STIR Reading Programme Evaluation

Background:

STIR (See - http://www.stireducation.org/) intervention includes forming networks of teachers, and supporting them to innovate and implement ideas and practices (micro-innovations) to improve children learning outcomes. Each teacher network consists of 10-12 schools (30-35 teachers) and is supported by cluster resource coordinators (CRCs). These teacher networks meet once every month to plan the implementation of ideas and discuss the progress with their colleagues.

For this specific project focused on early reading, teachers in STIR networks will implement at least one reading related idea in their two year journey with STIR.

ASER Centre will be conducting learning assessments of children over the next three years (2015-2018) to track the progress made in reading and comprehension levels under this programme.

Rationale of the Study:

The assessment study is designed to understand

- Whether the children under the STIR Education Programme can read and comprehend a text at grade level at the end of 3 years (2018)
- The proportion of children in successive cohorts who can read and comprehend grade level texts

Extent of Study:

The assessment study will be conducted in Varanasi and Rae Bareli districts of Uttar Pradesh

Timeline of the Assessment:

The entire assessment visits will be made for 3 years (2015-2018). In the beginning of each year, one assessment visit will be carried out. Previous year's visit will act as the baseline visit for the next year.

| Visit 1 July 2015 | → | Visit 2 July 2016 | → | Visit 3 July 2017 | → | Visit 4 July 2018 |
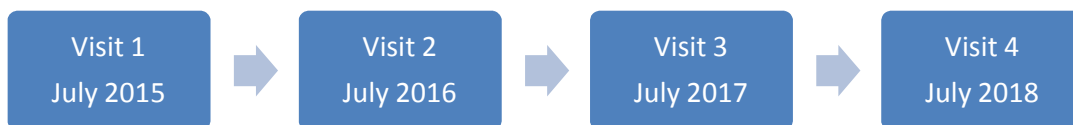
Timelines for Visit 1 (July 2015)

Timelines	Activity
By the end of May	Tool development • First draft • Field trial and data analysis • Final tool, instruction manuals and other formats
By the end of July	Recruitments • District level monitors • Field investigators
By mid-July	Training • Core team training • Field investigator training
By mid-August	Data collection in the field to be completed
By the end of August	Data entry to be completed
By the end of September	Baseline report to be presented

Methodology:

- **Assessment framework -** Keeping the objectives in mind (assessing reading), the assessment tool will be an oral, one-on-one tool which will assess grade level reading and comprehension. It will be based on the ASER reading tool but, will have tasks testing higher reading and comprehension skills.

  Uttar Pradesh has one of the lowest basic reading levels in the country. In grade V, only 44.7% children can read a grade II level text. This percentage drops to 33% in grade IV and a dismal 21.7% in grade III (ASER 2013). This implies that for the results to demonstrate what children can read, the assessment will need to have a range of reading tasks from very easy to difficult.

The tool will follow an ASER-like adaptive approach. For example, if the child cannot read words, the child will be given a lower level task i.e. letters instead of the normal progression of asking her to read a short text. This will reduce the number of tasks given to a young target group.

Along with the ASER-type reading tool, STIR is interested in assessing a smaller sample of children with EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) items. Based on field trials EGRA items comparable to ASER-type reading tool will be used.

- **Sampling –** The proposed sampling strategy generates a representative picture of each district. The study uses a two stage sample design. In each district, in the first stage, 60 treatment and 40 control schools will be sampled from the 2013 DISE school directory using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) technique[1]. In the second stage, 15 students per grade in grades 1 to 5 will be sampled randomly from each of the selected schools. Therefore, in each district the sample size is 100 schools (60 treatment + 40 control). In a district, 4500 children will be sampled in treatment schools (75 students X 60 schools) and 3,000 children will be sampled from the control schools. For EGRA components, 50% children of the total sample will be assessed.

Update: 14 May 2015

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[1] With PPS, schools with higher enrolment have a higher chance of being selected in the sample. It is the appropriate sampling technique, when the sampling units vary considerably in size. Combined with random sampling in the second stage, it ensures that each student in the district has the same probability of being selected in the sample as those in smaller sites, and vice versa.