Sampark Foundation’s 5-Step Model of change
5-Step Model of change:

For innovations to trigger change, it needs to find a mode of execution that works with the system within the system. Without execution at scale, long-term change is not likely to happen. This led to the creation of 5-step of change to transform learning outcomes in the government primary schools in 6 states.

PARTNER with the Government | 6 MoUs with 6 state governments

Change at scale is impossible unless we work with the government, working within their opportunities and constraints to drive significant gains in learning outcomes. With this in view, we signed a 5-year transformation MoUs with the state governments of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. An integral part of making the program sustainable is this partnership with government. At Sampark, we have built the processes around a robust association with the state government. Our representatives on the field, the ‘Sparks’, regularly meet and update key bureaucrats, including the District Magistrates, District Education Officers and Block Officials.

PROVIDE | 150,000 kits distributed free of cost so far | Innovation in the classroom transaction

At the core of our design is an assumption that if we can get a child excited about learning, nothing will stop her from getting to where she wants to go irrespective of all the constraints she might face on the way. We also believe that the enthusiasm of a child to learn is contagious and will energize the dormant system.

TRAIN | 200,000 teachers trained every year

The training we provide is unique and interactive as the teachers get an understanding of how to deliver each concept using the manipulatives in the classroom. We have successfully trained around 200,000+ teachers of government schools in the past year alone.

Across all the schools one teacher who teaches the grades 1 to 3 has been trained to use the kit effectively in the classroom. Teachers are trained in the interactive activity-based pedagogy. Animated videos are made available to all teachers through a mobile application, which creates a community of practitioners who are sharing and learning together.

TECHNOLOGY | 200,000 trained teachers use the Sampark Smart Shala™ App

The Sampark Smart Shala™ mobile application is a free learning platform with over 200K teachers as active users. The app provides simple and engaging content in Hindi that make learning more fun in school and at home in rural India. All content is available online and offline and one can also access it by just scanning the QR code in the multimedia workbooks.
Sampark Smart Shala™ 1.0

The design process, lasting several years, led to the development of the first version of Sampark Smart Shala™ program. The prototype was tested with a pilot program in 500 schools in Punjab 2013 with the help of a local implementation partner.

Sampark Smart Shala™ 1.0 had all the elements of success, yet it failed to deliver significant increases in learning outcomes.

Our post-facto study of this failure pointed to six possible reasons:

1. Lack of sustained support and review from the state because the program was subscale (working in just 500 schools). The partnership was at the District, rather than at the state level. We worked with external partners, depending on them for on-ground execution. This was a mistake – the program was about changing mindsets and needed a lot of passion and perseverance that we, as innovators had, but not the on-ground implementing partner.

2. While the Math program was very well accepted by the teachers, we saw that the actual aspiration of the children, the parents and the teachers was learning English. Thus, a ‘Math-only’ program was unlikely to sustain everyone’s interest.

3. The learning levels of the teachers were significantly lower than what we had assumed. We needed not just a higher investment in training, but also an ability to train the teacher throughout the year.

4. Teachers were used by the state for many non-teaching activities, leaving children sitting unattended in class. We needed to develop games that children could play and learn while the teachers are away – This turned out to be literally a game-changing learning.

5. Lastly, textbooks were not adequate to drive learning outcomes: they were text-heavy and practice-light. There was a need to add component which could aid learning.

Sampark Smart Shala™ 2.0

By 2013, these learnings had been crafted into a program that would deliver results on a much larger scale. In the same year, we started working in Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand under MOUs with both these states and under the aegis of their Chief Ministers. The program was piloted in 5,000 schools to test the newly designed Sampark Smart Shala™ 2.0, incorporating all the inputs from our failed Punjab initiative.

The results from this pilot were beyond expectations and resulted in the Chief Ministers requesting accelerated deployment of the program across the state. The success in those two states lead to invitations to implement the Sampark Smart Shala™ from the Chief Ministers of 4 more states: Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. Word of our early success was spreading fast.
The Waterfall Model

The Waterfall Model is a linear, sequential lifecycle model, which is simple to understand and use. In this model, each phase of execution must be completed before you begin the next phase. The “waterfall” model is envisioned as one where an idea or innovation spread organically to reach larger and larger number of beneficiaries. In the first two states, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh, Sampark introduced Sampark Smart Shala™ in one block in every district. The blocks were selected with the help of the education ministry.

The teachers in these blocks were trained in the SSS methodology and then these teachers acted as experts to guide the roll-out of the Sampark Smart Shala™ program in the rest of the districts. The foundation also came up with a way to reach teachers, who were technologically savvy and comfortable with the social media. Sampark also created 12 animated videos to explain how to teach a particular concept for teachers who had missed training or wanted to revise it.

Sampark Smart Shala™
4 Innovations, 3 Waves, 1 Outcome

Wave 1:
Sampark Smart Shala™ Math

In Wave 1, the foundation introduced new ways of teaching Math to the teachers and convinced them that the process would reduce their efforts and teaching time, and yet will improve learning outcomes.

Wave 2:
Sampark Smart Shala™ English

In Wave 2, teachers were trained to focus on listening and speaking before moving to reading and writing. Once again, the teacher training focused on convincing teachers that spending time in listening and speaking helped accelerate learning in reading and writing and made the learning experience fun for everyone.

Wave 3:
Sampark Smart Shala™ Games and more

In Wave 3, the teachers were trained to help children apply their learning using Sampark Smart Shala multimedia workbooks in Math and English. Besides, the board games help children learn even when the teacher is not around. There are 10 board games, with 7 levels of complexity, that allow 40 children to play at one time by grouping them based on their competency levels. Each board game takes 15 minutes to finish and come with clear objectives and instructions to be followed.
Sampark Foundation has three main divisions:

Field Operations, Program Design and Innovation, and Back Office Operations. Sampark Sparks work at the front end, they are located in each district of each state and work closely with the state’s education department. Sparks conduct teacher training; visit schools to ensure effective implementation and monitor progress; work as a link between the classrooms and the pedagogy team at Sampark. Every state has a state head, who mentors the Sparks. The state heads liaison with the government and ensures the effective implementation of the program across the state.

Teachers are at the heart of the Sampark’s execution. They drive the change in the classrooms and take credit for the improvement in learning outcomes.

Teacher training is central to the program--Master trainers appointed by the state governments and Sampark Sparks train teachers at the start of every academic year. Two teachers from every school in the state participate in the training.

The state government takes care of the expenses related to the teacher training. Trainings sessions are held at the block level-- each block has about 100–150 schools and teachers are trained in groups of 50. During the training, Math and English concepts are introduced to the teachers along with the methodology and teaching materials developed by the Sampark. The teachers are also given the Sampark app at the end of the training—the app works without the internet, gives access to video lessons to teachers.

Sampark has the capacity to train over 200,000 teachers/year. During the training, Sparks move as a team. Besides full training, refresher training is also organised for the teachers. It is a one-day affair conducted twice in the middle of the year at the cluster level (10–15 schools). Sampark Foundation also set up a help line at the state’s education department for teachers to call with questions or requests for guidance. If the volume of calls in a particular district is high, refresher training on the use of kits is provided.