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Twenty years of collaboration to strengthen education in India

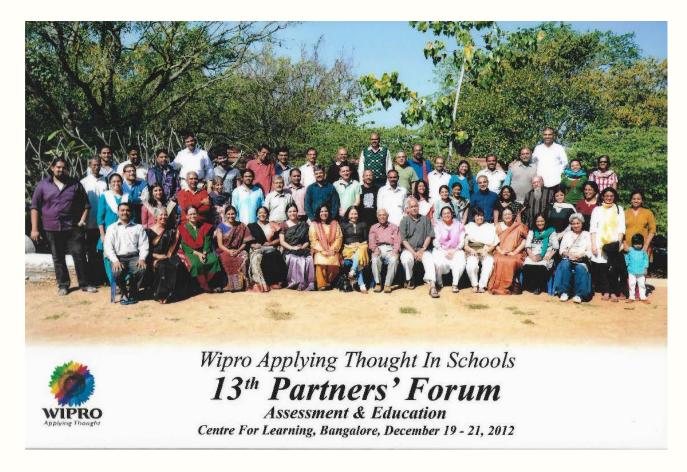# CONTENTS

Learning and Building Capacities in Education

The Experience of Wipro Education Partners' Forum

Social Interventions and Capacity Building

Social issues are usually highly complex and interconnected. Often, there are no historical precedents for addressing these challenges; nor are there any contemporary templates for solving them. Even when we figure out how to address a specific issue in a particular context, the factors at work are generally large in number and many of them remain unknown. Thus, 'off-the-shelf' solutions are usually inelegant and impracticable. This is especially true of issues related to teaching and learning in particular and those related to education in general.

In such a context, all of us who are active in this sector are intervening in the space in multiple ways and learning through processes of experimentation. Thus, in this journey, constant building of internal capacities of organizations is a given, where we are continuously trying to figure out ways of learning, doing and sharing through one's own actions and from those of others.

What can be the various modes of capacity building in this context? One of these is of course the set of quotidian processes of action and reflection that all of us engage in. This is a critical and central part of all aspects of learning and capacity building

Wipro Applying Thought In Schools
13th Partners' Forum
Assessment & Education
Centre For Learning, Bangalore, December 19 - 21, 2012

experiences and journeys. But there is often a felt need for more structured opportunities and processes. These often take the form of workshops, training programs, reading groups, mentoring processes, and other similar exercises. In this mix, a forum is an important mode of intervention that allows for a creative mixing and matching of ways of sharing and learning.

We started the Wipro Education Partners' Forum in 2002, around the same time that we started thinking and intervening in the education space. It was a key fulcrum of our activities then; it remains an important learning space for us even now. That has been the experience and feeling of many of our partners as well. The processes facilitated in the 20th Forum conducted during December 5-7, 2022, provide a point of illustration.

What is a Forum?

The online Oxford Learner's Dictionary (OLD) defines a 'forum' as 'an event or medium where people can exchange opinions and ideas on a particular issue; a meeting organized for this purpose.' The third meaning that is listed specifies a 'forum' as '(in ancient Rome) a public place where meetings were held.'

A forum is then not a conference, which is a large official meeting in which people with similar interests get together to discuss views and have formal discussions. A seminar on the other hand is a gathering that has a more or less academic and pedagogic intent.

Compared to these, the two meanings that we earlier shared of the word 'forum' tell us a few things central to the idea and its origins. The first one stems from the third definition that OLD provides. It has to do with the fact that it is a space where people interact. The second aspect is to do with the fact that a forum is a space in which congregations of individuals and collectives can take place. And the objective of such a gathering is to collectively fashion a shared understanding.

Thus, the idea of a forum is more capacious, compared to other kinds of gatherings. As its central focus is the group/collective itself, the mode of deliberations, therefore, need not be defined in a strict manner. The nature of the discussions lends itself to a large amount of flexibility as well.

The Case of Wipro Education Partners' Forum

From the very origins, Wipro's interventions in education have tried to go beyond cheque book philanthropy. An important aspect of our work has involved the recognition that interventions in education are long-term and their impact cannot be easily quantified. Therefore, we have always seen our engagement from an ecosystem perspective. A spinoff of this understanding has been a focus on enabling capacities and building communities.

The Wipro Partners' Forum has tried to be reflective and exploratory in nature, and has attempted to create spaces to consciously bring in diverse perspectives. The aim has also been to facilitate dialogues and discussions, that are both formal and informal. Some of the Forums have had partners presenting their work. Whereas some others have been on specific themes, such as history and education, ecology and education, textbooks, assessment, etc.

Partners' Forum has thus been crucial to our understanding and practices in the space of education, especially those related to community building. It has usually been a three-day residential meet involving all

our school education partners. It is held annually. Over the years, it has fostered mutual learning and sharing, allowed for informal bonding, and facilitated networking to collaborate.

Twenty Years of the Forum

Today Wipro Education Partners' Network consists of over 150 organizations. These CSOs are at various stages of their organizational journeys. They work across the country on a diversity of educational issues and approaches.

2022 marks twenty years of Partners' Forum. Its 20th edition involved structured sessions and discussions on topics related to education pertinent to our work and purpose. As this was the first Forum held physically after the COVID-19 pandemic, it helped us reaffirm our bonds with each other.

It has also been the largest Forum till now, with more than 150 CSOs and 300 people participating. Although we had apprehensions that the very size of the Forum

this year might potentially lessen its softer, more informal aspects, our experience has belied our pessimism.

Our faith in the importance of a space like this has been renewed. We have learnt that apart from creating a community, the Forum itself is a form of community that renews our faith in collective action for the common good, year after year.

The Forum facilitates meeting on neutral ground, where we share with an openness and in a forthright manner our experiences, learnings and reflections, and our feelings, apprehensions and visions as well.

A sense of bonhomie, comradery, and meeting of the minds permeated the Forum, through informal sharing of tea/coffee and meals, friendships forged over nature walks and collaborations discussed over long strolls. These aspects of living, learning, reflecting and sharing are perhaps all the more needed now, given the pace of our work these days, and the busy-ness of our lives.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Chitra Ravi, Shabnam Virmani and Suhel Quader, in Conversation with Sreekanth Sreedharan

Introduction

The first panel discussion scheduled for the first day of the 20th Partners' Forum on 5th December was a look back at the work of Wipro Foundation in its earlier avatars over the past 20 years. The panel included representatives of three partners with whom Wipro Foundation has had many years of relationship - Suhel Quader from Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Chitra Ravi from Chrysalis (earlier known as EZVidya) and Shabnam Virmani of the Kabir Project. The panel was moderated by Sreekanth Sreedharan, who worked with Wipro Foundation for an extended stretch in the early years.

Sharing by the Panellists

After welcome remarks from Sreekanth, all the three panellists did a short round of self-introductions and the work they did in their organizations. Sreekanth contextualized the early work of Wipro Foundation by an exercise which resulted in participants recognizing that most current partners had an association with Wipro that went no further than five years, with only a small number going as far back as between 5-10 years and beyond.

In the first round of remarks, the panellists spoke of the genesis of their partnerships with Wipro Foundation. Suhel mentioned that a grant to seed a citizen science program to engage children with nature was the starting point in 2010, which lead to other directions later. He also briefly outlined NCF's work as a conservation organization with an education arm that grew out of collaborations with Wipro Foundation.

Chitra mentioned that Chrysalis, as EZVidya, began their relationship with Wipro Foundation in 2001, with a grant to look at computer education in schools. She described her work was in a for-profit company which looked at whole child development to enable quality education and curiosity-driven classrooms.

Shabnam Virmani shared memories of her first meeting with Anurag Behar in 2009, which resulted in the production of education material and work with schools, extending Kabir Project's work to disseminate the words of Kabir.

Sreekanth summarized the remarks and drew linkages, before he drew the attention of the panellists to the next question, "How does one build an organization and sustain it over the long haul?" Chitra Ravi began her remarks by highlighting that there was no start-up ecosystem when she started Chrysalis and the association with Wipro helped with the initial push to experiment. Along the way, she discovered the three pillars of her work - stakeholders, scale and financial sustainability.

Chitra shared that an important realization for her was that scale and quality were not incompatible. She and her organization have tried to make these two simultaneously possible by moving the model to drop aspects that did not work and by working towards financial sustainability. A key point she mentioned was that it was only in education that the 'consumer,' i.e. the child, has no say in the process. She drew attention to developing deep relationships with various stakeholders, particularly parents, as the years have gone by, in their work.

Sreekanth then invited Shabnam to share her remarks on exploring psychological health and education in the development of the Kabir Project. She began by explaining the origins of Shabad Shala, which is the program that the Kabir Project has adopted to actively share the twin impulses of poetry in music, and of interrogating the outside while finding solace for the inside.

Shabnam observed that while in certain cases scale and replication might work, there is also a space for smaller, unique projects which are by nature unscalable, and perhaps the learning from those are different. In Shabad Shala, the experiment is to bring heart, head and body together in response to the song, a holistic experiment in exploring well-being in the school. Sreekanth drew attention to this embodied knowledge which is also being recognized by a wider community now.

Suhel spoke next when invited by Sreekanth, taking the example of NCF to link ideas with program development. The idea of SeasonWatch, as Suhel explained, is to explore if children could participate in an extended science experiment. The program's purpose is to understand the seasonality of trees and observe the impact of climate change on plants.

There have been other incidental documentation of flowering, such as the

1200 years of records maintained by monks in Japan for the starting dates for blossoming in cheery trees. However, modern scientific studies that look at the many factors that affect plants' lives across a period of time are scarce and not at scale. Along with meeting its scientific goals, SeasonWatch has also became an opportunity for children to explore their relationship with nature.

How does a child value what they have around them? How do we allow children to be in their context? In addition to linking ideas to programs, the question of financial sustainability does arise. Perhaps the way forward is to have a clear goal for the long term. However, we perhaps need to financially break it down to shorter 3-year goals to help communicate better with funders.

Sreekanth concluded the session by drawing attention to the importance of collaborations that all the three speakers alluded to in their remarks. He highlighted its importance in the work of each organization in the long term. He also appreciated the panellists for drawing from, and responding to, each other. Following this, there was a short Q&A session for fifteen minutes in which participants got the opportunity to pose a range of questions to the panellists.

Post-Panel Discussions

Rahul from Swatantra Talim raised a question for Shabnam on the viability of Shabad Shala in a polarized world. Shabnam responded that the answer lies in the myth of the Humming Bird trying to quench a forest fire with drops of water.

Drawing parallels with this myth to the work in education, she said that we need to recognize that work done with love, faith, intensity and rigour in responding to situations like ours is critical.

Rohit Shetti asked a question on the resistance to systemic work, both external and internal. Chitra responded by saying that

if basic consumer analysis is not done, then no model would be available for systemic work. Therefore, resistance has to be understood in that context and explored as systemic work progresses.

On another question related to systemic work in the space of social and emotional learning, Suhel mentioned that we need to work with teachers and the environment. For this, empathy is essential.

Empathy is critical not just with respect to the environment but with other people as well. It is a critical aspect of learning that has impact on collective action, on our relationship with all the people of the world, and with the other creatures with whom we share this earth.

Sreekanth concluded the session by thanking the speakers and the audience for their participation.

Chitra Ravi has spent the last two decades building a community and developing solutions to bring a fundamental change in the education system. In 2001, she founded Chrysalis, a state-of-the-art educational research and innovation organization with a vision to awaken the innate human potential in every child. She underwent a training program on 'Views of Understanding,' conducted by Harvard Graduate School of Education. Stanford Graduate School of Business, USA, handpicked Chitra among 60 entrepreneurs across India to be a part of their SEED Transformation Program 2019. Under her leadership, Chrysalis has been conferred prestigious awards including the ET-NOW 'Game-Changer' award from over 63,000 companies which were nominated.

Shabnam Virmani is 'Artist in Residence' at Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology. She initiated the Kabir Project journeys in 2002. Since then, she has been exploring the philosophy of Kabir and other mystics through a deep engagement with their oral folk traditions. Her inspiration and joy in this poetry and its wisdom has taken the shape of documentary films and a digital archive, singing and performing, translations and curations, urban festivals and rural yatras, and more recently, infecting students with the challenge and wonder of mystic poetry. All this is part of her work at the Kabir Project in Srishti, Bengaluru. Earlier, she has worked on gender issues through journalism, video and radio work in the community.

Sreekanth Sreedharan is the co-founder of NLightN Education. Sreekanth has worked in the area of Education for the last 13 years. His experience spans work in CSR, civil society, program management and direct work at the grassroots with government teachers. He is currently working on setting up and scaling an EdTech organization that aims to provide Foundational Education to all adults who missed the opportunity during their school days. His vision is to utilize the power of technology and distributed tutoring resources available across India to ensure that every adult Indian has Foundational Education as envisioned in India's National Educational Policy 2020.

Suhel Quader believes that children (and adults) flourish and thrive best when they immerse themselves in the beauty and diversity of the natural world. Although trained as an ecologist, he now spends most of his time thinking about how to ensure that children do not lose their inherent love of the wild creatures around them, and how to rekindle this love in adults who have lost that connection. Suhel works with NCF in Bengaluru.

The documentation of this discussion has been done by **Thejaswi Shivanand.**

Evolution of the Education Landscape over the Last Twenty Years

Arvind Sardana, Atanu Sain and Ujjwal Bannerjee, in conversation with Sreekanth Sreedharan

One of the conversations that was facilitated on the first day of the 20th edition of Partners' Forum was on the topic 'Evolution of the Education Landscape over the Last Twenty Years.' For the purpose of this discussion, changes in the overall ecosystem, policy-level changes and systemic shifts were discussed.

This discussion was moderated by Sreekanth Sreedharan. Atanu Sain, Arvind Sardana and Ujjwal Bannerjee shared their insights and concerns on the topic.

The moderator and the speakers come from varied backgrounds. Over the years, they have concretely engaged with communities, teachers and policy-makers, among other stakeholders.

In this session all the speakers discussed the ramifications of policies for different stakeholders such as civil society, the state, corporate entities and communities. They focused on significant policies that have changed the education landscape.

Sharing by Arvind Sardana: Arvind briefly touched upon the genesis of the Hoshangabad Science Teaching Program (HSTP) to improve and develop innovative science teaching and learning at the school level.

He shared that despite building a proof of concept, the lack of political will may result in hampering the scaling of programs. There are often political possibilities that one may not visualize or understand, which could hamper

one's efforts. The Lok Jumbish initiative to universalize primary education in Rajasthan was supported by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). In 1998, in the wake of nuclear testing in Pokhran, SIDA withdrew support for the initiative. Arvind added that continuous persistence can help bring forth systemic changes.

In the last two decades, access to schools has exponentially increased. However, improving the quality of schools was neglected, which resulted in segregation. Children from well-to-do families began joining elite private schools. A majority of children from poor families enrolled in government and low-fee private schools.

Sharing by Atanu Sain: Atanu shared that in the 1990s, with economic liberalization, there were numerous changes in the education landscape. Globally, there was a focus on child rights and the universalization of primary education.

The launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001, the National Curriculum Framework in 2005, the Right to Education Act in 2009, and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) amendments to the Companies Act in 2016 created spaces for non-profits to work with the government system.

Sharing by Ujjwal Bannerjee: Ujjwal gave an overview of policy developments in the last fifteen years. He discussed how these developments resulted in entities with varied worldviews impacting the education landscape. He shared how, through the

Annual Status of Education Reports, the focus on the quality of education was brought forth.

The efforts of Government of Delhi in 2013 to bring in innovative practices with civil society collaborations in education were also encouraging.

In 2016, the CSR amendments to the Companies Act ensured that a volume of funds of corporate entities was being allocated for development work.

Government of India has pledged to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations by 2030. The Niti Aayog has been mandated to measure the progress toward those goals.

The New Education Policy and the amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in 2020 also greatly impacted the education ecosystem. Ujjwal further added that the question of the presence or absence of political will remains unanswered.

Post-Panel Discussions: The initial discussion veered towards the need to create an inclusive education ecosystem that responds to the needs of the vulnerable groups of our society. Concerns about the growing presence of low-fee private schools with questionable quality catering to the poor were also voiced by participants and speakers.

A comment was made that the foray of private players into the education system must be carefully looked at. It emerged that decreasing state expenditure on education, and in particular for the implementation of the RTE Act, should be rigorously studied.

Atanu Sain is the Deputy Director of Vikramshila Education Resource Society. He has been working in the field of elementary education for the last thirty years. Teacher education, content creation, resource development, and education planning and management are his core areas of interest. He has been working on 'Foundational Literacy and Numeracy' in different states in India and helping them towards implementing National Education Policy 2020 and the NIPUN Bharat Mission. He has experience in textbook development and the review of foundational numeracy resources as well.

As Deputy Director of Vikramshila Education Resource Society, he has been participating in different National and State level forums and platforms. He has published several articles on education in different journals and newspapers.
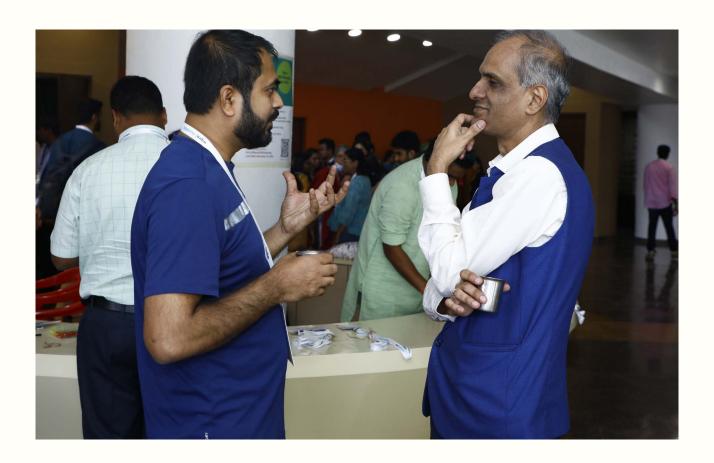
Arvind Sardana is a former Director of Eklavya, where he has also been a long-standing member of the social science group. He has been associated with curriculum development initiatives at NCERT and various state governments over the past two decades.

Sreekanth Sreedharan is the co-founder of NLightN Education. Sreekanth has worked in the area of Education for the last 13 years. His experience spans work in CSR, civil society, program management and direct work at the grassroots with government teachers. He is currently working on setting up and scaling an EdTech organization that aims to provide Foundational Education to all adults who missed the opportunity during their school days. His vision is to utilize the power of technology and distributed tutoring resources available across India to ensure that every adult Indian has Foundational Education as envisioned in India's National Educational Policy 2020.

Ujjwal Bannerjee is a Senior Program Manager at HT Parekh Foundation. Ujjwal has been working in the space of education for 15 years now, after transitioning from the corporate sector. Prior to joining HT Parekh Foundation, at Tata Trusts he was involved in leading implementation of education work for the state of Gujarat, other than anchoring projects in select states across various themes on early childhood education as well as elementary education. His journey in education led him to work with education NGOs, as well as private service providing companies, and has allowed him to engage with educational ideas from various vantage points.

The documentation of this discussion has been done by **Aastha Maggu**.

Emerging Priorities in School Education in India over the Next 5-10 Years

Gurleen Malhotra, Kiran Bhatty and Rishikesh B. S., in Conversation with Rahul Mukhopadhyay

A conversation on the topic 'Emerging Priorities in Education in India over the Next 5-10 Years' was facilitated on the third day of the 20th edition of Partners' Forum on 7 December 2022. Though there are many critical areas in education that we need to engage with, for the purpose of the session, keeping in mind the work and needs of the organizations participating in the Forum, the following three domains were prioratized: Foundational Literacy and Numeracy; Teacher Education; and Early Childhood Education.

This discussion was moderated by Rahul Mukhopadhyay. Gurleen Malhotra, Kiran Bhatty and Rishikesh B. S. shared their insights and concerns on the topic. The moderator and the speakers come from a variety of backgrounds. Their engagements range from policy deliberations at the highest level, and actively shaping ideas in the space through research and teaching, to hands-on practice on the ground.

In this session, we discussed emerging possibilities in the three sub-domains mentioned earlier, the position of NEP 2020 on these areas, how NEP 2020 is being implemented, what role NGOs and CSOs can play, and some interesting efforts already being made in this direction.

Sharing by Rishikesh B. S.: We need to grapple with the reality of NEP 2020. The relevant institutions in the various governments in the states and at the centre have already started taking steps for translating the policy on the ground.

There are two time horizons with which we need to look at this work. The first relevant time horizon is of five years of which two are already over by now, two years that were substantively lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FLN related work that was envisaged in this time period now needs to be fast-tracked by all stakeholders.

Now various state governments will be launching NIPUN. This program was launched even before NEP 2020 was adopted. There are some challenges related to compatibility between the two. These need to be addressed.

There has to be adequate planning for the next five years. Some areas about which we have not planned properly, such as that of school complexes, need to be addressed. States do not seem to be doing anything about some specific issues, such as that of special education zones. There are some things about which there is still very little clarity. This includes issues like 'No Detention Policy'.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) is in the development phase now. It is going to be voluminous. The foundation stage document only is around 360 pages long. One thing that needs to be flagged here is the multi-disciplinarity of education. How are we going to bring this about? Will this involve thematic integration across disciplines or will it have new curricula? A good thing about NEP 2020 is that all subjects are now seen as core. It has a non-hierarchical position on subjects. Hitherto neglected subjects like physical education and the arts have been given adequate

importance. The implications of this for our own practice must be teased out.

Sharing by Gurleen Malhotra on Foundation Numeracy (FN): Children must fall in love with whatever they are doing. The general assumption in FN is that children should develop the ability to read and write numbers. Whereas, what we understand from our work in this space is that children need to develop a basic number sense. Through FN related interventions, children also must develop a sense of relatedness between the sense of quantity and the idea of numbers.

Counting is basic to develop number sense. However, the question is how it can be developed in classrooms. We need to bring context and stories into our classrooms. Children need to develop a sense of 'how many,' and this needs to be facilitated by helping them engage with real, meaningful problems.

We also need to understand and innovate with teacher training and understand how this gets translated in classrooms. We need to engage continuously with teachers. This is necessary for teachers to develop a conceptual map of their interventions in classrooms.

Sharing by Kiran Bhatty: We need to step back from exclusively focusing on the NEP/NCF and the overtly institutional/governance aspects related to school education. Perhaps we need to refocus broadly on what is happening to our public education system itself.

One of the key aspects of building state capacity in education is to have robust data systems based on which we can make considered choices. There is a need to make reliable data available in a timely manner.

Second, there is a need for regular, concurrent handholding of teachers. In this context, persistent and increasing contractualization of teachers is a serious concern.

We also need social audits. The central government has announced social audits of missions and campaigns related to education. This could potentially help sustain the process of accountability. We need to go back to first principles regarding this.

The focus on learning outcomes related to FLN has been around for quite some time now. However, we need to keep our eyes on the larger picture. By focusing narrowly on outcomes, we might be missing out on addressing the larger question of fostering the joy of learning.

Children come to school to learn how to deal with the larger world. We need to reclaim the school as a space for social learning. In this context, one also needs to highlight the fact that social studies are becoming less and less important in schools. A related aspect is the need to engage with diversity of all kinds in our schools. NEP talks about both global/local contexts and imperatives. We need to think through the related cocnerns to figure out a balance.

Post-Panel Discussions: One strand of discussion following the sharing by the panel related to the desirability and possibility of extending the FLN mandate of NEP 2020 to critical reading pedagogies. Concerns were also shared with respect to migrant children and related questions surrounding multilingualism and equity. Some participants also raised questions about the need to discuss and push for reforms in the private sector.

Some of the points of discussion related to the ways in which convergence can be attempted between ICDS and FLN interventions in schools, including the role of AWWs in teaching learning processes. Some participants raised the point that we need to focus on community run schools as well; the public school system need not grab all our attention. It emerged in the discussions that a complete overhauling of the teacher

education system is required. Although NEP 2020 envisages a clear roadmap for this, matters are yet to start moving in earnest. The lack of clear thinking regarding in-service teacher training was also foregrounded. The focus on skills and testing also emerged as an area of concern; so did a lack of proper regulation of schools in the private sector. Common sense notions of the public school system as needing reform and the private sector as the source of solutions were challenged as well.

Concerns were expressed about the private sector having an increasingly important role in setting policy agendas. Here the role of CSOs was seen as critical in keeping checks and balances. School complexes were identified as one area in which CSOs can have a critical role. The idea of the school complex envisages brining hitherto unavailable resources as close to all children as possible. Capacity building of HMs was seen as a critical area of intervention in this regard. With respect to role of CSOs, concerns were expressed about new kinds of private players in the sector crowding out CSOs.

Gurleen Malhotra is a member of Jodo Gyan, a not-for-profit social organization with over two decades of successful experiences in supporting schools across the country in mathematics education. Its methods are based on the premise that children learn when they are engaged in activities that are meaningful to them. Jodo Gyan currently works extensively with government school systems in multiple states.

Kiran Bhatty is a Senior Visiting Fellow at Centre for Policy Research. She researches governance issues in elementary education, working to build systems of transparency, accountability, and community monitoring. Kiran has served as an education expert on a range of national and international projects, including the committees that established the guidelines for merging the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) with RTE. She is involved with

various civil society initiatives such as Right to Food Campaign, National Campaign for People's Right to Information, and Indian Association of Women's Studies.

Rahul Mukhopadhyay is a visiting faculty with the School of Education, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru, and a guest faculty for the Masters in Elementary Education program at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. He is also involved with the Field Research team of Azim Premji Foundation (APF), and with Wipro Foundation's work in education in East and North-East India.

Rishikesh B. S. teaches at the School of Education, Azim Premji University. He also leads the Hub for Education, Law & Policy located at the university. His research interests are in the domains of educational policies, assessments and teacher education. Over the last couple of years, education policy related issues have formed the core of Rishikesh's work. He is on various Government Advisory Committees on issues concerning education. He currently serves as a member of the Technical Secretariat Group constituted by Ministry of Education, Government of India, to assist the development of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).

The documentation of this discussion has been done by **Sailen Routray.**

Civil Society and its Evolving Roles

Ashish Kothari and Vijay Mahajan, in Conversation with Hridaykant (Hardy) Dewan

After the discussion on the evolving trends in the education space for the mid to long term period, the second panel on '**Civil Society and its Evolving Roles**' on the third day of the 20th Partner's Forum opened out questions around the existing trends and emerging needs for organizations in the civil society/ voluntary sector.

This discussion was moderated by Hridaykant Dewan (Hardy), while Ashish Kothari and Vijay Mahajan shared their journeys in the civil society sector and some insights and learnings for the next generation of civil society organizations (CSOs). The moderator and the speakers come with deep experience of having seen CSOs evolve across various phases of socio-economic and political shifts in the country.

Their discussions revolved around the speakers' journeys in the civil society space and the trends and events that have shaped the sector. They also deliberated upon the current trends and questions that need deeper thinking, so that we can reclaim the role of civil society in its truest spirit.

Sharing by Vijay Mahajan: The speaker started by describing the evolution of society through the lens of the dynamics between state and market players. He described how the state took on prominence across the globe during the years of the two World Wars and during other global man-made and natural disasters.

However, in the 1990s and the 2000s, market institutions came into prominence due to liberalization, privatization and globalization. Their downfall came in during the recession of 2008, bringing state players to the fore again. This tug of war for dominance between the state and the market, he opined, will keep continuing unless civil society players come in to bring the balance.

He raised questions regarding the role of state institutions. States can be dominant as providers, as they are connected to, and control, most of the resources. However, should the role of designing, thinking and regulating be given up to state players as well? As the decades have gone by, we seem to have become more dependent on the state for all these kinds of roles and aspects of decision-making.

He shared from his lived experience that all meaningful state interventions started as civil society initiatives. It then becomes the state's role to pick up the ideas that are showing results and promise, and replicate them. It is not the state's role to be the architect of such initiatives, which is a civil society function.

He brought in the perspective of political economy (defining it as 'pattern of control over resources') through his work in the livelihoods space through PRADAN. He shared how his experience showed that enabling meaningful livelihoods in vulnerable and marginalized communities destabilizes the prevailing political economy. This often causes backlash by the state or other players controlling the resources.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) can play a critical role in engaging the political economy of a space through fraternity as the balancing value to the mutually contradictory forces of liberty and equality. He reinforced that in any space we might be working, it is critical to embody these values and ideas that we espouse. He went on to describe the evolution of the civil society space as he grew in it and experienced it over the last few decades. The key needs he stated, for NGOs to function more meaningfully, are technical, managerial and financial knowledge and skills. He shared the '4-I' framework related to what it takes to build a sustainable initiative.

- The first 'I' involves 'insights'. When working with people and communities,

organizations gains insights by analysing experiences and observations through multiple perspectives.

- The second 'I' related to 'ideas and ideals'. Based on insights, organizations need to identify the ideas and ideals they need to and want to pursue.

- The third 'I' is for 'innovation'. This phase entails converting the idea into action to demonstrate the solutions in a particular context.

- The fourth and the final 'I' involves 'institutionalization.' This entails building a system to carry out the innovation/solution at a larger scale and through the mainstream. This doesn't always mean that the organization has to implement it. However, it can design it and support others in implementation.

In this context, Vijay discussed in some detail, the need for organizations in the current ecosystem to work on institutionalizing systems and processes to take innovations into the mainstream.

Sharing by Ashish Kothari: Ashish shared his journey in the world of environment protection from his days in high school when he began with work on animal rights issues. He shared his experience of starting a campaign to protect a local forest in the area, which to this day is a protected forest. He co-founded Kalpavriksh in order to make such efforts of protection more institutionalized.

He reiterated that this was not the first effort towards environmental protection. He reminded the audience about earlier movements and efforts to protect the environment - not just forests but all flora and fauna that make up an ecosystem. He mentioned the importance of movements and initiatives such as Chipko, other efforts in Uttarakhand to protect nature, efforts by the Bishnoi community, and Narmada Bachao Andolan, etc.

He brought out some fundamental questions that environmental protection efforts generate around what is development, who makes the decisions around what is development and at what level? Environment is a cross-cutting question about looking at economic planning and resource sharing that is intersectional, with aspects related to gender, livelihood and caste.

Civil society in the environment space has been raising the question of whose development and whose destruction (and not just for humans, but also for all species). CSOs, in such a space, perform the role of being an independent voice asking questions, not just to governments or market institutions, but to the communities they work with and also to themselves.

This role of raising questions also comes with the responsibility of thinking through solutions. Part of the solution lies in ancient practices, which were built in the spirit of caring and sharing between humans and the environment. This spirit and the community collective as a principle needs to be at the core of decision making and identifying alternatives. And the question that CSOs can perhaps ask themselves is whether they are functioning with this spirit.

In terms of what CSOs need to work on, Ashish shared that the spaces for ideating, innovating and identifying solutions for the crises we are experiencing lies within the NGOs space, and more importantly within communities and community-based organizations. The solutions are not about technology and technical innovation only.

These solutions need frameworks related to governance, innovation and decision-making as well. In this context, he mentioned a relevant framework by Kalpavriksh, called 'Flower of Transformation'. He also mentioned three areas in which we need to do more work in the civil society sector. These are shared below.

- Ego and Territoriality: We need to build the humility to accept that the problems we face are intersectional in nature. We don't know the whole picture. We need to recognize the need to come together and collaborate.

- Ineffective Scale and Replication Processes: The current process of working at scale is faulty. This is so, because often we see working at scale as about replicating a model in-toto. This needs to shift to identifying the principles and values underlying the model and then contextualizing the model. The other side to scale is also within organizations, as they grow larger in order to fuel the replication. Rather than scaling up, Ashish recommended 'out-scaling,' which is a process of creating alliances and horizontal networks to enable contextualized scale.

- Questioning Structures of Inequality: In the contexts we work in, there are all pervasive ideologies such as capitalism, state-ism, patriarchy and anthropocentrism at work, that produce inequities. We need to question these ideologies in reflective, constructive and accountable ways. For example, the solution to waste is not only in reusing and recycling, although these are important. We also need to start questioning as to why so much waste is being generated in the first place.

Sharing by Hridaykant Dewan (Hardy): Hardy added to the points shared by the speakers. He talked about the need for immersion in order to arrive at appropriate insights, ideas and innovations. He reiterated that often, it is not correct to think that an external person can just come in and solve a problem. Rather, solutions come from collective knowledge and are centred in communities.

He also brought in the political economy perspective on CSOs to understand how state and market institutions are creating

a competitive environment within the civil society space. Reiterating the value of fraternity that Vijay mentioned, Hardy mentioned the need for NGOs to recognize that we don't need to 'recreate' in our work. Rather, the need is to collaborate and create confidence in people. This will help all of us to attempt to solve wicked problems. There is no single route and model for this. The need of the hour is to contextualize implementation.

Post-Panel Discussions: The sharing by the panellists and the moderator evoked multiple strands of questions, comments and sharing by participants. Some of these were around creating a balance between collaborating with the system versus challenging it. Questions were also raised about how founders can build organizations but not make these be dependent on them. Some sharing took place about the ways in which educators can follow environmentally sound practices within classrooms and schools.

Some members of the audience also shared queries about the feasibility and modalities of shifting the mindset of the larger ecosystem about NGOs. Concerns were expressed about navigating processes where market players in the guise of CSOs are occupying more and more space. The need to create an ecosystem where smaller and larger organizations come together meaningfully was also expressed. These responses built further perspectives on working in the civil society space. Some aspects of these are discussed below.

Scale: While scaling up leads to inefficiency and bureaucracy, not scaling also deprives a large number of people of necessary services. The flaw perhaps lies in replicating processes rather than principles. It is also critical that policy making be part of out-scaling processes to ensure institutionalization. Part of the policy making process must be to ensure that the policy is not about a uniform formula. It has to have inbuilt social audit processes that enable contextualization and continued relevance.

Collaborations between State-Market-CSO Sectors: Each of these sectors has their own 'swadharma,' purpose and function to fulfil that contributes to building society meaningfully. State is about maximizing order and power. The market is about maximizing efficiency and profit. Civil society is about maximizing collective well-being.

So whatever kind of organization is there in a decision-making space, if they are fulfilling the purpose of collective well-being, it is something we need to be fine with. We need to enter these collective spaces with mutual respect, equality and a learning attitude that will take us from a project-oriented approach to a process-oriented one.

Organization Building: Founder syndrome is where there are structures and a perception that the organization can't function without the founder. However, we need to build sustainable institutions with adequate finances and capable human resources. It is important for the founder's growth to recognize that the founder and the organization are not one and the same.

It was also shared as a comment that these days there are more and more NGOs and lesser number of movements. The massive amount of funding that has flowed into the CSO sector is making it more and more like a business. This seems to have reduced the voluntary spirit. We need to create spaces for communities to challenge CSOs. Which begs the question as to whether we are empowering communities or creating a dependency within them on NGOs?

Ashish Kothari is a Founder-member of the Indian environmental group Kalpavriksh. Ashish taught at Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), coordinated India's Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan process, was on Greenpeace International & India Boards, and helps coordinate Vikalp Sangam and Global Tapestry of Alternatives.

Vijay Mahajan co-founded and was the CEO of PRADAN (1982-87), an NGO which has promoted the livelihoods of over two million poor households. In 1996, Vijay co-founded Basix Social Enterprise Group, and worked as its CEO for the period 1996-2016. Basix has supported over five million poor households through microfinance and livelihood promotion services. In 1999, Vijay cofounded Sa-Dhan with Ela Bhatt; and in 2009, Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN) with other MFI leaders. He is a graduate of IIT Delhi (1975), a post-graduate of IIM Ahmedabad (1981) and a mid-career fellow of Princeton University (1989). He was selected among 60 outstanding social entrepreneurs of the world at World Economic Forum, Davos, in 2003. Since 2018, Vijay is CEO of Rajiv Gandhi Foundation.

Hridaykant Dewan has been closely associated with Azim Premji Foundation right from the early days, and leads its Translations Initiative, among other responsibilities. As a key member of Eklavya, he contributed to teacher capacity building in Hoshangabad Science Teaching Project (HSTP) and developed various resources for teachers. Hardy has since been working in teacher development, textbook development and elementary education for the last 35 years, with various NGOs, Governmental Education Programs, State Governments and GoI's Ministry of Education. He continues to devote his energies for systemic improvements in our public education system.

The documentation of this discussion has been done by **Amrita Varadarajan**.

Thematic Conversations in Partners' Forum 2022

The 2022 edition of Partners' Forum provided participants with the opportunity to reflect, learn and share their experiences, and engage with their peers on a variety of topics, such as Foundational Literacy, Science Education, Understanding the Disability Ecosystem, Arts in Education, and Working with the System/ CSO's Role, etc. All these sessions had facilitators from organizations from the Wipro Education Partner's Network anchoring the session. In this piece, we share discussions by groups as they collectively engaged to unpack the themes, shared best practices and the challenges they face, and explored possibilities of collaboration.

I. Affective Education through Shabad Shala: Mystic Songs in Classroom

The session was facilitated by the Kabir Project team - Prashant, Neha and Shabnam Virmani. The team shared how Shabad

Shaala was initiated under the 'Kabir Project', a personal journey that Shabnam embarked upon after the 2002 riots in Gujarat to find contemporary resonances of Kabir. As opposed to rote learning of a few Kabir couplets in schools, Shabad Shaala envisions connecting oral traditions of the Bhakti movement prevalent in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The team shared that they wish to expand it to interested schools and school children across the country.

Group members were oriented to the incubation phase of the initiative through a video, where they got a glimpse into how the songs of saints and sufi poets such as Kabir, Gorakhnath, Ravidas, Bulle Shah and Ghulam Fareed, among others, are made accessible to school children through stalwart performers of these traditions. The team shared that online and offline sessions were organized where legendary artists such as Mooralala

Marwada, Parvathy Baul and Mukhtiyar Ali interacted directly with the children.

This was followed by a discussion on the possibilities of weaving a similar initiative into the contexts of the work of participants who came from diverse domains of education across the country. The challenges faced in terms of acceptance of such a project in mainstream schools were brought forth by the Kabir Project team. All the participants voiced that such an initiative for school children is important to expose them to our syncretic religious traditions emerging as counter-movements to dominant ones, and to foster a sense of religious and social inclusion.

The Kabir Project team also emphasized how such objectives are embedded in the nature of the initiative and emphasized a poetic rather than a didactic approach to speak about ideas of 'inclusion' and 'discrimination'. They shared that the lyrical quality of the music could be enjoyed, and the meanings, both social and personal, could emerge through explorations by children and teachers at their own pace.

In the follow-up discussions, Shabnam shared the piloting being done across 10-12 schools in different sites and how the initiative is developing pedagogic resource materials for interested schools and teachers to engage more deeply with the ideas behind the initiative. Some of the resources that

have generated a lot of interest among the members included: writing of letters to the saint poets by children to express their emotions; feelings and understanding of what they have heard; illustrations of an upside-down world to resonate with the concept of 'ulatbansi' or alternative/upside-down worlds, found in the songs of many of the Bhakti and Sufi poets; and a community gathering of schools and artists that showcases many of these diverse oral traditions.

II. Artful Thinking

The thematic discussion on Arts Education was facilitated by Rahul from Swatantra Talim Foundation, Jayesh and Nidhi from Aarohi, and Arpitha and Nagarathna from ArtSparks Foundation. They discussed the nuances of Arts Education, and current and existing practices in the Arts Education domain. The discussion also involved ideation on creative approaches that they could adopt in Arts Education. Using insights from classroom interactions and observations and hands-on activities, the group explored different strands within Arts Education.

The group created a mind map of words and phrases that each participant associated with the arts, Arts Education and Artful Thinking. This was followed by participants sharing challenges and questions that they frequently encountered in their work - how they could include the arts in their practice if they were not artists themselves, how to convince stakeholders such as schoolteachers and management about the importance of the arts and to address the systemic hierarchy in subjects and the lesser value often accorded to the arts.

With these questions in mind, participants were divided into sub-groups where they delved deeper into arts in education practices through puppetry, theatre and the visual arts.

In the visual arts sub-group, the participants were engaged in an activity using natural

materials. Group members collected natural materials such as leaves, twigs, flowers and barks. They were encouraged to create an animal collage using them.

In the puppetry sub-group, participants created puppets and put together a short story or performance. Participants observed that incorporating arts in education is possible in resource scarce settings by using locally available and low-cost materials.

The theatre sub-group explored how to leverage voice modulation, improvisation, body movements and gamification. To provide an experiential understanding of using theatre tools in a classroom setting, various small activities were conducted with the participants. These included walk-freeze, story enactment, character building, clap-tap-act, circle of emotions, make with your body, and voice modulation, among others. With each activity, elements of facilitation and mapping of learning outcomes were discussed.

In the concluding discussion, participants shared how they were nudged to focus on the process as opposed to the product, and to observe. They felt that they were encouraged to experiment with materials. They said that they experienced group processes as opportunities to choose and create. They also discussed the role of the facilitators in creating a safe and encouraging space in the session.

III. Early Childhood Care and Education: Perspectives and Practices

The session was facilitated by Ashwini from Avaniti, Atul from BELIEF, and Ria from Vikramshila. During the thematic session, group members exchanged ideas on how to build a shared understanding of ECCE, and measures to strengthen it further.

The facilitators started the discussion by requesting members to share prior exposure to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The group also briefly discussed changing global perspectives regarding ECCE and its impact on regional politics.

One of the important points brought forth was the difference between ECE (Early Childhood Education) and ECCE. Participants unanimously felt that when working with very young children, care is a particularly key component and as a term cannot be restricted to merely nutrition and must be viewed across all spheres.

Group members were divided into four sub-groups to delve deeper into diverse nuances of ECCE. One of the sub-groups reflected on why and how ECCE needs to be inclusive for children hailing from different socio-economic contexts such as those with special needs, and belonging to tribal groups, among others. Another sub-group reflected on the role of pre-school teachers and anganwadi workers (AWWs) in ECCE and the need to capacitate them. The other two sub-groups engaged with the relevance of engaging with caregivers and the community for ECCE and the pedagogy, curriculum and teaching learning resources relevant to ECCE.

Each sub-group discussed challenges, policy views, good practices, and context-based strategies for their respective issues. This was followed by a gallery walk where each sub-group was encouraged to understand the discussions of the others. Group members echoed that ECCE interventions must be designed keeping in mind that all the

nuances discussed are related to each other and cannot be addressed in silos.

IV. Exploring Perspectives on Foundational Mathematics (Using Number Sense and Measurement as Key Sub-themes)

The session was facilitated by Kavita from Aavishkaar, Gurleen from JodoGyan and Sumitra from Palakneeti. The objective of the discussion was to develop shared understanding on how can the experience of learning mathematics can become more meaningful for children. Group members were encouraged to share their contextual experiences and practices around math education.

The group was divided into sub-groups and they started the discussion by sharing their own relationship and experiences with math as a learner and educator. Members shared varied experiences. Some shared that it was easier for them to build an understanding of math. Some others shared that they were often overwhelmed with the fear of math. The objective of this discussion was to reflect on how the educators' relationship with math affects the way they teach math in the classroom.

The group then shared about the range of difficulties children face while learning primary math concepts. Participants shared that because of the procedural nature of math, children struggle with making sense of numbers and symbols in math. They also have poor spatial sense and face problems in understanding mathematical word problems.

The group attempted to build a collective understanding of number sense and measurement. They discussed how for pre-primary and primary grades, reciting numbers is misunderstood as having number sense. Group members shared that children, when asked to represent a certain number in objects, were not able to do so. The group concluded that having a shared number sense includes gaining a sense about the number - how big and small, how far and near it is, and how one can break the numbers while operating with them.

The next part of the discussion was on exploring measurement. The members discussed how children can meaningfully learn math, and the importance of contextual learning practices. They deep-dived into pedagogies of teaching measurements effectively to children. They shared inputs on exploring the relationship between measurement in children's real-life experiences and school education and the difficulties children face in learning measurement (length). Group members also shared some solutions to learn measurement in a meaningful way.

The group also explored possibilities of having a math collective that will allow members to continue discussing challenges and interventions.

V. Literacy Learning in a Multilingual Classroom

The session was facilitated by Brajesh from Muskaan, Gowtham from Kanavu, Manimakalai from Gubbachi Learning Community (GLC), and Sheeshpal from Shaheed Virender Smarak Samiti (SVSS). The Wipro team set the tone for the session by emphasizing how the purpose of the thematic sessions were not to find solutions, but to explore strategies that drive learning at the field-level. The team added that through a

process of dialogue and discussion in this space, some convergence could be explored.

This was followed by an ice-breaker where Shubhrata from the Wipro Foundation team requested the participants to think about a few lines of a poem, composed by the participants on the spot, with the opening line as 'I am from…'. Participants engaged with the activity with great enthusiasm. Many of them shared beautiful short versions of the poems they had written. Some of these were composed in English, while many others were written in their regional languages or dialects as well.

The group was then divided into three sub-groups. The participants were allocated to three groups, and they went around in turn from one facilitator to the other. The members were learning from and sharing their own experiences with each of the groups.

In each group, following a presentation by the facilitators, discussions around the topic were held. The discussions covered themes such as 'The importance of bringing the context of the child into the classroom,' 'The significance of letting kids speak freely in their mother tongue in the classroom,' and 'Strategies to help children read and write in their mother tongue,' etc.

Brajesh started with the context of Muskaan's work in Bhopal, with rag-pickers and children from denotified tribes. He shared about how

their approach to early language learning drew upon the children's contexts and experiences. He described how they used the whole language approach to build children's basic language fluency. The importance of incorporating dialects (e.g., Gondi) other than the dominant regional language (for example, Hindi) was emphasized. He added that the use of art and poems to engage children in creative modes with language learning processes has proved to be helpful.

Group members also echoed that there is a need to inculcate a sense of pride in their own languages among children in any learning context. It would help to have bilingual/multilingual facilitators who can undertake such teaching-learning processes.

In another group, Mani (from GLC) requested participants to use and share something about the things or thoughts in their own languages, that she had requested the participants to bring along for the session. This had been communicated beforehand. The members observed the interesting mix of proximity of the spoken language across some states/regions, for instance, Odisha, West Bengal and Assam. They noticed how the use of gestures and inflections helped to explain the artifacts, even when such proximity was missing. Group members also noted how language could be comprehended without the knowledge of a formal script or vocabulary.

The group voiced that each facilitator is a learner in this journey. Organizations should accept the language the child comes with and work with them on it. Discussions in the group enabled the participants to engage with the challenges and strategies associated with teaching literacy in a multilingual classroom.

VI. Social-Emotional Learning and Well-being

The session was anchored by Mayuri from Apni Shala Foundation and Siva from Viridus. In this session, discussions centered on recognizing the importance of well-being and social-emotional learning competencies of education and development professionals. Relevant skills and dispositions needed to foster these for individuals, teams, organizations and for various stakeholders, were deliberated upon.

The group initiated discussion focusing on the changing and volatile external circumstances in the world today. These often require individuals to be able to respond constructively to uncertainty in both personal and professional contexts. Participants discussed the need to be equipped with skills to respond to situations requiring emotional labor while working in proximity with underprivileged groups.

Group members voiced that beyond a deep understanding of developmental issues and approaches, the success of social change interventions by development professionals depends a great deal on their well-being. Participants shared the challenges in taking care of their well-being. These included facing guilt that comes with taking care of the self, habits and conditioning that make us ignore personal well-being, dependence on the external world for happiness, and difficulties in mindfully focusing on the present.

A social-emotional well-being self-assessment survey was circulated amongst the participants. The survey brought SEL competencies of self-observation, self-management, social awareness and relationship management skills into focus for the group. Participants discussed what emerged from the self-assessment exercise and why these competencies are critical to ensure one's well-being to work effectively as a development professional.

Each participant also experienced a reflective exercise that highlighted the interconnections and interdependence that each of our lives is a part of. This exercise left most participants with a feeling of gratitude but also of overwhelming loss, and with an awareness of the give and take in relationships throughout our lives.

The group concluded by discussing various strategies that can be adopted to ensure the well-being of individuals, teams and organizations.

VII. Science and Nature Education

The session was facilitated by Nirmal from Eikas Foundation, Mudit from Aavishkaar, Geetha and Vena from Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), and Poornima from The Forest Way Trust. Group members initiated the discussion by sharing thoughts on what comes to the mind of participants when they hear of science and science education. The responses included 'research,' 'process,' 'discovery' and 'challenging' - these thoughts resonated with most of the members.

When participants were asked about their feelings and thoughts about 'nature education,' they shared that the first thought comes from the fact that nature education seems inclusive. Other words such as 'wonder,' 'co-existence' and 'rights' were also voiced.

While most agreed that there was a wide difference between nature education and science education, there was an equally passionate group of participants who advocated against the creation of a chasm between the two. By the end of the discussion, members agreed that there was a definitive space created for a perspective that looked at both science and nature education as equals, with earlier words that were used for demarcation being later used to describe both.

As part of the session, participants were split into groups with a facilitator each, to discuss and present on three sub-themes with respect to science and nature education. In each sub-group, the participants were encouraged to share two instances of what worked in classes, the impact of those instances in classrooms and a challenge that they faced. Each sub-group shared anecdotes

that helped to build a sense of camaraderie and collective understanding amongst the participants.

By the end of the session, participants voiced that the multiple perspectives shared were helpful in reflecting on their journeys as educators. Group members were hopeful to create further meaningful collaborations across organizational lines.

VIII. The Jhamtse Education Model: Educating Hearts, Minds and Bodies

The session on Jhamtse Education Model was facilitated by Lobsang Phuntsok and Rashmi from the Jhamtse Gatsal Children's Community (JGCC). During the session, the facilitators talked about real life experiences that contributed to creating the Jhamtse Education Model: the three essentials for the 21st century—educating hearts, minds and bodies.

Lobsang shared lessons from 16 years of lived experience of creating an environment where children are imbued with the wisdom to guide, the compassion to nurture, and the skills to serve.

The participating group was divided into sub-groups where the members tried to answer questions and shared the common insights and understanding that had developed during the discussions. First, they tried to answer the question, what educating the heart, the head and the body, means. The second involved the 'how' of it – how we can educate hearts, heads and bodies.

One of the groups shared that as a culture we have some sense of what educating the mind entails. However, we do not have much clarity about what educating bodies and hearts means.

Another group shared that an educated heart has an awareness of emotions, can express feelings, and by being aware of others is able to have kind, giving and loving

relationships. An ethical education was seen as an important part of what having educated hearts, minds and bodies entails.

Lobsang emphasized that for educating bodies, crafts such as carpentry, arts such as dancing, and games such as football are important. The session was concluded with the screening of the film 'Tashi and the Monk,' a documentary on JGCC.

IX. Towards Open and Inclusive Libraries

The session was facilitated by Surya and Binit from Prayog, Parismita from NEET, Sajitha from Sajag, and Rupal and Amita from the Community Library Project. The group discussed what reading books in libraries means for them. It also discussed various facets of library-focused interventions.

These aspects included curating collections, engaging children in libraries, and issues of curriculum and access related to library work. In a word map exercise, the participants opined that the library symbolizes many things for people. One participant shared that it is a passport to eternity.

Participants then explored the library set-up. Binit asked participants to stand in a circle and conduct the game of 'Musical Book.' A book was placed before each participant. When the music started, they walked around in a circle. When the music stopped, Binit asked them to look at the book placed before them. Each participant was introduced to understand features of the book while conducting sessions with children.

Participants were then divided into sub-groups that focused on the themes of curating collections, engaging children in libraries, people in the library, and library curriculum and access.

Members in the 'Engaging Children in Libraries' sub-group discussed a case study of a situation where the child was not given access to the library because of the dress she wore. The group then did a role play to discuss the case study. Many relevant facets were discussed during the role play. These included making children feel safe and accepted in libraries. Some common norms and rules that can be set, for children to feel included, were also shared.

The 'People in the Library' sub-group discussed that the most key role in the library is that of the librarian. The librarian, through engaging activities, can help children remain connected to books and the library through careful collection of books, and by curating response to books. 'Miss Moore thought Otherwise' was a book that the sub-group discussed. Members felt that the book's vision on a child friendly library is a story for all times.

The sub-group on 'Curating of a Collection' started with a treasure hunt. It discussed the larger question of what a child might want to pick up in a collection. A good collection must have books across ages, subjects, themes and genres. The group then discussed whether they would keep the book 'Guthli has Wings', a book on a transgender child, in their collection. Discussion around it led to many facets that define a collection.

The 'Library curriculum and access' sub-group discussed the roadblocks between a reader and access. Issues related to language, inability to read, and many such concerns were discussed. The Community Library Project team shared their curriculum in the library. Then each participant shared their existing curriculum and the curriculum they aspired for.

In the final discussion, the group as a whole discussed the larger question of how the participants can learn from each other. They also deliberated on how books could be made more accessible, especially for children with disabilities. The group's members were optimistic about forging collaborations.

X. Understanding the Disability Ecosystem

The session was facilitated by Pratik from ASTHA, Kushal from Samait Shala, and Dipa from Mentaid. It brought together the diverse network of disability organizations within the Wipro Education Partners' Network. They were able to explore interconnections, similarities and diversities.

The ice breaker session directed the larger group to regroup into smaller sub-groups based on the number of years of their practice in the sector. This was done informally with no facilitation. This enabled the group to find each other in the relevant bracket with respect to their length of practice and learn more about each other's work.

Through a series of small group activities, organizations attempted to describe their work, and position themselves in the domain of education for Children with Disabilities (CwD). Five broad spectrums across various themes represented were target age-group, stakeholders, working model, nature of services offered, and nature of disability. Organizations positioned themselves across each spectrum. They also engaged with questions on the relevance of their work, why they engage with certain stakeholders, challenges, etc.

The group delved deeper into shared challenges and commonalities. The partners shared the problem of unavailability of accurate and complete data at the system level - including data at the intersections of gender and disability, children's health, livelihood, etc. However, some members opined that each organization's own work on the ground and practices were rich in data. This information is valid and sufficient to be relied upon.

Problems related to the absence of awareness about the various legislations pertaining to education for CwDs, lack of teacher preparedness, the need for,

and feasibility of, cross-disability teacher training, and updates from the field of disability were expressed by a few partners.

Many of the partners who have engaged with the disability space for decades, expressed a need to embrace technology, make better use of ways to disseminate stories and narratives from their respective fields of work. The partners echoed that there is a need for platforms to bring together organizations engaged in both disability and non-disability spaces to explore possibilities of partnerships.

The organizations not working on disability, who attended the session, shared that the discussions helped them to not approach their work in silos. According to them, the session helped them build a systematic understanding of issues related to CwD. A few partners also expressed the need to understand and address cross-disability inclusion.

The group concluded with the shared optimism to explore means of collaborating and leveraging strengths towards the benefit of the larger inclusion ecosystem.

XI. Whole School Transformation (WST): Practices, Challenges and Learnings

The session was facilitated by Rohit from Makkala Jagriti, Mainak from Simple Education Foundation (SEF), and Vidhya Meenambal from Vidhya Vidhai. It was supported by Dilbur Parakh from Aseema and Devika Nadig from Shikshangan in design.

The facilitators worked towards developing a shared understanding of WST, creating spaces for practitioners to share experiences, and some of the best practices and learnings from WST programs. With their support the group deepdived into some of the core challenges of WST and how organizations can think about addressing them.

Participants were divided into sub-groups for two rounds of discussion. The first revolved

Table I: Whole School Transformation - Summary of Discussions

Sl. No.	Component	Elements of WST from Group Discussion	Best Practices
1	School Environment and Culture	• Value driven ecosystem fostering empathy, inclusion and democratic culture • Participative, reflective and action-oriented space with equitable opportunities and bridges between theory and practice • Nurture children's agency by being free from fear and discrimination, and by being safe and joyful	• Create spaces for collaborative agreements, conflict resolution mechanisms and open discussions on sensitive topics
2	Teacher Development	• Develop capacities of teachers in an ongoing manner on quality teaching methodologies and stakeholder engagement • Focus on teacher well-being	• Continuous learning and needs-based approach • Relevant teaching learning materials are available • Space for experimentation • Awareness and use of digital tools • Building connections with communities
3	School Leadership	• Leadership clearly defines vision and mission that they should also embody • Nurture disciplined leadership that encourages co-creation • Mobilize and motivate partners to create and actualize the shared vision	• Capacity building of leaders on knowledge, skills and attitudes • Build technical, motivational and social skills • Build a balance between principles and practice
4	Student Learning Opportunities and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)	• Encourage focus on SEL and life-skills such as self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving, etc. • Curriculum must be child-centric, enable the use of the arts to enable creative expression • Prioritize student well-being and mental health; learning based on safety, equality and inclusion • Focus on self-awareness in students around their emotions, and on building relationships with those around them	• Foster flexibility in content execution • Provide opportunities for dialogues and discussions • Prioritize practices at school that encourage SEL actions • Encourage teachers to implement SEL in schools • Involve and sensitize communities about children's well-being
5	Community Weaving	• Ensure social and emotional well-being of all stakeholders • Develop accountability and community ownership with the necessary opportunities so that they can contribute to children's education and school improvement • Foster interpersonal learning, where the sphere of learning goes beyond the classroom	• Pivot the focus of parent- teacher meeting (PTMs) on discussion on school improvement, rather than only on individual students' progress • Through PTMs and school management committee meetings enable continuous engagement over time • Create spaces in schools for community members to share knowledge with children

around basic sharing of processes related to whole school transformation. The second round was a deep dive into components of WST, and related challenges and best practices. To keep the discussion focused, members were deliberately requested to exclude physical infrastructure. The table in the previous page (Table I) captures summaries of discussions across both the rounds, centered around emerging components.

Group members felt that the session and group interactions contributed to widening the perspectives on WST, especially through sharing of stories and experiences. They opined that there is a need for continued conversations on the subject. One of the facilitators volunteered to host a regular discussion forum.

XII. Working Towards Inclusive Education

The session was facilitated by Meera from Satya Special School, Rupa from Latika Roy Foundation, DPK Babu from Ashray Akruti, and Amit from Vision Empower Trust. The discussion facilitated conversations around inclusive education, bringing in the practitioners' perspective, and associated challenges and practices. There were a good number of participants from organizations that were not working with CwD.

The group dived deep into what inclusion means in a large space. The discussions brought in aspects of gender, caste, linguistic barriers, etc. as well. Given that disability discourses have moved away from the biological model of disability, members opined that 'inclusion' is an integral part of how we should begin to understand and define disability.

In sub-groups, case studies rooted in inclusive practices from varied contexts were used as starting points to initiate discussions and share experiences of inclusive education across various organizations. Connections were drawn across contexts, practices, approaches and challenges.

Most members agreed that inclusive education necessitated multiple prerequisites such as accessible infrastructure, availability of teaching learning materials (TLMs), and the need for rights-based work etc. It was also mostly agreed that these remain challenges at many levels. Questions were raised about the practicality of the inclusive education approach, as challenges around resources and teacher-pupil ratios etc. are rife.

Another issue that emerged was the disconnect between policy discussions on inclusion and practices on the ground. Group members added that there are complexities related to coordination between different government departments engaging in the space. This has sometimes resulted in botched on-ground implementation.

The need for awareness building and counseling of the various stakeholders involved in the process such as teachers, parents etc. were highlighted. The group felt that there must be perspective building towards accepting disability. The need to think of a long-term approach towards inclusion for CwDs across all spheres of life, especially beyond schools, is important.

Ideas of individualized teaching-learning practices, including differentiated assessments, were discussed. Building awareness and skills to understand disability is needed to be a part of regular teacher training and education programs.

Group members suggested how public schools could work along with other key stakeholders such as parents/families, anganwadis, CSOs and public health facilities. Some members suggested that special schools could collaborate closely with government schools. This would allow for inclusion of children and share the resources available in special schools.

To enable the sharing of ideas and for supporting needs, the group expressed

Table II: Takeaways - Working with the Government System and the Role of CSOs

	Inputs from groups wearing the Government hat	Inputs from the groups wearing the CSO hat
Challenges of working with the other	• CSOs lack understanding of governments and large-scale systems • The vision and objectives of CSOs difficult to match with that of governments' • Often CSOs' programs lack a long-term sustainable structural and procedural uniformity towards a larger objective • CSOs struggle with scaling their programs and governments finds it difficult to apply • CSOs have an us-against-them mentality and often have a negative perception of governments • CSOs struggle to set up processes of accountability and transparency • CSOs do not have rigorous processes to measure outcomes and impact	• Permissions, orders and approvals take too long to obtain. There is opacity on who/how to approach in government systems. There are also struggles with officers getting transferred too often. • It is difficult to align with governments' objectives, priorities and expectations • The governmental system is often not reflective and lacks the ability to acknowledge the constraints and address them • There is a lack of political will and too much interference • Lack of efficiency, competency, flexibility and transparency • Governments do not offer contextualized solutions • There is lack of standard operating procedures • The system struggles to capacitate teachers and burdens them with additional responsibilities • The system also does little to support infrastructural needs
Takeaways to work with the other	• CSOs are motivated to improve education • CSOs bring grassroots experiences • Government can support CSOs and facilitate systems, processes, and rules and regulations for impact assessment for NGOs	• CSOs must continue to empower communities to strengthen the overall accountability of government and public systems at large • Collaborate and empathetically work with governments by building relationships • Work in tandem to support the vision of governments' policy agendas • Support government schools in building up school infrastructure and with administrative processes • Develop collaboration frameworks for bringing in complementary expertise and work towards collective action

the requirement for continued sharing of common knowledge, and for building connections where organizations working on disability could engage with those now outside of this space. Group members felt that there is a need for CSOs to exchange ideas and experiences so that they do not have to reinvent the wheel.

XIII. Working with the Government System and the Role of CSOs

The session was facilitated by Arjun from Karunar Kheti Trust, Jitendra from Klorofeel, and Prasanna from Caring with Colours. In this session, the participants were divided into two sets of groups considering distinct

aspects of civil society organizations (CSOs) and government collaboration. Members were required to discuss challenges of engaging with others and measures to address these.

Sometimes when we get into discussions on this topic, there is a tendency to get mired in limitations related to our current experiences and knowledge. The session's objective was to encourage the participants to listen and learn with an open heart and mind. The session's flow was guided towards this goal.
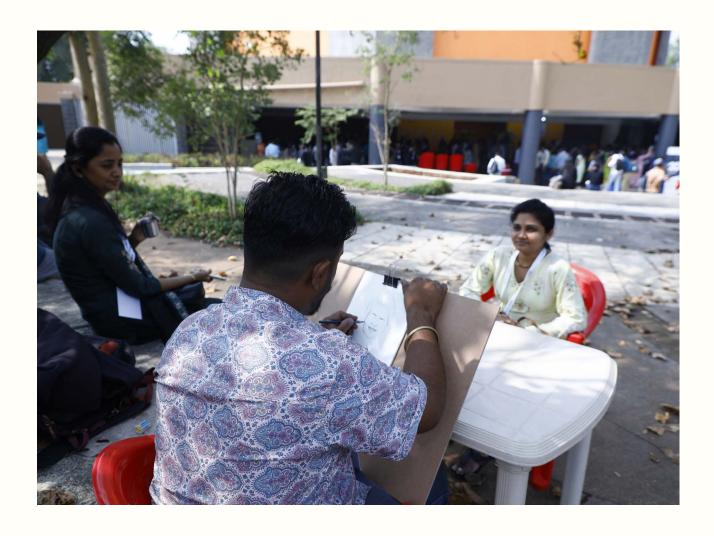
There was an initial hesitant energy of compartmentalized skepticism. These doubts were as much about the topic of CSOs and collaborations with the government, as with the process of the session itself.

During the session, participants began to trust the process and each other. The takeaways are captured in Table II in the previous page.

In Conclusion

These discussions across the multiple themes helped partners to pause and reflect on their journeys and experiences. They shared that they are going back with ideas and measures to address the problems they are trying to solve.

Learnings from the Regions
Reflections and Sharing in the Zonal Meetings

Different regions of India have different socio-political landscapes and cultural geographies. Non-profits working in the same region often face similar challenges and have learnings which when shared may prove useful as aids in reflections and agenda setting.

In the 20th Partner's Forum, organizations who are members of the Wipro Education Partners Network met in their respective zones as a relationship building exercise. The zone-wise processes are shared below.

East Zone Regional Meet

The session began with an ice breaking session by team members from Wipro Foundation. Participants in the zonal group were subdivided into sub-groups with the following foci: Fundraising; Strong local teams; Working with governmental functionaries; Teacher capacity building, and; Technology.

These sub-groups then met in breakout sub-group sessions. Here the interactions and deliberations were guided by some guiding questions. The discussions from each group were captured in posters which were then displayed. After this, the larger group met as a whole to share their experiences.

North Zone Regional Meet

In the regional meet for the North Zone, nine states were represented. These included Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, NCR, Haryana, J&K and Ladakh. A total of 27 organizations participated in the meet.

The participants had two choices for the couple of sessions that were planned for

Statements for the Ice-breaker Exercise for the East Zone

One person from each organization came forward and the group formed a circle. Statements were made. Then people who agreed stepped forward. Those who disagreed moved back.

Participants paused for at least 30 seconds after each statement. This was to give people a chance to see each other's responses and make notes for future cooperation. Statements used in the exercise are shared below.

- My organization is led by a woman/ has a woman in the leadership team
- My organization has been working in education for >10 years
- My organization has been working in education for <4 years
- My organization works with children from tribal areas
- My organization works with migrant children
- My organization works with children working on the street
- My organization works and promotes multilingual education
- My organization works in preparing out-of-school children to mainstream to government schools
- My organization works in a focused way on library education
- My organization has been working with the government school system for the last 3+ years
- My organization works with CwD

Guiding Questions for Facilitating Discussions in the Sub-groups in the East Zone Meeting

Fundraising	Strong Local Team	Working with Government Functionaries	Teacher Capacity Building	Technology
What are some tools that people use for fundraising?	How to select people from the community with the required capabilities and dispositions?	What are the different top-down strategies and bottom-up strategies that are useful?	How do we show the value of our work to teachers? (get their buy-in from a position of reluctance/ reservations/ suspicion)	How do I identify which aspect of my work to introduce technology into?
Which processes are used to identify potential funders? Do we know the priority areas for different funders?	We have community people for roles that are about working on the ground. How can I enable them to take more organizational responsibilities?	How do we respond to scale-up related questions about our work when we are not in a position to scale-up? How do we emphasize the importance of our work in such contexts?	How do we manage teacher expectations? (e.g., teachers are looking for people to substitute them; our role is different)	My team is uncomfortable with the use of technology. What can I do to make them more comfortable?
What are the main challenges we face with respect to fundraising?	What processes do we need to have in place for CB of our team?	What are some of the tactical ways in which we can maintain presence in larger forums yet not get sucked into large-scale expectations?	What are the pre-requisites that we need to have as an organization before we work on teacher CB?	Are there existing technological tools I can use or do I need to look for custom solutions?
What are the support systems from partners like WF that we think could help?	How do I do performance management of my team members?	How do we identify who from the government we need to work with?	How do we ensure that our work with teachers sustain beyond our presence in schools?	We have connectivity issues in our region and get good internet only in certain areas (home/ office). Can we use tech tools for our operations in this case?
What are the support systems we can develop among ourselves that we think will be helpful?	How do I retain people in my organization?			

the meet. These included a discussion on what CSOs need to reflect and work within to proactively address the top five challenges for the next decade or to spend time on getting to know each other better to kickstart partnerships and collaborations. The group chose the second option.

Initially the group organized themselves in two concentric circles. Music was played. Then they moved in opposite directions till the music stopped. Each participant spent two minutes getting to know the person in front of them. The group did six iterations of this process with much joy, confusion and dancing to the music.

Each organizational pair spent 10 minutes reflecting on two organizations they are looking forward to explore conversations with or to learn from. Each organization went around sharing who they would like to continue conversations with and why. The partners went back with a sense of excitement, curiosity and new friendships and partnerships to keep the conversations going after the Forum.

South Zone Regional Meet

The south zone regional meet had a total of 54 participants from 29 organizations scattered across five states in south India – Andhra

Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. The aim of the regional meet was for all the partners to use the opportunity to get to know each other better, as individuals and representatives of their organizations. Another aim was to allow for opportunities to collaborate between the partners. It had been three years since the last regional meet in 2019. The number of partners has increased in the meantime with several new organizations joining the group.

The session began with an icebreaker activity. In this exercise all the participants stood in two parallel lines facing each other. With their eyes closed, they took steps forward or behind, based on responses to a series of questions. When they opened their eyes, the scatter plot that resulted from the parallel lines they had started with revealed the fact that they were individuals with different life and work experiences and have travelled from different locations and distances.

This was a good point to move to the next phase of the session where they were divided into eleven sub-groups, with five individuals in each. Each one was split across two circles (an inner and the other an outer one), and each group spent around six minutes with introductions to each other. Then they moved within each circle to the next group in a pre-defined manner.

This allowed for all the participants to interact with each other individually within a fixed time period. Finally, they moved around in the room in an exercise to stretch out legs. Then small groups of five each were formed through random association. Participants then spent time discussing possible collaborations between themselves.

We closed the session with a short reflection circle where we opened up some requests for further support across the region. We also invited feedback for the Forum. The entire regional meet session took over two hours in total. It appeared that many partners were not aware of others in the network, or their work. They were already beginning to explore possibilities of collaboration between themselves at the end of the process.

West Zone Regional Meet

The group had a diverse set of participating organizations. This diversity was not just in terms of their work, geography, context and approaches. It was also there in terms of their organization size, stage, journey and challenges. Most of the partners in the meet were attending the Forum and meeting each other for the first time. Therefore, the primary objective for the session was kept simple. The goal was to create a space where participants can experience, acknowledge, appreciate and leverage the diversity of the group.

It was interesting to see how a few from the group, especially those who have attended a few Partner's Forums, took charge of

Facilitation Tools

World Café https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/

Liberating Structures https://www.liberatingstructures.com/ls-menu

the space while waiting for regional team members from Wipro Foundation. These participants who took the lead initially activated the space through a movement song 'Geet Ga Rahe Hain Hum Ragini Ko Dhundhte Hue.'

After a warm welcome, the group was invited for a 'speed meeting' activity to quickly get a glimpse of the participants, their organizations, work, strengths, challenges, and dreams for their respective organizations. This brought in a few laughs with mix-ups and confusions. Certain questions like 'What is your dream for the organization?' brought in some silence for everyone to reflect upon. Most other questions generated immediate responses, and the energy was vibrant and quick-paced.

With an assumption that the group would have warmed up through the speed meeting ice-breaker, the group moved on to the main exercise of the session – 'Step in the Circle.' In the exercise, the participants were requested to form a big circle, listen to the statements announced by the facilitators and step inside the circle if the statement was true/relevant for them/their organization. They had to stay there for a few seconds before returning to their original place.

The facilitators read a series of statements. After each statement, the group was asked to observe the inner and outer circles. The statements were related to organization's location, domain of work, size model/approach, stakeholders, challenges, leadership, culture, needs, priorities, and so on. The design was deliberately set to allow

the participants to ponder and observe in silence with no conversations. At the end of the exercise, when members were asked to share their thoughts, observations, reflections - many interesting points came up.

To quote a few – "Despite such diversity, we can see how similar our challenges are", "We are not alone in this," "There are organizations who are doing better, whereas we are struggling, we can learn from them," "It was comforting to see some large and well-known organizations also struggling with common challenges which we assume only we – small-scale and new organizations – deal with," "Despite most organizations focusing on staff well-being, almost everyone experiences burnout, stress, anxiety, fatigue and a feeling of helplessness at different points in their work," "There is so much diversity in the group to learn from."

Some of the participants had to leave before the end of the session as they had their trains and flights to catch. However, the rest of the group moved to the next activity. For this, they were requested to sit together with their organization partners and reflect on their experience of the last two and half days.

Participants were provided with a few guiding statements to initiate the reflection. These related to processes like key takeaways, questions for further explorations, organizations they wish to visit or seek help from, the support they wish to receive from and/or extend to the education eco-system, and so on.

Though we did not get the time to listen to some of their reflections, it was evident that the partners were putting in a lot of thought as they engaged in responding to this exercise. A few partners shared at a later stage that they were returning with a number of ideas, questions and reflections.

The session was concluded with a gratitude activity by Rohit Kumar from ApniShala. In

conducting this, he used guided visualization to take everyone through the entire journey from the first email about Partners' Forum to the entire two and half days.

The participants were encouraged to think of people, institutions and things which made this journey possible and meaningful. They were then requested to express their gratitude towards them by writing their names on a post-it note and paste it on the gratitude wall.

Everyone dispersed after expressing their emotions and feelings in one word with others in the room. Feelings such as 'peaceful,' 'inspired,' 'connected' and many more were shared. The common favorite was by a young boy (Abhang) of about three years who had accompanied his parents (Kalyani and Aniruddha) calling out 'mast' – 'fun/great' - as the one word shared.

This session was largely informal, open ended and the two hours felt very seamless and free-flowing. Overall, there was a feeling of solidarity, openness to engage, and lowering of the guards.

In Conclusion

As many participants shared, the zonal meetings helped in building bridges, forging relationships and opening up horizons. Many participating organizations became aware of each other's work for the first time. It is hoped that these interactions will lead to further conversations and associations.

Spaces for Collaborating, Time for Relating: The Many Faces of Partners' Forum

Looking back, looking ahead

We reflected on our 20-year journey with our partners at Partners' Forum 2022. Through several panels, large-group sessions, and numerous small-group conversations, partners from across India exchanged perspectives on important issues in education.

Partners' Forum 2022 was held at Chinmaya Vibhooti in Pune.

Partnering for change

Over 250+ representatives from education organizations working on a variety of educational issues attended the Partners' Forum 2022 event in Pune. Wipro partners reach out to some of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as children from urban slums, HIV-affected families, migrant labor families, street children, and children with disabilities. The partners presented their work to each other during the three-day event.

A thematic exploration

Organizations can give free and equal access to information to their beneficiaries in a variety of ways - written, electronic, audio-visual, etc., and play a crucial role by providing engaging content. Partners' Forum 2022 offered tools and perspectives on how children can embrace social responsibility, overcome social, political, and economic constraints, and create chances for lifelong learning through, among other mediums, mystic music or libraries.

Taking a break

Hosted by the Wipro Foundation team, Partners' Forum is designed primarily to serve as a retreat for Wipro's partners. For many partners, these three days are the only ones in the year when they are able to completely detach from their usual work or take a break from it. These are also the days for the Wipro team to reconnect with partners in order to better understand their plans, concerns and hopes.

Living in the moment

Chinmaya Vibhooti is a 63-acre campus surrounded by the Sahyadri range. The region is rich in flora and fauna. Partners went on early morning nature walks to explore the surroundings and identify trees, birds, and insects.

Forum Matters

Aastha Maggu

" The coming together of so many organizations with different approaches and pedagogies, yet with the common goal of changing the education landscape, is invigorating and a great learning experience at the same time." - Gazala Paul and Rajul Bharti, Samerth Trust

"The week of the 5th of December was exciting, as we celebrated Samaaveshi Pathshaala's fourth Foundation Day, and attended Wipro Education Partners' Forum in Pune. There were changemakers from 100+ organizations, mostly early-stage ventures on a mission to transform education across India. From a seemingly lonesome journey over the last four years, where we hardly got a chance to meet peers outside Karjat, Maharashtra, Partners' Forum gave us a brilliant opportunity to make good friends, network, explore the potential to collaborate, and exchange personal stories of building new ventures. From our conversations with partners, it emerged that working with the public education system and officials is an uphill task. However, it can be tackled with a bit of tact and determination." - Nivedita and Ashok, Samaaveshi Pathshaala

"At the 20th Wipro Education Partners' Forum, we saw partners come together to celebrate, and share their journeys and learnings with each other. We led a session on 'Artful Thinking,' along with two other organizations, where we walked everyone through 'Puppetry in Action'. We shared how the integration of puppetry and visible thinking, emotions and ideas can help create something beautiful and worthwhile. Even when there is a lack of resources, one can still tell some beautiful stories through puppets. On the second day, we set up a small space for an exhibition to

showcase our contextual cultural makers' space, pictures of our puppet friends, and snippets from teacher training workshops. It was wonderful to see everybody's reactions and thoughts, and receive feedback from them. We are hoping to see all the wonderful changemakers again along the way, if not off ground, then on the ground, and working our way up to creating change." - Rahul Aggarwal, Swatantra Talim

"I was a part of Eklavya earlier. When Wipro Education Partners' Forum began, we had set up Samavesh and our team used to regularly take part in the Forum. In recent years, it has been heartening to closely learn from the youth who are setting up new organizations. Even in the current edition of the Forum, we are getting a chance to engage in a relaxed setting with peers during morning

and evening walks, over meals, etc. In some sense, the Forum has provided a space for 'intergenerational dialogue' where old and new friends can come together to learn from each other." – R. N. Syag

"I have been attending Partners' Forum since 2012. This year, with other partners, I facilitated a thematic discussion on 'Literacy Learning in a Multilingual Classroom'. I shared our organization's Whole Language Approach, which we use with children whose mother tongue is Gondi, Pardhi and Marathi, among others. It was interesting to address questions on how children can learn reading without learning the alphabets. I shared our experiences of using this approach, and we were able to convince some of them. These questions also helped us reflect on our work." - Brajesh Verma, Muskaan

WIPRO APPLYING THOUGHT IN SCHOOLS
BANGALORE, 2002

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