

Pratham's Response to COVID-19

Over the past 25 years, Pratham has worked at scale across India to address the education crisis facing the nation's children and youth. Today, as we confront an unprecedented challenge, we are leveraging our experience and agility to both navigate the pandemic and continue to fulfill our mission. Here are a few of the ways we are adapting to the situation:

1. Keeping People Safe and Informed

As the pandemic spread across the globe, Pratham took meaningful steps to ensure the safety of our team of over 6,500 full-time people. All travel was restricted in early March, and in-person training was either postponed or occurred virtually. Students enrolled at Pratham vocational training centers were sent home. And on March 17, 2020, all Pratham offices were closed. The staff is now working remotely, wherever possible.

Our many communication channels were streamlined into a single cascading system. Using WhatsApp, we are disseminating reliable information on COVID-19 to Pratham staff and the communities we serve. In addition to creating handouts and posters on the virus and how to take preventive action with regard to safety and hygiene, we have [translated WHO videos](#) into nine regional languages (Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Kannada, Odia, Assamese, Tamil, and Telugu).

2. Connecting with Children and Communities in a New Way

By shifting from in-person interactions to remote learning, we are maintaining a connection with children in the 5,000 Hamara Goan communities where we have established learning groups. Our approach during the lockdown period is to leverage Pratham technology tools and digital content to keep the children engaged, with support from parents and other caregivers.

In the past two weeks, using WhatsApp and text messages, we have begun sharing a series of daily activities with parents for children of all ages called [Karona: Thodi Masti. Thoda Padhai](#) (*"Do it: a little fun, a little study."* The word "Karona" sounds like Corona, and in several Indian languages means "do it.") These messages feature video and audio content that facilitates hands-on activities in art, music, theater, math, language and science in many regional languages. A local Pratham team member follows up with a weekly phone call to the families in his/her village. These calls boost spirits, spur conversation around the activities and provide an opportunity for family members to ask questions about the [health-related materials](#) that have been shared.

3. Sharing Resources to Support Learning for All

Pratham has made critical investments in digital content and technology for education over the last few years. These tools and resources are now being shared widely through open-source sites with governments and 36 nonprofit and private sector partners. At present, [our digital library](#), which includes more than 3,000 videos, 300 games and three learning applications in eleven Indian languages, is being utilized by five state governments for their teacher resource platform as well as student engagement([Diksha](#) - UP). We are focusing on expanding this content repository and ensuring that it is accessible to as many organizations as possible.

4. Collaborating for Essential Humanitarian Aid

We have also been helping with relief efforts that address immediate hunger and health challenges. The Pratham team in Mumbai is working closely with the municipal government and a consortium of NGOs and in corporations to coordinate the [Mumbai Food Project](#). This project aims to feed 100,000 individuals during India's 21-day shutdown by delivering a pre-cooked meal daily to Mumbai's most vulnerable residents.

In addition, Pratham's vocational training centers in Aurangabad, Ralegoan and Latur stand ready to be converted into regional quarantine facilities for COVID -19 patients if the need arises.

5. Planning for Near- and Long-term Economic Uncertainty

Like other organizations, we are grappling with serious financial issues and preparing for an uncertain future. We are carefully examining our finances and taking measures to reduce expenses while speaking with our supporters to ensure job protection and livelihood for our employees.

More broadly, we are also looking at what effect the closure of the schools will have on children's learning, how the economic downturn will impact India's sizeable rural youth population and the overall disruption will have on communities we serve. While the full implications of the global shutdown will remain unknown for some time, we are beginning to plan for the post-pandemic landscape, analyzing how our strengths, capabilities and reach can be effectively employed for recovery.