Reimagined Learning Framework- A practitioner lens to future of learning in post COVID world

By Education Circle

An initiative by a collective of education non-profits for COVID-19 response

Outcome Note

September 2020

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About the Education Circle

Considering the impact of COVID-19 crisis on children's education across the country, the Education Circle was created as a voluntary collective of 13 non-profits to:

- Identify high priority focus areas for the ecosystem to reimagine a new normal of education transformation
- Leverage practitioners experience to identify scalable and sustainable actionable approaches
- Identify actionable solutions that can be deployed by government at scale as well as by practitioners for enabling on-ground transformation

The non-profits which are part of the Education Circle work across multiple states in India and collectively impact more than 5 million children. These non-profits engage teachers, community, parents, children, government, and other NGOs to execute various kinds of interventions focused on education such as training, capacity building, content development, building life skills and program designing for the stakeholders. Participant organizations of the education circle collectively span across multiple geographies, have designed, and implemented programs across various aspects of the education sector, have worked extensively with the government and policymakers, and designed training modules to enable stakeholders across the education spectrum.

2020 Education Circle Participants

Following organizations were part of the Working Group that have co-created this document

Education Circle is a voluntary COVID-19 response initiative facilitated by

Executive Summary

The advent of COVID-19 has taught the world how important it is to build certain set of life skills and emotional resilience for children to deal with uncertain situations. Traditional classroom methods are not enough, and the introduction of National Education Policy 2020 has advocated for reformation in the learning systems and processes followed in the Indian education system. Therefore, this period proves to be an exceptional opportunity to think about an education that can ensure joyful and deeper engagement with learning as well as prepare children for an ambiguous future.

Practitioners from the nonprofit space believe that traditional classroom mode of learning can be reformed through incorporation of certain practices and goals which can lead to a more holistic preparation of children to navigate demands of coming future**.** Therefore, the objective is not only to enable return of children to schools but to redefine the curricular and pedagogical elements of effective institutional education. With a broad shift in the academic structure upto secondary education and proposition of new curricular framework by NCERT, the nonprofit organisations of Education Circle group have co-created a learning framework for implementation across public schools in India. This framework has been created for providing foundational base to upcoming pilot models in school by both the government bodies and the ecosystem.

Proposed Learning Framework by the Working Group

The learning framework is based on 5 central questions needed to transform the idea of education in the mainstream public schools. These questions act as the structure to all the recommendations provided from a practitioner perspective to both government stakeholders and the larger education ecosystem.

1. What is reimagined learning in post COVID-19 world?
2. What are the principles of new learning system?
3. What are the best practices and models to influence the new learning system?
4. How can we enable stakeholders for reimagined learning?
5. What are the indicators to track in the new learning system?

Before defining the reimagined learning framework, the group collectively defined certain boundary conditions to make these recommendations specific to school type and grades.

- **Impact horizon**: **Mid- Long term** (Current academic year along with a long term view)

- **Focus**: Clear actionable **recommendations** on Principles and Models of reimagined learning

- **Age**: This group will focus on both **Primary and Secondary learners**

- **School Type:** Focus on **Government schools**

- **Prioritization:** Participants who currently engage with the government stakeholders would informally soft test the value of the outputs getting created.

Elements of Reimagined Learning

The working group came together to reimagine institutional learning for primary and secondary grades such that students find greater accessibility to a holistic learning experience that lay equal emphasis on life skills and socio-emotional learning, connect local context with global concepts and leverage potential synergies with technology to ensure equitable support systems within schools.

Value Statement: Building a context specific learning identity for learners that can equip children to adapt to ambiguity by creating enabling learning environments at school, home, and community

Based on the value statement, the group aligned on a set of 9 applicable principles of reimagined learning along with proposed shifts necessary in the school learning system:
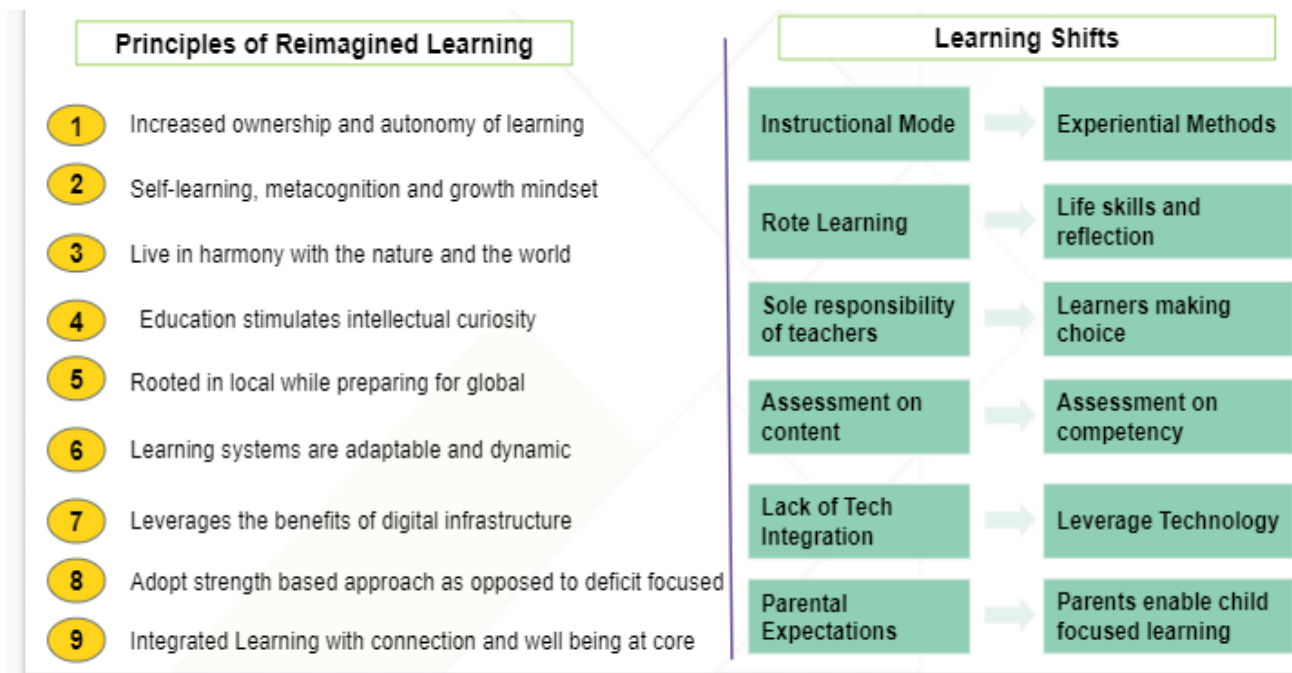
Principles of Reimagined Learning	Learning Shifts	
1 Increased ownership and autonomy of learning	Instructional Mode	Experiential Methods
2 Self-learning, metacognition and growth mindset	Rote Learning	Life skills and reflection
3 Live in harmony with the nature and the world		
4 Education stimulates intellectual curiosity	Sole responsibility of teachers	Learners making choice
5 Rooted in local while preparing for global		
6 Learning systems are adaptable and dynamic	Assessment on content	Assessment on competency
7 Leverages the benefits of digital infrastructure	Lack of Tech Integration	Leverage Technology
8 Adopt strength based approach as opposed to deficit focused	Parental Expectations	Parents enable child focused learning
9 Integrated Learning with connection and well being at core		

Figure 1: Principles of Reimagined Learning

Each of these 9 principles are integral to the proposed methods on transforming learning spaces and introducing a holistic child centered education to achieve competency and behavioural development. The group reimagined these spaces in ways where a child can pursue deeper learning and engagement with the topics at a young age.

Home	• Enabling environment • Role of adults in creating safe learning spaces
Neighborhood	• Common spaces to support learning • Experiential learning in local context • Support systems through formal and informal networks

Classroom	• Competency based Curriculum • Experiential and Integrated Pedagogy • 360 Degree Holistic Assessment	
Other learning resources	• Mentoring support to children • Supplement expertise and facilities in contextual learning • Common indicators of school performance	

Table 1: Key Elements of Holistic Learning Spaces

To enable a positive environment for child's learning, the key stakeholders of education system will have to play an active role in the overall process. Keeping child at the centre, the position of these stakeholders within the learning system have been reimagined as follows:

Parent — Enable safe learning environment at home

School Leader — Bring in the new culture of learning and ensure sustainability

Community/ Relatives — Create psychological safety through empathetic listening

Teacher — Engage with the emotions of a child and match with the pace of learning

Child Centered Learning

Social Worker — Support teacher, school and staff in enabling holistic learning

SMC — Give each stakeholder the larger vision of working on reimagined learning.

Government Officers — Leverage best practices within their network of schools and form partnerships with grassroot organisations
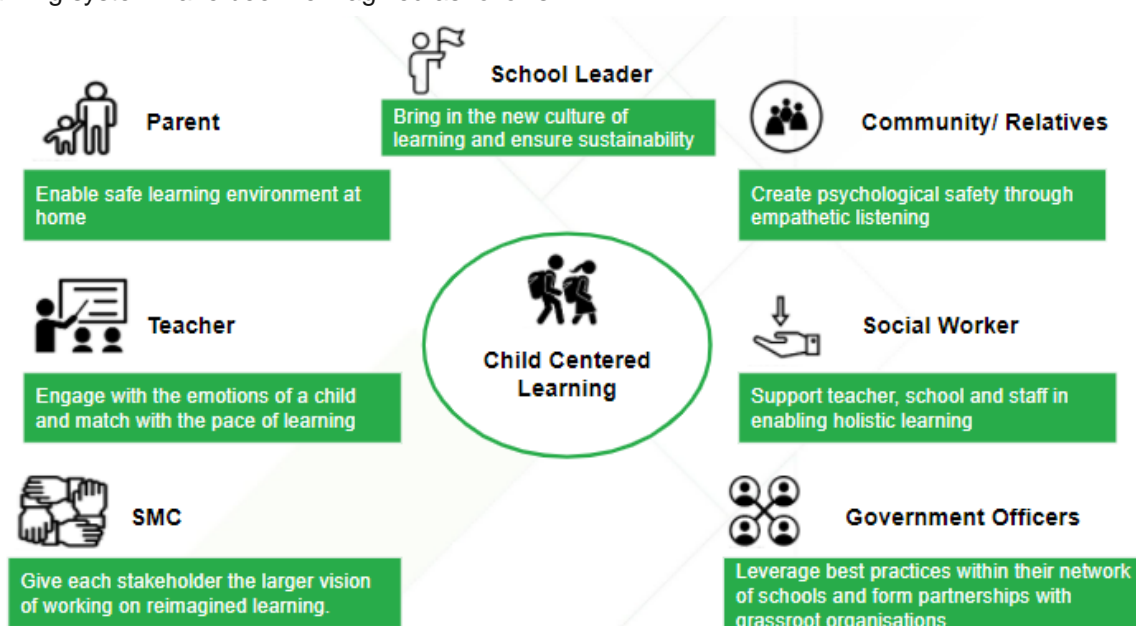
Figure 2: Stakeholder Roles in the new learning system

Implementing government bodies need to closely work with these stakeholders to enable a mindset shift in approaching the learning process, aligning them on a common value system that can guide the development trajectory of children. There is no argument against the fact that this will indeed be a demanding process and a clear roadmap of planning is essential. Therefore, the working group recommends long term state level partnerships with nonprofit organisations, social enterprises, subject matter experts, education practitioners and mental health counsellors who can contribute to the vision with a diverse set of expertise.

At school level, the practitioners have highlighted the critical need for investing in the capacity of School Leaders/Headmasters to ensure sustainability of the proposed system. The School Leader will have to possess certain skills and mindset based competencies to anchor change management and bring in a new culture of learning in public schools. Specific leadership programs need to be created to ensure rigorous capacity building of School Leaders before initiating the implementation process of the new learning system.

Proposed Best Practices to enable Reimagined Learning:

The group recommended a set of best practices for schools to adopt for enabling a transformative shift in the entire learning process. These practices have been influenced by insights from international work in education as well as success of certain existing proven models. Three priority areas of focus for best practices include:

- Reimagining school systems and processes
- Reimagining the learning of child in primary and secondary grades
- Reimagining teacher education

The document also outlines a set of existing proven models that offers guidance on implementing some of the proposed best practices in public schools. These models are by no means exhaustive and have been mentioned to highlight various approaches that the future education programmes in India can take post dissemination of NEP 2020.

Indicators of Reimagined Leaning

Lastly, indicators of reimagined learning have been proposed for each of the principles to install appropriate tracking systems in public schools. A blend of quantitative and qualitative tracking is recommended to ensure comprehensiveness. The table below presents a summary of the mapping done for each of the principles

Unit of Analysis	Principles	Broad Indicators for Tracking
Learner	Increased autonomy and ownership of learning	• Skill development • Reflection on surroundings • Regular attendance • Well-being and socio-emotional learning • Positive perception of learning spaces • Deeper engagement with subjects • Interests and passions are identified
	Self-learning, metacognition, and growth mindset	
	Live in harmony with nature and the world	
	Education stimulates intellectual curiosity	
Learning System	Rooted in local while preparing for global	• School culture • Regular use of technology in learning • Well-being support for students and staff • Teacher training • Curricular and pedagogical changes • Integration of arts, sports, and storytelling • Community engagement • Parental involvement in home learning • Infrastructural needs
	Learning systems are adaptable and dynamic	
	Leverages the benefits of digital infrastructure	
	Adopt strength based approach as opposed to deficit focused	
	Integrated learning with connection and well-being at the core of all learning activities	

Table 2: Broad Indicators for Tracking Implementation of Proposed Learning Principles

Background and Context

The pandemic impact and the disruption of learning

The advent of COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented shift of priorities for healthcare, livelihoods and even the economy as a whole. If there is one key takeaway from the ongoing effects, it will be the need to build life skills and emotional resilience in individuals to deal with uncertainty and change. More importantly, it has to be emphasised for the next generation of learners. Unfortunately, the current learning system in India has very limited or no focus on either life skills or emotional resilience. Furthermore, school closures across the world have already led to prolonged loss in learning for the current academic year, with Indian government officially announcing that schools will remain closed till the December of 2020.

Meanwhile, Union education ministry officials informed a parliamentary panel that online classes are only meant for school children above class 3 and only a limited number of online classes are allowed for those up to 8th standard *(Guidelines for Reopening of Schools, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)*. The ministry is taking steps such as feedback from parents and teachers to understand their comfort level and share feedback on their expectations once school reopen. These initiatives at the state level have managed to kick start some learning at home but face issues due to poor digital penetration and limitation of online channels. There are mixed reactions on opening of physical schools as parents are apprehensive of children safety and schools are struggling with preparedness to conduct classes within their premises.

However, an appropriate response to this disruption of learning might have to solve for both access and quality simultaneously. This means that traditional teaching methods would need to be re-examined by keeping child at the centre. It is important to note that the effect of pandemic is not only merely on the academic outcomes but also the well-being of children. This period proves to be an exceptional opportunity to think about an education that can ensure joyful and deeper engagement with learning as well as prepare children for an ambiguous future.

National Education Policy 2020: A paradigm shift in mainstream education

Practitioners from the nonprofit space believe that traditional classroom mode of learning might not be adequate to meet the needs of effective engagement in coming future. Therefore, the objective is not only to enable return of children to schools but to redefine the curricular and pedagogical elements of effective institutional education. For such a shift to take place, there has to be a synergy between legitimate policy backing and robust implementation models that operate on a more holistic framework for child development.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a remarkable leap forward into reimagining education process for children of India. Some of the key highlights for Education Circle members were competency-based curriculum, experiential learning, physical and mental well-being, digital literacy, and inclusive culture. An exceptional focus on early childhood education and foundational learning will also play a very critical role in driving overall change at the ground level. With a broad shift in the academic structure upto secondary education and proposition of new curricular framework by NCERT, the group has proposed and co-created a reimagined learning framework for implementation across public schools in India. This framework has been created for providing foundational base to upcoming pilot models in school by both the government bodies and the ecosystem. Given that the document brings in the practitioner perspective, the solutions are recommended to support the work that will be carried out for primary and secondary grade students by Ministries of Human Resource Development (HRD), Women and Child Development (WCD), Health and Family Welfare (HFW), and Tribal Affairs.

1 – Foundation of Reimagined Learning Framework

Vision and value statement

One of the core ideas behind proposing a whole new learning framework is to give greater agency to children such that they are able to determine education pathways for themselves. A number of alternative learning models in India today imbibe this fundamental belief and design systems in school in accordance with that. It has been observed that learning agency fosters classroom equity by creating opportunities for children with diverse intellectual capabilities and cultural contexts to pursue

Instead of looking at the pandemic as an undermining factor, the members of Education Circle saw it as an opportunity to identify gaps in existing learning process and propose sustainable changes from a practitioner lens. This change was not merely looked at from the perspective of higher academic outcomes but also child well-being, life skills and socio-emotional development.

In the light of NEP 2020, the goal of the document is to act as a guide for both government stakeholders and the education ecosystem to reform learning spaces, pedagogical practices and assessment while keeping the child at the centre. As a first step, the members consolidated the necessary learning shifts and derive a value statement to provide the foundation of all proposed recommendations.
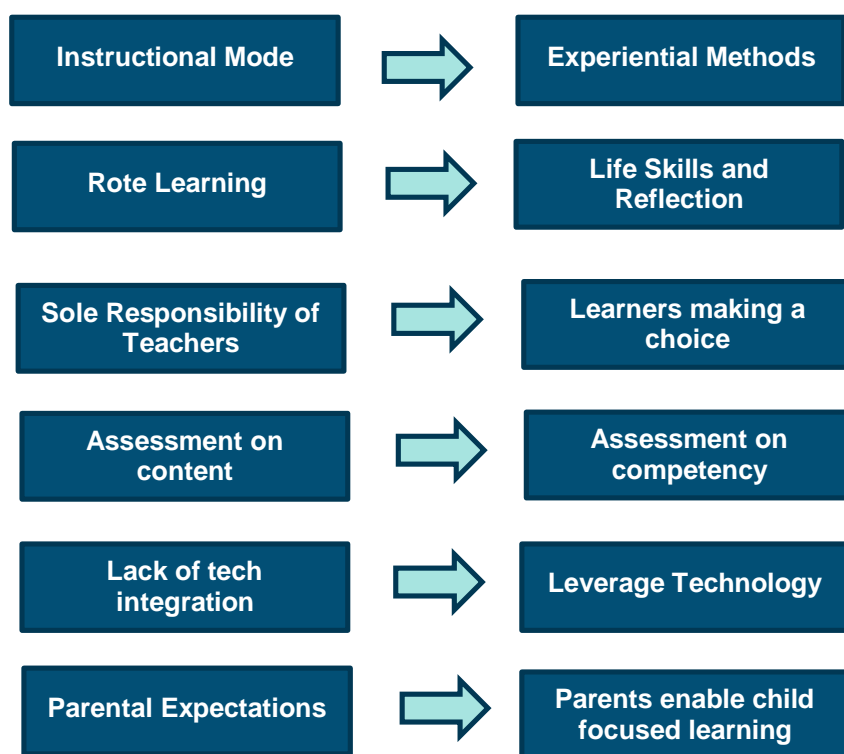
Instructional Mode	→	Experiential Methods
Rote Learning	→	Life Skills and Reflection
Sole Responsibility of Teachers	→	Learners making a choice
Assessment on content	→	Assessment on competency
Lack of tech integration	→	Leverage Technology
Parental Expectations	→	Parents enable child focused learning

Figure 3: Necessary learning shifts for the vision

Value Statement of reimagined learning:

Building a context specific learning identity for learners that can equip children to adapt to ambiguity by creating enabling learning environments at school, home, and community.

Key principles

By collectively bringing the on-ground practitioner experience, the circle members have aligned on 9 core principles to guide the foundation of reimagined learning in schools. These principles have been used to align on recommendations for transforming learning spaces, stakeholder roles, outcome indicators at school level.

Principle 1: Increased autonomy and ownership of learning

- **Child has the agency to determine learning choices and actively drive them**

Principle 2: Self-learning, metacognition, and growth mindset

- **Child can self-educate and actively seek opportunities to grow in its choice of learning**

Principle 3: Live in harmony with nature and the world

- **Child develops sensitivity and appreciation for citizenship role and the environment**

Principle 4: Education stimulates intellectual curiosity

- **Child is able to pursue sustained intellectual inquiries within the chosen disciplines**

Principle 5: Rooted in local while preparing for the global

- **Child harnesses local culture and surroundings to attain global 21ˢᵗ century skillsets**

Principle 6: Learning systems are adaptable and dynamic

- **School has flexible processes that can be reformed as per needs of children**

Principle 7: Leverages the benefits of digital infrastructure

- **School proactively integrates digital technology with curriculum and pedagogy**

Principle 8: Adopt strength-based approach as opposed to deficit focused

- **School does not limit itself to deliver quality education if resources are limited**

Principle 9: Integrated learning with connection and well-being at the core of all learning activities

School prioritises well-being and holistic opportunities for students in all decisions

2- Transforming learning spaces

The working group aligned on key elements of an effective learning space that can enable a child's holistic development. Rather than focusing solely on classroom as a common learning space, the proposed system expands upon the idea and tap into strengths of other local areas that are accessible and can be used as means to enable experiential and continuous learning of a child.

Stakeholders at different levels can act as a prominent support system to ensure safety and sustainability. Based on ground experience of the working group, the following key stakeholders were identified as major focus points of intervention:
- Children
- Teachers
- Parents
- Relatives
- School Management Committee
- Head master
- Social Workers
- Cluster Level officers
- Block level officers
- District level officers
- State level officers

Learning Space 1: Home

Enabling safe environment

There is wealth of literature that establishes how positive home learning environment during early years can lead to greater physical, cognitive, and social development of children. Regular learning activities conducted with aid of supportive parents can give much more opportunities for children to develop vocabulary and numeracy skills as well as form healthier relationships with their family. Investment in safe learning spaces is a non-negotiable for the reimagined learning system. Safety in this context is as much psychological as it is physical. Home can be one of the first focal points to enable safety as it is one space that remain closest to the personal identity of the child.

Role of adults in education

A recent study conducted in Sitapur district of Uttar Pradesh by Pratham and Cambridge University found importance of parental perception and involvement in a child's education [1]. Based on a sample of 24000 children, the research concluded that compared to relatively higher income families have much greater knowledge than poorer families to recognise whether their children are learning or the resources to support them. This highlights the need for differentiated support or mechanisms by the school to enable effective home learning based on socio-economic inequalities.

Learning Space 2: Neighborhood

Common spaces to support learning

The idea of safe neighbourhood could be difficult to follow especially in disaggregated societies in the urban regions. When it comes to rural regions, the community culture can be effectively leveraged for creating adequate physical learning spaces for children. When designing these spaces, there are some effective ways in which various block level and cluster level officers can transform common spaces in the neighbourhood:

- Establish designated spaces for peer learning sessions in the neighbourhood where volunteering elder students or members can teach younger children
- Provide awareness on all the detailed COVID-19 safety guidelines when conducting any activity or learning session in the neighbourhood spaces.
- Develop a team of local volunteers who can take ownership of ensuring access and safety to certain neighbourhood spots for conducting learning activities or group sessions.
- Encourage school teachers to conduct activity-based classes every once or twice a week in the neighbourhood spaces

Experiential learning in local context

One of the key principles of reimagined learning framework is to ensure local rootedness of the child while preparing them for global 21st century skillsets. Studies have shown how a child learns best in their local context and language during their early years of education. Under reimagined learning, it is encouraged that neighbourhood spaces are used as a strong means to make local culture an integral part of child's experiential learning. Children belonging to rural and tribal dominated regions will highly benefit from school programs that have an extensive focus on using local community spaces to foster experience-based learning outcomes.

Teachers can use local neighbourhood spaces to conduct experiential learning programs that promote diversity and inclusion. By making children gain an appreciation of local customs, festivals, and languages, the school can effectively meet the NEP 2020 goals on classroom inclusion.

Support systems through formal and informal networks

Cluster and block officers from local government bodies can play an essential role in mobilising both formal and informal volunteers from the local communities. Nonprofit organisations usually have a strong community connect through their interventions which HRD ministries and tribal departments can use to scale local community based teaching for public schools.

Formal networks of paid volunteers can include school social workers and the SMCs of all the public schools in the local area. Frontline workers like ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers can also act as formal volunteers based on the allocation by Ministry of Women and Child Development. These schools can act as clusters that share best learning practices with each other and take help of the formal volunteer force to design experiential projects and activities for children. The Community Library Project is an excellent example of creating a repository of quality books for fostering readership and life skills. Developing such low cost local centres like libraries and clubs through state investment can prove to be excellent support systems for socially and economically disadvantaged children. Formal volunteers can encourage community custodianship for such learning spaces so that it becomes a sustainable intervention

Informal networks can also be sourced from the community itself when certain active members can directly play a role in the learning process of children. These members can be rewarded with recognition and prizes based on their contribution

Learning Space 3: Classroom

Curriculum

A key objective of classroom teaching in the context of reimagined learning is to make child a self-learner. The new curricular framework as also supported by NEP 2020 have advocated for reduction of material in all subjects to core essentials. This calls for a competency based curriculum design where teachers can have a prominent focus on the skill development of child in areas like critical inquiry, creative thinking, and metacognitive abilities. A curriculum of this kind can drive agency and enable self-learning capacities to grow.

Integration of subjects also need careful emphasis to impart multidisciplinary learning since primary grades. Educators at public schools need to ensure that children do not just look at individual subjects in isolation but

learn to connect disciplines for broader problem solving and interaction with the world. Art, storytelling, and sports need not be co-curricular activities but blended elements to teach languages, culture, sciences within the revised design. Potential synergies between different disciplines must be aligned with all stakeholders for such an integrated design.

Once the revised NCERT curricular framework is released by the government, the actionable next step would be to plan meticulous training sessions for educators of public schools such that these new methods and techniques become familiar to them. The focus here should be to enable a mindset shift and demonstrate value in having such a curriculum in classroom teaching. Subject matter experts can be essential support for not only the overall design but co-creating a suitable implementation plan, contextualised for state specific needs. From local government officers to HM and SMCs, all the stakeholders of school would need to be active partners in the implementation process of the new curricular framework.

Pedagogy

Pedagogical methods also need a paradigm shift such that the learning process is able to fulfil both quality and equity goals. Such an approach would demand a co-created effort by both the educator and child in form of a shared responsibility. Reimagined learning framework recommends four pillars to drive such a pedagogical change based on NEP 2020 measures:

A. Differentiated support to help with integration of socio-emotional learning and match the pace of learner
B. Project based learning is part of subjects
C. Pedagogy is constructivist
D. Teachers and students co-create the learning outcomes

The growing importance of socio-emotional learning (SEL) has challenged the existing discourse of education that restricts itself to life skills and foundational learning. Children in public schools come from diverse set of backgrounds and experiences, with the disadvantaged ones being far more vulnerable to alienation and exclusion. Therefore, pedagogical methods that engage with social and psychological faculties of children would be far more important to achieve classroom equity, with differentiated support given to child based on challenges. State level partnerships with nonprofit space and local administration can anchor socio-emotional skills based pedagogy that deliver following outcomes:

- Teachers take initiatives to develop themselves and deliver SEL in classroom
- Students display age appropriate socio-emotional skills
- Schools make SEL a priority and take accountability to implement
- Parents actively engage with schools on student behaviours

Project based learning is an instructional approach that encourages both students and teachers to pursue deeper engagement with the subject by going beyond textbooks and rote learning. Each project is a real problem statement that a team of students would collaboratively work on. Learnings from piloted PBL programmes in United States have demonstrated that carefully designed projects can be an effective pedagogical practice to allow conceptual learning and skill development.. In partnership with education nonprofits and subject matter experts, state governments can tailor age appropriate project learning modules and provide necessary handholding support to both teachers and students. This form of classroom pedagogy can deliver following outcomes:

- Students pursue authentic problem solving through critique and reflection
- Students develop skills for teamwork and collaboration
- Students have more agency and voice when engaging with subjects

Constructivist pedagogy in classroom requires the educator to direct activities and teaching methods to create a safe, enabling environment. Under the new professional training program for teachers mentioned by NEP, it might be crucial to have a separate focus on adoption of constructivist pedagogy. Headmasters and teachers in public schools would need to view children as active contributors to classroom education rather than passive listeners of instructions. Headmasters would need to closely work with teaching staff and SMCs to co-create an

annual plan for enabling environment within all classrooms. A well-executed constructivist pedagogy can deliver on following:

- Students develop deeper conceptual understanding of specific disciplines
- Students demonstrate critical inquiry, curiosity, and active participation in the planned learning activities within classroom
- Teachers prepare their individual constructivist pedagogy plans and execute them with support from HM and other staff
- Schools include constructivist pedagogy in their annual progress goals

Lastly, learning outcomes of the child should be co-created and aligned with the educator for all pedagogical goals. A child centered pedagogy is possible only when students are involved in setting their own learning goals and development plans. With NEP reinforcing this aspect of classroom learning in the policy recommendations, there is an opportunity for schools to rethink about child agency in their own classrooms and introduce the new value system of co-creation in both primary and secondary grades.

Assessment

NEP 2020 have announced the introduction of holistic report card to track a child's progress with inclusion of Artificial Intelligence technology. This is a progressive step and practitioners believe that this new form of assessment must redefine academic outcomes. For classroom learning, the framework suggests following key features for child assessment:

- Assessment is based on competency and mindset rather than reproduction of content
- Learning outcomes track socio-emotional learning skills
- Assessment is digitised to aid personalised learning

Competency based assessment would need a complete shift of evaluation indicators for primary and secondary grades. In current public school system, assessments are largely psychometric in nature and solely measures the ability to memorise and reproduce information learned in class. In order to complement the revised curriculum and pedagogy, the assessment methods would need to transform in design such that life skills based competencies and mindset growth can be tracked for progress. For individual subjects, the assessments designed must be more flexible in nature and capture progress in the conceptual understanding of the topics as well as application of the learned knowledge. Inclusion of components like peer assessment and self-assessment can help strengthen evaluation done by the educator.

Holistic assessments for classrooms can have a limited impact if restricted to only academic development of child. Socio-emotional resilience and the ability to deal with uncertainty needs continuous work and evaluation as well to understand whether the existing school environment is having a positive impact on the child's overall well-being. However, socio-emotional development needs to be tracked and documented for both the child and the educator through established tools and frameworks. Teacher's socio-emotional competence must be developed through mentoring support, which can be part of the continuous professional development by the government. For children, age specific indicators need continuous tracking:

- Expression of basic emotion (3-6 years)
- Use of thinking to regulate emotion (6-10 years)
- Feeling simultaneous, mixed emotions (10-12 years)
- Emotions shaped by experiences and traits (12-15 years)

Technology can be leveraged for making child centered assessment more feasible at scale. A number of ed-tech solutions by both for profit and nonprofit sectors have demonstrated how digitised learning can help children learn at their own pace and monitor personalised learning closely. With inclusion of aspect like artificial intelligence, the role of educators in classroom will become more of a facilitator as the tech based component will help bridge learning gaps among different children in the same classroom. A healthy synergy between

technology and offline learning components can make evaluation far more beneficial irrespective of learning strengths and challenges.

Learning Space 4: Online Learning Resources

Mentoring Support to Children

Mentoring support to young children can leave a long term impact on their mindset and overall personality. Currently, no such support services are accessible for either boys or girls who might need a responsible adult to look upto for pushing themselves. In case of marginalised and underresourced students, mentoring by an experienced adult becomes even more critical as they are often vulnerable to getting dropped out or fall into wrong choices for their lives. To expand its access, technological synergies can be leveraged.

MHRD can orchestrate state level partnerships with organisations that can help create a strong network of mentoring alumni or teachers for each cluster of schools which can further be accessible as a central database. Online channels can be deployed to ensure maximum impact at scale and tech devices can be distributed in target schools under a new education scheme. A special focus of mentorship can be on the most deprived and vulnerable groups of children as well as those who face domestic violence, exploitation, or other forms of abuse. Government need to have provisions and incentives where necessary to mobilise a large pool of mentors.

Supplement expertise and facilities in contextual learning

Online learning platforms like DIKSHA can have contextualised content as per different regions of India. These online resources can supplement the educators in public schools to help them design. This can cover specific topics such as ecology, algebra, music, and scientific inquiry, among others. Subject matter experts can be engaged in creation of these modules along with translators to help provide the same content in as many local languages as possible

Common indicators of school performance

Standard indicators for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation of school performance can be helpful to track success of several new programmes over the next couple of years. Technology can play a major role in terms of developing a centralised platform by the government where all public schools are carefully evaluated. To ensure that such a system does not result in negative competition, the indicators must be designed carefully:

- Metrics need to capture holistic focus on children including competency development, socio-emotional resilience, and overall well-being in school environment
- Tracking of progress can be more relative than comparative as each school will have context specific challenges and resource provisions

Challenges in transforming the learning spaces

Before designing state level programmes to transform each of the learning spaces, it is also critical to be mindful of the existing challenges pertaining to each of them. The working group collaboratively identified major hurdles that must be accounted into the intervention plan.

Learning Space		Identified Challenges
Community	Home	- Lack of livelihoods for parents - Lack of awareness and opportunity to be safe - Low digital literacy - Lack of smartphones - Space constrains, safety of children, unstable economic situation, violence - Parents have low self-esteem about their status - Parents are avoiding teachers
	Neighbourhood	- Violence, crimes, distractions - Lack of access to resources like clean water, hygiene, etc. -Not adjusting for the child - Anxiety and stress readiness to learning -Communal barriers -Fear of interaction post-COVID -Lack of safety
	Public spaces	-Lack of COVID protection (short term - 15 to 18 months) -Risk of infections, CSA safety -Healthy and sanitized environment and awareness of necessary precautions -Assigning ownership and responsibility for these spaces
School	Classroom	-Lack of regulatory approvals - Lack of funding - Government mandate on syllabus and assessments - Lack of political will to challenge the existing conception around 'learning' -Lack of resources, space, class culture, safety - Lack of resources, financial constraints, teacher readiness -Teachers might have less motivation for additional training -Resultant poor implementation by teachers and administration
	Common areas	-Safety (physical, from other peers, adults, equipment safety) access -Maintenance (Often weak partnerships with private organisations)
	Other learning resources (allied institutions)	-Lack of willingness from other students -Access (timings, permissions, adult supervision), safety, -Too many resources and difficult to choose the appropriate sets for teaching

Table 3: Challenges in transforming the learning spaces
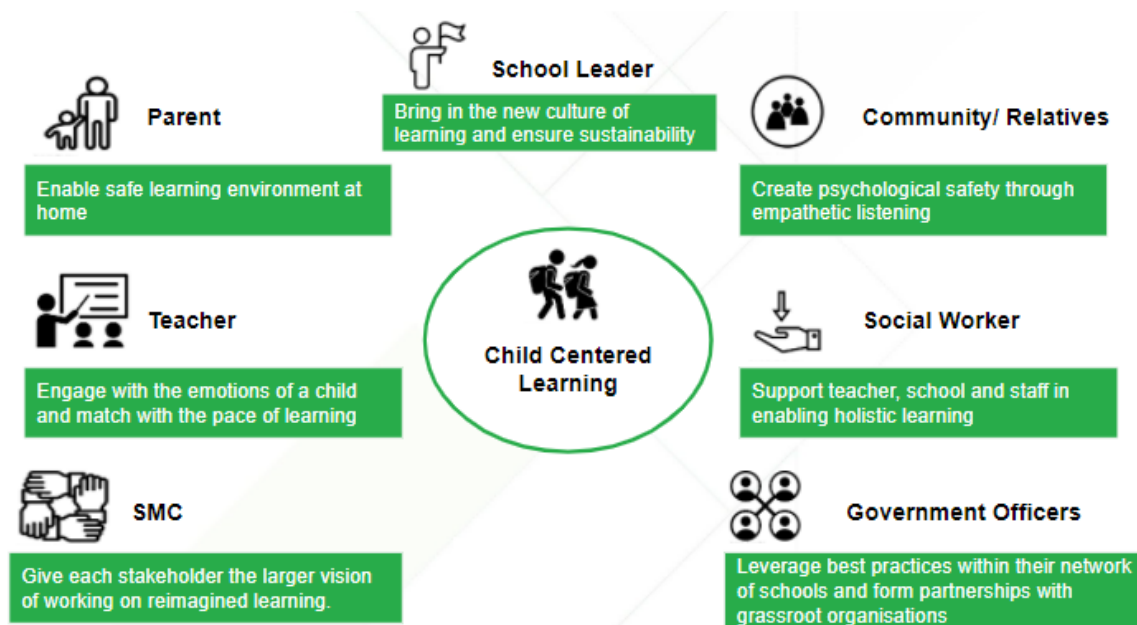
3- Role of Stakeholders

Figure 4: Proposed Stakeholder Map

Practitioners in the Education Circle have defined clear roles for each stakeholder in the reimagined learning framework. The idea is to ensure that each stakeholder is an active contributor to the overall learning process and their strengths are being used to the maximum extent.

Stakeholder	Role in the Reimagined Learning Framework
Parents	Act as co-educators of children for home learning activities Regularly communicate with teachers for staying engaged with child's development plan
Relatives/ Community Members	Practice empathetic listening with children to give them psychological safety while they pursue learning within community Ensure accessibility to common physical spaces for conducting learning activities Volunteer with schools for various child centered programmes
Teachers	Giving the children the space to get back to the pace of learning in the school Bring positive emotions towards the child to ensure their well-being in schools Facilitate the delivery of reimagined learning curriculum and pedagogy through careful integration of classroom and technology Regularly check in with parents for guidance on home learning activities and well being
School Leaders/ HMs	Ensure sustainability of reimagined learning processes Training and support to the teachers (resources from different organizations) Ensure continuous tracking of student well-being and learning outcomes by leveraging technology
Social Workers	Nonprofit organisations can closely partner with an entire school cluster to regularly provide operational support during change management in schools
SMCs	Giving each stakeholder the larger vision of working on reimagined learning. SMCs can be one of the primary facilitators
Cluster Level Officers	Be responsible for end to end change management in a network of schools falling within the cluster
Block Level Officers	Closely coordinate between District and Cluster level officers to identify and meet the support needs of different schools
District Level Officers	Create a system where the CRCs, HMs/teachers can reprioritize principles given by the reimagined learning framework

| State Level Officers | Reprioritize educational initiatives at the state level |
| | Partner with grassroot organizations who understand reimagined learning philosophies |

Table 4: Stakeholder roles in the new learning system

At school level, the practitioners have highlighted the critical need for investing in the capacity of School Leaders/Headmasters to ensure sustainability of the proposed system. The School Leader will have to possess certain skills and mindset based competencies to bring in a new culture of learning in public schools. Therefore, it is essential to plan for leadership programs that can prepare School Leaders for the recommended change management in the learning systems. **Appendix B** details out the competencies required for School Leaders in the context of the proposed learning framework

4- Proposed Best Practices

The members of the Education Circle aligned on certain best practices that can be adapted into scalable models and programmes by the government and ecosystem. These practices are based on the 9 principles of reimagined learning and have also been selected based on their relevance for the NEP 2020 goals.
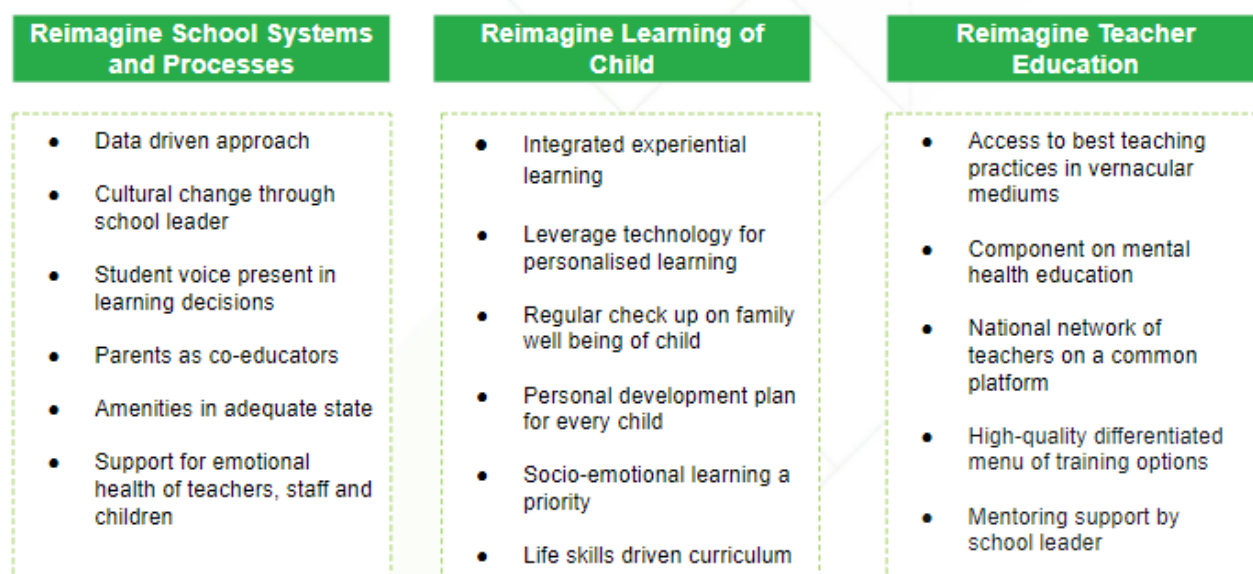
Reimagine School Systems and Processes	Reimagine Learning of Child	Reimagine Teacher Education
• Data driven approach • Cultural change through school leader • Student voice present in learning decisions • Parents as co-educators • Amenities in adequate state • Support for emotional health of teachers, staff and children	• Integrated experiential learning • Leverage technology for personalised learning • Regular check up on family well being of child • Personal development plan for every child • Socio-emotional learning a priority • Life skills driven curriculum	• Access to best teaching practices in vernacular mediums • Component on mental health education • National network of teachers on a common platform • High-quality differentiated menu of training options • Mentoring support by school leader

Figure 5: Summary of proposed best practices

Reimagine School Systems and Processes:

- Data driven approach is employed for sustenance and continuous development:
    o Tracking student growth against their annual goals in various subjects- qualitative and quantitative
    o Using competency based assessment and behavioural growth to identify strengths and needs of each student
    o Tracking school goals and bring in best practices wherever possible to understand effectiveness

- $\circ$ Stakeholders know what data to collect and have been trained to make analytical decisions based on it
- School leader builds a culture of holistic school transformation and provide end to end handholding support to teachers and staff for adapting recommended practices
- Student voice is part of all decision-making processes pertaining to learning in schools (topics to study, pedagogical methods, timetables, classroom infrastructure, integration of technology, accessibility of resources)
- School Leader is completely invested in the transformation process and must closely coordinate with cluster level officers, block level officers and involved nonprofit organisations.
- School Management Committee is strengthened to facilitate active parental involvement and school decisions on learning systems
- Mental health counsellors should be accessible for children, teachers, and the entire staff of the school as a part of school well being
- A regular check to be done on the condition and maintenance of amenities like toilets and drinking water access by the School Leader
- Schools under one cluster to keep sharing best practices on learning systems based on experience
- Emotional health of teachers is ensured, and well-being support provisions must be available when necessary

Reimagine Learning of Child

- Integrate experiential learning pedagogy with all the different subjects such that child has enough opportunities to pursue skill development, socio-emotional growth and deeper inquires on the topics

- Technological platforms are leveraged internally within the school to facilitate personalised learning and assessment of children. Teachers need to act as facilitators rather than information providers and actively use technology support to track a child's learning activities and overall progress.

- Each teacher is allocated to a set of parents for monthly check up on family well-being and guiding them on home learning activities for their child.

- Ensure safe learning spaces with no bullying culture where children are positively encouraged to pursue collaborative learning with their peers as well as teachers.

- Every child prepares their personal development plan and set tangible goals in participation with the designated teacher. Both teacher and child will co-create the learning outcomes together.

- Community spaces in public and neighbourhood should be used to promote peer learning circles and practical project based learning for understanding local relevance.

- Socio-emotional learning will have equal focus as skill development and foundational learning. Behaviour parameters need to be a part of the overall assessment of the child.

- Curriculum needs to be integrated with art, sports, storytelling, and other mediums that are conventionally understood as co-curricular areas. These mediums should be used to actively develop life skills and mindset competencies of a child as well to identify their interests and talents

- Mental health, ecology, empathy, and inclusion needs be part of the classes since primary grades

Reimagine Teacher Education

- Make international literature on best teaching practices available in vernacular languages for teachers to leverage at any point. This should include cutting edge research in educational psychology and design

- Educate teachers on dealing with psychological traumas and mental health issues through professionals

- Create a national network of teachers on a centralised technology platform where teachers across public schools of India can leverage learnings from each other both by grades and subjects.

- Offer a very high-quality differentiated menu of training options for teachers to take throughout the year which can include design thinking, child centered pedagogy, socio-emotional learning, among others.

- School leader provides regular guidance and mentoring support throughout the year

- Teachers are trained to employ technology in their lesson plans, assessments, and overall development of children

Based on the identified best practices, the Education Circle has collectively recommended a set of proven models in the context of India to understand operational approach of reimagined learning. The detailed description of models can be found in Appendix A.

5- Indicators to track development of new learning system

Key Principle	Indicators for Tracking
Learner	
Increased autonomy and ownership of learning	- Regular attendance to class without teacher interference - Positive perception of learning spaces in terms of acceptance and psychological safety - No corporal punishment in school premises - Agency to choose subjects, timetables and learning interests within school - Students perform self-assessment and setting individual goals and learning plans - Dedicated spaces allotted for self-learning time
Self-learning, metacognition, and growth mindset	- Self-learning assessment is carried out on a weekly/monthly basis - Independent/group projects at the end of every term. - Students commit to certain subjects/activities for long term focus based on passion

Live in harmony with nature and the world	• Curriculum is designed keeping the 'harmony with nature' and 'coexistence' as a value system • Students observe and reflect on natural surroundings through experiential learning • Skill development - adaptability, better social skills, interpersonal skills in combination with empathy and awareness • Students lead Community based projects
Education stimulates intellectual curiosity	• Students proactively asking reflective and inquiry based questions • Assessment capturing growth in skills and mindsets • Students using project based learning to demonstrate deeper engagement with topics/subjects
Learning System	
Rooted in local while preparing for global	• Local language/mother tongue is an integral medium of communication for all subjects until primary grades • Release of contextualised curriculum for each subject by State Education Board every academic year • Teachers mark themselves high on a rating scale of continuous professional development • Students lead locally relevant projects in community spaces
Learning systems are adaptable and dynamic	• Feedback processes have been set up for students, teachers, and staff to express challenges, concerns and questions on school systems and processes • School leader document changes done in the learning systems on a bi-annual basis
Leverages the benefits of digital infrastructure	• Availability of digital infrastructure within the school in form of devices, internet connectivity and inclusion of key tech platforms • Regular use of technology by teachers in facilitating personalised learning plans for children • Technology is employed in tracking both school goals and student goals
Adopt strength based approach as opposed to deficit focused	• Well-being of children and staff within school versus accessibility to resources and facilities • Competency based development of children within school versus accessibility to resources and facilities • School culture in terms of values and practices • Growth of school activities in areas of sports, arts, storytelling, and other vocational skills
Integrated learning with connection and well-being at the core of all learning activities	• Accessibility to professional counsellors for well-being support to teachers and children • Semester wise frequency of classes conducted on topics of mental health, ecology, and happiness • Number of school initiatives and projects led by children for the local community

Table 5: Key indicators for the new learning system

6- Acknowledgments

7- Appendix

Appendix A

As notable examples, the Education Circle group aligned on a set of existing proven models that can offer some of the adaptable best practices to meet the articulated vision. These models have been selected based on their potential for scalability and alignment with the core principles of the reimagined learning framework. It is by no means an exhaustive list, but the models can be a useful base to understand application of reimagined learning framework. The goal is to direct government stakeholders such that they can leverage some of the best practices if not the entire model to operationalise transformation in learning spaces.

Model 1: Learning Curve Programme on Socio-emotional Education

A non for profit organization based in Hyderabad, Learning Curve Life Skills Foundation uses an approach that integrates the role of multiple stakeholders in the school's ecosystem to bring social-emotional learning into mainstream practice. The organization empowers teachers through self-development and mentoring and enables them to translate this in the classroom through structured and age-relevant social-emotional curriculum and toolkits. Progress of teachers, children and classrooms is carefully documented and evaluated using a set of established tools and frameworks

Model Approach:
- Development workshops, lesson plans and toolkits for teachers
- Guided workbooks on socio-emotional learning are provided to students
- Learning Curve gives overall delivery support. Monitoring & evaluation support and tools to school leaders and staff
- Parents are engaged in socio-emotional learning through regular forums and behaviour progress cards

Outcomes:
- Teachers become mentors to their peers, role models for their students and develop growth mind-set
- Students reflect enhanced self-regulation, critical thinking and decision making. Moreover, they become adaptable, socially conscious, empathetic and show effective communication
- Students and parents actively engage with each other on student behaviours and schools taken accountability for implementing SEL.
- Schools have the required processes and systems to implement and measure student well-being and growth in socio-emotional behaviour

Model 2: Village Learning Circles in Telangana

In rural villages and tribal areas of Telangana, students with competent teaching and communication skills began converting homes, church compounds, religious places, school buildings and community halls into accessible learning spaces. During COVID-19 lockdown impositions, these elder students actively used neighbourhood and community spaces to teach and engage young children as a part of the Village Learning Circle model. VLCs are serving as ideal platforms for poor and underprivileged children to keep up with their studies, despite lack of resources like smartphones, internet connectivity and laptops.

Model Approach:

- Each VLC comprises 10-15 students from all classes from both government and private educational institutions and classes are conducted for 2-3 hours per day as per the timetable.
- Quiz, spell bee, essay writing, poetry, art & craft competitions, and English –Plus club activities are organized, besides regular classes.
- Students attending VLCs strictly adhere to the COVID safety protocols including wearing face masks, cleaning hands with sanitizer/soap and maintaining physical distance.
- Teachers remotely monitor VLC activities and guide' student teachers' in pedagogical methods, assignments and project works considering different categories of students and their abilities
- Ensure free supply of government textbooks to all students.. Help of Sarpanches, parents, public representatives and philanthropists can be taken in procuring library books
- Regular monitoring of Village Learning Circles by parents, community members, elected representatives, and local teachers.

Outcomes:
- More than 10,000 VLCs were formed in Telangana by the end of July and close to 50000 students actively involved in VLC academic activities
- Active peer learning by elder students builds community culture and neighborhood spaces are transformed to pursue quality learning activities
- Students of Telangana Social and Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Societies planned to increase the number of VLCs to 50000 by the end of August 2020

Model 3: Happiness Curriculum by Delhi Government

The Happiness Curriculum is designed on the basis of Happiness Triad and aims to support students in their journey to sustainable happiness through meaningful engagement in form of introspective stories and activities. Regular happiness classes will enable students to reflect on the relationship between their feelings, thoughts, behaviour and their impact on themselves, family, society around them and the natural environment.

Model Approach
- Like any other subject, students will have a happiness period every day
- Teacher's Handbook for Happiness Class includes description of mindful activities, stories and activities with reflective questions, and self-expression.

Outcomes
- Students having enhanced self-awareness and mindfulness
- Students educated on deeper aspects of well-being and happiness in life
- Students building upon socio-emotional learning to develop healthier relationships

Model 4: Arc of Transformation Approach by Dream A Dream

Under Arc of Transformation program, Dream A Dream is helping teachers adopt a validation and listening approach to help children in a non-judgemental way. The idea is to provide holistic training to a teacher to enable creation of safe learning spaces for the child.

Model Approach:
- Teachers are trained through these sessions to focus on their own individual strengths and build empathetic listening skills
- Carefully structured modules for step by step development:
  - The first module helps in understanding self: reflection on journey, struggles, challenges, creative ideas and building confidence

- o Second module is based on understanding children: listening, validating, connecting
- o Third module focused upon the role of teachers: socio-emotional learning, transformational learning, understanding how to support child by identifying their strengths and behaviours
- o Fourth module on facilitation skills: how teachers can invite the child to engage with learning
- Post training sessions, Dream A Dream trainer would monitor challenges and progress of teachers through timely school visits

Outcomes:
- Teachers have deeper understanding of experiential learning based pedagogy
- Teachers improve their facilitation skills with increased self-awareness

Model 5: Muktangan School Programme

Muktangan School Programme is an innovative learning model that follows the state syllabus (SSC Board) but implements it in a way that makes learning meaningful to the student. Teachers transact the curriculum through interactive, classroom activities, designed based on a comprehensive assessment of formative learning. Building on the students' pre-existing knowledge, this approach encourages students to actively construct their own understanding through inquiry, discussion, and exploration.

Model Approach

- Quality circle time allows children to have an open forum where they may state their views and address any problems they may face in class or personally. The forum acts as a fertile field where students themselves engage in creative, practical problem solving with the teacher acting as a guide for driving focused group discussions.
- Muktangan's counseling cell is also made available on a need basis to department faculty, teachers and in some cases even parents of the students.
- A programme designed to be inline with and a culmination of life-skills activities imparted to students throughout their academic journey at Muktangan
  - o Communication (professional and interpersonal)
  - o Self-awareness (resilience and self-management)
  - o Community project (understanding community issues and formulation of practical solutions)
  - o Literature Circle (effective comprehension and summarization)
  - o Career awareness (career focus and goals)
- Muktangan is currently using subject determined competencies to track individual student progress across grades. This tracker effectively quantifies student understanding on each competency allowing teachers to effectively focus on specific learning gaps.

Outcomes:
- Experiential learning is implemented across topics to engage students in a holistic learning process
- Students consistently grow in key life skills through focused curriculum and close competency based tracking
- Students develop socio-emotional learning and behavioural aspects through classroom experiences

Model 6: Akanksha Foundation Model for Schools

The Akanksha School Project comprises of Innovative pedagogy and high-quality co- and extracurricular programs play an integral part in a child's development. Our schools have programs in sports, arts, and leadership to create opportunities for our children. Our community programs aim to invest parents in the holistic education for our children.

Model Approach

- **Blended Learning**- In the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic, Akanksha has promptly adapted to the unique model of Blended Learning that integrates in-person and virtual learning. In order to ensure the learning of our students continues this key strategic shift has been implemented.

- **Independent Learning**- Students rotate between different workstations in groups to perform certain tasks within a limited time frame. Workstations foster a culture of independent, active, and purposeful learning.

- **Culture of Reading**- Exposes children to books that include more text than illustrations and helps them gain confidence in reading comprehension. Students also recommend books to each other and learn new vocabulary.

- **Art for Akanksha-** Empowers children with a powerful art education supported by its curriculum developed in-house, as well as providing art-related career opportunities for Akanksha alumni and generating revenue through high-quality products.

- **Sports Programs-** Primary goal is for children to have fun, create friendships, and build self-confidence through physical activity. In addition, the students are taught the value and importance of teamwork. Sports offered include football, hockey, and cricket, amongst others.

- **Advisory Program and Circle Time**- Akanksha's Advisory program ensures that all students have an adult who knows him or her well and is an advocate for them. These advisors support them when they face personal or academic difficulties.

- **School Management Committees-** SMCs often help conduct intensive interventional work in areas surrounding schools, including programs that raise literacy levels among parents or build awareness about proper hygiene and nutrition.

- **Parent Education-** Social workers lead a team of parents in each school and help equip them with knowledge and skills they can use to drive positive change within schools. This comes in the form of developing life skills ranging from health, hygiene, and nutritional awareness, to effective parenting and financial organisation.

- **Parent Literacy-** At the pre-primary level, Akanksha has created bilingual materials that allows parents to reinforce learning from school at home. Many Akanksha Schools also run spoken English classes for parents to build their confidence and to keep up with their budding fluent English speakers at home.

Appendix B

The critical pivot in achieving these outcomes will be the K-12 educational leaders (school leaders and the officers). Alokit has identified below some skills, knowledge, and mindset shifts (not exhaustive) at the level of school leadership (headmasters) that will lead to the above outcomes:

Skills

i) Data-driven decision making (including knowing how to collect and analyse data)

ii) Conducting effective staff meetings

iii) Observing lessons and recording notes based on observations

iv) Giving effective feedback to the teachers/coaching

v) Facilitating workshops/training

vi) Communication

Knowledge

i) Foundational literacy and numeracy

ii) Creating a vision

iii) Self-evaluating school

iv) Setting goals and school improvement plans

v) School walkthrough

vi) Alternatives to corporal punishment

vii) Staff management

viii) School culture

ix) Parent engagement strategies

x) Understanding adolescence

Mindsets (statements)

i) "I believe that all my students, staff and myself are capable of continuously learning and growing." (Growth mindset)

ii) "I believe we should provide equal opportunity to all students and help them achieve their highest potential" (Equity)

iii) "Corporal punishment is not acceptable in any form. It can lead to lasting damage to children and therefore no form of corporal punishment will be practiced in school." (Non-violence)

iv) "I believe data is QUEEN. I should rely on data to make decisions" (Objectivity)

v) "I believe that we all should be working towards a common vision and a shared goal" (Shared leadership)

vi) "I believe that I have to be more hands-on as a school leader. I need to be in the classrooms, interact with students and teachers, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the quality of learning" (Leading in action)

vii) "There are some things within my influence and there are some things beyond my influence. I will focus on things that I can influence and work to increase my sphere of influence" (Circle of influence)

viii) ''Parents are partners in the development of our students and I need to invest in them to see sustainable development.'' (Leading communities)

8- References

National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Human Resource and Development

Guidelines for Reopening of Schools, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Consolidated Insights from Working Sessions of Education Circle Members, Education Circle

Curriculum Brief 2020 for Socio-emotional learning, Learning Curve Foundation

Village Learning Circle, Telangana Social and Tribal Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Societies

Arc of Transformation Teacher Programme, Dream A Dream

Muktangan School Programme, Muktangan

Competencies and Mindset for a School Leader of K-12 Institutions, Alokit