The Good Sight

Windows to a Brighter Future

Bridging the Learning Gap

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) is a critical pillar of a nation's educational progress. Yet, millions of children in India continue to struggle with basic reading and arithmetic skills, hampering their long-term academic and socio-economic prospects. This special edition of The Good Sight brings to the forefront innovative interventions that are reshaping FLN outcomes through evidence-based strategies, collaborative approaches, and community-driven models.

Governments play a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for FLN programs. Policy reforms, infrastructure upgrades, and sustainable financing models are crucial for ensuring that every child, regardless of socio-economic background, gains access to quality education. The integration of large-scale systemic reforms and localized, community-led initiatives has proven to be a game-changer in improving early learning outcomes. Strengthening institutional collaboration and embracing data-driven decision-making further enhance the impact of these efforts.

Beyond government interventions, social sector organizations and NGOs have been instrumental in tackling deep-seated educational challenges. From professional development for educators to innovative teaching methodologies, these organizations have pioneered approaches that emphasize cognitive learning, peer-to-peer education, and contextualized curriculum development. Overcoming barriers such as resistance to new teaching methods, infrastructure deficits, and geographic constraints requires continuous adaptation and stakeholder engagement.

The private sector and philanthropic contributions have also significantly influenced FLN progress. Targeted investments in digital learning tools, early childhood resource development, and financial sustainability models ensure that successful interventions can be scaled effectively.

By fostering cross-sector partnerships, leveraging technology, and prioritizing foundational learning, India can accelerate progress toward universal proficiency in literacy and numeracy.

Editors

Asit Srivastava
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INSIDE

45 Days to Literacy by Flipping the Script

Education should be a catalyst for change, not a slow process. In a world where traditional education often takes years to yield results, ALfA is the spark that ignites literacy and numeracy in just 45 days, proving that learning can be both rapid and revolutionary.

The ALfA (Accelerating Learning for All) program by Dignity Education Vision International (DEVI Sansthan) has revolutionized literacy and numeracy education by achieving foundational skills in just 45 days. Despite skepticism by some, ALfA's innovative approach—using cognitive processes like visual recognition and paired learning without differentiation by ability—has shown remarkable results. In India, ALfA has grown exponentially, going from 20 government schools in RCT design in August 2022, to 35,000 with recent sign-ups in the first quarter of 2025.

In an ALfA class, teachers 'galvanize' students but do not teach.

Randomized Control Trials have been completed in 1117 government schools. Internationally, UNICEF-backed implementation in the Maldives and Rapid Results Initiatives in Ghana and Peru have also demonstrated significant literacy gains, leading to strong support from the governments. In India, two states have signed agreements to embed the ALfA pedagogy at zero costs in state curriculums—the ultimate direction of DEVI's efforts. Backed by a Harvard Graduate School of Education report showing substantial effect sizes, immediate adoption of ALfA could revolutionize India's literacy progress, allowing the nation to reach India's FLN (NIPUN Bharat) targets sooner than expected, and redefine the country's educational trajectory.

Journey of Growth

Dignity Education Vision International (DEVI Sansthan) began implementing its revolutionary ALfA (Accelerating Learning for All) program in schools in 2022 after eight years of active research. The non-profit was convinced that traditional approaches were failing children worldwide despite decades of investment in traditional methods, and a fundamentally different pedagogical approach was needed.

DEVI Sansthan designed revolutionary learning materials that are highly visual and intuitive, allowing completely illiterate children to recognize 10 letters and read 6 meaningful words in their language on the very first day. The ALfA approach normalizes student-to-student learning through random daily pairing, creating a one-to-one learning environment rather than the traditional one-to-many or group learning model. Since DEVI Sansthan's initial implementation in 2022, the organization refined and expanded the approach, adapting it into 34 languages (15 Indian and 19 international) to ensure its applicability across diverse contexts.

From the initial Randomized Control Trial in Shamli, Uttar Pradesh in the fall of 2022, ALfA has expanded rapidly with MOUs for implementation in 35,000 government schools spanning several states of India.

Internationally, DEVI Sansthan has conducted successful implementations in the Maldives through UNICEF support, as well as Rapid Results Initiatives in Ghana and Peru, among others.

Instead of a teacher-child transaction, in ALfA the transaction of learning is from child to child in 1:1 settings. The pairs are changed daily and randomly. Teachers demonstrate the tasks to be carried out by the pairs of children. They read out the prompts provided on each page. These prompts serve as ready-guide for the teacher. This process has opened new windows to teacher and student creativity. Children learn the 21st century skills naturally. Daily random pairing nurtures greater inclusion and equity.

From 20 to 35000 schools in 3 years

Himachal Pradesh
Ladakh
Jammu & Kashmir
Uttar Pradesh
Haryana
Rajasthan
Uttarkhand
Chhattisgarh
Assam
Mizoram
Maharashtra
West Bengal
Telangana
Odisha
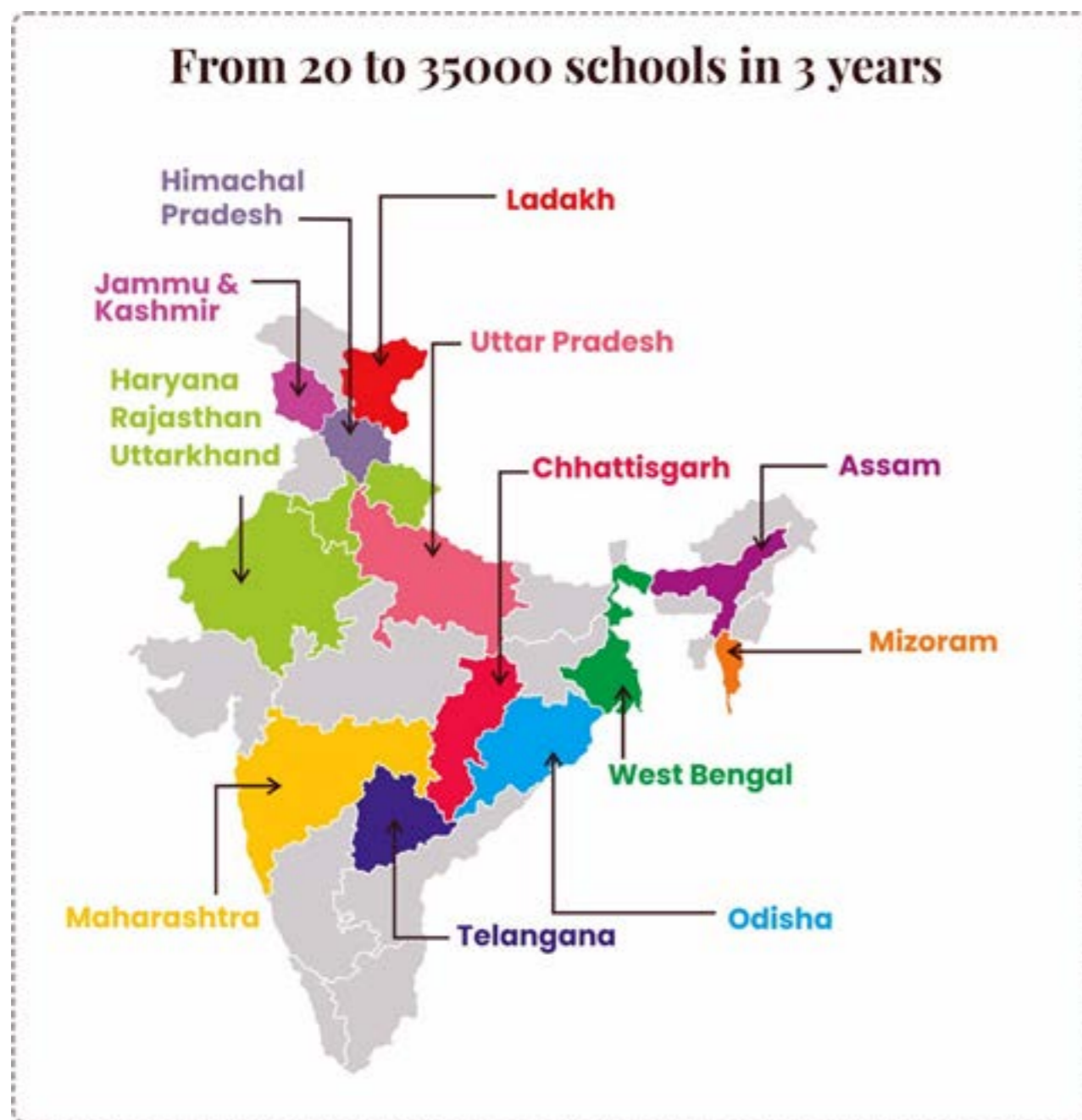
The Real Impact

DEVI Sansthan's work has been particularly effective in challenging educational environments. In Shamli, previously one of India's 10 lowest-performing educational districts, ALfA implementation led to 36% of schools reaching NIPUN status in UP government's own NIPUN Assessment Test (NAT) in which UP tested 68,352 schools across its 75 districts. Shamli went up to Rank 18 of 75 districts.

In Unnao, 47% of schools became NIPUN-compliant as per NAT, compared to Unnao district's average of 15%. These macro-level results, captured by government's own tests after just 30-45 days of implementation, demonstrate ALfA's transformative potential. Learning to read or to understand the basics of operations with ALfA is like learning to ride a bicycle which, in of itself, does not take much time. Once they have acquired these foundational skills, children move to a new trajectory of learning, developing greater confidence, speed and proficiency through time.
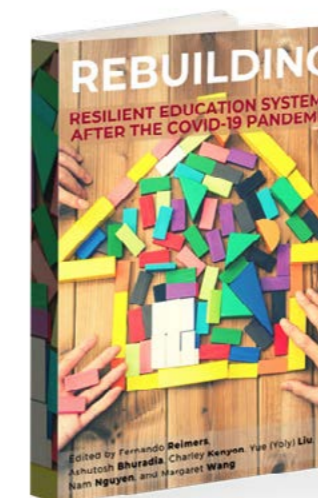
When children can read, it is well known, they can learn faster and better. When they develop the number sense and understanding of place values and operations, they grow in their mathematical ability through time. FLN is just a starting point, not the culmination of all learning. Children continue to grow with time, and lifelong, as they engage with new text.

ALfA's disruptive pedagogy has shown that learning these skills can be more natural than the DEVI Sansthan team had thought and that acquiring foundational skills need not be a long, arduous, or cumbersome process. Instead, the reverse engineering in ALfA utilizes cognitive powers of the mind to construct new learning on the foundation of these skills, instead of teacher-led, or even child-centric methods, that rely on a mix of approaches. Further, the paired learning approach enhances inclusion and equity as children work with different partners daily, developing broader social skills across socioeconomic boundaries. Beyond academics, higher attendance rates have been reported as children are more engaged in ALfA's interactive learning environment which makes learning child-led.
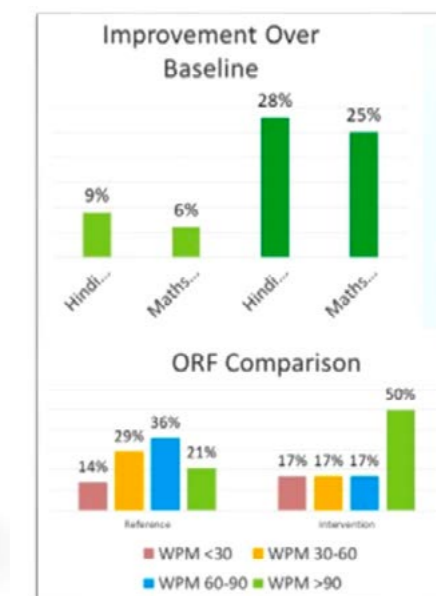
Proof in Action

The Harvard Graduate School of Education documented a Randomized Control Trial in the fall of 2022 in Shamli, Uttar Pradesh, which demonstrated remarkable effect sizes after just 40 days of implementation: 0.23 for Grade 3 and 0.89 for Grade 5. These results were published in their 2023 book *"Rebuilding Resilient Education Systems After the COVID-19 Pandemic."*

Chapter 8 of this 600-page book by Prof. Fernando Reimers and his team at Harvard GSE shows impact from the very first implementation of ALfA in India's low-performing district of Shamli. When Oral Reading Fluency was measured, 50% (intervention) versus 21% (control) group students could read at 90 words per minute or more. The program in Shamli grew from 20 (10+10) to 290 (210 intervention + 80 control) schools within three months, and led to MOU for four complete districts with 7,000 schools.

The effect size of 0.89 is particularly significant in educational research, indicating the average student in the treatment group performed better than approximately 81% of students in the control group.

Beyond Anecdotes-Third Party Reviews

The UNICEF Maldives Annual Report (2023) documented significant improvements in reading fluency and comprehension following ALfA implementation. The National Achievement Test (NAT) results from Uttar Pradesh show a direct correlation between ALfA implementation and improved NIPUN compliance rates, with ALfA schools consistently outperforming non-ALfA schools by 2X to 3X in achieving NIPUN status. Independent evaluations from Ghana and Peru implementations show rapid improvements, with students demonstrating remarkable progress in letter recognition, word reading, and comprehension skills within 45 days.
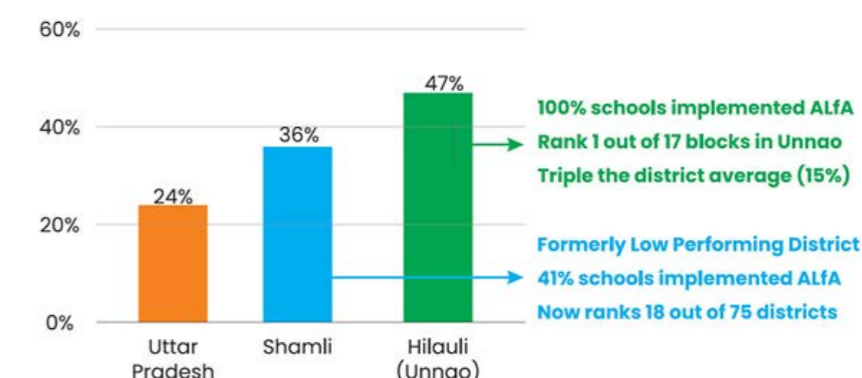
Besides international testimonies from HGSE, Maldives (UNICEF), Ghana and Peru, the results from Uttar Pradesh government's own NIPUN Assessment Test (NAT) in which 68,000 schools were tested, showed ALfA schools doubled or tripled the percentage of non-ALfA schools declared NIPUN, that too after swift, short-term interventions alongside textbooks of the government.

Closing the FLN Gap

At current improvement rates, India would likely achieve near-universal foundational literacy and numeracy only between 2045-2050. ALfA's contribution is potentially transformative. By achieving significant improvements in just 45 days, DEVI Sansthan offers the possibility of accelerating this timeline dramatically. If all states and Union Territories were to adopt ALfA immediately, India could achieve the NIPUN Bharat goals before the 2026/27 deadline, a revolutionary acceleration from the current trajectory.

Lessons from the Struggle

DEVI Sansthan faced significant skepticism from educational experts who find it difficult to believe that foundational literacy can be achieved in just 45 days. This resistance to revolutionary ideas mirrors historical patterns where innovations like the telephone or light bulb were initially dismissed. The non-profit overcome this by focusing on evidence, inviting third-party evaluations, and demonstrating results at scale, with Harvard's validation establishing crucial credibility.

DEVI Sansthan's most successful innovation has been the paired learning methodology, supported by research showing peer learning among the most effective educational strategies. The highly visual, interactive materials enable children to discover concepts independently.

Dr Sunita Gandhi, Founder, DEVI, meeting with Shri Sandeep Singh, Hon. Minister of State for Basic Education, Uttar Pradesh.

One-to-one transactions help children naturally find their "common denominator". Overall learning is far greater than when differentiated learning is practiced.

The non-profit has learned that children are far more capable than education systems acknowledge; they learn better from each other than through teacher-led instruction. The power of cognitive transfer and abstraction—having children identify sounds of familiar pictures as symbols to make words—has been underutilized in traditional education yet produces remarkable progress.

ALfA seamlessly integrates "4C Skills" (Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity) and "4C Traits" (Character, Citizenship, Climate consciousness, Connectedness) naturally through paired interactions. This holistic approach develops not just academic skills but also essential social-emotional competencies.

Collaboration and Moving Forward

DEVI Sansthan has launched the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) to provide ALfA implementation support worldwide, offering a structured pathway for governments to rapidly adopt and integrate the methodology. The organization's plan for India is to work with state governments to implement ALfA across their school systems. The approach's low cost and minimal resource requirements make it particularly suitable for scaling in resource-constrained environments. When integrated in the curriculum, it is a zero-cost proposition. (www.dignityeducation.org/rri)

Dr Sunita Gandhi, Founder, DEVI, meeting with Shri Yogi Adityanath, Hon. Chief Minister. He is holding Dr Gandhi's book on ALfA published by Bloomsbury, and Harvard Book which has an entire chapter on ALfA.

Children in Nandurbar, Maharashtra, learn Marathi through ALfA, a method that emphasizes reading for understanding from Day 1. They take turns asking three simple questions about pictures, combining sounds to form meaningful words. This joyful exchange eliminates the need to learn alphabet letters first, thereby saving time.

The ALfA Pedagogical Shift: Why It Works in 45 Days

ALfA doesn't just teach literacy; it unlocks a child's potential to learn anything, anywhere, by flipping the script on traditional education.

ALfA's rapid results come from a fundamental shift in pedagogical approach. Unlike traditional methods that teach letters in isolation followed by combining them into words over months, ALfA introduces children to whole words immediately through visual recognition. This approach aligns with neuroscience research on how the brain processes language. The program leverages cognitive transfer by having children identify familiar pictures, derive their initial sounds, and immediately use these sound-symbols to form words. This process activates multiple neural pathways simultaneously, creating stronger memory connections than sequential learning.

Random daily pairing creates what researchers call "productive failure" – the brief cognitive challenge of working with a new partner actually enhances learning by requiring adaptation and reinforcement. This practice, supported by Hattie's meta-analyses showing peer teaching with an effect size of 0.82, doubles the engagement time compared to traditional classrooms where children are passive listeners for much of the day.

The visual materials bypass traditional literacy barriers by allowing comprehension before complete mastery, creating a positive feedback loop of success that maintains motivation. As neurologist Stanislas Dehaene notes, "The brain learns to read by creating connections between visual and language regions," a process ALfA accelerates through its integrated visual-auditory approach.

When children can be empowered with the skill to learn by themselves, learning explodes. When children are paired up, they learn more through interactions. When pairs are random, children learn to appreciate diversity. They learn cooperation and communication. When they make questions for each other, they learn critical thinking and become creative. With Tina and Toto puppets, learning becomes joyful and practice happens as a natural extension of classwork. With a new known-to-unknown process, there is no need to teach letters and letter sounds. This saves a year. Children learn to read real and meaningful words from the first day.

REFERENCES
- Johnson & Johnson. (2022). *Meta-Analysis on Cooperative Learning.*
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement.*

EVIDENCE

1. **Harvard Graduate School of Education | Book Chapters | March 2023 | 68 pp**
   Professor Reimers (ed) and his graduate students (authors) review ALfA implementations in Uttar Pradesh (Chapter 8) and the Maldives (Chapter 10).
   Rebuilding Resilient Education Systems After the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2. **Disruptive Literacy | Bloomsbury | Book | July 2022 | 212 pp**
   Discover how to mobilise a people's movement for literacy, learning from famous historical examples and building a roadmap for the 21st century.
   Disruptive Literacy: A Roadmap for Urgent Global Action

3. **Accelerating Learning for All | Bloomsbury | Book | Jan 2024 | 188 pp**
   Learn in depth about the Accelerating Learning for All pedagogy, with case studies of classroom implementation in India and around the world.
   Accelerating Learning for All: A Groundbreaking Pedagogy to Transform Education

4. **UP Impact Report | Jan 2025 | 56 pp**
   Check out the data from ALfA implementations in over 7,500 schools in 4 districts of India's most populous state.
   Literate Uttar Pradesh: Sab Padhen, Sapne Bunen

5. **ALfA Numeracy Impact Report | Feb 2025 | 32 pp**
   Explore the ALfA numeracy pedagogy, and understand the data & evidence for its impact through implementations in India and around the world.
   ALfA Numeracy: Swift, Scalable, Structured

6. **Rapid Results Initiative | Jan 2025 | 8 pp**
   Understand how to conduct an ALfA research implementation, leading to scale-up and embedding in education systems.
   Rapid Results Initiative: Explore, Expand, Embed

![British Asian Trust logo]

Beyond Grants: How LiftEd Ties Funding to Results

LiftEd stands out for its innovative finance model, linking funding to measurable results for transparency and efficiency. Instead of creating a parallel system, it strengthens the existing education ecosystem through three key interventions: Development Impact Bond (DIB), EdTech Accelerator, and District Innovation Challenge.

The British Asian Trust is a diaspora-led international development organisation, delivering high-quality programmes in South Asia. It specialises in, and champions the use of, outcomes-based finance to drive positive change across the region. As pioneers of this approach in India, the Trust has a proven track record with real-world experience of putting together ambitious OBF initiatives. This work has mobilised around $40 million for large-scale, transformative projects benefiting 4.25 million people.

Picture credit: Central Square Foundation

LiftEd aims to impact the lives of up to 4 million children over 5 years by strengthening Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in India through collective action, innovation, and finance. The coalition driving LiftEd – 26 partners across the private sector and civil society – is working in alignment with the Government of India's NIPUN Bharat Mission which identifies FLN as an 'urgent and necessary prerequisite to learning'.

LiftEd stands out for its innovative finance model and systemic impact. Using principles of outcomes-based financing, funding is tied to measurable results, ensuring transparency, accountability, and efficiency. Instead of creating a parallel system, LiftEd operates by strengthening the existing education ecosystem through three key interventions:

Development Impact Bond (DIB): Partners with state governments in five states (Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar) and focuses on improving in-school learning by strengthening governance, transforming administrators into educators, and establishing effective classroom practices across public schools. It encourages data-driven discussions on FLN, regularised mentoring of teachers with actionable feedback to improve FLN, uptake of Teaching Learning Materials and lesson plans, etc.

EdTech Accelerator: Focused on enhancing learning at home, the Accelerator develops high-quality, contextually relevant EdTech solutions that are aligned with the school curriculum to improve FLN for children from low-income families. Designed for use in low-connectivity areas, these solutions integrate features such as personalised behavioral nudges, rewards and incentives, adaptive learning pathways, gamified assessments, bite-sized content automated homework grading, etc. By scaling effective EdTech solutions and generating deeper evidence on what works, the Accelerator is shaping the future of tech-based home learning for FLN.

District Innovation Challenge: A unique, state-level, innovation challenge in partnership with a large state in east India to incentivise districts to improve FLN outcomes.

The Echo of Impact: Measurable & Meaningful

So far, LiftEd has benefitted 3.3 million children in India across 15+ states. While the District Innovation Challenge is just being launched and learning outcomes assessments are ongoing for both LiftEd's DIB and EdTech Accelerator, the Trust has early evidence from third party evaluators to show improvements in practices and behaviours that support FLN outcomes – at a systemic level, a community level, a family level, and an individual level.

LiftEd DIB impact
- Number of schools reached: 8,603
- Number of teachers and government officials reached: 17,656
- Number of children reached: 7,35,029

The 'Systemic Shift Indicators' being tracked to measure incremental but meaningful shifts to strengthen FLN within the education system are also showing promising results:

- **Indicator #1 – Effective governance at the block level:** DIB education partners encouraged ~60% of government meetings at the block level to regularly review FLN data and plans.
- **Indicator #2 – Effective mentoring of teachers:** DIB education partners have seen early wins in ~50% of mentoring visits by administrators and educators embedded in the public school system, in terms of regularity as well as increased focus on actionable feedback for teachers on FLN.

- **Indicator #3 – Improved FLN practices in classrooms:** DIB education partners have observed early signs of progress in over ~30% of classrooms that are following lesson plans and consistently using Teaching Learning Materials provided to improve FLN.

LiftEd EdTech Accelerator impact
- 2.5 million+ users in 20+ states benefitting from the EdTech Accelerator
- 50% of activated users engaging on a monthly basis
- 50% of monthly users engaging on a weekly basis
- 57% of weekly users engaging for 30+ minutes per week

By supporting a cadre of organisations developing high-quality, contextually relevant EdTech solutions, the EdTech Accelerator has encouraged them to solve specific anchor challenges to improve scale, engagement, and product contextualisation for low-income segments.

Picture credit: Language and Learning Foundation

Roadblocks & Resilience

Implementing an initiative of LiftEd's scale and ambition has come with its set of challenges, particularly in navigating on ground realities and trying to move the needle at a 'systems change' level – and measure this change.

Working in an imperfect reality

A fundamental challenge was the lack of established benchmarks and outcome metrics for using systems change approach to improve foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN). Without clear data on baseline performance and expected learning gains, ensuring accountability and efficiency in an outcomes-based finance model was complex. To address this, LiftEd incorporated a grant-funded runway year, allowing our four on-ground partners time to test their interventions, develop robust metrics, refine programme strategies, and build the evidence base necessary for long-term success.

Measuring 'invisible' systemic change

Large-scale systems change in education takes time, and tracking systemic impact goes beyond short-term outcome measurements. The challenge was to balance the need for measuring long-term impact of system change with the feasibility of an outcomes-based financial model, ensuring that the risk-return profile remained reasonable for funders and partners. LiftEd addressed this by tying payments to two sets of outcomes – learning outcomes and a set of

uniquely conceptualised Systemic Shift Indicators (SSIs). SSIs are a structured approach to measure and verify incremental but meaningful shifts in key processes such as governance, teacher capacity, and classroom practices, which are critical to improve learning in the long-term. These indicators provide a more comprehensive picture of how education ecosystems

evolve over time, offering funders and stakeholders a clearer sense of progress while maintaining financial feasibility.

By tackling these challenges head-on, LiftEd has demonstrated that while outcomes-based finance in education requires adaptation to real-world constraints, innovative approaches can help mitigate risks and enhance impact.

Picture credit: Peepul

Role of Partners

Driving collective action, finance, and innovation, LiftEd has convened leaders in education across the private sector and civil society to form an 'impact multiplier', bolstering the government's commitment to India's education goals.—

- **Founding Partners:** The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, Bridges Outcomes Partnerships, the Maitri Trust, Reliance Foundation, Atlassian, Standard Chartered Bank, and UBS Optimus Foundation.
- **Programme Leader:** The British Asian Trust
- **Design & Technical Partners:** Central Square Foundation and Dalberg Advisors
- **DIB Education Partners:** Kaivalya Education Foundation, Language and Learning Foundation, Peepul, and Pratham Education Foundation
- **DIB Evaluation Partners:** ConveGenius Insights and Development Solutions
- **EdTech Education Partners:** Chimple, Ei Mindspark, Pratham Education Foundation, Rocket Learning, Sesame Workshop India, ThinkZone, and Top Parent
- **EdTech Evaluation Partners:** Ei and Sambodhi, with Professor Tarun Jain, IIM-Ahmedabad as Principal Investigator

Picture credit: Central Square Foundation

Picture credit: Central Square Foundation

Picture credit: Peepul

Picture credit: Language and Learning Foundation

Forging Ahead: What's Next?

LiftEd's approach delivers impact not only in the short-term but also in the long-term by strengthening the education system, with early yet promising signs of systems change now emerging. For instance, in the first year of the DIB alone, education partners have helped ensure that up to 60% of government meetings at the block level now regularly review FLN data and plans—translating insights into concrete actions that drive meaningful improvements in FLN.

Looking ahead, LiftEd also aims to demonstrate the power of collaboration between civil society, government, and private sector (samaj-sarkar-bazar). The initiative's strategic use of innovative finance and outcomes-based finance illustrates how impactful it is to not only blend capital but also blend diverse competencies and capabilities together as well. This has enabled each LiftEd partner to bring unique perspectives, experience, and skills to the table – allowing the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.


"By steering this initiative from conception to implementation and convening a coalition of experienced global partners, the British Asian Trust has created an opportunity to strengthen foundational learning in a scalable and sustainable manner.

Bharath Visweswariah
Executive Director, India, British Asian Trust

Driving Educational Change Through Collaboration

The Aspirational Bharat Collaborative is transforming education by fostering strong partnerships between the government and communities, driving meaningful change for a brighter future

The Aspirational Bharat Collaborative (BharatCollab), led by Kaivalya Education Foundation (KEF), is a dynamic initiative uniting over 1,000 NGOs, 30,000 volunteers, and 10,000 Panchayat leaders to uplift India's bottom 100 million. With nearly two decades of experience, KEF has been dedicated to enhancing foundational learning in public schools by empowering school leaders, middle managers, and community stakeholders.
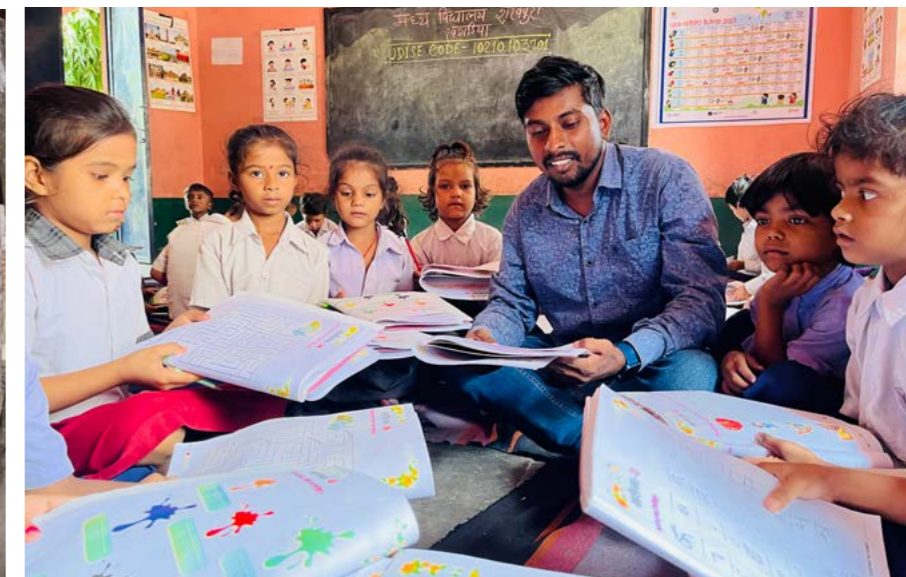
A Dual Approach: Government and Community System Change

BharatCollab works to improve education quality in India by strengthening "State Capacity" through "Last Mile Convergence" and "Hyper Local Collaboration." This initiative is built on two key pillars: Government System Change and Community System Change.

A. Government System Change: Government System Change focuses on strengthening leadership and governance structures at various levels to ensure effective policy implementation and long-term sustainability.

1. Middle Management Development

o **Coaching Skills:** Training district and block leaders to mentor and support teachers for continuous improvement.

o **Facilitation Skills:** Equipping leaders to foster peer learning and collaborative environments.

o **Change Management Skills:** Preparing leaders to manage resistance and drive systemic progress.

2. School Leaders & Teacher Development

o **Peer Learning Forums:** Providing platforms for educators to share best practices and challenges.

o **Live Action Projects:** Encouraging teachers to implement and refine new strategies in real classrooms.

o **Data-Based Decisions:** Utilizing technology and data for blended learning and joyful classroom experiences.

3. Improving School Processes

o **Active Library Use:** Promoting creativity and independent learning through functional school libraries.

o **Building as Learning Aid:** Transforming physical school spaces into interactive, learning-friendly environments.

o **Bal Sansad and Social-Emotional Learning:** Encouraging student leadership and emotional intelligence development.

B. Community System Change: This approach emphasizes the vital role of communities and parents in fostering a strong educational ecosystem beyond the classroom.

1. Partnering with Panchayats for Active School Management Committees (SMCs)

o **Supporting Governance:** Strengthening accountability and transparency in school management.

o **Mobilizing Local Resources:** Engaging communities to contribute material, knowledge, and manpower.

o **Creating Engagement Forums:** Encouraging parental and community involvement in school affairs.

2. Mobilizing Active Volunteers for Behavioral Change

o **Improving Attendance:** Addressing barriers that hinder school attendance.

o **Reinforcing Learning at Home:** Encouraging parental involvement in children's education.

o **Fostering a Learning Culture:** Strengthening home-school connections through volunteer initiatives.

3. Integration of Arts, Sports, Music, and Culture

o **Incorporating Local Art:** Enriching curricula with regional arts to foster creativity and cultural pride.

o **Promoting Physical Education:** Engaging NGOs to facilitate sports for discipline and teamwork.

o **Celebrating Cultural Wisdom:** Infusing local traditions and knowledge into classrooms.

Impact

From January 2018 to December 2022, BharatCollab achieved remarkable progress in education:

- **Demonstration Schools:** Developed 5,023 model schools with improved school processes, leading to a 12-16% increase in student learning outcomes.
- **Leadership Development:** Trained over 53,000 middle managers and headmasters in instructional pedagogy and school management.
- **Jan Bhagidaari:** Mobilized 26+ lakh citizens for enrolment drives, re-enrolled 1.2 lakh dropouts, and facilitated 6 lakh new enrolments in government schools.

Current and Future Initiatives (January 2023 – December 2024)

- **Buniyaadi Shiksha Abhiyaan:** Enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy skills for 15 lakh students across 20,000+ schools under NIPUN Bharat.
- **Zero Dropout Panchayat:** Panchayat-led initiatives to retain and re-enroll out-of-school children in 600+ Panchayats.
- **Inclusive Education:** Targeted interventions in 14 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) blocks and 300 Panchayats in Jharkhand to improve learning outcomes.

Through its comprehensive approach, BharatCollab is building a robust, sustainable educational ecosystem where both government and communities actively shape the future of learning in India.

"KEF is aligned with the Government of India's mission of NIPUN Bharat. We are enabling primary schools to achieve the FLN mission so that children can read and acquire basic numeracy skills in intervention schools spread across 24 states and two union territories.

We focus on system change. We need to ask a fundamental question: how do we bring about system change? At KEF, we believe in enabling the government instead of creating a parallel structure.

Working with the government does not always lead to system change. We need to engage with Sarkar (Government), Bazar (Market), and Samaaj (Community). Who represents this Samaaj? An NGO can represent Samaaj by bridging the gap between the community and schools. The community plays a significant role in driving system change.

System change involves both the government and the community. When we consider both aspects, there is potential for Sarkar and Samaaj to collaborate, with Bazar assisting them by providing funds to drive system change.

Manmohan Singh
CEO, Aspirational Bharat Collaborative

Scaling FLN for Lasting Impact

LLF's strategy for driving transformative change in FLN at scale is built on a three-pronged approach: Continuous Professional Development, District Demonstration Programs, and System Strengthening

Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) works to improve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) outcomes of students in primary grades at scale, in collaboration with national and state governments in India. LLF offers highly effective program designs with a system-focused and impact-driven approach. Since 2015, the Foundation has reached 16.2 million children across 10 states.

LLF's approach to bringing about transformative change for FLN at scale involves a three-pronged approach. Since the Foundation's goal is to build commitment and capacity within the government education system to plan and implement foundational learning programs at scale, LLF works in collaboration with state governments from the beginning on these three dimensions shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Continuous Professional Development (CPD): LLF designs and implements online and blended learning courses and workshops on Foundational Literacy, Foundational Numeracy, Multilingual Education (MLE) and Academic Support and Supervision for teachers, teacher educators, academic resource personnel (at block and cluster level) and administrators in the government education system. These CPD programs are all implemented in collaboration with state government institutions like State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and Samagra Shiksha.

District Demonstration Programs: These programs aim to significantly improve student learning in FLN in a block or an entire district over a period of 3-5 years by providing a structured instructional design with regular assessments, teacher training, children's learning materials, strengthened academic support for teachers and stronger emphasis on data driven decision making by capacitating the academic cadre. The focus in these programs is on equitable learning so that children at the bottom of the learning pyramid also make significant learning gains.

System Strengthening: LLF works with state education institutions (eg. SCERT, SSA, DIET) to develop effective FLN in-service training programs, school-based assessments, monitoring mechanisms, review and revision of textbooks and development of improved pre-service teacher education curricula.

Approach

State level Technical Support
- Build capacity of State Resource Groups (SRG)
- Co-create instructional design, materials, teacher handbooks etc
- Orient state level resource groups for training of teachers and mentors
- Institutional capacity building
- State LLF team of 5-6 persons

District level Demonstration Projects
- Training of teachers
- Effective supervision by mentors
- Effective cluster meetings
- Data analysis and follow-up action
- One LLF person for 100-120 schools working with the government education system

LLF works with a calibrated Hybrid model which is a combination of a linear (field demonstration) model and a non-linear (state-level system strengthening) model.

Linear Model (Demonstration at Block and District Levels):
This requires additional human resources to enhance the scale of impact, which is almost directly proportional to the staff deployed in a block or district. Within the linear model, LLF takes a low-touch model approach that is more system-oriented and the aim is to be able to improve FLN practices and student learning with only a lean team at the district level (with LLF staff to school ratios of 1: 150-200).

Non-linear Model (Technical Support and System Strengthening at State-Level):
With a team of 4-6 persons at the state level, LLF is able to influence state-level FLN academic reform work for materials, training, academic support, assessment etc. which has the potential of improving FLN results throughout the state. The impact of the purely non-linear model depends heavily on the effectiveness of the state's delivery mechanisms for training, academic support and messaging to educational administrators. A non-linear approach helps to achieve impact at higher scale with lower investment of resources.

In addition to the above two levers within a state, LLF works to influence policy and reforms at the National Level through advocacy and thought leadership.

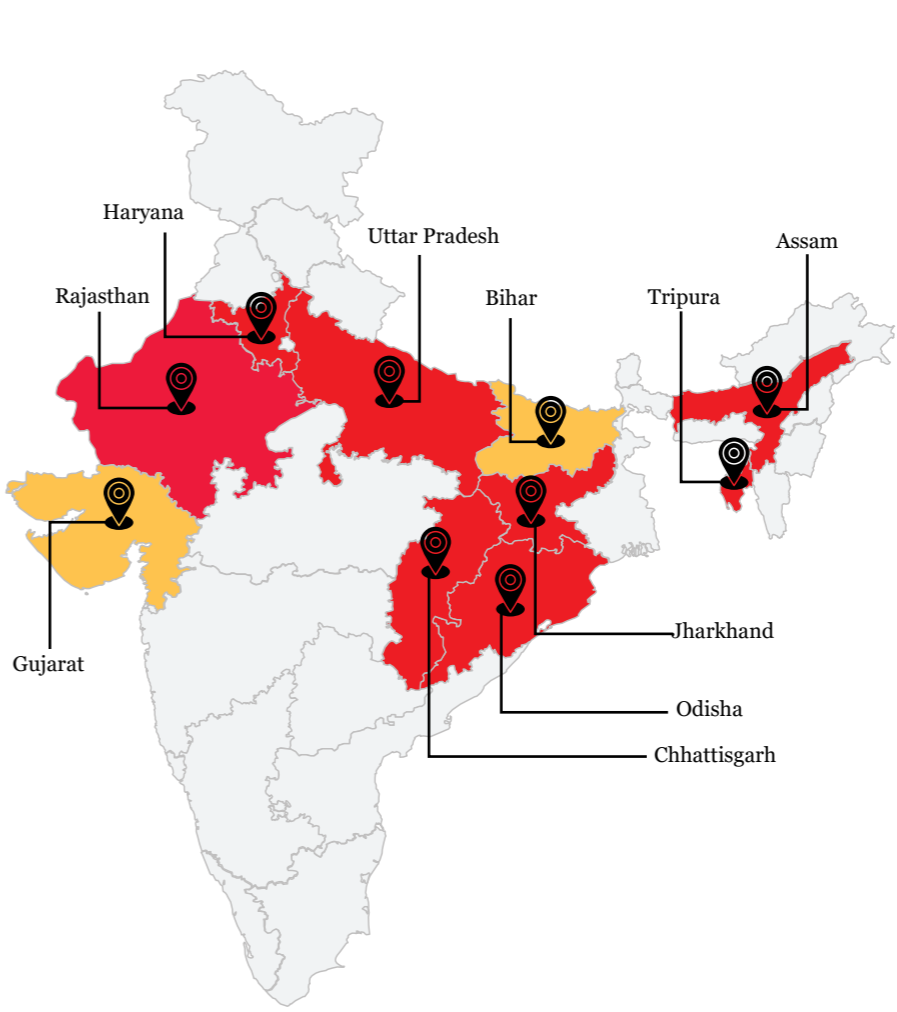### Multilingual Education Approach
Considerable research evidence shows that learning through a familiar language that children understand well, develops higher self-esteem and confidence that is crucial for learning, supports learning of additional languages, makes classrooms more participatory and results in better comprehension and learning in all subjects. It also promotes creativity, expression, higher-order thinking and reasoning. However, about 35% of children in India are taught in a language they do not speak and understand when they join school and face a moderate to severe learning disadvantage in their primary schooling years. The success of the FLN mission in India (NIPUN Bharat) in many parts of India depends on the inclusion of children's familiar languages in the teaching and learning process through a multilingual approach. LLF is working in Rajasthan, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand using this unique approach to improve FLN and is

thereby operationalising the policy recommendations given under the National Education Policy, 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework, 2023.

Impact
Impact is achieved through both direct interventions, such as District Demonstration Programs, and indirect efforts, including state-level technical support.

10 Years

10 States

10 Languages
Undertaken to support FLN & multilingual education reforms and initiatives

250,000
Teachers and 30,000 teacher mentors with improved classroom practices

1.2 million
Children have improved foundational learning outcomes in early grade

16.2 million
Children reached in 236,000+ schools through our programs

Impact through Programs
- 31% improvement in literacy and 25% in numeracy outcomes of students in Multilingual Education (MLE) intervention schools (Bastar district, Chhattisgarh, midline evaluation, Sept 2024)
- 10% improvement in literacy outcomes and 9% improvement in numeracy outcomes in the Impacts Study Report on the Neev Program in Chhattisgarh's Durg and Balod Districts (Mar 2023 - Apr 2024)
- 1.5x improvement in Oral Reading Fluency and 1.6x improvement in subtraction competencies in the Educational Initiatives Study Report in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (Dec 2023 - Mar 2024)
- 3.5x learning gains achieved compared with targets of the Development Impact Bond in Haryana (2022)
- 2x improvement in literacy learning outcomes of students in the MLE Action-Research project as compared to the non-intervention group (2022)

Challenges

Working with the government at scale comes with several challenges that can hinder the effective implementation of educational programs. Decision-making often involves multiple agencies with differing viewpoints on critical pedagogical issues, such as balancing structured pedagogy with teacher autonomy or integrating children's first languages in teaching. Budget constraints limit the development of crucial learning materials like student workbooks, while the focus on centralized, high-stakes assessments frequently fails to improve learning at the school level and may lead to data manipulation. Leadership changes at the state level disrupt continuity, creating uncertainty and potentially undoing earlier gains in structured approaches.

Government staff, burdened with heavy workloads and limited time,

often lack the motivation to engage with new ideas, particularly older employees resistant to change. Excessive data collection without clear priorities or actionable follow-up further stalls progress in improving teaching practices and student outcomes. There is also a risk of regular government responsibilities being substituted for strategic efforts, and a lack of political will can undermine the momentum for systemic reforms. These challenges highlight the complexity of working within large systems to drive meaningful and sustainable change.

Another challenge faced is related to raising of funds from domestic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sources for the programs. While the CSR landscape in India has grown significantly, many companies prefer funding short-term projects that demonstrate immediate impact, making it

difficult to secure support for long-term, systemic initiatives like foundational literacy and numeracy. Additionally, there is often a preference for localized projects aligned with a company's geographic focus, or urban centres limiting the scope of partnerships for programs focusing on remote and marginalised populations. The complexities and systemic nature of education reform further narrows opportunities, as does the competition for CSR funds among NGOs working in diverse sectors. The compliance-heavy nature of CSR funding and its emphasis on measurable outcomes also pose challenges, as systemic educational change often requires sustained efforts over time with outcomes that are not immediately quantifiable. This makes it essential to sensitise partners on the importance of supporting foundational education as a long-term investment in India's future.

Role of Partners

LLF has always been focused on scalability and sustainability of its interventions. The Foundation's initiatives are strategically designed to expand the reach and impact of government efforts to improve educational outcomes. By aligning closely with NEP 2020 and leveraging the policy's emphasis on FLN, LLF ensures that its interventions complement and amplify state-led initiatives. This alignment not only strengthens the credibility of LLF's programs but also integrates them seamlessly into broader state and national educational frameworks.

Collaboration with key state-level institutions such as State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), Samagra Shiksha, play a critical role in ensuring that LLF's programs

benefit from state-level expertise and resources. These partnerships enable the scaling of initiatives across districts, promote uniformity in educational standards, and ensure alignment with the curriculum and broader educational reforms. LLF partners with State Governments by signing MoUs for a period of 3-5 years and collaborate with National and State Education institutions like NCERT, SCERT, Samagra Shiksha, and District Education Offices for the co-creation of materials and training programs, monitoring data and analysis, follow-up action for review meetings and other administrative measures and mechanisms to support the academic eco-system.

Other Technical Collaborations: LLF's collaborations with leading NGOs such as Vikramshila, Sampark Foundation, Quest, CmF,

Madhi, Sol's ARC, Sesame Street and others are rooted in the belief that addressing the foundational learning crisis requires collective expertise and shared commitment. These partnerships allow LLF to tap into their deep understanding of local contexts, subject matter expertise innovative approaches, and proven methodologies, enabling the Foundation to design more inclusive and effective programs. These collaborations are not just about expanding LLF's reach but also about creating a platform for knowledge exchange and co-learning, ensuring that the Foundation's interventions are contextually relevant and scalable. Together, LLF aims to build a robust ecosystem that drives systemic, sustainable change in FLN outcomes for all children, especially those from marginalized communities.

Way Forward

By 2030, LLF will reach 35 million children by influencing classroom practices of more than 2 million teachers and teacher educators.

In 2025-26, LLF plans to expand its work in Balvatika across Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam, while introducing new demonstration districts focused on FLN with a Multilingual Education (MLE) approach in Odisha, Assam, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan.

The Foundation's efforts will prioritize establishing robust systems for data collection, analysis, and utilization across all programs. LLF is committed to enhancing documentation, facilitating impactful learning sessions, and fostering a strong data-driven culture within the organization.

Equity will remain at the heart of LLF's work as the Foundation deepens its focus on promoting the learning outcomes of marginalized children in classrooms. This includes developing gender-responsive teaching materials, professional development programs, and fostering inclusive classroom practices to benefit all children, particularly girls and marginalized groups. The Foundation aims to strengthen the gender focus of its programs while embedding a gender-responsive culture within the organization.

LLF will also undertake various research initiatives to advance literacy and education reform. These include continuing the National Teaching-Learning Practices Survey across nine states, studying the impact of targeted teacher training on FLN outcomes for marginalized students, conducting the What Works Hub for Global Education Study in Haryana to identify high-impact teaching strategies, and exploring systemic factors through diagnostic studies and process evaluations to enhance program implementation and outcomes.

In addition, LLF will focus on staff capacity-building programs to further enhance skills and expertise across domains while continuing to strengthen the organization's technology infrastructure to support our initiatives effectively.

"Children learn best when they get an environment of a familiar language. The key to the success of India's FLN Mission is introduction of children's most familiar languages through a multilingual approach in the early years of learning.

Dr. Dhir Jhingran
Founder & Executive Director

Reach to Teach

Transforming Learning at Scale

Reach to Teach's programme spans Classes 1-12, incorporating interventions in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Middle School strengthening, and an Exams and Beyond toolkit, forming the Comprehensive Learning Transformation Programme (CLTP)

Reach to Teach is an education-focused organisation and works at scale by partnering with State Governments and other organisations to strengthen Learning Outcomes by fostering children's natural curiosity. The organisation's approach prioritises comprehension over rote learning. Currently, the not-for-profit organisation operates in Gujarat, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya, impacting 58,000 schools, 319,000 teachers, and 7.9 million children.

Comprehensive Learning Transformation Programme (CLTP)

Since its inception in Gujarat in 2007, Reach to Teach pivoted strategically in 2019 from direct engagement on the ground in limited schools to a state-wide partnership with the Gujarat Government. Post this, the organisation expanded its outreach to three other states: Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya. This strategic shift has enabled Reach to Teach to consolidate its work of more than a decade and leverage its learning to design programmes at scale.

Reach to Teach does this by partnering with Education Departments, where the Department is the force multiplier, and by being an active part of the process, the design remains embedded within the system and hence becomes sustainable. The organisation's programme spans Classes 1-12, with specific interventions for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, Middle School

strengthening, and an Exams and Beyond toolkit. Through integrating these modules, Reach to Teach has created a Comprehensive Learning Transformation Programme (CLTP).

Starting with an assessment of learning loss, the non-profit creates play-based textbooks and collaterals aligned with the relevant Examination Board and trains teachers to roll this out. All of this is done post extensive consultation with teachers and the Department at every level to foster ownership of the programme. Recognising that learning loss hinders future opportunities, CLTP integrates play-based learning to foster engagement

among teachers and students, promoting an interactive, collaborative environment. The emphasis underlying everything the organisation creates or co-creates hinges on the three pillars of academic strengthening, capacity strengthening, and institutional strengthening.

Aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 10, and 17, CLTP focuses on State and National educational priorities.

From 3,000 to 7.9 Million: A Journey of Transformation

From reaching 3,000 children in three districts in 2007, Reach to Teach's programmes now benefit 7.9 million children across four states.

The strength of the non-profit's work was recognised by the Gujarat Government in 2021 when they commenced the World Bank-funded Mission Schools of Excellence programme. Reach to Teach was appointed the formal Technical Support Unit (TSU) to the project. The organisation works on 4 of the 7 Delivery Linked Indicators (DLIs) of the

project and has designed and carried out diverse strengthening initiatives, including designing a Decentralised District Planning tool to strengthen budgeting processes for the Education Department, Teacher Needs Assessment and Training, and strengthening Learning Outcomes by identifying hard spots and systematically bringing these down.

To illustrate the work on hard spots in Learning Outcomes—for instance, by reducing hard spots in Learning Outcomes by 25% over two years—the organisation was able to strengthen Learning Outcomes across 20,000 government schools.

In Arunachal Pradesh, Reach to Teach designed and implemented a state-specific Comprehensive Learning Transformation Programme. The strengthening led to an overall improvement in performance. Class 10 and 12 board results in 2024 showed an increase in pass rates by 10% and 12%, respectively. In the SDG Delta Report, the state went from being an 'Aspirant' in education to a 'Performer,' and even the ASER Report shows marked improvement in Literacy and Numeracy. Reach to Teach was able to do this because of the complete trust and support vested in us by the state and consultative co-creation at every stage.

Overcoming Systemic and Logistical Hurdles

Achieving systemic change across an entire state requires not just collaboration with the Government but also the foundation of trust. Establishing legitimacy as a partner of choice is critical to driving impact at scale. One of the key challenges is navigating the frequent transfers of senior government officials, which can disrupt programme continuity. To mitigate this, Reach to Teach focuses on building deep-rooted relationships at every level of the Department, ensuring

that ownership of the programme is widely shared. Trust is central to the organisation's approach, and by fostering co-owned responsibility, the non-profit creates stability even amidst administrative changes.

Geographical barriers add another layer of complexity, particularly in remote regions such as Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, where difficult terrain, low population density, and limited digital infrastructure make teacher training delivery challenging. To address this,

Reach to Teach has implemented a cascade training model, creating a network of master trainers in each district. This hybrid approach, combining in-person and digital interventions, ensures that knowledge transfer reaches the last mile. Additionally, the organisation has set up a dedicated telephone helpline and maintains responsive project offices in each state, providing immediate support to educators facing difficulties.

Political shifts and evolving policy landscapes also present potential

risks, requiring agility and adaptability. The organisation's strategy is to work in close alignment with Government priorities, maintaining transparency in its processes and remaining flexible in its design. By integrating policy shifts into programme implementation without losing sight of learning outcomes, Reach to Teach ensures that its interventions remain relevant, impactful, and resilient to change. Through these proactive measures, the not-for-profit organisation has successfully embedded its work within Government systems, ensuring sustainability and long-term educational transformation.

Stronger Together: Collaborative Efforts for Sustainable Change

Building strong partnerships with State Governments requires trust, alignment with policy priorities, and a shared commitment to educational transformation. Establishing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) ensures formal collaboration and embedding of teams within the Education Department.

Transparency, regular reporting, and demonstrated impact further strengthen these relationships over time.

To nurture partnerships with donors, it is crucial to go beyond funding and engage them in programme strategy, progress tracking, and innovation. Providing clear impact metrics, fostering active participation, and aligning with philanthropic goals ensure sustained commitment. A consultative approach fosters ownership and long-term sustainability. Co-creating solutions with teachers, education officials, and local leaders enhances relevance and encourages active participation. Continuous capacity-building, hands-on training, and structured follow-up mechanisms help embed reforms within the education system.

Collaboration thrives when all stakeholders see themselves as integral contributors to systemic change.

The Future of Learning with Reach to Teach

As Reach to Teach expands, its focus remains on deepening impact through structured interventions and partnerships. The non-profit aims to enhance digital learning solutions, integrate AI to allow teachers to develop tailored lesson plans, refine teacher training methodologies, and continuously strengthen its Monitoring and Evaluation approaches to create robust data-driven education models.

"Education is the cornerstone of opportunity. By strengthening foundational learning, we empower generations. Our commitment is to build resilient education ecosystems that harness the natural curiosity and energy that children have and support teachers to do what they do best—teach with the love for teaching.

Ratna Viswanathan
CEO, Reach to Teach

CENTRAL SQUARE FOUNDATION

Scaling Systemic Change for Lasting Learning Impact

CSF is a trusted enabler and catalytic advisor for systems reform, working towards strengthening learning systems, for all students to be NIPUN by 2026-27. At the State level, CSF works as Technical Excellence Partners/ Advisors.

Central Square Foundation (CSF), established in 2012, is a not-for-profit organisation committed to improving learning outcomes for all school-going children across India through system-led reforms. As a catalytic enabler, the Foundation drives initiatives that bridge innovation, policy, and practice, ensuring learning impact at scale across 14 states.

A Strategic Push for Foundational Learning

At the heart of CSF's mission is its strategic focus on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), which drives its collaborative efforts with 11 state governments to design and execute statewide FLN Missions. Additionally, the Foundation prioritises EdTech integration, aiming to deploy digital solutions for both in-class and at-home learning.

CSF is also deeply committed to Early Childhood Education (ECE) reforms, recognising the critical role it plays in laying a strong foundation for children's learning journeys. Additionally, CSF works in the area of School Governance, extending its system-level approach to both private and government schools to strengthen the country's education landscape.

CSF is a trusted enabler and catalytic advisor for systems reform, working towards strengthening learning systems to ensure all students become NIPUN by 2026-27. At the state level, the Foundation works as a Technical Excellence Partner/ Advisor. In FLN's system-led reforms, CSF teams collaborate as technical partners with the Departments of Education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Office, and the State Council of Educational Training and Research (SCERT) to support states in the design, rollout, and monitoring of State FLN Missions, reaching every teacher and student in every classroom.

CSF teams serve as catalytic enablers at the district level, working with education officials, mentors, and teachers to ensure effective implementation of State FLN Missions.

Positive Outcomes

From a system reform perspective, it has been heartening to see state education departments operating in 'mission mode' and designing long-lasting interventions that enhance capacity at all levels to deliver FLN outcomes for children. Notably, states have developed customised solutions suited to their specific contexts.

For example:

- Uttar Pradesh (UP) institutionalised a new cadre of academic resource persons in each block to provide training and mentoring support to all FLN teachers, tracking progress through spot assessments in schools.
- Haryana introduced the role of an FLN coordinator at the district level, working closely with district and block education officers to drive mission outcomes.
- Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Tamil Nadu hired young professionals as FLN fellows to energise districts and blocks for mission implementation.

CSF has observed states like Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and UP creating long-term solutions, such as improved textbooks, student workbooks, and teacher guides with structured daily lesson plans.

This means FLN-grade materials have been permanently enhanced and aligned with the new National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Over time, teachers and the entire system are expected to increasingly leverage these resources to support students more effectively.

Another crucial development during the mission has been a better understanding of learning outcomes (NIPUN Lakshyas). Ensuring the entire system comprehends these outcomes has led to the successful tracking of children's weekly and quarterly sub-learning outcomes. States have made significant progress in communicating these goals to stakeholders and providing high-quality assessment tools at the school, district, and state levels to continuously monitor progress.

An interesting example of using technology for governance is Uttar Pradesh's NIPUN Gunvatta app for mentoring visits. In December 2023:

- Mentors used the app to visit more than 1,79,000 schools for classroom observations and spot assessments.
- 1,05,000 teachers used the app monthly to enhance their teaching practices.

The Vidya Samiksha Kendras (VSKs) being established in various states are further improving governance. For instance, VSK Gujarat collects real-time student-wise data on learning outcomes for over 50 lakh students in government and aided schools, laying the foundation for personalised learning solutions.

Challenges

India's education landscape presents a paradox: while children are attending school, many are not learning.

According to UDISE+ (2021-22) data, the gross enrolment rate (GER) for children in the primary age group (3-10 years) is 100%. However, surveys indicate alarmingly low FLN attainment levels. The World Bank estimates India's Learning Poverty level at 56.1%, meaning more than half of children under 10 cannot read a simple text. In stark contrast, neighbouring countries such as China and Sri Lanka have significantly lower learning poverty levels, ranging between 15-18%.

The ASER 2024 report highlights:

The latest findings from the Annual Status of Education Report 2024 indicate a turning point for India's education system, showing a rise in foundational learning outcomes, especially among students in Grade 3, at both national and state levels.

- At the National level, Literacy levels improved from 20.9% (2018) to 23.4% (2024) and Numeracy levels from 20.9% (2018) to 27.6% (2024).

- At the State level, FLN level learning outcomes improved significantly across states over the years. In Uttar Pradesh, 60 districts saw at least a 5 percentage point rise in 2024 among 8 to 10-year-olds reading a Grade 2 text, as compared to 2018.

However, India still faces a huge learning crisis as the latest ASER 2024 data would demonstrate: 77% students in Grade 3 in govt. schools in rural India cannot read Grade 2 text & 72 per cent students in Grade 3 schools in rural India cannot do Subtraction. However, this crisis is led by three interdependent factors:

(i) Classroom-Level Challenges

- Ineffective teaching practices and inadequate instructional time

  o 45% of instructional time is lost yearly due to teachers managing multi-grade classrooms, absenteeism, or administrative duties.

  o 70% of teaching time is spent on traditional rote learning, which does not guarantee student comprehension.

(ii) Administrative Challenges

- Focus on infrastructure over learning outcomes

  o School monitoring visits often prioritise syllabus completion and administrative records rather than assessing student learning.

  o Teacher training success is measured by the percentage of teachers trained, rather than improvements in classroom teaching quality.

  o Only 30% of classrooms have teaching-learning materials beyond textbooks.

  o Many states lack a well-trained mentor cadre to support teachers effectively.

(iii) Structural Challenges

- Lack of focus on improving learning outcomes

  o Unlike higher grades, where board exam performance is tracked, early-grade learning remains a low priority.

  o Education systems tend to emphasise visible metrics like infrastructure, teacher recruitment, and enrolment over actual learning improvements.

  o Weak accountability—teaching quality and student performance do not influence teacher salaries, promotions, or transfers.

Solving the complex FLN challenge requires a long-term reform approach and collaboration among multiple ecosystem experts. CSF has adopted an integrated coalition approach, where the government serves as the anchor for large-scale implementation, while CSF and its partners drive research and evidence-based interventions. While building its own expertise, CSF actively collaborates with strategic and technical partners to advance FLN reforms across the country.

Looking Ahead

CSF's focus remains on sustaining the momentum of our system- reform work on FLN at the district level to drive state FLN missions to fruition. The goal is to ensure that every child achieves proficiency in both language and numeracy skills.

Furthermore, with advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), CSF is excited about leveraging technology for education. This year marks the beginning of AI integration in classrooms, aiming to enhance teaching and learning experiences for both students and teachers.

"With the rapidly evolving landscape of language models and multi-modal solutions, we are excited about enhanced teaching and learning experiences. As with all our work, we see this journey progressing from the build-and-pilot mode of pedagogically rigorous solutions to deployment at scale.

Shaveta Sharma-Kukreja
CEO & MD, Central Square Foundation

Revolutionizing Early Learning: The NEEV Way

The NEEV project strengthens ECCE for children aged 0-6 by transforming Balwadi and Anganwadi centers into child-friendly hubs with trained staff, engaged parents, and multilingual learning materials

United Way of Delhi is a not-for-profit organization working since 2008 to strengthen communities through impactful initiatives in education, health, financial stability, environment, and disaster response. It envisions a nation where every individual achieves their potential, driven by a mission to mobilize the caring power of communities.

Flagship Initiative: NEEV

The NEEV project is a flagship initiative dedicated to strengthening Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for children aged 0-6 years. Operating across Pune and Delhi NCR, NEEV focuses on upgrading Balwadi and Anganwadi centers into child-friendly ECCE hubs, fostering safe and stimulating environments that promote holistic growth and learning.

Key activities under the initiative include capacity-building programs for Balwadi and preschool staff, along with active parental involvement—especially mothers—to ensure comprehensive support for children's early development. The initiative also introduces multilingual developmental learning materials, such as workbooks, tailored to the linguistic needs of diverse communities, fostering cognitive and language development.

An innovative feature of the project is the incorporation of "Building as Learning Aid"

(BALA) art into the infrastructure of Balwadi and Anganwadi centers. By transforming walls, floors, and other physical elements into interactive learning tools, BALA enhances children's visual learning and makes educational experiences more engaging.

NEEV's interventions have resulted in measurable improvements in children's cognitive, social, and physical development, providing a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Community testimonials highlight its impact, with parents and caregivers acknowledging the program's success in enriching early learning environments and fostering significant developmental milestones.

Through its holistic and inclusive approach, NEEV demonstrates the transformative potential of early childhood education in empowering children and laying the groundwork for their future success.

Tangible Outcomes

- **Upgraded 190+ Balwadis and 50+ Anganwadi Centres:** Through strategic partnerships and meticulous planning, NEEV has successfully transformed over 240 early childhood education centres, providing safe, child-friendly, and well-equipped learning environments. These upgrades have directly impacted the lives of 7,000+ children, setting a strong foundation for their holistic development. The improved

infrastructure not only facilitates better learning experiences but also fosters a sense of trust and confidence among parents and caregivers in the system.

- **Significant Developmental Milestones:** The initiative has achieved remarkable progress in children's cognitive and motor skill development, with a reported 40% rise in these key areas. This measurable impact underscores the effectiveness of NEEV's structured curriculum, tailored activities, and child-centric approaches. The introduction of interactive tools and evidence-based learning techniques has further enhanced these outcomes, contributing to a solid groundwork for future academic success.

- **Introduction of Multilingual Resources:** Recognizing the diversity

in cultural and linguistic backgrounds, NEEV has incorporated multilingual teaching resources to promote inclusive and adaptive learning. This approach not only bridges language barriers but also fosters a sense of belonging and respect for local traditions, making education more accessible and impactful for children across diverse communities.

Intangible Outcomes

- **Empowered Mothers and Caregivers:** NEEV has transformed the role of mothers and caregivers from passive recipients to active participants in the childcare ecosystem. Through training sessions, community workshops, and hands-on engagement, caregivers have been equipped with enhanced knowledge and skills to support their children's growth and well-being. This empowerment extends beyond

education, fostering a sense of agency and leadership among women in their communities.

- **Strengthened Community Trust:** The program's transparent and inclusive implementation has significantly bolstered trust in early education systems. By addressing community-

specific needs and involving local stakeholders, NEEV has created a shared sense of purpose, encouraging sustained engagement and long-term support for the initiative.

- **Creation of an Inclusive and Child-Friendly Ecosystem:** NEEV has cultivated an environment where equal opportunities for growth are prioritized, ensuring no child is left behind. By integrating inclusivity into its framework, the program promotes diversity, equity, and belonging, which are essential for nurturing well-rounded individuals. This ecosystem not only benefits the children but also strengthens the community's social fabric by instilling values of collaboration and collective responsibility.

Pain Points
The NEEV project faced notable challenges during its

implementation: Some challenges include

1. **Infrastructure Limitations:** Many Anganwadi centres required extensive structural improvements to meet ECCE standards, delaying activities.

2. **Community Resistance:** Initial scepticism about new teaching methodologies and parental involvement needed consistent awareness efforts.

3. **Resource Gaps:** Limited access to quality educational materials and multilingual resources hindered uniform implementation.

Despite these challenges, UWD leveraged collaborative partnerships and consistent community engagement to address these hurdles effectively.

Better Together
Partnerships have been pivotal to

NEEV's success, demonstrating the power of collective action in driving sustainable community impact. The initiative has flourished through the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, each playing a distinct yet interconnected role:

Corporate Partnerships: Corporate partners such as Bajaj Finserv, SAG, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, and other corporates have played a vital role in driving impact by supporting infrastructure enhancements, providing essential materials, and making significant financial contributions. Their role extends beyond funding, bringing in innovative practices, employee volunteering programs, and long-term commitment to social responsibility. These collaborations have significantly enhanced the quality and scope of NEEV's interventions.

Government Collaboration: Local authorities have been

invaluable in facilitating the integration of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) standards within existing frameworks. Their support in approvals, policy alignment, and infrastructure permissions has enabled smooth program implementation. Additionally, their involvement has ensured sustainability and scalability, making these initiatives more robust and impactful.

Community Involvement: The active participation of mothers, caregivers, and community members has been a cornerstone of NEEV's approach. Their inputs have ensured the program remains relevant and culturally resonant. Community involvement not only enhances the program's reach but also empowers these individuals as stakeholders, enabling them to advocate for their children's developmental needs. Mothers, for instance, have been

empowered through awareness sessions, leadership roles in community groups, and direct involvement in program activities, fostering a sense of ownership and long-term engagement.

NGO Networks: Partners like CYDA (Centre for Youth Development and Activities) have enriched program execution by contributing expertise, additional resources, and contextual understanding. Their role in capacity-building workshops, technical assistance, and continuous feedback has

been critical to addressing on-ground challenges and enhancing program delivery.

These partnerships are a testament to the importance of shared vision and collaborative effort. By leveraging the strengths of diverse stakeholders, NEEV has been able to create lasting impact and build a sustainable model for community development. Further opportunities lie in expanding this network, fostering deeper engagement, and continually evolving to meet the needs of the communities served.

The Journey Forward

United Way of Delhi is committed to expanding the reach and impact of its flagship initiative, NEEV, with a vision to transform early childhood education across a broader spectrum of communities. The organization aims to scale NEEV to additional regions, focusing on underserved areas where the

need for quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is most pressing. By integrating cutting-edge ECCE methodologies and leveraging technology, United Way of Delhi seeks to enhance both the accessibility and effectiveness of its programs. These advancements will enable better learning experiences, comprehensive outreach, and

real-time assessment of children's developmental progress, ensuring no child is left behind.

By embracing technology such as mobile apps for parent engagement, data-driven tracking systems, and interactive e-learning modules, United Way of Delhi plans to bridge gaps in education delivery and monitoring. The organization also envisions working closely with government agencies, corporate partners, and local communities to strengthen the program's impact and sustainability.

NEEV's scaling efforts are aligned with the broader goal of creating equitable learning ecosystems where every child has access to quality education, regardless of geography or economic status. This vision reinforces United Way of Delhi's commitment to fostering collective action for sustainable development, empowering communities, and shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

"Our belief is rooted in the idea that every child, regardless of their socioeconomic background, deserves a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success. Through NEEV, we aim to empower future generations with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive and lead meaningful, fulfilling lives. Scaling this initiative is not just about expanding our footprint; it is about embedding a culture of inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability in early childhood education.

Dr. Sujeet Ranjan
CEO, United Way of Delhi

![peepul]

Making Math Come Alive: The Peepul Math toolkit

The Peepul Math toolkit empowers teachers in resource-constrained classrooms by making math engaging and experiential. Designed to accelerate foundational numeracy post-pandemic, it goes beyond resources to bring pedagogy to life, ensuring deeper understanding over rote memorization.

Peepul partners with government systems (currently with Govt. of Madhya Pradesh and Municipal Corporation of Delhi) to create high-engagement classrooms, ensuring children from low-income backgrounds learn and thrive. Through teacher development, academic mentorship, and governance strengthening, the organization transforms public school education—empowering every child to reach their full potential with confidence and pursue a fulfilling future.

Peepul believes that foundational numeracy is the bedrock of mathematical learning—without it, children struggle as concepts grow more complex. NAS survey data shows a steady decline in math performance across grades, highlighting the urgent need for strong early foundations. The not-for-profit organization vision is to equip every teacher with practical, engaging tools that make math accessible, meaningful, and lasting.

Math is everywhere—woven into the fabric of our daily lives. Yet, for young learners, it remains an abstract and intimidating subject. Teachers, especially in resource-constrained classrooms, struggle to bridge this gap, often lacking the time and materials needed to make math truly engaging. The Peepul Math toolkit was developed to address this gap and accelerate foundational numeracy outcomes after the pandemic, making it a game-changer for foundational numeracy. This toolkit isn't just about resources—it's about bringing pedagogy to life, ensuring that children don't just memorize math, but truly understand and experience it.

What Is the Math Toolkit?

The Peepul Math Toolkit is a carefully designed collection of teaching-learning materials (TLMs) and manipulatives that make math engaging and accessible for foundational grades. Aligned with NIPUN Bharat, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), NCERT textbooks, and insights from the Homi Bhabha

reason, and articulate their thinking.

The use of the math toolkit encourages deeper cognitive engagement, ensuring that learning is student-driven rather than teacher-dependent. Beyond convenience, the toolkit also promotes cost-effective and sustainable teaching. Many of the activities can be easily replicated using everyday materials like newspapers and wastepaper, making it a practical, scalable solution for diverse classrooms. The toolkit also comes with a teacher manual that gives descriptions and instructions on how to use the different cards, how it can be adapted for different levels of learning.

From Training to Classrooms – The toolkit implementation While the Peepul Math Toolkit is a stand-alone resource that any teacher can use for foundational numeracy lessons, its impact is maximized when integrated into structured teacher training. It is introduced during numeracy capacity-building modules for Grades 1–3 teachers as a supplement to NCERT textbooks and teacher lesson plans. The assumption is that teachers can make the most of the toolkit when they have a strong foundation in numeracy pedagogy, including the Concrete-Pictorial-Abstract (CPA) approach, math-talk, and math-meetings.

Implementation follows a holistic pathway—starting with capacity building on content, pedagogy, and TLMs, followed by ongoing

Centre for Science Education, it translates complex concepts into hands-on, interactive learning experiences. Reviewed by math experts and curriculum developers and piloted by teachers, the toolkit seamlessly integrates into daily classroom instruction.

With 13 types of manipulatives and activity cards, the Math Toolkit focuses on Number Sense and Number Operations, offering ready-to-use, research-backed resources for group and individual learning. Additionally, the Math Meeting template book helps teachers set up an interactive

Math Wall, making daily revision engaging and effective.

The toolkit is designed to maximize student practice, offering both shared and individual learning opportunities. In the foundational years, children need hands-on experience with manipulatives— both concrete and pictorial—to build a strong conceptual base before transitioning to abstract mathematical ideas. By going beyond textbooks, the toolkit empowers teachers to create dynamic, interactive math lessons, where students actively explore,

coaching and feedback as teachers incorporate these strategies into their classrooms. By embedding the toolkit within this structured support system, Peepul ensures that it is not just an additional resource but a catalyst for meaningful and sustained improvements in math teaching and learning.

Measuring Change
In 2023, Peepul, in collaboration with Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), piloted the Math Toolkit in one zone—Karol Bagh—to test its effectiveness in improving foundational numeracy instruction. Following teacher training, classroom observations in 57 schools revealed promising early adoption: 60% of teachers used the Math Meeting template

daily for revision, 77% integrated learning outcome-aligned TLMs, and 60% actively used the Peepul Math Toolkit in their lessons.

Encouraged by these results, MCD requested a scale-up to all 12 zones spanning 1573 schools, ~19000 teachers and 6.4 Lac students. To ensure system-wide adoption, Peepul worked closely with Mentor Teachers and the MCD Curriculum Team to co-create a customized version of the toolkit. This refined version was mapped to MCD's foundational numeracy module levels, making it seamlessly align with teachers' existing lesson plans.

In 2024, the toolkit was distributed across all MCD schools, with Mentor Teachers

leading the training through school-based and online workshops. To assess its real-world impact, Peepul and Mentor Teachers conducted joint classroom observations of 147 teachers. The findings were promising—29% (42 teachers) effectively used the toolkit to teach concepts, a significant milestone given that this adoption was entirely system-led. In 2024, Peepul also initiated a toolkit-impact study in the pilot zone to test for impact of the toolkit usage on student engagement and numeracy outcomes. The incoming early data indicates that the toolkit is being continually used in 54% of the classrooms (sample size-98 classrooms). Additionally, in 48% of these math lesson observed,

student engagement was more than 50% due to the use of the toolkit cards by the teachers (student engagement defined as percentage of students on task). The impact result on numeracy SLOs is still awaited but the organization is hopeful that with correct and consistent use of the toolkit the foundational numeracy outcomes will improve in these classrooms.

This journey from a pilot in one zone to full-scale implementation highlights the power of government-led reform, strategic co-creation, and teacher-driven change. For educators, nonprofits, and policymakers passionate about strong foundational learning, the Peepul FLN Math Toolkit is more than a resource—it's a step toward reimagining math classrooms across India.

Trials, Triumphs, and Takeaways

A key challenge with scaling any teaching-learning material is the associated cost implication of producing and disseminating it systemwide. While Peepul has funded the math toolkit scale-up this year, there is hope for a sustainable approach that will allow government systems to adopt it effectively.

Adoption has also been smoother in pilot zones where teachers received structured training and support, but at scale, the absence of a formal mandate and ongoing capacity building might slow down adoption rate and effectiveness.

Many of these challenges can be addressed by strengthening system collaboration, advocating for institutionalization, and building system capacity. Cost-effective replication can be enabled by hosting toolkit PDFs on system portals, embedding toolkit activities into standardized lesson plans, and training the system's academic coaches to enhance classroom implementation.

Allies in Action

The Peepul Math Toolkit's success stems from strong partnerships with MCD, driving system-led adoption. MCD customized the toolkit to align with FLN module levels, while Mentor Teachers championed its implementation through training, workshops, and classroom observations. Strengthening these partnerships will ensure long-term sustainability and lasting impact on foundational numeracy in public schools.

Scaling the Peepul Math Toolkit for Systemic Impact

The Math Toolkit is already driving change in MCD schools, with teachers integrating it into daily instruction. Encouraged by its impact, system stakeholders have requested a similar

intervention for foundational literacy. In response, Peepul is strengthening and customizing the Hindi Literacy Toolkit for scale. Originally developed and piloted in erstwhile SDMC between 2018-2020, this toolkit is now more relevant than ever, given the current gaps in Hindi foundational literacy achievement.

Additionally, English remains an aspirational language for both the system and stakeholders, yet access to effective pedagogy and teaching resources in early grades remains limited. Looking ahead, the non-for-profit organization plans to develop and pilot an English Phonics Toolkit, along with capacity-building modules for teachers. Based on early adoption and system readiness, Peepul aims to scale this intervention to further strengthen foundational literacy in MCD schools.

" Looking ahead, we see a future where every child experiences the joy of math through engaging, hands-on learning. Our vision is for these toolkits to become an integral part of every math lesson, not just in select classrooms but across entire school systems. For lasting impact, this initiative must evolve from a Peepul-driven effort into a government-owned and government-funded model.

Urmila Chowdhury
Co-founder, Peepul

" By deepening our partnerships with education departments at the city and state levels, we aim to empower governments as the driving force behind this transformation—ensuring that every teacher has access to these tools, every classroom benefits, and every child builds a strong foundation in math. The journey ahead is exciting, and with collective commitment, we can reimagine math learning at scale!

Sonia Mondal
Deputy Director, Peepul

Bridging Learning Gaps in the Himalayas

17000ft has been transforming education across government schools in Ladakh and Sikkim, creating lasting impact for students, teachers, and communities. Its initiatives focus on upgrading infrastructure, enhancing learning resources, strengthening teacher capacity, and improving pedagogical approaches to elevate the quality of education.

In the remote Himalayan landscapes of Ladakh, education is a challenge that requires innovation and resilience. 17000ft Foundation is bridging learning gaps in these high-altitude schools, ensuring no child is left behind.

Puga, in the Leh district of Ladakh, is located at over 14,000 feet. A valley of lush green meadows, mineral-rich mountains, and steaming hot springs, it is also home to a government residential school for the children of nomadic communities in the region. In October, the wind is so biting that the team layers on every jacket in their bags to withstand the cold and complete their work. Teachers are stationed here year-round, as traveling the 170+ kilometers to Leh frequently is impractical.

Despite the breathtaking landscapes and harsh weather, the school has thrived year-round, driven by the community's commitment to education.

This is just one of the many hundreds of remote frontier schools, far from Ladakh's popular tourist routes, that the 17000ft team visits frequently — whether in Anlay (or Hanley, known for the Indian

Astronomical Observatory), Itchoo (reachable only by a 3–4-hour trek in Kargil district), or Thang, a border village in Nubra Valley beyond Turtuk. Here, eager students and dedicated teachers overcome numerous challenges, striving towards a NIPUN Ladakh.

In March, as government schools reopen after 100+ days of winter holidays, classes often resume outdoors due to the biting cold inside the classrooms. Snow mounds pile up in verandas, and thick layers of snow surround the schools. After a three-month winter break, a new academic session commences with young children returning to school. However, with little to no access to learning materials in these remote villages, students lose touch with the previous year's academic concepts, severely impacting their performance, especially in subjects like Mathematics and English, where foundational understanding is critical.

Recognizing the severe learning loss during extended winter breaks, 17000ft took a proactive approach in 2022 by collaborating with the Department of Education to develop contextualized practice workbooks in English and Mathematics, for children in grades 1 to 3. Distributed before the long winter break, these grade-appropriate, learning outcomes-based workbooks received tremendous appreciation from students, parents, teachers,

headmasters, and DIET officials. This led the Department of Education to request an expansion, ensuring all 7,000+ primary students receive them before winter and summer breaks. Since then, 17000ft has designed and distributed these workbooks twice a year to all children. To support students in completing the workbooks, 17000ft follows up regularly with parents via WhatsApp and calls.

While every remote government school in Ladakh, like Puga, Chushul, Anlay, Korzok, Fotoksar, Drass, and Itchoo has qualified teachers, not all are trained in engaging pedagogical methods. Teachers need training and support on the latest pedagogies and play-based methods, as outlined in NEP 2020, to move from their traditional teaching method to make learning effective. To address this, 17000ft conducts bi-annual teacher training sessions for headmasters and primary grade teachers in Leh and Kargil, even during harsh winters with temperatures dropping to -20 to -25°C. These capacity-building workshops cover active learning methodologies, lesson planning, using local materials as teaching & learning aids, FLN pedagogies for English and Maths, creating conducive classroom environments, and understanding the holistic benefits of activities like Circle Time, among other topics. A continuous process, 17000ft has directly built the capacity of over 1,000 government primary school teachers and trained and equipped DIET Master Trainers to cascade the training to advance the NIPUN mission.

To ensure children in Ladakh are at a minimum level to achieve the NIPUN goals, 17000ft piloted a 90-day intensive disruptive learning program - Accelerated

Learning for All (ALfA) - a flagship initiative of DEVI Sansthan, in some of Leh district's remotest schools. Using concrete objects to teach mathematical operations and employing a 'known-to-unknown' approach for language learning has resulted in a remarkable 30% improvement in learning outcomes for students in Grades 1 to 3.

Testimonial by Muslim Aqil, Grade 3 – HS Chakungkha, Nubra Block, UT Ladakh

"Thanks to 17000ft Foundation, learning Math and English has become so much fun for me! Before, we mostly learned from textbooks and notebooks, but now we use exciting activities that make everything easier to understand.

In Math, I learned the place value system using ice-cream sticks. It helped me break big numbers into thousands, hundreds, tens, and ones, and now I can confidently form and decode 3-digit and 4-digit numbers. The best part was practicing with my classmates—we taught each other and cleared doubts together!

In English, I learned about rhyming words and how to identify the first and last sounds in different words. Now, I can easily create rhyming words like 'bat, cat' and 'fox, box' and recognize vowel sounds.

My classes are now interactive and enjoyable. I feel more confident in my studies and even love helping my friends. I look forward to learning more with these fun, hands-on activities!"

Simultaneously, to ensure a sustained improvement in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy, 17000ft has developed, in collaboration with Ahvaan Education Foundation, a learning outcomes framework aligned with NCF FS 2022 and contextualized lesson plans focusing on these outcomes.

To ensure parents stay invested in their children's learning at home, 17000ft launched a WhatsApp-based learning chatbot for Grades 1-3, enabling children to practice grade-appropriate content in an engaging way.

" Recognizing that to achieve the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy goals, requires a strong focus on Early Childhood Education (ECE), 17000ft is simultaneously working to strengthen ECE in the Anganwadi Centers (AWCs). 17000ft has transformed Anganwadi Centers into print-rich, child-friendly, colorful learning centers that spark curiosity in young children and stimulate learning.

All these efforts are meticulously monitored through frequent team visits to remote schools. The team treks across high mountain passes, endures sub-zero temperatures, and navigates harsh terrain, steadfast in its mission to deliver quality education to Ladakh's last mile. These initiatives help curb migration to cities for better education, ensuring that border villages remain populated—serving as the first line of defense in times of national need.

Sandeep Sahu
Co-Founder, 17000ft

About 17000ft Foundation: *17000 ft Foundation is a non-profit committed to strengthening isolated border communities in the Indian Himalayas by augmenting their education system to foster our first line of defence. Since its inception in 2012, 17000ft has transformed education in more than 1,000 government schools in Ladakh and Sikkim, benefiting over 125,000 children, 7000 teachers, and 75000 community members. Its initiatives include upgrading infrastructure, enhancing learning resources, building the capacity of teachers, and improving pedagogical approaches to enrich the quality of education.*

By ensuring access to quality education, 17000ft is not only improving education but also empowering communities to thrive in their homeland. As the foundation expands, it remains steadfast in its mission to transform all fronter communities in the Indian Himalayas. 17000ft is backed by an actively engaged board and is run on the ground by a committed team of local youth from the very villages it seeks to uplift. The Foundation, headquartered in Gurgaon, operates Project Centers in Leh & Kargil in Ladakh and Gangtok in Sikkim.

Pair Up to Power Up: Transforming Numeracy with Play, Pairs & Place Value

ALfA follows a transition from movement-based counting (kinesthetic) to tactile objects (concrete) to number symbols (abstract). Locally sourced materials provide low-cost tactile engagement, improving retention.

N umeracy is a foundational skill essential for daily life and future careers, yet millions of children in India and across the world struggle with basic mathematics. Clearly, conventional methods are insufficient.

DEVI Sansthan launched ALfA (Accelerating Learning for All) in 2022 to revolutionize literacy and numeracy education. ALfA follows a reverse methodology where children study modules

Children of Grade 2 are doing 84 ÷ 3, which would otherwise be considered very difficult to teach. ALfA makes it a lot easier. Children understand the concept of equal sharing and left over using sticks. When children work in 1:1 pairs, this brings out more in every child, including the shy, the hyperactive and the special needs child. Random pairing without differentiation by ability or gender nurtures life skills including collaboration, creativity and citizenship.

with buddies chosen at random, and without differentiation by ability. Teachers act as galvanizers, creating a warm environment, preparing resources, and encouraging self-discovery. Giving agency to the children to learn by doing and through discovery empowers children to learn faster while boosting their confidence and problem-solving skills.

The ALfA pedagogy develops the number sense by teaching place values from the beginning. Using shoulder taps, claps and snaps the process of learning scaffolds from kinesthetic to concrete to abstract. Children use locally available materials like sticks, stones, and leaves to understand numbers and operations quickly. Children work in pairs randomly assigned each day. This encourages creativity and collaboration and leads to greater equity and inclusion.

Swift: Results come in just 45 days; then children practice from their textbooks

Scalable: Low-cost, aligned with national frameworks

Structured: TLMs, Guides, Empowerment, Assessments, Support

Paired Learning in Nandurbar, Maharashtra: One child claps and snaps a number, say three claps and two snaps. The other tells the number: 32. The first one says, "Well done!" or "Try again." They then swap roles and keep practicing. Shoulder tap is a 100, and a clap up is a 1000. This comes intuitively to the children, including when a number is missing like 306 (three shoulder taps, zero claps, and six snaps). Children concentrate deeply and are fully engaged in this joyful way of learning numbers.

Children in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh using locally available concrete materials including materials gathered from nature, to represent numbers and solve questions in pairs. The number made by these children is 6,130 (6 flowers, 1 stone, 3 leaves and zero seeds). Every pair has a different number: one child makes a number, the other counts and tells what the number is. Then they swap roles, and in this manner practice their numbers well. Choosing any objects brings out creativity and resourcefulness. It feeds imagination, and improves cognitive understanding that goes from concrete to abstract, while they learn in play.

Transforming Counting into Deep Number Sense

ALfA follows a transition from movement-based counting (kinesthetic) to tactile objects (concrete) to number symbols (abstract). Locally sourced materials provide low-cost tactile engagement, improving retention.

- ALfA builds number sense early by introducing place value through movement-based patterns. After nine snaps, a clap represents ten; after ninety (nine claps) a shoulder tap marks a hundred.

- Children assign values to counters, such as matchsticks (ones), ice cream sticks (tens), and bundles (hundreds), placing them under a self-made place value strip.

- In paired learning, one child claps/snaps a number while the other represents it using matchsticks and ice cream sticks. They swap roles, responding with "Well done!" or "Try again."

- This joyful, engaging method encourages home practice with everyday objects, developing critical thinking and creativity.

- The final step transitions to abstract numbers. Children write numbers on chits or notebooks, solve questions from their peers, and explore concepts like carry-over and borrowing: ten matchsticks are exchanged for one ice cream stick, or vice versa.

- Children grasp greater/less than, ascending/descending numbers, zero and estimation through real-world applications, ensuring deep conceptual understanding over rote memorization.

DEVELOPING THE NUMBER SENSE

	Hundreds 100	Tens 10	Ones 1
Kinaesthetic	Shoulder Tap	Clap	Snap
Concrete			
Abstract	1	3	5

ALfA introduces place values from the beginning, with snaps as ones and claps as tens. Next, children represent numbers using concrete objects (small sticks for 1s, ice cream sticks for 10s, and so forth, before abstract written expression. This helps them grasp place value, even/odd numbers, patterns, ordering, zero, more/less better this way.

Near Zero Costs

One of ALfA's most remarkable features is its cost-effectiveness, which allows catalytic growth in a short time.

- **Minimal Materials:** Students don't need a textbook, instead just the teacher needs a numeracy booklet; children use locally available counters (like leaves and pebbles, or ice cream sticks & matchsticks) for activities.

- **No Workbooks Required:** A simple notebook suffices for students to write their own questions and solutions.

Children in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh are developing a strong grasp of place value, helping children understand carryover, borrowing, and regrouping intuitively. Using concrete to abstract methods, they have built swift fluency in all operations, estimation, and problem-solving.

- **Effective Online Training:** DEVI's Massive Open Online Training (MOOT) platform has transformed teacher training into an interactive and fun experience that rivals physical sessions while allowing participants to learn from the comfort of their homes or schools.

This low-cost model ensures scalability across diverse contexts while maintaining high-quality learning outcomes. Indeed, for an average cost of just $4 (Rs 320) per child – including training, learning materials, logistics, and staff costs – the program delivers a learning gain equivalent to two or more years of business-as-usual schooling. These costs go down to just Rs 90 per child when the program is implemented at large scale, and follows a TOT (Training of Trainers) model combined with online training of teachers.

This gives it a tremendous benefit: cost ratio, comparing favourably with the top recommendations in the Copenhagen Consensus report such as Teaching at the Right Level and Structured Pedagogy. ALfA is a form of Structured Pedagogy that is driven by process. Future plans to integrate ALfA pedagogies and learning processes within the government curriculum will drive costs to near zero.

Here, children in HP are making questions for each other. They are writing their problems in a notebook and checking each other's work. This boosts learning, and reduces teacher correction workload.

Sample ALfA Module

Sample Standard Textbook / Workbook Module

Evidence Behind DEVI's Work

ALfA's success is backed by measurable outcomes

		Effect Size	EYOS*
Shamli 43,787 students	29% → 61%	0.29	1.6
Lucknow 24,837 students	31% → 61%	0.68	3.8
Barabanki 8,852 students	8% → 51%	0.31	1.7
Hilauli (Unnao) 14,503 students	39% → 58%	NA*	
Solan 23,421 students	50% → 60%	NA*	
Ladakh 689 students	22% → 47%	0.64	3.6
Maldives 174 students	33% → 45%	0.58	3.2
Peru 150 students	50% → 72%	NA*	

Equivalent Years of Schooling. A World Bank report (scan/click QR) has estimated that a typical year of schooling in LMICs generates learning gains of 0.15-0.21 effect size. An intervention with 1 EYOS means children in the treatment group gained the learning equivalent of 1 year of 'normal' schooling. Here we see that many ALfA interventions, even of 45 working days, have produced dramatic improvements the equivalent of 1-3 years of normal schooling.

The Case of Leh (Ladakh)

In collaboration with the 17000 ft Foundation, and in collaboration with the government, a research implementation across 30 intervention and 5 control schools 60 days intervention groups outperformed control groups by over 2X the percentage points by the endline test:

- **Grade 1:** +38.4 percentage points higher results (Intervention: 64.4%, Control: 26%)
- **Grade 2:** +36.6 percentage points higher results (Intervention: 68.5%, Control: 31.9%)

The children in Leh, Ladakh are seen busy working in pairs. The teachers did a remarkable job of implementing ALfA in its true spirit: daily random pairing, teacher-child and child-child demos, and taking collective feedback, among other guiding principles of ALfA pedagogy.

Kupvi Block (Himachal Pradesh)
Grade 1 and 2 children are opening number chits made by their partner, and solving them using sticks. They can be seen deeply engaged and joyfully learning with each other. Such focus and concentration is rare.


Nandurbar (Maharashtra)
Children in Nandurbar, an Aspirational District of Maharashtra, are mastering mathematics two grades higher. They are grasping complex concepts like carrying over with ease.

Sustainability

Sustainability is driven by long-term government partnerships and evidence-based impact. A Rapid Results Initiative unfolds impact in three stages: Explore, Expand, and Embed.

ALfA aligns with India's National Education Policy 2020 and NIPUN Bharat, ensuring lasting integration within education systems.

MOUs with Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu division of J & K support large-scale implementation, backed by strong government collaboration and policy alignment.
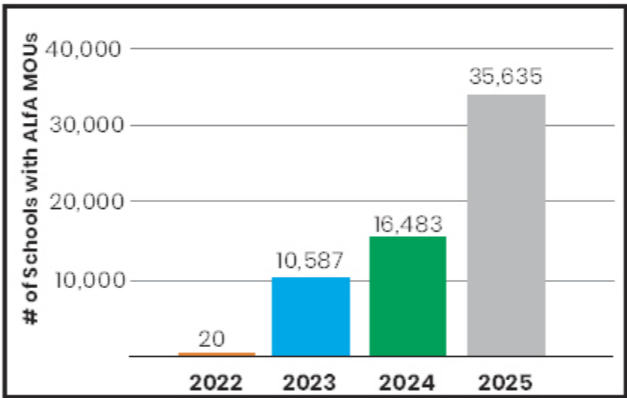
The thin ALfA Toolkits support localization, and are already replicated in 33 languages (15 Indian).

When teachers genuinely enjoy a training session—laughing through random pairings, concentrating on tasks, taking turns, encouraging each other with a simple "Well done!"—they carry that energy back to their classrooms. What once felt complex becomes clear, and they start believing their students can learn faster with these joyful methods. Most teachers deeply want their students to succeed—they just need the right tools and confidence to make it happen.

DEVI is collaborating with state and district governments, NGOs and community organisations to conduct ALfA research implementations around the country.

The Way Forward

Key lessons include the importance of teacher empowerment and the value of child-led learning models that nurture collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking. Numeracy is more than a skill—it is a foundation for lifelong learning and empowerment. By transforming mathematics education from rote memorization to joyful exploration through paired learning, kinesthetic and hands-on activities, ALfA is not only improving academic outcomes swiftly and cost-effectively, but also nurturing a brighter future for all children.

EdIndia's Data-Driven Approach to Foundational Learning

EdIndia's Data Analytics Support Program (DASP) is transforming education administration by replacing intuition-based management with data-driven decision-making. By providing administrators with advanced tools for data management, visualization, and analysis, DASP ensures more strategic and effective interventions.

Education is the backbone of a nation's progress, and ensuring quality learning opportunities for every child remains a pressing challenge in India. Sterlite EdIndia Foundation has been at the forefront of making change in the education sector by leveraging technology and data analytics. Since its inception in 2019, EdIndia has worked to transform how educational decisions are made, ensuring that interventions are targeted, effective, and impactful. By focusing on data-driven decision-making, EdIndia is trying to bridge the gap between policy-level changes and on-ground implementation, making quality education a reality for many children across the country.

Data Analytics Support Program (DASP) – The Power of Data in Education

EdIndia's flagship initiative, the Data Analytics Support Program (DASP), has emerged as a change-making effort to enhance education administration through the intelligent use of data. Traditional education management has long been dependent on intuition and conventional practices, often leading to gaps in the process of implementation. Through DASP, EdIndia is trying to address this issue by equipping education administrators with sophisticated tools for data management, visualization, and analysis, which are allowing them to make informed, strategic decisions.

Data can transform education by providing actionable insights that optimize resource allocation, enhance learning outcomes, and track learner progress. This forms the core of EdIndia's data analytics support program. The program enables administrators to analyze student performance, identify gaps in learning, and implement timely interventions.

This has led to significant improvements in how education policies are executed at the grassroots level, particularly in government schools. For instance, EdIndia's collaboration with the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) on its Mission Admission project involved managing school admission data for over 100,000 students, enabling MCGM to achieve its target in 75% of the estimated time.

The Impact of EdIndia's DASP
- More than 265 million data points have been processed
- More than 500 real-time decisions facilitated
- Implementation across 17 projects in 4 states
- 717 government administrators regularly utilizing EdIndia's interactive dashboards

The Chhattisgarh Case Study

Problem Statement: Addressing the Gaps in Foundational Learning

In Chhattisgarh, the state identified a critical challenge in improving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) among students from Anganwadi to Class 3, especially in rural and tribal areas. Despite ongoing efforts, the assessment revealed some gaps in learning outcomes, with many students struggling to achieve basic proficiency in reading and mathematics. The lack of data-driven insights made it difficult to pinpoint areas of concern and implement targeted interventions.

To tackle this, the goal was to create a structured system that could track the learning progress of 909,517 students from 26,536 schools, identify struggling students, and allocate resources more effectively.

For this, the state took proactive steps to enhance its FLN strategy by initiating a large-scale assessment program to evaluate student performance across districts.

Role of EdIndia: Supporting the State's Vision

Sterlite EdIndia Foundation introduced an advanced analytical framework by collaborating with the Chhattisgarh state to strengthen its FLN initiative. This framework integrated:

- **Student Development Index Metrics:** Providing a comprehensive overview of learning outcomes.

- **Social Audit Results:** Offering insights into the socio-economic factors influencing student performance.

Through this collaboration, the state education department gained access to interactive dashboards and real-time analytics, which helped administrators make evidence-based decisions. This data-driven approach allowed for:

- District-wise performance tracking to identify priority areas
- Timely interventions for students falling behind in literacy and numeracy
- Optimized resource allocation based on specific regional needs
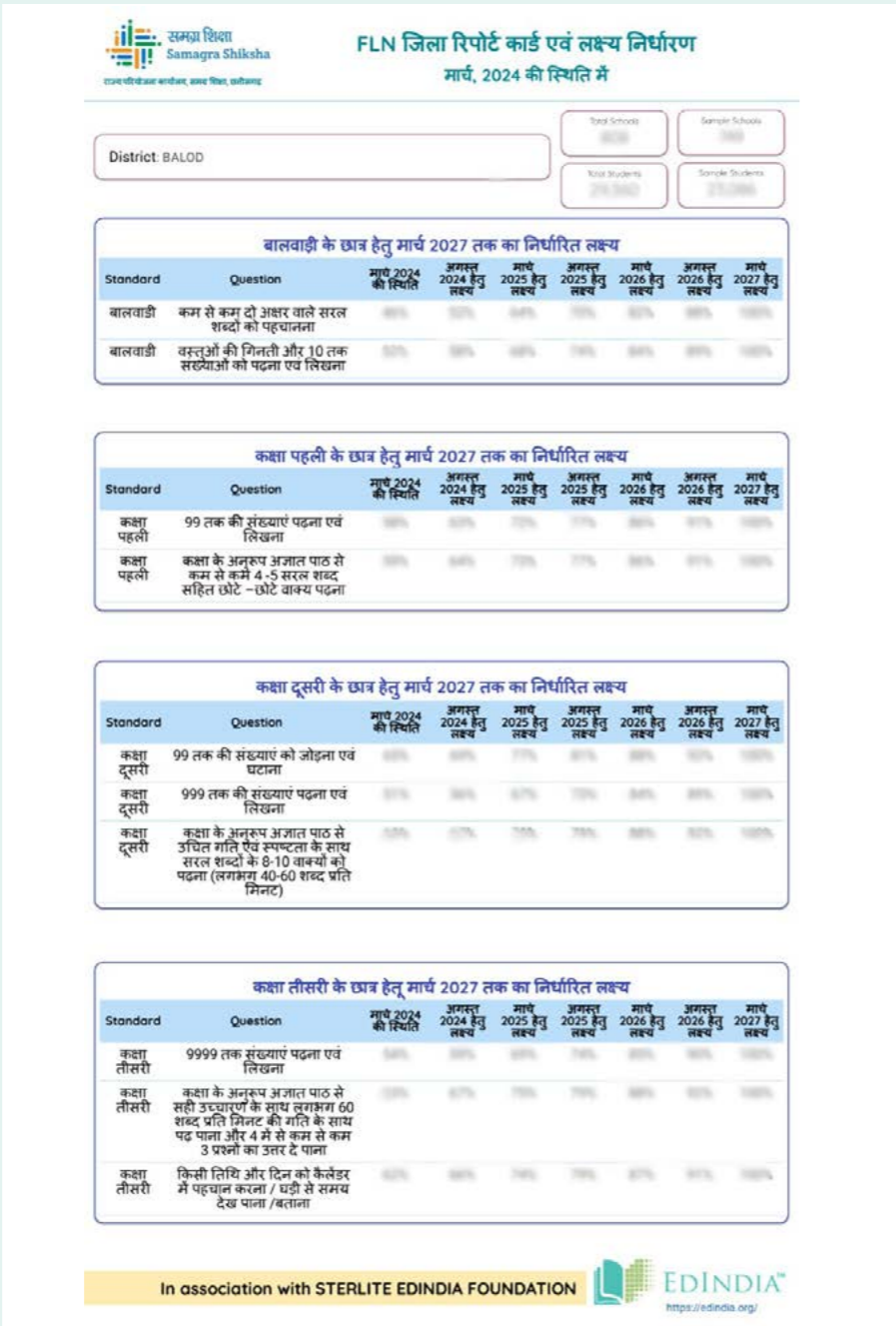
From Data to Difference

The data-driven approach led to concrete outcomes:

- **Precision in FLN Performance Assessment:** District-wise rankings and performance metrics provided unparalleled clarity on educational gaps.
- **Interactive Decision Support:** Dynamic dashboards enabled administrators to identify high-performing districts and areas requiring intervention instantly.
- **Data-Driven Resource Allocation:** Targeted resource distribution based on specific regional needs improved efficiency in achieving FLN targets.
- **Accelerated Target Achievement:** With insights from DASP, the state implemented timely interventions, helping achieve FLN milestones ahead of schedule.

Beyond measurable results, the initiative drove transformational impact:

- **Enhanced Policy Decision-Making:** State education bodies gained robust capabilities for data-backed interventions.
- **Strengthened Administrative Capacity:** Educators and officials developed confidence in data-based educational improvements.
- **Sustainable System Change:** Demonstrated how systematic data analysis can influence long-term education policies.
- **Collaborative Progress:** Fostered stronger engagement between administrators, policymakers, and educators in improving FLN outcomes.

Turning Roadblocks into Breakthroughs

Like any transformative initiative, the implementation of DASP has not been without its challenges. One of the most significant hurdles faced during the initial phases was data quality. Inconsistencies in data collection posed a serious obstacle, as unreliable data could compromise the effectiveness of interventions. Many education administrators were initially hesitant to embrace data-driven decision-making, largely due to a lack of familiarity with advanced analytics tools.

To overcome these challenges, EdIndia introduced a replicable FLN Program Tool designed to standardize data collection while allowing for flexibility in future modifications. This tool ensured greater accuracy, consistency, and usability of data, making it easier for administrators to trust and engage with the insights generated. Moreover, extensive training sessions were planned to build the capacity of government officials and educators, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively utilize data analytics in their daily operations.

Collaborating For Change

The success of DASP is deeply rooted in effective partnerships. Collaboration has been a cornerstone of EdIndia's approach, ensuring that all stakeholders, from government bodies to grassroots educators, are aligned in their efforts to enhance education outcomes.

A crucial aspect of this partnership model has been the coordination of state-wide data collection efforts. By working closely with government education departments, EdIndia has been able to streamline data-gathering processes, ensuring accuracy and reliability. This has been instrumental in creating a robust database that serves as the foundation for informed decision-making.

Capacity building has also been a key focus area. Training programs conducted in partnership with state governments have helped education administrators and teachers develop the necessary skills to leverage data effectively.

These sessions have empowered educators to interpret data insights and implement targeted interventions, ensuring that students receive the support they need to succeed.

EdIndia's collaboration with policymakers has played a vital role in promoting a culture of data-driven governance. By providing real-time insights and trend analysis, the foundation has enabled education officials to track progress, identify emerging challenges, and implement timely interventions. This has not only improved the efficiency of education management but has also strengthened the overall education ecosystem.

> " Data-driven decision-making is valuable addition to our education management approach, helping us enhance planning and implementation strategies. We are definitely interested in doing this type of assessments frequently for the benefit of system. Collaborating with organizations like EdIndia has supported our ongoing efforts to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy initiatives, ensuring that data translates into meaningful action for students and educators alike. The report developed is very useful and lot of activities as well as decisions could be taken based on this type of report. I thank the team who supported in every step from the beginning to end.
>
> **Dr. M. Sudhish,**
> Assistant Director, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Chhattisgarh

Scaling Up for Nationwide Impact

The success of DASP in Chhattisgarh has demonstrated the immense potential of data-driven education management. As EdIndia looks to the future, the organization aims to scale up its initiatives, ensuring that more states across India benefit from targeted, data-backed interventions.

A key focus moving forward will be the establishment of regular data collection cycles by state education departments. By institutionalizing data analytics within the education system, EdIndia aims to create

a sustainable model that can continuously track progress and refine strategies based on fresh insights. The expansion of the DASP model to additional states will ensure that more children receive the support they need to develop essential literacy and numeracy skills.

Enhanced collaboration with state governments will also be a priority. By strengthening partnerships with education departments, EdIndia aims to further integrate data-driven decision-making into policy formulation, ensuring that education reforms are both

evidence-based and impactful.

As India works towards achieving the FLN targets set by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, initiatives like DASP stand as an example of innovation and progress. By harnessing the power of data, EdIndia is trying to create an impact in education, which has the potential to transform lives, empower educators, and build a future where every child has the opportunity to learn and thrive. With its commitment to data-driven transformation, EdIndia is ensuring that no child is left behind in the journey toward quality education.
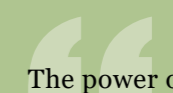
> " The power of data analytics in education is not just about numbers, it's about insights that shape the future of millions of children. At EdIndia, we are committed to ensuring that every child receives a strong foundation in literacy and numeracy, paving the way for a brighter future.
>
> **Sonakshi Agarwal**
> Director, Sterlite EdIndia Foundation

My e-School - Democratization of EdTech

My e-School Program" makes technology accessible to students by leveraging existing resources for a simple, affordable, and scalable EdTech solution. It eases teachers' workload with training, ensuring a sustainable, long-term impact on education.

P ratham InfoTech Foundation (PIF) has been relentlessly working for the last two decades to bridge the ever-expanding digital divide in the country through its purpose-driven EdTech innovations and programs.

The Foundation firmly believes in finding simple solutions to complex problems. Learning outcomes in government schools in villages of India have been impacted by multiple factors. A high student-to-teacher ratio leads to insufficient personalized attention for students, resulting in a lack of engagement and interest, further compounded by weak

foundational learning. This issue is exacerbated by an inadequate number of teachers, who are also burdened with non-academic responsibilities. This complex problem requires a long-term, affordable, and scalable solution.

In the last decade, many government and government-aided schools have been provided with digital tools like tablets, smart TVs, and projectors, as the use of digital tools in teaching is believed to have a positive impact on learning outcomes. However, there have been challenges in the use of these tools.

The foremost challenge is the lack of knowledge on how to effectively use these tools, coupled with resistance from teachers who are set in their traditional teaching methods. Additionally, the unfounded fear that smart TVs might replace teachers has led to these tools remaining unused. Logistical issues, such as irregular electricity supply and lack of internet access, further discourage their use. As a result, the majority of students in these schools underperform in Math, English, Science, and Social Science subjects.

While analyzing the constraints and challenges, the PIF team realized that the solution lay within the schools themselves. If the team could encourage the acceptance of digital tools as a complement to classroom teaching and motivate teachers to adopt a blended teaching and learning methodology, many of the identified problems could be

addressed.

Thus, the "My e-School Program" was born, focusing on moving beyond the traditional 'blackboard' approach and integrating technology with education. The program enhances teachers' instructional methods through an offline digital platform, enabling a hybrid teaching model.

Under this program, schools that already have digital tools receive training and encouragement to use them, while schools without digital tools are equipped through corporate partnerships. Schools are provided with EdTech content called 'Digital Sakshar' completely free of cost. This includes 3,500+ subject-wise and grade-wise videos aligned with the curriculum. The content can be used both online and offline once installed on digital devices.

Teachers undergo extensive

training and receive ongoing support to effectively use digital tools and videos to complement classroom teaching.

The integration of audiovisual aids has not only helped students grasp abstract and complex concepts but has also fostered self-learning. With digital tools, students can revise and reinforce their lessons even in the absence of teachers. The confidence gained by both teachers and students in using digital technology has brought us closer to a Digital India, bridging traditional teaching methods with education technology.

In its first year, the program was implemented only in Maharashtra. The following year, successful pilot runs were conducted in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. In the academic year 2024-25, the program is expanding rapidly across all the four states.

Year	State	Districts	Blocks	Schools	Classrooms digitized	Teachers trained	Students reached
2022 - 23	Maharashtra	4	14	874	1,519	2580	73,045
2023 - 24	Maharashtra Uttar Pradesh Himachal Pradesh Uttarakhand	11	43	1,637	2,242	3,187	1,78,555
2024 - 25	Maharashtra Uttar Pradesh Himachal Pradesh Uttarakhand	13	45	2,199	3,776	7,070	2,36,276

The above figures show a robust model that has given access of EdTech to at least 4000+ villages. Replication of this model can easily build the "Scale of Implementation that is needed in India.

A major milestone that validates the program's impact is the signing of an MoU between Samagra Shiksha Maharashtra (MPSP) and PIF. Through this partnership, the program will be implemented in at least 10,000 schools across 36 districts of Maharashtra, creating 25,000+ e-classrooms and training 50,000+ teachers to integrate technology into classroom teaching—ensuring a transformation in learning for over 1 million students in Maharashtra alone.

The Foundation is confident that this model will soon be replicated in other states aligning with the NEP 2020 guidelines.

This program directly contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** By significantly improving students' conceptual understanding.

- **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:** By collaborating with Education Departments, school principals, and teachers to enhance student learning.

Positive Outcomes

A third-party assessment of the program in November 2023 highlighted the following key outcomes:

1. Post-pandemic, technological devices and digital content have acted as a pull factor, improving enrollment and attendance in ZP schools.

2. The program's intervention has supplemented and supported ZP school teachers, easing their administrative burden.

3. The audiovisual format has enhanced students' retention of abstract and complex concepts.

4. Among the assessed schools, 70% reported improved attendance among disinterested or near-dropout students.

5. Peer-based learning has fostered responsibility, leadership, pride, and teamwork among students.

6. Access to digital content has enhanced critical thinking, curiosity, and inquiry skills among children.

7. Digital tools have significantly improved foundational skills, learning abilities, pronunciation, and enunciation.

8. The program has helped bridge the digital divide between urban and Zilla Parishad schools by ensuring access to and use of technology.

My e-School has democratized access to technology for students, leveraging existing resources to provide a simple, affordable, and scalable EdTech solution. By reducing the burden on teachers while equipping them with essential training, the program stands as a sustainable and effective long-term intervention in the education landscape.

"As we move forward with the My E-School program as a flagship initiative, we are filled with happiness for the positive impact it brings. At the same time, we remain focused on the bigger goal—ensuring every child in every town and village has access to quality education. Teachers are the backbone of our education system, and their dedication to adopting new methods and technology to support student learning is truly inspiring. Our partnerships with government officials, school principals, and teachers strengthen our trust in the government's commitment to preparing students for the future. Seeing students excited about learning and embracing digital education fills us with pride. We are glad to democratize Ed-Tech in a sustainable way, making it accessible to every child in India.

Prem Yadav
Co-founder and CEO, Pratham InfoTech Foundation

Last-Mile Learning: BINDI's Digital Leap Forward

Bindi's Digital Community School (DCS) runs in a community-selected space, staffed by trusted locals trained in pedagogy. With a 600-hour curriculum, solar projectors, and tablets, they provide affordable, inspiring education that sparks creativity.

BINDI International is a non-profit social enterprise working with last-mile rural communities in 19 states in India. With a strong belief in the philosophy that "When women prosper, communities prosper and when communities prosper, the planet prospers", Bindi works towards its mission of making knowledge and technology accessible, enabling communities to drive their own development. The organization's solutions include access to renewable energy, women empowerment & enterprise, education, women's wellness, and sustainable livelihoods.

The Why: Educational gaps across the Global South present several glaring recognized challenges—poor enrollment, attendance, and dropout rates; abysmal learning outcomes in foundational skills; low teacher availability; limited capacity and motivation; poor gender-based participation; barriers in digital access and adoption; substandard infrastructure; and inadequate availability of assessments and benchmarks, to mention a few.

Bindi believes that its interventions should create a standard for education that is contextual, multi-layered, multi-partnered, effective, sustainable, and scalable. While exploring linkages for a multi-partnered ecosystem, Bindi's emphasis is on the absolute last mile—children who lack access to quality education, coming from severely marginalized communities in remote, off-grid, offline villages.

The How? With the vision that today's learners will responsibly lead their communities tomorrow, Bindi follows a 5-step approach: promote a habit of schooling, ensure foundational literacy and numeracy, introduce components of modern education, develop critical thinking and confidence, and foster an action-oriented understanding of sustainability.

To make this happen, Bindi needed to answer some critical questions: Where will learning take place? Who will teach? How will they be supported with knowledge aids? How will we know it's working? And what does success look like for us? Bindi needed to define standards in each of these areas that allow for the necessary contextualization for the community it is working in.

The What? Bindi's response has been the Digital Community School (DCS). Set in a space identified participatorily by the community, it is run by community members who have the potential to learn pedagogy and who have the trust of the parents. Bindi equips these individuals with the necessary knowledge through repeated training sessions—both remote and in-person. They are provided with a 600-hour annual curriculum and supported with a solar-powered projector

and digital tablets, which open up immense possibilities for distributing educational content and providing low-cost, immersive experiences that spur creativity in learners. This portable digital setup, curriculum, and training toolkit constitute the DCS offering, with each component designed in a manner that allows adaptation for the local context.

The result? When they first come to the DCS, children are rarely exposed to a structured schooling environment. Bindi's monitoring framework gradually ensures regularity in schooling and tracks outcomes in foundational literacy and numeracy, following the ASER standards and the respective state curriculum. Bindi's success is when these children develop an intent to pursue formal education and acquire the necessary skills to transition into formal schooling.

Bindi also maintains a parallel focus on ensuring that these children are prepared for tomorrow—both in terms of future-oriented critical thinking skills and an understanding of forthcoming climatic challenges. To achieve this, the non-profit has developed an extended curriculum, built from the grassroots, that follows a 'Think-Speak-Act' framework. This framework ensures that learners develop critical thinking, can voice the challenges in their environment, and can initiate small acts of leadership. This approach flips the norm in historically oppressed communities.

Impact
In 15 communities that Bindi works with presently, the non-profit has been able to inculcate the practice of regular schooling in 500+ children. Last year, more than 30% of students reported a significant improvement in their learning levels in Maths, English, and local languages, with an average 1-grade rise in ASER standards.

Over the years, more than 1,000 students have enrolled back with government schools through Bindi's model, and every year, around 15 of every 100 students keep getting transitioned successfully to formal education. Even though the non-profit has been around for less than a decade, there are
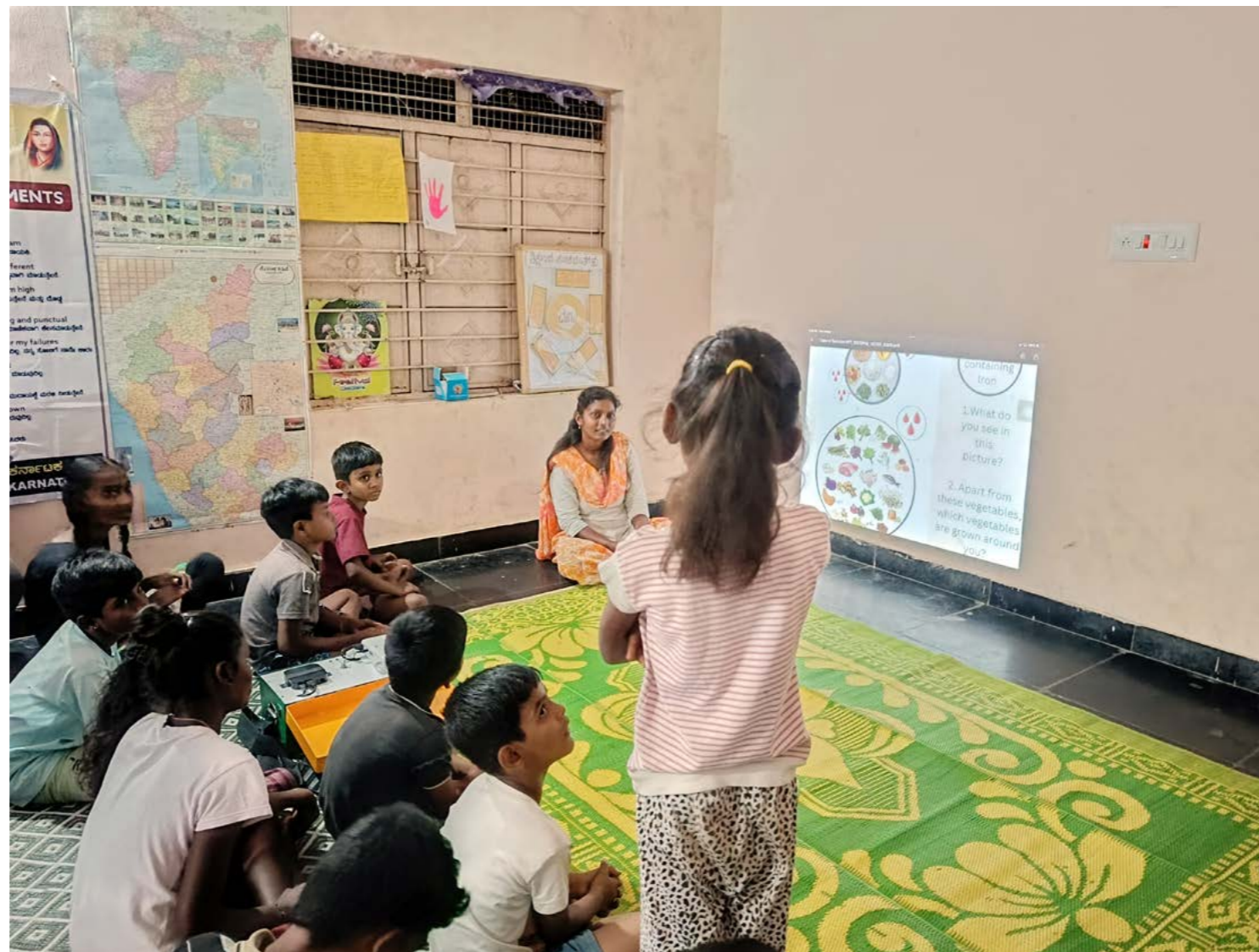
critical success stories of students who received scholarships or girl children having excellent academic results in formal schools.

For a child from a marginalized community, FLN is not just a fundamental skill—it unleashes confidence. This connects to another focus area of DCS: the Think-Speak-Act framework. DCS students have been able to raise issues like child marriage, advocate for the regularization of DCS, and promote the provision of a balanced diet with key stakeholders such as ministers, district collectors, and more. Using digital tools, students have created e-books on their local culture and practices.

There have been student-led campaigns in the community to prevent child labour and promote the importance of education. Students have demonstrated leadership skills by taking responsibility for bringing other children to school, implementing the sports module, and supporting peer learning. Many students now actively explore different career paths, which may differ from their parents or the ones traditionally suggested to them.

Bindi's child learners are not the only stakeholders in the DCS ecosystem—community members, in whom the organization invests heavily, show significant personal growth. Over 200 community teachers have been trained, not only bridging the gap in FLN but also stepping into leadership roles within education. These community teachers are integrating digital tools to make foundational literacy and numeracy more interactive, explaining STEM concepts, and even using Google Lens to explore and explain local flora, for example.

Challenges

The ground challenges faced by the Bindi team are no different from those of any other grassroots organization. Gaining community buy-in, ensuring the motivation of community teachers, increasing children's participation by shifting attitudes towards punishment and discipline, and addressing the migratory occupational patterns of some learners' parents—these risks and the corresponding lessons for the grassroots team have been multifaceted.

These challenges have made the spin-offs from the DCS model, particularly the grassroots-contextualized curriculum on gender equity, climate leadership in children, and digital citizenship, even more effective. Rolling out these curricular modules—created from grassroots learning in the DCSs—with more than 10,000 children has given Bindi the confidence to continue.

The most critical challenge Bindi now faces is twofold: The first challenge pertains to continuity. Bindi's data indicates that meaningful changes in attitude and learning outcomes for the communities it serves are measurable only after a sustained engagement of at least 3 to 5 years. However, the annual funding cycles of most donors introduce significant uncertainty into the initiative, hindering long-term planning.

The second challenge relates to the difficulty in building a multi-partner ecosystem. The complexity of the education problem necessitates collaboration among multiple partners, each bringing diverse expertise and resources. Yet, the growing invisibility of out-of-school peripheral communities—despite their significant numbers—has led many organizations to shift their focus towards strengthening the formal schooling system, often neglecting these marginalized groups.

From Bindi's perspective, this is a short-sighted approach. Every public infrastructure needs to include 'feeder' systems to ensure that the last-mile connection is made. Public transport utilization, for instance, increases exponentially when short last-mile feeder routes are available. The same analogy applies to public education: unless we make access to formal schooling possible and convenient for children in the last mile, they will remain excluded.

Partners in Progress

The DCS model brings together three kinds of partners: Grassroots Partners, Knowledge Partners, and Financial Partners.

Grassroots Partners: These are community-based organizations that have the knowledge of geographies and ethnic groups where Bindi's model is relevant. They even have the vision to sometimes adapt the non-profit's model to their local context. For example, looking at the modular nature of the DCS and understanding its emphasis on a community teacher, a partner saw its relevance as schooling support in conflict zones - DCS can switch on in houses of trained local homemakers the moment there is a curfew and school shutdown.

Knowledge Partners: Bindi derives its strengths from its grassroots-up work in renewable energy, health and local climate leadership. For every other aspect, the non-profit partners with expert organizations to provide us with resources which thereafter the team adapts to the local context.

Financial Partners: Goes without saying that donors are critical in this ecosystem especially since there has to be long-term intention to investing in children from last mile and in incubating a model that can be rolled out in a scalable manner across the Global South.

Way Forward

Moving forward, the goal is to scale this solution. It serves as an effective 'feeder' to the formal education system, providing a necessary alternative in remote areas where assigning a formal teacher is challenging. Additionally, it presents a low-cost, contextualized model for delivering quality education in the Global South. Bindi also plans to use the successful DCS spaces as hubs for innovation, already implementing several interventions focused on wellness, gender equity, and digital citizenship. Once children regularly attend, these spaces offer an opportunity to foster curiosity and creativity.

A key component of Bindi's future plans is to develop additional platforms that bring together stakeholders committed to similar initiatives—community centers, maker spaces, and beyond.

"Our Digital Community School initiative exemplifies how technology can be effectively leveraged in a contextualized manner to enhance foundational literacy and numeracy. This model complements formal education by bridging the 'quality education deficit' in last-mile communities. We have been—and will continue—aggressively partnering with organizations that share our vision to ensure that every child in India has access to quality education and the skills needed to tackle 21st-century challenges. Collaboration is the key, and equipping the next generation must happen at scale. The time for pilots and isolated initiatives is over—it's too little and too late now.

Harsh Tiwari
Director, Emp Bindi International Association

Co-Writing a Brighter Future for Children

Room to Read, in partnership with Government of Madhya Pradesh, trained government school teachers to create children's literature in local languages as part of a long-term system-strengthening initiative

Room to Read empowers children with foundational literacy skills and life skills that promote gender equality, driven by the belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children®. Committed to accelerating learning outcomes at scale, the nonprofit has positively influenced 50 million children across 28 countries. In India, it has been transforming young lives since 2003, reaching over 18 million children across 10 states.

Co-Creating Children's Stories with Government Support

Room to Read believes that fostering independent reading skills are crucial for a child's ability to engage with language, express thoughts, and construct meaning. Effective expression requires a rich vocabulary and strong background knowledge—both of which are nurtured through diverse and meaningful reading experiences. To ensure this, the non-profit's Literacy Program provides children with access to a variety of high-quality reading materials, making reading not just a skill but an enjoyable and purposeful activity.

Since 2017, Room to Read, through its Scaling-up Early Reading Intervention (SERI) project, has been working in partnership with the Rajya Shiksha Kendra (RSK), Madhya Pradesh, to equip students in government primary schools with foundational literacy skills. The SERI Project focused on ensuring access to culturally relevant, diversity-sensitive, and developmentally appropriate learning materials that support early reading.

In 2019-20, Room to Read conducted a comprehensive analysis to assess the availability and quality of government-provided children's literature for primary graders. The findings revealed a critical gap in both access and availability of engaging, high-quality reading materials—particularly early readers. Recognizing this challenge, Room to Read adopted a multi-pronged strategy to strengthen the ecosystem of children's literature in Madhya Pradesh.

1) Strengthening Government Systems

To foster systemic change, Room to Read supported the formation of a state-level committee at RSK, tasked with building awareness, identifying high-quality children's books, and ensuring additional reading resources reached every school. Furthermore, Room to Read contributed to the establishment and enhancement of child-friendly libraries, leveraging the GROWBY (an age-appropriate reading framework where Green is the basic level and Yellow the most advanced) model guidelines and library manuals. Room to Read also collaborated with the Library Department of Madhya Pradesh to categorize state-procured books for primary levels using internationally recognized book-levelling system.

2) Empowering Teacher-Authors and Illustrators

As part of a long-term system-strengthening effort, Room to Read partnered with RSK, Government of Madhya Pradesh to identify and train 50 government school teachers to develop children's literature in local languages. With technical assistance from Room to Read, these educators co-created 50 original, high-quality children's literature (15 storybooks and 35 reading cards)—expanding the state's repository of age-appropriate reading materials. More importantly, this initiative helped establish a strong cadre of teacher-authors who will continue to drive the creation of engaging children's literature in the coming years.

To maximize the reach and impact of these materials, the Government of Madhya Pradesh printed and distributed these 50 original works to 30 lakh+ students in Grades 1–5 across 84,000 primary schools in the state. This large-scale dissemination has ensured widespread access to high-quality reading materials, fostering a stronger reading culture among young learners.

JOURNEY AT A GLANCE

Workshops with the DIETs and call for story entries	Draft of stories received from teachers, vetted by DIETs	Training provided by RtR to the teacher-authors & illustrators	Resources co-developed in with government teachers	Reading cards and picture books in a Gr 2 classroom
2020-21	2021	2022-23	2022-23	2023

Impact

The impact of this initiative can be seen across multiple dimensions:

- Through strategic advocacy, Room to Read enabled the government to take co-ownership of the children's literature created by teacher-authors, ensuring its long-term sustainability. This partnership also led to cost-effective printing and distribution, with the government contributing ₹9 for every ₹1 invested by Room to Read, reinforcing its commitment to expanding children's access to quality reading materials.

- A cadre of 50 trained teacher-authors has been established, equipped to create diverse, culturally relevant children's literature and mentor other teachers in the state to continue developing good-quality children's literature.

- To ensure the effective use of children's literature, the storybooks are intentionally linked to teachers' guides, which support their integration into classroom instruction, fostering meaningful engagement with the materials.

Challenges

The impact of this initiative can be seen across multiple dimensions, but it is also important to acknowledge the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its long-term success.

- There are significant systemic gaps within the government that hinder the procurement and distribution of quality children's literature from other publishers, which often limits students' access to good quality children's literature.

- Building government capacity to prioritize children's literature requires strong continuous engagement with officials and their willingness to contribute. Additionally, writing for children is a specialized skill that needs continuous professional development and incentives to encourage teacher participation. At present, the government system lacks such process.

- Ensuring the effective use of children's literature in classrooms requires consistent monitoring and support from officials. Teachers need help integrating these materials into lessons and promoting independent reading, so that the resources are used regularly, and children develop a habit of reading.

- Executing an initiative of this scale required sustained momentum and coordination across multiple levels. One major challenge was ensuring seamless collaboration among RSK, DIETs, teacher-authors, Room to Read, and illustrators throughout the co-development process.

- The initiative required seamless coordination among RSK, DIETs, teacher-authors, Room to Read, and illustrators across multiple stages and levels. Aligning diverse stakeholders to a shared vision and ensuring cohesive collaboration was a significant challenge.

In 2019-20, Room to Read conducted a comprehensive analysis to assess the availability and quality of government-provided children's literature for primary graders. The findings revealed a critical gap in both access and availability of engaging, high-quality reading materials—particularly early readers.

Role of Partners

Understanding the role of partners reveals the depth of collaboration.

State Government: The state government was a key partner in financing the printing and distribution of books. The financial commitment reflected the scale of impact: while the SERI Project invested ₹72.7 lakh, the government contributed ₹6.71 crore, achieving a 9:1 leverage ratio. This partnership resulted in 86,658 book sets (including 15 storybooks, 35 reading cards, and 10 big books) reaching 84000 primary schools in the state, ensuring that millions of children could immerse themselves in stories that inspire and empower.

Partnership with Teacher Authors: Identifying and training teachers to create good-quality, culturally relevant children's literature for early readers is a crucial step. This initiative not only developed a group of skilled teacher-authors but also cultivated strong advocates and a teacher community that recognizes the importance of providing children with quality literature to build culture of reading.

Sustaining Impact Through Government Ownership

A significant achievement of this collaboration is the creation of a sustainable ecosystem for children's literature development. After publishing 15 storybooks and 3,525 reading cards, the SERI Project has helped expand the initiative to 22 additional teacher-authors, ensuring continuous content creation. Additionally, read-aloud videos are being developed to further engage educators. This model has been successfully replicated in Uttarakhand, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, demonstrating its scalability and long-term impact on foundational literacy across India.

> Through the SERI Project, our collaboration with the Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Madhya Pradesh is championing the importance of children's literature in foundational years, promoting a culture where reading is not just a skill but a joy. Empowering teachers as authors makes children's literature more inclusive, engaging, and widely accepted. Co-developing stories with system stakeholders ensures credibility, resources, and last-mile delivery. By equipping teachers to create high-quality, local reading materials, we not only enrich classrooms but also democratize children's literature.

Poornima Garg
India Country Director
Room to Read

From Learners to Leaders

Bharti Airtel Foundation connects underprivileged children to opportunities, empowering their aspirations. This impact is driven by dedicated partners—corporates, institutions and individuals—who help create an enriching learning environment.

Bharti Airtel Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, has been at the forefront of driving impactful change in rural India since its inception in 2000. The Foundation is committed to uplifting children and youth from less privileged backgrounds, by making quality education and holistic development accessible and thereby, transformative.

Over the past two decades, the Foundation has been implementing pioneering programs that focus on primary, elementary, senior secondary and even higher education, alongside initiatives promoting sanitation, community empowerment, and entrepreneurship.

Satya Bharti School Program

Launched in 2006, Satya Bharti Schools are built and managed by Bharti Airtel Foundation to enable the holistic upliftment of rural India's underprivileged children, especially girl students, through free, quality education. To further ease the financial burdens on the families of these students, the schools also provide free uniform, bags, shoes, textbooks, education materials, and nutritious mid-day meals. Through elementary, primary and senior secondary level schools, the program's long-term objective is to transform children into employable adults, responsible citizens, and changemakers of the future.

Quality Support Program

Quality Support Program was launched in 2013, in collaboration with state governments to transform government schools into vibrant, holistic learning spaces through co-scholastic interventions. Drawing from the proven practices of Satya Bharti Schools, its implementation model focuses on creating self-sustaining institutions where students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and communities collectively drive positive change.

Quality Support Program State Partnerships

QSP State Partnerships aim to transform government schools into vibrant and integrated learning institutions by strengthening and introducing new techniques and interventions at the state and district levels. The Foundation provides technical and management support to states for executing the intervention, by collaborating with government stakeholders and ecosystem partners for goals, targets, roadmap, and implementation.

Bharti Airtel Scholarship

The Bharti Airtel Scholarship empowers meritorious students from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue their chosen courses at the top 50 NIRF-ranked engineering institutes with fully-funded support. The scholarship covers 100% of tuition fees (for the full duration of undergraduate and integrated courses, up to five years, subject to renewal criteria) along with hostel and mess fees. There is a special focus on girl students to promote gender equality in the tech field. Every scholar is encouraged to support another scholar in their lifetime, fostering a legacy of giving back.
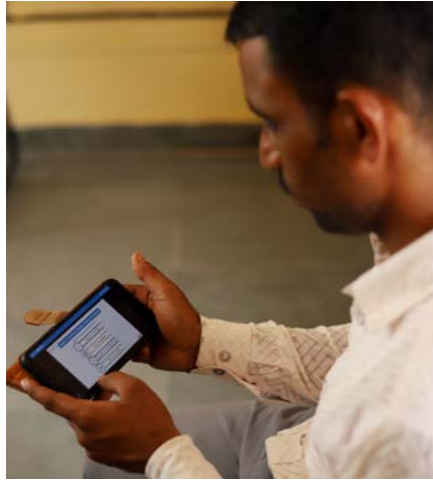
TheTeacherApp

TheTeacherApp is a one-stop training platform for teachers, educationists, and academic enthusiasts to equip themselves with a curation of comprehensive learning resources. Available on iOS, Android and web, the app provides an intuitive and personalised experience, supporting diverse learning styles with webinars, courses, short videos, podcasts, and more, making up to 259 learning hours. Through regular quizzes, polls, and national level competitions, the app makes for an engaging and interactive space for teachers to continually explore, learn, and grow.

Impact

The Satya Bharti School Program, Quality Support Program, Quality Support Program State Partnerships, Bharti Airtel Scholarship, and TheTeacherApp drive both tangible and intangible transformations in education.

Tangible Outcomes
- Over 27,000 schools and 22.35 lakh students impacted through direct interventions.
- More than 1.28 lakh teachers trained, enhancing classroom learning.
- Free education, uniforms, meals, and study materials provided to students, reducing financial barriers.
- Vocational training and scholarships ensure career pathways, particularly for girls and marginalized communities.
- Infrastructure improvements, such as computer labs, robotics labs, and smart classrooms, modernizing education delivery.
- Technology-driven learning through TheTeacherApp, with over 17.9 lakh downloads and 87,000 active users.

Intangible Outcomes
- Enhanced life skills such as leadership, communication, and critical thinking among students.
- Community upliftment, as educated students contribute back to society.
- Greater gender inclusivity, with a focus on girls' education and empowerment.
- Stronger teacher engagement, fostering innovative and experiential learning methods.
- A culture of giving back, as Bharti Scholars pledge to support future students.

By addressing both structural and social barriers, these programs create sustainable, long-term change, ensuring education becomes a transformative force for individuals and communities alike.

Lessons from the Struggle

For Bharti Airtel Foundation, quality education is the driving force of progress. But, since the focus areas fall in rural, and sometimes remote locations, there is a severe shortage of well-trained teachers. This proves to be a significant barrier in achieving the vision of uplifting rural India.

While infrastructure and access to schools have improved, the absence of skilled teaching resources continues to hold back millions of children from realising their full potential. Lack of enough skilled educators leads to a single educator handling multiple grades and sections. This often results in a potential lack of subject specialised teachers, leaving students struggling.

Moreover, teachers in rural areas often do not possess proper training in modern pedagogical methods, digital tools, and classroom engagement strategies, making learning less effective and inspiring.

Additionally, many trained teachers prefer urban postings, leading to an uneven distribution of talent. As a result, rural children – who already face socio-economic hardships – are deprived of the quality education necessary to break the cycle of poverty. To bridge this gap, it is crucial to invest in teacher training programs, offer incentives for rural postings, and introduce mentorship initiatives that support educators in delivering high-quality lessons. By empowering teachers in rural

areas, their students receive a strong foundation for a brighter future.

The Foundation is committed to addressing this challenge by training and equipping educators with the skills they need to inspire and uplift entire communities. Because when you invest in teachers, you invest in the future of India.

Stronger Together: The Partner Effect

Bharti Airtel Foundation serves as a bridge, connecting children from underprivileged backgrounds with opportunities to realize their aspirations. This transformation is made possible through the invaluable support of partners – corporates, institutions, and individuals – who actively

contribute to fostering a delightful and enriching learning experience. These partnership opportunities are available in the form of:

- **Volunteering & Employee Contribution:** Employees from Bharti Group Companies engage in volunteering through in-person and virtual sessions, mentoring students in Satya Bharti Schools and partner government schools. The ACT (A Caring Touch) payroll giving program further enables employees to contribute to educational initiatives.

- **Strategic Partnerships:** Apart from financial support our partners provide technical expertise, knowledge-sharing workshops, and functional donations including books, stationery, education software, and digital infrastructure, strengthening the program's reach and impact.

Together, these partnerships create a sustainable ecosystem of learning, empowering children

with knowledge, confidence, and a brighter future.

Way Forward

Building on the strong footing of these flagship programs, the Foundation's next phase of impact will focus on expanding reach, enhancing learning methodologies, and deepening community engagement.

Scaling access and infrastructure

Expanding the model across more rural districts will ensure that quality education reaches an even larger segment of underprivileged children, particularly girls. Strengthening digital infrastructure with smart classrooms and e-learning platforms will further bridge learning gaps.

Expanding the Quality Support Program (QSP)

By collaborating with state governments, QSP's proven interventions can be institutionalised in more government schools, ensuring sustainable, scalable impact.

Strengthening vocational and tech education

By integrating advanced vocational training in emerging fields and expanding the Bharti Airtel Scholarship, students will gain greater opportunities to enter the technology and innovation sectors. Increased mentorship and internship programs will help bridge the skill-employment gap.

Enhancing Teacher Empowerment

TheTeacherApp can be further developed with AI-driven personalised learning and community-driven knowledge-sharing modules, equipping educators with the latest teaching strategies.

Through strategic partnerships, technological integration, and a commitment to holistic development, Bharti Airtel Foundation strives to continue transforming lives, fostering lifelong learners, and creating future leaders.

"We believe that every child, no matter their situation, has the potential to change the world. We owe it to them to keep breaking down barriers and providing opportunities.

Mamta Saikia
CEO, Bharti Airtel Foundation

Smart Start

Rocket Learning's success is driven by digital classrooms on low-touch, low-tech platforms like WhatsApp, enabling tailored, engaging, and accessible learning experiences for children across diverse geographic and socio-economic backgrounds

Rocket Learning is a leading Indian ed-tech nonprofit leveraging technology, media, and community engagement to drive pre-literacy and pre-numeracy for children aged 3-6 years. Its AI-powered digital learning solutions empower caregivers and educators, ensuring early childhood education is engaging, accessible, and impactful at scale.

Digital Innovation for Early Learning

Rocket Learning is transforming early childhood care and education (ECCE) across India, with a focus on reaching underserved communities. Currently operational in 10 states, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh,
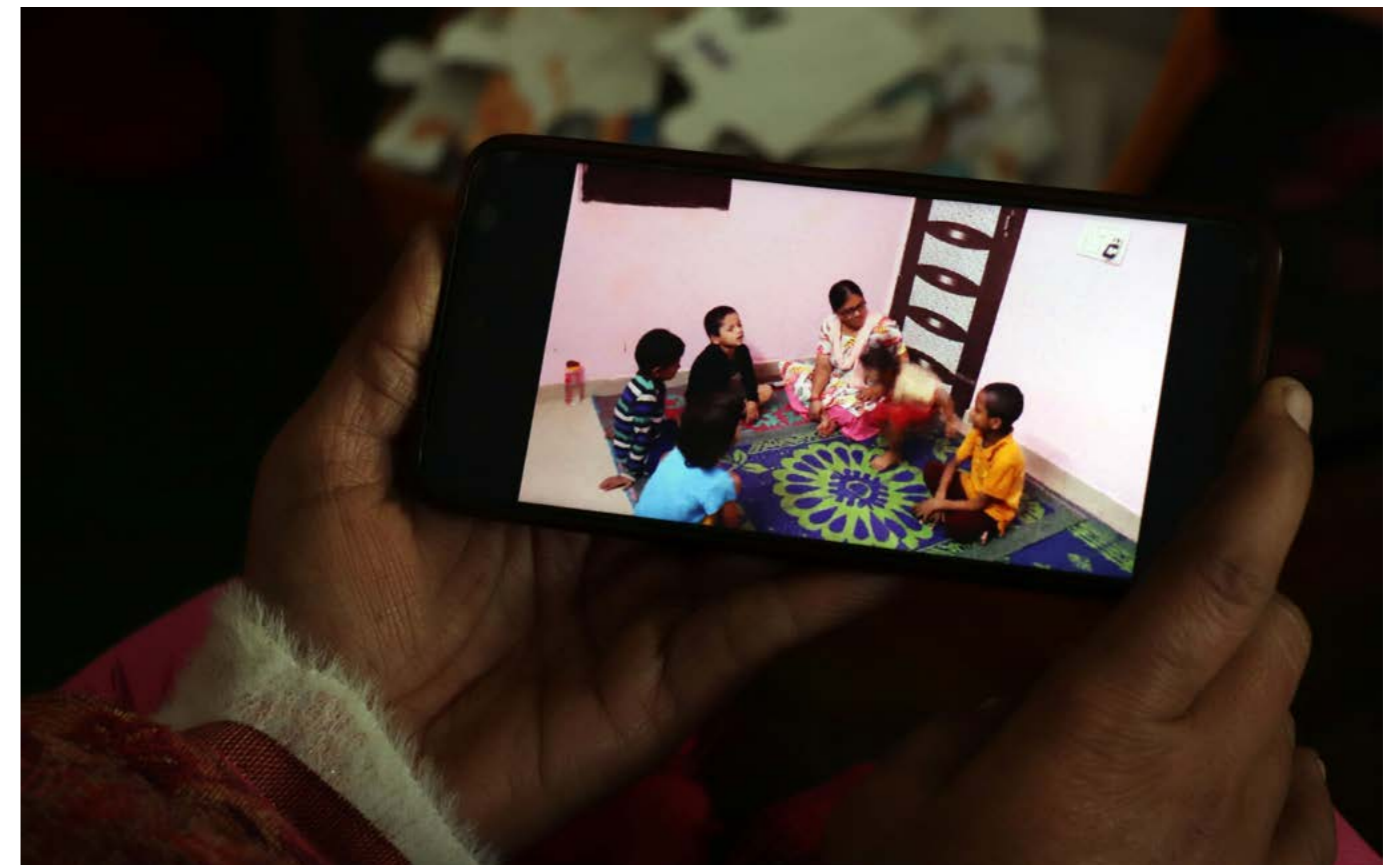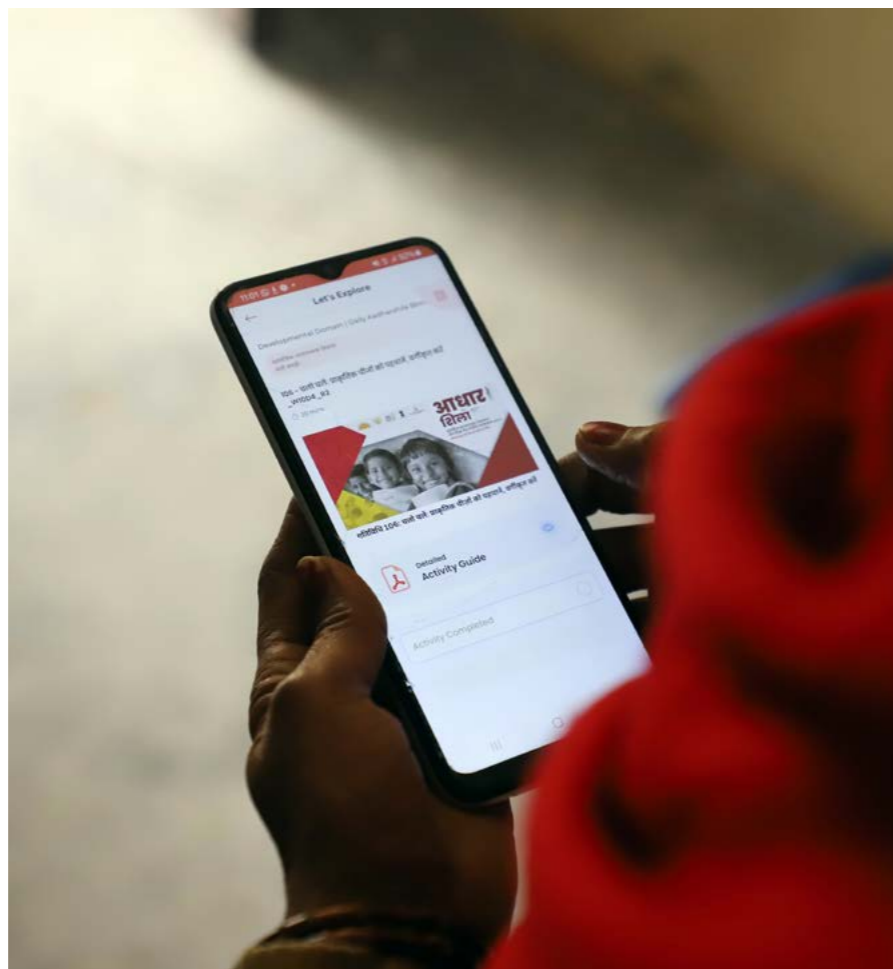
Chandigarh, Meghalaya, Punjab, and Uttarakhand, the organisation is on track to expand to 12+ states in the next 5 years. This expansion will impact 10 million children, engaging 5 million low-income parents through both at-home and in-school learning programmes.

Central to Rocket Learning's success is the use of digital classrooms through low-touch, low-tech platforms like Whatsapp. These platforms allow the organisation to provide tailored, engaging, and accessible learning experiences to children from diverse geographic and socio-economic backgrounds. By leveraging digital tools, Rocket Learning can organise content according to children's learning levels and specific needs, ensuring that all students receive personalised attention and support. Parents and educators are equipped with real-time guidance and resources, creating a collaborative environment

where families are empowered to facilitate their children's learning, even with limited education. Digital classrooms also replicate the structure of formal school environments, with organised classes sorted by themes and grades, offering a cohesive learning experience at scale.

Through a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, Rocket Learning continually assesses the developmental needs of children, the efficacy of the curriculum, and the effectiveness of its delivery channels. This data-driven approach allows the organisation to improve content and interventions, ensuring that they meet the evolving needs of both children and caregivers. Additionally, Rocket Learning's focus on two-way engagement with parents and Anganwadi workers enhances the impact of its programmes by fostering greater involvement in children's education.

Rocket Learning's district-level pilot studies and national movement for ECCE aim to ensure that every child in India has access to quality early education, regardless of their location.

Impact That Counts

Rocket Learning has made significant strides in improving early childhood education (ECCE) in India, with a focus on accessibility and quality. The ed-tech non-profit has impacted 3 million children and parents, delivering personalised learning content that helps children spend double the quality learning time compared to non-Rocket Learning classes, with the average child ranking in the top third of their class. Rocket Learning is operational in 10 states and 140+ districts, and it aims to expand further to reach 50 million children by 2030.

A key milestone is Rocket Learning's partnership with the

Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) to develop India's first national curricula for ECCE. As a technical partner, Rocket Learning contributed to Aadharshila – the National Curriculum for ECCE, and Navchetana – the National Framework for Early Childhood Stimulation. These frameworks offer a play-based approach for children aged 3 to 6 years and essential guidance for children from birth to 3 years. The integration of Aadharshila into the Poshan Tracker, a digital platform, ensures access across 1.4 million Anganwadi centres, impacting millions of children and caregivers nationwide.

By supporting 200,000 Anganwadi workers (15% of India's total) and empowering millions of parents and caregivers, Rocket Learning is driving large-scale change. As a key partner in the Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi Mission, Rocket Learning is committed to making early childhood education more

accessible, standardised, and impactful across India.

Facing the Tough Spots

While Rocket Learning's digital-first model has scaled effectively, challenges remain in areas such as device access, digital literacy, and sustained engagement, particularly in low-resource settings. Many families share smartphones, which limits uninterrupted learning sessions for children and hinders consistent engagement. Additionally, the diverse linguistic and cultural landscape of India requires constant efforts to adapt content, ensuring it remains relevant and effective for different communities. Localisation is key to maintaining impact, but it demands ongoing attention and resources.

Another challenge is shifting perceptions around early learning, as some caregivers and educators still view it as secondary to traditional schooling. To address this, Rocket Learning uses

behavioural science-driven nudges to help change mindsets, but sustained engagement and belief in the importance of early childhood education require continuous reinforcement. Educators and caregivers need ongoing support to remain invested in the learning journey.

Despite these challenges, Rocket Learning continues to make progress with an iterative approach, powered by data analytics and regular user feedback. This allows the organisation to refine its strategies and ensure greater impact over time. Rocket Learning's ability to adapt quickly and respond to challenges is crucial to achieving its mission of delivering high-quality early childhood education to millions of children across India. By addressing these hurdles head-on and continuing to evolve based on insights, the non-profit remains committed to expanding access to education and improving outcomes for children, caregivers, and educators alike.

Power of Partnerships

Rocket Learning's approach to integrating its curriculum into government frameworks focuses on collaboration, innovation, and scalability to drive systemic change in early childhood education. By partnering with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), Rocket Learning positions itself as a strategic ally in addressing the challenges of early childhood education at scale.

One of the organisation's key contributions was as the technical partner in developing the Aadharshila National Curriculum for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and the Navchetana National Framework for Early Childhood Stimulation. These frameworks offer structured, play-based learning content for children aged 0 to 6 years, and aim to support infant stimulation for children from birth to 3 years.

Rocket Learning ensures the curriculum aligns with government goals, focusing on universal access to quality education, improving outcomes for underserved children, and supporting caregivers and Anganwadi workers with easy-to-implement, culturally relevant resources. The organisation also supports training of Anganwadi workers and state-level master trainers under the Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi initiative to ensure effective curriculum delivery.

The non-profit's partnership with Google has further amplified the impact. This collaboration

is enabling the development of a conversational AI chatbot that allows children to interact with learning content in an engaging way. The chatbot, supported and facilitated by caregivers, ensures quality, accessible education for children, regardless of their geographical location or available resources.

Way Forward

Rocket Learning is on a mission to scale its impact across India, aiming to improve the IQ of the next generation and harness the demographic dividend of the country. With a focus on reaching 50 million children by 2030,

the organisation is expanding its presence in 10 states and over 140 districts, and actively working with 200,000 Anganwadi workers—15% of India's total. By empowering parents, caregivers, and Anganwadi workers with the necessary tools, Rocket Learning is fostering better early childhood education outcomes, ensuring that children spend more quality learning time, which is reflected in their school and life-readiness.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and NIPCCD, Rocket Learning is working to integrate age-appropriate and pedagogy-aligned curriculum into national frameworks, enhancing accessibility for underserved communities and extending training support. Through the use of technology and strategic partnerships, the non-profit is reducing Anganwadi workers' cognitive load by enabling their access to play-based activities from Aadharshila on the Poshan Tracker, while continuing to build state and center capacity.

"We envision a future where technology, community involvement, and government initiatives work together to create a holistic and inclusive ecosystem for early childhood development.

Azeez Gupta
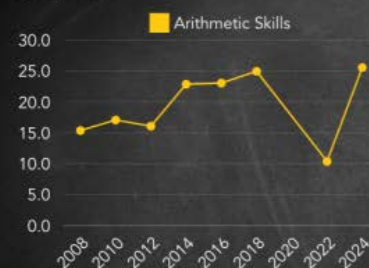Co-founder, Rocket Learning

Foundational Learning First, So Every Child Can Thrive

ASER 2024: Ennum Ezhuthum propels Tamil Nadu's 5-Rank Rise in Literacy & Numeracy, with unprecedented gains!

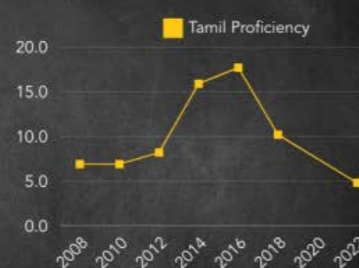### Grade 3 Subtraction Proficiency in Tamil Nadu's Government Schools

Arithmetic Skills

CLASS 3 MATH PROFICIENCY SOARS!
A 120% increase in just two years (2022-2024): From 10.4% to 25.6%, reversing learning losses and surpassing pre-2022 levels—double the average gain of any previous decade!

Grade 3 Reading Proficiency in Tamil Nadu's Government Schools

Tamil Proficiency

CLASS 3 TAMIL PROFICIENCY ON THE RISE!
Tamil literacy increased by 7.2 percentage points (118%) from 2022-2024, more than double the decade-long average gain of 3.3% before Ennum Ezhuthum.

Madhi Foundation, a proud champion of **Foundational Learning,** is honoured to serve as the **Chief Management Partner of the transformative Ennum Ezhuthum** initiative, accelerating foundational learning at scale. Heartfelt gratitude to our partners and stakeholders for supporting our vision!

> A problem as complex as the foundational learning crisis demands a nuanced, holistic, and empathetic approach—one that is deeply rooted in the realities of its context. Driving systemic change requires building solutions both bottom-up and top-down, fostering consensus at every stage. You cannot introduce a pre-packaged solution and expect it to be simply rebranded and implemented. While such an approach may gain initial acceptance, it won't create lasting impact or drive meaningful behavioural and systemic change. True transformation happens when the system takes ownership of the solution, even if it has been co-created with an external collaborator.

Merlia Shaukath
Founder and CEO, Madhi Foundation
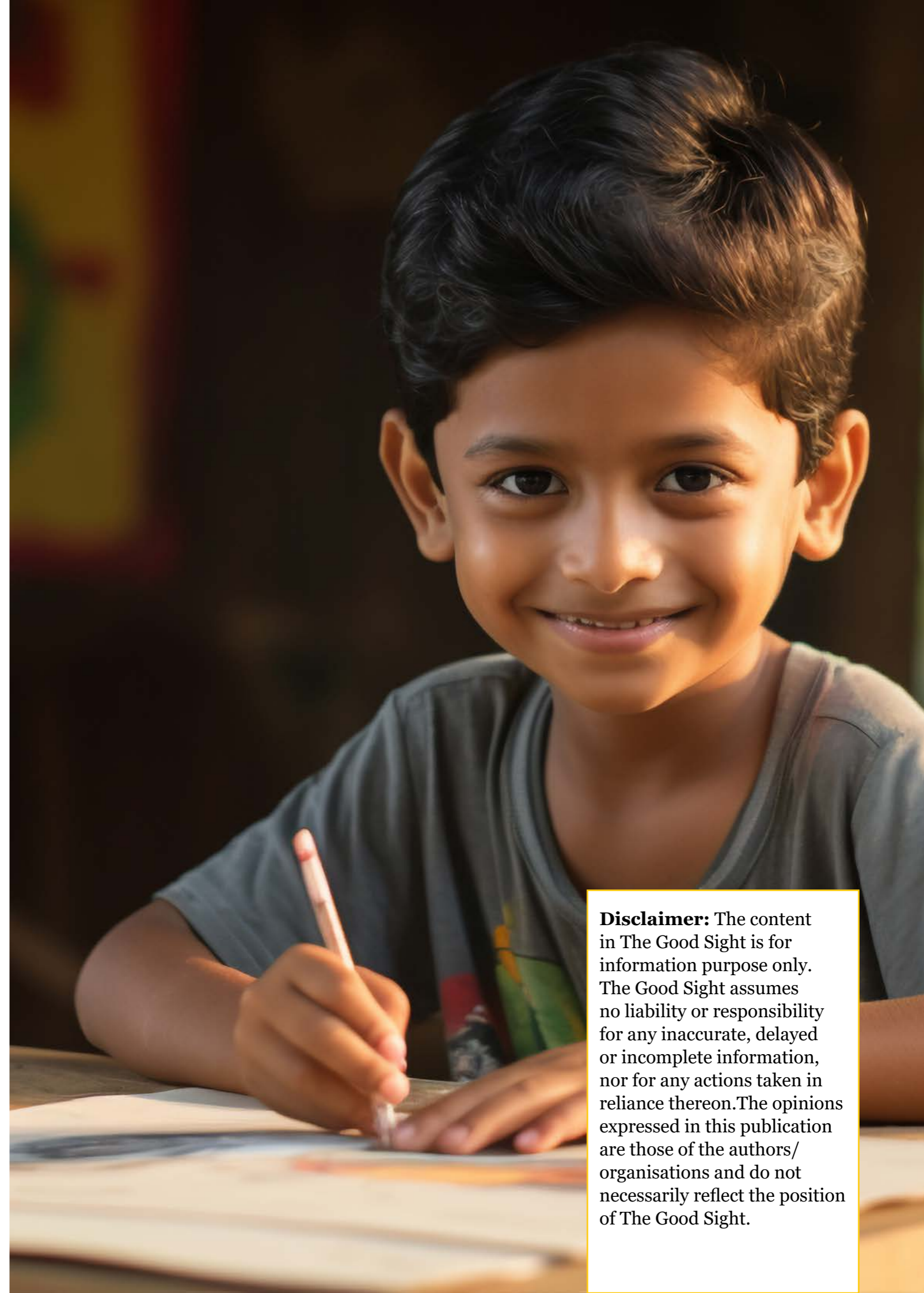
one tara
Free Alternative School

A Free Alternative School Start in the memory of your loved one.

To honor the visionary founder of City Montessori School, Lucknow, world's largest school, Dignity Education Vision International (DEVI Sansthan) started One Tara Schools—free schools for out-of-school children, and those who cannot attend school for any reason. Formally launched in November 2024 at Leadership Circle 1 in November 2024, there are now some 200 plus One Tara Centres in seven states of India.

Anyone can start their One Tara School in the

DIGNITY EDUCATION VISION INTERNATIONAL

Inspired by the life of educator
Late Dr. Jagdish Gandhi

memory of their loved ones. DEVI Sansthan provides the full know-how and a start up kit. A One Tara Center can be started for 1 or a 1000 students, in the comfort of one's home, in a slum nearby, or an institutional building.

The children are prepared for Grades 3 and 5, and given certification for the same. They are also offered the opportunity to take the NIOS test (Open Basic Examination), and be mainstreamed into other schools. The schools are free for the children.

Working on the education of 200 beggar children in 5 centres of Lucknow in collaboration with Umeed Foundation

Complete care, not just academics

Visit to the zoo

Children showing off their One Tara Kits

Numeracy, Joyful ALfA Way; teachers are trained in this method

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one tara
A Free Alternative School

DIGNITY EDUCATION VISION INTERNATIONAL

पूर्वजों की याद में

WHO CAN START?

- Students (Youth & Junior Youth)
- Whole family
- NGO
- School
- Senior Citizens
- Women at Home

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO?

- Register Your Center on the OneTara.app
- Register Your Students
- Get Online Support to Start Immediately
- Get Online or In-Person Training

Scan QR to Know More

HOW DEVI SUPPORTS

Complete know-how to start your school, including

Learning Materials Free Start-up Kit

App & E-materials Free of Charge

E-Assessments Free of Charge

Online Training & Videos Free of Charge

The
Good Sight

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