Mid-Year Report

MAA Restructuring Project

30th October, 2017 | Pune

lfe LEADERSHIP FOR EQUITY

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Executive Summary

The MAA Restructuring project, operational since December 2015, began with an overall goal to transform the MSCERT into an exemplary, apex government body with leadership and expertise in teacher support, research, continuous professional development to all education functionaries. This was with the intent of creating a conducive education ecosystem for teachers and students to flourish and succeed in Maharashtra. The project, along with its specific articulation of goals and priorities, has evolved substantially since its inception. Towards the end of the previous year (March '17) the project gained focus in terms of a concrete 3 year strategy and focused axes of intervention, namely Personnel Selection, Quality Assurance & Capacity Building, Performance Management, Partnerships, Scaling Best Practices, IT Support.

The period from April to September 2017 has seen a lot of traction across the prioritised fields of intervention, specifically in Selection, Capacity Building, IT Support and Performance Management. A snapshot of the outcomes is presented below:

Selection - **872** application received, **179** candidates were invited for selection conference, **31** candidates were selected based on the merit of their performance
Capacity Building - **462** Officers trained - foundation, MAA/RAA, BOS, **21** sessions conducted
Performance Management - **278** Reviewed , **236** Retained, **42** Discontinued
IT support - Sessions with 4 departments

Overall there has been a lot of momentum generated which we hope to leverage in the coming months to continue consolidating and institutionalising our efforts.

Introduction

Background

The MAA Restructuring project, initiated in December 2015 has undergone many cycles of evolution in terms of scope, staff members, timelines and goals in Year 0 of its operations. The focus in Year 0 was largely to build relationships, establish credibility of the project team within MAA and the State Education Department, gain a thorough understanding of the landscape and the needs of the people as well as work towards establishing a strong plan and strategy for the coming years of intervention. The outcome was reflected in the creation of a strategy document as well as an LFA (Annexure I).
The focus areas identified based on this landscape understanding are as follows

1. **Vacancies**: No office in the among DIECPD, MAA or RAA operates at 100% personnel according to posts sanctioned. Considering the quantum of work for which the offices are accountable there is an urgent need to fill all available vacancies as per the government rules.
2. **Quality**: The departments within the Maharashtra Academic Authority' are collectively responsible for rigorous research, curriculum and evaluations and ensuring teacher professional development through various workshops and trainings. It has been observed by multiple parties that the quality of these departmental initiatives are
3. **Human Resource Management**: There was an absence of a cohesive team and work culture, team and individual review structures, etc in order to ensure all the goals are met.
4. **Use of IT**: There was very minimal use of IT tools and resources to ensure faster and more efficient work, smoother collaboration as well as tracking the extent of work done.
5. **Learning**: The staff at MAA, the apex body, were not rooting their initiatives in direct field visits - to a district, block, cluster and school to understand ground realities and discover innovations which could potentially be scaled.
6. **Partnerships**: External partnerships were usually done on an ad hoc basis without a policy or a structures to track and evaluate the contributions of partners

Goals and Intervention Strategy

Based on the landscape understanding and the focus areas identified above an ultimate goal as well as axes of intervention were developed.

Long Term Goal: To empower the MSCERT into an exemplary, apex government body with leadership and expertise in teacher support, research, continuous professional development to all education functionaries. Leading to the creation of a conducive education ecosystem for teachers and students to flourish and succeed in Maharashtra

The restructuring involves breaking down the overall outcome into distinct axes of intervention with individual goals and related activities and measures of success.

The main axes of intervention are as follows
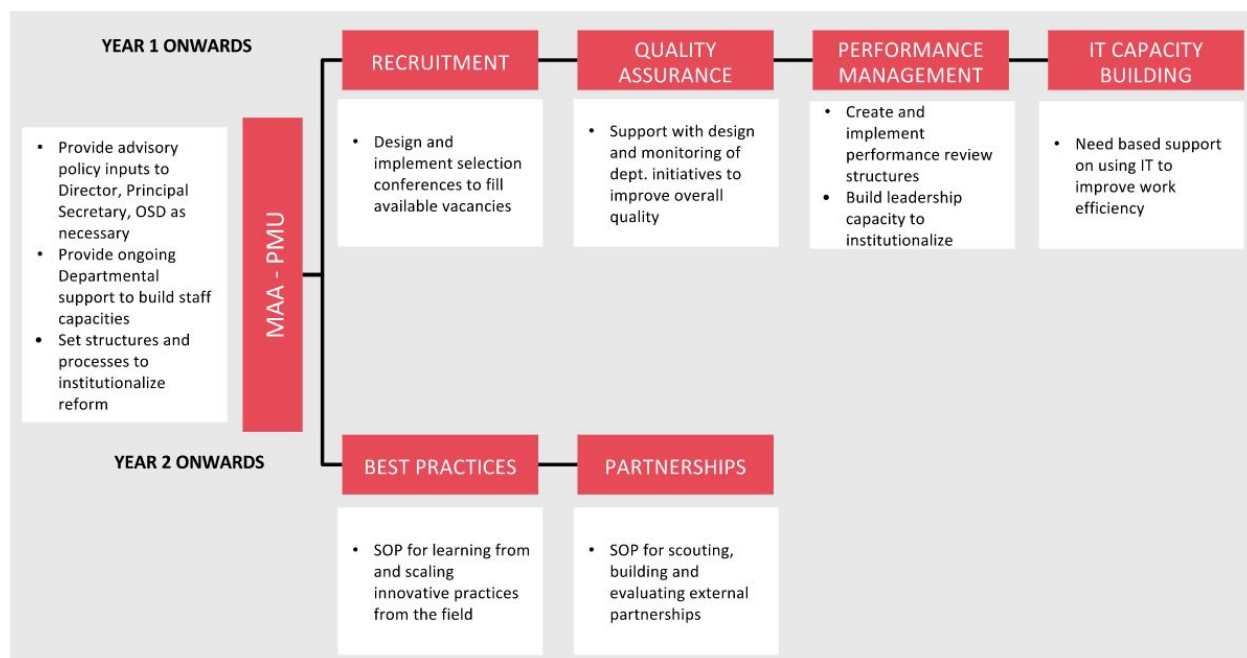
The Last 6 Months: April - September 2017

This section contains a detailed report of the targeted goals for Q1 and Q2, 2017 as well as aligned activities and their key highlights, learnings.

Focus Areas & Goals

Based on the overall project plan and feasibility considering uncertainties arising due to the nature of working with government, the following goals were set:

1. **Selections**:
   Conduct Selection Conferences to fill available vacancies in MAA/RAA
2. **Quality Assurance**:
   Conduct capacity building workshop for MAA/RAA Staff
   Conduct trainings for Board of Study members, Newly Recruited staff
3. **Performance Management**
   Conduct comprehensive performance review for Subject Assistants at MAA/RAA
4. **IT Capacity Building**
   Conduct Department-wise training sessions at MAA

Timeline

Dates	Activities
May 2-3	MAA/RAA Vision Setting Workshop
July 9, 13	Class 1 Officers Foundation Course Training
August 10-12	BOS Training
August 18-19	Selection Conference for MAA/RAA
August 22-24	MAA/RAA Workshop: International Standards
September 25	Performance Review MAA/RAA
September 27	Class 2 Officers Foundation Course training
October 13	Performance Review DIECPD

Key Activities

1. MAA/RAA Vision Setting Workshop May 2017

As a first step after the selection process and newly selected officers having joined their respective offices, it was decided to hold the first overall capacity building workshop for MAA/RAA, the theme being Vision Setting and Planning. The venue was Flame University, Lavale.

Overall vision for the workshop was to ensure that each participant walks away with clarity on annual planning, vision and goal setting, and mapped activities to the goals which will give the state team direction for the rest of the year. For each task simple templates were created and provided, which everyone found easy to fill. As part of the workshop, to ensure some team building and fun, a drum circle was organised in collaboration with TAAL Inc. which everyone enjoyed.

The feedback received was overwhelmingly positive and this workshop set the tone and direction for all the MAA/RAA staff for the entire year.

2. MAA-RAA Capacity Building August 22-24, 2017

Against a background of empowering the apex body to support the soon to be established international quality schools all over Maharashtra and introducing the state team to International Educational Standards, the present workshop entitled "MAA and RAA : The First Step Towards International Standards" was planned and organised in collaboration with the International Quality Cell, MAA. and was supported by Avsara Academy (*a high performing progressive secondary school that works on building lifetime leadership for girls primarily from low-income communities from Pune*).

The overall vision for the workshop was to create an experience which would enable the teams to develop a shared understanding about what "International quality" means in the context of creating International quality schools in Maharashtra. The workshop also aimed to ideate around what could the MAA & RAA teams can start doing at a state level to create and sustain districts & schools level interventions to deliver 'international quality' education. It also intended to introduce some administrative structures and processes as a part of the organisational development needs of the MAA & RAA teams, to improve effectiveness.

To design over three days was MAA / RAA team was split into two groups who would visit Avasara Academy and attend workshop sessions held in MAA on alternate days, with the entire team debriefing and making a plan for the way forward on day 3. As an overall outcome for the 2.5 days together it was for the teams to develop shared meaning, identify support structures for professional development, structures for inter office collaboration and commit to at least 1 action item per department which they would improve upon or change.

The visit to Avasara Academy helped the MAA and RAA teams to actually see in action what it takes to operate a school at an international with students from diverse backgrounds. Everyone walked away with a strong sense of possibility for the students in Maharashtra as well as for the future of the International Schools project, initiated by the Government of Maharashtra.

MAA-RAA Capacity Building August 22-24, 2017

3. MAA-RAA Selection Conference, August 2017

In a July 2017 internal review it was realized that several posts on which selected candidates did not assume charge were still vacant and after the transfer window several of the earlier occupied posts were vacated. To fill these vacancies the following link **(https://www.research.net/r/maadeputation2017)** was developed and circulated throughout the state for soliciting applications from interested candidates.

A total of **872** applicants had filled out the link for 108 vacant positions till the night of July 25th 2017. Out of these 872 candidates **179** candidates were invited for a 2 day selection conference on 18th and 19th August 2017 held at Balewadi, Pune. The candidates were split into officers (Class 1 and Class 2) and *Vishaysahayak* (Teachers/Class 3). The officers were called on the 18th August and the remaining were called on the 19th August. This classification was done keeping in mind the tasks to be allotted during the selection process and no other reason.

Criteria for shortlisting and selection was strictly in accordance with the Government Resolution dated 17 October, 2016. The conference sessions were designed to simulate the situations that the candidates were likely to face in their roles and they were evaluated on skills that were deemed to be most necessary to succeed in those roles. A detailed process report containing evaluation rubrics, selection criteria, session summaries etc. was submitted to MAA.

After the selection conference, the snapshot of posts at the MAA and RAA level is presented below:

Class/Office	Sanctioned	Vacancy as on Aug '17	Selected (Sept '17)
MAA Pune			
Group A	24	13	6
Group B	36	30	4
Group C	43	5	4
All RAAs			
Group A	8	2	2
Group B	42	36	4
Group C	46	22	11

Applicants during the Officer's Selection Conference, 18th August 2017

Applicants during the Vishaysahayak Selection Conference, 19th August 2017

4. Performance review for Subject Assistants

The first annual performance review was conducted for staff working in the post of *Vishaysahayak* (Subject Assistants) at MAA/RAA in collaboration with Dept. of Human Resources, Maharashtra Academic Authority on 26th September, 2017. Panels consisting of Deputy Directors and Group A Officers were formed. The LFE team normed the panelists on the design of the process and usage of the rubrics. The final scoring formulae and results were kept confidential.

The following scoring strands and weightage were used to come up with the overall evaluation scores:

- Self-Evaluation- 5%
  Each *Vishayshayak* has a chance to evaluate oneself thoroughly and honestly.
- Evaluation by a Senior Officer- 40%
  Observations of officers with whom the *Vishayshayak* has been closely working.
- Presentation of the work done- 40%
  This activity gave everyone a chance to openly express their achievements and impact.

- Alignment between the scores of senior officer and self evaluation- 15%
  This was included as a check for honesty on the self-evaluation strand.

The following strands were included in the rubric

1. No. of schools and districts visited, no. of modules created and trainings organised
2. Clarity of articulation/identification and data based presentation about successes, challenges in work
3. Ability to articulate / demonstrate impact of work done

The overall snapshot of the outcome of the review is as follows

- **39** - *Vishaysahayaks* evaluated
- **70%** - overall score decided as cut off for securing extension
- **26** - *Vishaysahayaks* Scored above 70% and have been recommended for extension
- **7** - *Vishaysahayaks* expressed intention of discontinuing from present post
- **6** - *Vishaysahayaks* scored less than 70% and not recommended for extension

Vishaysahayak being reviewed by the committee at MAA Pune

5. Ongoing Support

The underlying belief of LFE in implementing the Restructuring project is that while sporadic workshops and training sessions are useful in introducing concepts and providing an overview, it is working together with the MAA/RAA staff on a daily basis in attempting to apply these concepts that helps truly build staff capacities. What this looks like in day to day, is that the LFE team helps co-design departmental initiatives within MAA/RAA, with the intention of facilitating mutual learning and working styles in the process. Following are the key initiatives for which the LFE team has provided ongoing support

- Marathi Foundational Reading Competency Workshop - Marathi Dept. MAA
- Compilation of problems faced in Urdu schools in Maharashtra - Urdu Dept. MAA
- Designing Measures of Success for Ongoing Initiatives - RAA, Aurangabad
- Ongoing support to for International Schools Project- IQC Dept. MAA

Successes

Trust and Confidence within the system

Over the first half, building on the successes of the past year, the most important success has been the level of trust and confidence that multiple levels of stakeholders have shown on the team members. This reinforces our belief in investing time and effort in working from within the office, and being voluntarily involved in initiatives that may be beyond the scope of our initial terms of reference. While it definitely stretches our resources, the reward is quite high. In our case, it was very reassuring to be invited for multiple sessions with the Class 1 Officer Foundation Course trainings at Yashada, Pune as well as an entire day of session for the Class 2 Officer Foundation Course at Amravati, participating in policy level committee meetings at the National and State levels, etc. The LFE team was also invited for training sessions with the Balbharati Board of Studies (textbook writing committee) to present an overview of international standards in education, which would guide

Policy Level Inputs

Building on the increased trust and credibility, LFE has gotten an opportunity to contribute to various policy level initiatives.

a) **International Schools Project, GoM**: Co-ordinating an all NGO meet, designing selection criteria, application forms for schools, recommending selection of personnel to manage the project through SSA from within LFE's extended networks, etc.

b) **NCERT Committee for DIET Vision**: LFE represented Maharashtra along with the Director, MAA to guide the national vision document for all DIETs in the country, based on the vision for teacher education and progress made in Maharashtra

c) **NCERT Committee for SCERT Vision**: 2 Members from LFE were invited to the national committee to set a vision for strengthening SCERTs in India. Multiple recommendations were

provided by the team based on the innovative approaches undertaken in Maharashtra. They were also part of the drafting committee which was res

PSM test processes review

Involved in re formatting the scoring patterns for the PSM test and introducing 'fundamental competency scores' and revising the criteria for declaring a student 'Pragat'. These were presented to the Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra and culminated in a circular released to all teachers.

Transparency in Selection and Performance Review

This year's selection conference was declared 100% third party by the MAA and fully managed by LFE - including design, selection criteria and rubrics, shortlisting, culminating in a final process reports recommendation for selections, which was fully followed by MAA.

Further, the decision to conduct performance reviews managed by LFE was also accepted. While the scores, ratings and observations involved the supervising officers within the government, the entire design, rubrics, process and final report containing recommendations based on the scores, were given by the LFE team and accepted as is by MAA, which we consider a big success, given the multiple factors involved in selection, retention, and transfers in any government system.

Learnings

Clarity on Job Roles/Descriptions

While many individual officials were performing their roles well, as an overall structure, there was less clarity about specific expectations from their role. At a big picture level, while officials continuously mentioned that they were here to serve the 2.2 crore children of Maharashtra, what that meant on a day to day level, at each level of hierarchy, and how it would be evaluated, needs to be better defined. This is something we hope to address in the next half, through detailed, mutually constructed Job Responsibilities manuals for MAA and RAA.

Capacity to use basic IT resources

While the intention and excitement exists within the MAA/RAA staff, when it comes to actually integrating it with everyday workflow there still seems to be some issues. Further, we have realised that even basics are not clear for many of the staff. This would necessitate differentiated and need based support to ensure everyone has the requisite level of competency in using IT tools.

People

In this section we celebrate some of the key people among our stakeholders who have been exemplary in the way they have operated at MAA.

Maharashtra Academic Authority

Dr. Sujata Lohakare, Deputy Director, Marathi Department, MAA Pune

Dr. Lohakare has been a great inspiration to team LFE by personifying humility and sincerity in her approach towards her work at MAA. According to her team members she has been a source of great support and is very clear about the vision for her department. Through extensive field visits in Gadchiroli and extensive time spent interacting with students from remote areas, she has gained a lot. Senior officers have mentioned that this reflects in her renewed approach to her work, and hope this will encourage everyone to make time in learning from the challenges at the school level, especially in remote areas.

Dr. Sujata Lohakare, going over foundational reading skills with students in a rural school

Tauseef Pervez

Tauseef, a Primary Urdu-School Teacher who got an opportunity to become a part of the Urdu Department at Maharashtra Academic Authority after the restructuring exemplified what a motivated individual can achieve. Along with his Head of the Department, he visited schools in 8 districts interacting with the students, teachers and officers from the Education Department. Along with these visits he created and administered a survey to identify, enumerate and capture problems faced by teachers and HMs of Urdu Schools. To consolidate its findings, he led a state level workshop assisted by the LFE team. This brought together 30 experts on identifying the most crucial problems and finding solutions to those problems from over 3000 problems captured through these visits and survey. Tauseef feels that the co-operation that LFE provided in planning, designing, and executing workshop was helpful and he was able to gain new skills on workshop design and planning in the entire process.

Tauseef Parvez, Urdu Department, Maharashtra Academic Authority, Pune

Manisha Tathe & Chaya Mahindrakar

Manisha Tathe and Chaya Mahindrakar, along with LFE team have together led the selection and review process of *Vishaysahayaks* at MAA, and across RAAs and DIECPDs. They were closely involved with the planning, designing and execution of the process and supported these events by ensuring official paperwork and providing guidance on documentation. With our extensive interaction with these 2 key stakeholders, they feel positive about doing the crucial work with which they have been entrusted. They enjoy working with the LFE team, and mention that they are motivated by the dedication, efficiency and sincerity in the work that they see us do.

Ms. Manisha Tathe and Ms. Chaya Mahindrakar, Maharashtra Academic Authority, Pune

Supporters and Enablers

Mr. Nand Kumar, Principal Secretary, Department of School Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra

Mr. Nand Kumar has been our biggest enabler not just in terms of vision and direction for the project but also by providing invaluable guidance and mentorship to the team members. He has always provided us with constructive feedback as well. He has also given us opportunities to be part of multiple state level committees and conferences which have helped us understand the workings of the State Education Department more closely as well as enabled us to provide more contextualised inputs. We continue to look up to him for support and guidance to ensure the continued success of the MAA Restructuring Project.

Ms. Prachi Sathe, Officer on Special Duty, Ministry of Education, Maharashtra

Ms. Prachi Sathe has been a continuous source of inspiration and support for the team, especially in the domain of helping us understand statewide training initiatives and conceptualising new, teacher friendly initiatives. She has been very kind in helping the team gain exposure by participating in Balbharti Board Of Studies conferences and engaging with the members across the State.

Director, and Deputy Directors, Maharashtra Academic Authority and Regional Academic Authorities

Team LFE is deeply grateful for all the guidance and support readily provided by these key officials. The Director and the Deputy Directors have truly taken the initiative to understand the rationale and processes of the restructuring and are currently doing their best to align departmental initiatives to the new vision.

Central Square Foundation

Our team is thankful to the team from CSF for pushing our collective thinking on strategy and holding us accountable for consistent monitoring and documentation. Apart from the financial support in running the project, the CSF team has been extremely supportive in enabling team's participation in national conferences and committees which have proven invaluable in establishing the credibility of the organisation as well as the progress made by the project.

Motivation For Excellence MG Manudhane Foundation

The team from MFE has been supportive in validating our learnings about the ed tech landscape and implementation at scale. MFE has been financially supporting the project in We continue to look up to them in enabling us to form more partnerships in the ed tech space in the country.

Looking Ahead

Priorities for the next 6 months

1. **Selection**:
   MAA/RAA Selection Conference
   NGO / CSR Consultative Meeting and Selection Conference
   DIECPD Selection Conference
2. **Capacity Building**:
   2 workshops for MAA/RAA team culture, strengthening org processes/workflow
   1 Workshop for all DIECPD Principals to norm on MHRD Directives, Performance Review & Selection and Work Co-Ordination with Regions and State
   Ongoing support to strengthen departmental initiatives - IT Support sessions, Meetings to co-design departmental initiatives for Language, Equity, Research and CPD
   Pragat Charcha - Facilitating collective discussions to synthesise learnings for MAA officers
3. **Performance Management**:
   2 Conferences - Job Description revision of functionaries across the State Education Department Spectrum - Administrative and Academic
   Performance Review for Class 1/ Class 2 Officers - MAA/RAA/DIECPD
4. **IT Support**
   5 sessions of IT Support per department for MAA
5. **Planning and Documentation**
   Process reports for each conference, workshop and review process
   Annual Report
   Job Descriptions for MAA / RAA staff / State Education Functionaries
   Revision of TOC and LFA based on 2017-18 developments