We had visited one particular village in Lucknow district several times for the ASER 2019 tool pilot. As a result, a deep relationship was built with the villagers and their children. Whenever we went to the village, “sir has come” a child would gleefully announce and suddenly, a crowd of children and parents would swarm towards us.

Today, I visited the same village once again. The sound of “sir” greeted us and children surrounded us immediately.

I asked the children of the village to tell me something about their village. Every child had something to say.

Vansh, a 10-year-old boy in the crowd who studies in class 5 in a government primary school wanted to say something in this context.

He has a friend who studies in class 4. They have been friends for four years. He tells us that they often go to school together and play afterwards.

Vansh says, “we have not fought in the last 4 years. Whenever there is resentment, it ends immediately. We will maintain this friendship in the future as well.”

Vansh told us that he feels sad because there is no playground in his village. He told us that there is no gate in the primary school. Hence, children generally play in the school ground even after
school hours. Now, a gate has been installed in the school. Vansh says, “we now face a problem as we have nowhere to play.”

Despite this, the children have found alternate places to play such as the spot below the big Banyan tree. Cold winds blow there and bird keeps chirping. In summer, every child wants to play here. After hearing Vansh’s story, I felt that the zeal of children to tell us something about their village was remarkable. Often, children do not get the opportunity to express themselves. We realized that if you give children a chance to talk about what they feel, their participation increases immediately. Children put forward their thoughts with confidence. Appreciating the work done by children helps them in moving forward.

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