



PRATHAM CANADA

Every Child in School...and Learning Well

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What is Pratham?

Studies have shown that children who receive good early-childhood instruction do significantly better in later years of school, hence universalization of pre-school and primary education was seen as the most effective way of ensuring that slum children stay in school and complete a minimum level of education that make employment or economic opportunities more accessible.

This is Pratham's core premise, and it has successfully leveraged the following elements to achieve considerable success over the past 15 years:

- consistent financial support from corporate champions and major charitable foundations;
- sustained and meaningful involvement of thousands of citizen volunteers from all walks of life, including professionals, academics, public servants and ordinary citizens;
- training and employment of thousands of young women from the slum communities as teachers to avoid the high cost of hiring fully-trained teaching professionals and to extend the reach of educational programs;
- development of innovative teaching materials uniquely suited to the special needs of children in the slum context, the capabilities of the young teachers, the logistics of delivering educational programs in a community-specific environment; and
- a low-cost and scaleable approach that does not rely on expensive infrastructure such as school buildings and large bureaucracies.

Pratham was formed in 1994 as a societal mission in collaboration with UNICEF with the aim of making primary education universally accessible to millions of underprivileged children in the vast slum communities of Mumbai. Their goal was simple: **Every child in school...and learning well.**

Today, Pratham operates in 22 states, 11 urban centres and reaches the remotest communities in every part of India. **Pratham is now the largest educational NGO in the country.** Its work is so crucial in the educational field that the Government of India relies on Pratham's yearly **ASER Survey Report** to formulate its annual education funding strategy, and labour welfare departments at various levels of government rely on it to monitor child-labour issues.

Pratham's approach is based on a 3-way partnership between government, business and the public to help make education accessible to millions of children in the slums. **Pratham's programs do not replace the government's programs, just supplements them.**



Consistently reaching at least 200,000 kids every year in all parts of India, over the past 15 years Pratham has touched almost three million kids through its direct programs and several million more through other initiatives that supplement the government's own programs or involve partnering with specific local community-based programs all over India.

An important aspect of Pratham's work is its programs to improve the lives of thousands of child-labourers in slum factories. Not only does Pratham monitor the condition in factories employing child-labourers, and provide classes and instruction at the convenience of the factory-wallahs and the children, but at risk of personal safety Pratham staff often intervene to extract commitments to ensure safer and more humane working conditions and prevent abuse, and if necessary remove kids from dangerous environments with the help of police.

Also of immense societal benefit is Pratham's strategy of employing thousands of young women from the slums by training them as teachers at low cost and providing them gainful employment. The dual benefits of this approach are that the children consider them as 'didis' (or big sisters) and learn more readily from them, and the women are less vulnerable to the problems arising from unemployment such as poverty, and especially exploitation, which is a major issue in large urban centres.

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Donations to Pratham Canada are tax-deductible.

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Want to help? Have a question?

Drop us a line at mail@prathamcanada.org
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