

Quality of Education Grant – Project Proposal Form

1. NGO/Project Objectives:

- To help in enhancing the Quality Education in Schools by enriching and supplementing the regular curriculum.
- To help enhance the general academic performance of children by making learning meaningful and enjoyable.
- To help children bring together what they learn in school and what they learn outside.
- To build skills of thinking, analysing and making choices, and to encourage children to listen to different opinions while forming and expressing their own.
- To enable teachers to refresh their teaching skills to encourage multi-disciplinary teaching, and make teaching participatory, enjoyable and qualitatively better.
- To facilitate teachers' self-growth and personality development.
- To provide stimulating reading materials that will help develop children's reading skills and foster values that promote harmony and celebrate diversity.
- To build capacities of project staff especially school observers, field work coordinators and networking coordinator in aspects related to changing contexts and challenges of the formal education system.
- Network with the District Education authorities on effective implementation of the curricular package
- Network with National Council for Educational Research and Training and State bodies like Maharashtra State Council for Educational Research and Training, the Maharashtra State Text Book Bureau and Balbharati for inclusion of the Avehi-Abacus themes and methodology in the State curriculum.
- Network with National Council for Teachers Education(NCTE) for approval of Pre-service Teacher Education Module and for field trial with District Institutes for Educational Training.

2. Quality of Education proposal:

a. What 'quality of education' issue is the proposal addressing?

The Avehi-Abacus project attempts to bring about some fundamental changes in the methodology and content of education. The foundation course developed by the project is based on the belief that education is a crucial factor in social change, and that teachers and children are active participants in education and in the process of change. While implementing this foundation course in the Municipal Schools we recognized that there is a serious need for educators and teachers to examine their attitudes towards education and society. Equally significant is the understanding that such an effort must form part of the professional training that teachers undergo, from the earliest possible stage. In other words, a foundation course for pre-service training – a course that would focus on the teacher's role and how the teacher could contribute towards making education more relevant by exploring issues of current concern – was essential.

Development and Testing of Pre-service Teacher Education Module: The project has been involved in developing a two-year foundation course of pre-service education aimed at the Diploma level. This two-year supplementary course was tested with two DTEd (Diploma in Teacher Education) colleges in Mumbai between 1998 and 2000. Based on this experience, the course material is currently being reviewed and finalized.

b. How does the proposal address the issue?

A prototype of a pre-service teacher education module was developed and tested during the period 1998-2000. It is now proposed to review this module and finalize it so that it can be made available to teacher training colleges. This module is intended to serve as a foundation course for pre-service teacher education, and will include a detailed curriculum (including 50 session plans and supplementary materials to be used over a two-year period) and teaching-learning aids for the course.

General Objectives

- To ensure the introduction to trainee teachers of basic and essential concepts in making education relevant and responsive to society.
- To help trainee teachers reflect on their own roles and critically understand a teacher's role in society.
- To encourage and motivate trainee teachers to seek alternatives to the existing system of hierarchical relationships and move towards a more inclusive and democratic classroom.

Details of Curriculum and Methodology

The curriculum seeks to achieve the following goals:

- To help trainees reflect on the role of a teacher – not as a communicator of a set curriculum, but as an active participant in analyzing and sharing the curriculum.
- To provide an opportunity for trainees to examine and creatively channelize the fact that the school is integral part of society, that a change affected here will be lasting.
- To help teacher trainees explore various facets of change and development in our society, and thereby develop a perspective in keeping with sustainable development, pluralism and social justice.
- To help trainees relate social issues to classroom teaching of the regular syllabus and to place what is taught/learned in the larger context of education and society.
- To motivate teacher trainees to actively participate in the process of education as an agent of social change.
- To infuse the conviction in teacher trainees that a democratic classroom will bring in a true sense of responsibility and mutual respect among the young.
- To strengthen trainees' skills in using participatory methodologies in the classroom (art and craft, story telling, facilitation, role playing, games, facilitating discussion, etc.).

It will cover the following themes:

Re-examining our education system

- Understanding the place and notion of education within the present trajectory of development and its role as an agent of change
- Analyzing the values underlying the existing curriculum
- Reflecting on the idea of a democratic classroom and finding ways to create a democratic classroom within the existing system
- Redefinition of the teacher's role: Moving from mere transmission of information to participatory teaching-learning.
- Revisiting the notions of knowledge, learning, retention of knowledge and assessment.

Analyzing Social Processes and Structures

- Poverty and social inequity
- Economic growth and notions of development
- Social identities and conflicts (caste, communal, racial)
- Gender issues: Critical reflection on existing roles, access to resources and decision-making
- Environment issues: Defining and analyzing the use of resources
- Analyzing media influences and messages
- War and Conflict: Lessons to learn on the road to peace and stability
- Examining alternatives in relation to the above and strengthening factors and attitudes that foster social justice, pluralism and sustainable development.

The methodology used for the course will include the use of different kinds of teaching-learning aids (both projected and non-projected, as well as session plans and teaching aids from the **Sangati** curriculum). Each session will typically include elements of discussion, games or activities, as well as collating and sharing of information and experiences. Group work and individual assignments will be included. Project work – based on field experiences and analysis of data by trainees – will also form part of the course.

- c. **How do you define 'success' for the proposed initiative? How will you measure the effectiveness of the proposed initiative?**

The project has already had some measure of 'success' in the initiative. The work done so far is being integrated in the process of curriculum review for Diploma in Teacher's Education at the State level which has been our endeavor.

Similarly the two year course outline of the Pre-service Teacher Training Module was also provided to the Pedagogy Unit of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) the centralized programme aimed at Universalisation of Elementary Education. This unit is creating a Resource Bank of innovative teaching material at the central level to be made available to a wider level. The process aims at improving quality of in-service teacher training programmes under SSA. Most of the inputs, which the unit feels will be of

great assistance have become a part of their module developed and piloted in Maharashtra.

Measuring the effectiveness of the proposed initiative:

Expected Impact on Teacher Trainees and Teacher Trainers

- Enhancement of teaching-learning skills of trainers and trainee teachers.
 - Better understanding of the impact on formal education of changes in economic policies and political structures.
 - Forming/sharpening the habit of analysis of current pedagogical research/developments with reference to Constitutional values and objectives.
 - Enhancement of teaching skills through appropriate and effective use of audio visual aids and multi-sensory teaching-learning.
 - Evolving an integrated teaching-learning pedagogy that will facilitate relating school learning to the everyday context of learners.
 - Developing the skills to make learning a joyful and stress-free experience for both teachers and learners.
 - Developing a habit of seeing education as a process and knowledge as a contextually achievable aim rather than an isolated commodity evaluated by examinations.
 - Aiming at evolution of the teacher into a reflective practitioner rather than a mere transmitter of information.
- d. How does the proposal address requirements/ concerns/ interests of (a) Children (b) teachers (c) parents (d) community?

Since the proposed initiative deals with Pre-service Teachers' Education, it primarily addresses the requirements/concerns/interests of the teacher trainers and teacher trainees. On the whole the intervention is expected to impact teacher trainees (future teachers) in a manner where the teaching-learning process in classrooms will become more effective. (PI refer to General Objectives in point (b) of Q 2). This will ultimately benefit the children and thereby community as a whole.

Implementation of the *Sangati* programme: Along with the development of Teacher Education module the project has been involved in Quality Enhancement Education programme (***Sangati*** programme) in Municipal Schools where majority of the children belong to the most marginalised sections. Most of them are first generation learners. The evaluation studies done at the completion of every phase have concluded that the ***Sangati*** programme has contributed in enhancing both the cognitive and psycho-social skills of students who have been a part of the programme. The impact on students includes:

- Enhanced class participation
- Increased knowledge and change in perceptions and behaviour.
- Created confidence in children.
- Improved cognitive and psychosocial skills.

Moreover teachers also perceive that the programme has positively impacted children's attendance, interest in studies and attention in the class.

The impact on the teachers has been in the following areas:

- Improved interpersonal relationship within the classroom.
- Use of **Sangati** teaching methods and visual aids in non-**Sangati** classes to supplement and enhance the regular textbooks.
- Depth and increase in knowledge related to environmental and social issues.
- Understanding the interconnectedness of the variety of subjects they teach.

Right to Education Campaign: The organisation has also been pro-actively involved in the campaign for equal, quality education for all since the last six years. The 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009' (RTE Act 2009) was passed by the Indian parliament and came into force from 1st April 2010. In view of the basic problems in this Act there is a need to build awareness towards repealing and replacing it with the one in the framework of 'Common School System based on Neighborhood Schools' in consonance with the principles of equality and social justice enshrined in the Constitution of India. The project is aware that the struggle to achieve free equal quality education for all can be possible only through the united efforts of like-minded organisations, groups and civil society.

In this context Avehi-Abacus Project is affiliated to the All India Forum for Right to Education (AIF-RTE) at the all India level. The AIF-RTE was formed in June 2009 to seek repeal and re-enactment of RTE Act 2009. At the state level the Committee for Equal Fundamental Right to Education is a part of AIF-RTE and the project is an active founding member of this committee. Various programmes like public agitations, press conferences, public debates have been organised to draw attention of the civil society and media about the issues. Parents meetings and awareness meetings at the community level also form an important part of this intervention.