

## **Study of UNICEF - Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme (KPALP)**

### **COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP - DISCUSSION ON TEACHER SUPPORT & CAREER SYSTEMS**

#### **CONCEPT NOTE & AGENDA**

It is widely acknowledged that school-based, ongoing, and practice-based teacher professional development is a crucial factor in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Pedagogic decentralisation is advocated for developing school teachers as professionals (Sayed & Sarangapani, 2020; Sayed, 2010; Hoppers, 1998). Through the DPEP programme, DIETs and BRCs/CRCs were established in India to facilitate educational decentralisation and teacher professional development. However, through these institutions, programmes have not had much success in transforming teachers' practices or developing robust professional development models. In actuality, the professional identity of the mid-level functionaries - Cluster Resource Persons / Kendra Pramukhs - has not been adequately defined, and their roles have become more administrative than academic. As a result, teachers' professional development is frequently limited to one-time workshops that are disconnected from their classroom contexts and do not offer school-based or local support and mentoring. Additionally, career advancement opportunities are essential for establishing the professional identity of a school teacher and motivating teachers.

In India, the majority of teaching careers are flat. Few formal opportunities exist for educators to demonstrate their skills and abilities in specialised or leadership positions (UNESCO, 2022). Forming an academic identity for mid-level functionaries is a crucial stage in creating career advancement models for teachers. The OECD(2019) report suggests that implementing career structure reforms necessitates the consideration of multiple factors, including (1) using a competency-based framework to evaluate teacher performance; however, the teacher standards themselves must evolve in collaboration with teachers and other stakeholders. (2) Teacher evaluations should not be directly tied to student performance, as this leads to unintended consequences such as teachers teaching to the tests/examinations. (3) Certification and professional development as a criterion for career advancement are among the most transparent methods for evaluating teachers. However, the eligibility of institutions to offer certification programmes and the quality of these programmes must be regulated. (4) Specialized capacity building and professional development as a criterion for horizontal career advancement are more effective, particularly for those assuming leadership responsibilities such as mentors and principals. (5) Providing school teachers with a balance of autonomy and support and opportunities for collaboration facilitates their career advancement. (6) For teachers to be effective both in and out of the classroom, they must balance their workloads and work hours to tackle various tasks. (7) Well-designed self-reporting mechanisms and evaluation processes effectively motivate teachers, foster collegiality, and respect teacher autonomy.

UNICEF, with CEQUE as the implementing partner, designed and implemented the Kendra Pramukh Academic Leadership Programme (KPALP) to improve the quality of the school support provided by the Kendra Pramukhs (KPs) or Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) to teachers to improve the teaching-learning process and, consequently, student learning levels. CETE, TISS, Mumbai studied the processes and impact of the KPAL programme. The objective of this study was to analyse the programme design and its implementation design and adoption via an in-depth qualitative study of the programme in one district and understand the impact on the field concerning changes in KPs knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices, school-level processes, teacher practices, the support provided during the pandemic and the operation of the Professional Learning Communities(PLCs) established for KPs.

The evidence gathered showed that the KPALP(pilot) was successful. KPs have developed the skills and knowledge of mentoring based on the professional development they have received and have altered their attitudes towards mentoring to build positive relationships with teachers, resource persons, block leaders, and even students. Stakeholders were able to identify specific improvements in KPs' skills, attitudes, and practices at all levels of the system, from the school to the block level. In the five blocks we visited in the Palghar district, the programme appears to have permeated the system.

Specifically, KPs improved their data analysis, classroom observation, teacher feedback, and action plan preparation skills. In each of these domains, all ten KPs we interviewed were able to reflect on their learning and identify specific behavioural modifications and adjustments to their practices as a result of KPALP's capacity building. Teachers must modify their knowledge, attitudes, and practices for sustained practice improvement (Sarangapani, 2021). There is abundant evidence that school-level processes concerning teacher support have improved. In each school we visited, teachers remarked that they were motivated to try new ideas, welcomed the KPs, and valued the nature of the support they received. Classroom observations, teacher feedback, and collaborative action planning were highlighted based on a shared understanding of objectives. Forming relationships is a crucial aspect of change that facilitates the spread and adoption of programmes (Daly, 2015). The results often indicate that relationships between KPs and teachers, principals, and cluster/block resource officers have improved.

Teacher's adopting active pedagogies was particularly evident in the pedagogical ideas the KPs were exposed to, as teachers strongly desired to innovate and introduce new concepts in expressive talk and writing. We observed that simple scaffolds, such as templates and frameworks/models, assisted KPs in proposing these ideas to teachers and enabled teachers to implement and experiment with the new pedagogical ideas. However, we found little evidence of KPs providing such assistance without the assistance of experts like CEQUE. There is a significant knowledge gap among KPs regarding research-based ideas for foundational literacy and numeracy, as evidenced by the limited changes to teachers' pedagogy, particularly regarding numeracy. However, the PLC provided a conducive environment for KPs to acquire such knowledge. Teachers also demonstrated a more nuanced understanding of the issues related to the education of tribal children. They identified specific language and communication-related issues and worked with the KPs to find solutions.

During the COVID-19 quarantine and lockdown, the MFs and KPs displayed leadership. Many KPs were able to contribute to the development of resources for online transactions, the modification of the mode of training and support, and the collection of data to determine the educational requirements of students. However, KPs were helpless regarding the lack of resources and devices among students, and they expressed genuine concern for the learning loss they observed once schools reopened.

The PLC was an effective social learning environment for KPs. It provided a venue for both peer-to-peer and expert-to-peer learning. In addition, the PLC was used to discuss issues and seek collaborative solutions. The PLC enabled ongoing support for KPs and encouraged KPs to transform cluster meetings into additional learning meetings and a PLC for teachers. Instead of traditional workshops, professional development is most effective when social learning opportunities are created, according to research (Daly, 2015). The mid-level functionaries' roles have always been ill-defined (Goi, 2011), and the PLC was able to develop the KPs' professional identity and bring role clarity. KPs, through their sharing discussions, were able to validate their practices and understand their role clearly in providing academic support to teachers as they were able to see the results of their changes in practice. Such a building of professional identity will enable the way towards creating career pathways for teachers.

The dissemination of such concepts throughout the state is still a question that needs to be talked about and answered. Many questions haven't been answered about the expansion of the programme and its incorporation into the general public school system. According to the UNICEF team member, very few organisations focus on the issues of mid-level functionaries, including their roles, recruitment efforts, and professional development. On the one hand, the State seems to be questioning the affordability of this cadre from a financial standpoint, as evidenced by the fact that it is not actively recruiting into the KP cadre and consequently increasing the responsibilities of KPs to manage more clusters. On the other hand, KPs have stressed the importance of being allotted to smaller clusters to pay more frequent visits to schools. The long-term impact of such a programme hinges on the policies and practices adopted by the State towards the KP or cluster resource person cadre.

The KPALP has fundamentally achieved the objectives that it set out through the design, development and implementation of the pilot programme, bringing about change in KPs attitudes and practices and thereby positively impacting teachers' practices and students' learning. What needs to be investigated further are more systemic approaches and discussions at the policy level regarding how to carry out such a programme on a larger scale while preserving the quality of the outcomes. Cohen and Ball (2000) argue that innovations that have aimed to alter classroom practice or instruction have typically not had sustained success as much as curricular reforms like textbooks and standardised testing. There are several studies and research (Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013; Sancar, Atal & Deryakulu, 2021; Lim, Juliana & Liang, 2020) and frameworks (Rogers, 1995; UNICEF, 2019; Olsen, Rodríguez & Elliott, 2022; Wolfenden, 2022) available to understand and develop frameworks and designs to scale educational programmes, that should be considered as a next step. For example, these frameworks guide and scaffold the scalabilities of the programme, including what elements to scale, agencies involved in the scaling and identifying technology and other levers and tools to use for scaling. The "scaling-up" of the KPALP is an important next step for the programme, and strategies need to be deliberated on in collaboration with multiple organisations working to improve teacher support across India and, of course, the state government systems that will implement the programme at scale.

The suggested agenda for a collaborative workshop that includes different stakeholders involved in the design, development and implementation of teacher support systems to strengthen teachers' continuous professional development and develop models for teacher career advancement is presented in the table.

Suggested Agenda		
Day	Topic	Description
Day 1		
Morning Session	Teacher Support Systems	Discuss the design and implementation of teacher support systems, what has worked and issues related to implementing such programmes.
Afternoon Session	Policies and Practices - Teacher support, CPD and career structures	Discuss the policies for effectively implementing teacher support systems, including pedagogical, financial, career and institutional aspects.
Day 2		
Morning Session	Models of Scaling Up	Workshop on models of scaling up pedagogical innovations and educational reforms.
Afternoon Session	Applying scaling models to teacher support programmes	Using KPALP as a case do a collaborative exercise using a scaling model to design KPALP.
Day 3		
Morning Session	Summarise the scaling-up model for teacher support.	Consolidate and summarise the learning from the case study (from day 2).
Afternoon Session	Way Forward	Discuss the next steps and for further action.

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