

Internships at ASER Centre 2016



ASER Centre generates evidence for action while focusing on outcomes and processes in education and other social sectors. We build capacity of individuals and institutions to measure at scale, understand, communicate and act upon the findings based on our assessments and research. We aim to create a culture where rigorous measurement of outcomes is integral to action, thus bridging the gap between theory and practice, assumption and reality. Our objectives are to:

- **Measure** - produce useful evidence for action,
- **Understand** - build capacity to generate and absorb evidence, and
- **Communicate for change** - community and disseminate the evidence widely

ASER Centre is the autonomous assessment survey, evaluation and research unit of Pratham

www.asercentre.org

Units within ASER Centre

Research and Statistics Unit: The Research and Statistics Unit at ASER Centre is responsible for conducting contextual, relevant and independent research exploring a range of issues and themes across the spectrum of education in India. The idea behind the Unit was to explore more deeply key questions emanating from the Annual Status of Education Report as well as work done by Pratham in the area of programme implementation. Thus far, several longitudinal studies have been conducted by the research unit across diverse states of the country, each with its unique focus or question.

Monitoring Measurement and Evaluation (MME) Unit: Embodying ASER Centre's mission statement a Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (MME Unit) was set up in 2013. The MME unit comprises a 50-member team spread across 16 states and is responsible for developing and deploying effective monitoring, measurement and evaluation systems for development sector projects.

In 2016, the vision of the MME unit is to scale up its reach to other programs of Pratham and build internal capacities with an aim to expand externally.

Capacity Building Unit: Capacity building is one of ASER Centre's core areas of work. The importance of capacity building activities derives from the absence of a culture of measurement and analysis in India, whether within the government or outside. ASER Centre's Theory of Change focuses on building the capacity of individuals and organizations to measure at scale, understand and communicate with an emphasis on evidence-based action. All ASER Centre capacity building workshops aim to provide information and skills to individuals and organizations to collect, interpret, understand and communicate data effectively.

Assessment Unit: Assessment Unit designs assessment tools across subjects /domains for Early Childhood Education (ECE), primary and upper-primary age-groups. Additionally, assessment tools to measure teachers' effectiveness have also been created and are evolving continuously. Recently, the Unit has also started developing tools to measure impact from technology-led learning interventions. Today, the unit implements assessment projects to measure and assess the following, among others:

- Measuring district/state/national level estimates of learning outcomes
- Impact of interventions
- Pedagogical approaches and instructional strategies
- Classroom environment

Other Social Sectors: The People’s Assessment of Health, Education, and Livelihoods (PAHELI) surveys carried out in 2006 and 2011 were an attempt to explore applicability of the ASER – Pratham approach in education to other human development domains. Post the 2011 PAHELI survey, the Social Sector Unit created within ASER Centre has taken up collaborative and independent work in this arena.

Summer Internship 2015: A glimpse

Like previous years, in 2015 too, ASER Centre hosted 16 interns : Seven students from Azim Premji University (Bangalore), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Bombay), Ramjas College (Delhi), Miranda House (Delhi), Ashoka University (Sonapat), Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (Bombay) and Mata Sundri College (Delhi) and six international students from Harvard University, Princeton University, University of Illinois—Chicago and Clarks University, who spent 8 weeks in the summer working on diverse projects at ASER Centre. We also facilitated internships for three working professionals – from Cy-press Semiconductor, Seattle, Teach for India, Mumbai and Oliver Wyman, New York.

Zoila, an MPAID student at Harvard Kennedy School and Uttara Choudhary, Ashoka University, worked with the Measurement, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to create a standardised measurement framework for Pratham’s urban programmes. They out together a comparative analysis for developing a standardised measurement framework for Pratham Urban Programs on Early Childhood



Development. The objective was to map out two ECD urban programs in Bihar and Gujarat and provide a comparative framework for all aspects of the program.

Haydeliz Carrasco, an MPAID student at Harvard Kennedy School assisted the Research unit on with data analysis for an ongoing research study. She helped create a framework of analysis for understanding instructional time in Std 1 across three states in India to see how schools organise learning.

Rohey Jah, a Psychology major at Princeton University, assisted with a literature review of mental health of young mothers. She reviewed available literature on the carried out on the mental health of young mothers and review tools being used to estimate mental health.

The 2015 Internship experience: Interns speak

Intern: Uttara Chaudhuri, Ashoka University, Summer Intern 2015

“For my internship project, I was partnered with Zoila, a graduate student at the Harvard Kennedy School with extensive experience in early childhood development (ECD) in Peru. As interns with the Monitoring, Measurement and Evaluation unit, we were tasked with mapping all aspects of Pratham’s Early Childhood Urban Programs in two very different states—Bihar and Gujarat. The objective of conducting this exercise was to provide a comparative framework for these diverse programs. This would serve as groundwork for eventually creating a standardized measurement framework for all of Pratham’s early childhood urban programs. The best part of the internship was working and travelling with someone with a completely different cultural context, educational background, experience and skill set from mine. I learnt a great deal from her about so many things—how to think about systems, creating a theoretical framework from field experiences, the challenges and excitement of working in development, graduate school, travel, adventure, Peruvian culture, Spanish curse words and much more.”



Intern: Gabriel Aguirre Martens, Harvard Kennedy School, Summer Intern 2015

Gabriel worked with the Assessment Unit on Subjective Wellbeing and Learning Outcomes

“My project did not conform to any of ASER’s ongoing or projected work. The fact that they were still willing to receive me and support me in this project is in itself a first indicator of their openness and willingness to explore subjects that might not necessarily adhere to the core, and is in my opinion a very valuable characteristic of an organization involved in development; not adhering to an idea, but exploring and advancing in parallel. The free but yet supportive environment that ASER and the Assessment Unit provided was ideal to conduct my project. I am left with the satisfaction of being able to have implemented the tools I have learned in academic environment to the context of education in urban slums in India. I am hopeful that the findings will be relevant to further research and policy in this realm.”

Intern: Tanima, B.Sc. (Eco) NMIMS Mumbai, Summer Intern 2015

“I worked on early childhood development. My main responsibility was desk checking surveys. I also undertook data collection, refinement, entry, analysis and interpretation. I also improved my language skills since Hindi was the primary language used. The field visits were the highlight of my internship. They required a lot of sweat and toil but it exposed me to the ground realities.

The work environment was relaxed and constructive. My co-workers were very warm and welcoming. My mentor, Sakshi, was very helpful and accessible for any and all questions that I had during the course of the month. Overall, my experience was quite enriching and it helped with my professional as well as personal development.”

About Internships at ASER Centre

ASER Centre will not be able to provide stipends. Interns will be expected to cover their travel costs to India. Candidates will have to arrange and bear costs for accommodation and travel within the base location. The organization will provide support, where possible, in arranging accommodation for the candidate.

Travel Costs and Accommodation Costs for outside base location shall be borne by ASER Centre. Accommodation in field locations will vary depending on the situation but the candidate should expect basic communal accommodation.

Though no explicit resources may be devoted to building language understanding, a local person from Pratham/ASER Centre is expected to accompany the candidate during all field visits.

Interns are expected to spend 8-12 weeks for the internship, and will be based out of New Delhi or a State Capital. Interns may have to travel to different locations, often rural, within the country.

Interested candidates may send their CV and a short cover-letter to soumya.nair@asercentre.org highlighting why you want to intern at ASER Centre this summer.