CASE STUDY

Apni Shala

Empowering Apni Shala through a transformative partnership: Building comprehensive M&E systems, innovative assessment tools, and a roadmap for sustainable Impact

A case study on Atma's 1.5-Year partnership with Apni Shala

MAY 2023

About Apni Shala

Apni Shala is a Mumbai-based organisation that works on building Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills in children on the principles of play-based and experiential learning. It was founded in 2013. They have two flagship programmes:

- Khoj - An SEL-integrated primary school running in a municipal corporation school in Mumbai.
- School SEL - This programme follows a grade-specific curriculum in the 5 core areas of Social Emotional Learning(SEL) for classes 4-10 across municipal schools. They also partner with other non-profit organisations to create a platform where children can easily access SEL education throughout the year.

Apart from these they also strongly advocate for SEL for children and adults through their innovative campaigns, summits and workshops.

Problems identified

Apni Shala, an Atma graduate partner, recognised the need to enhance their monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems as their programs grew and expanded, particularly in their School SEL programme, which required more suitable tools to effectively gauge impact within a shorter implementation duration.
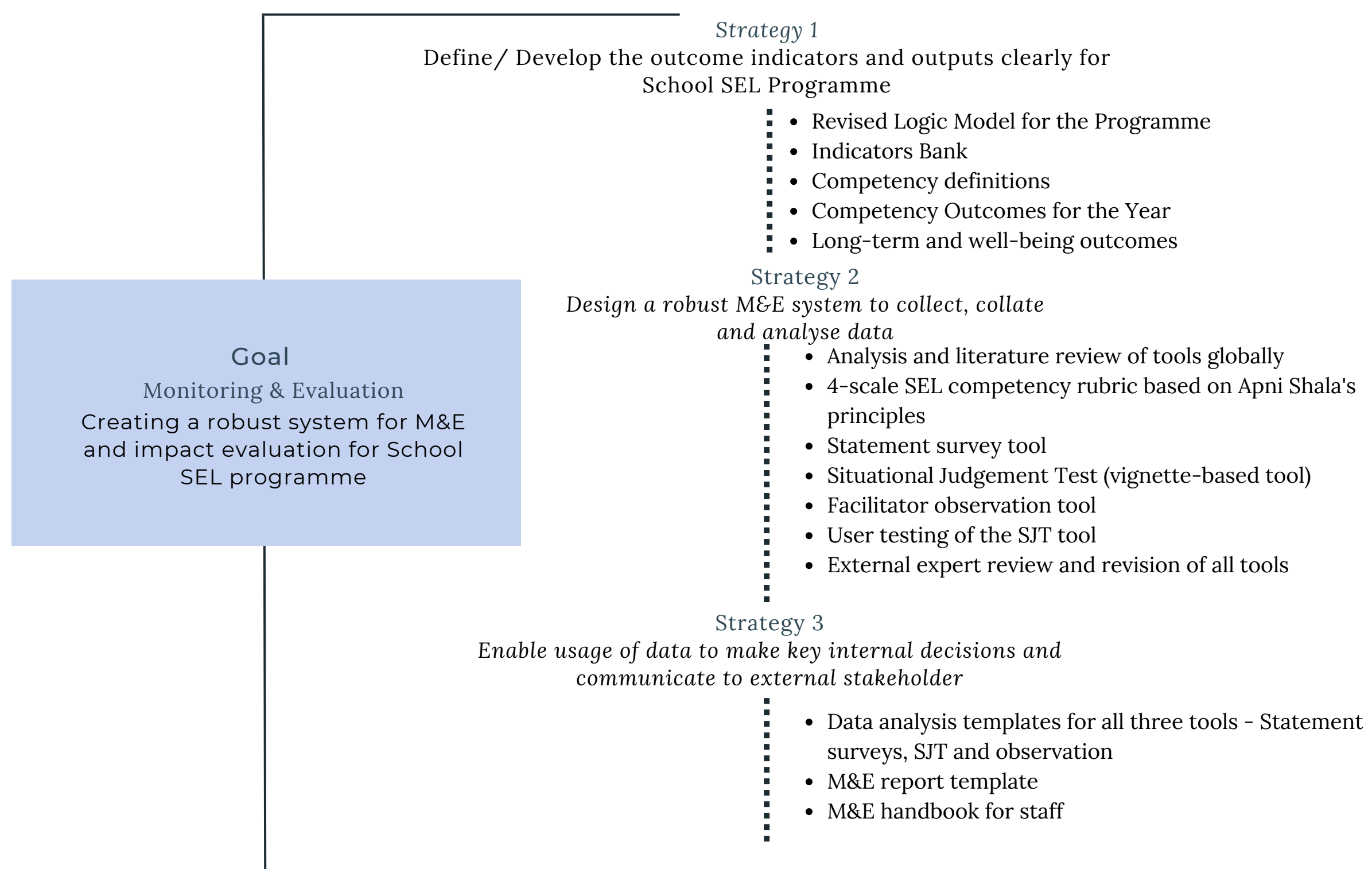
Atma's support needed in | Monitoring & Evaluation |

Atma's Approach

Through scoping calls and a review of Apni Shala's existing M&E documents, Atma identified the need for a revised logic model and a collaborative approach to building M&E tools for their School SEL programme. Together, Apni Shala and Atma embarked on a process of joint inquiry, research, and guided brainstorming to create a comprehensive framework and handbook. Employing a "Hindi-first" approach, the team ensured that outcomes, tool questions, and other elements were documented in a contextual and simple language for facilitators, with subsequent translation to English.

Solutions

In the realm of Monitoring & Evaluation, Atma successfully completed several projects in the duration of 1.5 years to support Apni Shala's organisational development.

Goal
Monitoring & Evaluation
Creating a robust system for M&E and impact evaluation for School SEL programme

Strategy 1
Define/ Develop the outcome indicators and outputs clearly for School SEL Programme

- Revised Logic Model for the Programme
- Indicators Bank
- Competency definitions
- Competency Outcomes for the Year
- Long-term and well-being outcomes

Strategy 2
Design a robust M&E system to collect, collate and analyse data

- Analysis and literature review of tools globally
- 4-scale SEL competency rubric based on Apni Shala's principles
- Statement survey tool
- Situational Judgement Test (vignette-based tool)
- Facilitator observation tool
- User testing of the SJT tool
- External expert review and revision of all tools

Strategy 3
Enable usage of data to make key internal decisions and communicate to external stakeholder

- Data analysis templates for all three tools - Statement surveys, SJT and observation
- M&E report template
- M&E handbook for staff

Outcomes Achieved

Knowledge

Through the partnership, Apni Shala has **gained a deep understanding of the key components of a well-articulated logic model**, including the **distinction between outputs, activities, and outcomes**. Leveraging their existing expertise in SEL, they further expanded their knowledge by exploring a wide range of tools, specifically Direct Assessment Tools for assessing SEL among children.

As a valuable outcome of the collaboration, **Apni Shala now possesses a readily accessible resource of diverse tool options that can be referenced and customized in the future for ongoing refinement and improvement of their tools.**

Skills

Apni Shala has enhanced their capacity in creating rubrics, conducting granular analysis, and utilising logic models to identify gaps in programme activities and tools, resulting in more efficient assessment and comprehensive representation of data.

Systems and Processes

- A comprehensive end-to-end M&E system has been developed for the School SEL programme which triangulates data from student-facing tools and facilitator observation tools. This also contains detailed data analysis templates that can be used for the next 3 years.
- Apni Shala successfully enhances its Student Outcomes framework by building upon the CASEL framework, tailoring it to their unique context. This revision has a positive spillover effect, guiding the roadmap for curriculum revision.
- Apni Shala implements a comprehensive rubric that illustrates the progression of each SEL competency, offering distinct stages in both Hindi and English.
- Apni Shala has enhanced its Statement Survey tool, aligning it with rigorous research and mapping it to every sub-competency outlined in their new framework.
- Atma and Apni Shala have developed a Situational Judgement Test, a unique tool that enables the application-based assessment of students' comprehension of SEL, marking a significant milestone in their assessment approach.
- Apni Shala has implemented an Observation Tool that enhances standardisation among facilitators, while also capturing valuable qualitative information, enabling a comprehensive assessment of their programme's impact.
- The process of tool creation, user testing, and revision sets a benchmark and serves as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Apni Shala, providing guidance for future tool revisions. The detailed documentation further facilitates easy updates to the tools and data analysis templates.

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In the space of SEL, a challenge that we have experienced is measuring impact in a way that is sensitive to the context and that recognizes the systemic nature and steady pace with which this work happens. We have been lucky to have Atma as a partner that understands this challenge and supported us in thinking through and designing for impact evaluation of our SEL programmes. The work we have been able to do with their support will help us not only document the impact and inform our programme design, but also report and communicate it effectively and ongoingly advocate for SEL to happen in schools

Amrita Nair,
Director - R&D and Advocacy
Apni Shala