



ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE REPORT.

Le-meridian Hotel, Delhi

Date: 15th March 2022

Time: 3:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Panellists: Mr. Rishi Rajvanshi (Room to Read), Ms. Kamayani Joshi (Mentor Teacher, DoE), Ms. Dropti Sharma (Pratham Education Foundation), Ms. Prachi Gaur (Tech Mahindra), Ms. Jasmeet Walia (CreateNet), Mr. Deepak Joshi (Language & Learning Foundation) and Mr. Harish Yadav (Mentor Teacher, DoE).

Moderator - Ms. Swaha Sahoo (Country Director, STIR Education)

Participants: DIET Faculty Members, District Coordinators, Mentor Teachers, Various NGO Team Members and STIR Education Members - Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka



Introduction:

With recent reports highlighting alarming levels of learning loss due to school closures, there is a nation-wide push for an even greater focus on initiatives that support foundational learning. The success of any intervention, however, is dependent on a number of factors. This round table aimed at understanding the kind of systemic support required for FLN initiatives to excel by learning more about the experiences of different Organisations working in the field.

The panel comprised of Organisations that work with various arms of the education system, all over India.

Objectives:

1. To understand how different programmes are supporting FLN initiatives in their geographies
2. The kind of support FLN initiatives benefit from the most
3. To understand how different programmes best, align and collaborate with each other in order to help amplify FLN initiatives

Discussion Pointers

The moderator mentioned that the civil society plays a very important role in amplifying the Government initiatives and that, presently, the Government is focusing on FLN initiatives (with reference to NIPUN Bharat). So, she started the discussion with an introduction of the panel members, and further put forward the following **questions** to delve deeper on the role of Government, Community and Knowledge partners in strengthening FLN initiatives. The questions are mentioned below:

- What is the kind of systemic support they have received that has helped them to sustain FLN initiatives in the State?
- What are some of the challenges faced by them?
- Goals for further strengthening FLN initiatives
- How can the impact of FLN initiatives be amplified?

Some of the common issues that the panellists commented on, are mentioned below:

1. **Role of the System**
2. **Role of Leadership**
3. **Role of Community (SMCs, Parents & Care- givers)**
4. **Mind-set towards Assessment**

Based on the discussions around the above pointers, certain recommendations were given by the panellists.

1. Role of the System

For FLN initiatives to flourish, systemic support is absolutely crucial. It is also imperative to appoint the right group of people who would be able to support teachers. Trust building between the knowledge partners and the system is a prerequisite for successful implementation of any policies.

During the discussion around the role of the system, it was mentioned that different state Government partners, who were quick in making decisions to implement FLN initiatives, were successful in taking the processes forward in their states. As a result, some of the States are already quite ahead, when it comes to the implementation of FLN initiatives.

It was specifically pointed out that the awareness and level of understanding about the FLN and its processes needs to be further strengthened and the system needs to be involved at every level and step of the process for effective implementation.

Moreover, the Official holding the chair, plays an important role in successful implementation of any programme. Therefore, focusing on creating cadres of officials, who feel deeply for Education and upholds a great vision, is of utmost value. Investing in officials, further helps in, creating sound accountability at multiple levels in the system.

It was also mentioned, that each State has a different need, so, it is essential to analyse them and establish processes that cater to the context of the State, rather than applying a one-size fits all approach. The Knowledge Partners and the

Government cannot work in silos and that is why it is important to work on the three fronts: the child, their home and their education. For example, in Madhya Pradesh, during the pandemic, there was a prevailing fear regarding the loss of retention of numeracy level in children. To tackle this situation, the Government collaborated with the Knowledge Partner in making subject specific worksheets and distributed to the age specific group of children. This practice was sustained through-out the pandemic time.

So, every state needs personalization and contextualization of the FLN initiatives. Qualitative measures are also required to check the milestones achieved. Overall, the system needs to be as progressive as the policies being implemented on the ground.

2. Role of Leadership

The school Principal also plays a crucial role because they need to balance and prioritize between programmes. A Principal's role is a dynamic one, so they need support and steady capacity building, as well. Their focus is usually on the holistic development of the child. So, a continuous and stubborn revisit to the objectives for the effective implementation of FLN initiatives, time and again by the leadership, helps in sustaining the essence and prioritize the focus of the programme.

The empathy of the leader, especially in understanding the challenges faced by children and the teachers in their teaching learning processes, further creates room for the successful implementation of FLN initiatives.

One of the panel member mentioned that FLN is only a single component when it comes to the list of duties of a Principal. They have multiple things to focus on as their goal is the holistic development of children.

Another aspect which was mentioned was the use of data for making well informed decisions. It has been observed that, after the intervention of the knowledge partners in the same, the handling of data by the system officials have improved and they are much more open to multiple perspectives, now. With the use of technology, organizing and handling system related data has become easier.

3. Role of Teacher

The teacher being the direct implementer of FLN processes with the child, requires continuous capacity building and systemic support. Education is no longer about subjects and it is more about celebrating childhood and strengthening foundational skills, so developing multiple perspectives about the child and childhood has a positive impact on teaching learning as well.

One specific challenge that Teachers' face continuously is to be a part of multiple engagements which leads to constraint in the teaching time, as a result it becomes difficult to just focus on a single child.

It was also mentioned that when working with smaller groups of children, FLN initiatives are easier to take forward but with larger groups it becomes, quite difficult. It was recommended that designing bridge courses for children, after every class, to address the learning gaps would help to check the success of the implementation of FLN initiatives.

In Delhi, the Government has initiated the FNL activities through the Mission Buniyaad program and it has helped in bringing a shift in the teachers' perspectives. It has also built strong trust between the teacher and the student. The strategy '*Connect*' of the TDC Program has been a major factor in strengthening the student teacher relationship and has helped in aligning best practices between schools.

It was mentioned by one of the panelists that, the strategy '*Connect*' has further helped them in attaining Mission Buniyaad objectives in Delhi.

4. Role of Community:

Participation from the community, SMCs and parents are very important for FLN initiatives to succeed.

The parents understanding the need and importance of FLN initiatives further helps the system and the teachers in its effective implementation. Trust building between SMC, parents and teachers regarding the classroom processes and the importance of their role in the entire scenario needs to be addressed, regularly.

FLN is the most fundamental need for children to become life-long learners and not drop out from education.

5. Mind-set towards Assessment

Assessment can be a big challenge and clearer guidelines in terms of having specific formats to assess the efforts of the child, needs to be factored in.

Also, the way we look at assessments needs to change. Building a sound perspective regarding the why, how and when of assessments for FLN initiatives can help in its sustainability.

Assessments cannot be just taken at face value as the complexity of teaching learning situations are multi-layered, so, specific assessments: formative and summative can be taken into consideration.

Sometimes, inflated systemic data fails to represent the true picture of the implementation processes and the successes of FLN initiatives, therefore designing a holistic and flexible assessment format which helps in understanding the real picture of the classroom, is important.

It is important to note that the success of the FLN initiatives largely depends on the way assessments are done. The focus is the towards the overall development of the child and assessments should help in achieving the same.

Conclusion

The discussion ended on the note that, although alignment between knowledge partners is a tough thing to achieve, but having strong trust and a common goal is essential for the success of any collaborative work at the country level.

The knowledge partners mentioned that they all need to be open to prioritize the collective and keep the individual goals and vision aside, because, strengthening the foundations of learning and the development of the child is the ultimate goal for everyone.

Some Glimpses

