

CAPACITY BUILDING OF ANGANWADI WORKERS, HELPERS AND SUPERVISORS

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Executive Summary

An anganwadi in India is a significant space for thousands of families across rural and urban parts of the country. With 1.4 million anganwadis, India is ensuring the achievement of health, nutrition and education outcomes for young children and their mothers.¹ As per the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), they serve six major functions, including pre-school education, nutrition, and health-related services.

The pillar of these centres is the anganwadi workforce, primarily comprising the anganwadi workers and anganwadi helpers, who are girls and women recruited locally. Additionally, there are cluster-level supervisors who are responsible for 25 anganwadi centres each. Anganwadi workers along with the helpers, fulfil about 21 responsibilities, maintaining records in 11 registers for all the six functions.² As a result of this, their focus on preschool education is diminished. Additionally, a multi-stakeholder structure comprising the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Tribal Affairs calls for higher levels of synergies, at times affecting the focus on anganwadi workforce development.

Only 34.9% of time in anganwadi centres is spent on age-appropriate play-based learning activities.³ The effect of this is observed on the learning outcomes – only 57% Indian children are school-ready when they enter grade 1.⁴ This learning deficit further continues and impedes the foundational literacy and numeracy skills in later grades. For this purpose, the capability building of the workforce needs urgent attention.

A number of challenges impede the success of capacity building initiatives in an anganwadi in India. These include paucity of training infrastructure, gaps in coordination among several actors involved in planning and implementation, low availability of data and research on training status along with pressing administrative duties of the anganwadi workers, helpers and supervisors lack of funding.

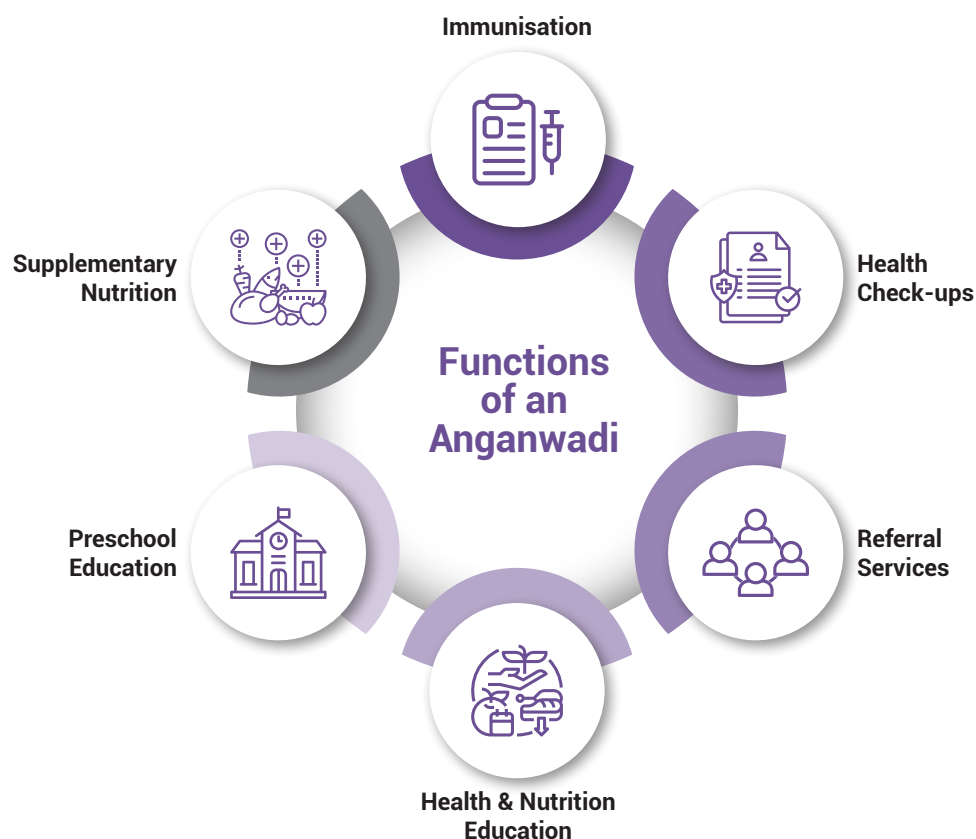
This perspective highlights the key distinguishing factors of successful scalable solutions which have overcome these challenges to ensure a well-equipped and responsive anganwadi workforce. These solutions focus on multiple levels of the workforce; i.e. anganwadi workers, helpers and supervisors. They intend to create mindset shifts, build collaborations as a critical component of planning and decision making, and they ensure usage of technology in the programming. Further investments in these trends along with an intentional dialogue on rethinking the roles and responsibilities of the anganwadi workers and anganwadi helpers would not only prepare the workforce for providing learners with strong foundational skills but also help their continuous development.

The Anganwadi Workforce: A Strong Pillar for Ensuring School-readiness in Learners

India has one of the world's most extensive programmes for early childhood development. It caters to over 80 million children under the age of six, and responds to health, nutrition and education needs of children and their mothers.⁵

Launched in 1975, the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) provides a range of services to families; especially children and mothers across early childhood care and education (ECCE), and maternal and child health. These include pre-school education, supplementary nutrition, health-related awareness, immunisation, health check-up, and referral services.⁶ The services are provided through a local centre, called anganwadi, ("courtyard shelter") located in an open space, building or any residence. The basic structure of an anganwadi, barring certain variations based on demographics, is usually the same. These centres have been consistently providing vulnerable and under-resourced communities across India equitable access to their basic rights of health and education. Currently a network of 1.4 million anganwadis are enabling the provision of these services.⁷

Figure 1: Functions of an Anganwadi



Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, Functions of an Anganwadi

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With a rise in awareness regarding the importance of ECCE, an increased number of parents are seeking quality pre-school education for their children to ensure that they are ready for school. Across rural India, there has been a significant rise in anganwadi enrollment rates in the age group 3-5, where as of 2022, 66.8% 3-year-olds and 61.2% 4-year-olds are enrolled in anganwadi centres (AWCs), compared to 57.1% and 50.5% respectively in 2018.⁸ This shift is promising, and hence makes these centres a critical place for the achievement of foundational learning in children and accomplishment of health goals for children and their mothers.

Anganwadi workers (AWW) shoulder a multitude of responsibilities across the health and education domains with helpers supporting them throughout.

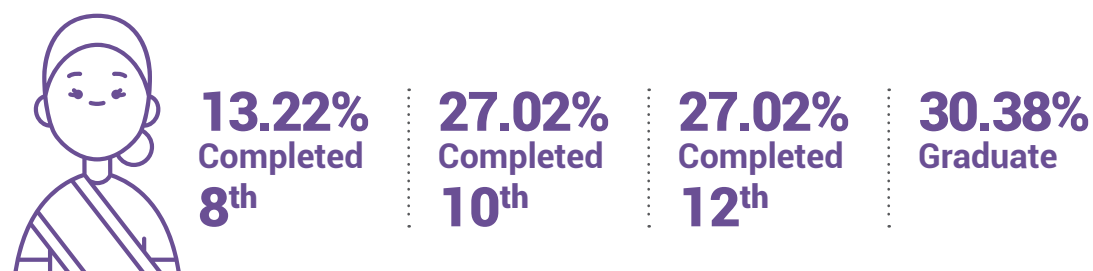
Figure 2: Profile of Anganwadi workers and helpers



The anganwadis are managed by AWW and helpers – who are trained to provide education, nutrition, and health services in a standardised manner. Presently, India has approximately 1.3 million AWWs and 1.2 million anganwadi helpers. Almost 85% of the anganwadi workforce are

from the same communities as the children and thus, are well-acquainted with the economic, social and cultural norms followed by families. Most of them have completed grade 10. These groups are governed by supervisors. Each supervisor is in charge of 25 anganwadis.⁹

Table 1: Distribution of education qualifications of AWWs



Source: NIPCCD, 2017

Even though the anganwadi is a centrally sponsored scheme, the recruitment process is undertaken by the concerned state governments and union territories as per their requirements. The anganwadi worker or helper who is required to be the resident of a local village typically goes through two stages in their recruitment - a written exam which is followed by an interview. According to the ICDS framework, the minimum qualification of an anganwadi worker is matriculation, which was initially grade 8.¹⁰ These workers are assisted by anganwadi helpers and together they take care of 21 responsibilities as highlighted by the ICDS framework on various domains of early childhood development like supplementing nutrition and growth monitoring, immunisation and health checkups, preschool and health education among children and mothers, community engagement and improving nutritional development.

Out of the 21 responsibilities of the anganwadi workforce, only two are ECE-focused. Multiple ministries and structures govern the functioning of the anganwadis, due to which, education tends to take a back seat.

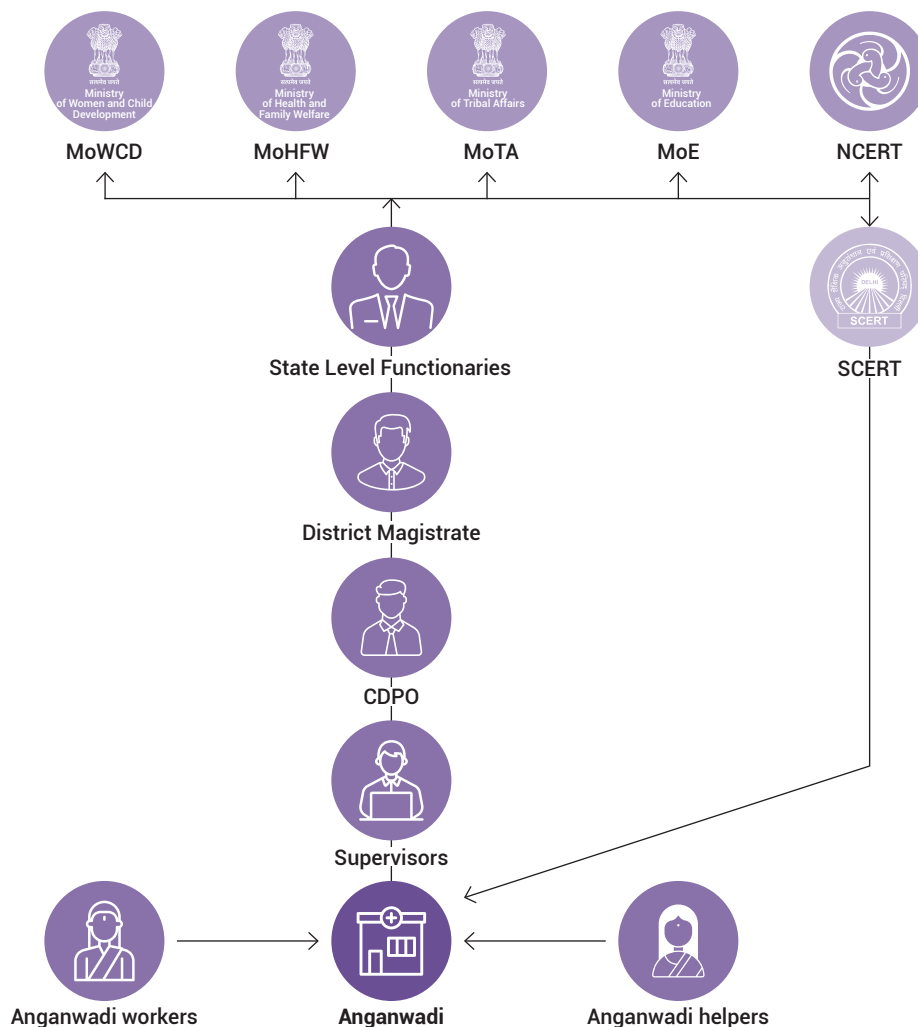
The service delivery of the anganwadis is monitored through a three-tier governance mechanism, including the cluster level supervisor, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) at the block level, and District Magistrate/Collector at the district level. The anganwadi workforce works under the directives of various ministries – Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA). While MoWCD remains the nodal point for the anganwadi ecosystem, with NEP 2020's emphasis on providing high quality of early childhood care and education, MoE's role in creating infrastructure and building capacity of the workforce is highlighted. NEP has emphasised on two components of Early Childhood Education and Care:

- (i) strengthening the curricular and pedagogical framework for early years education with the help of the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) and
- (ii) building capacities of the preschool workforce.

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To follow suit, State Councils for Education Research and Training (SCERTs) have to work closely with the central bodies to contextualise and customise elements of the programming.¹¹

Figure 3: Governance structure of the Anganwadi ecosystem



Source: Cost of Universalising Early Childhood Education in India, Save the Children

The recent 'Poshan Bhi, Padhayi Bhi' policy has been launched by the MoWCD in 2023 to concretise these directives, bringing the conversation and interventions for preschool education to the forefront. Through the changes introduced by the 'Poshan Bhi, Padhayi Bhi' ECCE policy, every child would be provided with at least two hours of high-quality preschool instruction on a daily basis.

With the focus of NEP 2020 on creating strong foundations, pre-school education is gaining its due importance. The policy directs the strengthening of AWCs with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained AWWs and teachers.

“There are various actors that are working in the early childhood space, and with NEP 2020's recommendations, the emphasis on educational outcomes is clearly stated. For example, across India, stakeholders like the central government, state governments, and multilaterals such as World Bank or UNICEF are heavily investing in this space. The sector is getting the due attention and the policy tailwinds are hugely responsible for this shift.”

– Dr. Manisha Date

For capacity building to impact learning outcomes in children, efforts are needed to ease the workload across domains, and make training exposure more consistent. Unless these aspects are resolved, the need for capacity building would remain unfulfilled.

The anganwadi workforce has to maintain 11 registers.¹² These are related to the six components of immunisation, health and nutrition, service delivery and so on. These tasks and routine exercises also occupy the instructional time they have for teaching-learning. Only about 34.9% of time in AWCs is spent on age-appropriate play-based learning activities.¹³ Furthermore, gaps in capacity, related to using appropriate material, behaving affectionately with children, positively involving parents at the centre and ensuring participation in class reduce their effectiveness. The impact of these numbers is also seen on the learning outcomes where, as of data from 2019, it was observed that only 57% learners in India were school ready to enter grade 1.¹⁴ This learning deficit further continues and impedes the foundational literacy and numeracy skills in later grades as well.

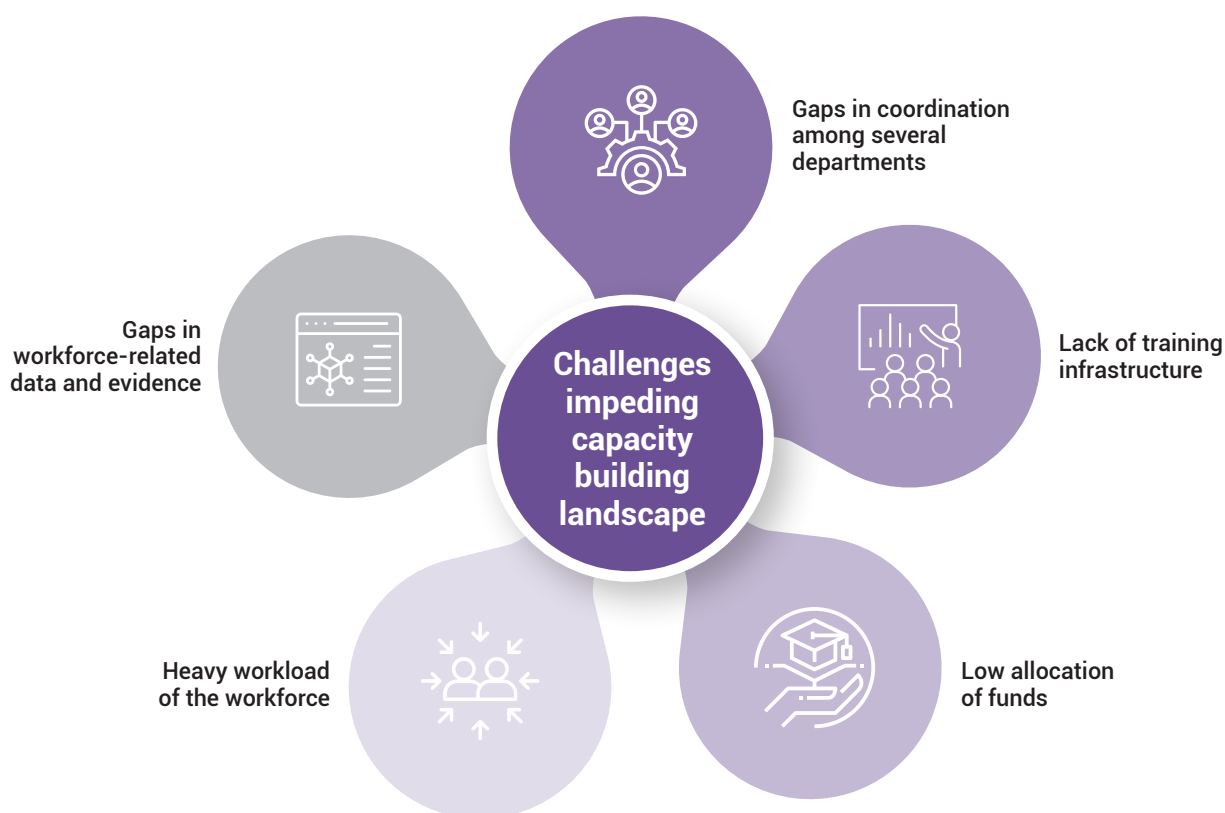
While this scenario of gaps in capacity is a strong one, consistent initiatives for building skill-sets of the workforce are missing. Although 95.5% of the AWWs across India had received a month-long induction training immediately after they joined, this number reduced to 26.5% for those who had received any form of refresher training.¹⁵

Quality pre-school interventions have a profound impact on learning and life outcomes for young children and here, trained professionals have a huge role to play.¹⁶ Hence, regular capacity building efforts to help the workforce cater to the complex needs of preschool education is a gap that needs immediate attention.

Challenges Impeding the Capacity Building of the Anganwadi Workforce

Capacity building of the anganwadi workforce is impeded by the paucity of planning and resources, as well as overall structure of work. The challenges are indicated in the figure below.

Figure 4: Factors impeding capacity building



NEP 2020 sets the expectation for different ministries to work together at the state and central levels. However, the gaps in overall planning and coordination between several actors result in siloed interventions.

NEP provides a significant opportunity to enhance the early childhood education landscape, particularly by fostering collaborations within different ministries - MoE, MoWCD, MoHFW and MoTA. A collaborative approach is also directed for actors who enable contextualisation and govern implementation at the state level. Hence, educational institutes such as NCERT and SCERTs also need to synchronise their planning of curriculum and capacity building activities. Despite this requirement, gaps in coordination among these actors and lack of a clear overarching plan often impedes implementation. The following quote explains this further.

“While most states have prepared the ECE curriculum, not all states have it approved yet. This is a major challenge since that impacts what goes to the anganwadi worker eventually. At this juncture, it is critical that we accomplish this step together where all the ministries as well as actors from the state and centre are working together.”

– Samyukta Subramanian, Pratham Education Foundation

The lack of an overall training infrastructure and central institutes to anchor skilling and systemic learning practices impede quality training.

The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) has traditionally handled the responsibility of training and development for the preschool workforce. It works under the MoWCD in order to help indicate course corrections for various education and health initiatives. However, the pre-school space requires more focused institutions, like the District Institute for Education and Training (DIET) for school education. The infrastructure for training, standardised training modules, regular follow-ups and mechanisms for governing these steps is missing. The skill gaps in the workforce hence go unnoticed, unless certain states or district administrations are working in collaboration with specific NGOs/NPOs for these efforts. Moreover, while the anganwadi workforce undergoes an intense induction training of 30 days in the very first month of recruitment, a consistent capacity building routine is absent.

Additionally, there is a paucity in the cadre of people like the DIET faculty, DIET principals and members from the SCERT who can closely work in the state for human resource development.

“We need to think if we have a layer of people who can train the huge anganwadi workforce in the preschool education component. It is practically impossible, merely looking at the scale of the workforce and the number of people we have above them to anchor these efforts. Institutionalisation of capacity building is a major challenge and if not overcome, we will keep having piecemeal solutions. If we don't rely on technology, overcoming this challenge is difficult.”

– Smitin Brid, Pratham Education Foundation

In addition to the training infrastructure, simple processes for learning are also not promoted, which challenges continuous capacity building efforts. For example, the anganwadi ecosystem does not allow for its workforce to visit other AWCs, unlike primary school teachers who are provided opportunities to visit each others' schools.

“We don't see AWWs visiting each others' centres to share best practices or learn from each other. There is no system or protocol that helps them to do that. For years, each teacher is limited to her own class and hence, cross learning is not possible.”

– Mangal Pandey, Key Education Foundation

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This view about 'criticality of peer learning' was also shared by Dr. Suman Sachdeva, who served as the UNICEF Education specialist for India for several years and now is posted in Sierra Leone. She stated,

"The Anganwadi workforce has abundant experience. We need to build on this knowledge and have systems that would help them contribute. They all can learn from each other too but what they need is a platform for learning and sharing."

While NGOs and other civil society organisations support the ecosystem for capacity building, the time constraints, workload and pressing administrative duties of the workforce come in the way of implementing these trainings.

The range of responsibilities handled by the anganwadi workforce occupy most of their time. Despite the mandate by the NCERT for the AWW and the helper to spend four hours on teaching-learning activities everyday, not more than 30 minutes are spent on teaching-learning activities.¹⁷ The workforce is overwhelmed with existing responsibilities and any new interventions are viewed as a burden. It is an uphill task to convince them of the positive impact that training could have on their day-to-day functioning. Their willingness to participate in capacity-building sessions is expected to remain low until the prevailing problems surrounding the nature of their job are resolved. The following quote substantiates this.

"When we were gearing up for the pilot we are to do in Delhi as a part of the multi-partner collaborative with Rocket Learning, Indus Action, IDInsight and Trickle Up, one of the strong feedback we received from the Anganwadi workers was on creating an environment for them to work more closely with parents and not just collect more data - "Don't make us fill-up more registers."

– Saransh Vaswani, Saajha

This aspect of making the workplace an effective and aspirational one was also highlighted in the interview with Mr. Shailendra Sharma, Chief Education Advisory to the Delhi government as he shared learnings from the Delhi Government's mentor teachers' programme as an example of capacity building exercise.

"If the real issues of the workforce such as providing access to functional toilets, salaries, processes through which their bills are passed or even good classroom infrastructure are not managed, the first half of every training would be spent in the teachers sharing these problems. So, when you think about any capacity building, taking an overall view at the contextual difficulties of the workforce, and ensuring ways to bring in ease of working is critical."

The funding landscape and public investments do not echo the policy push to ECE.

The government spends 0.3% of the education budget on early childhood education in India.¹⁸ With more than 1.3 million AWWs and 1.2 anganwadi helpers, the system is critically underfunded to even train the workforce in ECE. A study published in 2021 stated that 43% of the funds allocated for the ICDS-ECE programme in 2020-21 went towards awarding honorariums while only 0.4% funds were allocated for training and 4.6% for infrastructural developments.¹⁹ Along with public funding, the lack of CSR funding is also a major funding gap in this space.

For effective designing and implementation of training programmes, it is critical to generate evidence indicating the needs and training status of the workforce.

With the high number of public preschools in India, the data gaps in the training mechanisms have become a lot more evident. Apart from the funding problems in training, there are significant gaps in the data available in terms of the duration of the training, the time spent and even the frequency of these training sessions.

“There are two types of data gaps about training of AWWs: One is, you don't know when the training happened. The other thing is, you don't know what the training happened on. These data inconsistencies can potentially come in the way of planning.”

– Samyukta Subramanian, Pratham Education Foundation

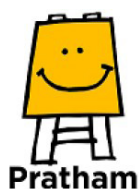
The limited availability of comprehensive data hinders the thorough analysis of the impact that training programmes can have in achieving the desired foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) outcomes in the early years. While the majority of training interventions are undertaken by private organisations or by collaboration between the government and private players, accurately quantifying data in the absence of a well-established training infrastructure is a challenge.

Effective Interventions and Barriers to Overcome

This section maps insights from 11 experts in order to present the existing solutions that have stood the test of scale and diversity, and have disrupted the traditional piecemeal approaches to capacity building. Each of these solutions aim to bring a change in the potential of the workforce to conduct teaching-learning practices by following ECCE guidelines to work on all domains of development, engage with parents and community and therefore, enable a smooth transition of learners to school.

An analysis of these interventions indicates that capacity-building programmes that are effective and sustainable possess the following four characteristics:

Type 1: Interventions focussing on various levels of the workforce cadre



Generally, capacity building is equated with conducting workshops, training or orientations that would enable skill development in specific domains such as pedagogy, content or even communication skills of the workforce. However, limiting these interventions to a specific cadre does not have a lasting impact, as other stakeholders who are responsible for governing the intervention are not involved. For example, NGOs/NPOs conduct many training sessions and workshops for AWWs, but these do not include supervisors responsible for ensuring functioning of the AWCs. This affects the long-term buy-in and smooth implementation of practices. Sustainable programmes are designed to include different members of the hierarchy as a part of the capacity-building initiatives. One such example is that of the Pratham Education Foundation, which worked with five state governments and facilitated systemic shifts in the approach to capacity building.

Note: The below programmes are all current programmes that have been running for at least five years.

Geographies	Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, and Andhra Pradesh
Target Groups	AWWs, anganwadi helpers, supervisors, CDPOs
Description of the Intervention	<p>Pratham has employed different models to work with multiple cadres in a variety of programmes.</p> <p>Model 1: Delhi Government Partnership Pratham trained AWWs, helpers, supervisors in ECCE, in association with other organisations like Centre for Early Childhood Development and Research and Jamia Millia Islamia, as part of the Delhi Government initiative. The aim of the initiative was to equip the managerial workforce with the same skillset as the AWWs across Delhi. The classroom training module was followed by a two-week practice class where the supervisors became leaders of practice by conducting practice classes themselves. They then conducted the training for workers and helpers across Delhi with support from Pratham.</p>

<p>Description of the Intervention</p>	<p>Training at all levels was based on the principles of 'participatory training methodology'. Values of care, respect, and empathy were highlighted to enable all stakeholders to work together.</p> <p>Model 2: Preschool interventions in schools across Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh</p> <p>Pratham's work, as well as the ASER data indicated that learners enrolled in Class 1 in these states were very young, almost 4 or 5 years old. There were two challenges observed. One, very young children were exposed to grade 1 tasks which were too advanced for them and two, the teacher's capacity to manage learners from multiple age groups was limited. The state government hence, had decided to co-locate preschool classes in primary schools; a model that was similar to Balvatikas. In this context, Pratham was approached to work with various stakeholders from the MoWCD and MoE. Two kinds of interventions hence were planned considering the context in the state:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In Haryana and Punjab, the Pratham team trained the AWWs, helpers, supervisors, CDPOs in curriculum and pedagogy to ensure a focus on the five domains of development and the learning outcomes these entail. 2. In Himachal Pradesh, as per the state requirements, the Pratham team worked with the primary school teachers of Classes 1 and 2, the block and district level education officers and state administration. The focus here was content, pedagogy as well as large scale assessments for school readiness. This exercise has been implemented across 3300 schools over the last four years so that competency-appropriate exposure is provided to students and they are ready for Class 1. <p>Model 3: SALT Initiative</p> <p>This is the most recent initiative where Pratham is working with the Sangram Shikha State Implementation Society, Government of Andhra Pradesh. The Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation (SALT) Initiative is a state government programme that aims at strengthening the quality and management of the early and formal schooling years across all districts of the state. The main focus of the World Bank-funded programme is to revamp the curriculum while improving the classroom practices by supporting the capacity building of teachers and the anganwadi workforce.</p> <p>Multiple stakeholders like the Department of School Education (DoSE), the Department of Women, Children, Disabled and Senior Citizens (DoWCDSC), other state-and district level bodies like SCERT, NCERT, SIEMAT and the network of DIETS are working towards the implementation of this programme at the ground level. Leadership for Equity is operating as a nodal NPO to support all stakeholders. Pratham works with the 3-8 age group for improving their foundational learning, and provides support to the government in developing an ECE roadmap, building the capacity of the AWWs and preparing early grades teachers. To accomplish this, Pratham has developed an ECCE module for Anganwadi teachers and helpers in collaboration with supervisors.</p>
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<p>Key Success Factors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Throughout the three models, Pratham ensured that the planning, organising and implementation involves various members from the preschool education ecosystem, including representatives from MoE and MoWCD. Apart from that, independent education research bodies such as SCERT, NCERT and DIETs are also working alongside. 2. 'Leaders of Practice', a mechanism where the leadership also undergoes training, runs practice classes and understands the challenges and opportunities of teaching-learning pedagogy, has not only trained the supervisors in ECE but also widened their managerial role by bringing them closer to the anganwadi workforce. As explained through this quote; <p><i>"We don't want a supervisor inspector monitor. We want on-ground, hands-on support and to do that, we need to establish leaders of practice within the system. One way to do it is to establish it is to let supervisors take the training, try out activities themselves in class, and then supervisors take lead to train the workforce. When the supervisors enter the class next, they are able to not just understand the gap, but also course correct. And so the role itself changes to a more of a mentorship or support model".</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Samyukta Subramaniam</p> 3. The modality of training and orienting people from different cadres and teams has made them support systems for each other. Because these stakeholders work together, a sustainable structure of support is created and Pratham need not be involved in any form of decision making anymore.
<p>Potential Challenges</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordinating with a range of stakeholders has been a challenge; especially where the working styles have been very different. 2. Convincing various members at the leadership level, especially the supervisors, to conduct practice classes took time. 3. Ensuring that multiple training cycles are aligned to the school calendar is a challenge that emerges with longer training cycles. <p>The team reported that persistence and demonstration of the ideas are enabling them to overcome these challenges, and achieve buy-in and change.</p>

This model has not only led to better classroom practices across anganwadis, but has also led to increased understanding and empathy among the various stakeholders. This buy-in from the system fostered a sense of shared responsibility, collaboration, and commitment among the different stakeholders at the central level, the state level, between the centre and the state as well as independent bodies working in this ecosystem, leading to a more cohesive implementation.

Another such unique intervention is implemented by Key Education Foundation. Working in the early childhood education landscape, the foundation is focusing on capacity building

by working with multiple cadres within the MoWCD and the MoE. KEF works with AWWs, Supervisors, CDPOs and pre-primary teachers. The focus of this training is on curriculum, pedagogy and helping them engage with parents.

“Coaching is a critical part of our capacity building process. Here, post trainings, we visit the Anganwadi once or twice a month, observe the class and provide support in creating session plans. We have developed a rubric for that ...effectively. Without coaching, all the training inputs remain at a cognitive level and things don't convert to actions.”

– Mangal Pandey, Key Education Foundation

For this to happen, a deep engagement with the state infrastructure, and an understanding of their working style is a crucial factor which needs patience, time and other resources. This was emphasised by Dr. Manisha Date, who is an expert in the space of people development and capacity building initiatives at scale.

“Every state is different. Every region demands a unique treatment. Any organisation working with the government needs to spend time to understand the nature of operations, the past interventions, the overall strengths of the region and build mutual trust. Being aware of the socio-political and cultural context of the state helps customise these interventions in a way that they become relevant and effective.”

– Dr. Manisha Date, Independent Consultant for People Development initiatives

Another such example of impacting multiple stakeholders in the child's ecosystem is also seen through a pilot done by Saajha, in collaboration with Indus Action, Rocket learning, IDInsight, and Trickle-up. Saajha has created Parent Engagement Groups (PEGs), and focuses on building capacities of both Anganwadi workforce and PEGs to explore how they can support and complement each others' efforts. While the impact of this intervention is yet to be tested, programmes like these help create continuity, as various actors learn to support each other and engage in capacity-building processes.

Type 2: Interventions focusing not only on knowledge and skills, but also on altering attitudes and creating mindset shifts



Interventions in the anganwadi system should encompass more than just skill development; they should also prioritise the cultivation of critical attitudes in the teacher, who in turn influences the learners. While technical competencies are undeniably important for helping the workforce manage classrooms, it is equally crucial for the workers to possess a mindset that emphasises inclusivity and child-centric approaches. These critical attitudes serve as the foundation for providing high quality care and support to the children and their families. In order to achieve this, interventions promoting reflective

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practices for attitudinal and behavioural changes have been crucial. One such example is that of Makkala Jagriti, a Bengaluru-based NGO which focuses on various axes of social equity, like gender, class, and caste.

Geographies	Karnataka
Target Groups	Anganwadi workers and helpers
Description of the Intervention	<p>Behavioural intervention aimed at creating mindset shifts Makkala Jagriti works extensively in the preschool education space across Karnataka. In the anganwadi ecosystem, the foundation works on three aspects – knowledge, skill and behaviour – which are directly delivered to the AWWs. For Makkala Jagriti, 'social biases' of any kind were an important point that impacted the quality of education.</p> <p><i>"I think many organisations shy away from behavioural aspects because you don't see results immediately. We are looking at changing the behaviour patterns of 35-40 years, something that people have lived with. But I feel if you don't change attitudes and behaviours, nothing else matters. You might be doing the best cognitive practices but if you end up disrespecting a gender or a religion I think it does more harm at this age. A child between the age of 3 to 6, internalizes stereotypes and biases more."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Amrutha Murali</p> <p>Makkala Jagriti conducts seven training sessions with AWWs, helpers and WCD functionaries. These workshops begin with a discussion on the various attitudes and behaviours that would help create an ideal learning space for children.</p> <p><i>"All our training starts with a visioning exercise of what is possible, what an ideal learning space looks like, what you should be doing, what the parents should be doing etc.. So now we have a vision of what we are trying to achieve and then we help them to break that down into things that would help achieve that vision."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Amrutha Murali</p> <p>Along with the pedagogy focusing on socially responsive practices, the group also engages in self-assessments that help them reflect better on pre-existing biases and how they would influence classroom practices. These are also supported by content that is sensitive and hence, enables dialogue.</p>

<p>Key Success Factors</p>	<p>This behavioural approach towards capacity building enables them to be cognisant of their behaviour and helps leverage the powerful impact a teacher can have on a student.</p> <p><i>"I have had teachers in the systems who are now going to retire any time soon after 30+ years of service and they say, I wish I would have known this before. I would have done better. So that's a powerful statement. I think there has been an absolute lack of importance given to this age group when it comes to learning. Now we are looking at things that they are relearning or unlearning and we expect more from them. I think for me that has been the biggest shift that I have seen."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">- Amrutha Murali</p>
<p>Potential Challenges</p>	<p>1. These changes take time to show effect and hence, short-term funding does not enable visibility of change.</p>

Type 3: Interventions designed with the essence of collaboration at every step of the course



Enhancing effectiveness through collaborative interventions in capacity building yields numerous benefits in terms of sustainability of the intervention, and also promotes ownership. Involving frontline workers of the anganwadi ecosystem in co-creating and making decisions around interventions facilitates firsthand access to their knowledge, experiences and insights. These prove to be invaluable in terms of understanding their needs, challenges and opportunities in the sector.

Such interventions also benefit in being firmly grounded to the realities of their work. To implement such a collaborative intervention, it is essential to create platforms and mechanisms that facilitate the active participation of the frontline workers. These may include regular meetings, focus groups or workshops where their inputs are sought and valued. Additionally, clear communication channels help ensure that the voices of these workers are heard and considered in the decision-making process. One such example is the module on language learning created by the Simple Education Foundation, which had teacher collaboration as a practice for building a curriculum. While the organisation helped the teachers with a broad technical structure, the teachers created the module for capacity building in language and also trained other fellow teachers.

"You need to explain to them the technical breakdown of all the language practices that we have made. If we look at the very technical literacy or numeracy of our language practices we have broken them down in 'Hows' of the process. So if for example a teacher is introducing a new word in class then there is a 5 step codified process to that as to where the teacher is

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right now, where she needs to move - making that visible to the teacher is important. Once you do that, they own it up and make it their own."

– Chandni Chopra, Simple Education Foundation

Geographies	Delhi, Uttarakhand
Target Groups	School teachers and nursery teachers
Description of the Intervention	<p>Co-creating Teacher Guide Books</p> <p>Simple Education Foundation has recently printed out their first set of Hindi language books which have been co-created with Grade 1, Grade 2 and preschool teachers. These language books consist of structured learning plans for the teachers that are designed to enable language literacy among children. While the lesson plans are co-created with the teachers, they are also iterated with them for a minimum of 5-6 times. This intervention is also implemented at scale after going through a benchmarking process involving an expert review, testing by 5-6 different users within a real classroom setting, and in the field by teachers, who recommend it.</p>
Key Success Factors	<p>The extensively reviewed guide book is entrenched in the ground realities of the teacher's space. The teachers are also well-versed with the books as they have been a part of the entire process. The following quote exemplifies this:</p> <p><i>"One of the things that comes out of it is the teachers become the champions of that guide book as they have co-created it with you so it has really captured their realities. The module is also used in classrooms for 8 months, co-designed with government teachers so you know it works, we have evidence of impact to show student outcomes. Such mechanisms help us as we train new teachers because the buy-in is higher."</i></p> <p>– Srinidhi Lakshmanan</p>
Potential Challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The entire process of review is time-consuming for the learning and insights team as well as the research teams. 2. In the landscape of ECE research, especially for understanding what works in content development and capacity building, funding is inadequate. <p><i>"I feel that schools and children are concepts that you can see and touch so they are more understandable concepts. On the contrary, state transformation spaces are a bit more intangible. Even if you are working at the state level, you have to work on teacher training, working on the system governance, and measuring the impact of that teacher training on every last student and that is a big ask from donors. We need funds for research, evidence generation and programs that build quality and nuance in a collaborative and transformational manner."</i></p> <p>– Chandni Chopra</p>

Type 4: Interventions anchored in technology



Rocket Learning

The impact of technology in education is being acknowledged, especially post-pandemic, as a facilitator in various settings. Be it in direct interventions with learners or training programmes, the use of technology has made processes smoother. With the provision of smartphones to all AWWs across the country, technology can be further utilised for capacity building. Simple and consistent tech solutions would enable coaching and mentoring support to the workforce on a daily basis. One such model where technology is the central aspect of programming for capacity building is that of Rocket Learning.

Geographies	Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Chandigarh and Uttarakhand
Target Groups	AWWs, Grade 1 and 2 teachers
Description of the Intervention	<p>The intervention operates on the AIM model of capacity building wherein A: Awareness of the criticality of ECE and workers' own agency I: Information to aid teaching-learning practices M: Motivation to build a habitat for supporting children's learning</p> <p>Rocket Learning is a non-profit based out of Delhi working extensively in the ECE landscape in India. Through its AIM initiative, it focuses on bringing in tech-enabled solutions to digitalise the anganwadi workforce. Central Square Foundation, MIT Solve, UNICEF, DRK Foundation, ACT Grants, World Economic Forum, Godrej Foundation and Microsoft are also collaborating on this solution.</p> <p>With the help of WhatsApp groups and a seamless backend responsive system, the organisation is providing content and teaching-learning support to AWWs. Teachers interact regularly on more than 1000 active WhatsApp groups, where they are sent material and encouraged to share their reflections from using it. Additionally, queries that the teachers have on a daily basis are also resolved. The consistent support also enables confidence in the anganwadi workforce to conduct activities.</p> <p><i>"Anganwadi workers traditionally weren't trained in educational practices and so, they felt the pressure. Most workers are experienced today but lack the confidence in their understanding of ECE. The openness to learn, however, is very high. Our interactions reassure them of their competency and keep them positive."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Azeez Gupta, Founder of Rocket Learning</p> <p>The intervention not only provides inputs but also appreciates the best practices shared by the workforce. This is done through an automated system for providing certificates and badges. These practices create a positive feedback loop, reinforcing behaviours that are effective.</p>

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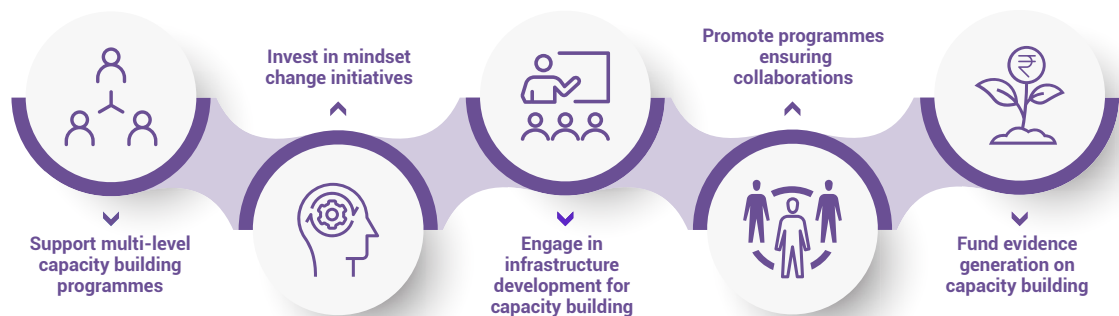
Key Success Factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Cost-effectiveness of the solution and agility to be operated at scale.2. The model ensures recognition and positivity in the workforce, hence amplifying efforts.
Potential Challenges	While the tech-based initiative is able to help the workforce conduct daily activities, it was reported that the socio-emotional skills of the AWWs and helpers could not be addressed. This is a major gap highlighted by Rocket Learning, stating that investments in soft skills of workers would be critical for sustaining long-term impact in early childhood education.

The above interventions provide a range of solutions which have the potential to be scaled up. By focusing on resolution of the challenges mentioned in each intervention, higher impact in capacity building can be created, leading to better learning outcomes.

The Way Forward: Potential Areas for Funders to Accelerate Capacity Building Interventions

Funders can enable workforce capacity building by supporting the following gap areas.

Figure 5: Areas of investments for funders to accelerate change in Capacity building for Anganwadi Workforce



Source:

Funding entities can focus on the following action points for each area of investment:

1. Support multi-level capacity-building initiatives to build understanding and empathy among stakeholders and hence, generate strong ownership.

- a. Invest in programmes that include different cadres of workforce for capacity building.
- b. Provide patient capital to practitioners for them to customise solutions to the systemic challenges, needs and the lived realities of the workforce.

2. Invest in mindset change initiatives of the workforce so that children also are exposed to positive, effective and sensitive role models while growing up.

- a. Enable human resource development programmes anchored to nuanced social constructs such as gender, caste and class in their programming.
- b. Support socio-emotional skill development initiatives for the anganwadi workforce.

3. Engage in infrastructure development for capacity building so that regular interventions can be planned for this critical workforce.

- a. Invest in private-public partnerships to create physical centres of learning for the anganwadi workforce.
- b. Support development of tech solutions for capacity building.

4. Promote programmes encouraging collaborations so that practitioners can build on each others' learnings and successes

- a. Invest in initiatives promoting collective action among various actors in the sector.
- b. Provide funding to practitioner collaboratives working on capacity building so that strengths of various organisations are at play.

5. Fund evidence generation on capacity building so that informed choices can be made for future investments in workforce development.

- a. Support studies analysing the status of various interventions and their effectiveness.
- b. Capture voices of the workforce to understand their perceptions about interventions.

Investments across these areas would help empower the workforce in upskilling themselves for the changing needs of education and improve the quality of pre-schools across India. Considering the long term impact of early years interventions on a child's life outcomes, paying attention to the capacity building of this workforce is paramount.

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