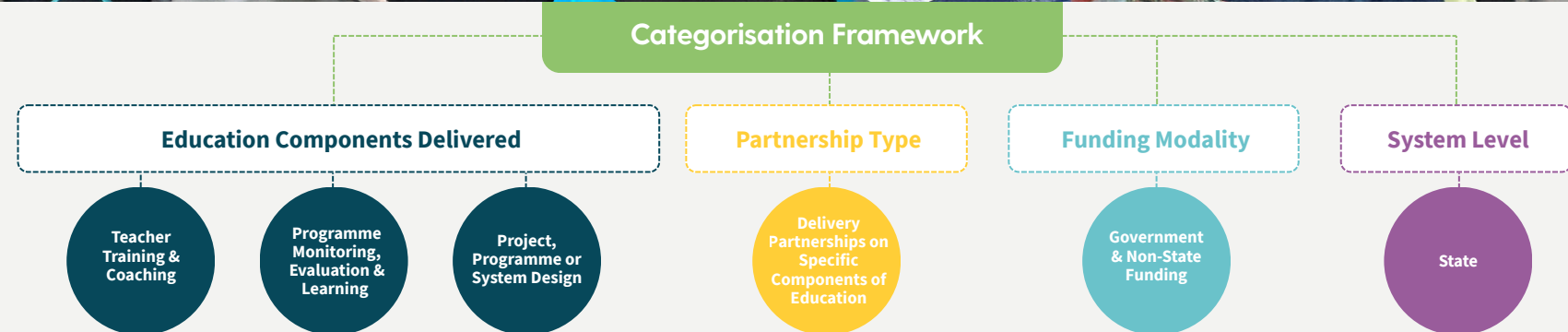


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Simple Education Foundation New Delhi, India



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Background of the Partnership

Over 100 million children in India rely on the public education system for free, high-quality learning¹.

Simple Education Foundation (SEF) ensures that every child in these schools has access to skilled, loving, and intuitive teachers who enable their learning and empower them to thrive. SEF achieves this by designing teacher-strengthening programmes at both the state and school levels, providing training, classroom coaching, and tools. In partnership with State Government bodies and local government schools, they deliver these programmes to every teacher, ensuring quality education for all.

From 2013-2021, SEF partnered directly with Government schools in the states of Delhi and Uttarakhand in India. These immersive programmes enabled SEF to gain deep insights into the support system that enables teachers. Two key areas of growth emerged:

- Teachers' struggle to implement state-level policies in their unique contexts, with little support or scope for adaptability
- Given the massive size of the State education systems (for context, India's capital city of Delhi has 80000 teachers) in India, Governments' struggle with operationalising high-quality programmes and evaluating student-level impact

India's [New Education Policy 2020](#) rolled out along with

an updated [National Curriculum Framework](#) and the launch of a nationwide foundational learning goal called [NIPUN Bharat](#).

Each of them set ambitious goals for children's holistic learning and foundational literacy and numeracy.

This came at a critical point, where school systems, teachers, and children had just started to reintegrate from school closures from the COVID-19 pandemic. In this backdrop, SEF kick-started a partnership with the State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT)² in Delhi, India. It was a time when the education system was embracing an ambitious new vision for children's learning, even as schools remained closed and teachers struggled to connect with their students.

Together with the Delhi government SEF anchored itself on a key question. **“What do teachers need to bring these policies into reality?”**



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Overview of the Programme

Design of the programme

Through this partnership with SCERT Delhi, SEF became one of the core knowledge partners supporting the state to reform its in-service teacher development system and build a 360-degree support ecosystem responsive to teachers' needs.

SEF worked closely with SCERT's administrative leadership, academic faculty, facilitators, and coaches. They anchored their approach in the belief that sustainable change cannot be achieved by building parallel systems. As SCERT launched and managed new government initiatives to transform teacher professional development in Delhi—providing policy direction, infrastructure, and delivery mechanisms - SEF contributed technical expertise to design, implement, and monitor these programmes. They also helped build institutional capacity and equip SCERT with tools and resources to fulfil their vision.

To ensure this, SEF embedded itself within SCERT's functioning. They engaged with all levels of government, enabling them to play their roles to the best of their potential and collectively build a thriving ecosystem for teachers.



Core interventions are based on elements developed by UNICEF ESARO's Structured Pedagogy Framework: The essential components for achieving real-time change in teaching and learning.

Diagram 1: Key Activities SEF engaged in through this partnership

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Implementation Timeline

2021
–
2022

- Kick-started partnership with Delhi's first ever online competency-based training module for teachers on building student relationships during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Created a cadre of experienced government teacher trainers—called Champion Master Trainers—to work alongside government resource persons in designing and leading teacher training sessions
- Co-designed and launched a state-wide Teacher Competency Framework⁴ with SCERT Delhi

2022
–
2023

- Launched the 2nd Annual Competency-Based module on 'Enabling Student Individual' and 'Group Worktime Strategies'
- Piloted classroom demonstrations and practice videos as an integral post-training structure
- Kick-started the 'Coach Capacity Building Programme' for teacher educators of the state
- Anchored state-wide induction for 9000+ new teachers, along with the launch of a handbook
- Launched and piloted Technology Management Information System (MIS) for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of training

2023
–
2024

- Instituted a needs analysis process⁵ to ensure data-driven module design
- Launched the 3rd annual competency-based module on strategies to integrate 21st century skills in classroom practice
- Rolled out a state-wide classroom observation form for coaches to support teacher adoption of strategies introduced in training

2024
–
2025

- Decentralised state-level trainings to the district level, and adapted the operational and design structure for the annual competency-based trainings
- Shared classroom observation analysis with key decision-makers and coaches to enable evidence-based decision-making on teacher support interventions
- Launched a module on 'Theatre in Education', along with a handbook to integrate arts and creativity into classrooms
- Co-conducted and launched an impact research study with a District Institute to assess the adoption of SEF's teacher trainings
- Published a research paper on 'Minimising Cascade Loss in Scale Trainings', based on the impact and findings in Delhi

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Impact of the Programme

Through this partnership, SEF has reached



62K Teachers



359 Coaches (Teacher Educators deputed by the state)



9 Local Institutes (District Institutes within the state)



14 Government Leaders



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Challenge 1 - Changing Leadership & Priorities

Despite the decentralised governance structure, a change in senior government leadership impacts programme implementation, especially as the new leadership might bring in a new vision or priorities for education.

In the three years of partnerships, SEF observed that at least half of the Government leaders move roles, departments. This leaves ambiguity and instability in programme consistency. Crucial programme activities and processes are halted, delayed, or discontinued as the new leadership looks to understand the landscape and existing programmes.

Mitigation Measures

- Invest in and build these new relationships early, especially by leveraging the credibility and trust built with existing stakeholders who can champion your cause.
- Understand the vision and motivations of the new leadership and identify its alignment with existing programme offerings. If there is alignment, make this visible by presenting it back to the leadership. If there are areas of misalignment, it might require considering changes in your approach to meet the outcomes.
- Identify key programme processes and interventions that can be institutionalised. This ensures that they are not people-dependent and can sustain even if there is a change in leadership.

- Be present at crucial spaces like budget and annual planning to support stakeholders in seeing the interventions that have created an impact and require government resources to sustain in the long term.

Learnings in Action

SEF advocated for the institutionalisation of conducting annual needs analysis before designing teacher training. This has now become a standard operating procedure in the State and across districts. Every year, teacher professional development interventions are based on classroom needs and teacher preferences. This process has sustained even when government leadership has shifted.



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Challenge 2 - Changing Operations & Structures

A change in operational structures and delivery mechanisms impacts implementation, especially when the non-state actors' programmes are closely tied to these structures, e.g., delivery of teacher training shifts from a centralised (state-anchored) to a decentralised (district-anchored) approach. The implications of this can range from:

- A lack of communication
- No clear decisions on new processes required to adapt to structural changes
- Lack of resources to manage the change

Mitigation Measures

- Carry out a landscape understanding to identify the different state bodies that are involved and impacted, their responsibilities, and the process and communication channels they work with.
- Understand if the priorities and requirements have changed and evaluate which parts of your programme can be adapted and which cannot. Through negotiation, a win-win partnership can be secured by taking on adaptations to your programme which are feasible and communicating changes that cannot be accommodated. For these, external partnerships can also be leveraged.



Learnings in action

In 2024-25, teacher trainings were decentralised, and districts were to conduct contextualised trainings for their teachers. This shift in process led to 9 district-wise needs analysis being conducted.

SEF studied each district's findings and met one-to-one with the leadership to understand the common and unique needs across District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). They mapped out common training module offerings and personalisation needs for each district. This enabled them to have a win-win partnership as SEF was able to balance fixed and adaptable elements of their programme offerings while maintaining a high-quality experience for all teachers.

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Guidance for Similar Government Non-State Partnerships

Guidance for Non-State Actors



System capacity strengthening builds through ownership and collaboration

Learning by doing applies to government resource persons as well. Work with government teams through co-working groups and shared planning spaces to build capacity and foster sustained ownership. Ownership builds motivation and stronger adoption of interventions across all levels in the system.

Strengthen existing structures and processes

View the government ecosystem as interconnected. Incremental reforms in large scale systems can have a high impact if planned and executed well. Align efforts with existing structures and focus on increasing their efficiency and effectiveness rather than creating new or parallel systems which might not last in the longer term.

Partner with the system, not around it

Acknowledge the experience, knowledge, and insight of government educators and administrators who have been part of the system for decades. Design support that builds from within — strengthening what already works. Approach the work with curiosity, not certainty. Listen deeply, stay flexible, and co-create solutions rather than imposing them.

Leverage the power of collaboration

Treat other actors — NGOs, teacher networks, academic bodies — as partners, not competitors. Coordinate efforts to avoid duplication and amplify collective impact.

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1. Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), “Home,” Ministry of Education, Government of India, accessed June 5, 2025. <https://udiseplus.gov.in/#/en/home>
2. State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) in India are government bodies that design school curricula, develop teacher training programmes, and support education policy implementation at the state level. They adapt national guidelines to state needs, ensuring quality education across public schools.
3. District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) are government-run institutions at the district level in India, established to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education. They provide training, resources, and support to teachers and educational administrators, focusing on both pre-service and in-service teacher training. They ensure National and State level needs are adapted for local needs.
4. SCERT Delhi x SEF’s Teacher Competency Framework. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QvEJ8RJsP4h5d-9krguoE3sREul2osmd/view?usp=drive_link
5. SEF’s Needs Analysis Framework. https://drive.google.com/file/d/18B36Pgm_lemOzwtJBFsjGOb-Axulj_6B/view?usp=drive_link

If you use any of the resources shared above, reach out to connect@sef.org.in to share any thoughts, experiences or questions.