



PATHWAYS TO TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Proven solutions from social entrepreneurs





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Pathways to Transforming Education details how we can adopt evidence-based learning principles and collaboratively revolutionise education. This report showcases tried and tested leapfrogging strategies created by education social entrepreneurs and innovators from around the world to bring about systemic, lasting change for all learners.

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About Catalyst 2030

Catalyst 2030 is a fast-growing global movement of people and organisations committed to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Joining forces with communities, governments, businesses and others, Catalyst 2030 members are changing systems at all levels through collective action and bold new strategies.

With 1500 members, and counting, across 197 countries, Catalyst 2030 emphasises collaborative action to accelerate change in the lives of billions. With this report, Catalyst 2030 members are taking the first step to reimagine, redefine and eventually transform education. By tapping into the power of collective intelligence, Catalyst 2030's social entrepreneurs create an impact that ripples beyond the communities they serve.

Our values are the cornerstone upon which we judge ourselves and the yardstick against which we invite our stakeholders to measure us. Our five core values are:



People and nature at the centre

In everything we do, we place people, nature and their ways of life at the heart of what we do. We stand accountable to them for our actions.



Co-creative mindset

The future of innovation is co-creation. We seek to acknowledge our own biases and silos and work to move beyond them. This includes sharing all relevant data when we collaborate and that whatever Catalyst 2030 produces is non-proprietary.



Collaborative leadership

We prioritise co-creating approaches that reflect shared ownership and credit collective impact. Shared norms are based on the needs and challenges we face.



Humble audacity

We have audacious goals and approach them with the humility that none of us alone know how they can be best accomplished.



Spirit of generosity

On any given day we are all donors, doers, visionaries or clients. We commit to sharing our knowledge, time and networks freely without expectation of receiving anything in return, other than the achievement of collective goals.

Education at Catalyst 2030

While the world has taken various steps towards achieving quality education for all, the statistics remain alarming. One in 20 children lack access to basic education and two out of five children are not enrolled in secondary education. In a survey undertaken as part of the 2021 The People's Report, in collaboration with Catalyst 2030, nearly 75% of respondents do not believe that their education is preparing them to manage their mental health.

At Catalyst 2030, we believe that social entrepreneurs have many tried and tested solutions to the challenges that local, national and international governments face. This report outlines evidence-based principles and methods that have been tried and tested by social entrepreneurs around the world. Being close to the problem and part of the audience they seek to impact, they have innovated, iterated and reiterated their strategies and solutions.

Pathways to Transforming Education is the brainchild of the members of Catalyst 2030's Issue-Based Education Collaboration, which has 60+ members from 20 countries.

Created, written, edited and designed by social entrepreneurs, the report combines the learnings at the intersection of education with gender parity, social justice, active and empathetic citizenship, climate change and conflict. We recognise that access to quality education has to be seen as a cornerstone of achieving the SDGs. Significant progress has been hindered by the lost years of the global pandemic. The action to redress that imbalance is crucial.

Social entrepreneurs are at the frontline of education. Their voices must be used to help define strategy and policy. This report amplifies such solutions to help political leaders and funders and we look forward to working with you to catalyse systemic, lasting changes in education. We urge you not just to read the report, but to collaborate with us to implement the ideas that it presents.



Foreword Letter from the Chairs

We are living in an age of instantly available information, but fragmented knowledge.

Our task as educators today, as never before, assumes greater complexity and significance. There is an urgent need to transform education. A paradigm shift must be made from the information-based curricula, instruction and assessment models, which are constructed, delivered and managed in a top-down hierarchical manner, to a collaborative, critical thinking and process-driven approach to learning.

There has been a shift in the global conversation on education from a focus on access and literacy and numeracy to a focus on 'quality' learning and learning outcomes in competencies for lifelong learning. (Brookings, UNESCO). Education is now being understood as the means to enable the agency of individuals by connecting socio-economic conditions, social and climate justice, culture, values, identity development and emotional wellbeing with the learning process.

Education is not limited to foundational skills. It must also facilitate the flourishing of all people, societies and the planet. As stated by SDG 4.7 – “By 2030 ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable life styles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of cultures contribution to sustainable development”.

This is a welcome shift in aspirations. The concern is that many educators and policymakers have made this conceptual and theoretical shift. For example India's National Education Policy 2020, but education systems have not changed similarly.

Education systems, especially in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), are still struggling with basic issues of achieving literacy and numeracy for a majority of their learners. Ensuring access and reimagining of learning will have to happen simultaneously.

Social entrepreneurs are working with an expanded conception of education, often in collaboration with governments and with very meaningful impact. Collaborating with communities, they have developed innovative solutions – curricula, pedagogies and assessment metrics - that keep the learner in the centre and address changing learner needs in varied contexts. Unfortunately, these tried and tested, innovative and impactful solutions have not had as much impact on education systems as they have the potential to do.

The pandemic has made governments more receptive to solutions from civil society. It is the evidence of the viability of these learning solutions that needs to be made visible to the world for it to take notice and transform learning ecosystems.



The time is ripe. We must seize this opportunity to reimagine and transform education systems and build new pathways to learning. We, at the Catalyst 2030 Education Issue-Based Collaboration and authors of this report, propose the following concept of education:

‘Education is to be understood broadly and comprehensively, as enabling the learning of the knowledge, skills and values needed to live a life of personal flourishing and the capacity to shape the future, with a deep sense of caring, connectedness with the universe/planet and everyone in it. Given the rapidly changing future, the purpose of education must enable people, societies and the planet to thrive’.

This inspiring report provides pathways for transforming education. It details how we can adopt evidence-based learning principles to address 21st century challenges and collaboratively revolutionise education. Our goal is to sensitise policymakers and influence education policy and practice for the better. The report highlights the importance of having social entrepreneurs and learners as active stakeholders in education policy design and practice implementation. It showcases proven models and best practices from organisations across the globe that have successfully partnered with governments at the state and country level to revamp educational policies and practice.

We look at quality education through a broad, inclusive lens. This includes marginalised areas such as inclusive education for children with disabilities and inclusive community-based learning spaces, formal and informal learning programmes. Cross-sectoral programmes like effective integrated gender education programmes with an impact on SDG 5, as well as SDGs relating to climate change, livelihood, good health and wellbeing are also incorporated.

By providing new perspectives like the much needed and often ignored voices of the youth, impactful solutions with creative and collaborative approaches to implementation, it illuminates the pathways to transform education.

Although education is a powerful individual and social transformative force it must be transformed for it to have a systemic impact. This metamorphosis can only be brought about by governments, communities, social entrepreneurs, teachers, parents and learners working collaboratively to leverage technology, learning spaces and pedagogy to create an environment of broad-based learning.

We hope the learnings from this report help decision-makers and policymakers globally to leap towards a transformation path that is equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

Dr Urvashi Sahni

Roeland Monasch

Olivier Brechard

Letter from the Youth - 'The education we want'

The education we want will determine the future we get. As adults are working to reimagine the future of education, we think it is imperative that our voices are also heard - the voices and perspectives of those who are in classrooms around the world today. As the ones on the frontline who are facing uncertain and hopeful futures, here we share thoughts and requests on how education could serve all children and in turn make the world even better in the future.

Firstly, we are thankful for the opportunity to learn and develop ourselves and yet we are worried about our brothers and sisters, the 258 million children who don't have the same opportunity, be it due to war, gender bias, disability or other marginalising factors. We want every child to have the opportunity to learn and develop themselves without exception.

We would like to address three aspects of education for which we envisage and want change. These are:

- 1 The relationship between teachers and students
- 2 The curriculum contents and the subjects we learn about
- 3 The purpose of education and the need for preparation to face and shape the world after school

To us the purpose of education is to incorporate alongside our academic development, the space for the development of our mental, physical and social capabilities. We want to grow our potential for critical thinking, for problem solving, to be able to plan, to communicate and to collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds. All this is necessary to feel equipped to navigate the world beyond school and to keep learning throughout our lives.

Our experiences, as well as those of our fellow youth, are testimony to the fact that the teacher-student relationship, in general, is below par. How can we develop our self-confidence and critical thinking if we are mainly judged on our gender or on our grades by our teachers or elders? If questioning and participation is not welcome in the classroom, then where? We long to go beyond being a passive receiver of the knowledge of older generations but with them to co-construct our learning and to experience our learning actively.

Many of us feel that the subjects we are offered in school have no relevance for our lives and futures. Why is it that mental health is hardly ever mentioned when so many of us are struggling? Social justice issues in all their forms do get mentioned but only in the abstract. How do we mitigate the climate crisis? How can we live on a warming planet when we learn so little about it? Historical topics are largely from a male, Eurocentric point of view. Technology and digital education are used and taught, respectively, in an ad hoc manner. The list is long.



We ask you to consider our actual needs as the world changes, see us as whole people not academic content vessels. We want to live and thrive in a prosperous world and our education is fundamental to achieving this goal.



Yours sincerely,



The consultation session for the education report included more than 35 youth who had engaged in a discussion anchored by the Learning Planet. The youth came from 30 organisations across Asia, the MENA region, Africa, Europe and the USA and included 15 Indian youth who had participated in a discussion organised by SHEF. India.

Executive Summary

This report is a call to all educators and governments responsible for running large education systems, to adopt a learner-centric, participatory approach to education policymaking and implementation, to catalyse the pursuit of a shared reimagined purpose of education and delivery by all stakeholders in the learning ecosystem.

Our aim is to provide an evidence base for practitioner-derived learning principles that we collectively believe constitute the vision for a transformed education in line with SDG 4. It showcases innovative on the ground solutions from social entrepreneurs and reflects perspectives of learners and ecosystem enablers, including policymakers and funders. It is a comprehensive view of the tools and perspectives required to disrupt the status quo of education systems worldwide and transform them in accordance with the expanded view of education laid out in SDG 4.

The proposed ways to do this include:

- 1 Incorporation of evidence-based learning principles, that have been successfully tested by social entrepreneurs, in formal curricula to facilitate systemic implementation
- 2 Adoption of local solutions with proven impact to ensure reach to a significant number of learners, especially the marginalised
- 3 Integration of all relevant voices (learners, parents, teachers, administrators and funders) in policy consultations to foster collective leadership

The report is meant to act as a conversation starter to foster flexible, sustainable collaborations in education policy and practice, rather than a rigid roadmap for implementation.

Chapter One addresses why we need to transform education policy and practice

As recognised by the SDGs, education is not an end in itself; it is also a vital means to achieving the other SDGs, such as wellbeing, gender equality, climate crisis mitigation and poverty reduction.

The call to transform education is not new. However, there is a renewed urgency to build a sustainable future in light of the zeitgeist of COVID-19 that has magnified existing social, political, economic and environmental inequities - but not without an unprecedented mobilisation by civil society to address these inequities.

The pandemic's disruption and distress have brought to the forefront the critical importance of a participatory and human centric approach to all global goals, including education. Herein lies the case for transforming learning ecosystems for every learner - be it the student, teacher, education leader, funder, policy maker, social innovator or caregiver.

The immediate need is a paradigm shift in education practice and policy. Education literature and policy discourse acknowledge newer perspectives and tools that learners need to be equipped with for a transformed purpose of education.



Yet, there is little awareness about ‘how’ this idea of transformation can translate into an implementable reality across the learning ecosystem. Social entrepreneurs in education have shown the way and have tried and tested solutions. These need to be taken seriously.

Chapter Two highlights evidence-based learning principles that are shaping the new education paradigm

Implementing a reimagined vision of education requires an understanding of the principles that govern this new universe of learning. The case studies we present in Chapter Two, as a source of these learning principles, are situated in the context of a global movement to repurpose learning. This is to enable learners to thrive in their lives and careers and make meaningful contributions in their local and global communities.

Chapter Three discusses the role of learning ecosystems and its components in facilitating a sustainable systems change

Systemic change is imperative for a paradigm shift to take root. We need to remodel the top down approach and power dynamics to make way for learning ecosystems where all stakeholders are aligned towards a shared vision of education.

How can learning systems be transformed?

The systemic changes envisaged by learning solutions we have showcased, demonstrate that such change requires collective leadership with policymakers, school administrators, teachers, funders, social entrepreneurs and communities working in harmony to build capacity, address systemic barriers to learning and foster trust in the system. It also requires leveraging of technology, learning spaces and learning pedagogies to create accessible, equitable and inclusive learning systems.

After all, the learners of today are the hope and the leaders.

Eight Learning Principles

- 1 Learner-centric Models and Learner-led Approach
- 2 Skills for Life (Life Skills and Social Emotional Wellbeing)
- 3 Learning a Living
- 4 Social Justice and Community-based Learning
- 5 Learning for People and Planetary Change
- 6 Learning for Civic Participation
- 7 Accessible and Inclusive Learning
- 8 Learning in Conflict Zones



The Case for Transforming Education

CHAPTER ONE



The competing crises in the world today pose an unprecedented challenge for people and society. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unimaginable future right to our doorsteps. It has widened long-standing socio-economic and environmental inequities and made them more visible. Increasing conflict and authoritarianism, degrading climatic conditions and alarming rates of youth unemployment have plunged us into an era demanding radical transitions on the path towards creating a sustainable future for all.¹

We are at a crossroads. Despite existing and impending calamities, there is an opportunity to rise to these challenges via concrete and sustainable actions. Even during the worst of the pandemic, humanity was able to disrupt conventions and innovate alternate systems to provide essential services, from food and healthcare to education and beyond. We must now build on these innovations and disruptions to create a resilient society. It is an opportunity to reflect, learn and incorporate lessons to rebuild a world that is equitable, accessible and inclusive.

Call for Transforming Education

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a shared blueprint to achieve a better and sustainable future for all. Education sits at the centre of this 2030 Agenda as a primary driver of progress across all 17 SDGs and as the bedrock of just, inclusive and peaceful societies.² It is a dedicated goal and the means to achieving all other goals³, particularly health and wellbeing, gender equality, decent work, responsible consumption and production and climate mitigation.⁴

Societies are undergoing massive changes. There are greater threats to individual agency and liberty, social cohesion and planetary solidarity. Education systems worldwide are struggling to keep up. The education crisis, exacerbated by COVID-19 school closures, has been silent and invisible for a long time. Before the pandemic, projections showed that the world would not meet its educational commitments under SDG 4 - *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* – by 2030⁵, with several millions not even in school.⁶ The pandemic-related learning losses have now stacked up, exacerbating historical learning inequities.⁷ COVID-19's impact on schooling has been referred to as a 'generational catastrophe' and 'a global education crisis'. An additional 101 million children and youth have fallen below the minimum reading proficiency level, wiping out the education gains achieved over the last two decades.⁸

On the other hand, the pandemic became a ground for the acceleration of new models of learning and innovations, beyond traditional learning pathways. Digital, blended and hybrid learning became an accepted new learning reality. Community-based interventions ensured the continuity of learning. Stakeholders within local learning ecosystems stepped up to meet the challenge in more ways than one.

Furthermore, a focus on skills beyond the traditional pathways to “promote personal and social development, prevent health and social problems, and protect human rights”⁹ came to the anvil. Social entrepreneurs and grassroots innovators were first responders to disrupt education delivery models, to reach last mile learners. Quick governmental and stakeholder responses enabled education continuity globally.¹⁰

The massive, quickly implemented changes are indicative of the willingness of systems around the world to move beyond existing approaches to embrace radical innovation¹¹, rethink fundamental educational practices and redesign learning ecosystems.

Given the increasingly volatile, uncertain, and complex world, we are forced to ask the foundational questions once again - what will the future look like for people and the planet? What skills will the youth need to adapt, thrive and actively play a role in shaping it? And what, in this context, should the purpose of education be?

“



“The world is uncertain, everything is changing - economies, planet, complex challenges, etc. Unless students today are developing as leaders - who can navigate these problems and shape a better future- then there is no hope for any of our aspirations such as peace, sustainability, prosperity...We not only need to be a force for equity, but need to reshape the purpose of our system”.

- Wendy Kopp, Teach For America

As the world recovers, there is a renewed call for a reimagined education that fits with new platforms for collaboration, new partnerships and shared values¹² and which contributes to a shared purpose.¹³ It is simply not enough to ‘go back’. The knowledge and skills required for learners to thrive in this fast-changing world calls for a vastly different set of learning experiences.¹⁴ Reforms within existing narrow goals and definitions of the purpose of education will not prepare learners for the challenges of the next century, nor advance learning equity, inclusivity and accessibility.

The new education story must be one of transformation.

Existing Frameworks on a Reimagined Purpose of Education

The call to transform education is not new.¹⁵ Over the past decade, extensive research has focussed on reinventing education to meet the challenges of an uncertain future. Multiple frameworks and articulations of a reimagined education / learning purpose have emerged to address the demands of a changing world.

In 2016, the Brookings’ Skills for a Changing World project made a case for equipping youth with a broader range of competencies or ‘breadth of skills’ beyond literacy and numeracy to meet the needs and demands of the 21st century.¹⁶ These included collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, analytical thinking, self-regulation, social and interpersonal skills, technology and computer skills and listening skills. One of the focuses of the Brookings project, the Breadth of Skills movement, highlighted communication, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving as the 21st century skills most frequently identified by countries (based on a scan of 102 countries).¹⁷

Another initiative, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Learning Compass 2030, is an evolving tool developed as a part of the Future of Education and Skills 2030 project. The Compass points towards an aspirational vision for the future of education and individual and collective wellbeing. It defines the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that learners need to fulfil their potential and contribute to the wellbeing of their communities and the planet.¹⁸

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) recent report, *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*, goes further, calling for a shared public purpose of education. The report calls “to unite around collective endeavours and provide the knowledge, science, and innovation needed to shape sustainable futures for all anchored in social, economic, and environmental justice”. It defines the aim of education as a shared societal endeavour to build common purposes and enable individuals and communities to flourish.¹⁹

When studied together, the defining components of key frameworks to reimagine education trace back to the targets and outcomes²⁰ stipulated in SDG 4. These cross link to other SDGs²¹ and an overall focus on lifelong learning opportunities. Implicit in the targets are skills required to navigate unfamiliar contexts, all grounded in the critical values of quality, equity, inclusion and access. These include functional literacy and numeracy skills, high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution. Skills development and vocational training, skills for sustainable development and global citizenship, inclusive of human rights education, intercultural education and international understanding are also included.

The discussed frameworks and literature strengthen an ongoing worldwide movement to rethink learning opportunities. Learning opportunities should enable learners to thrive in their lives, develop careers and meaningfully contribute to local and global communities. Governments globally have responded to this movement by recognising a broadened focus of a 21st century education. Topics such as social and emotional learning, culture and the arts, health and citizenship education have made their way into national education mission statements, curricula and other policy documents.²² This indicates an intention and potential for their development in education systems.

In literature and policy discourse, equipping learners with intergenerational knowledge and competencies for life, learning and work are an acknowledged need. This can empower them to participate effectively in their societies and the world and to tackle global challenges like climate change and biodiversity loss.²³ There is little evidence in education systems, however, of these intentions translating into learning spaces and awareness of how to impart these competencies.



“In the education sector, we don’t really need to focus on why education is important anymore. The conversation has shifted to asking how to make quality education for all children globally a reality and we often don’t get to the ‘how’ enough. When we talk about issue areas like socio-emotional life skills, early childhood development and broader issues around gender equality in education, the emphasis needs to be on understanding what are the best ways to get there”.

Erin Ganju, Echidna Giving

Social entrepreneurs are at the frontline of change, actioning the ‘how’

Conceptual redefining of education might be happening higher up, by policymakers, education leaders and academia. But the transformation of education in practice has been happening on the ground, in partnership with key stakeholders of local learning ecosystems. Social entrepreneurs are at the forefront of this movement, innovating and implementing solutions. They are advancing a full breadth of learner-centric, inclusive and adaptable skills and competencies.

This includes rethinking curricula and teacher training to equip learners with skills and knowledge to flourish in a rapidly changing world. Deeply rooted in contextual knowledge,²⁴ local innovators are pivoting the ‘How’, ‘What’ and ‘Who’ of learning pathways to better respond to the holistic needs and aspirations of all learners. They are driving the much needed shift from fact-based didactic methodologies, to competency-based approaches, in pursuit of inspiring lifelong learning.

Social entrepreneurs are leveraging partnerships with governments, communities, intermediaries and funders²⁵ to reach marginalised learners through integrated approaches and to achieve sustainable impact at scale. Their learning models have a cascading impact and they have the data to demonstrate it. The evidence-backed learning principles that underpin these learning models, if scaled up, have the potential to leapfrog progress in education²⁶ and build strong, resilient, inclusive and equitable learning ecosystems.

An urgent need to bridge the gap between intent and action

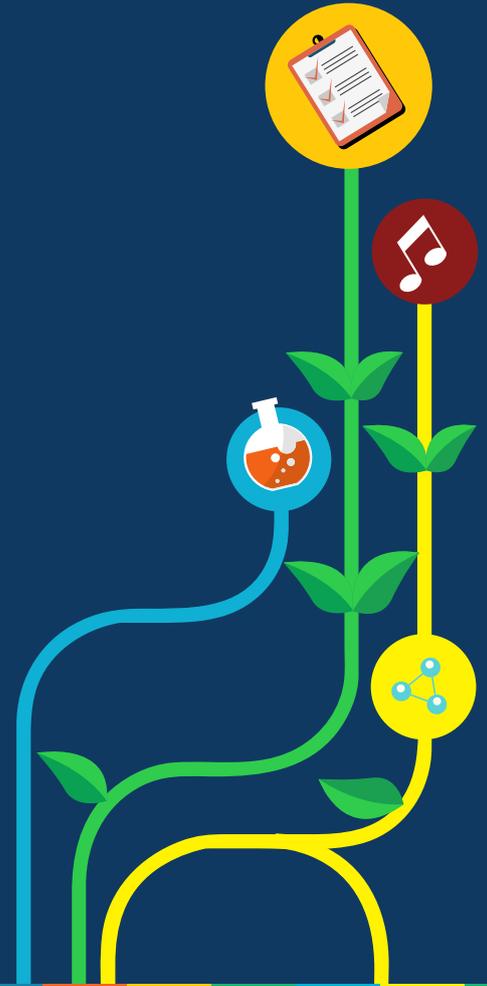
At the Catalyst 2030 Education Issue-Based Group, we are fuelled by a sense of urgency to transform the very purpose of education and the systems enabling it. Our focus is on the longer-term imperative of fostering collaborative local learning ecosystems that will address the challenges of this century. Our goal is to bridge the gap between intent and action.

This document is the first step in that direction. It is an effort to build an evidence base of learning principles that are successfully implementing, at grassroots, a reimagined vision for education that is being advocated globally. This document unpacks ‘the breadth of skills’ for the 21st century into learning principles that are driving the shift in educational practices and processes. These principles are further validated by the lived experiences of the youth.

Social entrepreneurs are showing the way. It is time for decision-makers to take them seriously and to step in to scale their solutions by taking coordinated actions to transform education systems.

Principles Redefining Learning

CHAPTER TWO



This chapter highlights evidence-based learning principles that have emerged from the study of a globally representative sample of thirty-seven holistic learning models²⁷. The principles and tools are derived from the insights of practitioners who are successfully scaling the impact of a thematic focus in their learning models. These principles are further validated by the voice of young learners and corroborated by the perspectives of ecosystem enablers.

It is worth mentioning that several of the social entrepreneurs consulted were able to reflect, and resonate with, unique combinations of these learning principles in their work. However, we have restricted the lens to one principle per organisation for the sake of providing a representative sample without compromising on brevity.

A snapshot of the learning principles, derived from the learning solutions that we have studied to understand the models in practice, is in the table presented on the following page. The examples listed in the table showcase social enterprises that have successfully scaled these principles through their learning models.

Principles	SDG 4 Alignment	Tools	Case Examples
The How			
Learner-centric models and Learner-led Approach	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-designed / collaborative curricula • Personalised learning tools • Apparatus to capture learner voices - learner-centred feedback loops • 'Learnability' as a core capacity • Future learning spaces • Self-directed learning • Intrinsic motivation development • Storytelling • Metacognition 	We Love Reading, Escuela Nueva, Learn Life
That What			
Skills for Life	4.1.0 4.2.1 4.a.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing focus in formal curricula • Culture of care • Empathetic relationships in learning environments • Art and play as pedagogy • Role modelling of teachers • Life skill Assessment scale • Skills development while in school 	Dream a Dream, SHEF
Learning a Living	4.1.0 4.3.1 4.3.3 4.4.1 4.4.2 4.4.3 4.6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy and numeracy Skills • Social and financial skills Development • Entrepreneurship skills and mindset • Peer learning • ICT skills 	Aflatoun, Nairobi
Social Justice and Community-based Learning	4.1.0 4.5.1 4.7 4.7.2 4.a.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender focus in formal curriculums • Safe learning spaces • Facilitation tools for critical dialogues • Community-based learning methods • Assessment metrics • Culture of respect to oneself and to others 	SHEF, Project Soar Muktangan Education Trust
Learning for People and Planetary Change	4.1.0 4.7.1 4.7.4 4.7.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimental spaces • Platforms for exchange of ideas • Communication channels to policymakers and local leaders 	Design for Change Designathon, LivMundi Institute, KIDs for SDGs
Learning for Civic Participation	4.1.0 4.7.1 4.7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 5th space - a space where young people discover themselves by engaging in social action 	Pravah, ComMutiny

Principles	SDG 4 Alignment	Tools	Case Examples
The Who			
Accessible and Inclusive Learning	4.1.0 4.2.3 4.3.1 4.5.1 4.a.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness, empowerment and handholding • Technology as an empowerment tool • Inclusive and accessible learning spaces • Community-based learning methods 	Friendship, One Sky Shonaquip Enterprises
Learning in Conflict Zones	4.1.0 4.5.1 4.a.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuroscience • Communication for development • Arts and culture, play pedagogy • Safe spaces • Peer learning • Storytelling and reading • Self-directed learning • Intrinsic motivation development 	TAAP Foundation
The Ecosystem			
Transforming Learning Ecosystems	4.5 4.7 4.a 4.c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner-led teacher training Programmes with learner-centric focus • Technology • Stakeholder dialogues / active communication platforms • Platforms for systemic exchange of know-how • Training content 	STiR Education, Learning Links Foundation, Adhyayan Quality Education Foundation, Teach For All, Quest Alliance, Riverside School

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Learner-centric Models and Learner-centric Approach

Placing learners as the focus of solutions, we can understand learner needs and tailor solutions that respond to them, while cultivating intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning.

A learner-centric approach recognises the learner’s agency and ability to be transformative, empowering them to become completely autonomous in their lifelong learning journey. The approach is centred on instilling a sense of belief in learners that they can not only change things for themselves and those around them but that they have the responsibility to do so. We Love Reading is one such model that seeks to change mindsets by fostering a love of reading.

We Love Reading

“Learners should ‘want to’ learn, and not ‘have to’ learn. They need to be enabled to become lifelong learners”.

- Dr Rana Dajani, We Love Reading



We Love Reading (WLR) is a simple holistic approach to enable systems change. The vision is to change mindsets through reading to create changemakers.

Key Facets

- The WLR pedagogy is driven by the philosophy that fostering the love of reading cultivates an intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning. The focus is on making reading fun through unstructured methods to build critical thinking, vocabulary, confidence and empathy and to foster agency in learners.
- The learning model is based on shared universal values that are unifying, yet diverse. Learners read in their own language at their own pace.
- The model relies on trainee community proximity. It is a horizontal organisational structure that operates through ambassadors (people from ages 16-100 trained in the WLR programme, the majority being women) who know how to read out loud and gather children in their own neighbourhoods.
- Ambassadors across the model constitute a virtual community engaged in peer-to-peer learning where everyone is a co-creator and a source of learner feedback. Design is driven by the consideration that a semi-literate person should be able to understand, implement and sustain the programme.
- Training in the WLR is free, accessible in both online and offline modalities. It consists of topics like the importance of reading, reading aloud, community organising, sessions planning, finding books, gathering children and making sessions recurrent.
- Impact is measured qualitatively by articulating real change. This is done by storytelling and quantitatively through academic research published in peer-reviewed journals demonstrating impact on children, adults and the community. Impact is assessed across multiple goals such as early childhood education, climate, mental health, social inclusion and women empowerment.

Outcomes

- The movement has spread from person to person. So far, 497,792 children have been read to and there are 4,478 ambassadors and 7,529 trainees in 63 countries.
- There are collaborations with the Jordan Government through a national campaign and a campaign to implement We Love Reading in schools to make up for the loss of 18 months of education and school life during the pandemic.
- There is an improvement in leadership skills in women trained as ambassadors by a margin of 80%. The programme has an impact on social entrepreneurship and leadership, with women empowered to start their own enterprises.



Curricula that reflect learner needs and incorporate learner feedback can move the needle from standardised education models to personalised and co-created learning journeys. Crucially, the learner community context should be understood to generate relevant, sustainable and impactful educational interventions. Co-creation of learning experiences with learners and the development of curricula that learners can relate to, can pave the way for self-determined learning where learners become proficient in designing their own paths. One of the oldest conceptualisations of a ‘school of the future’, Escuela Nueva, puts this learner-centric paradigm into practice in the most vulnerable, deprived, rural, isolated schools of Columbia.

Escuela Nueva

“We learned to transform complexity into simple, manageable actions so that any teacher can have results. And we have demonstrated that yes, it can be done, you can shift the learning paradigm”.



- Vicky Colbert, Escuela Nueva

Escuela Nueva, which means ‘new school’, is one of the oldest bottom-up innovations of the developing world. It is a simple, scalable, cost-effective solution to equity and quality of education that has transformed the conventional teacher-centred schooling into a learner-centred model.

Key Facets

- At the heart of the Escuela Nueva solution is
 - *Cooperative learning* - children learning through dialogue and interaction
 - *Personalised learning* - children finishing academic units at their own pace and learning rhythm through ‘modularised’ curricula
 - *Participatory learning* - children applying learnings with parents and the community
- The teacher is no longer simply transmitting facts and has a new role as a mentor and a facilitator. ‘Demonstration schools’ introduce visual images to teachers to model attitudinal changes. Teachers are trained in participatory learner-centric methodology, like the one they will use to teach students. Micro-centres or teacher learning circles facilitate peer learning and organise teachers into a community of practice through the virtual campus, Reneuva.
- Learning guides are all-in-one learning tools that are a hybrid between a traditional textbook, a workbook and a guide for the teacher to empower students:
 1. *In their ways of thinking*: to learn, to develop creativity, to solve problems, to criticise
 2. *In their ways of working*: to work in teams, to meet deadlines, to follow instructions, to collaborate, to listen, to build relationships, to strengthen empathy, to learn to negotiate, to embrace diversity
 3. *To live in the world*: to take initiatives, to lead processes, to positively criticise, to accept criticism
- The solution provides for a systemic approach to reforming education by addressing curricula, teacher training, community and administrative components. Decades of external evaluations demonstrate empirical results.

Outcomes

- The learning model has inspired educational reforms in more than 40 countries through government policy reform and global partnerships in diverse regions including Latin America, Asia and Africa.

- The local innovation became a national policy in Colombia intended to universalise basic primary education in the country, initially reaching more than 20,000 schools and nearly two-thirds of all rural school children. It has also innovated into secondary education, in urban marginalised contexts (Escuela Activa Urbana) and for migrant children through Escuela Nueva Learning Circles.
- The model proved its relevance during the pandemic when everyone was forced to go back to the essentials of learning. This was to be child-centred, to change the role of the teacher as a transmitter of instruction to a mentor and facilitator and to strengthen the participation of family and community. In the absence of connectivity in rural areas, printed self-learning materials proved to be useful guides from which children could learn by themselves and in pairs and with family. Teacher microcentres in smaller towns with some connectivity became virtual camps for training in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Thousands of teachers have been trained.



In learner-centric models, the role of a teacher evolves to that of a facilitator, mentor and guide to support learners on their own learning journeys. It's a new way of understanding learners as opposed to the historical training of teachers in instructional models, focused on dissemination of knowledge. The choice of pedagogy or heutagogy as a teaching approach depends on the level of motivation and skills of each learner. In new learning frameworks like the Lifelong Personal Learning Framework of Learnlife, teachers take the form of learning guides who act as anchors to foster eight main domains of autonomous personal learning in intergenerational learners - self-determination, self-directedness, self-management, self-regulation, self-awareness, self-responsibility, self-efficacy and self-responsibility.²⁸

LearnLife

“We have to ask ourselves, what do we want to measure and for whom? In the future of learning, the only thing we want to measure for whom is for the learner and be completely learner centric”.



- Christopher Pommerening, Learnlife

Learnlife is on a mission to positively change education worldwide, by creating learning innovation ecosystems on local levels, regional levels or entire country levels.

Key Facets

- The learning model is a result-led and an evidence-backed (study of 100 innovative schools, 650 research papers) case for modern progressive learning over industrial, standardised education.
- The new learning framework Lifelong Personal Learning is three steps ahead of the education system of today. The framework includes personalised learning and co-created learning to ultimately, lifelong personal learning, where a learner becomes completely autonomous in his or her learning. It consists of 21 elements divided into three clusters with each element providing its unique roadmap for supporting educational change.

- The model adopts a learner-centric collaborative approach of design of the framework by the young and old. Learner pathways are aligned to what the learner can do without assistance and what a learner can do with guidance or in collaboration with capable peers.
- Lighthouses / Learnhubs are designed as spaces of future learning with learners at the centre and a local adapted culture. An example is the Lighthouse in Barcelona, a cross-generational hub where all generations are learning and working together.
- Learning Guides are envisioned as anchors to foster eight main autonomous personal learning domains. These are self-determination, self-directedness, self-management, self-regulation, self-awareness, self-efficacy and self-responsibility.
- The model has a robust evidence base of five years demonstrating how people of all ages, from kindergarten to older people, can co-learn, co-live or co-work in one space.
- Rubrics are in place to assess autonomy and lifelong learning using self-assessment and 360-degree feedback sessions with mentors and guides. These have been documented and developed into a portfolio shaping the future of learning.

Outcomes

- 160 learners across Urban Hub and Eco Hub
- Online alliance of more than 1500 innovators from more than 90 nations around the world
- Launch of ten Hubs in the pipeline, 200 interested Hub Partners who want to build Lighthouses / Learning Hubs
- Partnership with city governments to create mini-hubs inside their schools



A learner-centric approach is an opportunity to change the way in which success is defined and reported. It is a chance to redefine success by moving away from a linear definition that excludes more and more learners, making them feel like failures. It contemplates a shift in metrics of relevance from enrolment numbers and retention rates, to talking about how many children or teachers have managed to transform their educational practice and how many children have improved their capabilities, skills and learning results.

Policymaker Perspective

A paradigm shift from knowledge-centred structures to child-centred structures requires comprehensive protection of child rights in the spheres of education and public policies. Acknowledgement of every child's context, such as cultural, ethnic, linguistic and social conditions, is fundamental to transforming education. This requires understanding the particularities of the learner population, who may be marginalised, disabled, migrants or victims of conflict.



“We need to understand that the main issue is to be child-centred. And this means that we are going to have to go beyond the supply of education and go to the right of education”.

- Constanza Alarcón, Deputy Minister, Education, Colombia

Funder Perspective

Funders like Porticus, strive to build a just and sustainable world where human dignity can flourish through an education strategy that is contextualised to the geography where its child development programme operates. In India, the organisation is working in regions like Jharkhand and Telangana to implement a deeper systems level plan. Further, they attempt to contextualise adversity by working with tribal authorities, social welfare departments and girls' residential schools.

What do young learners want?



“When we read these poems, teachers had a very clear ideological prejudice. Students in my bachelors wanted to challenge those views but we didn't have the space to do that. These schools were mainly upper-class. I think the contexts determine student engagement”.

- Hayaat Fatemah,
Student, Pravah, India



“The biggest problem we have here is that children don't read for fun. They do it because they have to. When they fall in love with reading, they fall in love with learning. We need to focus on creating a safe environment for reading and learning. Ignore grades and marks for a moment so that children don't compete with each other”.

- Marwa Jalal, Student,
We Love Reading, Jordan

Young learners were consulted on the importance of a learner-led and learner-centric approach to their educational journey. The following are some of their asks:

- Learning environments that are not driven by grades, marks or competition but by an intrinsic love for the process of learning
- Tools to stimulate independent thinking and acknowledgement of differing contexts and varied perspectives of learners
- Experiential learning spaces that allow for diverse learner expressions
- Curricula that are timely, with lessons that the learners can easily interact with / relate to
- Increased opportunities for self-learning to develop a love for lifelong learning

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

1. Collect, analyse and incorporate learner experience data from grassroots stakeholders and feed into policy formulation with due recognition of varied contexts and local needs.
2. Organise focus groups across solution models and with all relevant stakeholders of the local learning ecosystem to derive richer insights on practices that empower learner journeys.

COVID-19 generated a complex array of adverse mental health repercussions for adolescents and children.²⁹ Learners as young as four have been forced to deal with emotions that they had never experienced before. Anxiety, depression, loneliness, stress, fear, tension, anger, fatigue, confusion and worry,³⁰ already prevalent in some form, emerged as common issues weighing down many young learners. The need for skills beyond academic ability, to lead a thriving life and navigate the complexities and uncertainties of current and future times, was amplified like never before.

COVID-19 has also been an opportunity for a new set of life skills to surface. An understanding of human values like compassion, empathy, patience and self-awareness as well as how to deal with stress, conflict-management and processing grief became critical. With young learners, teachers and parents returning to in-person learning in once familiar environments, a focus on social emotional wellbeing, the need for trauma-informed care and resilience in learning spaces has become a priority in learning agendas.

Contextual realities impact learning capacities. Adverse childhood experiences or prevailing circumstances like malnutrition, neglect, abuse, violence and displacement impact a child's ability to achieve developmental milestones. This can lead to a child disengaging or dropping out of learning environments. Life skills anchored in learning of the self and others can help these learners adapt and respond to daily challenges.

Holistic development of a learner is incomplete without a focus on their social, emotional wellbeing and life skills. These skills are vital for day-to-day living in a world that can be isolating and emotionally challenging, sometimes to the point of dehumanisation.

Art and play as a pedagogy can help develop life skills. Consistent engagement with an experiential medium like art or play can help cultivate life skills. There is credible and extensive scientific evidence that playful learning motivates children and propels them on their learning journeys.

Children value care, respect and empathetic relationships. Even one such adult relationship, with parents, siblings, cousins and others where a child feels seen, heard and understood has the potential to be a game changer. In recognition of this, Dream a Dream has designed its Trainer Development Programme with a methodology to map attributes of care and respect for learners. The experiential learning programme helps teachers unlock their own sense of identity, care and creativity that can be role modelled in classrooms to support children. The aim is to bring an adult empathetic relationship into the classroom environment.





Dream a Dream

“We are re-imagining the purpose of education as, ‘For every child, a thriving life’. We are then defining thriving as helping develop the whole being”.



- Vishal Talreja, Dream a Dream

Dream a Dream empowers young people from vulnerable backgrounds to overcome adversity and flourish in a fast-changing world, using a creative life skills approach.

Key Facets

- Dream a Dream’s Arc of Transformation (AOT) is a unique framework that helps to design and deliver life skills that empower personal and social change. AOT is contextualised to make transformative learning accessible to young people, especially those who live in adversity.
- Play and art are mediums to enable participants to face challenges with courage, flexibility, creativity and power.
- Programme design and development is focused on interventions that bring about a mindset shift needed in the education ecosystem to reimagine the purpose of education as thriving.
- Happiness Curriculum is integrated into existing school programmes from kindergarten to Grade 12. The After School Life-Skills Programme (ASLSP) builds important life skills such as teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving and critical thinking in children aged 8-14 through sports and art. The Career Connect Programme (CCP) develops resilience, adaptability and confidence to deal with 21st century demands in young people aged 15-23 in learning and technology spaces.
- A total of 40% of the current staff at Dream a Dream are from the communities served, including schools, colleges and community centres which are common learning spaces (children aged 6-21)
- Innovation Labs (school-based interventions and youth centres in communities) are spaces to gain insights on how young people are experiencing learning. The focus here is on what’s working and what’s not and this is fed into the work with teachers and governments.
- The Teacher Development Programme has been co-created with clinical child psychologists and curriculum developers from across the world.
- Life Skills Assessment Scale is a statistically proven, validated and peer-reviewed measurement tool specifically designed for children who have faced adversities. Baseline and endline data for every child is recorded and used to inform the design of interventions.
- The solution adopts a multi-pronged approach to drive the awareness of life skills within the context of education with key national and international decision makers and stakeholders. Interventions take a variety of forms such as system demonstration, ecosystem influence and framework designs.

Outcomes

- Impact on three million children through state partnerships, 110,000 young people through direct delivery programmes and 35,000 teachers through training programmes (in India and Kenya).
- Breakthrough with the Delhi Government in India with the design of the Happiness Curriculum. This is a wellbeing-focused curriculum for children. There are currently partnerships with five state governments in India and with the Aga Khan Foundation in Kenya.



Policymaker Perspective



“We need a systematic practice including an apparatus that promotes into children and into teachers, skills and knowledge that go beyond the content, that go beyond the mere disciplinary exercise but rather, evidently, they need to understand that this is a possibility to learn that will give them life skills”.

- Constanza Alarcón, Deputy Minister, Education, Colombia

The Happiness Curriculum, developed by Dream a Dream in partnership with the Delhi Government in India, is a successful example of policymakers taking the lead in embedding a wellbeing focus in school curricula. Dream a Dream has adopted its own pedagogical approach to life skills to encourage different teams within the public education system to identify their biases and prejudices. It further encourages them to build trust through empathy and care and to collaboratively create the curriculum. The success of this initiative has led to other state governments in the country inviting Dream a Dream to develop a similar curriculum for their respective states.

Funder Perspective

Education in life skills is a systemic approach. Porticus is a funder with a system-oriented approach to personal development skills, which sits at the core of where its investments go. The focus is not just on skills at a child level but also on enabling adults such as teachers and school leaders as well as monitoring officials. The aim is to build across the system, while at the same time maintaining an explicit focus within the curriculum.



“While the pandemic was a big challenge, it also helped in bringing the narrative around wellbeing into the school system”.

- Nita Aggarwal, Porticus



“I think the first step is simplifying and unpacking life skills while giving teachers the tools to be able to make assessments on those skills. And then, training them to see how they can improve these skills. The mindset shift will be that you will not have every child topping all your skills, and it’s okay for them to be different. And I think, as a society, we have to accept that”.

- Geeta Goel, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

Agreement is sought on life skills assessment frameworks. A fractured vocabulary on life skills, social emotional learning or 21st century skills has translated into the fragmentation of assessment solutions and the emergence of multiple frameworks. Funders are seeking agreement on certain best practices regarding assessments, to be able to benchmark learning results. In India, a response to this need has been the Life Skills Collaborative³¹, set up by five funders and 19 practitioners. The Collaborative has developed a research-backed tool for assessment of life skills that are essentially qualitative. The tool is currently being piloted in 15 interventions in four Indian states including Rajasthan, Mizoram, Maharashtra and Uttarakhand.

What do young learners want?

Young learners want emotional intelligence to be considered on a par with cognitive intelligence. Specific asks include:

- Incorporation of mental, physical and social needs in education curricula on a par with critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will help them once they step out of school
- Cultivation of empathy as a value that enables one to understand one's own feelings and those of others
- Emotional regulation - knowing when and how to react, express emotions and respond to differences in conflicts as necessary skills
- Recognition of communication and expression as aspects of wellbeing. Knowledge of different platforms that can be used to stay connected and the need to encourage the use of varied tools for the expression of individual creativity and expression have been identified as essential learning components
- Lessons on time management and planning of learning journeys post-COVID-19 pivot to hybrid learning spaces



"I don't like the fact that teachers don't spend time on knowing how our mental health is. There is a lack of empathy".

- Sushmitha, Student,
Dream a Dream

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

- There should be integration of topics focused on life skills and social emotional learning in course work, programmes compatible with learning environments through blended curricula and teacher education programmes.
- Dream a Dream has successfully integrated a focus on wellbeing in public education curricula and can serve as a model for adoption and adaptation to local contexts. Mandatory training of all teachers in life skills that can be role modelled to learners and even parents and community members.

3 Learning a Living

Every person's personal, social and economic life is interconnected. Learning a Living is a mindset necessary to equip learners with the skills needed to secure a livelihood / income generating opportunity.

Social and Financial Education allows learners to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and inequality, turning dependence into independence on a systemic basis. Tying learning goals with learners' real-world goals like becoming efficient with savings, budgeting or learning how to prepare oneself for retirement through lesson plans can help learners understand the 'why' and 'how' of the impact of these skills on the rest of their lives. This includes economic empowerment, positive mental health around financial decisions, understanding their relationship with money and impact of decisions on goals among other things.



Aflatoun

“Power of our model is that we are B2B. We have content that we share with other organisations which is rooted at the local level, and we build their capacity to empower the boys and girls”.



- Roeland Monasch

Aflatoun International helps cultivate social and financial skills in children and youth to help them break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and inequality.

Key Facets

- Aflatoun’s learning methodology is based on five core components: personal understanding and exploration, rights and responsibilities, saving and spending, planning and budgeting and social and financial enterprise.
- Thematic fields are contextualised for specific needs including poverty reduction, peacebuilding, sustainable development and resource usages, youth employment and child labour, equality of rights, juvenile inmates and incarceration and psycho-social support in post-conflict countries.
- The Active Learning Method (ALM) empowers trainers and teachers to engage their learners and make learning exciting, fun and relevant.
- Structured as a social franchising model, Aflatoun provides knowledge, insights and networking to its partners. The partnership fee is determined by the annual income of the partner organisation and previous year’s financial report. Partners are provided with comprehensive tools to assess their own programmes.
- The organisation adopts a systemic approach for advocacy, tools development, capacity building work, contextualisation and acceleration of work. This is done through an extensive partner network consisting of organisations, international agencies and government institutions.
- Monitoring and evaluation research uses a range of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. It includes completed or ongoing randomised controlled trials in ten countries, a systematic review and meta-analysis of all financial education for children and youth and a realist review on programmes aimed at economically empowering adolescent girls.
- Thematic assessments and their results are annually published in a series entitled ‘Children and Change’.

Outcomes

- As a global movement working with 345 partners and 38 governments, the organisation reaches 10.5 million children and young people each year in 109 countries.
- Rigorous evidence shows an increase in teachers’ use of child-centred learning approaches and students’ school engagement as a direct impact of Aflatoun’s teacher training programmes. Socially, children show an increase in self-efficacy, self-control, critical thinking and confidence in the future. There is an enhanced likelihood of saving larger amounts, becoming financially literate and developing entrepreneurial attitudes.
- Governments and bilateral and multilateral agencies in 40 countries are in the process of integrating Aflatoun’s educational resources in national curricula and projects, giving more and more children access to essential life skills and financial education.



Youth readiness for today's known jobs and adaptability for tomorrow's unknown jobs are the needs of the hour. The current landscape of jobs is rapidly evolving due to technological changes. Addressing learners from early childhood, nurturing their personal understanding and technology exploration, helps build their confidence and competence. NairoBits, a non-profit organisation in Nairobi, is working to enhance the capacity of underserved youth and create opportunities to help them take advantage of the digital age.

NairoBits

“An education system cannot introduce coding for children without figuring out where these children get computers from. If they don't have the devices, the facilities, or the assets to ensure that they're learning, they get left behind”.



- Magdalene Wanjugu, NairoBits

NairoBits harnesses Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to place disadvantaged youth (aged 17-24) at the centre of societal engagements and solutions. The organisation equips learners with digital skills through its ICT centres and facilitates access to gainful employment opportunities.

Key Facets

- NairoBits offers alternative higher education programmes to help young learners unlock their career in technology through digital skills training and professional integration with the labour market. Focus is on addressing specific gaps for young learners from marginalised communities, which include accessibility to learning avenues and financial limitations.
- Societal challenges that prevail in the areas of operation relate to high crime, drug and alcohol abuse. NairoBits provides opportunities to youth from these marginalised communities. This includes youth who are unable to cope with the pressures of higher education and dropout or who are unable to afford the costs associated with higher education.
- Courses provided range from digital literacy to advanced multimedia design and coding curriculum along with video editing and other programmes.
- Programmes work via partnerships with community-based organisations that take responsibility to host and successfully run the centres in their local community.
- NairoBits has managed to overcome barriers by building trust with local partners and getting referrals for learners. Every successful placement has boosted their credibility. Placement support for alumni learners working for reputable organisations has led to employers recognising and valuing people skilled and certified by NairoBits.
- The organisation adopts a systems lens towards creating a wholesome subsector change through advocacy regarding the digital divide across marginalised groups.

Outcomes

- 10,000 youth, four African countries, eight ICT Centres across five informal settlements
- Successful replication of the NairoBits Model in Uganda (AruaBits and KampaBits), Nigeria (EdoBits and EkoBits) and Somaliland (HargaBits and GaroBits)



Policymaker Perspective



“Academic learning should also be blended with skill set learning, both being compatible. For a child to emerge out of school with the capacity to test himself or herself at work forthwith or to be able to pursue a vocational line in a more heightened skill set should be possible”.

- Vrinda Swarup, Former Secretary,
School Education & Literacy, India



What do young learners want?



“Most of the jobs done now will become automated - programming sector will become future of jobs – sports, etc - need to learn these skills - need to learn skills for job prospects available in the future”.

- Pia Parkhi, Student,
Designathon



Young learners are aware of the massive digital metamorphosis underway and the consequent changing demands of job markets.

This is reflected in their asks:

- With technology positioned to shape the jobs of the future (programming, computing), prioritisation of corresponding skills in learning solutions
- Job-oriented skill sets

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

1. Blend academic curricula with skills sets / vocational training to build capacities that can enable learners to make a seamless ‘school to work’ transition.
2. Incorporation of social, financial, digital literacy focused skills programmes and educational resources (as put in practice by Aflatoun and NairoBits) into curricula can help cultivate the ‘learning a living’ mindset from an early age.

Education has a pivotal role to play in a democratic, pluralistic, complex society. Learning to look at contemporary and historical events, including one's own actions, through the lens of social justice can help learners become reflective and responsible decision-making adults. They will become adults who are capable of identifying, questioning and analysing representations and omissions, discrimination and inequality.

An understanding of interconnections between various social identities and how these identities feed into critical agency can foster empathy, self-reflection and critical thinking skills in learners. This will enable them to engage in meaningful dialogue and respond better to community needs.

Integration of gender focus at the core of learning models is key to accomplishing a systemic impact. Gender focus in schools through feminist curricula can change the mindsets, not just of girls and boys but also teachers, parents, caregivers and administrators. The starting point is administrator buy-in followed by teacher training. This involves getting all decision makers to work on their personal or family and friend circle's experiences of gender discrimination, social injustice, violence and abuse. The Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF) in India is undertaking systems level work of promoting an understanding of the enormity, urgency and importance of gender focus at all levels of the learning ecosystem. This has translated into reimagined roles in learning spaces and actively engaged learners in meaningful and actionable discourse.

Study Hall Educational Foundation

The traditional definition of learning focuses on narrow academic skills, it keeps the self out of school, short-changing students because it does not view the learner as a 'whole' person with 'whole' human needs – rational, social, emotional, political. Learners do not live in a vacuum. They are relational beings”.



- Dr Urvashi Sahni, SHEF

Based in Lucknow, India, the non-profit SHEF is disrupting education with its critical feminist-based pedagogy and facilitation of critical dialogues, discussions and expressions in classrooms to help all students develop as free, egalitarian thinking, active democratic citizens. Its vision is to educate everyone about gender equality, social justice, personal flourishing and how to be an active democratic citizen.

Key Facets

- SHEF's learning methodology is based on two critical innovations:
 - Critical feminist pedagogy - a part of the official school curriculum for both girls and boys to raise awareness of oppressive social norms, power structures, traditions and gender relations. Curricula and teacher training modules for this are developed and shared with all partners.
 - Universe of care - a learning ecosystem that embeds trust, respect, empathy, openness, and security in the physical environment and the relationships between students, teachers and parents.
- Critical dialogues in safe spaces are key instruments to help girls and boys name their reality and examine the systemic discrimination and oppression faced by them and those around them. Discussions are oriented towards helping students deconstruct inegalitarian perceptions of self and others and reconstruct a democratic mindset. Lessons of equality are the core of the curriculum.

- Learners are viewed as socially transformative persons, capable of leading their own learning journeys. Tools of expression and critical thinking include extensive use of drama, critical literacy, dance, role-play and reflective writing.
- Classroom plans are aligned with 21st century skills needs. These go beyond cognitive and foundational skills to explore inter / intra-personal relations (empathy, compassion and wellbeing).
- Learning teams and structures are strongly rooted in democratic values and principles. For example, 75% of SHEF's leadership are women. A critical pedagogical focus is intentional across teacher training, a holistic school curriculum, school organisational structure and parent meetings / participation.
- Technology is used as a critical lever to foster connection within the ecosystem, contributing to the agility of the model with savvy learning teams.
- Focus is on lifelong outcomes and a participatory approach to measurement. Some of the metrics assessed include retention numbers, transition to higher education / workforce for girls across populations, livelihood generation, delay in marriage and alumni involvement.
- SHEF is a systemic approach to reforming education to integrate a gender focus through a network of nine schools and programmes. These are hubs of innovation where new curricula and pedagogies are developed, shared and scaled by the outreach arm.

Outcomes

- SHEF has trained over 100,000 teachers and impacted more than five million children (predominantly girls from disadvantaged communities) through its various schools and programmes. The solution is operational in 28 districts of the most populous state of India, Uttar Pradesh.
- Through the Aarohini Initiative (SHEF's girls' empowerment and education programme), almost 4,000 government schoolteachers, 1009 government schools (with over 100,000 students) in Uttar Pradesh (809 schools) and Rajasthan (200 schools) serving the most vulnerable populations of rural children have been trained in critical feminist pedagogy.
- There is collaboration with the Government of Uttar Pradesh for teacher training in interactive, child-responsive, critical feminist pedagogy.
- 2000 content videos covering the state curriculum, special education, digital stories and teacher-training workshops are offered free on SHEF's YouTube channel and on the government's Diksha platform.



Safe spaces in learning environments can foster critical dialogues on issues that affect all. Without a culture of care in learning spaces, curriculum alone will be of little use. Learning approaches must invoke the sharing of personal experiences, in safe spaces, to enable discussions on social issues. Furthermore, diverse mediums of expression are key to enabling learners, especially girls, to explore their abilities, implement new skills and troubleshoot with the help of their peers.

Getting male allies on board can mainstream gender dialogue in education. It is important to identify male allies to serve as intermediaries. The nomenclature and language of articulating a gender-focused pedagogy can be adapted to foster their inclusion. Boys have an equal role to play in making learning environments a radical space for the questioning of gender roles. Learning practices aimed at building empathy in boys, through awareness of existing gender roles, is an important first step.



Working via local facilitators who are trusted by communities helps to mitigate and overcome societal resistance. Ensuring alignment of programme goals with community and local government priorities, through engagement with communities, parents and local leaders, is critical for systemic impact. Local facilitators are a critical link, not just for learners but also for other stakeholders of the local learning ecosystem. Feedback loops from the facilitators can inform the intervention design and identify challenges and opportunities for implementation.

An example of this approach is the community-driven municipal schools by Muktangan Education Trust. These schools develop women from marginalised communities into innovative teachers capable of educating children through pre-service and ongoing in-service teacher education programmes. The teachers are trained to develop skills relevant to the observed learning needs of each child, which further helps in designing targeted learning experiences.³²



Muktangan Education Trust

“Education for the community, by the community”.

- Elizabeth Mehta



Muktangan Education Trust, through its Muktangan–developed municipal schools, has created a demonstration model of how a vibrant, inclusive, learning community can offer quality school and teacher education. The learnings have then been contextualised through manifold, outreach activities in diverse communities.

Key Facets

- The learning models aims to integrate of development of 21st century skills into the culture of all stakeholders in the learning community. The learners live and breathe these skills. An inclusive learning community paves the way for collaboration and not competition.
- The focus is on reinforcing of children’s natural, decision-making capacities, beginning in pre-school where, facilitated by their teachers, they formulate their own plans using the materials provided. They implement these plans and then review their actions and outcomes.
- The teachers, after observing the learning needs of each child, design further learning experiences to address these emerging needs. During training, teachers are equipped with relevant skills in child observation.
- Women from marginalised communities, through pre-service and ongoing in-service teacher education programmes, are developed into innovative teachers capable of educating children from pre-school to Grade 10.
- There is a regular engagement with government officials to generate ownership of the classroom processes and pedagogy who spend substantial periods of time immersed in learning spaces to engage with teachers and trainees.
- Teachers track each student’s progress through observation, in every aspect of the curriculum, acknowledging the diverse capabilities and levels of all students including the certified differently abled.

Outcomes

- More than 72,000 students, over 5000 teachers and teacher educators
- Work with the local and state governments



Community-led learning approaches impact social entrepreneurship and leadership development. The backbone of community-led learning models is a robust network of local community members. These interventions help reduce social inequalities that previously led to exclusion and widened gaps between strata of society. This is accomplished by ensuring every learner’s right to quality education. Members of local communities, especially women, are empowered to become leaders, carve out their identity and contribute to society.

Morocco-based Project Soar is a solution where girls graduate into Soar Clubs that provide a sustainable mechanism for lifelong leadership and civic activism. The model is designed to motivate Soar girls to lead sustainable action in their communities and enhance their leadership skills through empowerment workshops.

Project Soar

“One of the important parts of our model is community dialogue that is led by our girls at community level on issues related to girls. The idea that the community also has solutions so it’s essential from a sustainable point of view”.

- Maryam Montague



Project Soar is a holistic solution to serve the needs of ultra-poor teenage girls, living on less than \$1 a day from rural or semi-rural areas. It seeks to address the tremendous waste of potential where under-age girls drop out of school to get married.

Key Facets

- Project Soar is an openly feminist, gender equality-based organisation that works with families that are willing to invest in the future of their teenage girls.
- The learning solution moves away from traditional education support models to empowerment models which provide girls with the executive and holistic skills needed to stay in school, to negotiate with their families and avoid child marriage. The attempt is to fundamentally change and adjust gender roles by talking about menstrual hygiene and reproductive health.
- The backbone of the operation is a network of local community women, who understand the problems communities face and have been trained as facilitators. The girl learners are treated as partners and stakeholders.
- Feedback loops from facilitators and beneficiaries shape the modules for the project. This includes girl surveys, both baseline and endline surveys and annual learning summits to listen to all facilitators.
- Safe public learning spaces are central to the model, given that the work involves minors. Partnerships with the Moroccan government allow access to youth houses in the country and other partnerships allow the use of girl boarding schools and NGO facilities.
- Engagement and onboarding of local community leaders (especially male traditional leaders) as allies, while building community awareness of the project through public meetings constitute a few important steps.
- The project is data-driven. The success of every girl is tracked across her learning journey, including exams passed and her onward voyage to university.

Outcomes

- 34 Project Soar site locations in Morocco (28) and Northwest Syria (six)
- More than 3,392 girls in Morocco living in 72 marginalised communities across 10 regions and 173 girls in Syria have been impacted by the Soar programme. So far, there are a total of 238 Soar trained Facilitators and 35 Soar Clubs, while 2,179 girls have avoided child marriage and 2,148 girls have avoided dropping out of school.
- The Moroccan government has invested in the project and invited the organisation to apply for special status as a public utility. Public utility organisations are those that have proven their impact and are eligible for total tax breaks and the allocation of special funds. This will build credibility at the community level. This status will be conferred on Project Soar in January 2023.



Policymaker Perspective



“Earlier, you hardly found any girl in school. Or if there were girls, they were hounded out after a while by the treatment of those girls as the atmosphere was discriminatory and not inclusive. Today, you will find integrated classrooms and more girls than boys; you will find equal participation in private schools; and you will find more participation of girls in government schools. The whole complexion of classrooms and schools has changed with large participation of girls. But whether this has meant that the school has become a more empowering institution for these girls by way of being fully inclusive and gender positive to build their self-confidence and encourage their abilities to the fullest, remains only partly addressed”.

- Vrinda Swarup, Former Secretary,
School Education & Literacy, India



Funder Perspective

Intentional integration of gender focus in funding approaches can help ensure more than 50% of participation of girls in all programmes. Targeted funding focus usually includes areas where a high percentage of girls are out of school or where girls do not have equal opportunities. There are also funders who might not exclusively work with girls but work with programmes that have gender at their heart. They are willing to collect and segregate data based on gender.

Result-based financing mechanisms or outcomes funding can play a key role in pushing for gender outcomes at a systemic level. The Education Outcomes Fund for Africa and Middle East (EOF) is using ‘cohort pricing’ to promote equity through a differential focus on girls. The price per outcome paid for improvements in girl’s learning is 1.2 times of that paid for boys. Through this multiple, there is recognition that while there are both boys



“Private provision can and already does have a critical role in reaching all children with quality education, but governments have to be setting the mandate, including with thoughtful regulation and support to ensure equity and quality in the private sector”.

- Jared Lee, Education Outcomes
Fund for Africa and the
Middle East

and girls in systems, there is a need for additional resources to ensure girls stay in school and learn.

Given that outcomes-based funding is based on the premise of systems alignment between all learning ecosystem key stakeholders - governments, funders and implementing entrepreneurs - this is one way to push for a shared purpose of gender equity. The mechanism can also be applied to foster inclusion of other marginalised learners.

What do young learners want?

Young learners want their learning environments to be microcosms of the world they inhabit and influence. Their call for tools to navigate its diversity, strife, systemic barriers and long-standing stereotypes includes:



“There is an absence of theoretical understanding, e.g., we are not taught what is justice, so when we talk about injustice it remains unclear to students. Understanding justice is important to learn about social problems in a connected way”.

- Nishant Misra, Student, SHEF

- A sensitive and inclusive curriculum with integrated and intergenerational content covering topics on societal problems. These problems that learners are likely to be confronted with and require skills to navigate, range from poverty, inequality, gender discrimination, caste, domestic violence and child abuse to child marriage, dowry, communal disharmony and systemic barriers to professions
- Dedicated time and space in learning environments along with the expertise to facilitate relatability through personal experiences
- Diversity in learning environments that can allow learners to see and appreciate their differences and access a wide array of skills, agnostic of gender, that can break the notion of accepted gender roles
- Awareness of theoretical constructs accompanied by the ‘how’ through exposure to unique ideas that can empower learners to solve problems in the future
- Tools and methodologies to encourage experience sharing and expression via drama, poetry, plays and workshops

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

1. Mandatory incorporation of gender / empowerment studies in formal school curricula alongside traditional curricula subjects. Social enterprises with demonstrated solutions, for instance, SHEF’S Critical Feminist Pedagogy and Project Soar’s Empowerment curricula, can be partnered with for pivots adapted to local contexts.
2. Educational policies that provide concrete pathways to advance equitable learning.

5

Learning for People and Planetary Change

Learners are potential changemakers who can contribute to social and planetary change. Pedagogies focused on cultivating the belief ‘I can’ and allowing experimentation within learner surroundings can help identify issues of personal significance that can translate motivation into collective action.



Design for Change

“You don’t need to change ‘the’ world, just change ‘your’ world”.

- Kiran Sethi, Design for Change



Design for Change (DFC), one of the largest global movements of children driving change in their own communities, it is all about unleashing this ‘I can’ power.

Key Facets

- DFC’s Feel-Imagine-Do-Share (FIDS) Pedagogy Framework, with design thinking at its heart, is a transferable model to develop 21st century skills in children, build their social and emotional competencies and promote employability skills.
- With depth in terms of mindset shift and scale in terms of belief systems, FIDS shifts the approach of learning from how and what you teach to whom you teach and why they need to learn. The lens of empathy is chosen by the learner and not dictated by the teacher.
- Co-creation is a fundamental principle with the voice of children (primarily aged 8-13) central and not incidental to their learning.
- The learning model is open-source, accessible, adaptable and replicable with potential for impact in numerous countries and regions around the world. Partners have complete autonomy and accountability.
- The role of adults, both teachers and parents, has evolved into that of guides and facilitators.
- Measurement is along data sets that are both qualitative (stories) and quantitative (empirical research).

Outcomes

- 63 countries, 18,970 stories of change across global goals and two million children impacted. Many partners are working with governments to scale.
- Impact of DFC Curriculum has been documented through multiple research initiatives to demonstrate development / improvement of skills like collaboration, creative thinking and empathy in students, along with a significant impact on teachers and parents in terms of adult involvement.



Learning and working with an intercultural and interdisciplinary approach to complex world challenges can reinforce one’s common belonging to the same humanity and planet, while valuing differences and diversity. Organisations like the Liv Mundi Institute in Brazil are working to awaken socio-environmental awareness through non-formal learning processes called ‘transgressive journeys’. The aim is to strengthen individuals and their relationship with their territories in a holistic way, integrating social, cultural, geographical and spiritual aspects. In the process, the goal is to multiply transgressors who question the status quo, propose fair and prosperous relationships between all forms of life and multiply habits, beliefs and values necessary for dealing with social and environmental challenges.

Integration of design thinking and experiential learning in existing models can help develop a changemaking mindset. Amsterdam-based Designathon is working with India-based SHEF to incorporate the Designathon method for skills development and environmental topics for learners in the existing gender and social justice school programme.



Designathon

“Everything around a child should change - social services, city design, parental relationships and education. Children should be able to exercise their autonomy and at the same time, act in collaboration. A huge mindshift is required in how we relate to the entity of the child - Listen to Children”!



- Emer Beamer, Designathon

Designathon facilitates children (aged 8-12 years) as potential changemakers to develop skills to contribute to planetary, social change.

Key Facets

- Designathon addresses the learners' needs to develop their own agency and initiative, for their voices to be heard, to understand the complex challenges of the world and to recognise their role in addressing them.
- The pedagogy is centred around design-thinking and maker education (experiential), project-based learning, tech-enabled curriculum (optional) and an interdisciplinary / intercultural, inclusive, adaptive methodology catering to an international community. Learning journey transverse from engagement, to ideas, to research and to solution.
- Focus is on development of life skills and 21st century skills (collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creative thinking and developing their own agency as a budding citizen in society).
- The programmes are custom-made with 60% of the content experimental. Parents are involved and learner surroundings influence the areas of focus and the design and building of solutions.
- Diverse problem-solving tools: In-person learning spaces including schools, after-school programmes, community clubs and businesses are supplemented with technology to develop prototypes and apps.
- Measurement metrics include the child’s knowledge, creative thinking and changemaker ability. Annual events make use of inbuilt tools and surveys to capture learner outcomes.
- Learning model is both student and facilitator-led and includes teacher training as a crucial component for systems change. Local workshops are conducted with teams in respective countries.

Outcomes

- Operation in 45 countries, 112,000 Children (50% from marginalised groups), 1,800 teachers / facilitators in network and 30 000 designed interventions. In Ireland, the programme has been incorporated into the curriculum.
- With the COVID-19 disruption, online transformation of classrooms emerged as a ground of global exchange.
- Commissioning by the City of Rotterdam to work with ten schools on the topic of poverty in families, to hear both the main concerns of the children in relation to these issues and their solutions. This is an example of getting information and feeding it back into new policy.



Inclusion of youth in decision-making, by establishing channels of communication and dissemination of their ideas to relevant decision makers (locally and nationally), has paved the way for transformative impact. Designathon collects student ideas on specific topics for decision makers and publishes them at the city level. In Côte d'Ivoire, one such invention by the children was implemented at the community level. Similarly, the Riverside Project by the Design for Change team collected learner feedback on the safety of their surroundings to kickstart a campaign called 'Approach' for child-friendly cities. The campaign now has the support of other schools and the community, including businesses, the police and local government.

Policymaker Perspective



“There is no systematic way, either on a European level or on a global level, where we would, together, consider the most important innovations in education and how we would systematically take them forward. In my view, one of the great things that could happen in a summit would be to agree on some pilots on a global level. For instance, let’s say a curriculum on climate change, some common elements for all children in the world”.

- Pilvi Torsti, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland

What do young learners want?



“We need to tackle climate change together - inform each other with our own stories. It should be a global effort and needs to be tackled in every region. If everyone realises how big of a problem it is, we can work together to solve climate change”.

- Wail Kherazzi, Student, Designathon



“Climate change is a big concern for all of us. It is hard to find tangible solutions where the young generation is not in a position of power to make change and are not heard by the people in power. We need to utilise the tools we have now to inform policy makers that we elect and have connections with those who could represent those higher up in power. We as individuals do not have a lot of leverage”.

- Annie Fromson Ho, Student, One Sky

Learner Specific Asks

- Climate change to be a compulsory topic in school curricula along with lessons on sustainability, the environment and responsibility with age-appropriate content to enable an understanding of causes and consequences.
- Awareness supplemented with actions that can be taken / related to at an individual level. For instance, garbage clean-ups in learning spaces can build consciousness of cleanliness and recycling. Knowledge of projects like PlantOX³³ can inspire independent action like the planting of trees.
- Platforms for exchanging individual stories of tackling climate change in pursuit of a collective global effort to solve the problem. Ideas without the tools and platforms to leverage them would have no impact. Mediums are needed to engage with elected policy makers so young learners can be heard by those in power.

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

1. Updated curricula incorporating topics related to sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, global citizenship and cultural diversity.
2. Platforms for youth participation in problem-solving and decision making.

6 Learning for Civic Participation

Young people must be engaged regarding rights and responsibilities and empowered through citizen action to play an active role in building peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.

Learning to establish a connection between self and society is the cornerstone of civic participation. This involves an understanding of self and building deeper relationships, which ultimately impacts social change. At Pravah, an organisation facilitating the development of a generation of empathetic, sensitive youth changemakers in India, the starting point is to identify an area of concern and influence to practise change-making in a social context. This is followed by an analysis of an action undertaken to draw out lessons from the experience that can pave the way for self-transformation.



Pravah

“Learnability is one of the core capacities to build in young people”.

- Ritikaa Khunnah, Pravah



Pravah aims at developing leadership capacities of young people to unleash their ability to bring about transformational change at the level of self and society.

Key Facets

- Pravah works with institutions and facilitators to design and implement curriculum. It also works with incapacity building of organisations and youth programmes, geared towards organisational development, effective facilitation, entrepreneurship and employability. All curricula and programmes have a common thread of exploration and understanding of relationships with self and society using gamification, experiential methodology and peer learning.
- The model has created the fifth space in society - a space where young people discover themselves by engaging in social action: a space where they engage in active citizenship and volunteering. It provides a space that focuses as much on the self-transformation of youth as it does on transforming society through them.
- Programmes are co-created and co-led with young people as both participants and facilitators. ‘Learnability’ is not only a core capacity sought to be developed but also a recruitment criterion for learning teams. It is assessed using in-house inventories that check inclusion, conflict and psychosocial ability as well as aptitude and openness to learning.
- The Pravah Smile programme places learners as interns in grassroots organisations and social movements across the country for a period of three to six weeks. They confront the realities on the ground and become better adaptive learners.
- Measurement and evaluation are at the level of self, interpersonal relationships and society using the Kirkpatrick model, a globally recognised method of evaluating the results of training and learning programmes.
- The organisation adopts a system-building approach toward the training and capacity building of NGOs.

Outcomes

- Pravah has reached out to 700,000 adolescents and youth leaders, more than 600 young social entrepreneurs, 1,000 youth engaging and youth-led organisations across India and impacted 15 million lives since 1993³⁵.



Exposure to on the ground realities is necessary for learners’ realisation of their engaged citizen role as one lived identity, as well as their development as adaptive learners. Spaces to facilitate the linking of the concepts that learners are exposed to in school / college to their ‘real world’ can encourage actions. In these spaces they witness the power of collectives and collaborations.



ComMutiny

“We are trying to shape and accelerate youth work by making sure there are enough tools and resources out there for people who work with young people to pick up and run with, and who together constitute the community practice”.



- Kanika Sinha

ComMutiny - The Youth Collective (CYC) and VartaLeap is a pan-India ecosystem of 165 youth-centric organisations that aims to nurture the leadership potential of young people to transform self and society.

Key Facets

- ComMutiny sees youth-centric leadership as a journey of self to society, which is why young people are described as ‘Jagriks’. These are self-aware, awakened, active citizens who are being the change even as they bring change.
- Choice of experiential, non-classroom pedagogy is to ensure that the information becomes knowledge, capacity becomes agency and discontent becomes social hope. Peer learning is an important component.
- Courses are co-constructed and co-designed with learners using common design principles and frameworks. One of the key principles of youth centric design is ‘Refl-action’ which refers to the cycle of reflection and action that is the hallmark of experiential learning.
- Gamification is used as a pull strategy to introduce challenges in learning and goal setting, critical thinking and other 21st century skills. An example is Samvidhan LIVE! Be A Jagrik - a gamified approach to build constitutional literacy and create a lived experience of the rights and duties enshrined in our Constitution.
- The VartaLeap coalition, incubated by ComMutiny, is a voluntary cross-sectoral grouping of 165 (and growing) youth engaging organisations from the development sector, government, media, educational institutions and UN agencies. With a common vision - ‘Every Youth A Jagrik and Every Space Nurturing Jagriks’, the coalition designs, pilots and scales youth-centric innovations and enables appropriate narrative shifts, while playing to each other’s strengths.
- Evaluation Frameworks measure shifts in constitutional literacy (knowledge and awareness, action and inspiring action) and increase in ability to have a dialogue, co-create and collaborate, increased agency, leadership and decision making, among other things.

Outcomes

- A total of 179 organisations as members
211,451 young people impacted,
5,372,000 campaign outreach
- More than 150 5th Space media and learning products as well as gaming resources and toolkits. These include films, books, research, graphic novels, music albums, social games and different kinds of learning resources for on the ground and online engagement and impact.



Policymaker Perspective

Governments globally are intensifying their efforts to stimulate democratic engagement among young learners through on-site citizenship education programmes, visits to government institutions and interactions with government officials.³⁶ A recent policy reform process undertaken at a systemic level in Finland has been to transform education to provide skills and personal trust in one's abilities, that naturally enable young people to participate actively in society. Earlier, the Finnish school system was compulsory for learners up to the age of 15. This has now been extended to include secondary school level. One of the main motivations is for young learners to develop their potential as citizens. In Portugal, there is a new citizenship curriculum that is now being monitored to assess how schools are responding to additional autonomy.³⁷

Funder Perspective

Funders like Porticus recognise the gap in youth engagement and empowerment from a citizenship lens and are looking at it as a critical strand for digital investments. One of the initiatives Porticus supports includes a collaboration with Reap Benefit, an organisation that adopts both the rights and responsibility lenses to work with young people. The organisation helps to build an understanding of citizenship and civil action and to engage young people to solve local issues. These range from climate-related issues to civic actions such as improving sanitation and the maintenance of roads.

What do young learners want?



"I know that a lot of my friends did not enjoy civics classes. Right now I am working on a project called 'be an awakened citizen.' We did a small survey to evaluate constitutional literacy. 36percent score in general. So these classes don't really help. We try to provide a platform to improve this metric. We have amazing impact stories through these methods of gamification".

- Hiba, Student, ComMutiny



"Citizenship is not something you learn in books. It's something you learn by visiting places that represent your identity and learning social values- not only visits but events that increase awareness about accomplishments and success stories. Radical changes made by influential people".

- Hamzeh Abu Sleeh, Student,
We Love Reading

Learner Specific Asks

- Knowledge of rights in tandem with exposure to real action in the political sphere to retain or understand relevance
- Opportunities to role model as citizens by making civic learning engaging through game-based learning or by visiting places that require representation of this identity, for instance, in the social sector and other spaces of action
- Lessons on dealing with differences in ideologies and the resistance that emanates from these

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

1. Integration of youth and adolescent action agendas with a citizenship lens in curricula. Organisations like Pravah and ComMutiny have proven methodologies and product offerings that can be integrated into existing learning models and adapted to local contexts.
2. Voluntary / compulsory social service as a part of educational programmes to give opportunities to young people to lead and experience social action.

7 Accessible and Inclusive Learning

Accessibility and inclusion are cross-cutting learning principles that cater for the diverse needs and interests of learners and the communities in which they live. For the purposes of this section specifically, attention is drawn to two categories of accessibility:

1. Marginalised populations - remote communities, systemic exclusion
2. Learners with disabilities - physical / cognitive / psychological / neurological





Friendship

“Our teaching and learnings are holistic and aligned to the changing landscape of education. It’s not only integrated with the national education program but also have its own cognitive, affective, and psychometric learnings”.



- Runa Khan, Founder and Executive Director, Friendship

Friendship is an international social purpose organisation addressing the education needs of children based in remote, inaccessible, hard-to-reach areas of river islands (also known as ‘chars’, which are tracts of land surrounded by water) of the river Brahmaputra.

Key Facets

- Friendship schools are run on a landscape that is constantly eroding and forming afresh, at a distance from the mainland, unreachable by governments and NGOs.
- The Friendship Education Programme (FEP) places human values as the basis of all pillars of skills needed in the 21st century and uses grassroots knowledge as a basis of design of all its interventions. Teaching modalities are adapted to the specific needs of the children and adults in remote areas.
- There is reliance on community members and teachers who use easily dismantlable and moveable prefabricated school buildings when islands break up due to flooding. Solar panels, video screens and pre-recorded lessons also help to ensure access. There is also reliance on strong community involvement in governance to foster community ownership.
- The focus on education is part of an integrated solution in recognition of the multi-faceted challenges communities face. Action designed to address one basic need may not be effective if a different need is not addressed simultaneously. The integrated solution combines health, education, climate action, inclusive citizenship, sustainable economic development and cultural preservation.
- Impact of FEP is measured within and outside the classroom.
- Alternative learning methods developed during the pandemic included study support through phone calls, student home visits, online teacher training, small learning groups and the Friendship Education YouTube Channel, which was set up in partnership with governments.

Outcomes

- A total of 43 primary schools, 15 secondary schools, 49 adult literacy centres have been impacted
- Learners in primary schools consistently outperform the national average and those in secondary schools have achieved a high success rate
- Increase in self-confidence and dignity among the char population
- In villages with Friendship schools, child marriage has declined significantly, since parents are less willing for their girls married if they gain knowledge and have access to better life opportunities
- Replication of FEP best practices including a Code of Ethics and Clean School Clean Home in nearby government schools





Caregiving and an environment of care and empathy are central to designing programmes catering for vulnerable learners. This includes responsiveness, supportive guidance and accommodating care routines. Handholding of learners on their journey to self-acceptance is a crucial phase towards self-transformation and cultivation of belief in their abilities. Learning follows.

One Sky

“It’s about creating a mindset shift, so that all children are seen as having potential, and all adults are seen as having the potential to help children thrive”.



- Morgan Lance

One Sky partners with communities across Asia to provide quality responsive care and early education training so that vulnerable young children can thrive.

Key Facets

- The One Sky curriculum is inspired by the Reggio Emilia principles of child-centred learning, informed by the global evidence base on early childhood development and adapted to serve the specific needs of children and caregivers in each context.
- One Sky’s programmes centre on establishing responsive relationships between caregivers and children, promoting age-appropriate communication and stimulating healthy cognitive, physical, language and social emotional development. Training is provided to caregivers of vulnerable children in state-run orphanages, rural villages, industrial zones and urban informal settlements.
- One Sky has partnered with governments to transform systems of early care and education for young children in low resource settings across Asia. These partnerships span two decades.
- Evaluation of programmes is done by leading academic institutions, including the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health that specialises in early childhood development. The focus of measurement is on impact in responsive caregiving and the care environment, alongside improving child development outcomes.

Outcomes

- A total of 75,878 caregivers impacting 274,521 children’s lives³⁸
- Ground-breaking partnership with the Chinese Government to train every child welfare worker in the country that has transformed the standard of care. The partnership has directly reached more than 200,000 children in China’s 31 provinces
- Expansion to Mongolia and Vietnam, where the government has invited One Sky to scale its home-based childcare provider training programme nationally



Children with disabilities should be integrated into mainstream schools from an early age. If a child is excluded from zero to six years old, they are so far behind by the time they enter school, that it is difficult to bridge the gap. Exclusion from school opportunities can impact the rest of their lives.

Working at the ecosystem level to change perceptions towards children with disabilities is critical to foster inclusion. Based on the premise that every child can learn, an essential component is the training of Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners and parents on the rights of the child.

Learning solutions like the South Africa-based Shonaquip Social Enterprise (SSE) focus on facilitating a relationship of trust between practitioners and parents to address bias, stigma and mistrust in their communities through disability dialogues. ECD practitioners are trained as facilitators and are equipped with pedagogical tools of inclusive play and learning to address learner needs. Parents are empowered as knowledge holders of their child's disability to make decisions. Captured insights are used to design prototype tools that can be shared with professionals, policymakers and special educators to facilitate dialogue, learning and transfer of skills.





Shonaquip Social Enterprise

“And if you move disability out of charity, in terms of delivering it, I believe it’s one of the points that will shift people’s minds around what disability means”.



- Shona McDonald, SSE

Shonaquip Social Enterprise (SSE) is a hybrid social enterprise consisting of Shonaquip (Pty)Ltd, Uhambo Foundation (NPC) and the Champions of Change Trust, which works together on the joint objective of creating inclusive, barrier-free communities for children with disabilities and their families.

Key Facets

- The SSE model adopts a systems approach to the inclusion of children with disabilities in a holistic way. It addresses the barriers to inclusion, provides assistive device and service support in rural and remote areas, focuses on ECD and facilitates economic participation and empowerment of parents and service providers.
- Programmes build the capacity of existing ECD day care centre staff and parents to enable play and learning for children.
- The Let’s Talk Friends programme introduces teachers and parents to the social model of disability, opens up healthy conversations about disability and inclusive school practices between pupils and teachers and tackles bullying behaviour.
- The award-winning Ndinogona “I Can” programme is designed by occupational therapists to give caregivers tools, knowledge and experience to empower children across a range of disabilities. ECD activities are based on the principles of structured stimulation and can be adapted to each child’s specific needs. These include an understanding of disability rights, individual learning plans and the importance of inclusive education for all.
- A comprehensive manual of activities is adjustable across a range of needs for caregivers. Kit supplementing the programme includes 100 different activities and tools to support engagement with non-verbal children as well as simple, replicable items to assist children with other specific needs.
- Training for parents would bring learning into the household and empower them to support their children’s educational journey and beyond.
- Training programmes are modular and flexible, both online and offline, and are led by facilitators who are equipped with the knowledge, skills and field experience to build the capacity of people who parent, care for or provide education or services to children with disabilities and their families.

Outcomes

- The model has 1,764 primary beneficiaries, 62,506 secondary beneficiaries and 2,397 touchpoints
- Presence in multiple countries - South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland and Uganda



Technology is a tool for empowering the disabled community. Solutions like Learning Includes, based in Malaysia, are strong advocates for technology as an empowerment tool that should be leveraged by learners in the community. There is increased advocacy for the digitisation of learning tools, including computers, screen readers and assistive software to reduce dependency on slow changing braille books.

Policymaker Perspective



“An erroneous position is to assume that a disabled child, and someone who has a certain learning impairment, are the same. No, their differences need to be included in an education that is inclusive and that is for all, for all of their life. At a global level, we need to stop categorising the population, glued to a specific particular condition”.

- Constanza Alarcón, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Education in Colombia

What do young learners want?



“I have Down Syndrome. My parents are doctors and they have always loved and supported me. I studied in Study Hall School which is an inclusive school. My school motivated me to participate in the special Olympics where I won many accolades. I passed my class 12 exams and now I am a Yoga teacher in Study Hall School. I completed my education from open schooling”.

- Sahil Singh, Student, SHEF

Young learners are aware and appreciative of the unique strengths and limitations of each individual, including themselves. Their specific asks include:

- Inclusive and supportive communities
- Equal chance for children to perform and showcase their talents, including children with disabilities
- Acknowledgement of differing contexts and circumstances of learners and support for individual learning pathways

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

1. Inclusive education policies that encompass all learners by acknowledging their specific contexts and differing needs
2. Mandatory training of teachers on accessible learning tools
3. Investment in online resources and facilities to meet the needs of learners with disabilities
4. Institutionalisation of caregiving in learning spaces for learners living with adversity and different needs.

Our education systems are not conventionally prepared to address learning needs in conflict or post-conflict situations.

In the context of this report, communities and societies in conflict include:

- Political, cultural or religious tensions resulting in civil unrest
- Absence of law and order, prevalence of high crime in communities
- Countries with external or internal armed conflicts, causing disruption to various aspects of life including education and resulting in mass displacement or refugee situations

Equipping learners with the ability to respond when there is a conflict or to ensure their continued access to education during conflict has not been a priority. This has resulted in a lack of focus on transitional models for education.

Life skills play a key role in analysing, understanding and dealing with the underlying causes of conflict. Most violence, including domestic violence, can be rooted in issues of money and power. Responding to violence with force results in short-lived, piecemeal and fragmented changes. But learning to negotiate, along with an awareness of alternate non-adversarial ways to reach a position of leverage (money, security) and sharing power for mutual benefit can result in sustainable, symbiotic ecosystems.

Safe spaces for communication and expression are invaluable to address conflicts. In learning spaces, teachers who don't know how to manage frustration, anger, grief and bullying, end up showing certain types of violence. To address interpersonal violence, working with deep-rooted emotional violence becomes critical. Art can create safe spaces with storytelling and reading being the most common engagement methods.

Arts and culture-based solutions are globally proven to help nurture peace in conflict zones by mobilising communities, developing local leadership and supporting ecosystems. There is ample evidence of the effectiveness of a methodology based on neuroscience, communication, art and play, in breaking the pattern of violence in communities to connect, translate and promote social changes.³⁹ TAAP Foundation is one such solution that uses the arts, educational innovation, communication for development, creative industries and learning through play to ensure that families, schools and communities in Latin America and the world have more peaceful environments.





TAAP Foundation

“If a young boy has a camera in his hands, he won’t use a gun”.

- Gabriela Arenas, TAAP Foundation



Key Facets

- At the core of the TAAP learning solution are community-based interventions, collaborative programmes and creative solutions that address violence directly impacting children, youth, parents and teachers.
- Sensitisation of communities about the impact that violence has on education, wellbeing and the importance of overcoming problems, such as poverty, by engaging all stakeholders is an important first step. The focus is on making visible the problems of violence and the solutions to help overcome them.
- Through its “Intergrow Approach to the Community”, TAAP tries to work with every stakeholder in the community, related to the issue to be addressed. For instance, when working with children, TAAP realised that most violence was caused by the way people lived at home. The solution identifies parents, teachers and other community members as important stakeholders to role model how to deal with emotions.
- The organisation is extensively invested in measuring the impact of its work. It does this through insights gathered from attendees, partner organisations, qualitative surveys and follow-ups with beneficiaries of the interventions.

Outcomes

- TAAP has consolidated itself as an organisation promoting peacebuilding and educational innovation in more than 14 countries worldwide, with 2,334,790 direct beneficiaries who have received training in workshops and participated in the foundation’s programmes and activities. There have also been more than 2,500,000 indirect beneficiaries who have had unrestricted use of the TAAP methodology, communication campaigns and educational policies.⁴⁰
- More than 3,600 mothers and fathers with issues of intra-familial violence have stopped engaging in violent behaviours towards children after participating in the programmes.
- More than 20 schools have adopted the TAAP methodology as part of their educational programmes, reducing violence in their classrooms.
- The foundations’ arts centres, creative industries and entrepreneurship programmes benefit more than 12,000 young people who are at risk of recruitment by gangs, armed groups and groups involved in illegal activities such as mining.



Community-centric approaches are crucial and key to reaching marginalised learners. Local access, cultural contextualisation and nurturing local leadership are stepping stones towards building peace and resilience within communities. If the community decides to change, sustainable change is possible. Support from local leaders can help guide and overcome local resistance.

Policymaker Perspective



“Typically, our education systems are not very prepared for conflict or post-conflict situations. Our international structures do not have a quick ability to react when there is a conflict and you have children and families quickly leaving their countries. We don’t have this kind of post-conflict or, and transitional models for education that could be applied”.

- Pilvi Torsti, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland

What do young learners want?



“In the French education system, there is knowledge about political systems but not enough on conflicts/social issues. Internet, therefore, has become important for us to learn about conflict”.

- Loris, Student, Friendship

Funder perspective

For funders like Porticus, education for displaced refugees in Bangladesh or elsewhere across the globe, is a key education portfolio. Porticus, for instance, focuses on working with children who have been displaced due to climate or societal issues.

- Knowledge on conflicts and social issues in education curricula

Recommendations for Learning Principle Integration

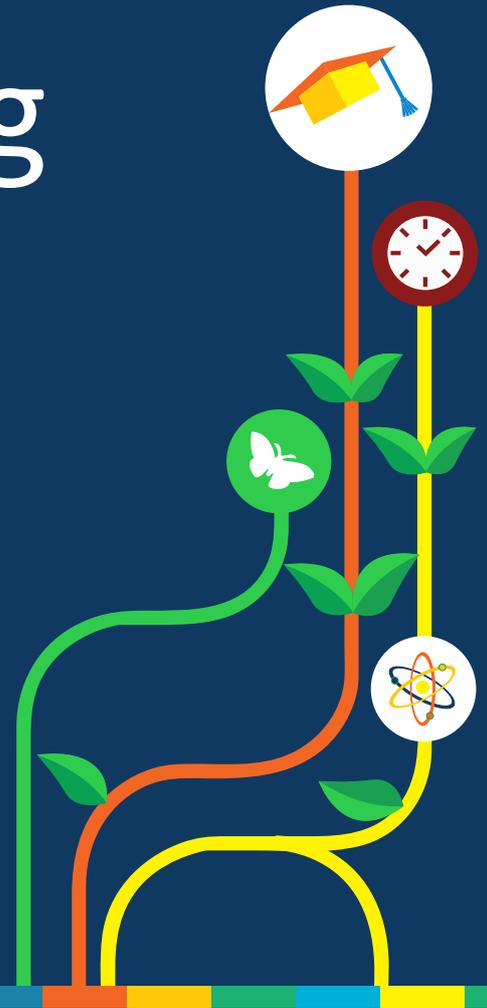
1. Acknowledgement of learner contexts and particularities of the learner population through policies that can facilitate targeted interventions, including funding
2. Support for solutions designed to directly work in communities, communication for development and the creation of local learning spaces



Transforming Learning Ecosystems

The path to a systemic paradigm shift

CHAPTER THREE



The objective of this section is to dive into the transforming educational landscape from an ecosystem's lens. It explores the role each stakeholder will play in the new learning paradigm and identifies the key levers that will drive this systemic shift.

Educators globally are working to advance ecosystem approaches to lifelong learning that are collaborative⁴¹ and learner-centric. In the words of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), the aim is 'to develop learning ecosystems that work across contexts in life, in every setting and benefit everyone through capacity building at local levels, strengthening partnerships and offering data and knowledge'.⁴² Ecosystems offer a potential practice for the future of education to change the way we learn and shape our future together⁴³ for collective flourishing.

The COVID-19 crisis has fuelled this shift in mainstream discourse on education, from conventional schooling to collaborative, disruptive local learning ecosystems. School learning alone is insufficient. What is also required is recognition of the need for individuals to cultivate creativity, self-expression, entrepreneurship, emotional and social intelligence. Every space of learning and relationship has a crucial role to play in empowering the expression of individual agency and creativity. Learning spaces are being reconceptualised as living environments that allow for interactions between learners, educators and the community surrounding the environment. These are crucial to stimulate creativity, trust and the freedom to evolve and transform.⁴⁵

Intergenerational relationships across the ecosystem, with dynamic interplay and opportunity to change roles flexibly, are critical as privileged spaces. They are enabling levers to promote key competencies of lifelong learning (like learning to learn, social and civil competence, entrepreneurship or cultural awareness) and foster social cohesion for a healthy society.⁴⁶ As we look to move beyond the pandemic, these reimagined relationships and consequent repositioning of system leaders will be the bedrock of the new paradigm of education.

1

Collective Leadership: Changing Role of Stakeholders



“Systems change is when there is enough critical mass of people including at the government level and at other levels of the systems - where they work together to change the policies, practices, and the culture of a system”.

- Wendy Kopp, Teach For All

The educational process is a systemic, structural and multidimensional process with many variables determining its qualitative value. The definition of learner changes in a systems reform approach and an understanding of this changing definition permeates every level of the ecosystem. The onus shifts from the learner to the larger ecosystem. This wider ecosystem comprises parents, teachers, school leaders, policymakers and funders, who by virtue of inhabiting this world, have internalised social and cultural biases. They have inadvertently become stakeholders who contribute to the persistence of systemic barriers to learning.

To create just and inclusive education environments, the means matters as much as the ends. The empowerment of learners through highlighted learning principles must be accompanied by radical changes in their surrounding ecosystems. Learners need to see the whole system play out at the classroom level. This incorporates a diverse, inclusive and equitable collective leadership that is built on mutual trust and works to overcome systemic barriers.

Governments



“We should talk much more about politics and education together, because educators do know what should be done. But unless there is strong political support for it on a global and a national level, it will not happen”.

- Pilvi Torsti, State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland

Over the past decade, the policymaker approach globally has evolved from building capacities to provide and ensure community access to elementary or school education, to additionally focussing on the quality components of education. The questions invoking this approach are:

- What are the learnings that are happening and the learning outcomes demonstrating them?
- Do all stakeholders have the same understanding of the purpose of education systems?
- What capacities are being developed in the teachers?
- Are the students graduating school with an ability to reason, order and innovate their thought processes?

A focus on development of applicative, analytical, logical and socio-emotional mental capacities has become the cornerstone of policy discourse and education programmes globally. However, it is not yet reflected in the assessment and training systems for public education.

With COVID-19 has come a call to build back better. Given the catastrophic impact of the pandemic on learning levels globally and the innovative solutions that followed in response, there has been a shift towards a participatory, inclusive approach to education system transformation.⁴⁷ There is a recognised need for structural policy changes⁴⁸ that will not only help recover learning losses but also ensure no one is left behind. The pandemic has adversely impacted education worldwide, but it has also made it necessary to push a transformation agenda for education policy, discourse and practice.

Policymakers seeking to play a revolutionary role in education must:

1. Move beyond a focus on foundational literacy to expand on essential 21st century skills, along the learning continuum to redefine the parameters of learning success.
2. Take a lead on collaboration for systems change by adopting and scaling local innovations that have been tried and tested on the ground by social entrepreneurs in education.
3. Be open-minded to different ways of achieving results in different contexts. Avoid a one-size- fits-all approach and let local contexts and stakeholders guide change.
4. Have clear goals that are broad enough to serve as guiding frameworks and sufficiently generic to leave space for adaptation to local contexts and the emergence of grassroots innovations.

Funders



“The question has to move from how many children are you reaching with the money, to what is the money being spent on”?

- Roeland Monasch, Aflatoun

A systemic shift in funding practices for education requires funders focused on a transformative, rather than a reformative agenda. Funding remains one of the biggest challenges in education, impeding the ability of social entrepreneurs to innovate or scale their innovations in a sustainable manner. Unavailability of long-term, systemic grants, endowments and unrestricted funding for institutional strengthening, along with funder reluctance to fund small local non-profit organisations, are some of the common issues grassroots innovators face.

Along the continuum of funding, the paradigm shift in practices is being led by disruptive philanthropies like Echidna Giving, Porticus and LEGO Foundation, among others, which are supporting educational programmes through trust-based philanthropy. These are funders who understand complexities, think as partners, demonstrate humility, spend a great amount of time with implementation organisations and move beyond the measurement approach. They are open to playing a more transformative role along the value chain of education. This includes moving towards scale, systems and government uptake, while wanting the power to remain with the non-profit organisations.



“Many people are funding the most immediate needs, and we believe that’s dangerous because education is one of the cornerstone solutions for supporting longer-term change driven by communities for innovations and solutions that will be most relevant and sustainable. Unfortunately, it can be hard to convince other funders of the importance of investing in education”.

- Erin Ganju, Echidna Giving

Echidna Giving, for instance, in addition to directing core funding towards organisational effectiveness and institutional strengthening, goes the extra mile to help entrepreneurs with strategy planning, leadership hiring, evaluation framework monitoring and introductions to new funders. Breaking away from practices in philanthropy solutions that are set up to be barriers, rather than supportive partners, Echidna measures the impact of its grantees against metrics / indicators determined by the grantees themselves.

The nature of funding determines the type of intervention supported. Illustratively, results-based financing (RBF) mechanisms, backed by impact investors with risk capital, target learning outcomes in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) skills. FLN skills remain the primary goal of most educational systems across the globe and are viewed as perquisites for effective participation in society.⁴⁹

RBF is a powerful way to bring social entrepreneurs with the most promising innovations to the table to work in government schools. The government's explicit intention here is to scale interventions that demonstrate success. They can build a relevant evidence base in terms of what works in the local context and have access to models which can be incorporated in future policy.

Overall, the practices that will drive a shift in the role of funders in transforming learning ecosystems include:

1. Flexibility in measurement frameworks and reporting templates that can serve more as guidance documents. Reporting requirements as a tool to stay engaged, involved and be on equal footing with the innovators.
2. A willingness to be part of collaboratives that accept joint reporting or standard reports and project proposals that can be shared with multiple organisations. Funders like Dell Foundation and Echidna Giving have shown a willingness to accept common reports with other funders.
3. Co-funding /collaborative funding / innovative financing that allows practitioners to take the lead and have space to innovate.
4. A partnership. Once an investment or grant is made, all are on the same side of the table, with success or failure attributed to both the funder and organisation alike. It's not a 'them versus us' but an 'all us' scenario.



“What we have found is that it's our responsibility as a funder to help social entrepreneurs think about how their longevity and sustainability are secured. Whether that's intellectual property around what we help them to put together, or if it's open source, we can help them to transform in a way that they can provide the technical assistance needed to use that content. It's a conversation about what the market need is.”

– Sarah Bouchie,
Lego Foundation



Innovation Spotlight: Conditional Funding

The underlying basis of this approach is building trust through equal partnerships where the mindset is how can we work /collaborate to achieve the SDGs.

We Love Reading has come up with an innovative model that invites the funder to fund a small non-profit local organisation through a third party, which could be a UN agency or INGOs, while specifying that the funding must go to the local partner. The approach is not only about money as a requirement but that the INGO/UN agency has to build capacity of the local entity, scale its solution and give it visibility. Such an approach leads to sustainability of the solution and long-term impact. It also mitigates the risk for mainstream funders / impact investors to fund local entities directly. The model found traction during the pandemic when Big Heart Foundation in UAE decided to support We Love Reading through UNICEF Jordan.

Social Entrepreneurs as Ecosystem Enablers

All social entrepreneurs featured in this report adopt a system-wide approach to promote lifelong learning in close partnerships with state governments, administrators, learning teams and broader communities.

Social Entrepreneurs discussed in Chapter Two have demonstrated success in affecting systems change with proven learning models while at the same time, building an evidence base for a transformed vision for education by expanding on the breadth of skills.

Social entrepreneurs discussed below pursue local ecosystem enablement as their central objective. Their primary hat is that of ecosystem enablers, with a focus on empowering stakeholders, and strengthening institutions within existing public education systems through collaborative, peer-led, and network approaches.

Peer Networks for Learning Improvement

Models like STiR Education recognise the agency of stakeholders and teachers to empower them to identify their contextual needs and make decisions accordingly, in line with their collective purpose. The modus operandi is to leverage existing public systems to build peer networks.

STiR Education

“We believe that there is immense knowledge and expertise already existing within the education systems; the role of peer networks is to bring that together and promote reflection, specific actions and peer learning across the different levels in the system.”



- Neha Gehlot, STiR Education

STiR Education supports education systems to reignite intrinsic motivation so that every child, teacher and official is motivated to learn and improve.

Key Facets

- The STiR Approach is based on peer networks, action, feedback and reflection, which form the heart of the learning improvement cycles. Each cycle focussing on a different theme.
 - Introduction of content to the officials
 - Training sessions for school leaders
 - Teacher training in new practices to enable higher quality of interactions with children
- There is facilitation of mindset shift through communities of practice at different levels that provide the support structure and the collaboration opportunity. Project management units at state level bring together collaboration and coordination involving multiple NGOs.
- Co-designing process for the state and the teachers / officials consists of two elements. These include:
 - Macro - Who are the key stakeholders? Who is going to run this?
 - Micro - What does the content look like? What does the teacher need? What are the skills needed?
- Key aspects of the model are embedded in the system and how it works on a regular basis. Learning outcomes are centred around the foundations of lifelong learning and indicators are defined for the three stakeholders - teachers, officials and students.

Outcomes

- Work in 69 districts across India and Uganda, impacting 200,000 teachers and six million children
- \$1 USD average cost per child per year



Strengthening School Leadership and Governance

Adhyayan Quality Education Foundation

“Let’s drop the misconception that only students are learners. You can’t expect children to change their outcomes if teachers are going to keep doing the same things that have been leading to poor outcomes. Until adults learn to ‘ask’ instead of ‘tell’, students are going to keep regurgitating instead of analysing, synthesising and evaluating. The entire teaching-learning team, from teacher to school leader, has to be a collaboration of learners”.



- Kavita Anand, Adhyayan Quality Education Foundation

Adhyayan seeks to improve the leadership and governance of teaching and learning in schools with leaders at the centre of the process. The methodology is driven by tools to find the opportunities for improvement when schools ask for a review with an intention to better specific standards, for instance setting up trackers for learners and accreditation.

Key Facets

- Adhyayan’s research-backed tools include the framework and the diagnostic, which when added to Shaala Siddhi Level One, Two and Three - the Indian framework - leads to a developmental space for people to reflect and learn together. This enables large, multi-stakeholder evidence-based conversations to take place.
- Systems change is core work and system leaders (including school teams consisting of multiple stakeholders) are empowered to engage in self review through facilitation by an external person. Change of practice is confirmed by assessing embedded learnings against agreed standards.
- Teachers and state officials, as learners, shift their practice. Children who walk into these learning spaces modelled on certain standards can assess and lead their learning journeys, translating into outcomes.
- Adhyayan adopts a data-driven approach whereby weekly reports are sent to the state and data on changed practices is communicated on a monthly basis to the blocks, three or four of which together constitute a zone. Zonal level meetings are undertaken by Hub Leaders to analyse data at the state level, to identify what schools are doing differently that is working and to assess metrics of learner engagement.

Outcomes

- 6,500+ schools, 1,000+ Assessors and 103 Hub Leaders
- Partnership with government of Goa to implement Systemic School Improvement Plan (SSIP) impacting 824 government schools, 34,000 students, 1,400 government schools in Tripura and 45 schools in Arunachal Pradesh
- Work with Delhi Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) across 5,600 schools to build a School Development Index with other civil society and government agencies
- During the pandemic, 11,000 teachers were enabled to come online
- A total of 398 contextualised lessons were developed by Goa’s teachers for the DIKSHA platform
- A total of 336 master trainers and 336 computer teachers guided the journey of Goa’s teachers



Learning Teams: Teachers, Parents and Communities as Transformative Agents

Teach For All

“Teacher development is a key driver of scaling because we have an education system full of adults who learned in a different system. If we don’t help people unlearn and relearn then there’s no hope for scaling an education system that works towards this set of holistic outcomes”.



- Wendy Kopp, Teach For All

Teach For All (TFA) is a network of independent, locally led organisations in 60 countries that are working to develop collective leadership to ensure all children have the education, support and opportunity to shape a better future.

Key Facets

- TFA’s new teacher development framework has been co-created with 4,000 students and teachers across 60 countries. TFA supports teachers to unlearn and develop a new mindset. It is anchored in an understanding of what is happening in classrooms, where students are developing as leaders with problem-solving and critical thinking skills, empathy, wellbeing and awareness of themselves and the world, compared to where students are only learning academic content.
- Focus is on teacher leadership development as a key driver of scaling an education system that works towards a set of holistic outcomes.
- Pursuit is not only academic learning but also the ability to use knowledge in problem-solving and critical thinking. Foundational numeracy and literacy are identified as crucial enablers for problem-solving and critical thinking.
- Student voice is elevated by partnering with them to reshape learning experiences and instil student ownership as a key focus.
- Network partners are independent and locally led. They start work by developing the locally rooted and globally informed contextualised vision for students, based on local values, challenges and opportunities.
- The aim is to foster collective leadership. The focus is on the development of change agents, diversity, space and relationships at work within the system and community, including children, families, businesses, government officials and veteran teachers.
- Internal resources measure holistic outcomes, enabling local partners to develop their local vision for student success and to determine priorities and placement of teachers.
- TFA’s Global Learning Lab enlists the people of the network to collectively learn what differentiates the classrooms and communities that are enabling children to get the education, support and opportunities they need.

Outcomes

- Network partners in 60 countries with an excess of 15,000 teachers in classrooms
- More than 80,000 alumni leaders and over one million students who are being reached by network teachers annually





“Parents play an important role in following up with children and teachers. When they pay attention to the child, the teacher will pay more attention to them too. In general, there will be a better learning environment for the student. When the parents are educated and have a good culture, that will help children be more successful in their studies. In our structure, all parents love and care for their children but due to circumstances, not all of them have the opportunities to finish their studies and help their children in the best way. That’s why I like to participate in programmes that support parents”.

- Hamzeh Abu Sleeh,
Students, We Love Reading

Parents have significant power to change the narrative in education discourse and praxis because if they start questioning the parameters of learning success for their children, the school systems will be forced to change. Engaging parents as active stakeholders is important to facilitate this demand for accountability from schools.

During the pandemic, teachers realised the value of involving parents and communities in children’s education. A huge amount of time and effort was invested in planning new, creative ways to forge deeper bonds outside the classroom. Moreover, a wide range of out-of-school-time providers, childcare centres and other community organisations stepped up to bridge the gap.

Civil Society (Local leaders, NGO Partners, Private Sector)



“You need the private sector on board; you need civil society on board for sustainability and quality, because education innovations are too vulnerable to political and administrative changes”.

- Vicky Colbert, Escuela Nueva

Civil society acts as a bridge between successive governments and administrations. Its consistent and relentless presence ensures coherent transitions without an impact on the continuity of good policies and programmes. It plays an important role in social accountability and has the potential to facilitate the expansion of educational opportunities to all children with an understanding of the unique challenges in local contexts.

Certain institutional and structural levers are critical for accelerating the ecosystem transformation for a new education story. Unlocking these levers is imperative not only for reaching every learner but also, for ensuring the sustainability of a learning solution in current times.

Technology

The pandemic demonstrated the speed at which a transition could be made from offline to online education. Technology became a critical lever for fostering connection and contributing to the agility of learning spaces. The level of leadership, innovation and democratic access to solutions within networks was unprecedented. Thousands of teachers were trained in digital literacy and digital libraries of lesson plans were speedily developed. WhatsApp groups and messaging became common modes of dissemination and social innovators were taking over MP3 players, radio stations, YouTube and TV stations to reach every last mile learner. All of this translated into a resolve to integrate digital platforms and tools into learning practices going forward.

While there are innumerable success stories of technology as a lever to achieve impact beyond classrooms, data points from many regions also bring another perspective - the need for equitable access to technology. Technology enabled solutions without learner access to computers, phones, the internet and data will be of little use.

Technology needs to be leveraged to ensure accessibility to marginalised learners. For organisations like Friendship, which cater to the educational needs of children based in remote, inaccessible areas of river islands (chars) of the river Brahmaputra in the northern districts of Bangladesh, video recorded quality lessons transmitted through solar panels and video screens compensate for the availability of adequately educated teachers. For organisations like Learning Includes, which work with children with disabilities, technology is an empowerment tool that helps make learning spaces accessible.

The solution may not be to move everything online as it is but instead to create new programmes with learning outcomes designed for online environments. Learning models have accepted technology to be a critical supplement but not a replacement for the in-person model, which remains the gold standard for quality delivery of education. Solutions like the Learning Links Foundation (LLF) adopt a human-centred design thinking approach for innovating technology integrated education and technology enabled transformations. A 'resource person' is assigned to each school of operation to capture learners' asks and insights to feed into its pedagogy design.



“Online school worked during COVID - use of google classrooms was a positive experience - some of these possibilities should be kept when returning to in-person learning and how to learn in general - add to the repertoire”.

- Tijana, Ex-Student Council
from Design for Change,
Serbia

Learning Links Foundation

“In these COVID times, we realised more deeply, how important community ownership is to bringing desired change. As one of our donors says – it takes a village to raise a child, so let’s educate the village: COVID times have brought this to the fore”.



- Anjee Prakash, Learning Links Foundation

Learning Links Foundation (LLF) is an ecosystem enabler serving all stakeholders in the education system to foster purpose and progress by unlocking lifelong learning.

Key Facets

- LLF works both in the formal and education sector across four domains of specialisation: enhancing quality of education, strengthening citizenship and skills building, harnessing the power of technology for educational outcomes and sustainable social innovation.
- The model adopts a human-centred design thinking approach to innovate technology integrated education and technology enabled school transformations. Solutions go beyond the school syllabus to bridge the learning gaps, drive systemic change in schools and enable lifelong learning.
- Learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are provided with access to quality education to develop grade level competencies along with essential life skills.
- Comprehensive solutions are designed and implemented to enhance teaching effectiveness, improve student learning outcomes and support the all-round development of children.
- Curriculum and pedagogy are connected to what is important to the learners. A ‘Resource Person’ is assigned to every school of operation to capture learner asks and insights.
- Parents and community members are actively involved in creating a supportive environment for the learners.
- Evaluation metrics used across programmes include literacy and numeracy levels, enrolment rates, teacher efficiency, financial literacy and level of integration of technology in teaching practices and more.

Outcomes

- A total of 1.8 million pupils, 2.2 million instructors and 6.8 million community children and adults
- Partnerships with state education departments and partners from 27 countries
- Use of digital platform for e-learning contributed to minimum downtime during COVID-19 in the partner learning centres



Blended learning or technology choice of approach could be a function of context, a function of juncture or a particular time and place. The goalpost must be the outcome of holistic development of the child and the means are subservient to this end.

What do young learners want?

- Emphasis on digital skills at the primary levels of the education system
- Technology, not as a replacement for traditional knowledge, but a shift towards blended learning with the integration of virtual classrooms, as experienced during the pandemic and in-person learning models

Innovative Learner-centred Pedagogies

When it comes to education for today's learners, it is not just about what constitutes the core curriculum, it is about pedagogy, the 'how' of learning those subjects.

Art and play, experiential learning, design thinking and gamification are a few pedagogies that are making learning interesting and engaging for learners. Funders like Lego Foundation list their pedagogy of playful learning as a prerequisite for funding support.

Learning spaces

Reimagining education to include essential components of social, emotional, political, experiential and inclusive learning entails re-envisioning learning spaces as environments conducive for such learning.

Learning spaces, just like learning pedagogies, must be learner-centred in their design and conceptualisation. For instance, a solution working with minor girls must first assure parents of the safety of the learning spaces. To address this, models like Project Soar have partnerships with the Moroccan Ministry of Youth and Sports to get free access to government sponsored youth houses in underserved areas. These public spaces are safe and are led by women teams trained in protection policies.



"There was discrimination on gender, discrimination on caste, discrimination on disability. So these are the three frontals, which I have seen as a policymaker being changed and readdressed and reimagined for more inclusive classrooms in the last 20- 25 years .. the biggest phenomenon shifting in what is now called a diversified classroom".

- Vrinda Swarup, Former Secretary,
School Education & Literacy,
India



Innovation Spotlight: Transformational Learning Spaces

Learnhubs are lighthouses conceptualised as flexible creative spaces to empower communities by making the new paradigm of learning a reality. The spaces house digitally enabled, multi-purpose studios and can be implemented as a classroom-sized 'hubling', or serve as a full-scale, cross-generational hub. These entirely replace a traditional school environment. The two hubs in Barcelona are future-oriented but with different focuses. The Urban Hub is where full-time learners discover better ways to learn while the Eco Hub is a sustainability and innovation centre where socially conscious people can take collective action to protect the planet.

What do young learners want?

- Separate areas for hands-on learning
- Unconventional seating arrangements
- Space for group work, research projects
- More field trips, community experiences and opportunities to 'act' in the real world

Measurement

Assessment of learning outcomes varies across learning models and funder approaches. For innovators in education, there is little enthusiasm for standard frameworks and linear definitions of learning improvement, as it is contrary to a learner centric approach to education. Exceptions are the response to the national standards in the country, the state or national curricula, where most governments' parameters of learning success are limited to literacy and numeracy skills.



"A system that allows a teacher when dealing with his child to have an assessment instrument to understand what the starting point is in context of the child's conditions, and then plan accordingly, has a teaching intention".

- Constanza Alarcón, Deputy minister, Ministry of Education in Colombia



"If we want every child to succeed, we need to change the parameters of success itself".

- Vishal Talreja, Dream a Dream

Equipping teachers with assessment instruments to plan child-centred interventions

Funders have demonstrated flexibility in the choice of metrics. Some have developed their own frameworks and defined outcome metrics with which organisations are expected to align. Others have adaptive framework processes and allow entrepreneurs the flexibility to define their own parameters. The choice of metrics also depends on the nature of the arrangement with a particular organisation. The range of metrics includes anything from assessing grade-level competencies, literacy and numeracy levels to behaviour change and class participation. There remains, however, a primacy of quantitative rather than qualitative learning outcomes.

There is an increased reliance on technology for tracking learner journey data, conducting assessment surveys, generating reports and other processes related to back-end impact measurement and analysis. Digital tools are emerging as a critical component in all evaluation frameworks going forward.

We do not yet have the tools to measure how systems are being strengthened holistically. Few metrics in a systemic context include assessment of outcomes in children, teachers, parents and administrators.



Innovation Spotlight: Learning Assessment in Classrooms

In Colombia, a system largely centred around standardised tests to talk about education quality, a transition has been made to talk about education in training and bringing it into the classroom by equipping teachers with assessment instruments. Today, out of an enrolment of around 6.6 million children, over two million children have applied these assessment instruments and the teachers are working to appropriate the results to understand the starting point. They will then use the data to design plan focused on the child and which meets the conditions of the context to further the interests of the student.

Sustainability of Learning Models

A learning solution should be practical, sustainable, run by people and low cost, all without compromising its specific goal.

Total local sustainability of any learning model is dependent on the nature of the intervention, the learner community and the geography of implementation. Replication of solutions implemented in other parts of the world should pass the test of socio-economic and operational sustainability in local contexts.

For marginalised learners, community-based learning interventions are the most common and cost-effective in resource-limited settings. Such interventions include the use of free learning spaces provided by local communities or public authorities and the recruitment of teachers, facilitators and school management from within the communities.

Financially, innovators have been successful in exploring varied models. These have included social franchise models, revenue channels, commission-based projects with corporates, licensing fees, the commercialisation of curricula, differential pricing, cross-subsidies, open source and pay for access models.

Scale

Within the community of social entrepreneurs, scale is often interpreted in alignment with the vision of the learning model. Social innovators resonate with the idea of scaling up, scaling out and scaling deep. These all take form in different ways. Scale with reach but without depth has not been a sustainable approach.

For few innovators, there is resistance to 'scaling up' as scaling up one component does not sustain the other components interacting with it. Scale, for instance, is interpreted differently for models addressing learners with disabilities.



"Scaling is generally attributed to taking one component of the programme and reaching it to different places. Being an integrated model, our comprehensiveness of what we do seeps deep into the system. For us scaling would be defined as the amount of influence we are able to have on the larger system and whether these practices eventually lead to sustainability".

- Elizabeth Mehta,
Muktangan Education Trust

It is not necessarily about large numbers but about the whole system that has a responsibility towards large numbers of children with diverse needs and who need learning interventions that respond to these diverse needs.

For funders oriented towards systemic shifts, the focus is on supporting systems and governments to scale things nationally. For others, common parameters include the number of learners, geographical expansion, capacities built and influence on the larger ecosystem. This includes a focus on sectoral shaping, idea adoption, partnerships, putting the learner voice in policy development and mindset shifts.

The systemic changes envisioned by most solutions require working with policymakers and other stakeholders. Partnership with governments and integration of learning solutions in national education systems has been acknowledged by most social entrepreneurs as the only way to reach every learner, regardless of context.

Collaborations

A pursuit of a shared purpose of education is impossible without intentional collaborations. A transformed learning ecosystem must be anchored in strong, inclusive partnerships and cooperation between learners, educators, communities, policymakers, funders and civil society.

Collaboration is essentially co-creation. For learning ecosystems to truly emerge, domains and opportunities must be linked and connected to allow for cumulative learning⁴⁸ that can pave the way for collective action.

It is time to break the silos.





Quest Alliance

“We have had a lot of partners implementing our approach (our curriculum or capacity building) but now how do we integrate it into an existing system? How does that work, how do you bring implementation at a ground level, policy influence, capacity building all of it together for systems change to shift mental models of different stakeholders at different levels”?



- Neha Parti, Quest Alliance

Quest Alliance is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to transform learning ecosystems through education technology, capacity building and collaboration to build 21st century skills for learners and facilitators.

Key Facets

- The vision of Quest Alliance is a world where young people thrive as self-learners and drive economic and social progress.
- Scalable solutions are designed to enable educators to address critical gaps for quality education and skills training.
- Focus is on self-driven learning for life, which is the result of experiences, reflection and keeping the learner at the centre. Knowledge creation, multi-stakeholder partnerships and capacity building are tools to revolutionise learning experiences and systems globally to transform individuals. Learners and educators are empowered to become innovators and change leaders, driving 21st century skills in their local environments
- The strength of the model is multidisciplinary teams and networks that collaborate to achieve maximum impact.
- Collaborative learning networks are tools of systemic change fuelled by research and innovation. Partnerships with government, civil society and business to scale models of self-learning for 21st century skills. Advocacy alliances of thought leaders mainstream self-learning for 21st century skills.

Outcomes

- Impacting 1,000,000 youth and educators in 35 partnerships
- 300 hours of digital content



Elements of Effective Collaboration

- Alignment in vision, values and agenda
- A backbone organisation for project management, clear communication and focus on goals
- Shared goals and established principles of practice
- Space for practitioner to take the lead
- Flexibility in approach and pathways to shared goals
- Open dialogues
- Strong partnerships
- Trust, empathy and patience

Codification of learning practices

The objective of codification is to capture the whole process of an idea and its implementation, the entire story of a learning solution. It overcomes the limitation of traditional documentation in sharing context specific, actionable knowledge. Codification encourages the art of mimicking as a tool to create a culture of co-creation and shared purpose in schools.

The Riverside Learner Center in India is one such initiative that is codifying everything being done at the Riverside Academy to create a system's approach to school transformation under six pillars. These include Curriculum, Parent Partnership, Community, Personal and Professional Development, Admin and Leadership. The Centre's I CAN Platform is a robust framework of processes and practices that gives leaders and teachers a clear roadmap for change. The platform is being used to serve schools across the world, allowing universal visibility of practices and resources.⁵²

Going forward, governments in consultation with the wide range of stakeholders involved in the delivery of education, can take a lead in creating repositories of codified practices of learning models that hold leapfrog potential. It can be an opportunity to bring promising innovations that are on the margins of education systems, to the centre of how learning takes place.⁵³



“There are great schools and visionary school leaders, and yet we lose their insights and wisdom as the practice of ‘codification’ is not something we spend our time on. Hence, we are often unable to replicate or sustain good work”.

- Kiran Bir Sethi,
Riverside Learning Center





CALL TO ACTION

At Catalyst 2030, our goal for SDG4 is to catalyse enduring connections that can help 21st century learners thrive. The principles advocated through solutions via this report are grounded in innovations with transformative potential and ecosystem encompassing approaches to collaboration. The intent is to extend learning and the practices facilitating it, far beyond the conventional spheres. The call to redefine learning is accompanied by a call to each stakeholder within the learning ecosystem to be a learner, a changemaker and a Catalyst.

Our Call to Action

- 1. For governments to adopt a participatory approach to policymaking and a partnership approach to policy implementation for education. This can be achieved as follows:**
 - Integrate principles towards redefining learning in policy focus areas and incorporate topics like gender-focus, climate education, wellbeing, citizenship and employable skills in formal curricula. Social entrepreneurs in education have developed very innovative curricula and teacher training modules, ready for adaptation and uptake
 - Adopt local solutions through partnerships with social entrepreneurs to scale the reach of evidence-based learning models to every learner
 - Engage with learners in spaces of transformation and establish mechanisms to capture feedback that can inform the policy development process
 - Organise periodic consultations with a wide group of stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers, administrators and funders) to clarify and reinforce a shared purpose of education and to assess the relevance of content and pedagogical focus against it.
 - Foster collective leadership within local learning ecosystems
- 2. For funders to create creative funding models to enable local grassroots educator innovators to work towards sustainable achievement of SDG4:**
 - People first approach meaning invest in local people who know the problems and solutions better than non-locals
 - Build capacities of local / small innovators to meet the funding criteria / qualify for various funding approaches.
 - Support human-centred designs to determine strategy and approach that address the root cause and lead to system change
 - Balance short-term project funding and unrestricted, long-term leadership / institutional strengthening
 - Invest in assessments, research and development and post education intervention to build an evidence base and inform sectoral measurement frameworks
 - Move towards collaboration funding for collaborative work and impact
- 3. For Social Entrepreneurs, learning teams and civil society to explore collaborations to address learner needs:**
 - Partnerships between teachers and learners to shape learning experience
 - Engagement with parents, caregivers on social and emotional wellbeing so a safe and caring environment is created for learners
 - Fostering of learning journey ownership by learners with necessary support systems
 - Collaborations among social entrepreneurs to expand access to the identified breadth of skills
 - Proactive support for the sector to thrive and grow
 - Move from an organisational way of thinking to a sectoral way of thinking

APPENDIX

Annexure: Collaboration Checklist for Social Entrepreneurs

Checklist for Partnerships with Governments

Partnerships with governments are crucial for scaling any innovation. Several practices that have worked for innovators to facilitate collaborations that have been supplemented with advice from policymakers include:

- A Unique Selling Proposition (USP) which is unique, innovative, scalable and has the potential to be a game changer
- Local relationships with schools and national relationships with government ministries
- Identified key personnel in relevant departments who can be touchpoints
- Pilot programme of the idea in a specific geography to demonstrate outcomes, followed by adaptation / realignment of model based on learnings and potential for scale
- Case for sustainability by showing how quickly the solution can be assimilated in the school's pattern of doing things
- Pilot partnerships with government ministries for scaling nationally together including teacher training, capacity building and handholding support
- Work with multilaterals to build credibility and an evidence base and to gather national support for solutions
- Establish monitoring and evaluation systems, including the collection of annual impact data and tracking of educational programme outcomes against national statistics that can be shared with authorities
- Evidence-based articulation and engagement

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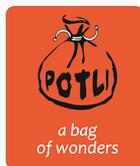
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