

Request for Proposals

Agency to provide communications support to a foundational learning program in Gujarat

1. Background

Gujarat is home to 3% of India's schools and 4.6% of India's students. In the past several years, the state has undertaken several reform initiatives to improve the quality of school education. However, the foundational learning levels (ability to read with comprehension and solve basic math problems by class 3) in Gujarat are worryingly low. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) – 2018 showed that nearly 68% Grade III students in Gujarat cannot read a Standard II text while about 78% Standard III students in Gujarat cannot do simple subtraction.

However, Gujarat is now in the process of designing and implementing a program to transform the learning crisis by undertaking a system-wide foundational learning improvement program.

2. Central Square Foundation

Founded by Ashish Dhawan in 2012, Central Square Foundation (CSF) is a nonprofit organization working with the vision of ensuring quality school education for all children in India. We are driven by our mission to transform the school education system towards improving the learning outcomes of children, especially from low-income communities.

We believe that foundational learning is essential to achieve better learning outcomes of all children in school. Development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills by Class 3 will bridge the wide learning gaps that exist today, leading to an improvement in the quality of learning at all stages of education. Improved foundational learning has benefits at both the individual and system level as it is directly correlated to increased workforce participation and better quality of life, and is a key lever in pulling up the entire system's performance.

In order to achieve our goal, we partner with social impact organizations to bring innovative solutions in education, as well as work with the government to drive scalable, sustainable and positive impact. We also collaborate with the private sector, nonprofit organizations and other ecosystem stakeholders to create effective proven tools around critical issues such as early learning, technology in education, classroom instruction methods and systems-thinking.

3. GEC and foundational literacy and numeracy

CSF along with its partner organizations in Gujarat is working towards improving foundational literacy and numeracy in the state. **Gujarat Education Coalition (GEC)** has been set up to support the Government of Gujarat to co-create and deliver a comprehensive and scalable solution to improve the foundational literacy and numeracy.

Research shows that foundational literacy and numeracy are bedrock of successful academic development of a child. Children who do not obtain these skills early on are unlikely to catch-up in later years. There is also evidence to show that strong foundational skills lead to better gateway skills to learning outcomes in later grades, to higher retention of children in schools and more productive life outcomes.

GEC aims to sustainably improve foundational literacy and numeracy (Class 1-3) at scale by building system capacity to design, implement and assess early learning solutions. GEC comprises non-profit organizations like Akshara Foundation, CSF, Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) and Reach to Teach (RTT). The initiative is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), CSF and The Larry Ellison Foundation (LEF).

Four key pillars that capture the holistic aspect of system reform will help drive the GEC program. These include:

- Setting up the agenda and aligning system-wide foundational literacy and numeracy goals, targets and metrics
- Strengthening current curriculum framework and classroom instruction practices by modifying associated teaching-learning-material and bringing pedagogical improvements
- Building system capacity by identifying needs and developing tools and training modules for monitoring, coaching, pedagogy, data review and analysis, planning (e.g. teacher allocation, instructional time) etc.
- Enhancing governance and accountability related issues key to driving foundational literacy and numeracy such as fragmented school systems, teacher availability, incentives, transfers, promotions and strengthening existing institutions.

4. Purpose of this RFP

GEC is now in the process of rolling out and implementing the state-wide program on foundational literacy. However, to achieve these objectives, it is important that key stakeholders within the government and outside are aligned to the program objectives and support in creating an enabling atmosphere for its implementation.

For the program to be implemented as designed, it is important that all stakeholders have an understanding and acknowledgement of the importance of foundational learning and its role in the overall development of a child. This needs to be built across levels of change i.e. systems (state, district and block levels), organizations (media, academic/ research institutions, civil society organizations), practitioners (teachers, BRCs and CRCs, para-teachers, SHGs), population (parents and general population). In addition to this, stakeholders would also require an understanding of challenges/ gaps in achieving foundational literacy, key metrics, goals and targets and associated behaviours to be achieved under the GEC program along with adequate information on their respective roles/ responsibilities.

CSF is looking for a partner who can support in developing a communication strategy, develop collaterals and communication outputs to align government officials/ stakeholders, developing communication products and collateral, and providing technical support for its implementation in the state. This RFP document outlines the scope of work for the communication partner, deliverables and timeframe for the project.

5. Scope of work

Project objectives

The overall objective of this assignment is to develop communication strategy for foundational learning program, develop communication products and collaterals and provide technical and advisory support on communications to the state government/ Project Management Unit (PMU) set up CSF. This will be achieved by:

1. Creating programme branding and elevating the appreciation for foundational learning among key stakeholders
2. Aligning officials at the systems level on goals and targets of the foundational learning program and motivating them to work towards achieving it by:
 - a. mobilizing workforce resources
 - b. creating specific call to action for each level of change
3. Building an understanding of goals and targets among school administration and teachers and motivating them to achieve it
4. Creating awareness among people (parents and general population) on the importance of foundational learning

Overarching themes and messages

Target audience	Success indicators	Key messages and behaviour	Potential channel/ activities
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % increase in number of audiences who understand foundational learning and its importance ● % increase in number of audiences who associate with importance of class 1-3 in a child's schooling journey ● Number of parents who are aware about goals and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall impact of foundational learning on children - their education, health, employment prospects and overall quality of life - Impact on learning ability of child in subsequent years of schooling - Key goal and targets vis-a-vis reading comprehension and numeracy (oral reading fluency i.e. no of words per minutes, 	Radio and TV ads, OOH, social media, community engagement activities like Reading Mela, Parent Teacher Meetings etc.

	<p>targets specific to their child's class/ grade</p>	<p>no sense, etc.)</p>	
<p>Teachers and head teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % increase in number of audiences who understand foundational learning and its importance ● % of teachers and head teachers know about GEC's foundational learning program ● % of teachers and headteachers know about key metrics and targets to be achieved under foundational learning program ● % of teachers and head teachers understand their roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis foundational learning and practice it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall impact of foundational learning on children - their education, health, employment prospects and overall quality of life <p>All students in Grade 2 should read fluently and with comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify unfamiliar words in simple connected text - Oral Reading Fluency - Students read all or almost all words correctly at correct pace - Identify meaning of familiar words in a sentence and also be able to identify unfamiliar words <p>All students in Grade 2 should have knowledge of numbers and are able to do basic operations (single digit addition and subtraction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Count, read, write, compare, and order whole numbers up to 100. - Represent quantities up to 100 concretely, pictorially, and symbolically. - Compose and decompose whole numbers up to 100, using place-value concepts - Solve single digit addition and subtraction problems that are presented concretely, 	<p>Comms Tool/Aid to assess reading fluency, posters/wall-paintings on key goals and targets, workshops and conferences, films on roles and responsibilities, stories of positive deviant teachers and schools etc.</p>

		<p>pictorially, and symbolically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solve simple real-world problems using addition and subtraction facts within 20. 	
Officials at block, district, state level and political leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of stakeholders who are aware about foundational learning, its importance and Gujarat’s foundational learning program ● Number of stakeholders who are aware of key goals and targets for Gujarat under foundational learning program ● Number of stakeholders who are aware of their roles and responsibilities and practice it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall impact of foundational learning on children - their education, health, employment prospects and overall quality of life - Linkage between foundational learning and overall economic progress of Gujarat, job creation, ranking in national surveys or indices - Key goal and targets of state’s foundational learning program - Roles and responsibilities of officials i.e. mentoring support to teachers, budget allocation, teachers training, monitoring of program activities etc. 	

Note: These broad indicative messages and will be further refined in consultation with GEC team, project stakeholders and audiences.

6. Project activities

Objective 1: Creating programme branding and elevating the appreciation for foundational learning among key stakeholders

The partner will work with the GEC secretariat and leadership to elevate the profile of the program. It will be achieved by creating campaign branding, brochure(s), state factsheet(s), videos, program website and briefing documents on school education among other collaterals (this is an indicative list). Strategic opportunities like workshops, seminars on school education and other digital platforms to showcase the work on coalition will also be identified.

A better appreciation of foundational learning and its importance in the context of Gujarat will be key to the implementation of this program in the state. To meet this objective, the communications partner will have to ensure regular engagement with media, key influencers in the state (local celebs/ champions, corporates/ philanthropists, academicians, women SHGs, High Net-worth Individuals /diaspora), state education department, officials at the district and block level.

The partner will be responsible for developing communication materials and collaterals for decision makers, key stakeholders and influencer engagement and disseminate the same through meetings, discussions, workshops and use of social media. Some of the specific requirements include:

- Developing communication collaterals or packages for meetings/ workshops with key influencers in the state including media, industry associations, academicians, celebrities etc.
- Regular media coverage/ stories on foundational learning in leading newspapers, news channels, radio, digital platforms, etc.
- Designing and co-curating a session on foundational learning during the Vibrant Gujarat 2021 Summit along with Department of School Education and GEC leadership
- Regular updates on initiatives planned on foundational learning and other education initiatives through social media handle of foundational learning program, Ministers/ Govt. officials

Objective 2: Aligning officials at the systems level on goals and targets of foundational learning program (including their roles and responsibilities) and motivating them to work towards achieving it by

- **mobilizing workforce resources**
- **creating specific call to action for each level of change**

This will be key to creating a conducive and enabling atmosphere for the formal launch and implementation of a foundational learning program in the state. This requires working closely with the state leadership, officials at the state level and orienting district and block officials on the importance of foundational learning. The goals and targets related to both literacy and numeracy (as explained under point 5) will have to be simplified, explained and popularised among the audiences. Activities will have to be designed to align and motivate them to help realize these goals. Some activities will have to be designed to nudge them on a regular interval to bring back their focus on foundational learning. Some indicative requirements include:

- Develop collaterals (presentations, factsheets, videos) to build salience on the importance of foundational learning and why it is important to Gujarat's education policy
- Plan and design an event for communicating/ launching foundational learning goals and targets across the system and motivate them to work towards achieving it on mission mode
- Video conferencing with DDOs / DMs by the State Department/ HoDs to communicate the goals and targets as well as aligning with them on their individual roles and responsibilities in achieving them
- Motivation letter to teachers/ Cluster Resource Centres/ Block Resource Centres / BRP from the Chief Minister/ Education Minister

Objective 3: Building an understanding of goals and targets among school administration and teachers, and motivating them to achieve it

School administration and teachers are critical to the success of the foundational learning program. All teachers, Headmasters and School Principals in the state should be aware about the foundational learning goals and targets, and strategies to achieve them. This can be achieved by developing communication materials for face-to-face meetings/ workshops, engagement activities for teachers and mass-media. Agency will help plan and develop following:

- Conceptualize and develop implementation plan for state-wide activities like reading campaign, school level competitions etc. as part of the foundational learning month (tentatively in September/ October 2020 i.e. Teacher's Day)
- Leverage *Shala Praveshotsav* (an enrolment drive conducted by the state government in the month of June) to conduct a community awareness drive on foundational learning e.g. micng, leaflet distribution, wall-writing etc.

These activities may be conducted in an intensive manner in five focus districts of the state - to be decided in consultation with the state government.

Objective 4: Creating awareness among people (parents, teachers, general population) on the importance of foundational learning

Similarly, community awareness activities will help in establishing the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy among parents and larger communities - both rural and urban. It is expected that awareness among parents about learning goals/ targets will increase their involvement with children, and positively impact learning outcomes. This would entail developing a detailed plan including mass-media campaigns, community mobilization activities and interpersonal communication.

- Plan, conceptualize and develop implementation plan for state-wide activities like reading campaign, cluster level competitions etc. as part of foundational learning month (tentatively in September/ October 2020)
- Plan, conceptualize and develop implementation plan for community awareness activities like street plays, school level activities, workshop parents to explain the importance of parental involvement in improving learning outcomes among children
- Awareness videos/ films and radio jingles on foundational learning in Gujarati and related media buying plan for the dissemination of campaign outputs by the state department

These activities may be conducted in an intensive manner in five focus districts of the state - to be decided in consultation with the state government.

Note: The government facing communication materials may have to be developed in Gujarati and English. Communication materials and collaterals for district officials, teachers and parents will be developed in Gujarati.

7. Duration of the assignment

Initially, we plan to engage the partner for a period of 11 months i.e. May 2020 - March 2021. Based on the outcomes and project needs, the assignment duration may be further extended.

8. Timelines

In the year 1, the assignment can be phased in the following manner:

Activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Conducting an immersion/ needs assessment				
Development of communication strategy and plan				
Develop a communication package for influencer engagement				
Engagement with media houses/ journalists and sustained media coverage in mainstream and vernacular media in Gujarat				
Develop communication package for system alignment and motivation				
Letter from the CM, video conferencing etc.				
Conduct activities for system alignment - meetings, workshops, discussions with government officials				
Community awareness - Shala Praveshotsav				
Community awareness - Reading month				
Launch of state level social and mass media campaign				

Quarter 1: May- June 2020

Quarter 2: July - September 2020

Quarter 3: October - December 2020

Quarter 4: January 2021 - March 2021

9. Project deliverables

- A comprehensive communication strategy and plan including a theory of change for communication interventions on foundational learning in the state
- Provide technical and advisory support to the state education department in developing communication plans, communication outputs, necessary toolkits etc.
- Creatives and collaterals on key goals and targets for system alignment, and community awareness

- Conduct workshops and/ face-to-face meetings with media to create an enabling environment for implementation of program in the state and sustained coverage on foundational learning
- Orient media houses and journalists on the importance of foundational learning and ensure sustained coverage of issues in the media through op-eds, articles, coverage of program activities etc.
- Design, develop and implement at least two state-wide awareness campaigns (including development of collaterals and roll-out/ media plan) on foundational learning (Shala Pravesotsav and Reading Month) in partnership with the state education department
- Plan and manage social media presence and activities of the program including regular content creation for social media
- Develop program brochure, briefs and other collaterals to enhance brand value and recall

10. Eligibility criterion

Agencies with significant experience in conceptualizing and managing large-scale communication program(s) for narrative building and behaviour change are encouraged to apply. The agency should have demonstrated experience in the following:

- Providing technical and advisory support to central or state governments on communication interventions e.g. developing communication strategy, media buying plans etc.
- Working with influencers like key decision-makers in the state/ central governments, media, academics, celebrities etc.
- Developing high quality creatives and communication collaterals on social issues for audience across systems, organizations, practitioners and population
- Designing and implementing state-wide mass-media, community awareness and engagement activities and campaigns and suggesting media buying-plan

11. Proposal evaluation guidelines

Selection will be made based on the following technical parameters and the cost-effectiveness of the financial proposal:

1. Overall agency experience including in the development sector
2. Relevant experience in terms of narrative building, engaging with policy-makers and influencers at the national and state level, designing and implementing state-wide community awareness activities
3. Overall understanding of the assignment, proposed approach and methodology
4. Team composition and ability to meet timelines
5. Cost-effectiveness of financial proposal

A quality and cost-based selection method will be applied to ensure selection of the best technical proposal at the best price.

12. Proposal submission guidelines

We invite communication agencies with experience of building narratives and behaviour change to propose a strategy and broad implementation plan for the objectives mentioned above. A proposal of (~10-12 pages or a presentation with maximum 20-25 slides) from interested organizations, outlining the following:

- Background of the agency, examples or details of similar assignments undertaken in the past
- Proposed strategy for project including approach and methodology for both stakeholder engagement and community awareness activities
- Proposed dissemination strategy for different audiences/ stakeholders
- Proposed team structure and CVs of key team members
- Deliverables and timelines
- Details of activities for which your organization plans to engage with another partner/ sub-contract
- Financial proposal

Note: Other details like organization credentials, team information etc. can be provided as annexure.

Please acknowledge and send a confirmation to participate in the pitch along with your organization's credentials by Monday, 20 April, 2020. Responses can be sent to: tej@centralsquarefoundation.org

The meeting to conduct the first round of evaluation of proposals will be held at Central Square Foundation office in Delhi or remotely in the last week of April 2020 (tentative - details to be communicated).

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon the selection of the winning proposal.

13. Budget and payments

The budget for the contract will be determined as per the quality and scope of the proposal. The payment schedule will be finalized upon contracting but is likely to be against submission of major deliverables. The list of major deliverables will be mutually agreed upon between partner and Central Square Foundation.

(ENDS)