



Practice Guide



Strengthening middle tier mentoring capacity through government partnership in India

Impact at Scale Labs: Foundational Literacy & Numeracy

2026

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Through the Impact at Scale Labs - Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), Global Schools Forum supports seven grantee organisations across India and Sub-Saharan Africa for testing, iterating, and generating evidence towards scaling their FLN programmes in low-middle income contexts. Read more about the Labs, our grantees and their innovations [here](#)



Overview

This Practice Brief is co-developed by Leadership for Equity and Global Schools Forum, as part of the Impact at Scale Labs for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy. The practices, insights and recommendations shared here are grounded in the implementation realities and reflect the lived experiences of organisations working to improve foundational learning outcomes.

These approaches were designed and delivered in specific contexts. Applying them elsewhere will mean adapting to different programme, systemic and delivery realities. We share them as a guiding point for that adaptation. We encourage you to explore these practices and consider how they might inform your own work.

Let's continue the conversation:

If you are exploring how to adapt any of these practices, whether within your organisation, your fund or a wider education system, we would love to learn more about your programmes, the challenges you are navigating and the opportunities for impact you see ahead.

To discuss adaptation or implementation, or to connect directly with the organisations that implemented and refined these practices, please reach out to

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01

Introduction



In India, despite significant improvements in school enrolment, learning outcomes remain persistently low (Aiyar, 2019). This reflects a broader issue in developing countries, where poor teacher preparation, limited resources, and weak state capacity affect the quality of education (Attavar et al., 2024). Moreover, from 2009-10 to 2018-19, in-service teacher training remained weak and underfunded, receiving only about 1% of the education budget. At the same time, the middle tier cadre — uniquely positioned between policymakers and classrooms, and comprising cluster heads, block officers, DIET faculty and regional officials — is often under-resourced, overburdened and confined to compliance-driven routines.

In response, Leadership for Equity (LFE)'s engagement across Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana adopts a systems approach to strengthen capacities of the middle tier through professional development, to facilitate teachers, and support instructional delivery.

The intervention is aimed at institutionalising a practice of regular, high-quality classroom observations among middle tier (cluster, block, district officials) using a standardised observation tool (the Teach Tool) and providing mentoring support to government school teachers. Working in close partnership with state and district education departments across these three states, **the interventions address a key systemic gap - the lack of sustained, classroom-level support for teachers leading to limited learning engagement and outcomes among students.**

About the programme

Pilot duration

5 years

Andhra Pradesh

3 years

Maharashtra

2 years

Haryana

Implemented by

**Leadership for
Equity (LFE)**

Goal

To demonstrate a robust model for improving teaching quality through classroom observation and mentoring by middle tier officials.

Reach across 3 States



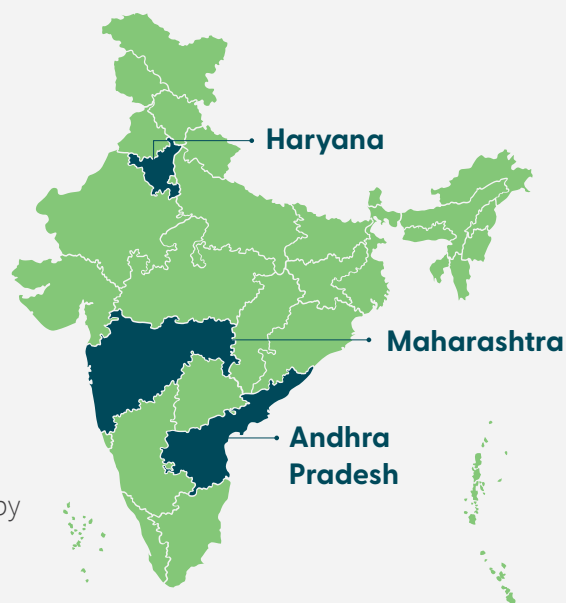
1.44 lakh +

Teachers reached



14,500

Officials empowered



About the Practice Guide

This practice guide distils implementation lessons, challenges and field-level insights from LFE's work on middle tier strengthening across three Indian states. Anchored in a six-stage, actionable framework for operationalising and sustaining system partnerships, it offers a clear mental model for practitioners seeking to replicate and adapt similar approaches.

Through codified implementation practices, the guide surfaces pragmatic learnings for practitioners on enabling the middle tier as effective instructional leaders, leading to tangible shifts in classroom teaching-learning that are critical to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) outcomes aligned with the NIPUN Bharat Mission.

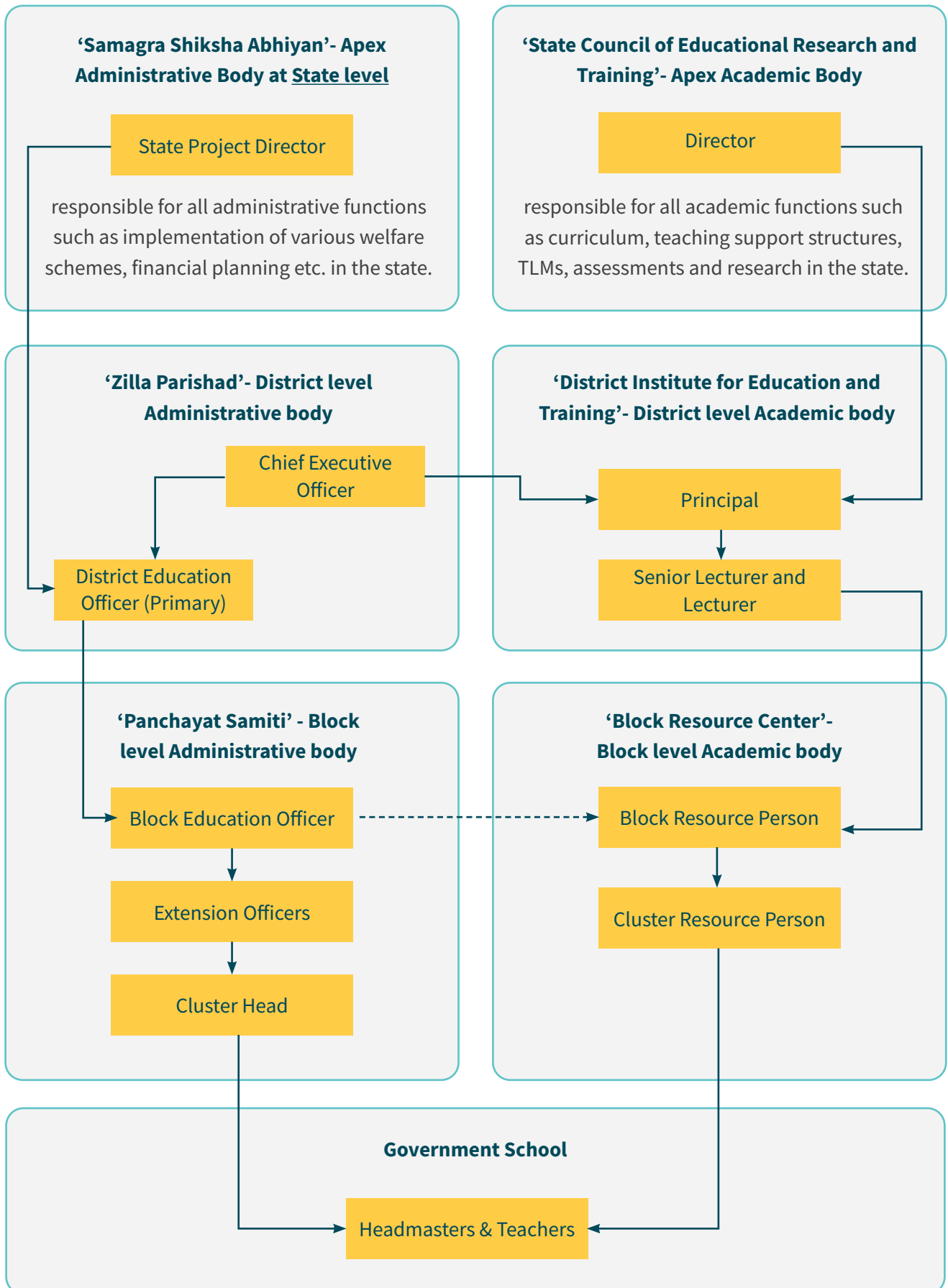
02

Context and Problem statement

The expansive governance structure in the Indian public educational system operates at four levels: state, district, taluka/block, and cluster level, wherein the roles and responsibilities of officers are broadly divided into Administrative and Academic groups. Across states, on average, 10-15 schools form a 'Cluster', 10 clusters form a 'Block', 10-15 blocks form a 'District', and 22-36 districts form a 'State'.



Figure 1: Visual outlining the governance structure of the public education system



Through LFE's work across multiple states, systemic challenges have been identified across implementation roles:

01 At middle tier level:

- An estimated ~30-40% of the middle tier positions are unfilled across district and block levels, which results in overburdening officers on duty. Despite having academic expertise, middle tier officers are frequently engaged in administrative tasks, such as managing the implementation of various schemes (eg, mid-day meal scheme), data collection responsibilities for multiple projects, and coordinating school-level competitions, leaving limited time for instructional support to teachers.
- Lack of coordination between academic bodies (SCERT, DIET) and administrative structures (SSA, Zilla Parishad), which often function in silos. As a result, middle tier officers face fragmented mandates and increased workloads.
- The middle tier officers' job roles include classroom observations and instructional support to teacher. However, their observation tools are lengthy and mostly focus on infrastructural aspects, logistical checklists or used for specific use-cases. This pushes officials to support teachers based on subjective experiences and assumptions.

02 At teacher level:

- Current teacher support structures rely heavily on in-service training at the state/ district level, blended courses, and provision of FLN-focused teaching-learning materials (TLMs). However, teachers face challenges in translating learnings from training and TLMs into classroom teaching practices, due to a lack of on-site support and follow-ups.
- Input-based metrics are prioritised, such as the number of teacher-training sessions conducted or participated in over improvements in classroom practice or student learning. There is uneven training quality with limited alignment to classroom contexts. Blended training, though scalable, frequently lacks practical application. Despite recent training reforms, many students unable to reach desired FLN benchmarks.
- Weak links between professional development, performance and career progression further reduce teacher motivation.

Together, these factors highlight the need for more holistic, application-oriented, and outcome-driven teacher support systems that potentially contribute to improving FLN competencies of students.

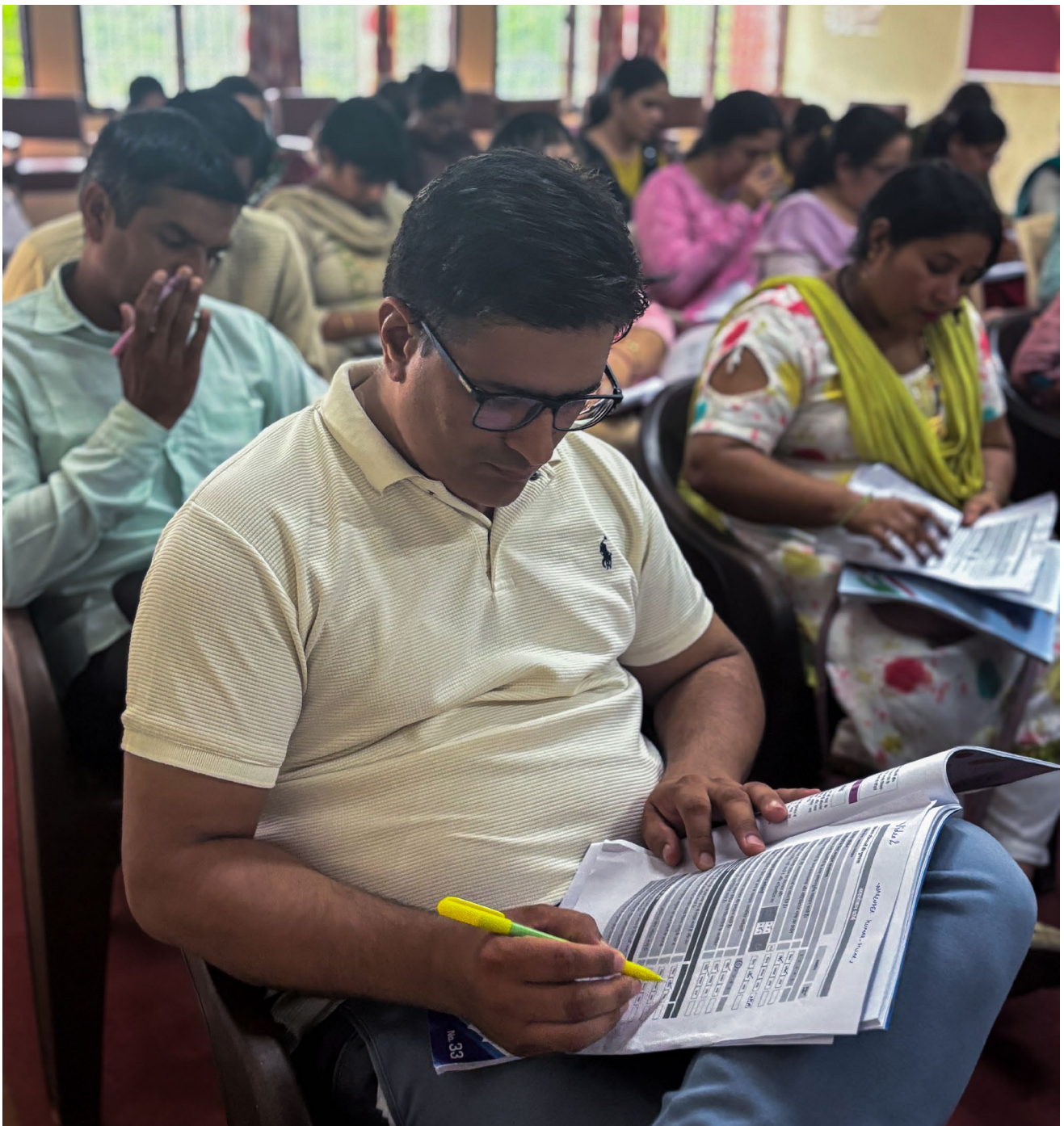
In light of these challenges, the core gap addressed by LFE's interventions in the states centres around improving effective classroom-level support to government school teachers through:



Strengthened role of middle tier officers as 'mentors' to teachers via structured classroom observations and actionable feedback, which is focused on improving pedagogical practices.



Advocating the use of classroom observation data at system level to plan more contextualised and relevant Teacher Professional Development (TPD) interventions, which contribute towards improvement of FLN learning outcomes of students.



03

LFE's Approach to System Strengthening with the middle tier at the centre

Core Pillar of Interventions

Focus of this
practice guide



Teacher Capacity

In-Person workshops
and Blended Learning
Materials for FLN teaching
and learning techniques



Teacher Mentoring

Supporting government
officials to provide classroom
observation and mentoring
on general pedagogical
techniques using TEACH tool



Governance Support

Streamlined local policies
and processes for the better
monitoring governance of
FLN Programmes



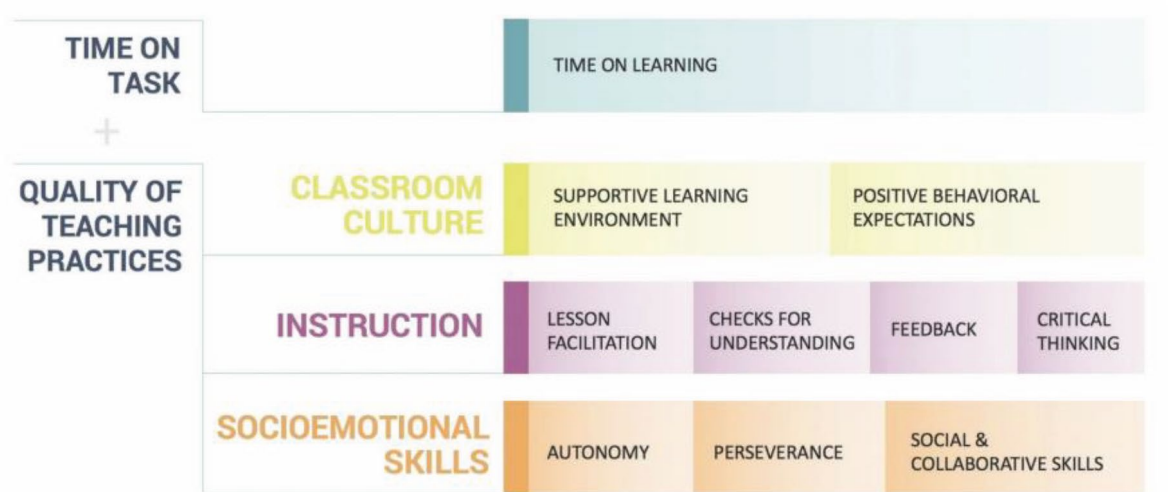
Impact

Improvement in teacher
practice shifts and student
learning outcomes.

As part of the teacher mentoring pillar, LFE introduced the World Bank-endorsed Teach tool - a research-based framework for classroom observation, which enables the observer to determine the quality of the teaching and classroom processes.

Prior to the intervention, in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, there was no structured mechanism for collecting insights regarding the quality of pedagogical practices inside the classroom. This limited the ability of the system to take data-backed decisions while planning interventions for teacher development or making the teacher support component more relevant to actual needs and contexts.

Teach tool, a standardised classroom observation tool for assessing teacher student interactions



Why Teach tool?

- Standardised and reliable classroom observation tool
- Grade - and Subject - Agnostic
- Provides clear snapshot on quality of teaching practices and classroom culture.
- Enables sharing specific feedback and planning targeted teacher support.
- Ideal for scale- can be adapted to local context and does not require specific academic expertise for observers.

The interventions across three states focuses on setting a structured process of classroom observations using the Teach tool, which serves as a valuable resource for governments to comprehensively understand current teaching practices and the quality of education in classrooms. Moreover, the insights generated by this process can be effectively utilised to inform specific education policies or programmes that aim to improve teaching practices, such as implementing an instructional model that is designed to improve FLN outcomes.

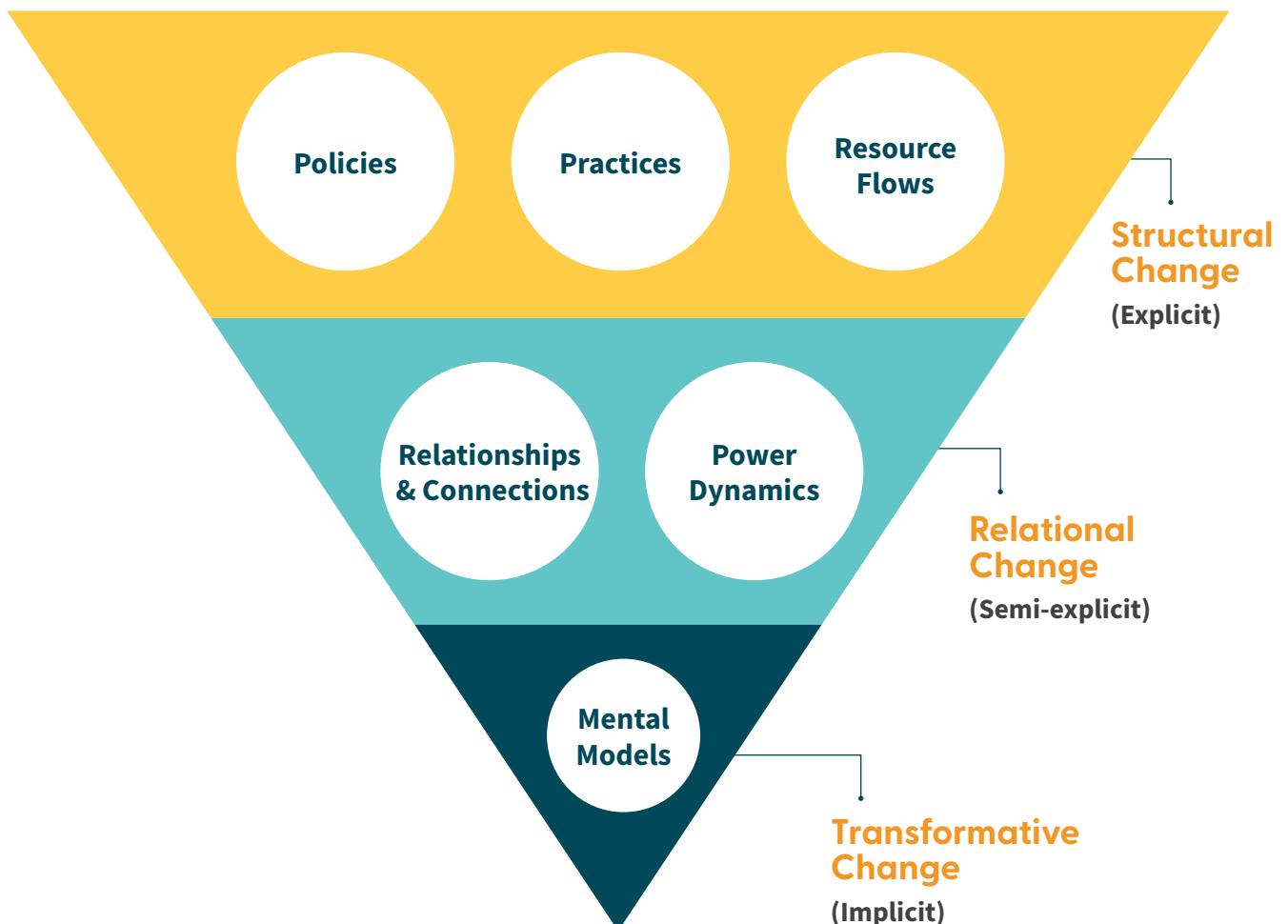
3.1 Conceptual grounding

Systems Change Framework:

LFE's approach is grounded in a 'systems change framework'¹ which recognises that lasting shifts in how government systems function require changes at three levels: structural (policies and practices), relational (how people work together), and transformative (underlying beliefs and mental models). This guide documents what that looks like across all three levels. This framework also helps design metrics to track progress and measure the impact of the interventions.

Systems change operates by addressing six interdependent conditions organised into three levels of visibility:

Six Conditions of Systems Change



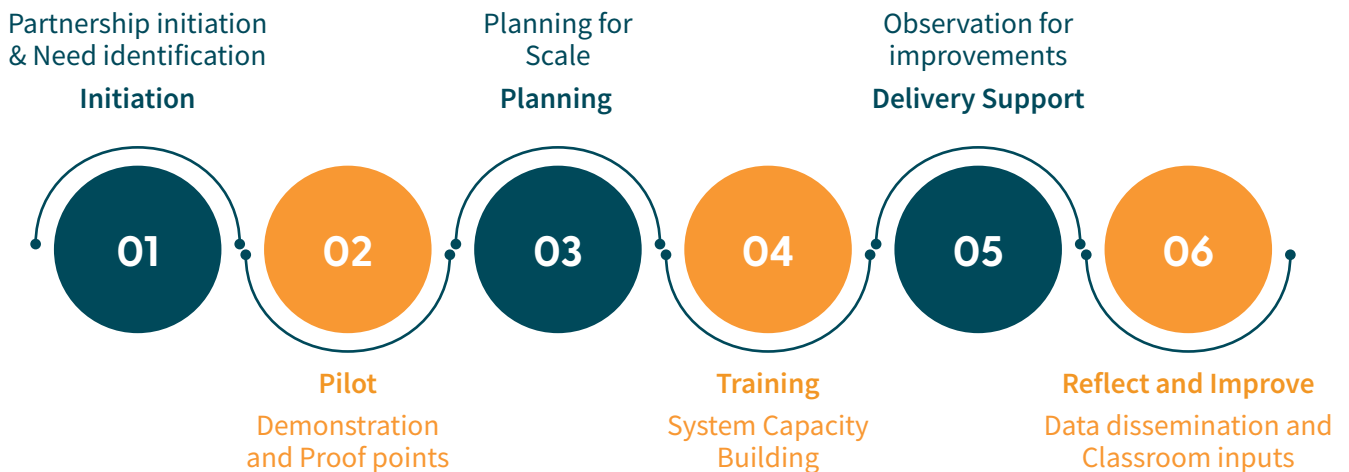
¹ Kania, J., Kramer, M., Senge, P. (2018) . The Water of Systems Change. https://www.fsg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Water-of-Systems-Change_rc.pdf

Condition of change	What it targets	In LFE's partnership with government
Structural change (Explicit)	Policies (formal rules), practices (shared procedures), and resource flows (allocation of money, people, and knowledge). Visible and relatively quick to achieve.	- Jointly setting agendas and co-planning capacity building workshops - Data-based review meetings - Leveraging the academic expertise of middle tier officers for teacher support
Relational change (Semi-explicit)	Authority, power dynamics, influence and system culture — intangible factors that either enable or hinder progress. Requires a nuanced understanding and consistent action over time.	- Involving officers from diverse cadres in training and review meetings - Prompting discussions on shared challenges — consistently, over time — to shift cross-cadre relationships
Transformative change (Implicit)	Mental models: the deeply held beliefs and habits that drive how people act. The most complex level, structural and relational changes, are unlikely to sustain unless underlying beliefs shift.	- Shifting beliefs about in-service teacher training methods - Repositioning middle tier officers as effective mentors (not just administrators) - Normalising structured, bias-free classroom observation as standard practice



3.2 Approach and Key Stages

Middle tier strengthening for teacher support intervention traverses **six (6) distinct stages** with government systems that are co-partners in design and delivery, which have evolved through various iterations over the years.



Snapshot of LFE interventions in the three states:

	 Andhra Pradesh	 Maharashtra	 Haryana
Project Partners	Education Department, SCERT and World Bank	SCERT for state-level project; Zilla Parishad for district transformation programmes	SCERT Haryana
Funding	World Bank	State Funded, if district level (partially ZP and partially LFE)	State Funded
Scale	All 26 districts in the state	10 Districts in the state	All 22 districts in the state
Schools focus	Primary & Secondary Schools	Primary Schools	Middle (6-8 grade) Schools

Deep-dive into the six stages of government engagement for middle tier support

Stage 1 → Partnership initiation and need identification

The initiation of a project partnership with the government usually follows rounds of consultations with senior leadership in the education department, followed by alignment on the project roadmap and core design principles based on state needs. Following this, a formal partnership through an MoU is signed.

The consultation meetings are a space to share the implementing organisation's core expertise, impact of work across different geographies and the specifics of the proposed intervention. This also gives a space to identify and leverage key officers at the state and district levels to champion the cause and uphold the quality standards set for the project.

The project initiation phase in the three states followed somewhat similar journeys:

01 Andhra Pradesh	02 Maharashtra	03 Haryana
Onboarded as Knowledge Partners under the 'SALT' project by the World Bank in 2021	Ongoing work with Maharashtra since 2018, the project was initiated through consultation meetings with the SSA office and the World Bank in 2023.	Initiated through consultations and alignment with SCERT in 2024

The impact and evidence of the intervention created through LFE's work in Andhra Pradesh were crucial in initiating projects in Maharashtra and Haryana.

Insights from the field

In each state, it was necessary to **align with government's priorities, structures and policies** and include flexibility for iterations of project design and delivery based on government's needs.

The entry in states was **anchored by a specific senior official** who became the programme's internal champion- someone who attends reviews, communicates expectations downward and protects the programme from competing priorities. Identifying and investing in this person is Stage 1's most important task. This aside building relationships across academic and administrative wings of the system and system hierarchical levels (State & District) is critical for building a strong foundation for the partnership.

Stage 2 → Demonstration and gathering proof points

Once the formal partnership is established at the state level, it is critical to demonstrate the intervention (in the form of a small-scale pilot project, in select locations) to generate contextual evidence and processes for adoption among key stakeholders (in this case - middle tier officials and teachers). This helps:

- 01 To **generate proof of concept and assess programme efficacy** under realistic conditions, for all project partners (education department, funders and NGO partners)
- 02 To **learn and iterate on implementation processes** to inform future project scaling.

Below is an overview of the pilot project in 2023 in Maharashtra state. From planning to on-ground execution, each phase was implemented by the project partners , namely the SCERT, LFE and World Bank.



Nature of Stakeholder Partnership

What was planned?	What actually happened? What was missed?	Learnings from Pilot
- LFE: Co-planning the project with SCERT leadership, providing training and M&E Framework. - SCERT: Oversight on project implementation through DIETs and Zilla Parishad (at districts). Allocating budget and financial planning. - World Bank: Guidance on the overall planning and execution of the project.	- While there was broad cohesion and agreement on the project, the initial planning and implementation lacked cohesiveness. - Limited engagement of officials during field visits and reduction of training days.	- All project partners must align on a set of non-negotiables to ensure quality implementation - Plan deliberately to leverage the system's budgeting and planning logistics



Implementation of the Pilot

What was planned?	What actually happened? What was missed?	Learnings from Pilot
- Eight districts in Maharashtra were selected for the pilot - Academic and administrative cadres at the district and block levels were part of the pilot	- The pilot covered a wide range of teachers and diverse set of system officials. - The observation target completion among Cluster Heads and block officials was higher compared to other cadres involved (DIET faculty, EEOs and BEOs)	- Ensure system coherence and alignment in capacity building interventions vis-à-vis the job chart of system officials. - Orientation and hands-on support enabled higher adoption among middle tier officers (Cluster Heads and BRPs).



Training Materials

What was planned?	What actually happened? What was missed?	Learnings from Pilot
- Contextualised Observation Manual & Training material prepared in collaboration with SCERT - Practice and examination videos recorded in government school classrooms.	- The interactive nature of the training fostered reflection and discussion among middle tier officials – a break-away from the existing patterns. - Classroom-recorded videos used as practice during the training helped officials identify where and how to apply their skills and support teachers.	The training brought about focus on a set of protocols, such as note-taking, scoring in alignment with the Teach tool rubric, and ensured high-quality observations - free from subjectivity and bias.



M&E Framework

What was planned?	What actually happened? What was missed?	Learnings from Pilot
• Training Data collected via Feedback form, Practice video & Reliability Exam forms. • Collation of data in the form of trackers on Excel sheets.	• The M&E tools created for training helped measure effectiveness and record feedback of the officials. • Observers found it difficult to navigate the data collection app due to which project deadlines had to be shifted.	• To improve data-collection processes, user-friendly data collection App and training for the officials were key. • The ‘Reliability Exam’ conducted at the end of the training served as an incentive for middle tier officers to engage throughout the training.



Dissemination Workshop

What was planned?	What actually happened? What was missed?	Learnings from Pilot
• Dissemination of classroom observation data with representative observers from each district, DIETs and SCERT officials as invitees. • Focused on building understanding of the observation data and using insights to plan for teacher support.	• The system leaders engaged actively, where they recorded their insights on the handouts given. • However, the plans made during the workshop did not fully translate into teacher support interventions in the state or districts.	• The workshop model enabled an active process of interpreting the data in connection with officials’ on-ground experience. • The discussions and reflections shared during the workshop helped build initial system alignment - but more efforts needed for those to be made part of the state’s priority for teacher support interventions.

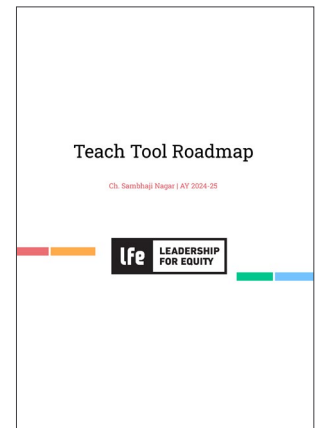
The learnings and iterations from the pilot programmes led to the co-development of an implementation framework involving all the project partners, which could be further adapted for execution at scale across geographies. The demonstration also helped the system officials to understand the nuances of the project and share feedback on what could be more useful and relevant to their context.

Stage 3 → Planning for Scale

There were some key considerations taken into account while planning for teacher mentoring interventions through government middle tier officials across different states. While the context may vary, practitioners can adapt these to suit their respective needs:

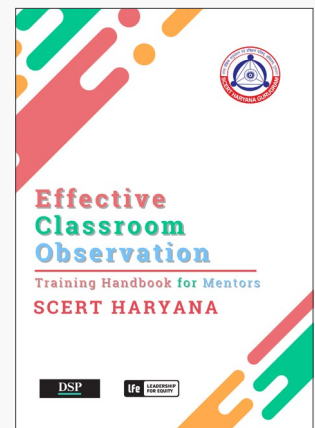
System alignment and coherence

Build shared vision among project partners (state/ district education department, funders) and ensure alignment on key outcomes of the project. Aligning the project with existing priorities of the state is crucial to be seen as an embedded solution to fulfil the larger goals and vision of the state. ([Sample roadmap document](#) - build coherence among project partners). For example, under the NIPUN Bharat mission, all states have targets to improve the FLN learning levels of students in their schools. Hence, in Maharashtra, observers were asked to nominate schools with a low level of FLN competencies and regularly support the teachers through classroom observations and mentoring.



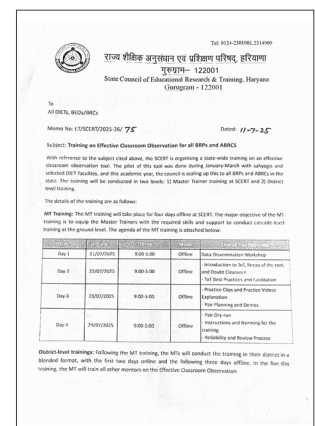
Identifying agents of change

To ensure the cascaded training is delivered with fidelity. For example, developing a group of master trainers who will carry forward the training at a district level and are equipped and supported with detailed guidelines, monitoring formats and ways to action those. ([Handbook for master training](#))



Leveraging existing avenues and resources

Rather than creating new structures that may seem more of a burden. For example, many states have instituted monthly district review meetings, which have been leveraged to discuss the trends in classroom observation data, alongside other priorities of the district. Additionally, official government proceedings can be leveraged to communicate the program objectives, roles and responsibilities and timelines between different departments and cadres. ([Sample proceeding](#))



Strong operational planning

outlining the exact timelines, measures of success, roles & responsibilities and [risk and mitigation register](#), with inputs and approval from all project partners. Documenting the operational plan with clear milestones, accountability structures, timelines and measures of success, prior to the implementation provides a strong anchoring. ([Sample Operational Plan](#))

Stage 4 → Capacity Building of Education Officers

Capacity building of the middle tier through rigorous training on the “Teach Primary” Classroom Observation tool is central to the overall success of the program. The training program largely aims at building a strong understanding of the various pedagogical and behavioural strands and overall scoring system of the Teach tool. Secondly, there are several aspects of the training that build their capacity to apply their understanding to conduct observations objectively, free of biases and provide evidence-based feedback to teachers.

Design and delivery of middle tier capacity building programme: An indicative checklist

Interactive training engagement:

-  Group work activities, energizers, practice demonstrations incorporated throughout the training days to foster collaboration among the officials.
-  M&E Tools (feedback forms, pre-post test forms) in place to track learning against the set objectives. ([Sample Data Management Sheet for training](#)).
-  Culture of growth mindset fostered through messaging and examples, where officers feel comfortable learning from both hits and misses, can share doubts or questions freely, in the spirit of learning.
-  Reflection spaces created for officers to pause, reflect on their biases and consciously shift towards creating a positive impact on the teachers and children.

Contextualised training content:

-  Training materials (technical or general pedagogy-focused, as per programme needs) prepared in the local language and context of the geography.
-  Training materials include an observation manual, interactive PPTs and guiding notes.
-  Video clips recorded from classrooms used as reference materials, making the training more interactive and application oriented. ([Sample Training Material](#)).
-  Content builds in-depth understanding of classroom observation formats and equips officers with skills for providing structured feedback to teachers and among peers.
-  Content supports officers in making sense of the data collected, reported, and used at different levels in the system.

Assessment and actions:

- ✓ A reliability exam administered on the final day to check whether officers can use the observation tool consistently, score classroom practice accurately and hold a structured feedback conversation with a teacher.
- ✓ Officers leave with a concrete action plan on what they will observe during school visits, how often, which teachers/schools they will support first and track progress.
- ✓ Space built in for any additional refreshers for knowledge updates, documented feedback analyses that the state or district team wants to layer on.

Post-training guidance and support:

- ✓ Clear guidance, including timelines and targets, shared in the form of formal proceedings.
- ✓ Follow-up support schedule established and followed through with field support team during the observation phase.



Insights from the field

The training mode, duration and batch design were kept flexible and finalised in consultation with the Education Department officials, considering the scale, budget and officials' availability. The same content has been delivered as a 9-day cascaded training in Andhra Pradesh, a 5-day training in Maharashtra and a 5-day blended format (2 days online and 3 days in-person) in Haryana. When days are compressed, the design leans more on practice, discussion, self-guided tasks, and learning through examples rather than truncating content. Wherever possible, anchor the training with a vision-building or context setting address by a senior state or district leadership. This signals that the middle tier's work matters to the larger system's priorities and instils a sense of responsibility and ownership towards the project among the officials.

Stage 5 → Observation for improvements

Conducting classroom observations is already part of the job roles of system leaders. The Teach tool builds on the existing structures in the system and leverages system officials' capacities for effective teacher support. There are two main objectives for this phase of project implementation:

- A) To ensure that the **observation targets are met**.
- B) To ensure **high-quality observation and mentoring support is provided** to teachers.

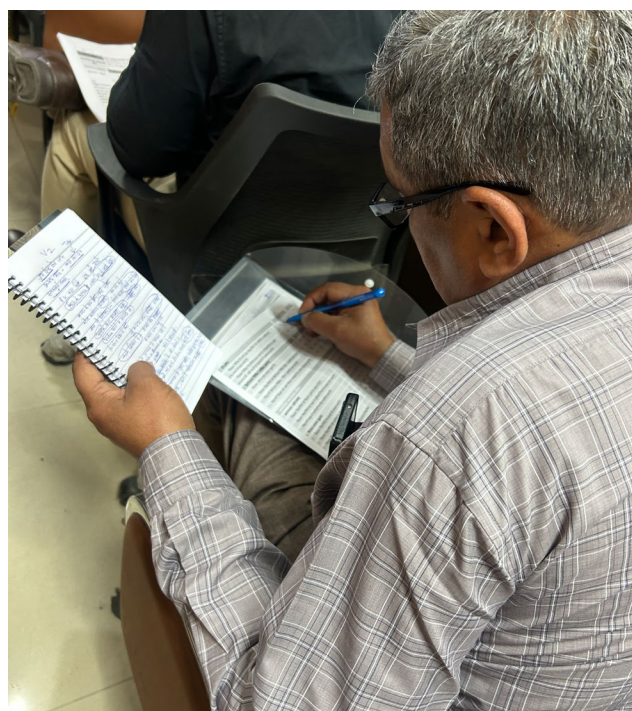
A Ensuring targets are met:

- **Reliable M&E and technological framework to facilitate the classroom observation process:**

A user-friendly data collection tool is critical to adoption as observers already navigate high administrative data burdens, so anything that adds friction will be resisted.

For example: In Maharashtra and Haryana, LFE built a lightweight SurveyCTO-based solution; in AP, this was integrated into the state's unified education app ([Sample walkthrough of the App](#)). Through this program, a conscious effort was made to shift the officers' perception from filling data on links/apps by making it simple and seamless, towards the qualitative aspect of objectively observing and providing feedback to teachers.

- **Sharing real-time updates for solutioning and building ownership:** Sharing regular updates on Whatsapp groups (preferably sent by the education department) with completion of targets of each officer, based on their jurisdiction has been an effective strategy to ensure effective monitoring of progress. The WhatsApp group also creates a space where officers can share photos of their observations and experiences and builds ownership towards the project.
- **Leveraging existing governmental structures:** Leveraging District and Block Quality Cell meetings to discuss the targets and trends of the classroom observations is another structure that ensures regular classroom observations being conducted.
- **Recognition and softer incentives:** Highlighting the efforts of observers and providing appreciation on common platforms/ review meetings, greatly enhances observer motivation and serves as a positive reinforcement.



Snapshot of how the three states fared against the targets:

Parameters	Maharashtra	Haryana	Andhra Pradesh
Scale Achieved	15K Observations by ~700 trained observers across 3 years	59K Observations by ~1,800 trained observers in one year	5 Lakh + Observations by ~12K trained observers across 5 years
% Completion of Observations	91% officers started observations and 81% completed their targets in 2024-25	100% officers started observations and 98% completed their observation targets in 2025-26	90% officers started observations and 51% completed their observation targets in 2024-25
Teachers Reached	11,000 +	13,000 +	1.2 lakh

B Ensuring quality implementation:

- Double Coding:** Double coding or shadow observations is a process where the LFE team observes the same classroom along with middle tier officers. Double coding serves three purposes: assessing the quality of classroom observations conducted by middle tier officers (by analysing the variance between their scores and our team's scores), tracking how well officers are adopting the observation protocols, and providing hands-on support following training on feedback and mentoring. Overall, the double coding process provides valuable insights on the implementation, which can be used for tweaks or improvements by all the project partners. ([Process document for Double Coding](#)).
- Documenting classroom level stories, field notes** of the team and testimonies of observers will serve as key evidence during the post- implementation project review. ([Sample Format for collecting field notes](#), [Sample of best practices collected on field](#))



Stage 6 → Dissemination of data and Inputs to Teachers

The final stage, perhaps the most important, is to disseminate the findings and insights from the classroom observation data to inform future TPD interventions and support structures in the state. There are two major components of this phase:

A Making the observation data accessible and easy to interpret

For this, effective workflows need to be created that are concise and effectively represent all the aspects of the data. This typically includes the creation of dashboards, which include visuals and graphs, along with the dissemination of data via state/district-level workshops. Here is a summary of the efforts made by LFE across different geographies:

- In Maharashtra and Haryana, the dashboard consisting of visualisations of teacher performance data was developed by the LFE team. In Andhra Pradesh, the dashboard was developed by the technical partners of the state. Across the geographies, the trends are visualised for state, district and block level across all the parameters of the Teach Tool. In Andhra Pradesh, the accessibility of data goes a step further, where all cadres from the senior leadership to field officials can access data of all teachers in their state-developed App. ([Walkthrough video of the app](#)).
- Once the data has been collated in the form of graphs and trends, all the cadres of the education system are supported to understand and analyse the data with openness and objectivity. In order to do this, 'dissemination workshops' have been conducted at the state and district level, where senior leadership and officers who conducted observations interpret the data and develop plans for teacher interventions.
- These workshops provide space for reflection and analysis after a cycle of data collection, towards making course corrections and more targeted teacher support. It also provides system officials a nuanced look at the classroom-level challenges and contextual diversity, leading to well-informed decision-making.



Insights from the field

A recent state-level dissemination workshop held by LFE at SCERT Haryana brought together 66 selected officers (three from each of the 22 districts) from the DIET faculty, BRP and CRP cadres for two days.

- The first day of the workshop was focused on building understanding of the various trends in the data and generating insights by combining their on-ground experience.
- The insights were recorded in a handout given during the workshop. Here's an example of a [BRPs reflection](#).
- The second day of the workshop was focused on planning for TPD interventions in their respective districts. [Here's](#) a compiled version of plans made by district officials. As a follow up of the state level workshop, each DIET office will conduct similar workshops at district level with all the remaining officials and submit their plans for teacher interventions to SCERT.

B Designing interventions for Teacher Professional Development

Once the data is accessible and awareness of the current quality of teaching practices is built in the system, the data must inform future interventions for teacher support.

- During dissemination workshops conducted in Maharashtra and Haryana, system leaders from various cadres have been involved in the collective planning process based on the data collected. The planning involved goal setting, activities to be deployed at the system level, community and classroom levels. They also agree upon the timelines for the activities, means of monitoring and risk management plans.
- Involvement of middle tier officials in decision making towards better teacher support systems ensures higher alignment with the ground realities, enhances buy-in and overall, increases the chances of success of the program.



04

Impact and Results so far



Even though the projects are currently ongoing, there are several data points and anecdotal evidence that suggest significant shifts in the functioning of the system. Connecting it back to the conceptual framework of ‘systems change’ as introduced earlier, below are some key findings:

01 Explicit Structural Changes: System adoption of the Teach tool and classroom observations

- The states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana have consistently shown strong ownership and adoption of the structured observation process to support teachers through middle tier officers.

The data from **Andhra Pradesh** particularly shows a shift in system practices.

From the baseline in A.Y 2021-22 to A.Y 2024-25, the number of middle tier officers trained on the Teach tool increased from 1,781 to 11,429 while the number of observations increased from 10,096 to 2,28,072 in the same period.

The Education Department of Andhra Pradesh allotted significant time and resources to build capacity of a large number of middle tier officers, who have conducted ~5 lakh observations cumulatively, till date.

“

Earlier, I believed I was a good mentor, but this training has completely changed how I observe a classroom. The practice videos and concepts I learned were very different. Before, I focused mainly on content and how teachers delivered it. Now I understand that I must observe the entire classroom environment and include those aspects too.

- Mandal Officer, Andhra Pradesh

- States like Haryana and Maharashtra have invested their own budgets towards this program, which signifies a shift in the flow of resources towards stronger capacity building measures around middle tier officers' role to mentor teachers.
- **Increasingly, across the states cluster heads are seen conducting classroom observations (observing teaching practices) during school visits,** compared to previous focus on only administrative aspects, infrastructure & student dipstick assessments, which signals a significant shift in practices.



02 Semi-explicit Relational Changes: System support towards teacher practice shifts

- The intervention has brought the senior leadership of the departments closer to the middle tier officials and the realities on the ground. In Andhra Pradesh and Haryana, classroom observation data is regularly reviewed and discussed during block and district review meetings, where middle tier officers present the data along with challenges on the ground and discuss plausible solutions with the senior leadership.
- Given that cluster heads are promoted after 10-20 years of service as a teacher, mentoring through structured classroom observation is an ideal way to leverage their academic expertise and understanding of the context. However, for mentoring to bring growth in teaching performance, teachers' acceptance of the middle tier officers as their mentors is also equally important. This is evident in the teacher-performance growth observed in the intervention states, which is as follows:

Parameters	Maharashtra	Haryana	Andhra Pradesh
Teacher performance gap reduction ²	38% (AY 2024-25)	5% (AY 2025-26)	22.7% (AY 2022 to 2025)

The data not only indicates that mentoring through structured classroom observations is an effective way to improve teacher performance, but it also shows a significant shift in the relationship of middle tier officers and teachers, from being hierarchical to a mentor-mentee.

Teacher Voices



Teacher Voices



² Performance Gap represents the difference between the current performance level and a desired or target level. It indicates how much improvement is needed to reach the target. Formula for calculation: (Endline – Baseline) / (Max Score - Baseline). Max score in this case is 5 as per the Teach tool rubric.

03 Implicit Transformative Changes: Better adoption of evidence-informed approaches

- States have demonstrated a **shift in mental models as they are investing more in planning and actioning in diversified forms of support to in-service teachers**. Additionally, implementation of this program in the spirit of ‘teacher support’ rather than using it as a “monitoring” mechanism suggests a shift in the largely hierarchical mental model in the system.
- Over the last three years, there has been **greater willingness seen from system leaders towards collecting data on teacher performance** and objectively perceiving it as a ‘diagnosis of current quality of teaching practices’ to bring about large-scale reforms. This marks a shift towards an evidence-informed approach towards system-driven transformation.



05

Key Learnings and Recommendations



Learnings

- 01 Invest stakeholders at the state-level senior leadership in the vision** and get their buy-in for the project. Having multilateral support (like the World Bank) helps further the program vision. When achieved, as in the case of Andhra Pradesh and Haryana, the project can be scaled state-wide in a relatively short span of time while maintaining the quality of implementation.
- 02 While working with the government systems, identify the scope of the project** and the factors which are in the team's **locus of control**. Despite systemic challenges, the strengthened structures for and capacities of middle tier have consistently shown to improve teaching-learning practices in classrooms.
- 03 Reform initiatives for the middle tier must be institutionalised within existing government structures and budget lines.** This requires greater role clarity, protected time for instructional support in classrooms and continuity of reform efforts. Only when these conditions are in place can middle tier functionaries experience tangible changes in their day-to-day work and effectively drive improvements in teaching and learning. In the intervention, the funding was required for the training of middle tier officers as observers

and mentors. Post the training, the middle tier officers continue to observe and support teachers as part of their job. The state leadership can leverage the insights generated from this program to design teacher training and provide on-site support through cluster-level meetings.

- 04 Additionally, when teachers and middle tier officials are **recognised for their efforts, given feedback and supported** towards improvement, it provides significant impetus to grow and achieve visible change in their performance.

Points to consider for Practitioners attempting a similar adaptation

01 Define non-negotiables while allowing flexibility

Maintain core quality standards (e.g., training rigour, observation protocols) while adapting to contextual constraints.

02 Strengthen leadership engagement

Institutionalise regular review mechanisms involving senior leadership to sustain focus, accountability, and momentum.

03 Invest in continuous capacity building

Move beyond one-time training to ongoing support, refresher sessions, and peer learning opportunities for both middle tier officers and teachers.

04 Plan proactively for risks

Anticipate challenges such as officer transfers, workload spikes, and competing priorities through buffer planning and larger observer pools.

05 Strengthen communication and accountability

Use formal and semi-formal (WhatsApp) communication channels for continuous coordination and touch points, and clearly define roles and milestones to ensure transparency and oversight of ‘what success looks like’ across all stakeholders

06 Build intentional data-to-action pathways:

Through structured processes (e.g., dissemination workshops, review discussions, planning templates) that translate observation data into targeted teacher support interventions.

06

Annexures

Rubric on adherence to observation protocols for Observers and Mentors:



Classroom Observation Planning

Low	Medium	High
• The observer does not know about the target observations. The observer has no plan for observation. All observations are done at the last minute to meet the target	• The observer vaguely knows about the target observations. The observer has some observations planned, however, most of the observations are either unplanned or planned at the last minute	• The observer clearly knows the target observations. The observer has planned all the observations to meet the target.



Observation Protocol

Low	Medium	High
• The observer does not sit at the back and observes the class by looking at students and talking to the teacher and students	• The observer sits at the back and observes the class without talking to the teacher or students most of the time	• The observer sits at the back and observes the class without talking to the teacher or students



Note-taking

Low	Medium	High
The observer does not take notes at all. And if he/she does take notes, then the notes lack evidence.	The observer takes some notes with evidence, but the rest are unclear.	The observer takes all notes with evidence.



Using Manual during Observation

Low	Medium	High
The observer does not code using the observer manual and mostly relies on memory	The observer refers to the manual sometimes. However, he/she codes superficially using the manual.	The observer always refers to the manual for coding.





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