



21st CENTURY SKILLS IN INDIA

SUMMARY- STATE OF THE SECTOR REPORT 2022



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SIGNIFICANCE OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The 21st Century is a time of significant technological change, which in turn is driving changes in society and the economy. Young people need to be equipped with the relevant skills, attitudes, and knowledge to deal with such changes. UNICEF-YuWaah's 21st century skills framework defines such skills as a set of knowledge, capabilities, and attitudes that “equip youth to transition into a fast-changing world of opportunities and create success for themselves.” Apart from preparing young people for dealing with the unpredictable employment scenario of the future, 21st century skills have multiple positive impacts on youth, such as:



Improvement in self-esteem and confidence



Enhancement of academic learning outcomes and motivation towards higher education



Empowerment of girls (for instance, through an increase in the age of marriage)



Enhanced emotional stability for youth from vulnerable communities



Improvement of mental health, for example, through the reduction of suicidal thoughts

RATIONALE FOR THE REPORT

The 21st century skills space is a complex and fragmented one since there are multiple terminologies, definitions and content frameworks, and players. Therefore, it is crucial to systematically study, map and analyze it to promote a coherent understanding of the status of this sector. Hence, UNICEF commissioned the writing of the State of the Sector Report on 21st century skills in India, which has been prepared by GRAAM.



METHODOLOGY

Numerous secondary and primary data sources have been used to generate rich insights for this report. More than 200 research papers and other secondary data sources have been covered in a thorough literature search. Interviews of visionaries (experts) and programme staff of large-scale implementation organizations, Focused Group Discussions with core stakeholders (such as youth, parents and principals), and an online poll of youth are the primary data sources for this report.



STATE OF THE POLICY ON 21ST CENTURY SKILLS IN INDIA



Policy Initiatives

On mapping policy related to 21st century skills, this report finds the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the CBSE Handbook on 21st century skills of the Ministry of Education to be amongst the most significant policy initiatives in India. The importance given by NEP 2020 to 21st century skills has boosted the prominence of such skills with policymakers and others



Central Ministries

Apart from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has also taken up noteworthy 21st century skills initiatives such as the introduction of the Employability Skills Curriculum for ITI students



State government efforts

In addition to the central departments, several state governments have taken up 21st century skills programmes in partnership with different organizations. These include the Delhi state government partnering with Dream a Dream for implementing the Happiness Curriculum, and the Government of Punjab partnering with Breakthrough for implementing the Taaron Ki Toli life skills programme



Policy Development

Policy development for 21st century skills in India remains at a nascent stage, since comprehensive national frameworks for 21st century skills have not yet been developed or operationalized with measurable indicators. Accreditation and quality control mechanisms for 21st century skills programmes and organizations have not yet been created

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

This report has carried out a landscape analysis of noteworthy organizations and interventions in the 21st century skills space. 30 large-scale interventions having more than one lakh beneficiaries were identified through such analysis. Though there are many large-scale interventions in the space, a detailed analysis of a smaller number of interventions (i.e. 6 interventions) has been done. Such narrowing down was done on the basis of what the interviewed visionaries mentioned as the major programmes in the space. Such a deep dive into six interventions and their organizations has helped to understand their strategies related to scale, impact, and innovation:

1

Happiness Curriculum of Dream a Dream:

Dream a Dream partnered with the Delhi Government in providing the Happiness Curriculum to children from grades 1 to 8 in all the schools run by the state government. Dream a Dream has refined its model through a close examination of what works and what does not work for over 15 years. The Happiness Curriculum is recognized as an educational innovation that makes going to school a joyful experience and addresses high anxiety among students.

2

MyQuest of Quest Alliance:

MyQuest provides 21st century skills to ITI (Industrial Training Institute) students and aims to enhance their employability and employment prospects. Quest Alliance has carried out technology-based innovations to enhance the continued access of its employability skills content for less privileged learners in rural areas, even during the Covid pandemic. Training of more than 3000 trainers has helped it expand its presence in more than 20 states.

3

Adolescent Education Programme of Magic Bus:

Magic Bus's Education Programme attempts to empower first-generation adolescent learners from marginalized families. It includes the Life Skills programme, wherein adolescents are equipped with life skills to lead fulfilling and rewarding lives. Magic Bus has an innovative approach to life skills training that integrates the perspective of skills for life and skills for employment. Evidence of impact through multiple impact evaluations has supported Magic Bus's efforts to achieve scale.

4

School Cinema of LXL Ideas:

School Cinema utilizes the medium of short, 15-minute films to teach life skills to children. Films enable teaching important life skills in an engaging, life-relevant way to a large number of children. The use of school teachers as facilitators contributed to the scaling up of the model, while facilitator guides and worksheets helped to maintain an element of standardization.

5

Adolescent Empowerment Programme of Breakthrough:

The Adolescent Empowerment Programme of Breakthrough aims to equip adolescents with life skills to challenge regressive gender norms in a non-confrontational manner. The 2-year school-based gender equity programme known as Taaron ki Toli (TKT) is at its core. Partnerships with state government departments, development of linkages with multiple societal stakeholders and the use of mass media-based campaigns have all contributed to enhancing Breakthrough's reach and scale. The organization has generated robust impact evidence through multiple RCTs, including long term impact evidence.

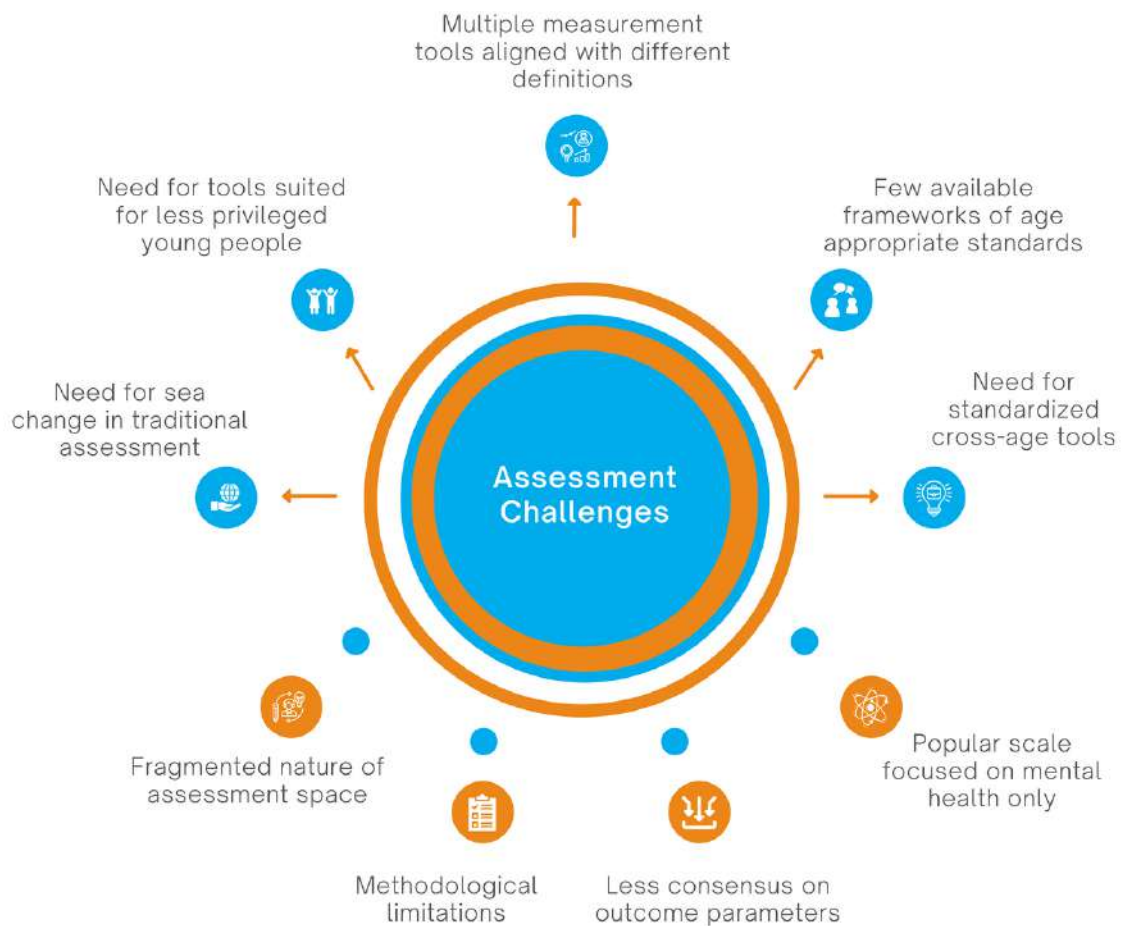
6

Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum of Udhyam Learning Foundation:

Udhyam has been running the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC), which aims to foster 21st century skills and entrepreneurial mindsets and skills in young people (school students and ITI students). The teacher facilitated sessions of EMC have a practical orientation since they enable students to come up with a plan to earn profit or solve a real-life social problem. A partnership with the SCERT and state government has enabled EMC to be implemented in all the public schools of Delhi. Udhyam has demonstrated adaptability by using the 'bag-less days' in schools and the 'Employability skills' slots in ITI's to integrate its EMC sessions in the packed schedules of these institutions.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING AND SCALING UP 21ST CENTURY SKILLS PROGRAMMES





ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES

Several challenges in the critical aspect of assessment of 21st century skills, including the lack of consensus on what to measure

WHITESPACES

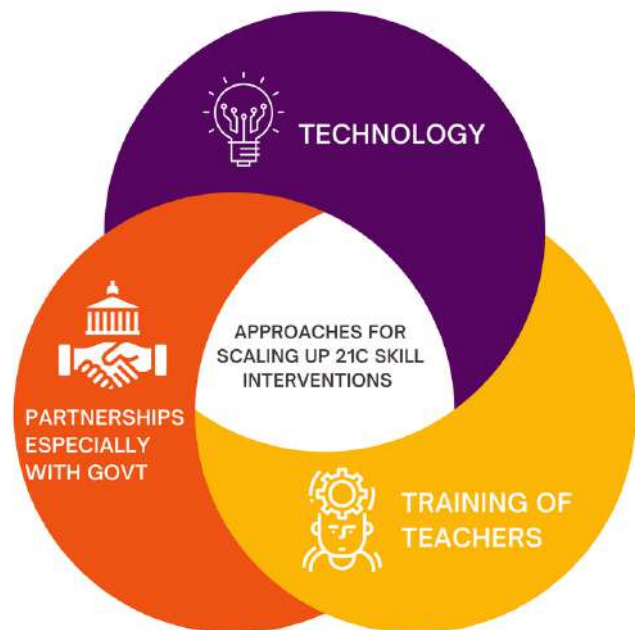
There are fewer interventions targeted for the following groups and areas:

- »»» Out of school young people: The difficult social and familial context of out of school young people, lack of support from decision-makers and the lack of data and guiding content frameworks make it difficult to provide 21st century skills to such young people. Organizations in the space face a challenge in scaling up, since the beneficiaries often require individual handholding.
- »»» Young people in remote rural areas, especially outside the school system.
- »»» Marginalized groups such as scheduled castes and tribals.
- »»» Parents, who also need to be oriented to understand 21st century skills and their significance.

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCALING UP

The landscape analysis done in this report shows that partnerships (especially government partnerships), use of technology, and the training of teachers or trainers are the 3 main approaches that have helped organizations to achieve scale.

- Partnerships with state governments have helped organizations achieve comprehensive reach (for example of entire public school systems) which they could not have hoped to achieve on their own. Data management and monitoring issues, and autonomy gaps are the challenges faced by implementing organizations in such partnerships
- The use of technology makes pedagogy and delivery more efficient and effective. It also simplifies the execution of assessment. The digital divide (lack of access of poorer youth to devices and internet connectivity), however, remains a challenge



- Training of teachers or Master Trainers is a frequent strategy to achieve scale. However, Master Trainers may not go on to reach the number of people that they are expected to reach. It is also a challenge to maintain quality while relying on a large number of teachers to deliver 21st century skills

ENABLERS AND OPPORTUNITIES



There are available content frameworks that are a valuable guiding resource for upcoming interventions. The CBSE Handbook on 21st century skills is one such resource. The newly created MEPSC (Management and Entrepreneurship and Professional Skills Council) under the MSDE/NSDC umbrella has created qualification packs (QPs) or a set of standards for 21st century skills



The Life Skills Collaborative (LSC) has done pioneering work in bringing 18 organizations together for designing programmes and assessments. The India Life Skills Glossary developed by the LSC will help build a common understanding of such skills



The Young Warrior Next initiative by YuWaah is another pioneering initiative that is expected to generate evidence on implementation best practices, while also helping to scale impactful models

A SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

01 Partnerships for Scale

Strategic partnerships with State Governments have helped organizations like Quest Alliance, Udhyam Learning Foundation, Magic Bus and Dream a Dream to achieve significant levels of scale.

These partnerships have enabled reaching lakhs of young people in 10 or more states, or coverage of the entire public school system in a single state.

02 Innovation - Technology for enhancing access and delivery

Quest Alliance's creation of the MyQuest App to provide gamified 21st century skills content. It is also making such content available in low bandwidth areas through the Learner Pi systems.

03 Innovation - Pedagogy to make 21st century skills engaging

School Cinema's use of film, an infrequently used medium for 21st century skills, which brings entertainment, storytelling and emotional connection to transact 21st century skills.

04 Inclusiveness: Gender empowerment through 21st century skills

Breakthrough's work on changing the gender-related attitudes and behaviour of girls and boys.. Girls and boys are equipped with life skills to counter gender discrimination in a non-confrontational way.

05 Inclusiveness: targeting of less privileged sections

Dream a Dream's partnership with the Department of Scheduled Caste Development, Government of Telangana to provide 21st century skills to Scheduled Caste youth studying in Social Welfare Residential Schools.

06 Assessment

Dream a Dream's work in developing the pioneering Life Skills Assessment Scale for measuring the life skills of less privileged youth. This scale considers the interconnected nature of life skills.

A SUMMARY OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEST PRACTICES AND CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

07 Long term Relevance

Magic Bus' work on adolescent education combines life skills, work readiness and employability skills in a single model. It is thus relevant for taking young people towards meaningful livelihoods.

08 Facilitation and convergence

The formation of the Life Skills Collaborative (LSC) is a milestone in addressing the fragmented nature of the 21st century skills space. The component organizations of LSC have committed to collaborate in deepening the understanding of life skills and strengthening assessment through mutual learning.

09 Standardization of curriculum

MEPSC's work on developing the Qualification Packs for Generic Skills (on the lines of QPs which exist for vocational courses). This can be a precursor for more comprehensive QPs on 21st century skills frameworks and can help integrate 21st century skills more meaningfully in vocational training.

10 Measurement of Impact

Breakthrough has had the impact of its Taaron ki Toli initiative evaluated through two RCTs. This makes it a robustly tested programme with reliable evidence of impact.

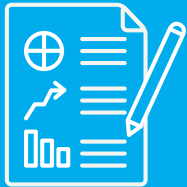
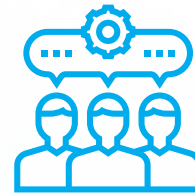
Breakthrough has also generated evidence on the long-term impact of its programme.

11 Research and Knowledge

LSC's work in developing a stakeholder-input based glossary of life skills for the Indian context. This will facilitate a common understanding of such skills and form the basis for comparable assessment metrics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Intensify and support collaborative platforms such as the LSC and Young Warrior NXT, and expand the numbers and diversity of their component organizations.



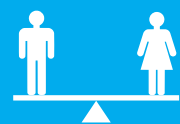
Create unified framework combining different 21st Century skill components, instead of depending on separate life skills, digital skills, financial literacy and other such frameworks. This would bring greater coherence to the understanding of and efforts to promote 21st century skills.

Reform the existing teacher training curriculum and develop a systematic strategy for training teachers at scale for integrating such skills in their teaching.



Drive the curricular integration of 21st century skills with the national-level partnership of a specialized organization from the educational space. Such an organization should play the role of knowledge partner and should be involved in designing and planning the pedagogical experiments for integrating 21st century skills into the teaching and learning of mainstream subjects.

Blend curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular approaches to promote 21st century skills, till the time the required capacities are built for integrating 21st century skills in the entirety of the school curriculum.



Facilitate and support more gender-focused 21st Century skill interventions. The content of 21st century skills programmes for girls and women should be grounded in a recognition of the societal and familial challenges that they face on a routine basis.

Devote attention towards providing 21st century skills to out of school youth, including urban slum youth, tribal youth and rural youth.



Map the most industry-relevant 21st century skills, so that youth can be better equipped with such skills through systematic dialogue between policymakers and industry.

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Read the full report here:

<https://www.yuwaah.org/sots2022>

Or email at:

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