

The pandemic brought pronounced challenges for stakeholders across the education ecosystem. To meet the emerging needs, HDFC supported five organizations, pioneers in the education space - Akanksha Foundation, Avasara Academy, Purkal Youth Development Society, Teach for India, and Shanti Bhavan to ensure students continue learning with minimal disruption. The support provided by HDFC was able to aid residential facilities, build capacities of educators, provide access to devices, and facilitate career counseling and psychosocial support, among others. The following themes form the core of the intervention pivots implemented by the partners:

Impact themes -



• Continuity of learning

With the shift of physical learning space to online platforms, the focus of implementing organizations moved towards ensuring continuity of learning in the surroundings that the students were confined to. For major part of the academic year 2020-21 (the months of April to early September 2021), the focus was on **mapping the children's whereabouts, ensuring device availability, and stable internet connectivity**.

ଷ୍ଟ୍ର ବ୍ୟୁତ୍ତି କ	Addressing the challenge of • network availability •	Internet connectivity was intermittent for students migrating to their native villages. Despite initiation of asynchronous mode of learning, students were unable to engage with the learning material posted for them on various platforms. To tackle this, the partner organizations made provisions for favorable network SIM cards and data pack recharges.
	Ensuring availability of devices •	The target beneficiaries, majorly coming from resource- constrained families had a difficult time managing Covid-19 related expenses. The expense for providing children access to online resources added to the financial stress. Households with multiple children and limited devices led to conflicts. In other scenarios, children were bereft of devices when parents went out for work. All organizations worked on this aspect through fundraising and crowdsourcing. Tablets and cell phones distribution at PYDS and Akanksha Foundation was supported under the HDFC grant. At TFI, devices were loaned to parents after signing student device loan agreement. Avasara Academy made provisions for devices by raising funds from various donors.
	Tackling issues pertaining to health and family responsibilities•••	 Students tested positive for Covid-19 or had family members who needed support that impacted the overall time spent on learning. The attention of students was often divided between household and caretaking responsibilities. Ensuring health and wellness became a major challenge to be addressed, where all partners engaged in extensive outreach through community members, partner organizations, and SMC members for helping those in need.
	Addressing the emerging social • and cultural biases	Gender-based discrimination was a factor affecting the continuance of education. The educators noted that on multiple occasions parents were apprehensive to provide devices to the girl child. Some parents also started contemplating about marriage of their girlchild amidst the pandemic. It was thus realized by all organizations, especially the ones catering to higher grades that counselling parents/caregivers towards facilitating virtual lessons for their wards was critical.

"Our family had to shift to our native place in Uttar Pradesh because our small business here at Pune was shut down due to the pandemic. At this point, my son had also lost his job at a nearby company. My daughter had to go to the nearby farm to get access to internet for her online classes or to complete schoolwork. It was very stressful and tiring for her. Moreover, because none of the elders could accompany her, sometimes she was not able to attend classes. It led to some loss in her academics which upset her".

- Parent (Daughter in Grade 10 at Avasara Academy)



"Everything is going great. Teach for India is trying to match the school model as much as possible. However initially I did have trouble. I have three children, so the timing of their classes always clashed. My husband takes the phone when he goes for work, so the younger daughters missed their classes".

- Parent (TFI)

Educators' experiences – comparison

Pre-pandemic	During the pandemic
 86% educators mentioned that they preferred a physical classroom setup 100% educators said that they were highly convinced about their judgement of students' understanding of lessons 60% educators said that they were intermittently engaged in Zoom/ Google meet for personal reasons purposes but not for delivering lessons 100% educators said that they were able to engage all students during the classroom sessions in the physical classroom setup 	 Educators mentioned that it took some time to acclimatize to the online mode of lesson delivery and ensure extent of students' engagement 46% educators mentioned that they were satisfied while teaching in an online classroom 54% educators said that they were unsure about their understanding of students' grasp on lessons

Children's experiences

Durir	ng the pandemic
•	95% students said that they had excellent internet connectivity at their urban place of residence
_	240/ students who estimated to their metion along sum stimulated at all second still interest on a students

 34% students who migrated to their native places experienced challenges with internet or network connectivity

Shanti Bhavan – schooling as usual

As usual, the month of April beckoned the onset of the summer vacation at Shanti Bhavan, a residential school in Tamil Nadu. However, the year 2020 brought in unique challenges owing to the global pandemic and rise in the number of cases in India. At the onset of the pandemic, Shanti Bhavan was determined to ensure the safety of all students and staff while minimizing the disruption to their education. Hence, they decided to retain all students on campus through the summer and holiday breaks. Although, students were unable to meet their parents during the summer breaks – which was usually the case in the earlier years, through this step, Shanti Bhavan was able to greatly minimize the exposure to the virus and permitted students to continue studying without any kind of interruption. Not only students, the teachers and staff also remained on campus to take care of children and support them in their academic efforts and cocurricular activities. The measures taken by Shanti Bhavan proved to be beneficial as they were not only able to continue teaching students just like the prepandemic times, but they have also had no Covid-19 case reported on their campus till date.

A family that lives together learns together

Sayali, a teacher from **Akanksha foundation's** Pune based Savitribai Phule School, Moshi mentioned how the physical setup is very different from the online mode: "the student comes to school, we teach him/her, there are certain activities we undertake to assess him/ her, there are regular PTMs where parents visit school, and the engagement stops there. During the pandemic the task was not only to engage the students but, in some ways, involve the entire household, the parents, the siblings, the caretakers. From making them understand about the required surroundings that the child needs for studies, helping them maintain a routine, adjust timings so that the child can attend the classes and the household chores go about smoothly around him, so that even with clashing class timings there's no friction between siblings. As a result, we formed personal and stronger bonds with each family". Sayali mentioned that being a teacher of Marathi, a language which requires extensive work on comprehension, the writing skills has suffered during the pandemic. However, the importance of learning has taken a central place all throughout with the educators being engaged with students' surroundings for ensuring seamless learning.

Capacity building, training, and support for educators

Capacity building programs played a critical role towards meeting the evolving demands of the sector. The programs at the five implementing organizations were focused on following aspects:

$\overset{\circ}{\sim}$	Training teachers for planning of	- Capacity building conducted by Akanksha Foundation had
$\overline{\nabla}$	classroom activities	components like - Compassion, Resiliency Zones, Help
Π		Now Strategies, Mindful Listening, Grounding,
		Resourcing, Gratitude, and a Sharing Circle. These
		sessions not only empowered the teachers in delivering
		the expected curriculums but also helped them cope with
		the pressures of working from home and identifying

		-	patterns at a personal level. At PYDS, leveraging Bloom's taxonomy helped teachers create defined strategies for achieving the desired learning outcomes. Learning by doing method of teaching was tweaked in the online set up by assigning small tasks and having them aligned to understanding levels. This approach helped educators achieve resourcefulness among kids in the primary grades and boosted their creative thinking. The duration of usual capacity building sessions was increased to ensure fellows felt confident to meet the demands of virtual teaching experience. For instance, at Teach for India, instead of the 5-week summer institute, an 8-week online training was facilitated
	Technological training for educators	•	Capacity building exclusively aided educators' transition towards effective online lesson delivery. The organizations undertook pivots for teachers to address the grade appropriate learning needs of the students.
Ô	Training on ensuring psychological safety in virtual classrooms	•	Educators were trained in the Socio-emotional and Ethical (SEE) learning curriculums and sessions were aligned to the classroom needs.
Line of the second s	Deployment of special teams to train educators	•	Exclusive teams called taskforces were formed for capacity building as well as to address concerns regarding the socio-emotional learning curriculum. TFI partnered with an organization to address the socio-emotional wellbeing needs of students. Akanksha Foundation developed a SEE task force to train teachers on how socio-emotional wellbeing of children can be prioritized.

"Initially, when the sessions were initiated for us, we could not gauge the effectiveness it would have in an online set up. However, as we started employing these practices in the classrooms and even in our personal spaces, we realized that these practices were helping us form deeper relationships not just with the students but also with their families." - Teacher, Akanksha Foundation

Building a safer classroom for girls

Vasishta, a fellow at Teach for India has been teaching students from a community that has witnessed multiple cases of child sexual abuse, child marriage and gender-based discrimination. Owing to the extant ecosystem of the community he teaches in, he notices how the prevailing conditions impact the morale, enthusiasm, performance, and engagement of students in class, especially girls. Noticing the inquisitive nature of his students, Vasishta has worked towards increasing their confidence and motivation to attend classes and fulfill their aspirations. He ensures daily conversations are held with students around building their confidence and career aspirations. He has also taken initiative to sensitize the boys against stereotypes and bias against women and girls. Through these activities, Vasishta has seen a visible difference in the behavior and attitude of the students. He has noticed that the students are able to voice their opinions and have developed a problem-solving mindset. During the pandemic, an incident that he found challenging was that of one of his students getting married. It was then that the students became vocal about the issue to the point that they were able to stop the marriage from happening. Apart from the courage and resilience he has noticed in his students, Vasishta has also observed that his students are working actively towards fulfilling their career aspirations in the STEM fields. Although Vasishta believes the landscape is challenging, he is sure that the changes observed, are a beacon of hope.

Bloom's taxonomy in remote learning

Shalini Negi, a teacher for Mathematics at PYDS talked about the importance of implementing the blooms' taxonomy in online learning; a concept she learnt in the capacity building sessions held during the academic year 2020-21. Shalini mentioned that the cognitive domain of learning must be improved in any learning setup to ensure children do not become rote learners and can use learning to understand and apply concepts as and when required. She also stated that in the online setup, ensuring concept applicability became a challenge, however, the blooms' taxonomy approach helped her frame better lesson plans and deliver lessons as per the skills and requirements of the students. She also mentioned that the blooms' taxonomy approach helped her build the introduction of the lessons to holistically address the requirements of the learning sessions at the beginning of the classes. She mentioned that the approach aided in dividing the tasks among students and place more open-ended question through use of online polls, surveys, worksheets, and google forms.

Innovations in curriculum, content creation, and

dissemination

Driven by the needs of the extensive usage of online mode of learning and shift towards leaner centric approaches, multiple pivots were adopted by the implementing partners.

Usage of tech platforms	•	Technology became an integral part of lesson delivery. It was observed that 100% educators laid emphasis on the need to be acquainted with the use of varied platforms.
		acquainteu with the use of varied platforms.

• Technological expertise teams were set up by the schools at regional levels, i.e., city and central level to partake in

		 capacity building sessions and to ensure usability of devices distributed to students. The technological team worked in unison with social workers to train them to address the queries/doubts that students/parents using the devices may have. The team took a central role in developing worksheets and asynchronous tools for engaging students during the initial phase of remote learning set up.
	Engagement through asynchronous lessons	 The pivot towards asynchronous learning took place through deployment of platforms like WhatsApp groups, Edmodo, Edpuzzle, Xrecorder, Lomo, Jolly phonics, YouTube, StoryWeaver, Raz-Kids, Rocket learning app, Matific, Google Forms, Khan Academy, Google Read Aloud, GeoGebra, Quizlet and in some cases in-house platforms developed for student engagement. This mode was leveraged for the primary grades for larger part of the academic year. The shift to asynchronous mode was made gradually after arrangement of devices, internet connection and data serviceability for the higher grades.
	Engagement through synchronous lessons	 Classes conducted through video conferencing was preferred by all the organizations who could not provide students with residential facilities. Zoom and Google classrooms were extensively used to hold classes to. Teachers used features like break out rooms, white boards for group activities and student discussions. The educators also leveraged platforms including Edmodo, Google forms, Padlet and live worksheets to raise the engagement levels during live classes. These platforms aided teachers in diversifying the learning experiences for students and added to enhancing analytical skills of the students.
A.	Play way, project based and experiential learning	 Play way learning was utilized across grades to reduce monotony of remote learning and to provide hands-on learning experiences. Younger grades were exclusively involved in play-based learning, and emphasis was laid on building foundational literacy and numeracy. Focus was on helping children build a rapport with their peer group. For higher grades, play based learning and experiential learning was combined to provide practical experience.

		• Project based learning, was utilized to engage students in tasks aligned to the lessons being taught. This helped children establish a connect with the topics they learned.
✓ </th <th>Revamping lesson plans</th> <th> Lesson plan revamping played a major role in planning the pedagogical approaches with inclusion of tools. Time allocated for classroom activities beyond lesson delivery. </th>	Revamping lesson plans	 Lesson plan revamping played a major role in planning the pedagogical approaches with inclusion of tools. Time allocated for classroom activities beyond lesson delivery.
<u></u>	Formalization of socio-emotional learning curriculums	 The Socio-emotional and Ethical (SEE) learning curriculum developed by the Emory University was brought in as an addition to the already existing structure of socio-emotional wellbeing program at the Akanksha Foundation. TFI introduced the trauma informed learning instruction for their fellows which focused on the practices that could ensure virtual classrooms remain safe spaces. The existing team of clinical psychologists at Akanksha Foundation worked towards developing structures to provide training in trauma informed teaching methods to the educators.
	Icebreaker and check-in calls	 Check-in calls were introduced and initiated by the teachers, social workers, and counsellors. Celebration of major national and international events, to ensure engagement of children in various fun group activities. The organizations achieved this by including grounding exercises, fun activities like Hallabol, trivia, and quiz sessions at PYDS, Akanksha Foundation and TFI. Shanti Bhavan emphasized on physical training through sports or exercises for 60 minutes daily. Tools like Padlet, Peardeck, Mentimeter were leveraged to make learning a fun activity. Avasara Academy utilized weekly check-in calls to understand student wellbeing. Increased engagement level also led to better partnership between educational institutions and caregivers. The role of parents in education as partners was recognized.
	Duration of classes	• The duration of classes was shortened, and multiple classes were held in a day to maintain high levels of student engagement.

Career counselling and enrichment activities: Some crucial educational milestones were redefined for students. The choice of graduate courses after high schooling was impacted due to the pandemic. Hence, career counselling during the pandemic emerged as a major support mechanism to ensure students felt supported and guided towards their career aspirations. The following key observations were made during the interactions:

	Changed perception of reliability	 Due to calculat receive reliabilit 	o discontinuation of physical examinations and cion of grade 10/12 scores based on average scores d in grade 9/11, the perceptions around the ty of scores changed.
	Focus on providing children unique skillset to meet career aspirations	 Since the import the need them m Greater (a) N internat university interest online experts interact and ski 	The conventional metrics of grades was no longer and ant metric for students, career counsellors found and to provide students with a unique skillset to help theet their career aspirations. The attention was laid on skilling the children through d'irtual internship opportunities, including tional, (b) Virtual summer school opportunities at ities, (c) Short term skilling courses aligned to the t areas. It was noted that schools leveraged the mode of learning and teaching to reach industry and professional trainers for organizing tions and training sessions leading to varied learning ling experiences for students.
TAT.	Increased career options	• The ex hence the holistic and we fields talent,	panse of available career options increased and the interests of the aspirants were being explored ally. Shanti Bhavan conducted multiple career talks orkshops with renowned personalities in different on topics including building curiosity, nurturing and steps to success.
	"We do not miss school becau We did many activities like exp	bhaiya (Fello riments. He a	w) conducted lessons just like physical classes. Iso encouraged us to participate in quizzes".

- Teach for India Student

"The school has handled the pandemic really well. Initially I was a little worried about my daughter's studies, since the school had communicated to us that they will not be holding the exams for Grade 12 and will be adding an additional grade, grade 13, for the children to help them cope with the rigor of the curriculum and to score better. But, when I saw my daughter's concerns about her studies vanish and saw her engaged in extra curriculars also, I was relieved and assured about the school's decision".

- Father of a child currently in grade 13 at Avasara Academy

Broadway for Arts Education (BAE) goes online at Shanti Bhavan

Students at Shanti Bhavan were urged and motivated to take part in extracurricular activities for which specialists from across the globe including the USA visit the school to train students in performative arts. Shanti Bhavan hosts a music teacher who offers voice and instrument lessons and manages the choir. However, with the onset of Covid 19, the music program too bore the brunt. Undeterred to provide their students with co-curricular activities, the music program called Broadway Babies, in association with Broadway for Arts Education, was made virtual using online platforms. The program helped students stay in touch with their instruments and the world of music. As one of the students mentioned: *"The music program is fantastic, we have online classes, and we get guidance online. The experience is almost the same."* The collaboration with Broadway for Arts Education has helped Shanti Bhavan continue to focus on the extracurricular activities for students, as they now have access to a larger team of professional musicians with expertise in different genres of music.

Meticulous planning was the key

Vaishali is a teacher at the LNMPS Mumbai, and Neha works at PYDS, Dehradun. The educators talked at length about the fact that the sections of the lessons they planned in the physical setup differed drastically from the online lesson plans. Vaishali and Neha emphasize the importance of how they started the sessions with not just grounding activities but emphasized on the importance of promulgating pre work activities through Google forms to initially give students an introduction to the concepts they shall be introduced to, and for the educators to understand the levels of concept understanding aligned to the unit which they will be introducing in the class. Vaishali says- *"Each section and time allocation to the particular section of the lesson to be delivered had to be meticulously planned, even to the point of the kind of pre-work which would be given to the students showing varied levels of understanding regarding the concepts"*. The next aspect of lesson planning that both Neha and Vaishali focused upon was the class activities. Neha mentioned – *"We chose to shift the prerequisite activities to online alternatives like introducing videos, PowerPoint presentations etc"*. Both Vaishali and Neha agree that though the remote learning setup was difficult to adapt initially, but later the setup opened doors to certain uncharted opportunities which helped them make their lesson delivery better.

World of Work (WoW) program

A career counsellor from Avasara Academy switched to a unique way of engaging students regarding career opportunity exploration and thought and resources surrounding them. The students were divided into groups and given tasks to complete basis the research associated with their areas of interest. With the completion of these tasks, individual calls were initiated with each student to trigger a SWOT analysis and help student aspirants understand the alignment of their career research. Basis this research, the counsellor helped the student aspirants form three career plans alternative to each other named PLAN - A, B and C basis the students' interests. These plans form the plan of action for the student aspirants for applications to desired universities as well as to understand the job opportunities post completion of these programs.

• Focus on parent engagement level

Due to discontinued classroom setup and extended association at home, the role of parents and caregivers became paramount.

ĨÎ.	Increase in parent teacher interaction	•	Increased connect with the parents helped in ensuring child's progress and wellbeing. All organizations had regular virtual meetings with parents during which they would share artefacts of students. During the meetings, the educators would talk about the positive developments in the child's progress and bring to focus the improvement areas.
	Involvement of community workers	•	The organizations worked extensively with community workers including social workers to spread awareness about Covid-19 appropriate behaviors and ensuring vaccination of all concerned care givers. Partnership with organizations working in communities formulated to increase outreach. TFI fellows made regular community visits where they interacted with the parents to understand their challenges. At PYDS. social workers and their network with PRIs coordinated to ensure education reached the remotest of villages by conducted a survey on the device availability, internet access, network coverage. Akanksha Foundation partnered with grassroots organizations to increase outreach and address critical issues at the community level.
	Ration and relief support	•	Parents were provided with groceries and other important amenities to ensure their basic needs are met. Teach for India, worked towards providing parents with groceries to ensure they feel supported during the early months of the pandemic. Similar steps to provide ration and relief items were taken up by Akanksha Foundation and PYDS.

• Meeting the need for psychosocial support

The children in the age group of 3 - 16 years have experienced a significant psychological impact owing to the changing circumstances and paradigmatic shifts in the education sector. The restrictions in movement and reduced social interactions have impacted the wellbeing of children, especially in the formative year.

Children's need for psychosocial support

During the interactions with the school leadership and management, the following challenges emerged:

8 500 -8 inte

Social development and• Limited interactions of the students with children of their age, have impacted the interpersonal skills of students.

	Decreased co-curricular activities	 The students belonging to underserved communities in majority cases had school spaces to participate in co- scholastic activities, an essential component for children to display unbound expression. Closures of schools have inhibited access to these spaces including libraries and playgrounds which has adversely impacted their mental wellbeing.
[]	Decreased life skills education	 Residential facilities also support the development of life skills; however, the closure of these facilities impacted the transition of children into their home spaces leading to stress.
00	Increase in negative emotions	 The counsellors mentioned that students experienced a wide range of emotions, however, there were 5 emotions that were seen in highest frequency and intensity, these included, distress (20%), feelings of being overwhelmed (26%), anxiety (30%), fear (9%) and lack of motivation (15%).
Gr	Lack of safe spaces	• Due to reduced mobility, social isolation, and lack of access to safe spaces, children were unable to express their emotions effectively which directly impacted their overall wellbeing. It was observed that coping with the new mode of learning while also keeping up with the rigor of studies often became challenging for students.
	Migration related distress	 3 out of 5 implementation partners reported migration as a significant challenge. Almost 20% migration reported during the pandemic at different phases across target beneficiaries. Change in location triggered feelings of discomfort.

I don't like being at home. I want to meet my friends, travel to school with them, play on the playground and eat my tiffin with them. I like that I can be at home with Mumma, but now I want to go to school every day. I feel happy at school. - Anvi (Grade 4)

Parent's need for psychosocial support

The uncertainties experienced by the students also stemmed from the situations arising from prolonged engagement of family members and caregivers at home. Hence, the need for psychosocial support was felt by parents and caregivers as well. During our interactions, it was noted that -

30% parents said that they felt scared about how the future would shape up post COVID-19 pandemic.

40% parents said that they were in a comfortable position during the pandemic to support their families and were assured about the future.

30% parents mentioned severe losses.

How the implementing organizations addressed this emerging need? Prioritize mental health over content mastery



- Educators focused on the mental health and wellbeing of their students by trying to understand their psychological state before beginning any class.
- Educators used Socio-emotional learning (SEL) activity including the feeling circle to understand the socio-emotional wellbeing of students.
- Grade wise monitoring was conducted by Avasara Academy to gauge the psychological state. This was conducted using a survey which captured metrics including engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness, and happiness.

Increased frequency of parent-teacher interaction



Parents/caregivers identified as partners, hence the interface with them increased to keep **them informed regarding the progress of their children** as well as the way forward regarding the schools' reopening.

Check in calls with parents



Schools **extended the counselling services to parents and caregivers**. Since students at Shanti Bhavan could not visit their families during summer breaks, wellbeing calls were arranged by the school for students to speak with their parents. Socially distanced meet ups between parents and students were also arranged on campus.

Introduction of formal counselling services and partnership with organizations

- Counsellors' role enhanced, as formal sessions were instituted in everyday learning sessions.
- Organizations partnered with other organizations providing counselling services to increase outreach to students, and parents/caregivers

Increased support to educators



Educators too were concerned about their health and familial wellbeing during this period. Some staff had to leave due to personal reasons and visiting volunteers from different countries in Shanti Bhavan could not travel. This led to added work pressure on the remaining staff members.

Periodic interface setup for the addressal of mental well-being needs of the staff.

I am the best just the way you are*

Raisha had always been conscious of her body image. She recalled that during the pandemic her relatives brought a marriage proposal, citing her health as a reason to get married soon. Although Raisha's mother was convinced, her father showed apprehension. It was then that she approached her counsellor for help. Raisha mentioned – "I broke down. I want to study, have a stable job, travel the world, marriage cannot happen now, it's illegal too. I told my school counsellor everything. She guided me with placing my views in front of my parents". Raisha also mentioned that her counsellor also helped her talk about body image concerns with her parents. It was after continuous conversations she was able to convince her parents to not get her married. When the relatives visited next time and started discussing about her marriage, her mother took lead in disagreeing and emphasized that her daughter's education is the utmost priority.

She credits the counselling assistance for helping renew her parents' beliefs. **Name changed for confidentiality*

• Addressing learning gaps

The remote learning setup was dependent on the availability of digital devices. The outcomes depended on the seamless usage of the digital platforms and the comfort of students at all learning levels to adapt to these platforms.

Summarizing the key challenges below:

	Outcomes depended on the usability and workability of devices	 While some children picked up the usage faster, some took time to adapt. The usability also depended on the support which they could get access to. The students faced multiple issues with own devices while they operated from locations which were not readily serviceable.
-//-	Health concerns due to increased digital exposure	• The digital exposure made students vulnerable towards various health issues majorly due to long exposure to screen and lack of physical exercises. It was noted that around 35% students had their eyes tested and complained of strained and/or painful eyes which made them consciously reduce the screen time due to which they had to miss out on mainstream learning.
	Digital fatigue	• Fatigue was observed as a major contributing factor, that impacted learning of children universally. Maintaining high levels of enthusiasm and motivation towards learning was difficult in an online setup, that contributed to reduced attention span.
Learning	g gaps	
	Challenges in	• It was noted that the demonstrable skills suffered more for children in the
	demonstrable skills	 lower grades as compared to children in higher grades. This was because a teacher plays a crucial role in building basic skills in the formative years. The learning outcomes of the children in the lower grade was impacted in the following areas - observation skills, critical thinking, logical thinking, and collaborative learning. While for the higher grades, the following areas were brought to the attention: (a) writing skills, (b) time management (c) geometric and construction skills.

Introduction to bridge curriculum

The organizations moved towards designing and implementing a bridge curriculum to address the discrepancies in learning outcomes which the educators assessed either during synchronous modes of learning or when educational institutes were briefly reopened. The bridge curriculums were an organized way of assessing the depth of learning gaps which could not be bridged through the regular rigor of the online teaching curriculum. It was noted that:

- Bridge curriculums were extended across the grades as short-term courses to select students, or as refresher course.
- The content and rigor were decided based on the average learning levels.
- Remedial classes for students requiring handholding support were clubbed together with bridge classes.

At TFI, the bridge curriculum incorporated additional learning time in smaller groups with prioritized content. Envisaged as a 6-to-9-month program where local spaces will be used to conduct in-person, small group, or individual instruction. The fellows were advised to teach additional 60-90 minutes outside school timetable to prioritize Math and English for Grades 1-8 to counter pandemic induced trauma, increase resilience and address socio-emotional wellbeing of students. While at PYDS, a 10-day refresher course was implemented before the next academic year to help students facing challenges with certain topics.

• Tracking mechanisms for attendance, assessment, and retention

The tracking mechanisms utilized in the physical schooling setup were adapted and adopted to match the uncertainties of the online schooling mode.

Attendance

The attendance was primarily marked through a roll call being noted in a tracker (MS-Excel sheet). Later it was done using platforms like Google forms, Edmodo, Zoom meetings and some in-house developed platforms.

Prioritizing engagement - a situational shift

.*: .*:	Priority given to • engagement over outcomes •	Most organizations prioritized engagement of students with content and learning material over tangible learning outcomes . Akanksha Foundation tracked submission data, average reported 47% across 2 schools.
	Academic advancement no • longer a sole determinant of student engagement •	The engagement was measured as the student's alignment with education rather than the academic advancement of students. TFI tracked engagement across synchronous and asynchronous modes, and the average stood at 51%.
	Introduction of unique • approaches to assess engagement	Unique approaches to assess levels of engagement were developed. Schools used online portals including Edmodo to capture the engagement levels of students. Hence, the engagement levels were defined as: (a) Number of worksheets solved by the student in a time bound manner (b) Number of videos watched by the student in a time

bound manner and aligned to the given video (c) Number of activities the students completed and uploaded evidence.

 Benefits of tracking engagement levels noted
 Tracking of engagement levels proved to be beneficial for student's education and helped fulfil pertinent objectives such as: (a) Helping communicate the child's interest and regularity in educational activities to the parents. (b) Providing teachers with a buffer time to acclimatize students with usage of technology while also gaining enough space for their capacity building and personal research (c) Helping educator set expectations from the engagement that the students were expected to be a part of.

Assessments

The assessment mechanisms pivoted to the comfort of the learners as well as helping the educators to keep track of the learner's progress.

Revised grade cards	 The assessment and grade/report cards were changed to ensure students do not suffer because of the marking system considering children were faced with multiple unique challenges that hindered their learning. Hence, emphasis was laid on performance-based indicators aligned to qualitative indicators of student performance. Avasara Academy recorded anecdotal evidence of the key performance of students instead of utilizing grade cards during the initial transition towards online learning.
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Kindergarten to Grade 4	Grade 5 and above
Combination of synchronous and asynchronous assessments	Video based assessments and asynchronous assessments
A combination of synchronous and asynchronous assessments. Some common patterns that emerged are: Diagnostic assessments: Other than regular formative assessments and submissions, the partner organizations engaged in extensive diagnostic assessments designed and customized to assess the	Video assessment: Students were required to attempt the assignment through a video call, where the assessment was made available during a specific time through emails or WhatsApp. An invigilator was present during the video assessments. Post completion, children were required to share the pictures of the handwritten answers to the teacher either via
number of outcomes that the educator wanted to achieve after delivering a set of lessons.	WhatsApp, email or by uploading the photos on a portal. It was also noted that diagnostics and regular tests were administered for the students.
Leveraging instant messaging apps: Tests/assessments were also conducted by sending the exam material through WhatsApp to the parents and receiving images of handwritten responses from students. Additionally, creating video responses of students was also one way that the parents supported the assessment of students.	Asynchronous assessment: In instances where the students were unavailable for video assessments due to internet issues, students were given the option to submit an asynchronous assignment.

Retention

All organizations have reported that they were able to ensure that majority students enrolled in grades appeared for the yearend examinations.

Some of the reasons identified for exemplary retention numbers are -

- (a) Continuous engagement, sensitization, and counselling parents/caregivers towards the importance of education and engagement of them.
- (b) Provision of psychosocial support for multiple stakeholders including students, parents and caregivers.

Ain't no mountain high enough

The Purkal Youth Development Society (PYDS) situated at Purkal village, in Dehradun district, Uttarakhand is educational haven to some of the most underprivileged settlements in and around Purkal village, as far as Uttar Kashi situated at one of the highest terrains in Uttarakhand. Through intensive student outreach programs carried out in the difficult terrains of Uttar Kashi, PYDS has been able to locate and reach out to students who had been sent back during the pandemic and were on the brink of being cut off from mainstream education. Leveraging its contacts in the community, and through extensive outreach and surveys conducted by teachers and social workers, PYDS was able to ascertain the device needs of students. Additionally, they were also able to measure if existing devices were functional. One of the most remarkable aspects of the outreach program was how PYDS was able to traverse some of the inhospitable locations in the villages in Uttar Kashi, in the winter months by partnering with the PRIs to track children. The outreach facilitated with the help of the PRIs enabled the team to help children gain access to devices to ensure continuity of learning and helped establish connect with the parents which in turn ensured student retention even in the most challenging terrains. Children with intermittent access to internet were advised to be housed at the PYDS's residential facilities to ensure continued access to internet.



Strategic differentiators and the way forward



Strategic differentiators and way forward

Strategic differentiators

All five implementing organizations focused on learning continuity by engaging with multiple stakeholders. The organizations worked towards common themes for students across grades in different geographies. The differentiators observed across the five organizations are listed below –

<u>Themes</u>	Akanksha Foundation	Purkal Youth Development Society	Teach for India	Avasara Academy	Shanti Bhawan
Continuity of learning	 Extensive outreach campaigns held between March- July 2020 Teams of social workers worked extensively by conducting home visits, calls conducted by teachers. SMC members reached out to community to reach students Leveraged WhatsApp groups to share learning material 	 Post closure of residential facility, survey and home visits conducted by social workers, requirements for devices/sim cards noted Partnership with Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members to reach difficult terrain In some instances, students with network unavailability also brought back to residential facility 	 Formulated a task force to study the education landscape Collaborated with different organizations in the educational space to define their approach 	 Check in calls by social worker Provisions made for distribution of learning material in partnership with local community members 	 Continued functioning as a residential setup Since children have been residents of the school since a young age, rapport has been formulated with teachers, and caretakers who act as a strong support network

Capacity building, training, and support for educators	 Training in SEE learning curriculum promulgated in a phased manner SEE taskforce instituted to build teachers' capacities Training on device usage and platforms like Edmodo, Google forms, Loom, Xrecorder was conducted Extensive teacher surveys conducted for understanding their challenges 	 Teachers trained on specific approaches for effective usage of natural elements by students Emphasis on project-based learning, and co- curricular connect 	 The legacy 5- week training converted to 8- week online training to help them understand the pedagogy and content for online teaching 	Trainers of XCELL program conducted peer learning for skill enhancement	• Regular professional learning continued
Devices & internet data support	 Devices provided to students in a phased manner, higher grades given priority Extensive outreach campaigns conducted for understanding the availability and usability TFI, Akanksha and iTeach schools teamed up Data recharges also provided to the ones in need 	 Extensive surveys by social workers and home visits led to gauging of number of students in need of devices, internet, and sim card support 	 A device loan agreement was signed by parents once the device was provided to them. The device was only loaned to the student and was to be returned to the TFI fellow once the school reopened. Priority was given to secondary grade students Internet recharges were also facilitated 	 Fundraising for device support, need based provisions for devices 	 Learning continued in a physical setup with increased frequency of calls with parents/caregiv ers

Innovations in pedagogy & content dissemination	 Usage of platforms like Padlet, Edpuzzle, Lomo, Xrecorder, BoloApp, Youtube, live worksheet platforms, breakout rooms School hours minimized from 5.5 hours to 3.5 hours SEE learning curriculum in partnership with Emory University formalized and implemented across grades 	 Cross-curricular connect, blooms' taxonomy and project-based learning implemented Presentations and reference material, class recordings preserved for future reference Tools leveraged for asynchronous learning – WhatsApp groups, and Google forms. The students, majorly first- generation learners, were logging in from difficult terrains, hence limited digital platforms were used and focus was more on learning through natural elements 	 Introduced the trauma informed learning instruction for their fellows which focused on the practices that could ensure classrooms continue to remain safe spaces virtually for students Created the bridge program to address learning loss Use of multiple tools and applications including white boards, peardeck, padlet, Khan Academy, Google Read Aloud, Jolly phonics, GeoGebra to make instructional aid fun Content was disseminated using Mini lesson 	 Extensive usage of online platforms like Padlet, Kahoot, Mentimeter to make the online sessions interesting. Asynchronous and synchronous modes of learning availed together for maximizing learning and grade appropriate rigor Kits containing learning material emailed or sent through bus conductors or other local groups to students monthly Addition of grades (extension of academic years) for Grades 10 and 12 especially for those passing in year 2020 to deal with the losses in learning 	 Classes continued in physical mode For performing arts, Shanti Bhavan partnered with Broadway Babies, a US- based arts organization to begin virtual classes Provided each graduate with an alumni mentor Support provided to find internship opportunities, and resume building
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			videos, voice notes, learning packets on class WhatsApp groups • Fellows also worked towards creating a distribution channel for physical worksheet packets to be distributed	and for better scores	
Focus on student engagement	 Co-curricular activities like that of Readathon and celebration of days of national and international importance Breaks from continuous screen time through classes given to students to reduce digital fatigue Alternatively, timed asynchronous submissions and synchronous classes in the timetable to reduce screen time 	 Co-curricular activities and competitions like fancy dress, project making (thee based) organized Fun days like potluck, matching dresses for younger grades Group activities after gradual reopening of schools like cleaning of premises 	 Activities like confidence and skills building such as financial literacy, holding performative art activities such as <i>Hallabol</i> virtually Some fellows took classes in community spaces to ensure children get access to in- person classes 	 Enrichment activities like Yoga, French language classes Celebration of nation festivals Talk series by industry and academia experts Facilitated access to mentorship program for students called Hi Didi Other activities like coding clubs, sports events, interschool competitions Byju's kits were provided for IIT 	 During vacations, children could not visit their families. Hence, they were permitted to make their own schedules during the vacations to keep themselves engaged Focus on extracurricular activities including 60 mins of physical training activities through sports like soccer, basketball, and cricket among others

				JEE and NEET aspirants Portfolio creation for grade 12 th students, and conduction of psychometric tests stayed virtual (conducted with Talerang) • Small group calls (group discussions) for understanding career opportunities • Tutorials provided for navigating the college websites	 Community service projects over the weekend Current affairs presented by the children at the assembly
Focus on parent engagement	 Connect with parents/caregivers who lost their livelihoods. Social workers, school leaders and teachers helped in identifying career opportunities to those affected (leveraged tools like Haqdarshak application) Performance discussions with parents Rocket learning app piloted for K-2 students for increasing parental engagement in learning 	 Periodic connect with parents to discuss ward's performance and participation in classroom activities 	 Check-in with parents to discuss child's progress, focus on key improvement areas and to motivate and counsel them to send their children for virtual classes 	 Weekly connect to understand family's wellbeing and discuss their wards' performance 	 Being a residential facility that continued its operations during the pandemic, parental involvement and engagement was low in the academic lives of students

Meeting the psycho-social needs of stakeholders	 Survey on parental wellbeing to gauge the overall wellbeing Teachers exposed to peer interaction methods, seeking circles to practice SEE activities, SEE taskforce Grounding activities at the beginning of each virtual session 	 Check in calls by teachers with parents and students on monthly basis and grounding activities introduced at the beginning of Step back spaces 	 Partnered with HEAL Foundation to address the constrained of students Partnered with an organization Pathat offered 	 Students were referred to counselling ounsellors for tudents and harents hcreased in requency Students and harents school also has a counsellor dedicated to address the socio-emotional
	awareness regarding cyberbullying, attention training, compassion and ethical discernment training, systems thinking training, resilience, and trauma-informed practice	their past experiences and learning through them, mental hygiene workshop for teachers	fellowswholineededmentalsihealthand•counsellingsisupporta•SEL activities likepart and craft toahelpstudentsarticulateathemselves,Rfeeling circletounderstandthesocioemotionalfcwellbeingofstudentsewage	keregularDuringtheubjectspandemic,childrenmostlyxtensivereportedchildrenmostlyurveysandconcernsregarding careerpproacheslikechoicesandhat of WagnildaspirationsduendYoung'stouncertaintytesilience scalecausedbytheudvisorypandemic.Duringtheparentor teacherDuringthepandemic, inor grade bands)onstitutedforSeptember,onstitutedforseptember,marentsradeschildren.Theinteractionwasarrangedwithparentsinteractionwasarrangedwithparentsinasociallydistancedmannermannermanner

Change in monitoring methods (attendance)	 Initial tracking on submission Post initiation of synchronous classes, MS-Excel sheet-based tracker was leveraged, the attendance measurement was done by roll call Later an in-house platform called 3D leveraged, a portal for uploading the attendance sheets 	 Asynchronous submissions tracked by the school by way of assessing the responses to the WhatsApp circulation of work With the initiation of online learning mode, MS-Excel sheet-based tracker was leveraged with roll call method During brief reopening of schools, physical attendance with roll call method was leveraged again circling back to excel sheet-based tracker with the next shut down 	 Usage of ed tech platform ClassDojo Collected monthly data to analyze metric including - students ability to access blended learning, ability to attend asynchronous classes, hours/week of instruction time Tracked the perceptions of safety that students felt at home 	 My portal tracker was leveraged Asynchronous submissions through Edmodo were also tracked with the regular attendance (for the XCELL program) 	 Attendance was tracked using attendance registers
Change in method of assessment	 Diagnostic assessments were focused on called as unit tests, conducted through usage of asynchronous methods, solving the papers and sending the responses through WhatsApp or posting on Edmodo 	 Video based assessments for higher grades and for younger grades asynchronous assessments Extensive usage of Google forms 	 Google forms and WhatsApp were utilized to take assessments Owing to multiple challenges presented by the 	 Video conferencing- based assessments and discussions were mostly leveraged for the XCELL program 	 Grade tests conducted internally Regular course of assessments, four examinations were conducted in the academic

	 Weekly and monthly tests conducted by teachers, and mini assessments on live worksheets 	for conducting assessments Mid-year, and final assessments conducted in person for class VI and above (diagnostic approach) based on which the students were placed in three categories - 1) Promotion to the next class 2) Probation - from mid-April to mid-June, student must have 100% attendance and 75% and above in all subject assessments 3) Hold back - repeat the class due to poor attendance and performance	pandemic, the completion rate of assessments was not high	 Surveys and studies through google forms also formed a part of regular assessment for XCELL program. 	year at following intervals: August, December, February (Preboard), March (Final). • For the Science and Commerce stream (grade 12 th), laboratory examinations and project evaluation conducted in February by external examiners
New partnerships created	 SNEHA Foundation - for issues related to child abuse/ female abuse Emory University -for SEE learning 	 Panchayati Raj Institution members of remote villages of Uttarakhand for facilitating 	 HEAL foundation for SEL trainings Matific - a online platform providing games 	 Industry experts for leadership talks and career guidance Partnership with universities for 	 Northwell Counselling to address the socio-emotional wellbeing

	 Swasth Organization - For free health checkup to parents Kotak Education - for skill training to parents 	the device outreach	and worksheets for Math • Srishti Organization for mental health and wellbeing counselling of fellows	summer schooling programs like that of Ashoka University Partnership with FLAME University, MIT- ADT University for career talks	concerns of students
Nonacademic support	 Social workers also assisted with provision of beds for sick family members Support for vaccination, job opportunities information Support to parents from Project Karuna (grocery kits) 	 Ration kits distribution 	 Provision of grocery kits Ensuring parents and caregivers get the vaccine 		
Elements that can be adopted in a regular school	 Usage of technology as main medium for conducting short assessments Parental partnership and focused engagement through increased check in calls will be continued Promulgation of self-learning material Extensive focus on SEL to continue 	 Preservation of online learning repository and project-based learning found useful and will be continued post pandemic Refresher sessions (10-day session for students lagging on certain topics before initiation of next academic year) 	 Trauma informed learning instruction for fellows to focus on the practices that could ensure psychological safety in classrooms Interfaces for fellows' socio- emotional wellbeing Usage of online tools for instructional aid Bridge curriculum to be 	 Extensive parental engagement through increased parent-teacher meetings to be continued 	 Co-curricular activities like music on the online mode Virtual volunteering opportunities

			continued (6 – 9- month program where fellows teach additional 60-90 minutes outside school timetable to prioritize Math and English for Grades 1-8)		
Learning opportunities	 Teachers' load of check in calls could be shared with the counsellors and social workers 	 Teachers' capacities to be built on implementation and usage of online platforms for diversifying learning for students 	 Trainings to be made more contextual in nature, specific to the regions in which TFI operates Frequent check- ins with fellows to avoid feelings of isolation on the job 	 Teachers could also be made a part of the counselling process, more engagement of teachers in outreach activities 	• Exposure to online platforms for students, enhancing technical abilities of both students and teachers

Way forward

	Aspect	Recommendation
	Blended learning model	 As schools begin to reopen, blended learning becomes a plausible way forward. This approach does not disadvantage the students from the benefits of an academic year-round physical setup of learning. The students can directly interact with the educators and gain through exposure to technology. Physical classes combined with online resources and digitally pre- loaded resources in class and aid the everyday teaching process Hybrid approach where the classes are mainly conducted online but certain activities are required to be conducted in person
	Bridging the learning gaps	Focus on filling learning gaps through extensive bridge programs. Learning during the pandemic has suffered across the programs. For the primary grades, foundational learning has suffered at a greater scale where increased emphasis can be laid on building basic understanding of subjects and interpersonal relationships. While the focus can lay upon grade appropriate learning for higher grades.
	Bridging the digital divide	The adaptation of the pivots now lies towards making the locations serviceable while ensuring a uniform outreach of technological opportunities across the locations.
ŶŶŶŶŶ	Increased focus on developing formative skills in children	More focus on children in the age group of 4-8 years for inculcation of formative skills like – empathy, self-control, integrity, embracing diversity and grit. Children gain these skills through interaction with other children of their age group. With school closure, the younger set about to enter schools could not experience schooling the conventional way, hence educators emphasized on this aspect.
.*. J	Added emphasis on creating safe spaces	Increased focus on awareness creation and training of educators, and parents on creating spaces where children feel safe to share their experiences.
	Region specific training	It was mentioned that regional teaching aids and trainings can be provided to educators to help them better respond to concerns of parents and students.

Appendix



Appendix

• List of abbreviations

Abbreviation Full form

AKF	Akanksha Foundation
ΑΥ	Academic Year
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
Ed-Tech	Educational Technology
FA	Formative Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICSE	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education
KII	Key Informant Interview
LNMPS	Laxmi Nagar Mumbai Public School
LRM	Learning Resource Material
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
PYDS	Purkal Youth Development Society
SEE	Socio-Emotional and Ethical
SEL	Socio-Emotional Learning
SMC	School Management Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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