

Zero to Five Challenge Refinement Q&A

Responses to Questions from the Amplify Team

Question: We are interested in learning more about the roles that each of the organizations will play in your idea – for example, will Thrive be implementing the idea? How will HHI be involved?

Answer:

Thrive Networks will implement the idea. Thrive Networks supports pioneering programs in health, education and clean drinking water, combining innovative ideas and proven delivery models that empower people to improve their lives. As background, Thrive Networks is a new nonprofit business model—an innovation network of organizations that do something very well. [A recent blog post](#) by Thrive Networks' president describes the genesis of, and rationale for, this new organizational model.

HHI has been operating in India, Uganda, and other countries for a decade. HHI recently merged with Thrive Networks to expand its reach and to benefit from the economies of scale and resources of Thrive Networks, while retaining its unique competencies, brand, programs and leadership.

Reach India, an established partner of Thrive Networks, has an expansive network in India—spanning 14 states. HHI's ECD curriculum will be delivered through Reach India's grassroots training network, which is particularly strong in the state of Bihar.

Question: What was the rationale for choosing Samastipur District in Bihar?

Answer:

A number of factors led Thrive Networks and its partners to choose the state of Bihar and Samastipur District, specifically.

Bihar

First, Bihar counts among the poorest states in India. Very low literacy levels, especially among women, coupled with poor health and low levels of awareness about health and child development, leave the state's female population particularly ill-equipped to manage health threats they and their children face. Sixty nine percent of women age 20-24 are married by the age of 18 and 58% of those age 19 are already mothers.¹ More than virtually anywhere else in India, adolescent girls and young women in Bihar lack critical knowledge to protect and nurture their children.

¹ National Family Health Survey 3 (NFHS 3), 2005-2006, August 2009.

Second, though a decade ago Bihar was characterized by political intransigence, poor law and order and corruption, political developments since 2007 have signaled a dramatic change. Improved governance has supported an economic revival in the state reflected in increased investment in infrastructure and health care facilities, greater emphasis on education, and a reduction in crime and corruption.² At the same time, the State has made strides in the areas of women's empowerment, judiciary and tax reforms, and public safety.³ Improving the health and development of vulnerable children by training parents/caregivers on early childhood development, and nurturing parenting skills, has greater potential to be sustained in an environment of progressive political leadership characterizing Bihar at this time.

Samastipur District

Thrive Networks is focusing on Samastipur District, specifically because, first, it is a particularly poor region of the state of Bihar, with a large population of 3.4 million, 96% of which is rural. For example, more than 67% of girls marry before the age of 18,⁴ compared to Bihar's average of 52%.⁵

Second, Thrive Networks' partner, Reach India, supports many strong community-based organizations, including Women Development Corporation Bihar.⁶ Reach India has a strong working experience in this district and links to government, which will provide the most credible demonstration of what works to the State Government.

Third, the District is not onset by natural disaster or internal insurgency, making it a relatively stable region in which to invest.

Fourth, it is relatively accessible from the state capital Patna, making the program accessible to internal and external stakeholders seeking to monitor and evaluate the program's efficacy and replicability. Thrive Networks believes that if the proposed ECD program can support mothers and other caregivers in this District, it will provide a strong case for replicability elsewhere.

Finally, important investments in the district by DFID, the David & Lucile Packard and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundations mean the district offers good potential to leverage resources for transformational change among girls and women, gain visibility for the program to highlight what is working, and engage district and state government to look for convergence among interventions and ways to sustain them, which, in turn, increases the potential to scale up within and beyond the district.

² Sharma, Supriya; Jha, Abhay Mohan (2008-07-15). "Bihar witnesses a quiet transformation". NDTV. Retrieved August 15, 2008.

³ Tewary, Amarnath (2007-07-09). "Where 'backward' Bihar leads India." BBC News. Retrieved April 26, 2010.

⁴ State of Health in Bihar. Population Foundation of India. 2007.

⁵ Bihar State PIP 2010-11

⁶ <http://www.wdcbihar.org.in/about.php>