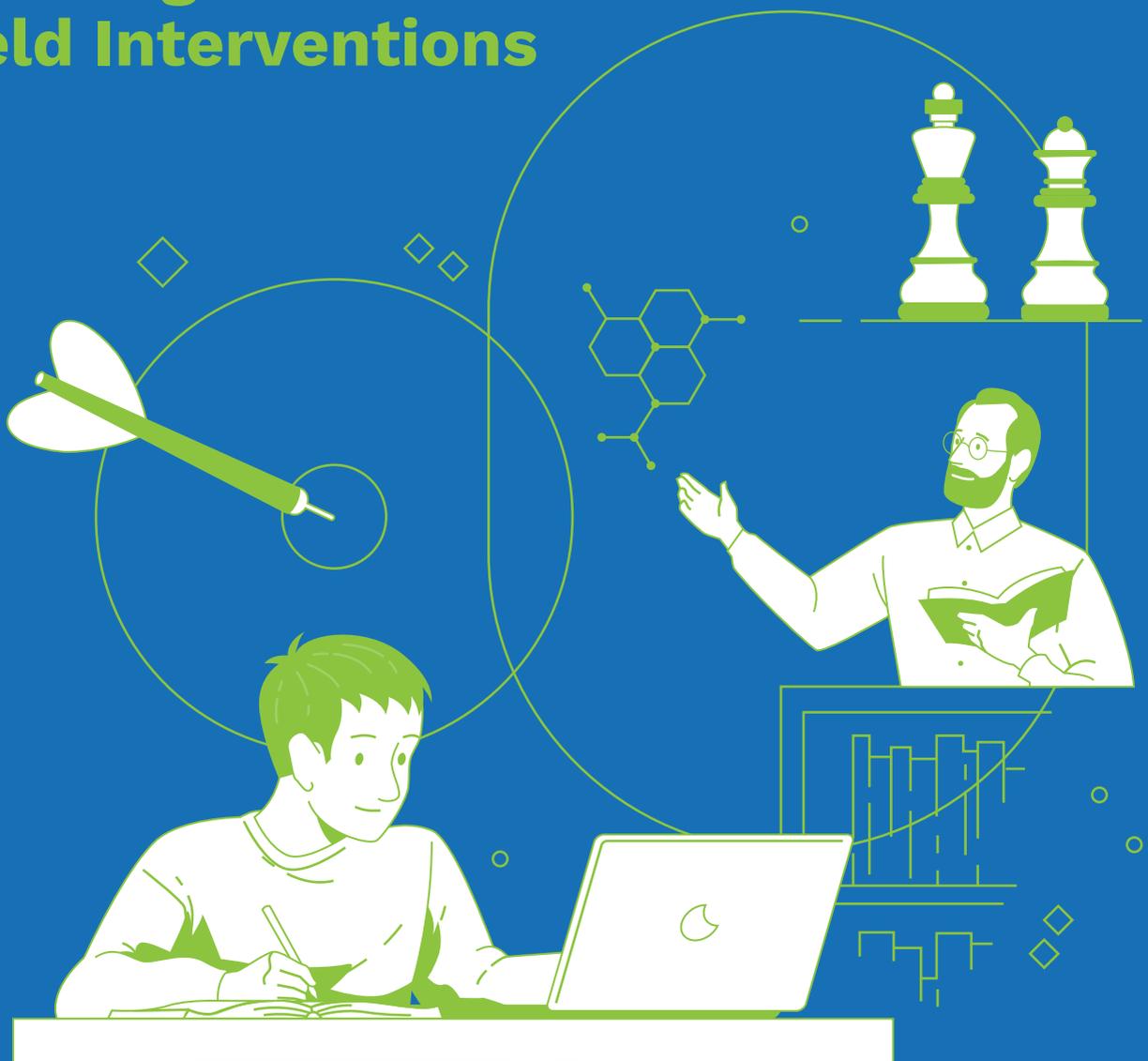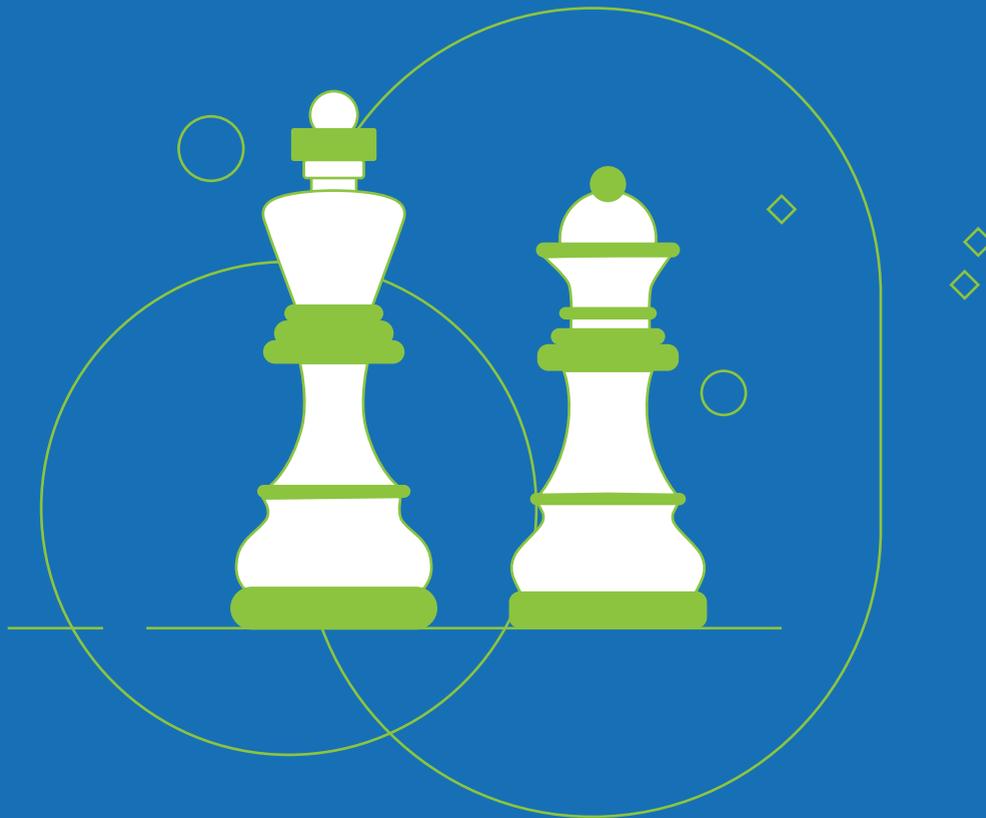# Strategies for Systems Change;

Learnings from Field Interventions

QUEST ALLIANCE

The complexity of the public education system makes it important for solutions to integrate 21st Century Skills to look at the system as a whole. A Systems Change approach will allow for long-lasting change at multiple levels along with a focus on shift in attitudes, mental models and practices among others.

This summary note highlights case studies of 5 organizations and brings out varied strategies employed by them to bring Systems Change. We focus on collaboration with the government, contextualization of programs, partnership-based scaling, leverage of technology, reflective assessments and co-creating strategy as key enablers of systems change.

Organizations Studied

1 **Kaivalya**

Kaivalya's education program was introduced in 2008 with the view that self-change promoted through the development of leadership among educators can lead to a system-change in education.

Key Interventions

Kaivalya aims to create future-ready schools, districts and states through a bottom-up approach to promote student-centric learning with learning outcomes are at-par with global standards.

Target Group
Teachers
Head teachers
Block and Cluster resource coordinators

Engagement Strategy
Capacity building workshops
Center for excellence hubs
Contextualisation of international frameworks
Virtual and in person field support
Professional learning communities

Outreach

- **11** states

- **32** districts

- **5** lakh schools empowering teachers and headmasters

- **14** field-based innovations under Centre for Excellence initiatives through innovative teaching-learning materials, BaLa (Building As Learning Aid), student parliaments, teacher practices and need analysis tools

- Partnerships with Genpact, Piramal Foundation, Boston Consulting Group and Emory University among others

Approach to 21st Century Skills

- Focus on building capacity in teachers and officials from the education department to cascade impact to learners. For instance, if a teacher needs to teach collaboration to students, they need to be less competitive and more collaborative themselves.

- Development of educational leadership at all three levels of school, district and state to enable a cascade effect to learners.
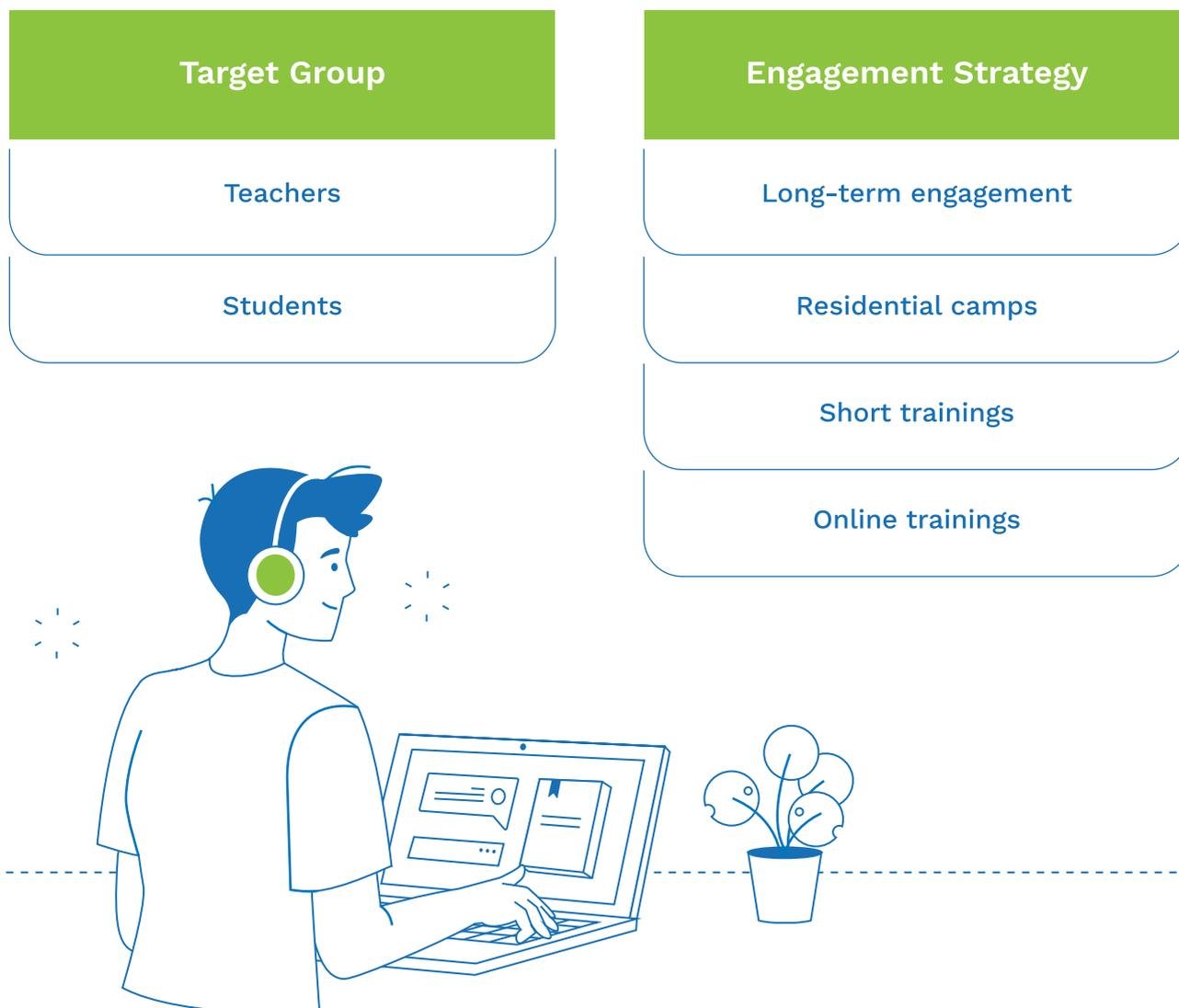
2 Aavishkaar, Himachal Pradesh

Aavishkaar was started by Sandhya Gupta and Sarit Sharma in 2012, with a mission to enable, equip, and empower students and teachers to ignite creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking in science and mathematics.

Key Interventions

Aavishkaar's focus is to improve the quality of teaching science and mathematics through the use of innovative methods like visualization and hands-on activities. In the process, teachers and students developed curiosity, creativity and critical thinking.

Target Group	Engagement Strategy
Teachers	Long-term engagement
Students	Residential camps
	Short trainings
	Online trainings

Outreach

Aavishkaar has worked with teachers from the Government of Himachal Pradesh, Telangana and Tibet.

- As the training leads of a Science and Math Collective, they have been working with several grassroots organizations including Neev, Karam Marg, Saath, Grameen Shiksha Kendra, CHIP, OSCAR, CYDA, Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT), Josh, Sahyog, Asaadharan, Unverse Simplified, Vidyodaya.

- They have worked extensively with Teach for India as well as other organizations.

Approach to 21st Century Skills

- Aavishkaar targets the system through a specific reform i.e. by teaching science and mathematics.

- They use an interest-based diffusion of ideas among a much larger network of like-minded organisations across the system - as a way of promoting change.

- The skills in focus are curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving.

- Local context and everyday objects are employed to teach Science and Math.

3 Lend a Hand India (LAHI)

LAHI was founded in 2003 with its base in Pune, Maharashtra. LAHI's model activates 21st Century Skills through promoting employability and entrepreneurship among students.
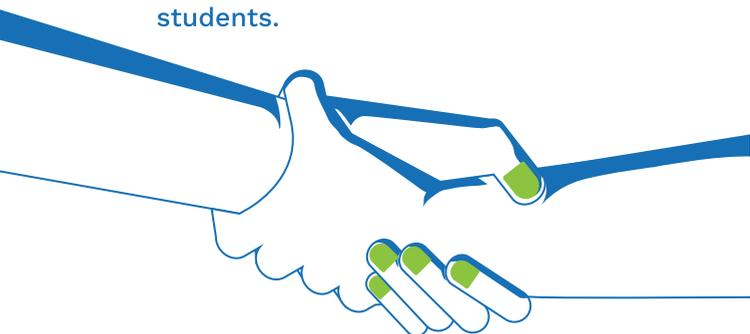
Target Group

Students

Teachers

Outreach

- **24** States and Union Territories
- **10,000+** schools
- Over **1 million** students
- Direct implementation in **200** schools in **14** states
- Assistance to the government through knowledge inputs and monitoring of the program through its state-level project management committees

Key Interventions

LAHI's course gives students exposure to multiple sectors. The multi skill vocational course covers 20 occupational areas like electrical wiring, wielding, carpentry, plumbing, land cultivation, landscaping, nutrition, packaging of food and storage, health and hygiene and so on.

Engagement Strategy

Guest lectures

Field visits

Internships

Trainings

Approach to 21st Century Skills

- Focus on both technical and non-technical knowledge and skill building
- Uses the employability perspective to intervention design
- **Skills in focus:** collaboration, communication, problem solving, critical thinking and leadership

4 Reap Benefit

Reap benefit's mission is to promote decentralized governance through the creation of an active citizenry. They work with schools (both public and private) to create a cadre of problem-solvers (called Solve Ninjas), focusing on local solutions for local problems using local data.

Key Interventions

Reap Benefit's solve boot camp programs are experiential, ranging between short term, stand alone offering to long term mentorship programs. The students are guided to identify problems and go through a process of solving them as part of experiential learning. Most problems are civic and environmental in nature, revolving around water, waste, sanitation and pollution. In the process of civic problem solving, learners undertake several tasks which can include conducting surveys, reporting, initiating local advocacy or campaigns, taking action (volunteering) or designing innovative solutions.

Target Group
Students

Engagement Strategy
Bootcamp programs
Mentorship
DIY kits
Gamification
Apps, WhatsApp chatbots

Outreach

- **40,000** Solve Ninjas inspired

- **60,000** civic actions undertaken

- **337** civic innovations built

- **4,60,00,000** liters of water saved

- **6,65,000** tonnes of landfill waste diverted
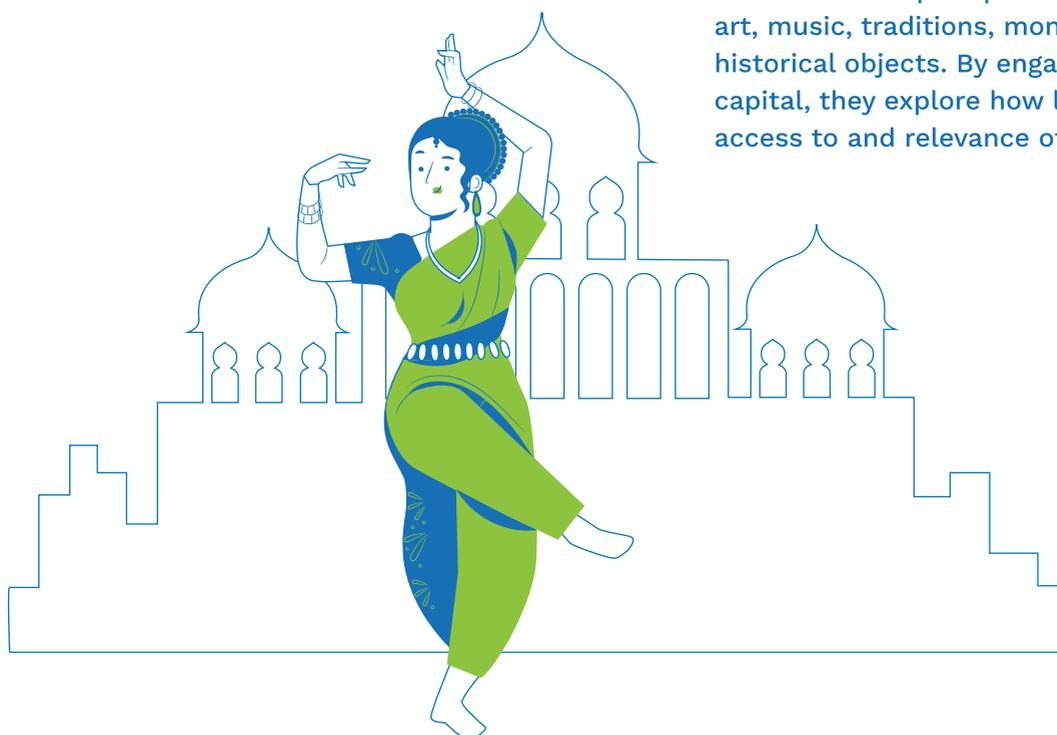
Approach to 21st Century Skills

- Using design thinking principles, they leverage action-based teaching methods.

- **Skills in focus:** Empathy, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, community collaboration, team work, resilience, leadership, self-confidence and data orientation that students learn in the process of solving civic problems.
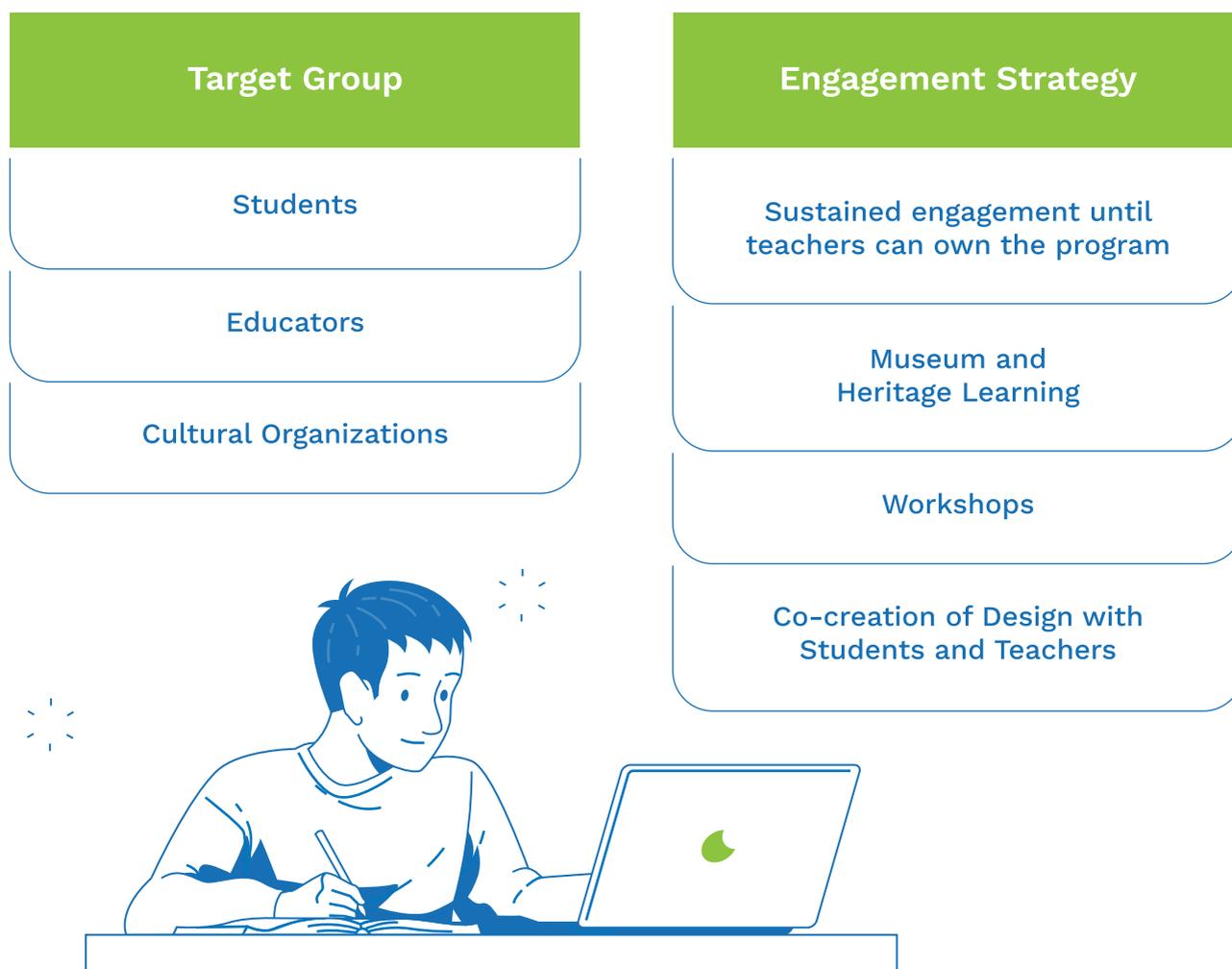
5 Flow India

Flow India is a for-profit organization that uses a Cultural Capital approach to develop 21st Century Skills. Their mission is to establish choice of cultural learning and foster cultural intelligence as an integral methodology in classrooms.

Key Interventions

Working at the intersection of cultural learning, design technology and 21st Century Skills, Flow India examines opportunities that cultural capital presents in the fields of art, music, traditions, monuments and other historical objects. By engaging with this capital, they explore how learners can find access to and relevance of cultural capital.

Target Group	Engagement Strategy
Students	Sustained engagement until teachers can own the program
Educators	Museum and Heritage Learning
Cultural Organizations	Workshops
	Co-creation of Design with Students and Teachers

Outreach

- **100** educational institutions
- Over **25** cultural institutions in India
- Approximately **1000+** educators reached
- **40,000+** children
- Across **20** Indian cities

Approach to 21st Century Skills

- Focus is on cultural learning which enables skills such as collaboration, creativity, empathy, self- discovery, critical thinking, curiosity and 'community mindedness'.

- Community mindedness is described as an interest in connecting with and being a part of the wider community - achieving self-awareness in relation to one's community and the ability to voice interests as part of an empowered collective.

- Learners engage with cultural stimuli in the city which builds on the skills using creative enquiry processes.

Core strategies for systems change

Collaboration with Government
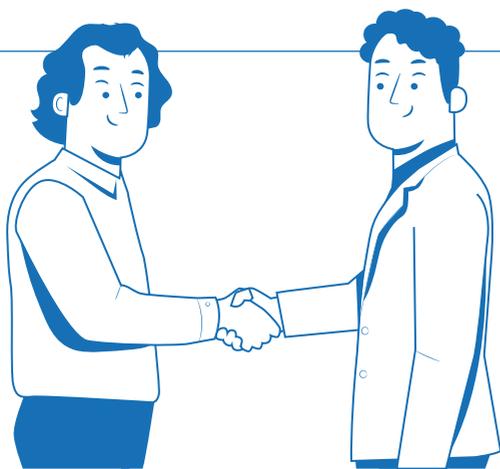
Key takeaways

Take part in
Curriculum Committees

Set up model schools
as demonstration sites

Co-create programs
with local bodies

Align with the existing
needs of the government

Ratify your goals with
the government

Contextualization

Key takeaways

Local problems demand
local solutions

Complementary solutions address
the needs of the school

Establish connections with
daily life experiences

Use local language

Work with local players, industries
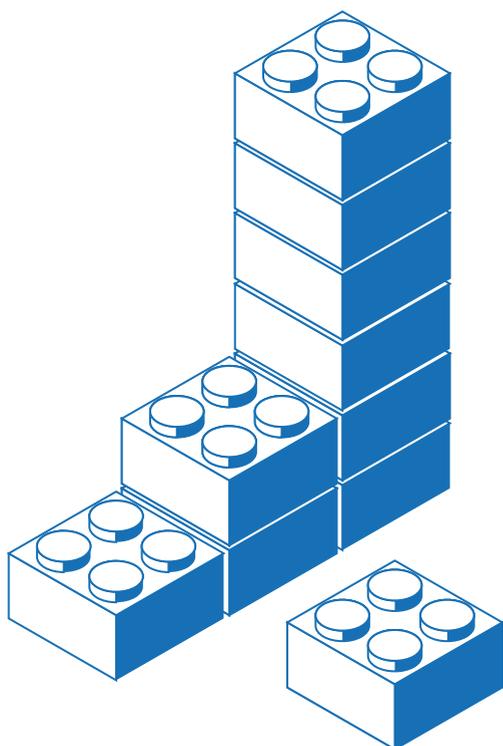and human resources

Scaling through partnerships

Key takeaways

Partner with Government institutions and peer organizations to stay small, but scale wide

Leverage alumni networks to scale

Choose a stakeholder for wider reach

Partner with international organisations to gain global perspective

Leveraging technology

Key takeaways

Leverage simulation, gamification and dashboards to engage learners

Provide community support both online and offline

Ensure user experience include two-way communication and feedback loops

Leverage dashboards to offer opportunities to showcase work and accomplishments

Reflective Assessments

Key takeaways

Reflection is a critical means to evaluate learning

Assessment should be a combination of inputs provided by self, peers, and educators.

Qualifiers of self assessment can be done through observations, documentations, home visits, qualitative processes

Assess learning to identify areas of understanding, those that need improvement, and support.

Working with educators as co-facilitators of strategy

Key takeaways

Building dialogue with stakeholders during the creation of programs is essential

Co-create design and strategy with educators

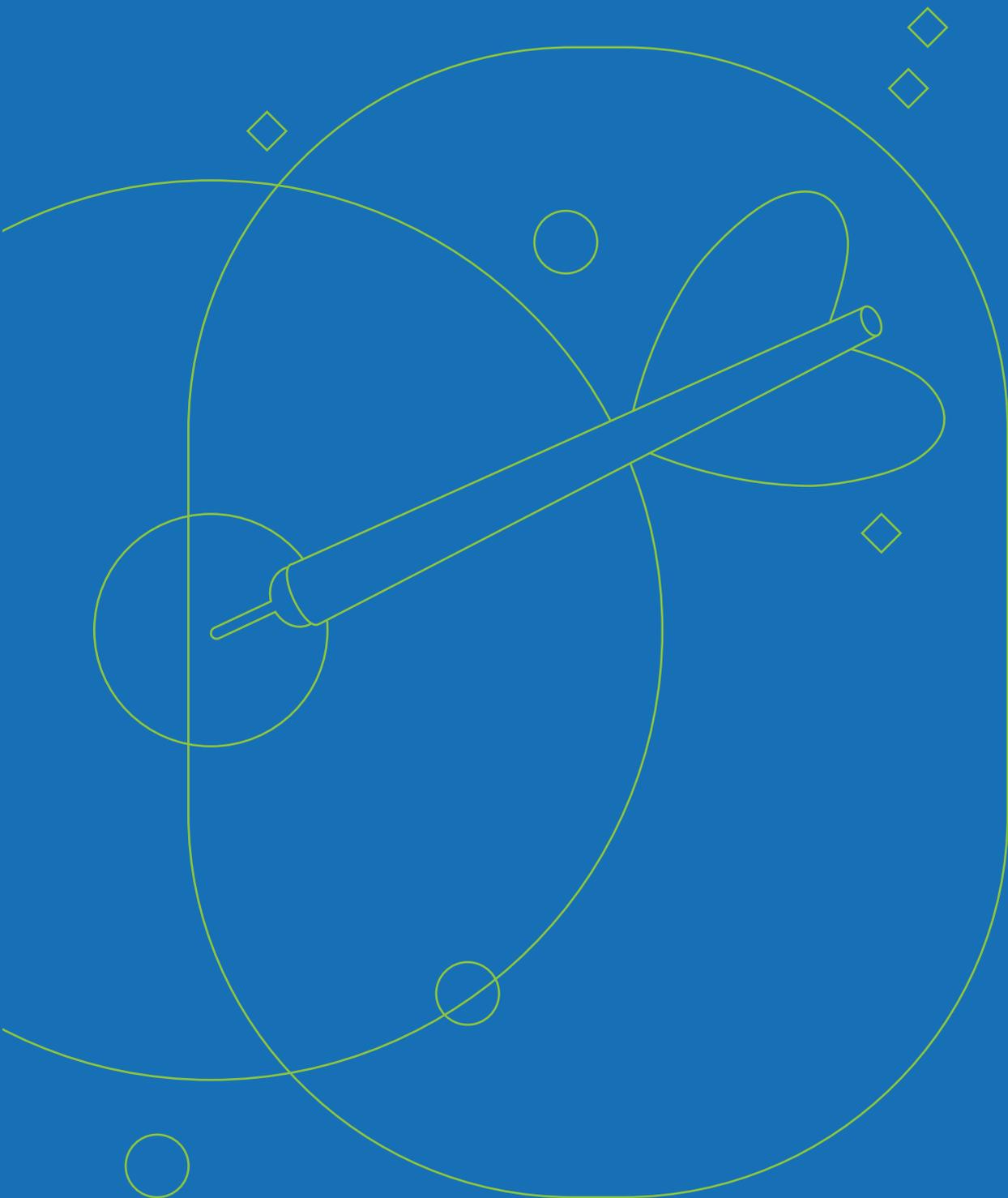Build a mentorship model rather than a training exercise

Few Success Indicators

Success for systems change includes influencing structural change (through policies, practices, resources); relational change (relationships and connections and power dynamics); and transformational change (mental models) in the education system. There are varied pathways to enable these changes. The conditions of change interact with each other, and can propel one area of action to trigger action in another area.

- Intentionality to influence changes at all levels is the key to bring about transformative changes in the system

- **Comprehensive program engagements could result in relational change between different system actors.** Kaivalya's intervention simultaneously focuses on several aspects of the system including teacher training, curriculum development, pedagogy, educational leadership with 21st Century Skills and assessments. Its successes include influencing the Ministry of Education to set up a centre on educational leadership. Kaivalya has also been able to influence mindsets change specifically in terms of the relational change it has enabled between teachers and students, students and parents and among teachers themselves.

- LAHI's intervention advantage lies in its very focussed link between implementing the government vision on vocational education and successful career transitions. They have successfully mainstreamed vocational education as their course.

- Reap Benefit has been successfully breaking mindset-barriers. When students take successful actions, innovate and receive local media and community attention; both parents and teachers see merit in the skills their children are able to build through these engagements.

- Aavishkaar's model of scale is not intentional but brings to attention the fact that intervention's success can enable it to scale through interest-based diffusion.

- Flow India's success in influencing practice depended on the nature of engagement with schools.

All the interventions brought resources into the system through curriculum content, training for pedagogy or through human resources in the form of mentors, trainers or educators.