

synergy summit 2022



DEVI SANSTHAN
Dignity Education
Vision International
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PARADIGM SHIFT in FLN

Making India literate and numerate
in months, not years

11-12 JULY 2022

SUMMARY REPORT

In partnership with



Initiatives of DEVI Sansthan



Media partner



Venue: India International Center, Max Muller Marg, New Delhi

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BACKGROUND OF THE SYNERGY SUMMIT

After 2 years of school closures due to COVID-19, primary school teachers in a government school are struggling to bring their children up to grade 3 level in a short time. Children in grades 1 and 2 are entering school for the first time with little to no pre-schooling. Many children in grades 3-5 have also lost FLN skills and are unable to grasp their grade-level curriculum. Further, government schools are seeing increased enrolments as many children have shifted from budget private to government schools due to financial distress. The majority of government and non-government school teachers are facing an unprecedented burden and suffering from limited capacity on addressing this FLN crisis for so many children in a short time.

The New Education Policy 2020 of India places the highest importance on FLN, "The rest of this Policy will become relevant for our students only if this most basic learning requirement is first achieved."

To this end, National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy, or NIPUN Bharat scheme was launched in 2021 "to ensure that every child in India gains foundational numeracy and literacy by the end of Grade 3. NIPUN Bharat further focuses on transforming the monotonous education system into an integrated, enjoyable, all-inclusive and engaging."

One more year without FLN can add to the disaster caused by the nearly two years of school closures. According to UNICEF, COVID has wiped out years of progress. Worldwide nearly 70% of the 10-year-olds unable to read, write or do basic numeracy. According to Azim Premji University Survey, 92% of the children in India have lost at least one language ability in literacy and 82% in numeracy.

The speed with which children learn is more relevant today than ever before. Typically, even after three years of being in school, or by the end of Grade 3, up to 75% of the children could not read pre-Pandemic.

A massive effort is thus required combined with new and highly disruptive methods of teaching and learning that clearly demonstrate they are effective in accelerating literacy, improving accountability, creating transparency and are joyful, all-inclusive and

engaging. This requires collaboration at all levels, pilots of new ideas, and collection of evidence.

The Synergy Summit focused on how to achieve these goals and accelerate Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for all children.

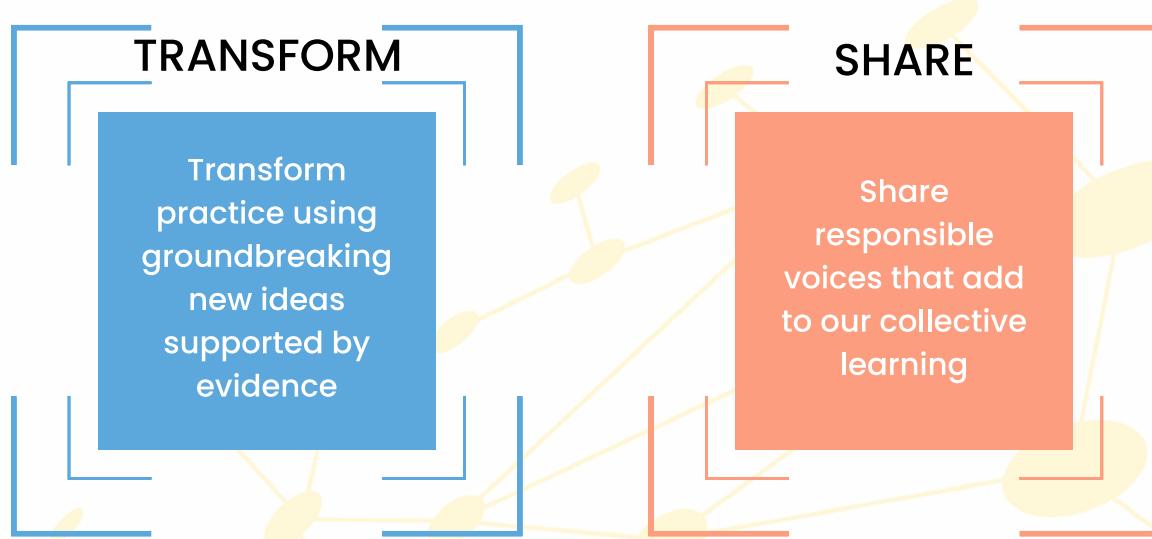
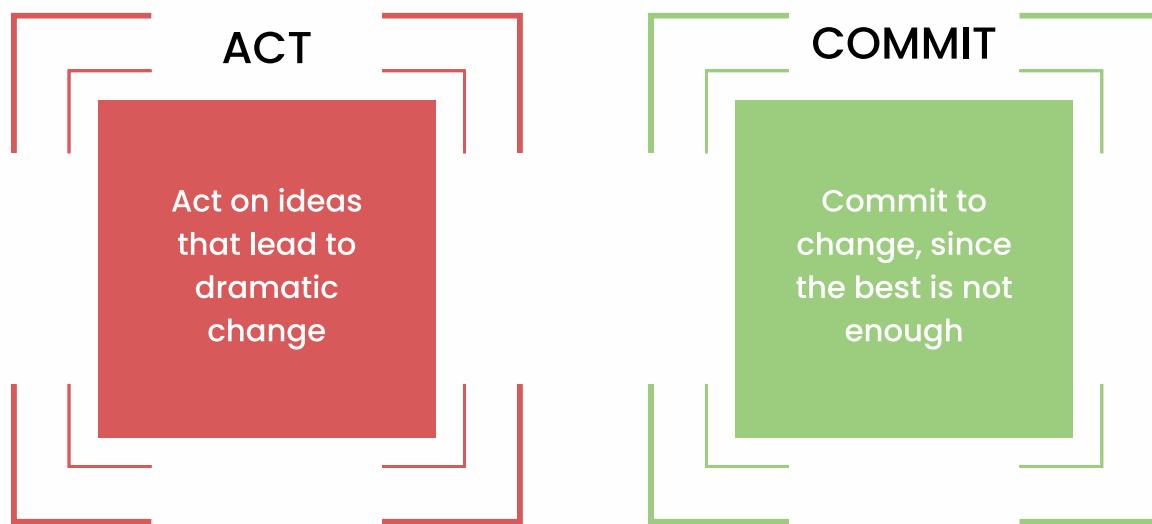
Top leading senior policymakers, ambassadors, heads of international and national NGOs, corporations, donor-agencies, and change-makers from India and overseas joined 'THE SYNERGY SUMMIT' to come together and synergize for the literacy movement.

Synergy Summit, India's most strategic summit, on Paradigm Shift in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: Making India Literate in Months, not in Years! took place on 11-12th July 2022, at India International Center, Delhi. The Chief Guest of the summit was Dr. Abdulla Rasheed Ahmed, Honorable Minister of State for Education, Republic of Maldives.



Why SYNERGY ???

The four **A C T S** of SYNERGY Summit are:

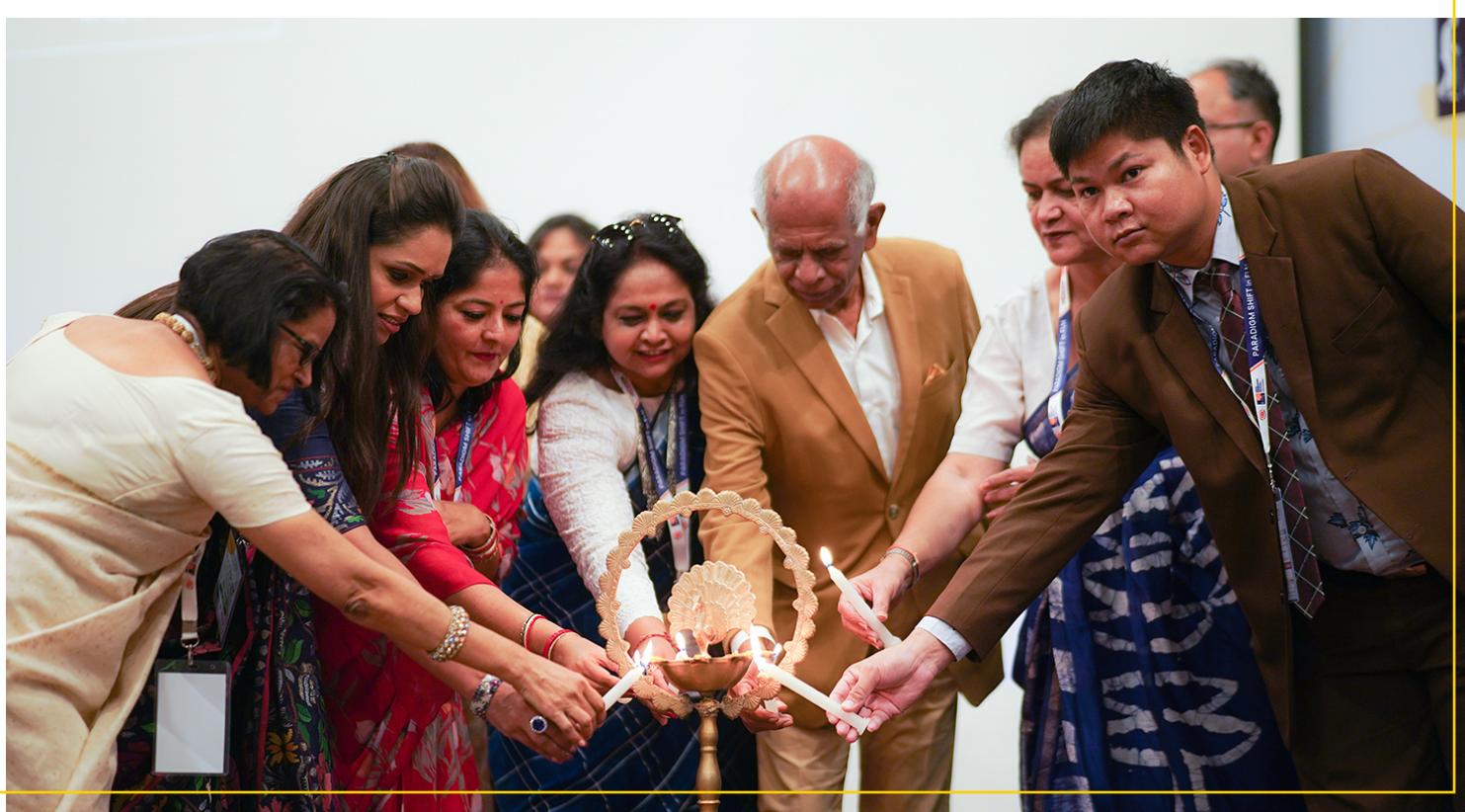


“ Discover transforming new directions to achieve the goals of FLN, and help navigate the future of education. ”

INAUGURAL SESSION

The summit was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, Dr. Abdulla Rasheed Ahmed, Honorable Minister of State for Education, Republic of Maldives, in the presence of Dr. Sunita Gandhi, Founder and CEO of DEVI Sansthan, Mr. Khou Zaiyaoza, Embassy of the Lao PDR, Dr. Payal Kanodia, Trustee of

M3M Foundation, Dr. Aishwarya Mahajan, President of M3M Foundation, K.P Fabian, Former Indian Diplomat and other dignitaries. Honorable Defence Minister of India, Shri Rajnath Singh virtually graced the event and shared his thoughts through a video message.



The two-day summit saw active participation and discussions on FLN by various organizations.



Honorable Union Defense Minister of India, **Shri Rajnath Singh** appreciating the summit in his video recorded message commented, "There is an old saying: 'If you want to beautify your life, you should invest in business, but if you want to beautify generations, you should invest in education'. Events such as this are an investment in the field of education, which in the form of returns will pave the way for betterment."



Continuing further, he added, "The theme of the summit is very important. If India has to grow in terms of knowledge economy and if it wants to create a knowledge society, then foundation literacy will be its first and most necessary step. If we look at the actual situation of our country, even after 75 years of our independence, due to various reasons, we have not been able to reach an ideal position in foundational literacy. Although there has been a rise in enrollment rate but we have not been able to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills to the extent that we should have been. Several statistics reflect that children of class V in rural government schools lacked foundational literacy skills and this situation has worsened in the last two years during the Covid-19 pandemic. There is an urgent need to figure out the problems and find a solution. We need similar efforts which can take foundational literacy not only to the pre-pandemic state, but beyond that. In this direction, I would like to congratulate Ms. Sunita Gandhi for her concept and programme

titled 'Accelerating Learning for All'. As I have been informed that through this programme people can be made literate in 90 days, I hope a large number of people will join the initiative and come forward to support it."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CojNUqYxvkg>

DEVI Sansthan has joined hands with M3M Foundation and signed an MOU for the implementation and advancement of FLN in 10 identified schools in Shamli district, Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. Abdulla Rasheed Ahmed, Minister of State for Education, Republic of Maldives said, "Foundational Literacy and Numeracy is the foundation of education, it is also the basis of life and learning should be made fun and enjoyable."

He further added, "I am thankful to Dr. Sunita Gandhi, who very generously agreed to implement her program in all the schools of Maldives. We have signed an MOU between Ministry of Education, Republic of Maldives and DEVI Sansthan for a system wide reform."



DISRUPTIVE LITERACY

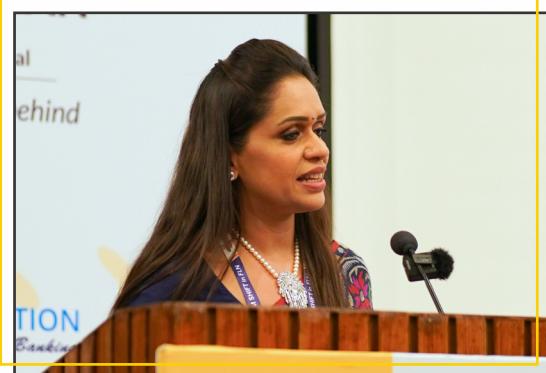
Book Launch



A book: "**Disruptive Literacy: A Roadmap for Urgent Global Action**" penned by Dr. Sunita Gandhi along with Tom Delaney, Jonathan Hakim and Mashhood Alam Bhat, as an effort to come up with practical ideas for solving India's greatest challenge in education:

Foundational Literacy & Numeracy, was launched at the Synergy Summit. The book is published by Bloomsbury, India and is provided herewith on the link: www.dignityeducation.org/book. It is also available on amazon.in.

PLENARY SESSION 1



Dr Payal Kanodia

Trustee, M3M Foundation

Dr Payal Kanodia is a Trustee in M3M Foundation and Director in M3M Group and plays a pivotal role in the functioning of her family business.

Ms Archana Joshi

Director, Deepak Foundation

Archana Joshi is the Director of Deepak Foundation. Under her leadership, Deepak Foundation has won several CSR Awards in various development sectors.



Mr K P Fabian

Indian Diplomat

Ambassador K. P. Fabian is an Indian Diplomat who served in the Indian Foreign Service between 1964 and 2000, during which time he was posted to Madagascar, Austria, Iran, Sri Lanka, Canada, Finland, Qatar and Italy.

PLENARY SESSION 2



Mr Thirumala Arohi

Senior Vice President, Infosys Ltd.

In his tenure at Infosys, which spans 23+ years, Thirumala Arohi has managed many vital client relationships for the Financial Services Europe based accounts before taking on the current role of Head of Education, Training and Assessment (ETA).

Ms Kamal Gaur

Deputy Director Programs Education, Save the Children

She has nearly twenty eight years of experience in development sector including Education Sector. Her key responsibilities, while working on different projects with the World Bank , European Union , DFID and JBIC have been to formulate.



Mr Santosh Phad

Founder, Thinksharp Foundation

Santosh is the founder and Managing trustee at Thinksharp Foundation. His idea of starting a social organisation to bridge this education gap comes from this first-hand experience of Rural-Urban education divide that he faced.

Ms Anushree Mishra

Director of Programs Plan International

She is the Director of Programs in Plan International (India Chapter) for Education, Livelihoods and Child Protection and Gender Based Violence. She holds a Masters in Child Development from Delhi University.



PLENARY SESSION 3



Ms Shaveta Sharma-Kukreja

CEO & MD, Central Square Foundation

Shaveta is Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director at Central Square Foundation. Shaveta has been part of the founding team at CSF, and leads CSF's strategy, operations and strategic partnerships.

Mr Nixon Joseph

CEO, Children's Love Castles Trust

Mr Nixon Joseph, CEO, CLT India (Childrens Lovecastles Trust), Bengaluru, former President & Chief Operating Officer, SBI Foundation.



Mr Vaibhav Chauhan

Project Manager, HCL Foundation

Vaibhav Chauhan is associated with HCL Samuday as a Project Manager. His profile includes designing, monitoring and evaluation of projects under Education, and Livelihood verticals and also organization management and development.

PLENARY SESSION 4



Ms Swati Jha

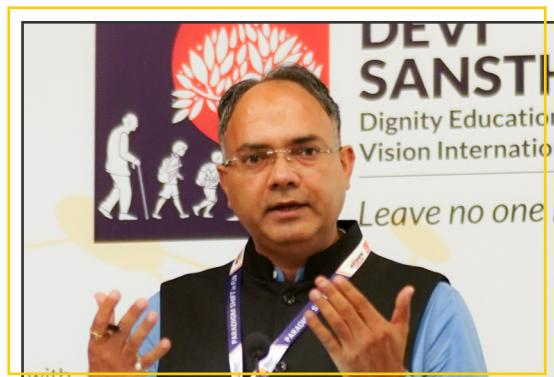
Program Director, American India Foundation

Swati Jha, Program Director, Learning and Migration Program (LAMP), at American India Foundation's India country office in Gurgaon. Her current assignment centers on addressing a highly neglected issue—the education of children affected by distress seasonal migration.

Ms Nandita Raval

Core Team Member, Piramal Foundation

Nandita Raval is a co-founder and Director at Kaivalya education foundation and leading 4 states in District Transformation program, Foundational learning, and Early childhood development program across 6 states.



Mr Pradeep Kumar

Director, Programs & Partnerships, Worldreader

Pradeep Kumar leads the expansion of Worldreader programs in India across many states in the Government and Affordable Private School Sector.

Mr Aishwarya Mahajan

President, M3M Foundation

He is currently associated with M3M Foundation, a philanthropic arm of one of India's leading real estate M3M Group as President. He has a Doctorate in Sociology from India with 22+ years of national and international experience.



Recommendations from all the

Keynote Speakers

1. Technology is a very powerful tool which in a very blended manner with the teachers and school system, augment the solution for literacy.
2. India is a minefield of successful pilots and failed scale-ups. Solutions that address the aspects of scalability and sustainability in the long run, need to be focused on.
3. Looking at the problem of literacy from a system lens and designing methods which focus on all stakeholders.
4. Keeping the solution simple and pragmatic. Let it be a phase wise approach!
5. Concept clarity and understanding of the subject should be given high importance and making education enjoyable while practicing.
6. The Companies can be advised to redirect a certain fixed high percentage of their CSR funds, towards Foundational Literacy and Numeracy for one financial year.
7. Extensive Behavior Change communication needs to be done and solving the gender issue.
8. Focusing on the last person of the delivery chain: Teachers
9. Learning to Read and then Reading to Learn should be followed as a concept, giving practice a higher place on the shelf.
10. Government + Society + Market needs to come together for betterment of education.
11. Work on schools with higher enrolment of students and make them model schools for the remaining to follow.
12. A hungry child will not learn or study, which makes nutrition as the first stepping stone towards education.
13. Responsive caregiving at home, involvement of Parents and home encouragement for monitoring and helping the child reach FLN level.
14. Each one Teach one: every privileged student should teach one underprivileged student
15. Overcoming barriers of language in education.
16. Come together, synergize and follow each other's experiences and replicate.
17. Recommend government employees to send their own children to government schools, this may help in enhancing the quality of schools.
18. Children of migrant labors should be admitted immediately to the school where they relocate on the basis of some common card or document so that his education continues uninterrupted.
19. Invest in bridging the learning gap due to covid for grade 3 and below and ensure all of them come back to school, focus on learning being the next step.
20. Student involvement through practical application of concepts



FELICITATION

1. PRANGAN FOUNDATION

- Their organization caters exclusively to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- While attending school/tutoring is a pre-requisite for children to attain FLN with SEN children however, depending on the level of learning disability, just introducing the child to school or to

collective tutoring may not be enough! Immense emphasis has to be placed on the value of and deployment of strategic methods in supporting children with SEN to read, write and communicate effectively so that they are able to express their needs.

2. GLOBAL INNOVATIVE FOUNDATION FOR TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

- This story of change demonstrated by the GIFTS NGO team tells you about how the small yet important initiative brings a significant change in building the Foundation of Literacy and Numeracy in slum kids. The journey started by focusing on their aim of imparting quality education to the less privileged section of society. They targeted the

slum population residing mostly near the Yamuna riverside and nearby areas. Moreover, the volunteers also encourage their parents to send their kids regularly to study, especially the girl child, as education only can improve their social and economic status contributing to their overall development.

3. ICFAI UNIVERSITY JHARKHAND

- Vidya Daan Scheme: To conduct Remedial Classes to the poor children from the villages and train them on IT skills. To donate text books to the Panchayat Schools. Organize Library-on-Wheels.
- Summer Youth Camp for the Rural Students of Jharkhand was conducted at the ICFAI University, Jharkhand campus from 21st June to 24th June

2022 . Thirty two rural students from neighbouring villages like Simaliya participated enthusiastically in the camp, organized under the banner of Institutional Social Outreach. Besides Yoga practice, a number of interesting activities like Newspaper reading, training on IT skills, general knowledge quizzes, career counselling, singing and dancing competitions were included in the summer camp.

4. JINGLE BELL NURSERY SCHOOL SOCIETY

- FLN learning saw major effectiveness when BaLa (Building as a learning aid) was introduced in our institutions including urban, rural and charity schools. The whole campus started buzzing with learning when every physical space of the institution was converted to learning area.
- Classroom Map and Outdoor Map on the floor: Introduces the children to an abstract concept like mapping and how large areas can be represented on paper.
- Children's Wall: The Children's Wall in the campus walls encourages children to express themselves with their creativity thoughts, paintings, graffiti, etc. Creative thought and expression get promoted through this.

- Door Angle: Children experience angles in familiar elements such as the doors in the school. They are used to introduce the concept of angles and are enhanced through markings on the floor
- Stairways: The stairways in the school promote the concept of counting, addition, subtraction, step counting, before, after and in-between numbers and younger children learn counting in a familiar, fun environment
- Goltara: It is made on the floor for numbers and language that is used by children in small groups to help them understand the number concepts and practice of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Also, language concepts like rhyming words, alphabet and word/picture associations

5. i-4 Connect Foundation

They started their journey to impart quality education for the children in 2009, at Government High school, Banapuram Village in Khammam district, Telangana. Their journey began with an immersive three-year action research project (2009-2012) to redefine education through

purposeful and skill-based learning, expanded the learning beyond four walls of schools and connecting to life to make whole village as classroom for 140 children, who were first generation learners in that village.

6. AROH FOUNDATION

- AROH has been working in the most critical foundational years of learning for a child for almost 12 years now. Launched in 2009, our flagship project Padho aur Badho (PAB), focused on enhancing learning outcomes and retention of children in schools with a unique Post Based Learning Curriculum, which was easy to grasp and stayed longer in children's memory.
- AROH has installed SMART classes in more than 200 schools in rural setups, Set up Digital Libraries, upgraded more than 500 Aanganwadis with supportive infrastructure. All these interventions were based on very user friendly interfaces, which delivered curriculum through audio-video mode, which again was very coherent. With these baby but buoyant steps together, AROH could benefit more than 50,000 children by far in urban slums and rural setups.

7. HCL FOUNDATION

- Starting off in 2017 with 10 GPs of 1 block (Kacchauna) of Hardoi district, now program is running in more than 190 GPs in 8 Blocks of Hardoi covering more than 1 lakh Neo Literates. An admirable feature has been the achievement of 100% Literacy Rate amongst the eligible population in 41 GPs of Kachhauna, 31 GPs of Kothawan and 41 GPs of Behandar.
- Sakshar Samuday – the adult literacy intervention began in 2017 with a group of 15 women. Semi-educated youth from villages, who are willing to act as instructors, are selected and trained to become Community Literacy Volunteers (CLV). The CLVs then use ICT-based modules to guide batches of learners and are paid a nominal incentive for their services.



- The learners are continually assessed throughout the 4-month program which ensures attainment of basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. The CLVs then use ICT-based modules to guide batches of learners and are paid a nominal incentive for their services. The

learners are continually assessed throughout the 4-month program which ensures attainment of basic reading, writing and arithmetic skills. So far more than 100000 adult women and men have benefitted from this intervention.

8. LITTLE STEPS MONTESSORI SCHOOL, BHUJ

- Little Steps Montessori School was established in the year 2000 by Rani Saheb Aarti Kumari Jadeja. The school is well known for its work in foundational literacy and numeracy.
- Children read and write with perfection. Children are assessed regularly on a daily, weekly , monthly basis. Their work is reviewed regularly and remedial are done within the classroom right from Pre -Primary. The compassion and love given to the children by all members of

the school, working with different areas of development of the child brings out the best in each child. The children at LSMS are not only taught from their textbooks and syllabus but are also taught life lessons, good manners, respect, care, and kindness towards all living beings. Each day is a new day and since 22years we innovate and present activities to satisfy the curiosity and sense of enquiry of the child ,such that learning is enjoyable.

9. SBI FOUNDATION

- SBI Foundation has been committed to advance the FLN mission of India and has had the good fortune of establishing strong partnerships with organisations working to address this challenge in different parts of the country. We started our work on foundational learning through the Prarambhik Bhasha Shikshan Karyakram in the state of Haryana. This was India's first ever development impact bond – the Haryana Early Literacy Outcomes Development Impact Bond (DIB). This 3 year project in partnership with Language and Learning Foundation was envisioned to build capacities of government school teachers with the aim of improving language learning outcomes of approximately ~16,000-18,000 children across 474 government schools in Ambala. Since 2020, this programme has been able to significantly improve Hindi language learning outcomes for children in the district of Ambala and its learnings have

been integrated in the FLN Mission of the state of Haryana.

- In 2021, we partnered with DEVI Sansthan for the Global Dreamshala Web-based Literacy Project, an initiative for supporting a foundational literacy and numeracy programme in Hindi to empower 10,000 illiterate adults (15-60 years old) and out-of-school children (6-14 years) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, using a web application based model. The Literacy Now app enables teachers and volunteers to conduct interactive assessments and deliver interactive content including videos and games to teach FLN in an enjoyable and effective manner. The app will also enable partner organizations like governments, schools and NGOs to use large-scale data for decision-making. The project nurtures the philosophy of 'each one reach and teach at least one' and is spearheaded by volunteer students from the schools of Lucknow.

RECOMMENDATIONS *from* PARTICIPANTS



- While FLN talks large about the need and concept, policy should also speak about its implementation phasing, monitoring & assessment aspects. Also, rather than creating sequential learning, a parallel model catering to both basic learning along with critical thinking is required.
- Unanimously agreeing to the fact that there is dearth of trained teachers anyways in the Indian Education system, suggestion to engage para workers and volunteers for FLN implementation can be totally ineffective as there is no mention of its financial or executional arrangements. Even training of existing teachers shall needs to be done.
- Third could be on adequate resources as it recommends enhancing resources, but how and from where is the question.
- With the involvement of multiple departments like State/UT Administration, National Institute of Open Schooling, Departments of Adult, Continuing Education and Life Long Learning in Higher Education Institutions, , National Informatics Center, State Centre for Literacy in SCERT, multiple Ministries and supporting bodies like Directorate of Education for All (DEFA), DoSEL, MoE, National Center for Literacy in NCERT, Technical Support Group (National Project Management Unit) through EdCIL (India) Ltd., ensuring coordination sometimes can become challenging. Regular avenues for improving convergence should be explored.

- Besides this the Financial Outlay of 1037.90 Crore spread over 5 crore beneficiaries comes down to INR 207.58/-Learner. This also includes amount to be paid to CLVs. Thus, there is a case for increased financial support to the cause.
 - Teachers to be trained in identifying visual processing issues in students: It is easier to influence a young child's brain and give him an accurate perception of the symbols that are the foundation of both literacy and numeracy.
 - Compulsory training for students and teachers to consciously align the mind and body to experience the state of focus would optimize student potential.
- Teaching students that are not focused is like working on an unplugged computer.
 - Focus on Mastery over Memory: Creative expression of learning and real-life problem solving should form an integral part of pedagogy and assessment.
 - Statutory assessment of children under compulsory school age should be carried out to start with early intervention programs by Government appointed agencies reaching out to Children with SEN even at geographically isolated places through technology and providing training programs to SEN parents.



- To create Legal aid cells for parents of children with SEN. Aim would be to provide advice and information regarding the rights of a child and guidance to plan for the protection of the interests of the SEN child after the demise of parents.
- A stronger right for children with SEN to be educated at a mainstream school coupled with necessary infrastructure and as is equally important for SEN children, sensitizing all stake-holders (teachers, parents, peers etc.) responsible for the child's journey.
- There should be a proper financial support system with fewer complications for economically backwards, lower castes and minority class belonging parents because they often depend on their kids for livelihood.
- Proper rewards and checkpoint systems were developed for teachers and strictly imposed on both governments and private schools, similar to the pattern of the corporate world.



- There should be an introduction of external agency assessment after grade 3 or grade 5 that examines the status of the child and provide a support system to them if they are unsuccessful
- Teacher Training: The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) often have high vacancies, insufficient funds, and severe constraints impeding them from acting responsive to local needs.
- This core function of an education system requires a strong public sector, sufficient human resources, and a proper infrastructure.
- Policymakers should also consider increasing budgetary allocations for teacher training institutions
- Revised Learning Approach: Education systems in many countries, in an attempt to boost learning quality, have moved away from teaching reading and mathematics in incremental, skill-based ways.
- Culturally responsive teaching, which strives to make learning relevant to the lived realities of children, and critical mathematics education, which teaches maths as a tool to critically read the world, are among several approaches widely sought after by schools worldwide.
- Schools with better resources can dedicate time, resource and space to construct libraries for children to inculcate reading practise at the early age. Blend storytelling and story reading sessions once a week. Encourage teachers and students to write stories. As children grow, the schools need to promote culture to review and learn everyday activities such as reading newspaper, going to post office, making grocery list, filling basic forms, which may keep them connected to their community life.
- The critiques argue that building reading proficiency and basic arithmetic skills are very important. However, formulating learning as the only mastery of piecemeal reading and arithmetic skills may intensify rote learning culture, may ignore application of imagination and holistic components of learning. Our experience also shows, learning without context, reciting without questioning and critical thinking will become impediment for holistic learning. In contrary, reading with understanding and learning math or other calculations to apply in real life context will strengthen the purpose of foundational learning.

Global Advisory Committee



Yogesh Kumar, IAS



Yogesh Kumar



Vicky Colbert



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disruptive
literacy
a global partnership

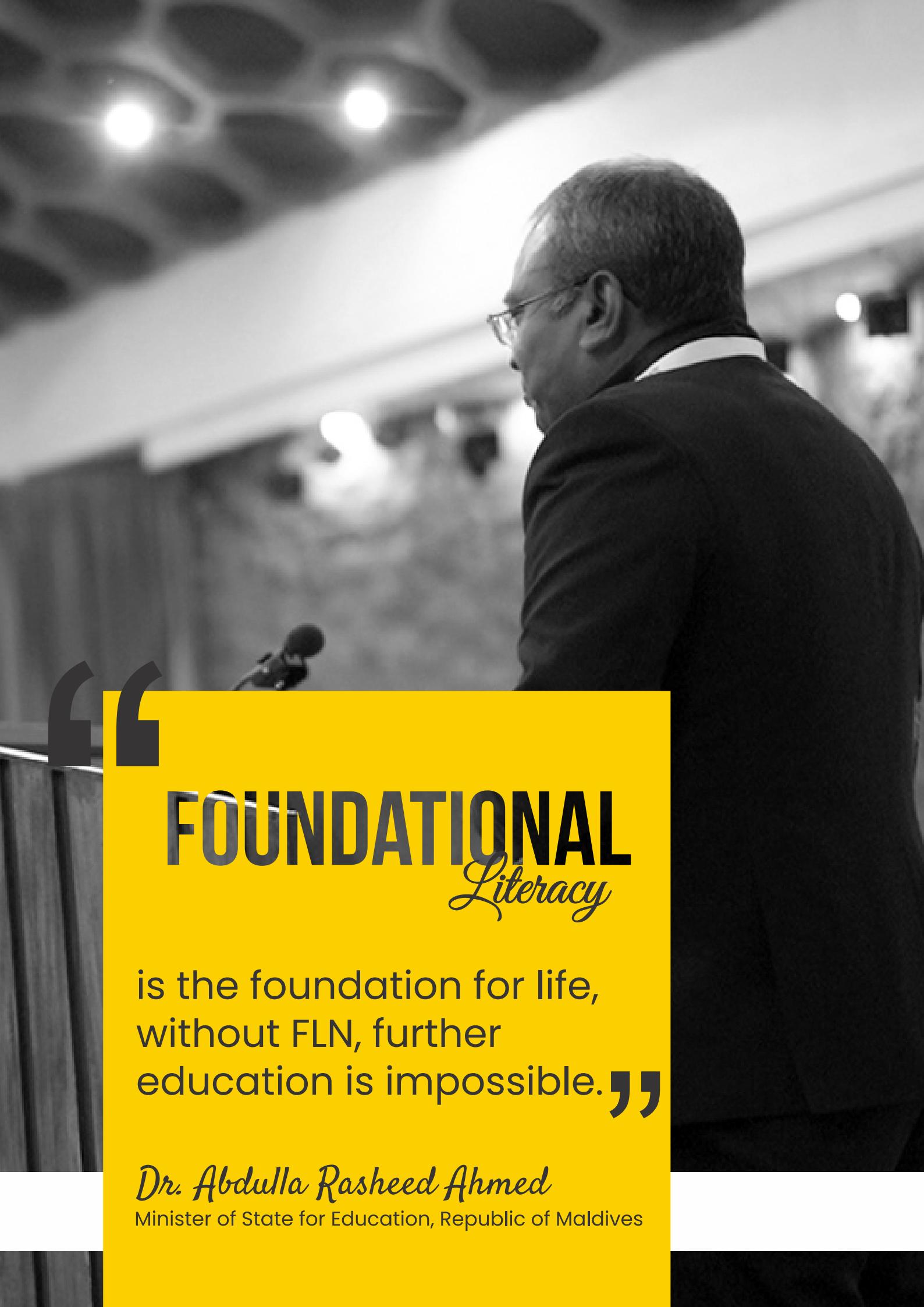
1st Global Summit on

Disruptive Literacy & Education

UPCOMING

9–11 March 2023

**LOOKING FOR
PARTNERS**



“

FOUNDATIONAL *Literacy*

is the foundation for life,
without FLN, further
education is impossible.”

Dr. Abdulla Rasheed Ahmed

Minister of State for Education, Republic of Maldives