

MAA Restructuring EoY Report

2017-2018

Pune



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List of Acronyms

CPD	Continuous Professional Development (Department, SCERT, Maharashtra)
DIECPD	District Institute of Educational Continuous Professional Development (DIET, in MH)
GR	Government Resolution
HM	Headmaster
IT	Information Technology
IVGS	Institute of Vocational Guidance
LFE	Leadership For Equity
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAA	Maharashtra Academic Authority
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development, (Government of India)
MIEB	Maharashtra International Education Board
MIEPA	Maharashtra Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
MOA	Memorandum of Association
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OD	Organizational Development
RAA	Regional Academic Authority
RMP	Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini
RTE	Right to Education (Act, 2009, Government of India)
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SESD	School Education and Sports Department, Government of Maharashtra
SLDP	School Leadership Development Program
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
YASHADA	Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration, Pune

INTRODUCTION

It has been an exciting year for the state projects at Leadership for Equity. As we come close to celebrating one year of incorporation, it gives us great pleasure in compiling and presenting our annual report. In this document we are excited to present the overall background of the project, its evolution, progress, key milestones and learnings. We are also happy to be able to present these against the national background for systemic efforts to improve educational quality across the country.

This section contains an overall introduction to the context, the SCERT Restructuring Project, project work streams and goals.

Overall Context

It is well established that national conversations around education have shifted from a focus on access to that of equity and quality. The MHRD through its various initiatives has been initiating and encouraging states to ramp up its focus on broad and specific initiatives to improve quality. Against this background, the GoM launched a flagship reform of the Pragat Shaikshanik Maharashtra in June 2015, focusing on quality, and has followed it up with specific initiatives to ensure these reforms will be institutionalised and sustained in the long term. Some of these initiatives has been to ensure the education system including the officers and the functionaries are able to provide effective support to the teachers to be able to deliver quality education to students. Further context can be gained from our last years' report linked [here](#).

The Maharashtra SCERT Restructuring Project

In line with the provisions in RTE Act (2009) SCERT came to be designated as the state academic authority in 2012. On this basis, a concerted effort was initiated to strengthen the SCERT in terms of human resources, processes and a complete overhaul in the way trainings and research are designed and implemented. A subsequent government resolution dated 17th October, 2017 saw the SCERT being renamed as 'Maharashtra Academic Authority' and restructured to include individual subject departments and human resource influx from the academic cadres of the state.

Any well functioning education system, such as a state, requires effective mechanisms of in service teacher development - with excellent content, and processes of delivery, monitoring and evaluation; research to influence education policy; contextualised curriculum development with an overall aim to influence the in classroom pedagogy, teacher and school leadership development and student learning outcomes. Additionally, implementing and managing educational technology innovations, e-governance, is also priority. In the context of Maharashtra, the SCERT is mandated and empowered to suggest policy implement, and deliver on all these fronts.

The LFE team, with the overall vision of empowering a state to raise the effectiveness across those indicators in the long term began collaborating with the SCERT with the primary aim of establishing it as an exemplary government apex body with expertise in teacher support, curriculum development, research, and continuous professional development of all education functionaries

The LFE team, earlier working within SCERT as consultants incubated under Thermax Foundation, have made significant progress in building relationships, capacity development, increasing the staffing, and re-creating the vision for the institution. In this work we have been very closely mentored and guided by the Principal Secretary, Education Mr. Nand Kumar. The specific project goals and work streams are elaborated in the sections below.

HIGHLIGHTS 2017-18

Important Activities in The Past Year

1. 3 Organizational Development Workshops for all academic staff members of RAAs and MAA.
2. 2 Performance Reviews and 3 Selection Conferences for DIECPDs, RAAs and MAA.
3. Rewriting the Job Role Descriptions of all officers working within the School Education and Sports Department, Government of Maharashtra.

Important Outcomes

1. 5 Year MOU signed with the Department of School Education and Sports, Government of Maharashtra establishing LFE as the official education
2. Madhukar Banuri officially nominated as member of the Executive Committee, Maharashtra International Education Board
3. Proposal to establish SCERT as an autonomous body submitted to Government of Maharashtra
4. 166 vacant positions filled across MAA, all the RAAs and all DIECPDs.
5. Improved training monitoring practices by Dept of Marathi, MAA, CPD, leading to improved training designs for other departments in 2018-19

Major Pivots for the Project

1. **Leading Performance Review Process**

In any government systems, conversations around accountability and performance management are usually approached with caution, with even senior leaders being circumspect about it. Owing to the robust foundation laid in the 17th October, 2016 SCERT Restructuring GR, we were able to pilot 2 rounds of performance reviews for the Vishay Sahayaks selected through our process at SCERT. Even though this post was relatively junior, it led to 2 significant things - initiating conversations around performance and excelling at one's work in order to sustain within SCERT and establishing LFE as the key driver of the process in a transparent and fair manner. This added to the conversations with the Principal Secretary, Education who suggested that we should work on a performance appraisal system for all officials in the education department in the state. This, even though done with a few hundred members, has served as a valuable starting point to initiate and sustain conversations and practices around accountability and performance within the education department.

2. **Success of selection model:**

The method in which LFE has organised and conducted the selection process to enable officials to transferred or deputed to the SCERT has been well received by the applicants as well as the authorities. Of special focus has been the fact that it mirrors what will be required by a person to see success in the role. Based on the feedback it also adds transparency to the process to ensure that selection happens in an unbiased way on a rubric, rather than an arbitrary interview or decision at the top. It has been helped establish LFE as a trustworthy organisation to ensure the best talent from a given talent pool is brought to add value to the SCERT initiatives. Even other departments like the IVGS and MIEB have included us in the design of the selection process due to the successes of our model.

3. **LFE as official Organisational Development partner for SCERT**

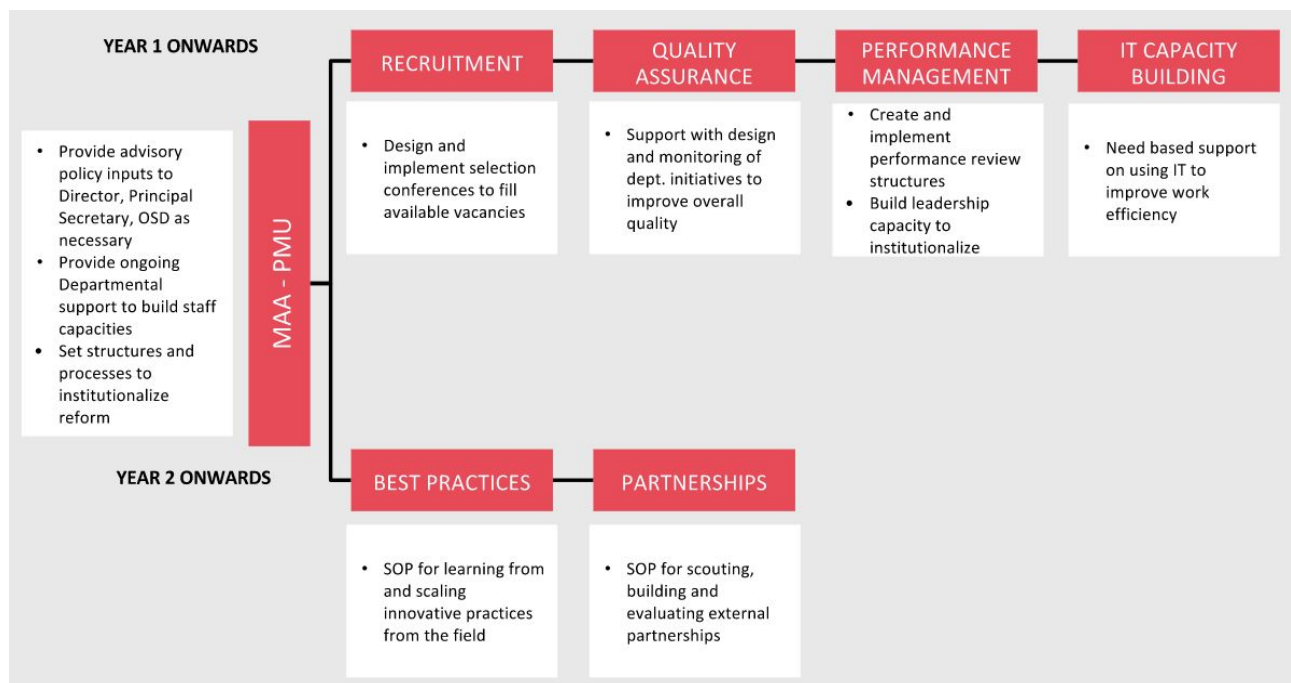
A unique way that LFE approaches capacity building is through a combination of ongoing proximate support and formal workshops. With 3 workshops and over 1500 hours of ongoing support provided to the SCERT officials, has led them seeing the value of the support since it is completely rooted in the immediate needs of the department as well as establishing linkages to the larger strategy of the Secretary and LFE to shift the key levers of organisational planning, teacher training, organisational development, performance management, and organisational culture. The process has been so well received that the Deputy Director in charge of organisational development has replaced a prominent partner with LFE and incorporated 4 workshops led by LFE into the Annual Work Plan of SCERT, thus ensuring budgets and schedules are duly sanctioned.

THE PAST YEAR

“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



Selection

In its quest to provide excellent education to all students, and in-turn provide better in-service support to teachers the School Education Department in Maharashtra resolved to restructure the Maharashtra State Council for Education Research and Training into Maharashtra Academic Authority and five newly created Regional Academic Authorities through a policy decision dated October 17, 2016. The restructuring lead to a comprehensive overhauling of staff structure and nature at the apex education body. The previously administrative nature of roles was changed to cater effectively to the growing academic needs of the system through the newly formed bodies. To strengthen academic activities thoroughly, a more decentralized structure was introduced in MAA and RAAs.

This restructuring lead to creation of posts that earlier did not exist at the erstwhile MSCERT, new members had to be selected for these posts as well as the existing posts that were lying vacant. There was also the issue of the cost constraint placed by the state - how can we get highly motivated and competent people into the apex body without any additional cost to the exchequer? In 2016 multiple selection conferences were held throughout the state to select the most suitable candidates from the pool to carry out the mandate of the Maharashtra Academic Authority and the Regional Academic Authorities.

It is important here to differentiate between recruitment and selection. Recruitment refers to the entry of an individual into the government services - this remains unchanged and the main point of entry for officers is still the state civil services examination for the academic and administrative tracks, in education. Since revamping overall recruitment is too large in scope with too many variables outside our locus of control, we decided to focus on selection - a process which ensures transfer to MAA and the RAAs can only happen by undergoing a selection process designed by LFE.

Some of the key inputs by our team are given below.

- Third party selection panel comprising of people from leading non-profits and NGOs was curated to evaluate the applicants during the selection process for ensuring that only the best candidate make it through the process.
- For the selection conference, 13 unique tasks were created based on the knowledge, skills and mindset that are most essential to the role which the candidate had applied.
- Aligned to these tasks, rubrics were created to help remove any prejudice or subjectivity from the process. The panel members were briefed about the use of rubric for evaluation in an hour long norming session.
- Selection Conference handbook, a guiding document for conducting a selection conference was created for the staff members of DIECPD.
- Training session on evaluation and use of Rubric was conducted for members of MAA, RAA and DIECPDs.

Overall status of Selections at MAA and RAAs for the year 2017-18 after 2 selection conferences:

CADRE OF SERVICE	APPLIED	SHORTLISTED	SELECTED
Group A	1596	345	13
Group B			22
Group C (Vishaysahayak)			39

Overall status of Selections at DIECPDs for the year 2017-18 after selection conference:

CADRE OF SERVICE	APPLIED	SELECTED	JOINED
Group C (Vishaysahayak)	1208	128	92

MAA-RAA Selection Conference, August 2017

- In a July 2017 internal review it was observed 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 need was felt to organize a selection conference to select the best candidates for the vacant positions.
- 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 (Group A and Group B) and *Vishaysahayak* (Teachers/Group C). 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.
- 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 (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 Officers' Selection Conference, 18th August 2017



Applicants during the Vishaysahayak Selection Conference, 19th August 2017

DIECPD Principals' Meeting on Performance Management, December 2017

- Meeting with Principals from all DIECPDs was hosted by Maharashtra Academic Authority, Pune at Sinhagad Technical Institute, Lonavala from 6th to 8th December 2017 to review the work being done, challenges faced, discuss about various initiatives and programs, restructuring of DIECPDs and seeking inputs along with coaching the members on carrying out recruitment process and performance evaluations.
- LFE team was involved in planning and conducting 5 out of the 8 sessions covering the MHRD Guidelines on DIET Restructuring, Analysis of District wise trends and data, Creating coordination structures at divisional levels with Regional Academic Authorities, feedback and inputs from the members on the DIECPD Performance Review Process and briefing them about the Selection Conference.

DIECPD Selection Conference, December 2017

- According to the 17th October 2016 GR, the selection conference for DIECPDs has to be carried out under the supervision of the Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad and cannot be centrally conducted by MAA or any of the RAAs. On this background, the LFE team oversaw the conduction of Selection Conference for vacant positions of *Vishaysahayaks* across DIECPDs by providing a comprehensive selection conference handbook to Principals of each DIECPD and conducting a norming workshop with them to acquaint them with the nitty-gritties of the selection process. The Principals and Senior Lecturers from all DIECPDs from across the state were briefed about the entire selection process in the month of December in a Workshop organized by MAA Pune in Lonavla. Their inputs were sought in finalizing the actual process that would be carried out in December 2017.
- Based on the guidelines given in the handbook selection conferences were conducted at every DIECPD independently and the list of selected candidates was shared with MAA Pune.
- This being an entirely independently carried out process showed signs of the maturity and sincerity of the system in selecting the best resources based on their ability.
- 1208 applications were received from which from which 128 applicants were given orders and 88 joined for duty.

MAA-RAA Selection Conference, December 2017

- A November 2017 internal vacancy review brought out that several posts on which selected candidates did not assume charge (due to issues pertaining to relieving orders etc.) were still vacant and after the transfer window several of the earlier occupied posts were vacated. To fill these vacancies need was felt to organize a selection conference to select the best candidates for the vacant positions.
- A total of **3377** form-visits lead to **724** completed applications for a total of **92** vacant positions till the night of 3rd December 2017. Out of these 724 candidates **166** candidates were invited for a 2 day selection conference on **11th and 12th December 2017** held at Maharashtra Academic Authority, Pune. The candidates were separately called on two days, with Teachers/Group C Officers coming in on 11th December, while Group A and Group B Officers coming in on 12th December 2017. This classification was done keeping in mind the nature of work expected and the tasks that were to be allotted during the selection process.
- 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.

CADRE OF SERVICE	APPLIED	SHORTLISTED	ATTENDED	SELECTED
Group A	724	61	39	5
Group B				14
Group C (Teachers)		105	76	24



Group of participants participating in a discussion. Participants are assessed by panelists on various competencies that are highlighted in the evaluation rubric.



One of the applicants undergoing the interview with the panel, interviews were introduced for the first time in December 2017 based on the feedback of panelists from August conference.

Key Learnings

Restricted Applicant Pool

Working with a cost constraint limits the approach to the relative strength of the existing applicant pool. The entire process was designed to keep the applications voluntary, since no added incentive was attached to applying for a role at MAA, although due to added empowerment of the office as the apex body, there would be many more responsibilities. So while the process was designed to get the best from a given applicant pool, the limitations of any applicant pool must be acknowledged because they do not consist of 100% of eligible officers.

Third Party Process

We were initially apprehensive of how an external organisation such as us would be perceived leading a government internal selection process. However, the feedback we repeatedly received was that it was refreshing for the applicants to go through a third party process because it reassured them that it would be transparent and impartial. They also enjoyed the innovative experience they got a chance to have through the whole process.

Quality Assurance

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. Because of the rising expectations from the apex body, it has become imperative to improve the quality of these departmental initiatives to be effective in the supporting the needs of all benefactors. Over the past year LFE team has conducted capacity building workshops where essential skills, knowledge and mindsets were built to positively impact the quality of departmental initiatives. LFE team at MAA has also lead charge on improving quality of multiple processes and initiatives that the departments have undertaken by providing proximate support to the departments.

Associated Activities

MAA-RAA Vision Setting Workshop, May 2017

- To establish a strong foundation for capacity building of officials at MAA and RAAs, a workshop on Vision Setting and Planning was conducted by team LFE in May 2017. 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.



Officials participating in the MAA-RAA Vision Setting Workshop, May 2017

MAA-RAA Workshop on First step towards International standards, August 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.



Officers participating in the August, 2017 workshop.

Support on M & E of Basic Marathi Reading Competency Development Program, May 2017-Jan 2018

- ASER Report 2016 states that 37.50% grade 5 students in Maharashtra cannot read a grade 2 level text. According to NAS 2017 Report, 37.73% of students have not developed the competency of reading with comprehension. 'Basic Reading Competency Development Program' was hence organized in Maharashtra in the year 2017-18 by Maharashtra Academic Authority with the aim of developing basic reading competency of every student of grade 1 to 5.
- This program involved training all the teachers of the state on an innovative pedagogy, rooted in constructivism, for developing reading competency in learners by using the tools and experiences available in the learners surrounding.
- Team LFE played an instrumental part in co-designing the monitoring and evaluation process for measuring the effectiveness of this program along with the Marathi language Department at MAA, Pune. The team designed the entire framework for collecting authentic feedback at every level of the program in way which involves the participation of district level authorities.
- For the first time in the history of large scale trainings in Maharashtra feedback data is available at such large scale on various different parameters like quality of content/activities/session in the training, ability of trainers, infrastructure at the training venue etc. Virtually every trainer who has been a part of this program right from the state level master trainers to the cluster level trainers, each and every trainer's individual feedback has been recorded for assessing the quality of the training.
- During the course of training, if a trainer's feedback was not satisfactory, they have been given additional support to build their capacity upto a level where they feel confident in leading sessions for others. Such effective use of information and data for training has been a first in Maharashtra.



Teachers participating in different activities during the course of the training program.

Designing “Problem Analysis Workshop” with Urdu Department, August 2017

- LFE team worked with the members of Urdu Department on designing a 3 day workshop towards analysing the multiple problems that they had received from teachers after visiting 8 districts. A group of 30 teachers from across the state had come to the workshop which was structured on the basis of Design Thinking. The participants experienced different phases of the workshop in a manner wherein they used different components of the design thinking framework for identifying solutions to the most pressing problems. Problems and solutions identified at this workshop were presented to Hon Principal Secretary Mr. Nand Kumar for guidance and further action.
- Urdu Department at MAA has worked in sync with the outcomes of this workshop and ensured that the solutions that were recommended in this workshop are being implemented through the year.



Participants engrossed in animated discussions during the workshop.



Tauseef Parvez, Subject Assistant, Urdu Department, MAA Pune leading a session in the workshop.



One of the participants representing his group and sharing their solution with Hon. Principal Secretary Mr. Nand Kumar.

Support on M & E of Educational Leadership Development Program and School Leadership Development Program, May 2017-January 2018

- The MIEPA along with the CPD Department at MAA launched the School Leadership Development Program in 2016-17 for leadership development of all HMs and Cluster Heads. In 2016-17 about 25% of the target training was completed. And feedback data was collected in a way which could not be analysed to draw inferences for any sort of course correction or evaluating the success of the program.
- In 2017-18 the remaining training for SLDP was to be completed and a completely new program was being designed for Senior educational leadership of the district and state. Team LFE worked with the stakeholders responsible for designing the program to incorporate a holistic framework for assessing the success of the training and the impact it was having on the participants. Online pre-test, post test and feedback was designed along with the state level committee which was designing the training module. Tests and feedback forms were designed in a way such that analysing the form would become convenient at any point of time to track the health of the program.

MAA RAA Organizational Development Workshop, February 2018

- Picking up from the Vision Setting workshop of May, and the International benchmarking workshop of August, a 4 day Organizational Development Workshop was conducted by the team for around 200 member strong academic staff working in MAA and all RAAs. This workshop was organized in Pratham Arora Centre for Education near Aurangabad. Heavy emphasis was laid on coaching the officials on data analysis and inferencing skills. Additionally this workshop included sessions on effective teacher training, time for the departments to work on their vision and job charts, and essentials for building a strong culture and brand. Apart from the MAA and RAA members this workshop was also on the radar of Hon. Principal Secretary Mr. Nand Kumar and Officer on Special Duty to the Minister Mrs. Prachi Sathe, both took time out from their busy schedules to grace this workshop and take very essential sessions for the participants.
- This workshop was designed in a way to give opportunity for many officers to bond informally with each other and explore newer areas of interest like music, drama and dance.
- As per the feedback conducted 92.8% respondents felt very positive and were satisfied by the content across sessions that were conducted, 89.5% of the respondents had very positive view about the planning of the sessions, and 91.2% were positive about the facilitation skills of the LFE team members. LFE's presence at MAA has been of advantage in ensuring that only essential aspects are included in workshops, participants felt that the workshop was very contextual to their needs and provided them with the new knowledge, skills and mindsets in a way which they could put to use.



MAA RAA Organizational Development Workshop, February 2018

Key Learnings

Capacity Building as a contextual and continuous process

Thanks to the positioning of the team within the system, working directly from the office of the SCERT we have gained a lot of insight about the immediate needs of the officers. More than any structured diagnostic, we are able to tune the content of the workshops to the ongoing state priorities which increases the enthusiasm of the officials to participate, given that participation is directly related to simplifying their work towards those priorities. This makes the workshops aligned to their needs and very relevant for the participants. In addition to the workshops we also provide proximate support on a day to day basis to which promotes learning on the job for all involved. Thus capacity building, we have come to believe, should not be limited to one off large group activities, but must combine workshops with regular ongoing support.

Performance Management

The October 18, 2017 Government Resolution about the restructuring of MSCERT as MAA and RAAs and DIETs and DIECPDs identifies the need of strengthening these bodies and building their capacities to support the changing nature of leadership and assistance expected off of them. It also establishes the grounds for conducting performance reviews as a pivotal component of ensuring staff accountability at the apex body for policymaking in school education and its district level outfits.

2017-18 has been a crucial stepping stone with regards to performance management initiatives that have begun at MAA-RAA level and across DIECPDs. LFE team has lead capacity building workshops, and reviews from the front by planning and executing these activities and building the understanding of the members of the staff at MAA to conduct similar activities in the coming time.

Associated Activities

Performance review for all Subject Assistants of MAA and RAAs

- The first annual performance review was conducted for staff working in the post of *Vishaysahayak* (Subject Assistants) at MAA and RAAs in collaboration with Department of Human Resource Development, Maharashtra Academic Authority on 26th September, 2017. Panels consisting of Deputy Directors and Group A Officers lead the reviews for which the LFE team had informed them about the process and using rubrics to form an objective opinion about the candidate's performance.
- Scores of review were based on Self-Evaluation- 5%, Evaluation by a Senior Officer- 40%, Presentation of the work done- 40% and alignment between the scores of senior officer and self evaluation- 15% (This was included as a check for honesty on the self-evaluation strand).
- Overall snapshot-
 - **39** - *Vishaysahayaks* evaluated
 - **70%** -of 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

Performance review for all Subject Assistants of DIECPDs

- The first annual performance review was conducted for staff working on the post of *Vishaysahayak* at District Institute of Educational Continuous Professional Development (DIECPD), in collaboration with Department of Human Resource Development, Maharashtra Academic Authority on 28th October, 2017 at the respective Academic Authority for those districts. Panels consisting of Principals and Senior Lecturers of DIECPDs were formed at Maharashtra Academic Authority and the 5 Regional Academic Authorities. The LFE team had normed one member at each venue to guide the panelists on the design of the process and use of the rubrics.
- Scores of review were based on Self-Evaluation- 5%, Evaluation by a Senior Officer- 40%, Presentation of the work done- 40% and alignment between the scores of senior officer and self evaluation- 15% (This was included as a check for honesty on the self-evaluation strand).
- Overall snapshot-
 - **237** - *Vishaysahayaks* evaluated
 - **70%** - overall score as cut off for securing extension
 - **208(+1)** - *Vishaysahayaks* Scored above 70% and have been recommended for extension
 - **16** - *Vishaysahayaks* expressed intention of discontinuing from present post
 - **12** - *Vishaysahayaks* scored less than 70% and not recommended for extension

Key Learnings

- The decision to conduct performance reviews managed by LFE was accepted based on the quality and thoroughness of process displayed during the Selection Conference.
- While the scores, ratings and observations involved the supervising officers within the government, the entire framework 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 underlying factors involved in selection, retention, and transfers in any government system.
- A key learning from the feedback that we received for the entire process was that although transparent for the system, the process did not feel transparent to the candidates who were being reviewed since they did not know what might make or break their case. This has been noted and will be incorporated in future iterations of the process.
- Going ahead it has been thought of to share a post review document highlighting the nuances of the process for the candidates to understand.
- It has also been thought of to share a circular with all supervisors who are part of the review process for them to understand the importance and significance of their say and the way in which they review a candidate.
- To reduce any chances of favouritism and make the process more objective, multiple stakeholders will be asked to review the candidate.
- In addition to improving the process itself, the very fact that this process exists has initiated conversations around accountability, demonstrating 'outputs', and increasing performance aligned to the organisational responsibilities. We consider this an excellent beginning, despite the fact that it is only related to the Vishay Sahayyaks. We hope that these conversations would extend in an organic manner to the entire staff.

IT Capacity Building

Use of IT tools has been a major area of development for the Maharashtra Academic Authority because of the bottleneck that gets caused at the highest academic body of the state. The presence of LFE at MAA has had a positive impact on the drive to use IT tools in day to day work at MAA. This was the first year where Review presentations had a PowerPoint deck that was part of the standard review procedure, for the first time IT based competency was assessed for in the Selection Conference, and officials at MAA started to make shift from “Use of IT” towards “Effective use of IT”. Sessions on creating coherent Google Forms were conducted for different officers across the state hierarchy on multiple instances.

Associated Activities

Data analysis Workshop for members of DIECPDs, March 2018

- With the increasing awareness about importance of data in making informed decisions, the Research Department at MAA Pune in coordination with LFE decided to organize a 3 day workshop for all DIECPDs to build their capacity on handling and analysing data for better decision making. This workshop was conducted in month of March 2018 at Pratham Arora Center for Education near Aurangabad and was attended by DIECPD Principal, 1 Senior Lecturer and 1 Statistician from all DIECPDs.
- The entire workshop was planned in a way to build the capacity of DIECPD members in data handling, cleaning, sorting, filtering and analysing right from scratch. There was no pre-requisite of particular skill or knowledge to be able to participate in this workshop. Members were coached on using Microsoft Excel and were given a live task to apply the skills they were learning in the course of the sessions.
- All the respondents have given very positive feedback about the usefulness of workshop in the work they do, they appreciated the detail in which topics were covered. Starting at a point where less than 5% of the participants had previously worked on Excel, and in 3 days all of them felt comfortable using Excel in doing basic data analysis and visualization.

Key Learnings

At the beginning of the year, this axis was conceptualised in response to a need expressed by all of the stakeholders at MAA - they saw that in order to be effective they needed to increase their proficiency in using IT tools. Seeing this as an easy technical fix of upskilling, as also leveraging our proximity with the LFE project team working on the MITRA project, we decided to work on this. However over the course of the year we realised that workshops may not be the best way to do this, and it requires more of a small group approach, given that people across hierarchies are not comfortable in openly discussing their varying skill levels in using computers and hence the outputs on this axis have not been as effective for us as we had initially hoped. As a result there will be significant rethinking on this front going forward.

Additional Initiatives

Given the proximity of the team to the senior leadership of the state, we have been fortunate to get to weigh in and contribute to various ongoing initiatives of the School Education and Sports Department (SESD). This section contains a description of those initiatives which took a considerable amount of the team's resources and time and have been instrumental in establishing LFE as a trusted partner organisation of the department.

Capacity Building Workshop for Newly Recruited Officers

Building on the positive feedback received from the OD Workshops for MAA and RAA, team LFE was invited to conduct multiple sessions as part of the induction training of newly recruited Group A and Group B officers. For Group A officers, the sessions were held at YASHADA, Pune and for the Group B officers it was at the Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Vidarbha Development and Administrative Training Prabodhini, Amravati.

Key sessions included themes of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, orientation to international developments in education. The sessions were designed to be participative rather than lecture based. Many team activities were conducted and overall it had an overwhelmingly enthusiastic participation and positive feedback.

One of the key outcomes of this has been the strengthened relationships with all the new officers who go on to take up middle to senior positions in the education department across all the districts of Maharashtra. For the stakeholders it provided a great simulated environment to engage in academic discussions, be acquainted with international practices, and practice planning and strategic thinking in scenarios that were very similar to the work they would be assigned when they took resumed office. They also got to engage in some sort of reflective practice. While one can never really gauge the long term outcome of a such a short initiative, it was helpful in providing exposure to a style of training and contents that were different from the ones they had received thus far and we hope that as they continue in office, our relationship will continue to grow.



Madhukar leading the end of day reflection for all the newly inducted Group B Officers.

Supporting Maharashtra International Education Board

The Government of Maharashtra has launched an ambitious project to set up 100 schools providing education equivalent to international standards, spread across all districts. As a first step it involved setting up an autonomous Board to which the schools would be affiliated. The LFE team has been involved in the following activities to support the successful launch and implementation of the project.

- Translation of International Schools Concept Note
- Inputs on drafting the MIEB Concept note in collaboration with the Principal Secretary, Education
- Coordinating meetings with over 30 NGOs to form working groups for the MIEB
- Designing and Supporting with the design, organisation and execution of 4 selection conferences for teachers and schools to be part of the project, over 940 applicants from 106 schools across 33 districts were processed during the selection conferences.
- Providing Implementation Support to International Quality Cell at MAA to carry out MIEB related activities
- Drafting the MOA to set up the Board as an autonomous society in collaboration with the Director, MAA.

A key outcome of this work has been the formal appointment of Madhukar in the Executive and Management committee of the newly formed MIEB. We hope to continue being involved, in a low-touch capacity with the evolution of the initiative.

Orientation Workshop for Board of Studies, Balbharati

Balbharti is the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum research. Its Board of Studies is comprised of expert teachers from public and government aided schools to prepare the syllabus and write the textbooks for all the state board schools in Maharashtra. Owing to the positive feedback of the various workshop sessions conducted by LFE, the team was invited to orient the Board Of Studies members to international best practices in designing a curricular flow so as to influence the process of designing the new textbooks in Maharashtra. The workshop was conducted at Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, Bhayander, Mumbai.

Over a period of two days, our team facilitated a subject wise in depth study of the curricular flow of Ontario and helped the participants to come up with ideas which could be applicable to our context. We also presented an overview of the curricular frameworks of Finland, Singapore and Canada which helped orient them to the practices of high performing education systems at an international level.

One of the most important outcomes of this was the perspective gained by the participants as to where we stand in relation to what is out there, without a sense of inferiority. The tone was more about how much more we can do to continue getting better to ensure children in Maharashtra get the best education. It is difficult to say how much of this has actually reflected in the textbooks, given that the final decision about what makes it into the textbook is much more complex. We walked away with excellent relationships with the members and continue to stay involved in the textbook related discussions through the official whatsapp groups.



Pratik leading a session with the Board of Studies members at RMP, Mumbai

Establishing MAA as an autonomous body

For any apex body to have the highest impact, it must function with a level of autonomy, akin to the NCERT. While accountability to the ministry and government is vital, many administrative and financial decisions take an inordinate amount of time due to the long processes involved. There have also been interesting models which have come to light from the team's visit to Rajasthan, where all DIETs have been registered as a society so as to enable them to accept donations and become self sufficient. With the advent of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and the NCERT concept paper on strengthening SCERTs, a lot of the national funding to states will now be routed through the SCERTs, making the case for financial autonomy even more valid.

With this in mind we initiated conversations with the Director, MAA to which he was extremely responsive. We studied models of existing autonomous government bodies in Maharashtra and looked at the SSC Board and Balbharati. Our aim was to maintain the current recruitment and organisation structure, while gaining financial, administrative and academic autonomy. After multiple iterations and discussions, the organisation structure and committees were finalised in the Memorandum of Association and a final draft of the MOA was prepared in March 2018.

Currently, the proposal has been approved in principle by the Education Minister and is awaiting due administrative passage from the relevant departments. We are optimistic that this will be finalised in the June 2018.

Support to state initiative to Determine Student Learning Levels - *Adhyayan Star Nischiti*

The Pragat Shaikshanik Maharashtra census assessments conducted by the state have successfully ushered a lot momentum to ensure that all students are attaining grade level outcomes. To take this to the next level and ensure that teachers are aware of the learning level of each student in their class, so as to enable the support system to help them better, the Adhyayan Star Nischiti program was launched. However this was not a formal programme, but more of an initiative taken by DIET Jalna which has spread to all other districts with the visionary guidance from the Principal Secretary Education.

Since this was a ground up initiative, different districts had differing definitions of the levels, methods to assess and report the data. Over multiple meetings, spanning workshop sessions, direct support to a couple of DIETs, and presence in Virtual Conferences, the LFE team has given preliminary inputs on refining the process with the ultimate aim of deciding on an annual strategy for the academic year 2018-19.

The process is nowhere near complete, but the initiative is of utmost importance in rallying every teacher and support official to be aware of the learning level of every single child in Maharashtra and develop child centered plans to ensure all students learning joyfully at grade appropriate levels.

Key Learnings

Experience from most organisations working with the government indicates that there are initiatives one undertakes to ensure the overall organizational strategy is aligned to it, and some others which will help build trust and credibility so that the relationships are strengthened and are able to endure. LFE as a young organisation has tried to balance both, with limited resources, and it has been a tough yet rewarding experience for us. Tough because there were times where our resources were stretched beyond limits for initiatives like the MIEB selection processes and yet, involvement in it led to LFE being called on for key strategic and implementation decisions for the MIEB, which was exciting for us. The team members, who were used to working with teachers only in urban areas, gained a lot of valuable context by interacting with teachers, HMs and SMC members from across different corners of Maharashtra. Similarly, working with the Board of Studies for Balbharti helped the team understand the elaborate process involved in the development and publication of textbooks in Maharashtra, and form valuable relationships with the members. Working on the induction for newly recruited MPSC officers helped establish LFE as an expert organisation which will help in the long run, as these officials go on to occupy positions of influence in the system.

Overall our takeaway has been that while it is important to work beyond one's organisational mandate while working with the government bodies, it has to be with an internal compass and not at the cost of time spent on the mandated projects or by stretching one's resources thin.

PEOPLE

Key Stakeholders

This [video](#) captures what our stakeholders feel about the work we have been doing and their experience of working with us.



MAA / RAA officials in an activity depicting interconnectedness. OD Workshop Feb 22-24, 2018, Aurangabad.

Team

The team presently consists of Siddesh and Pratik, with significant direction and support provided by Madhukar. We work together to design the strategy, goals, as well as with the on ground implementation. Owing to the successes of this year and the added responsibilities for the coming year, it is envisioned that the team will be expanded in the coming year with 3-4 additional members. Here's a quick introduction to the team:

SIDDESH SARMA

Siddesh has served as the Lead for the Restructuring Project and over the past two years has been instrumental in building strong relationships with officials across hierarchies both within MAA as well as across various districts in Maharashtra, planning and executing key project initiatives, and mentoring other team members within various teams in LFE.



"It has been a fantastic learning experience for me working with the senior leadership of the Education Department. I have learnt much more about overt and tacit processes in education from my interactions over the past year with the government than through my formal academic training."

PRATIK RAJURKAR

Pratik has served as a Project Associate and has been indispensable in providing proximate support to the officials within MAA. His enthusiasm, work ethic and people management skills have made him quite sought after for support by everyone at MAA from the Director to the Subject Assistants.



"When I look back I feel in the last year I have had the steepest learning curve compared to any other year in the recent past. The scope and opportunity to learn by working so closely with the people who make and drive the the system has been great, it has given me an unmatched perspective about the realities of education and an understanding of how things function at state's scale."

LOOKING AHEAD

Plans for Next Year

The year has been a great journey for LFE as an organisation as well as the project as a whole. It has been a story of evolution and growth. We began the year with well defined goals and initiatives and made significant progress on those over the year. Due to the success of the planned activities as well as the significant time spent on successfully contributing towards additional activities for which a demand arose from the government, has resulted in our signing an MOU with the School Education and Sports department as a an academic advisory partner with the possibility of providing implementation support at various levels - state, district, city, etc.

In order to be successful, we went back to the drawing board and reflected on not just our learning from the year but also on how we could maximise our impact by leveraging the principles behind our successes. Our biggest learning has been that in order for any educational system to be functioning effectively indicators of progress need to be measured across the following axes:

- 1. In Classroom Pedagogy**
- 2. Remedial Education**
- 3. Education Technology**
- 4. Early Childhood Education**
- 5. Teacher Accountability**
- 6. Teacher Training (mode/content)**
- 7. Monitoring - Data Management**
- 8. MIS and E-Governance**
- 9. School Leadership**
- 10. Assessments - Large Scale and In Classroom**
- 11. Secondary to Work Integration - Life Skills and Career Guidance**

A combination of motivation, accountability and support needs to be put in place to ensure the functionaries and officials responsible for delivering across these axes are able to do so with the requisite efficiency, effectiveness and sensitivity. Our work with the SCERT has taught us that it would be necessary to work across multiple levels to truly diagnose and understand the gaps in each of these axes and work towards designing sustainable interventions and solutions that would be effective in improving indicators across all of them. Additionally, in Maharashtra, MAA is the apex body with the mandate and responsibility to deliver 9 of the above 11 axes.

Therefore the main focus of the state projects team at LFE, will shift from ‘restructuring’ per se, to ensuring that the School Education and Sports Department as a whole is able to show improvement across these fronts. Our approach of working would be to work with MAA on various initiatives targeted towards these. Therefore the organisational strengthening, capacity building, and quality assurance would all no longer be ends in themselves, but towards the end of ensuring that MAA is able to deliver on its mandate, specifically with reference to the 11 axes, effectively. The work, engagement and relationships will continue, however internally we are working on tweaking our approach towards the work.

Over the next few months, we are excited to be able to grow the team and dive deep into the details to formulate a targeted diagnostic for the state, across these axes and design targeted short to long term intervention plans with a balance of policy advisory, policy implementation support.