# Improving the school-to-work transition rate in Hamirpur

## Problem

Hamirpur is one of the most literate districts in India. Its literacy rate of 89% (2011 Census is 15 percentage points higher than the national average of 74%. The enrolment ratios at school and college levels are also significantly higher than the rest of the country. However, this has not translated into an improvement in **skill levels of the workforce**. The attendance levels in schools and colleges were found to be extremely low, while according to most stakeholders, learning levels among students were unsatisfactory. As a result, despite high investment in educational infrastructure, there is a mismatch between demand and supply of skilled labour in Hamirpur. Due to lack of employability in the private sector, most graduates covet government jobs in the district. Since the public sector is incapable of employing so many graduates, unemployment levels are high. This is highly undesirable, as large-scale unemployment breeds social tensions, and negatively impacts the economy of the district.

## Swaniti's approach

The Swaniti team, through its interactions with a broad set of stakeholders including Mr Anurag Thakur (MP from Hamirpur), local schools, private firms and the government, realized the urgent need to improve the quality of education in Hamirpur. The Team found that poorly designed curricula and lack of innovative teaching tools were an important factor behind poor learning outcomes at the school level. In the course of its interactions with teachers, the Team also found that in many schools, curricula are designed in Hindi till Std X, after which there was an abrupt switch to English. The curriculum was also found to be outdated in many cases with no focus on life skills.

To address some of these problems, Swaniti initiated a **Yuva Shiksha programme** in some schools in Hamirpur. Yuva Shiksha introduced two major interventions in collaborated with the private / voluntary sector:

a) Innovative teaching for primary school: Swaniti collaborated with the NGO PlanetRead to develop an after-school programme to improve learning levels. The Team also worked with "**Toys-from-Trash"**, and NGO that works to create interesting pedagogic tools from waste and trash. The aim was to make learning more interesting and effective for students.
b) After-school visits for better exposure in seconday schools: Swaniti also helped schools to organize visits to local factories to provide them an exposure to shop floor work. Kraft Foods, as part of its CSR initiative, was also involved with this initiative.

In addition to the above, Swaniti also proposed a Yuva Gyan programme to evolve an assessment system to gauge learning outcomes among primary school students, and also develop a tutoring/mentoring programme for students as a supplement to regular school which could have a positive impact on their future job prospects.

## Impact

Swaniti helped to start after-school programmes in 3 schools, while the assessment programme was initiated in 4 schools. We also initiated dialogue with several vocational training institutions to improve their curriculum and training methodologies. Post the election, Swaniti aims to work with more schools, and engage more stakeholders in the effort to improve the state of education in Hamirpur.