Research on Affordable Private School Pre-primary Teachers

Program to Improve Private Early Education (PIPE)
Objectives

• Understand factors affecting how pre-primary teachers in affordable private schools (APS) implement activity based learning (ABL) solutions, by studying:
  – APS teachers’ mind-sets
  – APS teachers’ journey with ABL solutions
  – Challenges faced by APS teachers in implementing ABL solutions
  – Practices from current interventions which have helped APS teachers in their implementation of ABL solutions

• Recommend practical and feasible solutions for ABL solution providers to improve implementation
Format of field research

25 pre-primary teachers from 13 APS across 3 cities and covering 5 ABL solutions were individually interviewed for 45-60 minutes, each.

- 8 teachers from 4 schools
  - Mumbai
- 9 teachers from 5 schools
  - Bangalore
- 8 teachers from 4 schools
  - Hyderabad
### Contents

1. Research objectives and design

2. Typical APS pre-primary teacher profile
   - **2a** Portrait of a typical APS teacher
   - **2b** Journey of APS teacher with ABL solution providers

3. Challenges faced by APS pre-primary teachers

4. Recommendations for ABL solution providers

5. Introduction to PIPE and FSG Inclusive Markets
Portrait of a typical APS teacher

- 29 year old working mother
- Earns INR 7,500 per month
- Has been teaching for 5+ years
- Has completed 12th grade
- Has not received any formal teaching training
- Lives with her family next to the school
We have segmented APS teachers as ‘poor’ and ‘good’ implementers of ABL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Poor’ implementers&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>‘Good’ implementers&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Rely on rote memorization-based learning</td>
<td>● Use ABL in classroom</td>
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<td>● Follow a lecture-based model where children participate through rote or choral repetition</td>
<td>● Teach concepts using materials and interactive activities e.g., flashcards</td>
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<td>● Interact with children mostly as a large group</td>
<td>● Interact with children individually or in small groups</td>
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<td>● Ask rote-based or close-ended questions to test recall of information</td>
<td>● Ask open-ended questions to test understanding or to stimulate reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Have poor understanding of child learning outcomes</td>
<td>● Have good understanding of child learning outcomes</td>
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<sup>1</sup>Illustrative traits
We developed portraits based on context, expectations and perceptions of APS teachers that drive implementation quality.

**Context**
- What is their household context?
- What is their daily schedule?
- What is their classroom set-up?
- What support do they get from the school’s management to implement ABL?

**Expectations**
- What are their expectations from their job?
- What do they want to experience by teaching?

**Perceptions**
- What is their perception on the way children learn?
- What are their beliefs on their role?
- What are their beliefs on non-traditional curricula?

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Implementation quality
### Context

**Personal**
- Lives with husband and children
- Values teaching as a respectable profession
- Teaches in a school from 8:30am to 4:00pm
- Spends the rest of the day looking after children and doing household chores

**School**
- Teaches a class of ~40 students
- Receives limited support/oversight from school management
- Directed by APS administrator to implement ABL solution without proper introduction
- Implements both traditional curriculum and ABL curriculum
- Has no access to materials required to implement ABL due to limited budget or limited material kits

### Expectations

**Non-teaching role**
- Wants to be a good parent
- Would like evenings to remain free in order to complete household chores and take care of children

**Teaching role**
- Wants to feel valued for work
- Wants to feel in control of classroom
- Aims to finish syllabus on time
- Prefers ‘proven’ teaching techniques due to familiarity and to avoid parent complaints

### Perceptions

**Teaching**
- Believes children learn by repeating lessons
- Believes learning outcomes are demonstrated by ability to recall what has been taught
- Believes parents’ satisfaction and completion of curriculum on time mark success as a teacher
- Believes it is necessary to give writing work in class and homework

**ABL**
- Believes the ABL curriculum does not prepare students for grade 1
- Believes children in other schools with non-ABL curricula are learning faster and more content
Typical APS teacher portrait of ‘good’ implementer

**Context**

**Personal**
- Lives with husband and children
- Values teaching as a respectable profession
- Teaches in a school from 8:30am to 4:00pm
- Spends the rest of the day looking after children and doing household chores

**School**
- Teaches a class of ~30 students
- Receives support/oversight from a coordinator or headmistress, who addresses implementation concerns as prescribed by ABL solution provider
- Introduced to benefits of ABL by ABL solution provider
- Implements ABL curriculum
- Has access to materials required to implement ABL curriculum, through school

**Expectations**

**Non-teaching role**
- Wants to be a good parent
- Would like evenings to remain free in order to complete household chores and take care of children

**Teaching role**
- Wants to feel valued for work
- Wants to feel in control of classroom
- Aims to teach children concepts like counting items and reading new words
- Prefers ABL as the teaching experience is more engaging / diversified

**Perceptions**

**Teaching**
- Believes children learn by doing activities and not through rote learning
- Believes children demonstrate conceptual understanding by answering analogous questions on the concept
- Believes children’s learning outcomes mark success as a teacher
- Believes it is necessary to keep students engaged during class

**ABL**
- Believes conceptual learning is important for children to do well in future
- Understands it takes more time to teach children concepts, e.g., reading and counting

Different from ‘poor’ implementers
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1. Research objectives and design
2. Typical APS pre-primary teacher profile
   2a. Portrait of APS teacher
   2b. Journey of APS teacher with ABL solution providers
3. Challenges faced by APS pre-primary teachers
4. Recommendations for ABL solution providers
5. Introduction to PIPE and FSG Inclusive Markets
Typical journey with ABL solution providers for ‘poor’ implementer

Solution imposed
- Is briefly introduced to ABL by management
- Isn’t convinced of the value of ABL
- Is not involved in decision making and does not feel accountable for implementation

Untrained for ABL
- Does not attend training at the start of the year
- Does not remember content of the training
- Relies on teachers’ manual for implementation

Usage of a traditional curriculum
- Implements portions of a traditional curriculum as
  - material for the ABL curriculum hasn’t been delivered
  - APS administrator sold traditional workbooks to parents
  - APS administrator wants to cover additional topics not covered in ABL solution (e.g., writing work)

Deprioritization of ABL
- Believes won’t be able to complete both curricula by the end of the year
- Believes ABL is ineffective

School intervention
- Management buys traditional workbooks
- Management selects ABL solution

Teacher experience
- Is not involved in decision to use ABL
- Does not attend training or attends but does not remember much content
- Starts implementation of traditional curriculum
- Learns from other teachers and starts implementing ABL while continuing with the traditional curriculum

Solution provider intervention
- In-school product presentation
- Introductory training
- Material delivery (e.g., workbooks, teacher manuals)
Ideal journey with ABL solution providers for ‘good' implementer

**Solution provider intervention**
- In-school product presentation
- Material delivery (e.g., workbooks, teacher manuals)
- Introductory training
- Follow-up training

**School intervention**
- Management selects ABL solution

**Teacher experience**
- Attends product presentation
- Participates in decision-making with management
- Attends training
- Starts implementation of ABL curriculum

**End: Academic Year 0**
- **School intervention**: Management selects ABL solution
- **Teacher experience**: Attends product presentation

**Summer Holidays**
- **Teacher experience**: Participates in decision-making with management
- **School intervention**: Management selects ABL solution
- **Teacher experience**: Attends training

**Beginning: Academic Year 1**
- **Teacher experience**: Attends training
- **School intervention**: Starts implementation of ABL curriculum
- **Teacher experience**: Attends training

**Implications**

**Buy-in for solution**
- Is explained the benefits of ABL during product presentation
- Is convinced of the value of the ABL solution
- Is involved in decision-making and feels ownership for proper implementation

**Basic understanding of implementation**
- Attends training prior to start of academic year
- Understands and remembers content of the training
- Refers to teacher manual for further guidance

**Timely start of implementation of ABL**
- Implements ABL from the start of the academic year
- Focuses energy on a single solution as opposed to mixing ABL and traditional curriculum

**Improved implementation of ABL**
- Gradually becomes more confident in implementing ABL
- Prioritizes ABL as has seen improved child learning outcomes
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<th>Research objectives and design</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Typical APS pre-primary teacher profile</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Challenges faced by APS pre-primary teachers</strong></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Recommendations for ABL solution providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Introduction to PIPE and FSG Inclusive Markets</td>
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8 key mindset barriers and implementation challenges faced by APS teachers hinder proper implementation of ABL

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<th>Mindset barriers</th>
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<td>1. Believe they are not accountable for implementing ABL</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Believe children are learning concepts through rote techniques</td>
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<td>3. Believe traditional curriculum is more effective than ABL curriculum</td>
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<th>Implementation challenges</th>
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<td>4. Overwhelmed by the amount of new content</td>
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<td>5. Unable to understand trainings and manuals</td>
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<td>6. Unable to address parent complaints</td>
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<td>7. Unable to manage classrooms when implementing ABL</td>
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<td>8. Burdened with additional workload when implementing ABL</td>
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</table>

In addition to these 8 common barriers and challenges faced by APS teachers, other external factors like timely delivery of materials, accessibility to adequate number of material kits, student-teacher ratio etc. also affect the quality of ABL implementation. However, these factors have not been covered in detail in this document. ABL solution providers must identify the most relevant challenges and then address them accordingly. For detailed best practices on teacher training, parent engagement and implementation of ABL solutions go to [https://www.fsg.org/best-practices-solution-providers-affordable-private-school-market-urban-india](https://www.fsg.org/best-practices-solution-providers-affordable-private-school-market-urban-india)
## Barrier/ Challenge description (1/3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier/ Challenge</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quotes/ Examples</th>
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</table>
| 1 Believe they are not accountable for implementing ABL | ● Solution imposed by management  
● Excluded from the decision making process of purchasing ABL solution  
● Unaware of the benefits of ABL | “The owner of the school only told me, that we were going to implement an ABL solution and that I needed to go for training” |
| 2 Believe children are learning concepts through rote techniques | ● Unable to differentiate between rote and conceptual learning  
● Unaware of how to assess conceptual learning | “My students will be able to ‘count and give’ as they know oral counting”  
“I do not know many ways to check for understanding. I generally ask students if they have understood, if they say ‘yes’ I will continue” |
| 3 Believe traditional curriculum is more effective than ABL curriculum | ● Feel that ABL  
– does not prepare students for 1\textsuperscript{st} grade  
– covers less content than traditional curriculum  
– slows pace of learning for children | “With ABL our students are learning less than in other schools. Instead of knowing how to count till 100 by the end of UKG they will only know how to count till 50” |
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<th>Barrier/ Challenge</th>
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</table>
| Overwhelmed by the amount of new content               | • Introduced to multiple new concepts, approaches and materials  
• Inadequate time between training and implementation to absorb all the new content                                                                                                                                 | “Initially, I would get mixed up between all the material the solution provider had sent to us, especially with workbooks as I didn’t know when to use which”                                                   |
| Unable to understand trainings and manuals             | • Content includes use of technical terms without explanations, e.g., motor skills, age appropriate development  
• Most content is in English whereas teachers are more comfortable with local languages                                                                                                                                 | “I couldn’t understand what was taught to me. I was confused by the usage of technical names such as physical domain, motor skills”                                                                                   |
| Unable to address parent complaints                    | • Unprepared or untrained to address parent queries regarding the new program/ curriculum  
• Unconvinced about the benefits of the ABL solution                                                                                                                                                     | “In the training they taught us the easy activities, but when I had to prepare myself I could not understand the description of the presentation steps”                                                             |

"Some parents are unhappy that children in other schools learn to count and read from the beginning of the year, while their children spend time coloring in their workbooks"
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unable to manage classrooms when implementing ABL</strong></td>
<td>• Unable to manage children during activities as children tend to get excited and become difficult to manage</td>
<td>“It took me 2 weeks to get the students settled”</td>
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<td>• Classroom management techniques not demonstrated during the teacher trainings</td>
<td>“At the start, I faced some issues implementing the activities as the students would start running around”</td>
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<td>• Not used to conducting activities in small groups</td>
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<td><strong>Burdened with additional workload when implementing ABL</strong></td>
<td>• Continue to implement a traditional curriculum with the ABL curriculum</td>
<td>“Before ABL it would take me 1 hour every week to prepare for my classes, now it takes 1 hour every day”</td>
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<td>• Spend significant additional time reading lesson plans and preparing for the activities</td>
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<td>• Need to source materials or think of alternatives if the required materials are hard to procure</td>
<td>“I have more work this year. Since there is no writing work in the ABL curriculum we have added some writing books which is hard to complete on top of the activities”</td>
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<td>• Need to attend trainings on holidays</td>
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ABL Solution providers can address these 8 barriers and challenges through 4 staged solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers and Challenges</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Believe they are not accountable for implementing ABL</td>
<td>a) Align core product to APS market</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Believe children are learning concepts through rote techniques</td>
<td>b) Involve teachers in sales process</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Believe traditional curriculum is more effective than ABL curriculum</td>
<td>c) Align teacher training to APS context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Overwhelmed by the amount of new content</td>
<td>d) Provide teachers continuous support</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Unable to understand trainings and manuals</td>
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<td>● Unable to address parent complaints</td>
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<td>● Unable to manage classrooms when implementing ABL</td>
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<td>● Burdened with additional workload when implementing ABL</td>
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These solutions involve incremental content modification and leveraging existing processes (1/2)

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<tr>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>a</strong></td>
<td><strong>Align core product to APS market</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Provide prescriptive weekly/ daily lesson plans&lt;br&gt;• Bundle key materials for activities within the program offering&lt;br&gt;• Design teacher manual with&lt;br&gt;  – visual instructions in the form of pictures&lt;br&gt;  – instructions in English and local languages&lt;br&gt;  – minimal technical terms or explicit explanations&lt;br&gt;  – use of simple language&lt;br&gt;  – tips on how to assess conceptual learning for each concept&lt;br&gt;• Provide teaching instruction in the form of videos/ animations</td>
<td>• Product team to&lt;br&gt;  – identify and make the relevant changes&lt;br&gt;  – arrange for additional materials to be bundled&lt;br&gt;  – hire professionals for illustrations in the manuals, translation of instructions into local languages and creation of videos/ animations for instructions&lt;br&gt;  – update implementation and sales teams&lt;br&gt;• Finance team to review product pricing&lt;br&gt;• Implementation team to train the learning managers to use the updated product&lt;br&gt;• Sales team to train sales force on revised product offering</td>
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<td><strong>b</strong></td>
<td><strong>Involve teachers in sales process</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Ensure teachers are present for product demonstration during sales pitch to&lt;br&gt;  – get their buy-in on the solution&lt;br&gt;  – familiarize them with the ABL solution&lt;br&gt;  – explain the benefits of the ABL solution&lt;br&gt;  – set APS administrator expectations to give teachers time and space to adjust to the new program</td>
<td>• Sales team to&lt;br&gt;  – update the sales pitch and format to involve teachers and interact with them&lt;br&gt;  – train team on engagement with teachers (e.g., benefits to focus on, activities to demonstrate)</td>
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These solutions involve incremental content modification and leveraging existing processes (2/2)

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<th>Solution</th>
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<td>c</td>
<td>Align teacher training to APS context</td>
<td>• Implementation team to</td>
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<td>• Divide training content into multiple tranches</td>
<td>– update the training agenda and create additional collateral e.g., parent FAQs</td>
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<td>• Use demonstrations, roleplays and mock planning sessions</td>
<td>– train the learning managers to use the updated agenda and collateral</td>
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<td>• Include practical training on classroom management</td>
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<td>• Use simple and local language</td>
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<td>• Explain relevant technical terms with simple examples</td>
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<td>• Explain the difference between rote learning and conceptual learning using simple examples</td>
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<td>• Set expectations around initial challenges that teachers will face with simple solutions to address them</td>
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<td>• Provide teachers with written responses to parent FAQs</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>Provide teachers continuous support</td>
<td>• Implementation team to</td>
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<td>• Conduct periodic classroom observation sessions with feedback on implementation</td>
<td>– update the engagement calendar</td>
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<td>• Include short and regular refresher trainings, post classroom observations</td>
<td>– train the learning managers to implement the updated calendar</td>
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<td>• Create WhatsApp groups for teachers to get support on implementation concerns</td>
<td>– arrange for resources (e.g., phone, SIM) to create and manage WhatsApp groups</td>
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<td>• Conduct parent engagement sessions at the school to</td>
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<td>– explain how and why the program might be different from traditional learning methods</td>
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<td>– address specific parents concerns</td>
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These solutions involve 2-6 months of lead time to plan and build internal capacity.

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Planning and preparation: Finalized material and content: Using/ implementing updated content.
## Contents

1. Research objectives and design
2. Typical APS pre-primary teacher profile
3. Challenges faced by APS pre-primary teachers
4. Recommendations for ABL solution providers
5. Introduction to PIPE and FSG Inclusive Markets
The Problem: Children in school in India are not learning

Weak foundation in early years\(^1\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In grade 1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● 78% can’t read simple three-letter words</td>
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<tr>
<td>● 54% can’t pick 12 pencils from a stack of 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>● 82% can’t complete a simple 4-piece puzzle</td>
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Leads to poor learning outcomes in secondary school\(^2\)

<table>
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<th>In grade 10</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>● Only 35% students can read at grade 4 level</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Only 32% students can place decimal numbers in increasing order</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Only 24% can calculate area of a circle</td>
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</table>

Children are exposed to rote memorization techniques in early years and hence struggle to cope with primary education

---

1. Findings from assessment of 207 children commencing grade 1 in Affordable Private Schools (APSs), conducted by FSG in 2016-17
2. Findings from assessment of 50,000 students in grades 9 and 10, conducted by Education Initiatives in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan in 2013-14
86% of children from urban, low-income families are exposed to pedagogically inappropriate “rote” techniques

1. IRS 2014, The research selected households belonging to socioeconomic classes A3-D1 according to the New Consumer Classification I 2- FSG research. Percentage of parents of 4 and 5 year olds enrolled in a private educational institution. Assumes that those in non-APS private preprimary classes will transition on to grade one at an APS I 3-1 e.g., the teacher would stand in front of the class and ask children to memorize “A for Apple, B for Bat, C for Cat ...”

Low-income families aspire and are willing to pay for “quality education” for their children

Low-income families constitute ~70% of urban India

86% of children from low-income households in urban India attend affordable private schools (APSs)

APSs use pedagogically inappropriate “rote” teaching techniques 3
The Solution: Adopting activity based learning in early years can provide the right educational foundation to succeed in life

Why focus on the early years?

Nobel laureate James Heckman highlighted that return on investments in early years are highest compared to remedial programs later\(^1\)

Why focus on activity based learning?

Activity based learning is the right pedagogy\(^2\) in teaching children in the early years and giving them a solid foundation

---

PIPE aims to replace rote memorization technique with activity based learning in 300,000 APSs in India

Leading to children from low-income families getting a solid foundation and an equal opportunity to succeed in life
PIPEs impact: More schools and better outcomes

FSGs Pre-School Assessment Tool was used to assess 38 PIPE schools and 20 non PIPE control schools i.e. APSs where no ABL solutions have been introduced across classroom environment, student learning outcomes and engagement of teachers, owners and parents.

- **Number of APSs**
  - Jul 2015: 0
  - Jul 2016: 35
  - Jul 2017: 161
  - Jul 2018: 409

- **% of schools assessed**
  - Control average: 54%
  - PIPE average: 54%

- **Preschool assessment test score**
  - Control (20 schools)
  - PIPE (38 schools)

- **Schools served by PIPE partners**
  - Number of APSs: 35, 161, 409
Our efforts are supported by

To learn more about our work please visit www.fsg.org/pipe
Our team* brings together strategic, educational, and operational experience and expertise

Vikram Jain
*Program Lead*
- Leads the PIPE program
- 15 years of strategy, operations and consulting experience
- Worked with Monitor Inclusive Markets, McKinsey and Deloitte
- MBA, London Business School

Gauri Kirtane
*Quality Team*
- Over 10 years of experience in education leadership, with a focus on teaching, learning and curriculum design
- Most recently, Education Manager for more than 35 centers and 1200 students at the Akanksha Foundation
- EdD, University of Pennsylvania

Lakshmi Narayanan G
*Field Team, Bangalore*
- 7 years of work experience, with extensive experience in the education space in Bangalore
- MA-Development, Azim Premji University

Sriramprasad Rangarajan
*Partner Team*
- 6 years of operations and consulting experience in India and Africa
- Launched an employability assessment tool that has been commissioned on 30,000+ candidates
- Worked with HCL, PwC and Athena
- MSc Operations Research, LSE

Sana Kazi
*Program Team*
- 6 years of consulting experience in the education sector
- Worked with PwC, Center for Civil Society and Goldman Sachs
- MPA, LSE

Total team size: 14
Roles and responsibilities:
- **Partner team**: Capacity building of partners, Best practice development
- **Quality team**: Monitoring in schools, Best practice development
- **Program team**: Dissemination and program management
- **Field team**: Monitoring in schools

* The team shown here is representative of the PIPE team for 2018-19
FSG is a mission driven non-profit (501 c3) focused on Scale Social Impact

We are well known for having pioneered innovative approaches

- Catalytic Philanthropy
  *Philanthropy that considers the big picture*
- Inclusive Markets
  *Creating markets that work for everyone*
- Shared Value
  *Creating business value and social value*
- Collective Impact
  *Organizing around common goals*

We use these approaches to help global leaders create impact and promote their effective use

We leverage these approaches to run initiatives that create scale sustainable impact

- Early Childhood Education
- Low-income housing
- 100,000 Opportunities Initiative
FSG Inclusive Markets (FSG IM) believes that markets can and should benefit the poor

We believe that markets should be part of the portfolio of solutions for social change.

Our strength is in understanding how to make inclusive business models work, and how to get them to scale.

We create impact in various program areas by:

- driving new thinking for the field, and
- making change happen on the ground.

We are a “mission driven” and non-profit unit whose work is entirely public domain.