



Project for Active Cluster Engagement

A Handbook for Cluster Improvement

Cantra

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PROJECT FOR ACTIVE CLUSTER ENGAGEMENT

A Handbook for Cluster Improvement

-Part 1

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Foreword

Lakshmi, a domestic helper and a resident of Bengaluru sends her two children to private schools, despite her poor financial situation, by taking a loan. When asked why, Lakshmi says “I want them to study well and get better jobs, unlike me. This will be possible only if I send my kids to private schools”. This is the perception of many parents in India. The image of Government schools is falling and many schools are on the verge of shutting down despite having facilities at par with private schools. A failing public education system is a tremendous issue as effective public education is significant for ensuring social mobility. This is what motivated us to work in the Government clusters.

There are a number of organizations working in this field, and many of them take the effort to put their actions down into ideas that can be shared and borrowed by others. Having said that, there is still a lack of *contextualized* literature and practical guides in the Indian context. Mantra4Change hopes to contribute to the filling of that gap through this handbook. We believe in a culture of sharing - both our successes and challenges - so that other organizations willing to do similar work in the field wouldn't have to 'reinvent the wheel'. The problem we face today has many contours and the need is of local change leaders who understand problems in their context and put forth contextual solutions. Thus, what we need is not the scaling up of organizations like Mantra and many others. What we need is for the *idea* of systemic transformation to *spread out*. That is the purpose of this handbook.

About Mantra4Change

Mantra4Change is an NGO based in Karnataka, India; working in the space of Systemic Transformation in Education. This ranges from Whole School Transformation through our programs, School Transformation and Empowerment Project (contact us for the handbook on this!), to PACE (Project for Active Cluster Engagement), which is the focus of this handbook). Read more about us at <http://www.mantra4change.com/>



"ನಾವು ನೀರೆಯಬೇಕಾದದ್ದು ಎಲೆಗಳಿಗಲ್ಲ, ಬೇರುಗಳಿಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ"

- ಡಾ. ಸರ್ವಪಲ್ಲಿ ರಾಧಾಕೃಷ್ಣ

"You can't just sprinkle water on the leaves and expect change to happen. You will have to nourish the roots."

-Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

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Acknowledgements

“Some stories move you more than others, they touch a place in your heart that leaves you forever changed.” — Suzanne D. Williams

We have been fortunate to have been touched by many stories, and to have had support in bringing many stories to life. The making of this handbook is one such story. We sincerely extend our gratitude to everyone who has been a part of the Mantra family in one way or another and helped in the making of this document.

First and foremost, our supporters, Mr. and Mrs. Shibulal for their unflinching support in the organization and in our endeavours in creating such open-source documents. Mr. Sanjay Purohit, our mentor, without whose insightful questions and encouragement, this journey would not have been possible.

Team Shikshalokam, with a special mention of Ms.Sujatha Rao, Ms.Ruchi Ghosh and Mrs. Veena Sagar, for laying the foundation of the Cluster Transformation Project design and for their enormous contribution and involvement in co-creating the design.

The CSR team of Wells Fargo, for their support and trust throughout the evolution process of this project.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to our partner clusters. We are privileged to have been a part of their journey.

Last but not the least - our team at Mantra for providing precious insights that someone sitting at a desk would never get. This document is first and foremost dedicated to you, to continue doing the wonderful job of making schools happier spaces not just for students, but teachers and leaders too. Thank you all!



“The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.”

Rob Siltanen

Executive Summary

This handbook (Part I) is focused on explaining one of our approaches to cluster improvement, and the particulars of the improvement journey of a cluster: that from *lacking* to *proficient*.

Section 1 of the handbook gives a brief overview of what this handbook is, and who it will be useful for.

Section 2 attempts to answer the question - *What is the problem and what do we aim to do about it?* This involves detailing out our problem statement, and the causes of which form the focus of our program.

Section 3 attempts to answer the question - *How will change happen?* This is done by detailing out our model of cluster transformation, our cluster evaluation framework, our theory of change.

Section 4 attempts to answer the question- *What will we do to make change happen?* This is done by detailing what activities will be there in each stage of our intervention and by explaining what an action plan would consist of and a sample list of activities for PACE.

Section 5 is the last section of the book and is driven by the question - *How will we keep on track?* Essentially, this section explores how a monitoring and evaluation framework can be developed from our theory of action.

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Section 1 - Introduction

In this handbook, we have taken the Program Theory lens. A program theory is an explicit theory or model of how an intervention, such as a project, a program, a strategy, an initiative, or a policy, contributes to a chain of intermediate results and finally to the intended or observed outcomes (Funnel and Rogers, 2011). There are three primary questions that Program Theory asks:



These are the questions that we have tried to address through this document in Sections 2, 3, and 4, respectively. Although at Mantra4Change, we have tried to answer these questions for our own situation, this handbook can be used by others interested in understanding our approach, and in contextualizing it for their own geography and needs. The design can be taken as is, or modified. These are practices that have worked best for us, and we would like to share them - and perhaps spark an idea that you could implement in your context.

We strongly believe in the power of collaborative efforts towards building innovative solutions. If you find the handbook helpful in building your own contextual solutions, we would be happy to hear from you. If you find it inadequate, we would be happier to receive your feedback in improving this further.

Section 2 - What is the problem and what do we aim to do about it?

The first step in evolving a program design is to figure out why we are evolving a program. What is the fundamental problem that we are trying to address? In order to answer questions about the problem and its causes, we engaged in a Situation Analysis. This analysis involves identifying the main problem in the situation we are in, the causes of this problem, and its consequences.

At Mantra4Change, we established a shared understanding among our team that the core problem we are trying to address is **the ineffective functioning of the cluster**. A cluster is the second smallest unit, above schools in the education system; where a group of schools are connected geographically, in a structure that allows them to share resources and work together for the improvement of all the schools in the cluster. A cluster generally comprises of 10-15 schools. In most cases, however, these clusters don't function effectively. We identified five causes that are primarily responsible for ineffective clusters. They are:

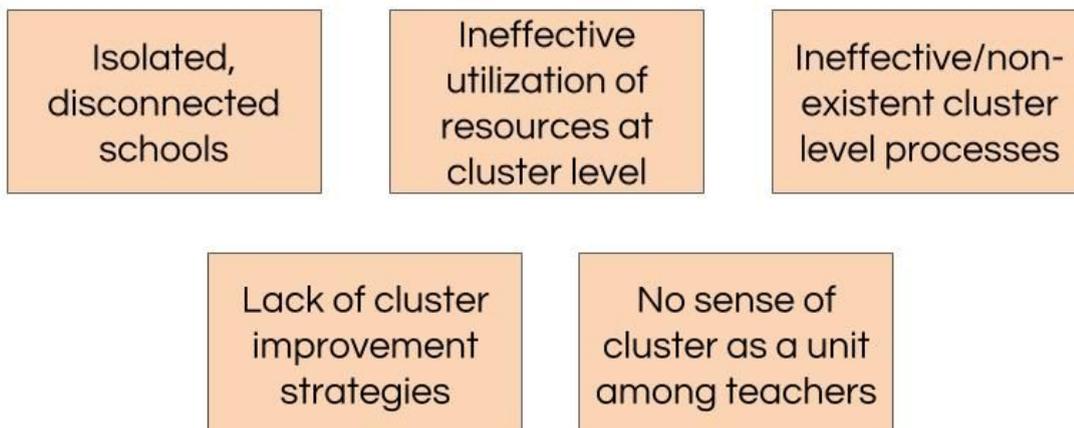


Image 2.1: Primary causes of ineffective functioning of a cluster

1. **Isolated and disconnected schools:** Schools in the cluster become isolated and disconnected because of the huge geographical distances between them. In addition to the physical distance, there is also a lack of spaces for teachers and HMs to come together and work with each other. Schools have also found to be unable and unwilling to collaborate with other schools in the cluster.

2. **Ineffective utilization of resources at the cluster level:** Physical resources and human resources are important for improvement of any school. But schools neither have adequate resources nor they do share resources among each other or use them collaboratively. Either due to a lack of awareness of where to find resources, or because local bodies are uninterested in contributing, resource levels across schools in the cluster are variant, inconsistent, and generally lacking.
3. **Ineffective or non-existent cluster-level processes:** When cluster-level leadership is ineffective and reduced to a single person, namely the CRP, the cluster is unable to function cohesively. An unwillingness or disinterest in using resources collaboratively further leads to ineffective cluster-level processes. For example, schools spend a lot of time in admin processes, whereas these processes could be streamlined at the cluster level which will result in effective processes at school and cluster level.
4. **Lack of cluster-level improvement strategies:** Schools in the cluster do not think of improving as a whole, or even if the schools want to improve, there is no strategic planning. Without effective leadership at the cluster, it's difficult to have a strategy in place to ensure improvement of the cluster. The cluster is unable to progress or improve as a unit.
5. **No sense of cluster as a unit among teachers:** Teachers are unclear as to what the value of cluster-wide collaboration is. Cluster-level processes also do not address teacher's needs, who in turn do not engage with cluster-level thinking.

In the following image, we break down these ideas further to understand the root of each cause and subcause.

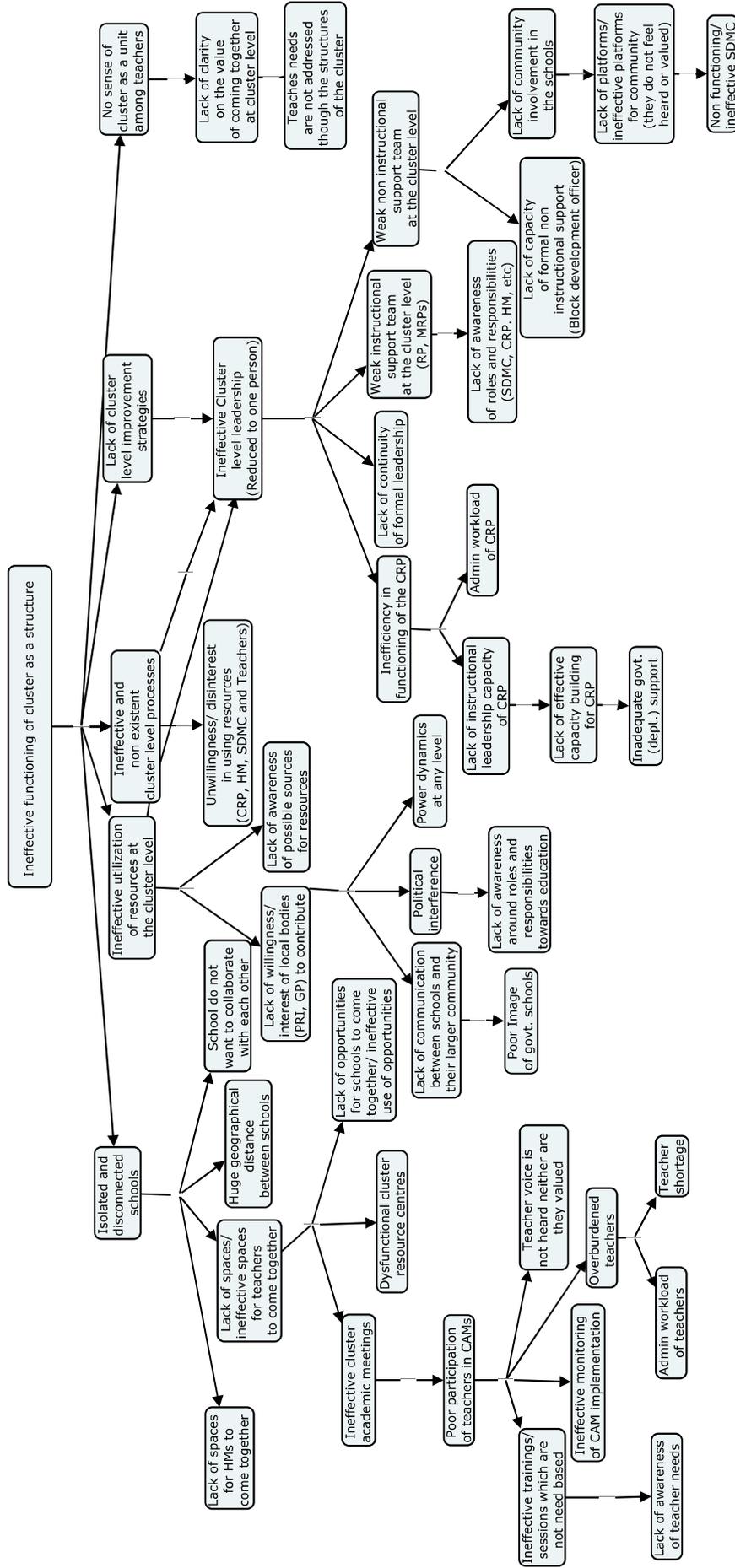
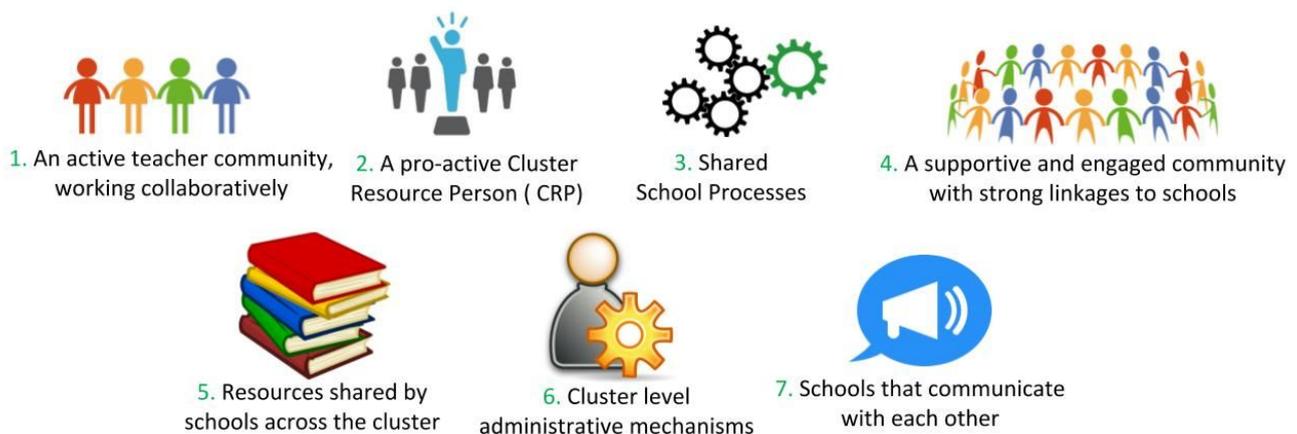


Image 2.2: Situation analysis of the ineffective functioning of a cluster

Section 3 - How will change happen?

Section 3.1. What is the change we are seeking to bring?

As seen in the previous section, due to many causes, the clusters are functioning ineffectively and the schools are isolated. The goal of our Project for Active Cluster Engagement (PACE) is for the cluster to function effectively. So, how will an efficiently functioning cluster look like? It will have all the components specified in the following image:



And finally, 8. A vibrant physical space where teachers and community members gather

Image 3.1: Components of an effectively functioning cluster

In short, the cluster will be functioning as a single distributed school. We hypothesise that when the cluster is functioning effectively as distributed school, the individual schools in the cluster would benefit, leading to improvement in all individual schools. This process is represented in the following image.

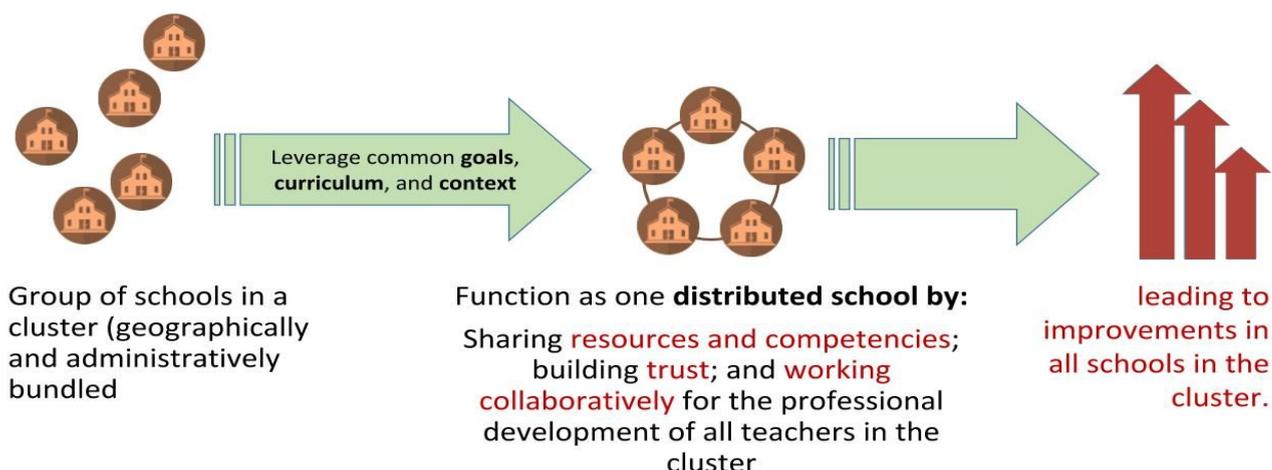


Image 3.2: Cluster improvement to school improvement

Section 3.2. Theory of Change

In the earlier section, we saw that the change that we are trying to bring through PACE is an effectively functioning cluster as distributed schools. So, what are changes that have to happen in the cluster that will lead to or enable the effective functioning of cluster as distributed schools? The answer to this question is represented in the following image.

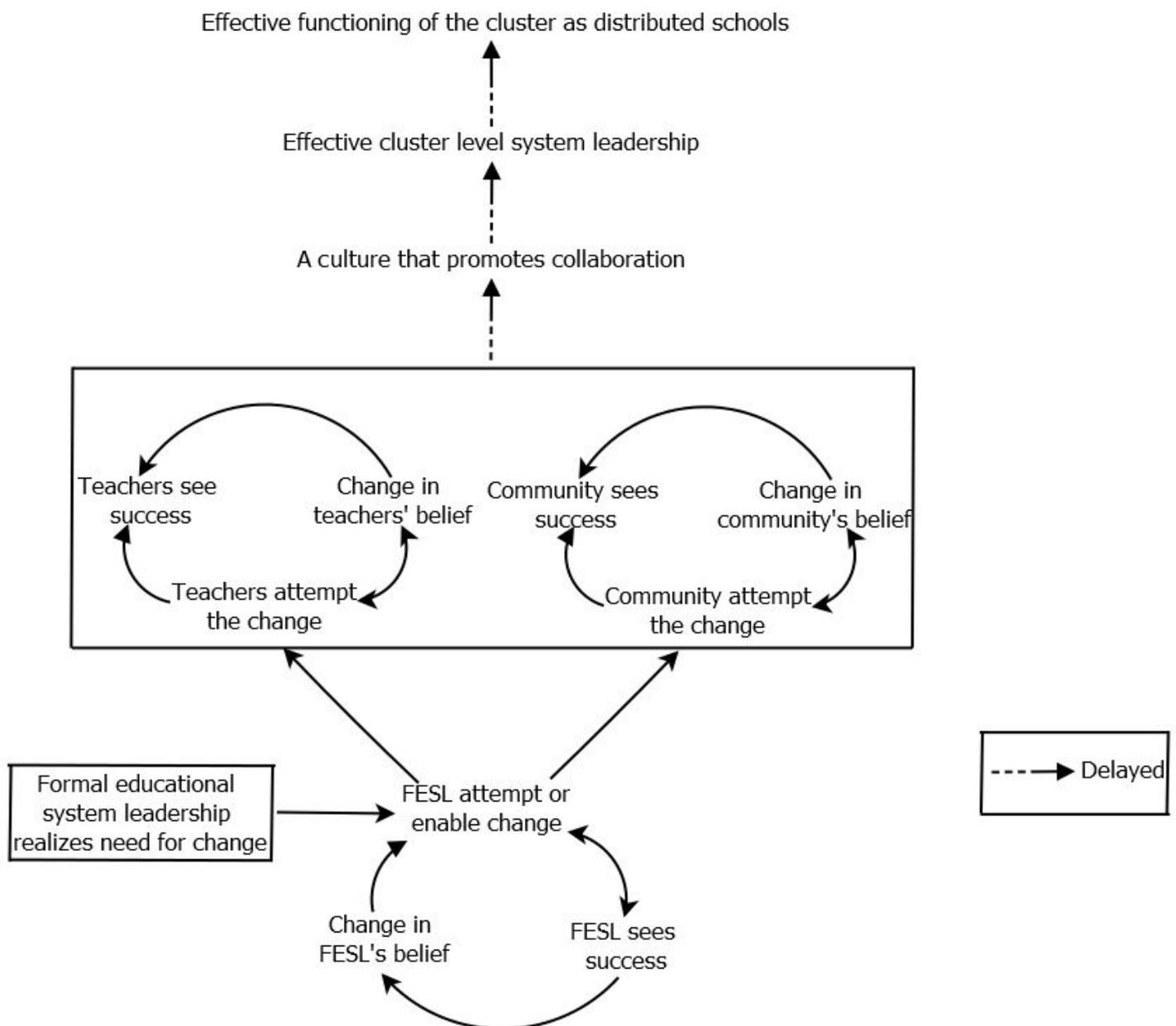


Image 3.3: High level theory of change

Since we are working with Government schools, there must emerge a realisation in the **Formal Education System Leaders (FESL)** that, improvement is needed in the cluster. Only when they realise, they will be more willing to take efforts towards cluster improvement and/or enable other stakeholders¹ to engage in cluster improvement. Some of these efforts taken by the FESL will lead to success and the success will strengthen their beliefs and motivate them to sustain engagement in cluster improvement.

When we say the FESL will engage in cluster improvement, we mean they will be working on enabling the revival of existing cluster-level Government structures such as Cluster Academic Meetings (CAMs) or creating new cluster level processes for cluster improvement such as establishing effective channels for communication across schools.

The FESL engaging in cluster improvement is essential to enable two cycles of changes:

1. Our **teachers** will attempt cluster improvement. For example, teachers across schools will engage in CAMs, lead a Math support group for a group of schools in the cluster, engage the community in school/cluster improvement and take part in decision-making in their schools and cluster. Some of these attempts will lead to success which will strengthen their beliefs and motivate them to sustain engagement in cluster improvement.
2. The second cycle of change will see the **community** involving in cluster improvement. For example, the Gram Panchayat will be contributing resources for cluster improvement project, the SDMC will function effectively and the community will engage in cluster improvement projects such as leading an enrolment drive in the cluster. Some of these attempts will lead to success which will strengthen their beliefs and motivate them to sustain engagement in cluster improvement.

¹ Stakeholders refers to Teachers; Head Masters/Mistresses (HMs); Formal Education System Leaders (FESL)-Cluster Resource Person (CRP), Block Resource Person (BRP), Block Education Officer (BEO), Master Resource Person (MRP), Resource Person (RP); Community-Parents, School Development Management Committee (SDMC) members, Gram Panchayat (GP), Alumni, other people in the community

When these two cycles of changes go through many iterations, there will emerge a **culture that promotes collaboration** in the cluster. Teachers, community members and FESL will actively collaborate because, through the cluster improvement projects they engaged/enabled they would have realised a value for themselves owing to collaborating at a cluster level. Our teachers, for example, would have realised that working collaboratively with other teachers helps them address classroom challenges in their individual schools effectively. This realisation will create a culture in which collaboration at the cluster level among the various stakeholders is the norm.

When our stakeholders are actively collaborating for cluster improvement, we will see **effective system leadership** developing in the cluster. By system leadership, we mean there will be distributed leadership at the cluster level. That is, there will develop a set of stakeholders in the cluster who will

- collaborate with each other for planning, implementing and reviewing cluster improvement
- drive the vision of a cluster in all the stakeholders and
- promote collaboration of stakeholders across schools

The system leaders will be from diverse stakeholder groups (teachers, HMs, FESL, community). The system leaders group will also actively identify more and more people from the cluster to join them. Hence, system leadership will be more effective and sustainable than having only one person (CRP) with a fixed tenure to lead the whole cluster.

Finally, the cluster will have stakeholders collaborating at the cluster level led by an effective system leadership that will lead to PACE's goal: a cluster effectively functioning as a distributed school.

Section 3.3. What is the Project for Active Cluster Engagement?

In the previous section, we saw the changes we are seeking to bring. One of the approaches to achieving those changes is through the Project for Active Cluster Engagement. The following image shows the key components of the project:

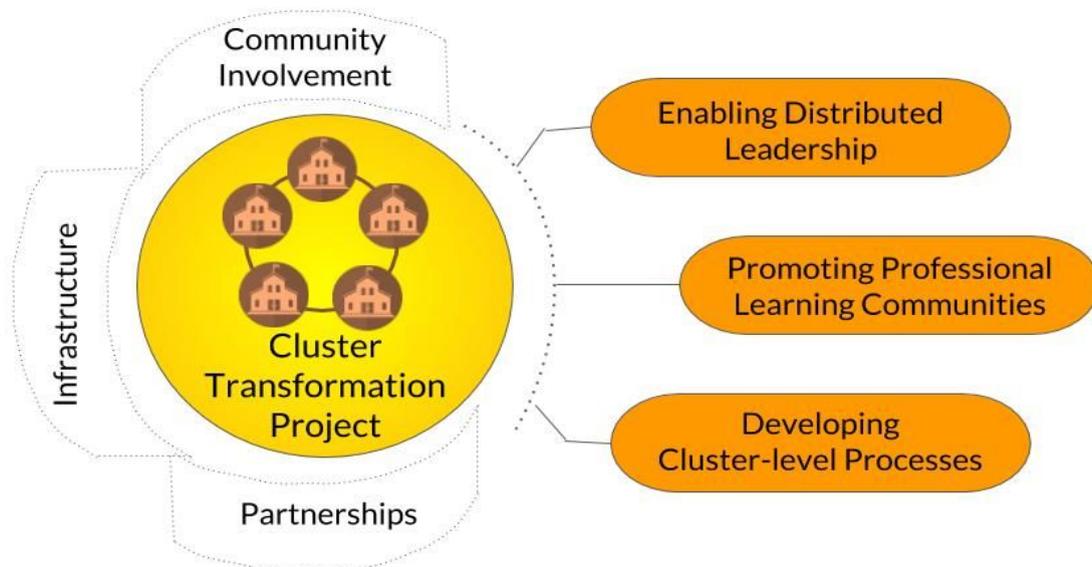
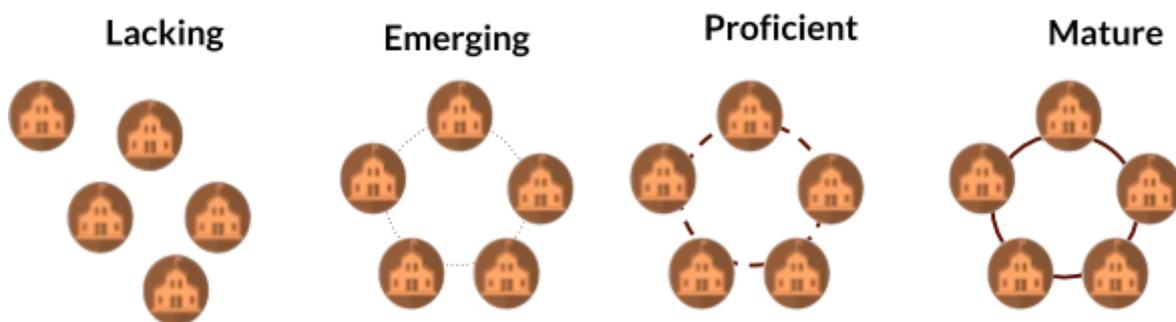


Image 3.4: Project for Active Cluster Engagement

PACE is a holistic, multi-staged approach to **enable effective functioning of the cluster**. We recognize that various components of the cluster transformation process are interrelated and influence each other. Changes in one part of the system will cause changes in other parts as well - it thus becomes important to have a *systemic approach* to cluster transformation. Although PACE mainly focuses on aspects of distributed leadership, professional learning communities, and systems - we also recognize the need for certain 'enablers' - community engagement, infrastructure, and partnerships with organizations. Recognition of all these elements ensures holistic improvement of the cluster. The three key levers are explored in further detail in section 4.

Section 3.4. Cluster Assessment Rubric

How and when we go about enabling distributed leadership, professional learning communities, and cluster-level systems depends on how the cluster is at the beginning of the intervention and what the needs of the cluster are. Hence, the first step is to carry out a Needs Assessment of the cluster. After establishing the needs of a cluster, there needs to be a vision of where we want our cluster to be after our intervention and how they should continue improving. Visioning of the improvement journey of a cluster led to descriptions of how an ideal or a “mature” cluster will look like. We² also started forming descriptions for the stages that a cluster will undergo from the point where the sense of cluster as distributed school is completely “lacking” to becoming a “mature” cluster. The stages in the improvement journey of a cluster are:



The cluster assessment rubric (Annexure 1) was put together based on research on cluster/system improvement as well as distributed leadership. Hopkins’ and OECD’s work on system leadership were referred to. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities was built on the works of Etienne Wenger from a compilation by Centre for Advancement for Teaching Learning; as well as Richard Dufour among others.

² The cluster improvement rubric was developed collaboratively with Shikshalokam

Overview of the rubric

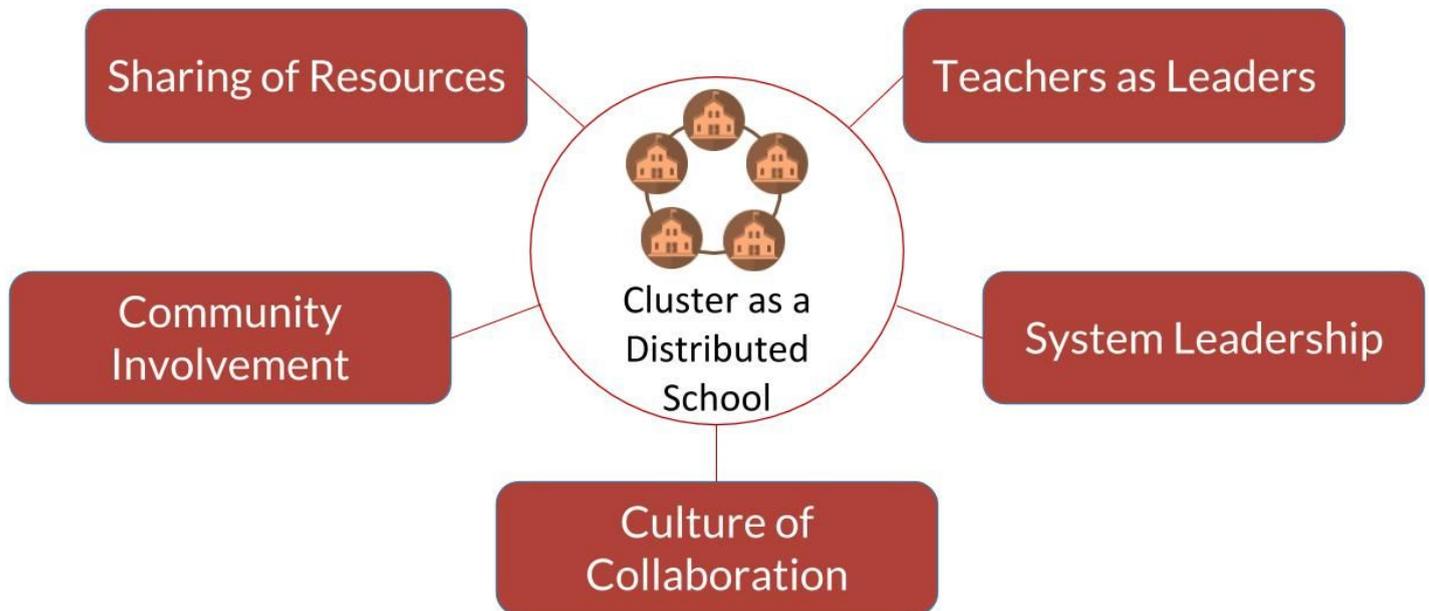


Image 3.5: Cluster improvement framework

The cluster improvement rubric was designed to assess a cluster of Government schools. The cluster is assessed in five domains, and each of these domains is further broken down into sub-domains to make marking on the rubric easier. Strands may also overlap across domains. Each strand progresses through four stages: lacking, emerging, proficient and mature.

On each strand, the cluster will be marked along lacking-emerging-proficient-mature. We recognise that the descriptions in the rubric might not exactly match with the reality in the clusters as each cluster is unique. However, the idea is to mark the cluster on the level with the closest description so that users of this rubric will have a shared sense of how the cluster is. Following are the descriptions of each of the domains on the rubric:

Sharing of resources

This domain assesses the quality of resource sharing in the cluster. By resources, we mean physical resources, human resources and soft resources (structures and processes). The domain is broken into five sub-domains: resource availability, incidence of sharing, awareness & conviction in the value of sharing resources amongst stakeholders, knowledge & proper use of the system and systems & structures. It is important to understand where the cluster stands in terms of sharing of resources as this is an important indicator of how the schools are collaborating with each other, as well as how the schools are able to leverage the community in procuring resources.

Teachers as leaders

This domain assesses the leadership capability of teachers in their own schools and in the cluster. It also assesses the capability of teachers in leading their professional development. The domain has seven sub-domains: teacher participation & voice at the cluster level, teacher participation & voice at school level, collaboration amongst teachers, communication between teachers, systems for collaboration, connection & involvement with the community, and teachers' attitude to professional development. Understanding whether teachers are developing as leaders is critical as teachers are the primary stakeholders and have the capacity to become change facilitators at the ground level and thus facilitate cluster transformation.

Community involvement

This domain assesses the efforts taken by the schools in engaging the community members (parents, Gram Panchayat, SDMC, others in the community) in the improvement of the cluster and the participation of community members for cluster improvement. There are five sub-domains: parental involvement in school (teachers' role), parental involvement in school (parent's role), understanding of the community, resourcing from the community, partnerships & networks. Assessing and tracking this domain will help ensure that there is a focus on facilitating the creation of a network of partners who can aid cluster improvement.

System leadership in the cluster

This domain assesses the quality of cluster-level leadership (system leadership) in the cluster. It assesses the planning, implementing data-driven decision making capabilities and the capability of the system leaders to drive the vision of cluster as distributed schools in the cluster. The sub-domains in this domain are: stakeholders take on roles of system leaders, systems & structures supporting system leaders, shared vision, CRP's role, resource mobilisation, planning , data collection & decision making, structures for communication between schools and documentation. Understanding and tracking this domain is critical as development of system leadership is essential for sustainability of the cluster improvement journey.

Culture of collaboration

The culture of collaboration domain assesses the collaboration of stakeholders in the cluster, the systems supporting their collaboration and how much collaboration is promoted by stakeholders in the cluster. It has five sub-domains: scope of engagement of stakeholders, extent and quality of teachers & schools collaboration, structures for collaboration, leaders support and focus on collaboration and relationship of stakeholders across the cluster.

Section 3.5. PACE: The Improvement Journey from Lacking to Proficient

In this handbook, we will focus on the improvement journey of the cluster from lacking to proficient. Limiting the project’s journey to ‘emerging’ poses a risk of changes not sustaining after exiting. Further, reaching a ‘mature’ stage is a long-term vision, and requires processes, norms, and values to develop and become ‘the way things are just done in the cluster’ - which is a long-term change over several years. In this case, it makes sense to focus on the improvement journey from Lacking to Proficient, *while enabling the cluster to move towards Mature on its own by building the cluster’s capacity to manage change.*

In the journey from Lacking to Proficient, the following five Key Focus Areas have been identified. These have a direct mapping to the Cluster Assessment Rubric as well. The following image shows these five key focus areas:



Image 3.6: Key focus areas for lacking to proficient cluster improvement journey

Section 3.5.1. Teachers develop as leaders



Teachers are key actors in the cluster. It is important to enhance their leadership capacity so that cluster improvement sustains. The outcomes chain for this key focus area is depicted in image 3.7. The chain depicts the immediate and intermediate changes that will have to happen

in the intervention period in order for the teachers to develop as leaders at the end. Teachers develop leadership in PACE by engaging collaboratively with other teachers across the different schools in the cluster for professional development and also by engaging in cluster improvement projects.

Section 3.5.2. Improved instructional leadership



In the Teachers as Leaders key focus area, teachers professional development was a key component. To drive teacher professional development, there has to be effective instructional leadership in the cluster. The changes associated with improved instructional leadership is depicted in image 3.8. In the current system, the Cluster Resource persons (CRP) faces challenges in executing his/her instructional leadership role as they are

overburdened with many administrative responsibilities. Hence, first the administrative processes in the cluster have to be streamlined. The CRP's capability to leverage expertise of Resource Persons (RP) and Master Resource Persons (MRP) is also improved so that there is distributed and effective instructional leadership in the cluster.

Section 3.5.3. Improved community involvement

The community should be involved so that there is strong ownership and accountability for cluster improvement. Community is not limited only to the parents. It includes all the members in the

students community including SDMC and local bodies. The outcomes chain for this is in image 3.9. When the community engages in cluster improvement, schools will see the benefit in their school. For example, the school might see



that a project was done with much ownership and accountability because the resources were mobilised from the community. This will challenge a common perception that might exist in many schools: engaging the community only causes disruption. When they see the value of community engagement, schools will create more opportunities for collaborating with the community for cluster improvement. The community will also realise the significance of collaborating with schools for cluster improvement and hence will engage effectively with the community.

Section 3.5.4. Effective system leadership

For the cluster to function effectively, there has to be effective system leadership. The chain can be seen in image 3.10. System leadership evolves organically in the cluster. Stakeholders engage in projects through which they develop their leadership capabilities. Their operational leadership capabilities such as planning and implementation are improved. Some of these stakeholders, because of their motivation, repeatedly engage in cluster improvement projects and emerge as system leaders. The system leaders collaborate with each other and drive and sustain the vision of the cluster as a distributed school.



Section 3.5.5. Effective sharing of resources



Resources (material resources, human resources, soft resources) are significant for cluster improvement as they ensure physical well-being of the stakeholders and also impact motivation of stakeholders. The chain is in image 3.11. This strand first focuses on reviving the Cluster Resource Center (CRC) which is a Government mandated space in one of the schools in the cluster for teachers to meet and collaborate. Regarding other resources, some of the resource requirements of individual schools are worked on first before working on sharing of resources across schools. This is so that schools first have at least the basic resources first. Later, when schools engage in sharing of resources, they see the value of operating as a cluster. Structures and processes for sharing have to be also improved so that sharing of resources is effective.

Effective sharing of resources

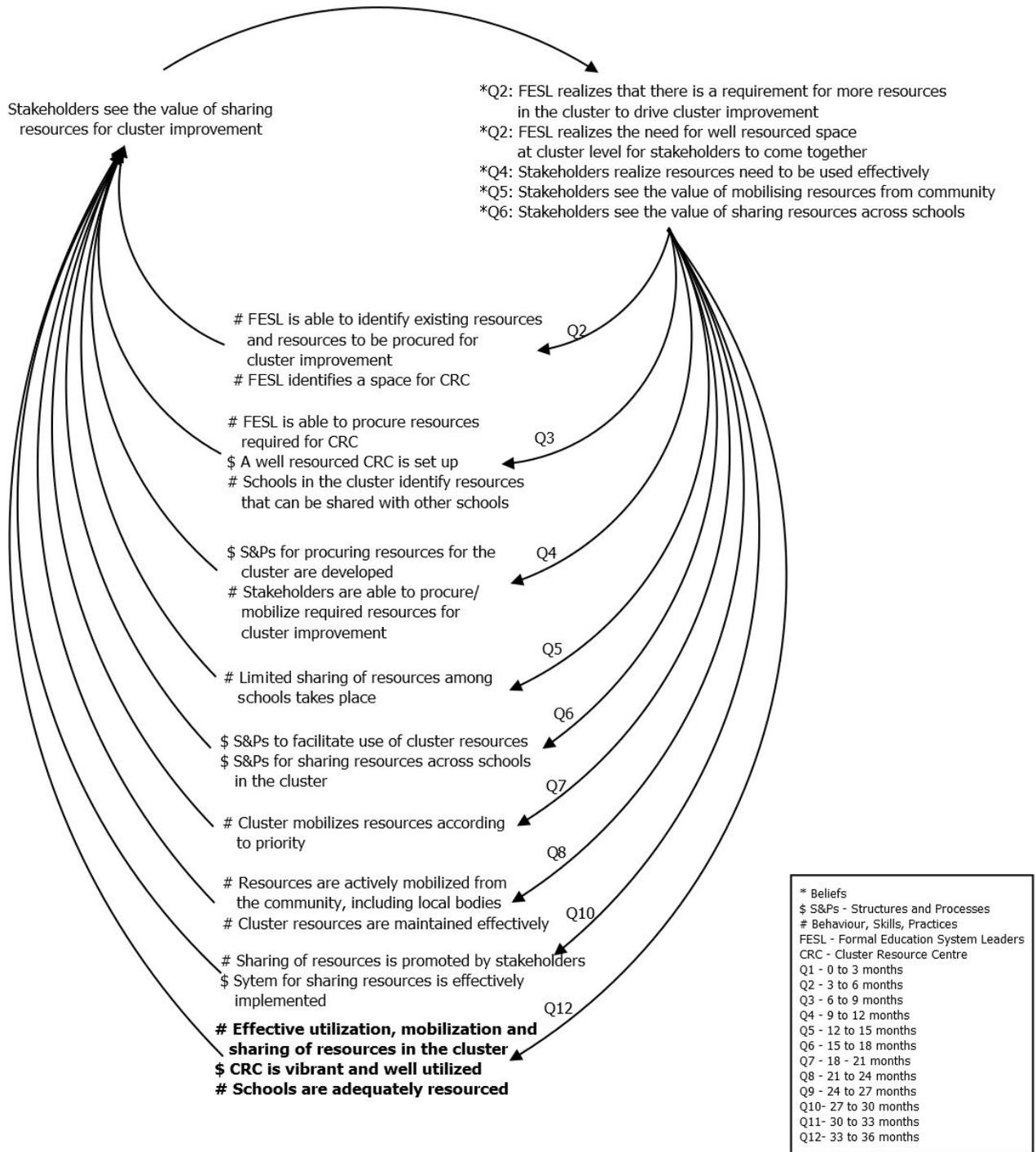


Image 3.11- Outcomes chain: Effective sharing of resources

Effective System Leadership



Image 3.10- Outcomes chain: Effective system leadership

Improved Community Involvement

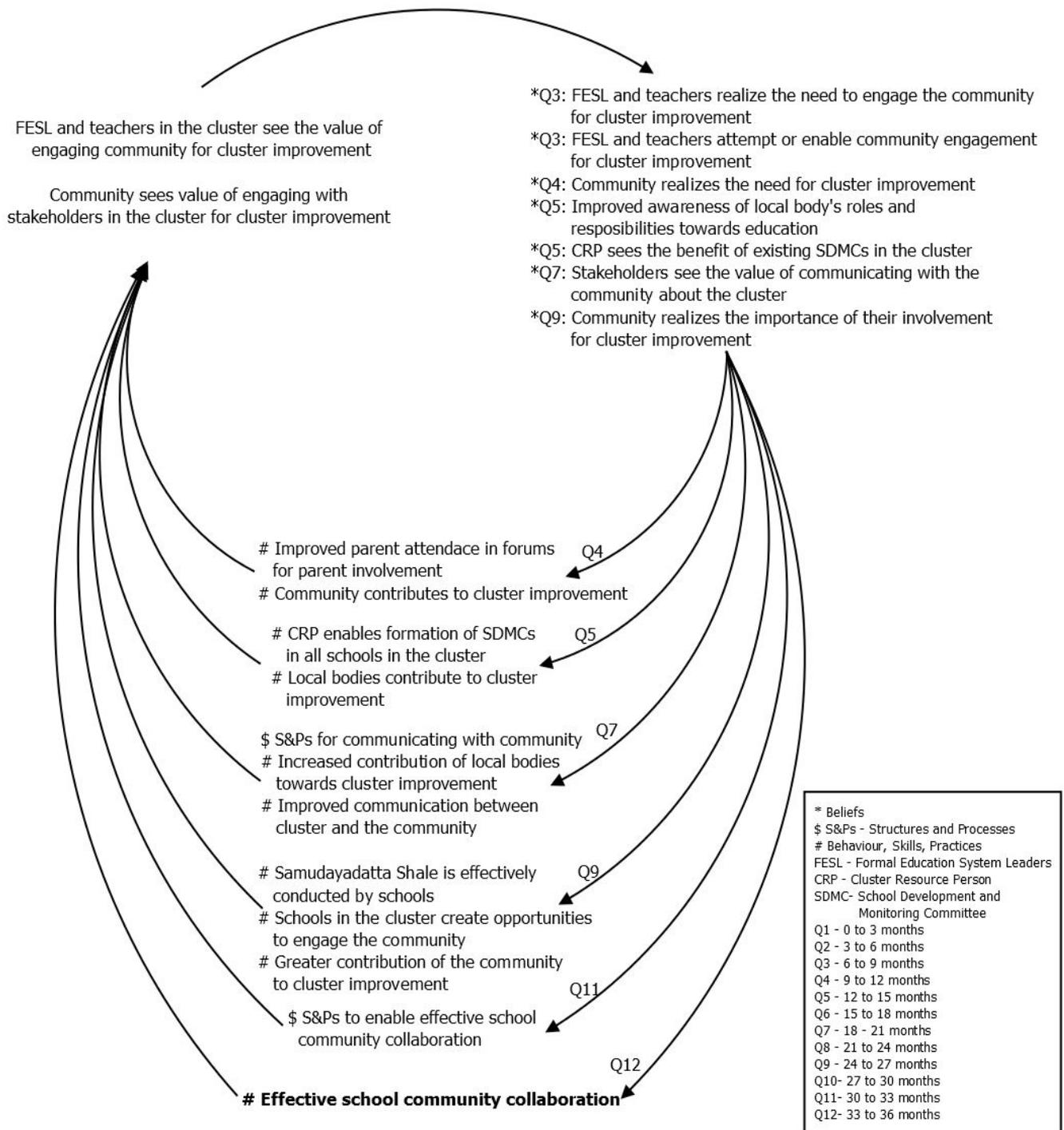


Image 3.9- Outcomes chain: Improved community involvement

Improved Instructional Leadership

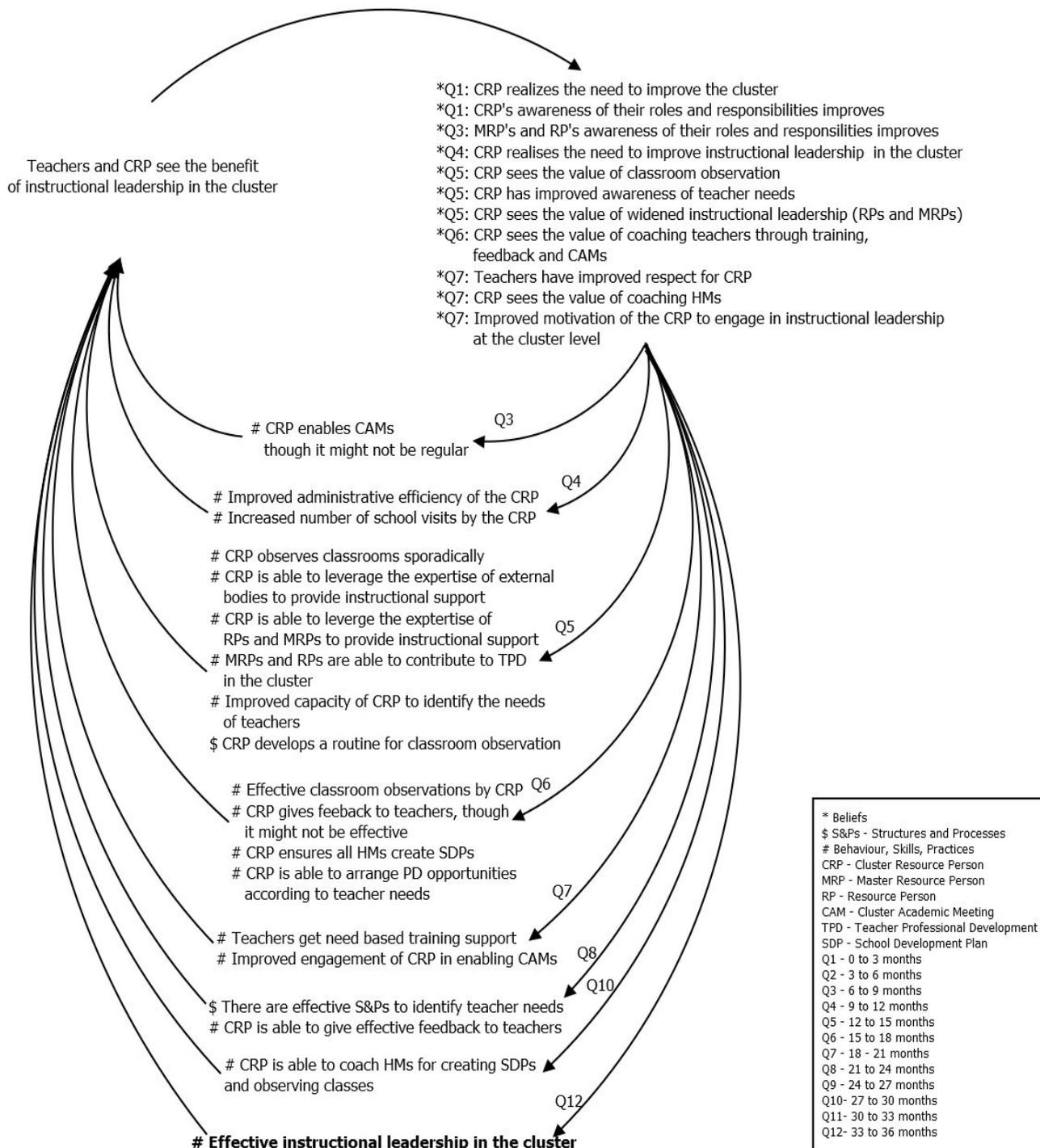


Image 3.8- Outcomes chain: Improved instructional leadership in the cluster

Teachers develop as leaders

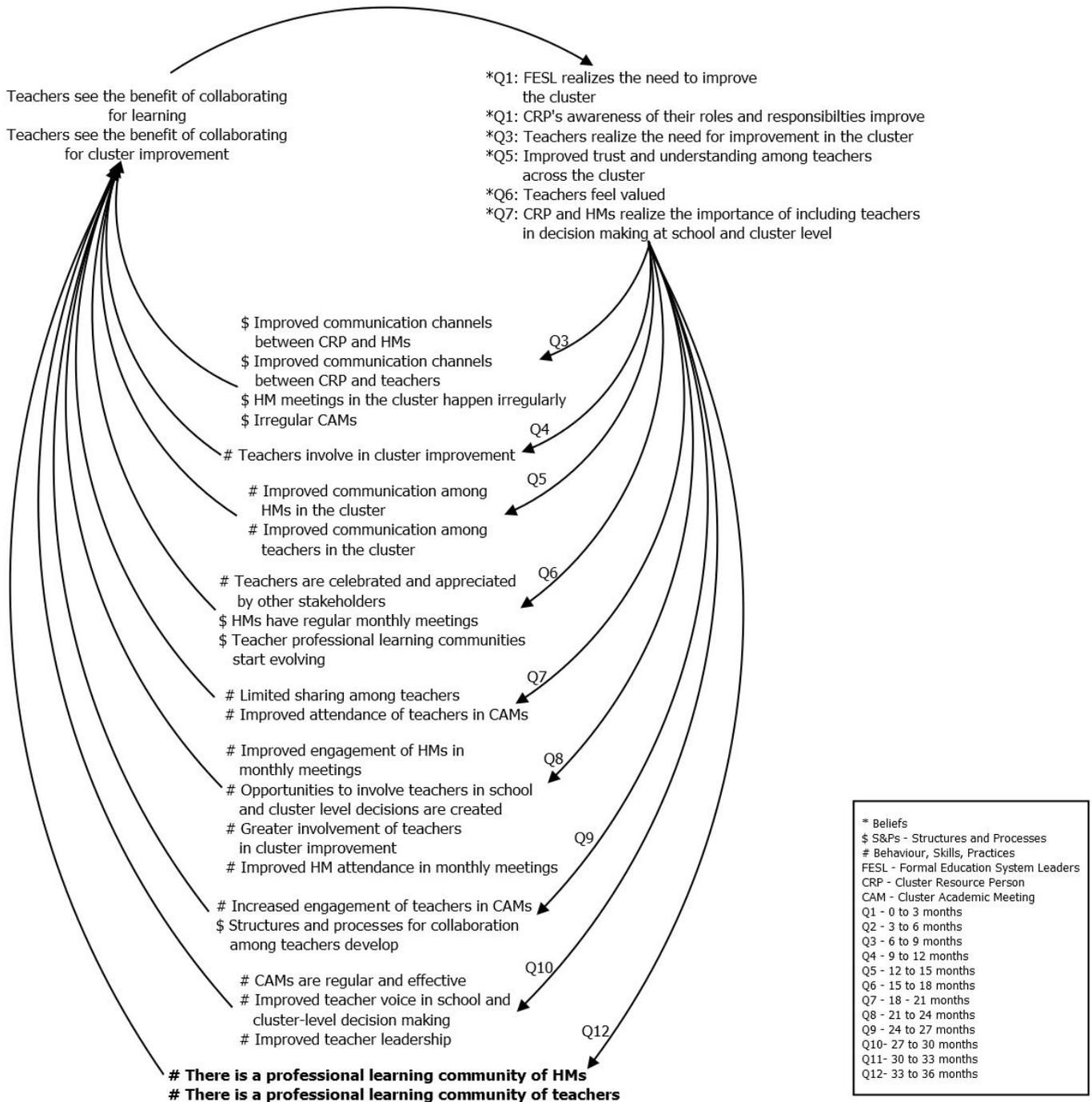


Image 3.7- Outcomes chain: Teachers develop as leaders

Section 4 - What will we do to make the changes happen?

The outcomes chains explain the series of changes that have to happen in the cluster for it to move from lacking to proficient cluster. This section explains how PACE will bring about these changes; that is, the set of interventions that will bring about these changes.

Section 4.1. The Stages

PACE is based on the premise that every cluster is unique. Hence, its improvement journey will be unique as well. There are four stages to the intervention which are detailed out below:



Image 4.1: Stages of PACE

Stage I: Connect - This stage begins with a Needs Assessment, which is a detailed baseline assessment of the cluster. The needs assessment is done over a period of two-three months along with project implementation. During this period, we try to understand the current status of the cluster in terms of resources, leadership in the cluster, community engagement and teachers taking up ownership in the cluster. This data on current status gives a glimpse of cluster as a whole and also serves as a base for our work with the cluster.

Stage II: Empower - or the implementation phase. The focus in this stage would be on reviving the existing the structures in the cluster such as cluster academic meetings (CAM), enrolment drive and Samudayadatta Shale, etc and taking up projects which the stakeholders prioritize. In this stage, we will be spending a lot of time on planning, implementing and evaluating each projects carried over in the cluster. The focus is on showing stakeholders that change is possible, and that they are capable of bringing about change.

Stage III: Enable - In this stage, the stakeholders begin to take ownership of cluster

transformation. The cluster works not just towards reviving existing structures, but also in establishing new structures to improve the cluster, such as subject teacher groups, newsletters, regular meetings, and so on.

Stage IV: Sustain - Or the exit phase: Changes sustain when capacity of the stakeholders in the existing system is built. For this, we ensure that a gradual release of responsibility is planned during the course of the intervention itself. Throughout the three years of project implementation, capacity would be built in the stakeholders to sustain changes on their own and to access required support from external organisations/stakeholders. Key actors and process owners among teachers and community are identified who would take the changes forward after our exit.

Section 4.2. The Action Plan

We need to plan what activities will we doing in each stage of the intervention. Let's look at what are some of the things we consider when building an action plan:



Image 4.2: Building an Action Plan

These are exactly the things a Program Matrix helps us put together. A program matrix has a list of possible activities which can be implemented to achieve the given outcomes. Anyone who has this list can then choose, based on their context and practicality, the interventions that best suit them. Let's look at its three main components:



Image 4.3: Program Matrix-RAO

As shown in image 4.3, an RAO Matrix will detail out the resources, activities, and outputs, needed to achieve a particular outcome. Refer to table 4.1. for a sample RAO Matrix.

So far, we have understood the kinds of changes we want to see in the clusters we work with. We have also understood that our work in the cluster will go through phases from high investment to gradual handover, and we have explored how to capture what activities we are doing on the ground. Let's also explore what would be some key activities in the Project for Active Cluster Engagement. As explored in section 3.3, PACE is implemented through three key means:

- Enabling distributed leadership
- Fostering Professional Learning Communities, and
- Developing cluster-level processes

The following pages explore these in greater depth.

Enabling distributed leadership

One of the key means of enabling distributed leadership is through the planning and implementation of cluster improvement projects. The following image gives an idea of how this looks like:

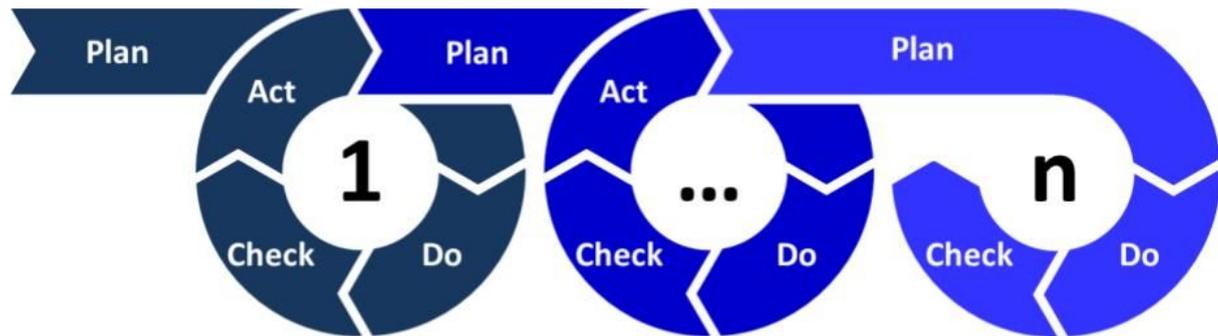


Image 4.4: The Plan-Do-Check-Act Project cycle

This shows how there would be multiple cycles of planning a project, implementing it, monitoring how it is going, and improve capability and processes accordingly. Going through multiple cycles of this ensures a culture of *continuous improvement*. Further, as explored in the stages of PACE, here too there will be a gradual handover. For instance, projects early in the intervention may be driven almost entirely by the external partners, but as the cluster's capability to manage change improves, they would be more and more capable of doing it on their own - with a wide distribution of stakeholders who can drive cluster improvement. These stakeholders who drive cluster improvement (system leaders) will be from different stakeholder groups (teachers, community, FESL). Also, since the system leaders have been collaborating in various projects together, there would emerge effective distributed leadership in the cluster.

Now what kinds of projects should be taken up? Ideas for projects can come from:

- What the stakeholders in the cluster want to improve and work on, or what they feel is the priority/need for the cluster
- Areas of improvement identified from the Needs Assessment phase
- Understanding existing government structures which can be revived (eg, Cluster Academic Meetings, Bridge Programs, etc)



One of the projects taken up in a cluster was carrying out an enrollment drive, as the stakeholders were concerned with the depleting number of students coming to government schools

Suggested list of projects that can be done at the cluster level:

1. Enrolment drive
2. Summer camps for children
3. Building common playgrounds for schools
4. Mobile library project
5. Reviving Cluster Resource Center (CRC)
6. Reviving Cluster Academic Meetings (CAM)
7. Streamlining administrative processes
8. Effective SDMC formation in all schools and improving functioning of SDMC
9. Bridge program-Sethubandha in Karnataka
10. Reviving Samudayadatta Shale (Community-teacher meeting in Karnataka)

Promoting Professional Learning Communities

A professional learning community of teachers (PLC) is a group of teachers who collaborate regularly to address their classroom challenges and improve student outcomes. Teachers consistently share their expertise with each other. They also collaboratively learn new teaching strategies and perspectives from outside the group and involve in action-research in their classrooms.

PACE focuses on fostering professional learning communities of teachers to develop in the cluster. This is significant because PLCs have been found to promote collaboration and trust between teachers which are essential for effective functioning of the cluster (Ghose & Jain, 2016). The focus on PLC in PACE is based on Community of Practice (COP) theory and also from the experience of Azim Premji Foundations in India in enabling Voluntary Teacher Forums in three districts of India (Ghose & Jain, 2016). PACE will first focus on reviving Cluster Academic Meetings (CAM) which is the mandated cluster-level Government structure for in-service trainings. The CAMs have to be attended by all teachers in the cluster or all teachers of a particular subject depending on the agenda of the CAM. CAMs will be made regular and effective. By effective, we mean the discussions in the CAM will be relevant for the teachers in addressing the classroom challenges and also that it will be a democratic space where all teachers deeply engage in reflection of their practice. PACE will then leverage on CAMs to drive professional learning communities in the cluster by enabling subject teacher groups and groups of teachers doing action research projects.

Developing cluster level processes

Cluster level processes are the processes that enable streamlining of various cluster level activities and the interactions between the various stakeholders. There are some cluster level processes which would already be existing before the intervention. However, they might need to be streamlined. For example, some of the administrative processes. There would also be processes that have to be newly developed in the cluster such as communication and sharing of resources among schools. Borrowing from distributed leadership, PACE focuses on developing cluster level processes so as to institutionalise collaborative practices which are developed in the cluster.

Section 5 - How will we stay on track?

So far, we have answered the questions of what we do, and how we do what we do. The next important question to ask is ‘How do we know that we are going in the right direction?’ This is the question that our Monitoring and Evaluation Framework helps us answer.

We can keep track of whether we are going in the right direction or not in two ways: internal conversations to have a ‘heightened awareness’ of what is happening in our schools; and by systematically keeping track of whether and which outcomes have been achieved, based on data collection and analysis. Different sources can contribute to developing a monitoring and evaluation framework, including those in the following image:



Image 5.1: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The activities and outputs called out in the RAO matrix contribute to what we will monitor and evaluate. In addition, the success criteria, or indicators against each of the outcomes in the outcomes chains is also important in order to keep track of how and what kinds of changes are being achieved in the stakeholders. Refer to Table 5.1 for a sample list of indicators. Since activities, outputs and indicators are large in number, it is useful to track key activities and outcomes only. This will form the basis of what we would like to monitor. Depending on the results that emerge, we might choose to dive deeper and evaluate *why* something is happening the way it is happening. Eg. If we want to understand why something did not work the way we imagined it, or if we want to validate our assumption about why something worked the way we imagined it to, and so on. This forms the last part of program design of a cluster transformation journey from lacking to proficient. We hope this document was useful in bringing up both questions and clarifications about our approach to school transformation. We will be happy to hear about both!

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References

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Table 5.1: Sample list of indicators

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Attributes	Comparisons
Q3	Improved communication channels between CRPs and HMs	There are structures for communication existing between CRP and HMs. CRP s and HMs frequently communicate	% of HMs regularly communicating with the CRP
			# of mediums of communication
			Frequency of communication between CRPs and HMs
	Improved communication channels between CRPs and teachers	There are structures for communication existing between CRP and teachers. CRPs and teachers frequently communicate	% of teachers regularly communicating with the CRP
		# of mediums of communication	
		Frequency of communication between CRPs and teachers	
Q4	Teachers involve in cluster improvement	Teachers contribute to cluster improvement projects	# of cluster improvement projects teachers participated in
			% of teachers participating in cluster improvement projects
Q5	Improved communication among HMs in the cluster	Structure for communication is adhered.	Frequency of communication between HMs
		Best practices and challenges in school leadership are shared regularly.	# of instances where best practices and challenges in school leadership were shared
	Improved communication among teachers in the cluster	Structure for communication is adhered.	Frequency of communication between teachers
		Best practices and challenges in teaching are shared regularly.	# of instances where best practices and challenges in classroom were shared
Q6	Teachers (including HMs) are celebrated and appreciated by other stakeholders	CRP, school leaders and community appreciate teachers Structures for appreciating teachers develop (eg, shoutout wall in the CRC, 10 minutes of a CAM or staff meeting or parent teacher dedicated to appreciating teachers)	# of structures at the cluster level to recognise teachers efforts
			# of times teachers were appreciated for their efforts by the CRP/ other FESL
			# of structures at the school level for HMs and teachers to recognise each others' efforts
			# of times HMs or teachers appreciated teachers at school/cluster level
			# of structures for the community to appreciate teachers
			# of times community appreciated teachers
	HMs have regular monthly meetings	All HMs meet monthly	# of HM meetings
		average % of HMs attending the meetings	
Q7	Improved attendance of teachers in CAMs	Improved attendance of teachers in CAMs	average % of teachers attending CAMs
Q8	Improved engagement of HMs in monthly meetings	HMs share best practices and challenges of leading their schools in the meeting.	% of HMs participating in meetings
			% of time in the meeting for non-administrative discussions

Table 5.1: Sample list of indicators

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Attributes	Comparisons
Q8	Improved HM attendance in monthly meetings	Attendance	% of HMs attending the meeting
Q9	Increased engagement of teachers in CAMs	Teachers share best practices and challenges of leading their schools in the CAMs	% of teachers participating in meetings
			% of time in the meeting for academic discussions
			# of classroom challenges shared in the meeting
			# of success stories shared in the meeting
			# of collaborative efforts (post-CAM) initiated because of the CAM
			% of teachers who find the CAM relevant to their teaching practice and could identify first steps to implement CAM learnings in their classrooms
			Has the facilitator prepared a proper plan for the CAM?
			Adherence to the plan by the facilitator
			% of teachers who participate in the meeting
	% of time in the CAM for teacher participation		
	Structures and processes for collaboration among teachers develop	Teachers form norms for collaborating with each other. Teachers have an understanding of what they can collaborate towards, and how they can collaborate with other teachers	# of instances of collaboration among teachers
Q10	CAMs are regular and effective	CAMs are less about completing administrative tasks, and more about academic support.	% of time in the meeting for academic discussions
			# of classroom challenges shared in the meeting
			# of success stories shared in the meeting
			# of collaborative efforts (post-CAM) initiated because of the CAM
			% of teachers who find the CAM relevant to their teaching practice and could identify first steps to implement CAM learnings in their classrooms
			% of teachers who participate in the meeting
			% of time in the CAM for teacher participation
		CAMs are held regularly. Teachers engage in the CAMs to collaboratively address classroom challenges in the cluster.	
	CAMs are planned and executed effectively		Adherence to the plan by the facilitator

Table 5.1: Sample list of indicators

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Attributes	Comparisons
			Frequency of CAMs
	Improved teacher voice in school and cluster level decision making	Teachers make decisions in schools. There are structures which promote teacher voice structures to capture feedback from teachers	% of teachers in cluster leadership structures
			Frequency of feedback collected from teachers
			# of Changes implemented because of the feedback
			% of PD opportunities arranged according to the teacher needs
			% of teachers involved in cluster level decision making
			% of teachers involved in school level decision making
			% of cluster level decisions which teachers took (either alone or collaboratively with other stakeholders)
Q12	There is a professional learning community of teachers	Teachers voluntarily come together to learn and improve their practices	# of teacher learning groups
			# of proactive, collaborative initiatives taken by teachers for professional growth
			frequency of PLC meets
			% of teachers engaging in PLC structures other than CAMs
			# of PLC structures
			Time for PLCs

Table 4.1: Sample RAO matrix

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Activities	Outputs	Resources
Q1	FESL realizes the need to improve the cluster	Conduct Focused Group Discussions with CRP and BRP	# of interactions/FGDs with CRP and BRP	Checklist/List of probing questions
		Interact with block level officers.	# of interactions with block level officers	Checklist/List of probing questions Resources which can help explain need for cluster improvement
		1) Prepare cluster status report along with the officers 2) Share status report with officers	Minutes of the meeting	Cluster assessment report
	CRP's awareness of their roles and responsibilities improves	Conduct a CRP orientation meeting	# of meetings conducted % attendance of CRPs	Shikshalokam resources, session plan
		Conduct pre test and post test on roles and responsibilities / quiz	Test/quiz results	Test/quiz template
Q3	Improved communication channels between CRPs and HMs	Create cluster level HMs and CRP committee and whatsapp group	Whatsapp group, committee	Whatsapp
		Encourage CRP to do school visits (or/and) visit schools with CRP	# of CRP school visits # of joint school visits	-
	Improved communication channels between CRPs and teachers	Conduct samuha sabrama programe, ensure CRP leads parts, if not all of it	# of samuha sambramas	Session plans
		Create cluster level teachers committee and whatsapp group	Whatsapp group, committee	Whatsapp
		Conduct monthly samalochana sabhe	# of samalochana sabhe conducted	Session plans
	HM meetings in the cluster happen irregularly	Interact with HM, drive need for HMs to meet	# of interactions with HMs	
		1) Collect needs and opinion of HMs with respect to monthly meetings 2) Co-plan the agenda with the CRP 3) Co-conduct meeting with CRP	- List of requirements from HMs - # of meetings conducted	Session plans
		Share monthly meeting reports with HMs and CRP	# of reports shared	Report template
	Irregular CAMs	1) Collect needs and opinion from teachers with respect to CAMs 2) Co-plan CAM agenda with CRP 3) Co-conduct CAM with CRP	- List of requirements from teachers - # of CAMs conducted	Tools for collecting teacher requirements CAM session plans

Table 4.1: Sample RAO matrix

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Activities	Outputs	Resources
		Create subject teachers forums (STF)	# of subject teacher forums % of teachers part of subject teacher forums	-
Q4	Teachers involve in cluster improvement	1) Call all-teachers meet 2) Collect ideas/priorities for cluster improvement 3) Propose cluster improvement projects 4) Form groups/ attach interested teachers in existing groups	# of teacher meetings % of teachers involved in cluster improvement projects % of cluster improvement projects which have teacher representations	-
Q5	Improved trust and understanding among teachers across the cluster	Teacher mela or prathiba karanji for teachers	# of teacher melas/ events for teachers	-
		Teacher Whatsapp group	Whatsapp group	-
		Newsletter to share best practies	# of newsletters	-
	Improved communication among HMs in the cluster	During HM meetings, 1) Encourage sharing school needs and resources among HMs 2) Encourage sharing of schools' progress 3) Conduct HMs' self assessment of schools and share findings and action plans	# of HM meetings	Session plans
Improved communication among teachers in the cluster	Encourage teachers to take initiatives to share/manage whatsapp group and newsletter	Contributions made by teachers to the whatsapp group and newsletters	-	
	Ensure regularity of CAMs	Frequency of CAMs	-	
Q6	Teachers feel valued	1) Identify the best practices 2) Share case studies/articles on best practices observed	# of teacher stories shared	Template/tools to capture stories/best practices
	Teachers are celebrated and appreciated by other stakeholders	Conduct teachers cluster level mela, ensuring community participation, and having opportunities for appreciating teachers	# of opportunities where teachers were appreciated	-
	HMs have regular monthly meetings	Encourage HMs to take initiative and ownership for a monthly meeting	# of HM meetings	-

Table 4.1: Sample RAO matrix

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Activities	Outputs	Resources
	Teacher professional learning communities start evolving	1) Conduct need-based trainings and discussions 2) Identify motivated teachers who can start leading the voluntary meetings 3) Support teachers in the meetings	# of teacher groups # of voluntary teacher meetings	-
Q7	CRP and HMs realise the importance of including teachers in decision making at school and cluster level	Ensure Cluster Development committee includes Teachers (Jeevadhare Samiti)	% representation of teachers in the committee	-
	Limited sharing among teachers	Share/discuss resources on importance of including teachers in decision making	# of resources shared/discussions on this topic	Resources on importance of including teachers in decision making
	Improved attendance of teachers in CAMs	Encourage sharing among teachers during STF, Cam, other meetings	# of resources shared among teachers % time made during meetings for discussion among teachers	-
		1) Help CRP in tracking teachers attendance 2) Have individual interactions with the teachers to motivate them to participate	% attendance of teachers	-
Q8	Improved engagement of HMs in monthly meetings	-	-	-
	Opportunities to involve teachers in school and cluster level decision-making are created	1) Co-plan with HMs and CRPs with respect to including teachers in decision making	# of opportunities created to include teachers in decision making	-
	Greater involvement of teachers in cluster improvement	1) Encourage teachers to take up a project to improve cluster (involving students as well)	# of projects led by teachers # of teachers involved in cluster improvement projects	-
	Improved HM attendance in monthly meetings	1) Help CRP in tracking HMs attendance 2) Have individual interactions with the HMs to motivate them to participate	% attendance of HMs in monthly meetings	-
Q9	Increased engagement of teachers in CAMs	1) Identify why CAMs are not effective 2) Ensure topics are of relevance and interest to teachers	% attendance of teachers	-
	Structures and processes for collaboration among teachers develop	Help teachers document the norms for collaborating	Norms for collaborating	-

Table 4.1: Sample RAO matrix

Key Focus Area: Teachers as Leaders

Quarter	Outcomes	Activities	Outputs	Resources
Q10	CAMs are regular and effective	1) Ensure teachers focus on learning outcomes of the students	% CAMs planned and implemented effectively	Checklist for observing CAMs
	Improved teacher voice in school and cluster level decision making	Continue co-planning with HMs and CRPs for including teachers in decision making	# of opportunities for teachers to take part in decision making	-
	Improved teacher leadership			-
Q12	There is a professional learning community of teachers	1) identify active teachers to promote them to become RPs. 2) Support continuous working of the PLCs	# of teachers in the PLC Regularity of PLCs	-
	There is a professional learning community of HMs	Support continuous working of the PLCs	# of HMs in the PLC Regularity of PLCs	-
all quarters	Teachers see the benefit of collaborating for learning	Regular reflection cycles that drive teachers to see the benefits of collaboration	# of reflection cycles	Sample template for reflection cycles
	Teachers see the benefit of collaborating for cluster improvement			

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Sharing of Resources				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Resource availability -	Schools are inadequately resourced; especially small schools struggle with a lack of resources both infra and human	At the cluster level resource availability improves; there may be uneven distribution across schools-some schools may be better resourced than others.	Cluster schools are adequately resourced in terms of infrastructure, soft infra and human resources	Cluster schools are well resourced in terms of infrastructure, soft infra and human resources Due to sharing of resources each school has access to adequate resources as and when they need them; cluster is able to procure resources that are needed by schools.
Incidence of sharing	There may be instances of sharing but they are purely adhoc and based on need, proximity, relationships between teachers or schools. It is not within the expectation set and accepted norms of behaviour of stakeholders in school.	Some schools and teachers benefit from resource sharing but it is not standard practice; sharing is limited to only a few types of resources. Teachers have to be prodded or reminded by others, example CRP or a few system leaders who have conviction.	Schools benefit from resource sharing. A large number of teachers attempt to follow the agreed norms and processes. Most of the resources across a cluster are shared	Most teachers across all school are aware and follow the system . All types of resources across schools in the cluster are shared and well utilised.
Awareness & conviction in the value of sharing resources amongst stakeholders	There is no awareness about resource-sharing among the leaders	There is some awareness of the need and benefit of sharing resources amongst the CRP and stakeholders (teachers, HTs, community members), but not much conviction or commitment to making it work.	The CRP and other leaders promote the process. They advocate sharing and create an awareness of the processes and norms amongst the teachers.	The CRP and system leaders are focussed on value of this process and constantly monitor the process in an ongoing fashion to make it happen.
	Teachers and others feel a sense of hesitation and resistance to the idea and suggestion of collective ownership and usage.	Stakeholders in the cluster are informed about the concept but do not necessarily know how it works and how to use it.	Stakeholders are no longer resistant and are willing to consider the prospect on its merits. They see the need and benefits from it.	Other stakeholders like teachers, parents and community see the value in this.They try to convince those unfamiliar or resistant to the idea about the value of it.

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Sharing of Resources				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Knowledge & proper use of the system	Stakeholders are not aware of the systems, if any	Not all stakeholders in the cluster are aware of the systems and processes for sharing; how the system works and its usage and benefits.	<p>Stakeholders in school are well aware of the systems, process and norms that govern the sharing and acquisition of resources.</p> <p>Teachers become aware and use the system.</p> <p>Due to unfamiliarity it may not be seamless and smooth. Timetables may clash. Resources requisitioned may not be returned or be taken by others.</p> <p>Resources are sometimes misplaced and damaged through incorrect usage and abuse.</p>	<p>Stakeholders in school are well aware of the systems, process and norms that govern the sharing and acquisition of resources.</p> <p>They take ownership and ensure that all concerned follow the norms and processes.</p> <p>Teachers are sensitive to the needs of others and respect and follow the process and norms of sharing</p> <p>They are willing to accomodate needs of a colleague/ school as required and asked</p> <p>Consumers of the resources respect the collective resources and use them appropriately</p>
Systems & Structures	<p>Each school operates independently and restricts themselves to using their own resources; usage of resources varies across schools. Resources may go unused.</p> <p>There are no systems, processes in place that support sharing .</p>	<p>Some systems and strucures are collectively agreed by the CRP and few other stakeholders in school, and put in place to enable sharing of resources.</p> <p>These are in the intital stages and not very well developed, i.e. anticipating all possibilities nor tried or tested collectively.</p> <p>Preliminary attempt to map select resources</p>	<p>There are systems and structures in place that support the cluster to do joint planning, prioritisation and procurement of resources. They need to be monitored and modified to ensure that they work well.</p> <p>System leaders rexamine and identify processes that work and modify the system to make it more effective.</p> <p>A group of people take responsibility for it. Norms for usage are also in place.</p>	<p>There are efficient and well designed systems and structures in place that support the cluster to do joint planning, prioritisation and procurement of resources.</p> <p>Some resources are common for use across cluster and some are procured jointly and distributed across schools.</p> <p>There is a database of resources and an efficient working system in place that tracks resources, sharing andd uasge;</p> <p>When resources get exhausted or damaged or unusabel they get replaced</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Culture of Collaboration				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Scope of engagement of stakeholders	All stakeholders work for their own schools; each school functions independently.	Select stakeholders group/s across schools, who are motivated and ready to take on leadership roles and work for school improvement, come together only for specific projects from time to time.	Stable group/s of critical stakeholders comprising of CRP, HTs, teachers and some active SMC members undertake joint and collaborative projects for the improvement of the cluster as a whole.	<p>Stable group/s of critical stakeholders comprising of CRP, HTs, teachers and some active SMC members who undertake joint and collaborative projects for the improvement of the cluster on an on-going basis.</p> <p>The group consists of representatives from all schools and all types of stakeholders. There are mechanisms for ensuring adequate membership and induction into the groups.</p>
Extent and quality of teachers & schools collaboration	<p>Teachers come together only when summoned for a cluster meeting by the CRP;</p> <p>Cluster meetings are not very regular and focus primarily on exchange of information and data gathering.</p>	<p>CAMs are held regularly; they are well attended.</p> <p>Content is also focussed on classroom issues ; teachers discuss amongst themselves and come up with solutions jointly.</p> <p>Groups of teachers meet periodically (not necessarily regularly) to discuss classroom practices, hold workshops etc.</p> <p>This happens typically at the behest of an external agency like the CRP, an NGO partner or a HT.</p>	<p>Groups of teachers from across schools, meet periodically to share classroom challenges and do joint problem solving.</p> <p>The CRP and HTs encourage and support these groups.</p> <p>The content of the meetings is focussed on classroom challenges, student learning and teaching learning issues.</p>	<p>Groups of teachers self motivated and self regulated meet periodically to share and learn from each other. An appropriate block of time is set aside for this and is respected by all.</p> <p>The content of the meeting is focussed on classroom challenges, student learning and teaching learning issues.</p>
	Decisions are made on a school level independently.	Teachers come together some decisions are made collectively on project/adhoc basis,.	Select decisions are made and organised collaboratively - example field trips, academic calendar, common assessments, joint school events.	<p>There are shared goals for the cluster, across a variety of domains like schools infrastructure and resources, academic planning, teaching-learning & student related issues. Decisions in alignment to goals are taken and executed collaboratively.</p> <p>Other decisions like a common academic calendar, common assessments, joint events are made and implemented by varied groups of teachers collaboratively.</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Culture of Collaboration				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Structures for collaboration (like PLCs)	<p>There are no structures for collaboration across schools. However at an individual school level, the community and schools may work together for school improvement.</p> <p>Structures like the SMC will exist but strenght may vary across schools.</p>	<p>There are structures in place (committees, meeting times & venues) but they are rudimentary.</p> <p>Membership of committees is limited and not representative of all schools ; it is not stable ; meetings are not always regular or well attended; can be erratic.</p> <p>No fixed and agreed norms for interaction.</p>	<p>There are structures in place for stakeholders like teachers, GP members, SMC members to be able to work together, create joint goals and plan for achieving them .</p> <p>Mechanisms like fixed meeting times, places, designated representatives of each school. Norms for interaction are fixed. A few PLCs are in their nascent stages.</p>	<p>There are structures in place for stakeholders like teachers, GP members, SMC members to be able to work together, create joint goals and plan for achieving them.</p> <p>Mechanisms like fixed meeting times, places, designated representatives of each school. Members take ownership of these processes and are vested in them. PLCs especially teacher PLCs are stable.</p>
Leaders support and focus on collaboration	<p>There is no awareness and understanding of the benefits of collaboration amongst stakeholders in the cluster.</p>	<p>The CRP and other leaders across schools have a limited understanding of working collaboratively and its associated benefits; they percieve it as instrumental to achieving set goals.</p> <p>They cooperate with each other on select collaborative projects.</p>	<p>The CRP and other leaders across the cluster demonstrate a good understanding of collaboration and its benefits.</p> <p>They encourage teachers to work together and provide support to enable it. They create opportunities in the form of projects and tasks, for teachers to work together.</p> <p>Other stakeholders like teachers in schools also are aware and work collaboratively.</p>	<p>The CRP and other leaders have conviction in the power of collaboration; they ensure that collaborative structures in the cluster work effectively.</p> <p>They participate in many of the cluster level collaborative processes - cluster meetings, planning meetings etc;</p> <p>They demonstrate relationships of trust and reciprocity. Teachers also fully support and participate in collaborative processes.</p>
Relationships of stakeholders across the cluster	<p>Stakeholders interact as and when required/mandated.</p> <p>Few sporadic bonds may exist.</p>	<p>Stakeholders have bonds and relationships with those that they work with and those that are known to them in the cluster.</p>	<p>Those persons who have worked together share relationships of trust and reciprocity.</p> <p>People are willing to listen however, conversations, especially difficult conflict-ridden conversations, are not open.</p>	<p>Stakeholders in the cluster share relationships of trust and reciprocity; people are sensitive to and willing to accomodate the needs of others;</p> <p>Conversations are open and dialogic; there are mechanisms to resolve conflict</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Community Involvement				
Paramaters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Parental Involvement in School (Teachers' Role)	<p>Schools do not place much value on parental contribution to learning.</p> <p>Teachers are unaware of parental needs and aspirations. They do not see them as significant.</p> <p>Parent teacher meetings are held but not well attended.</p>	<p>The existing systems and processes within the system are implemented(though not necessarily in spirit). The school makes some effort to reach out to parents.</p> <p>They put in place certain rudimentary mechanisms (example notes & reminders, reports handed directly to parents) to ensure that parents attend the PTM.</p> <p>Teachers make an active effort to engage with parents during the PTM. The mandatory PTMS are held regularly.</p>	<p>Teachers understand the need and value of parental involvement in the child's school. PTMs are held keeping mind the convenience of parents.</p> <p>If required, informal meetings outside the mandated PTMs are held.</p> <p>School involves parents and requests their support in events like annual day celebrations, sports day in a sporadic and limited form.</p>	<p>Teachers understand and view the parent-school relationship as a partnership with aligned goals. They are aware of parental constraints and aspirations and try to address them.</p> <p>Those parents who can, are closely involved in school events that require their support like-annual day etc. They are consistently involved in helping to resource, providing expertise if required and helping to manage during the event.</p> <p>Teachers and parents share relationships of trust and reciprocity. School reaches out to parents for support in various forms - financial if appropriate, volunteering for supervision, story telling, extracurricular etc, support in organising school events.</p>
Parental Involvement in School (Parents' Role)	<p>Parents role is minimal. They come to school only when mandated.</p> <p>PTMs and other school events are not well attended.</p> <p>Parents too do not engage much with the school.</p>	<p>Majority of parents make an effort to attend PTMS to comply with the mandate.</p> <p>However participation is passive, for example limited to listening and accepting instructions.</p>	<p>Parents are able to communicate with teachers and articulate their concerns.</p> <p>They see the value of the connection with teachers and make an effort to participate in the mandated school events.</p>	<p>Parents are deeply connected to school. PTMs are well attended.</p> <p>They feel free to approach teachers as and when the need arises. They feel a sense of ownership of the school.</p> <p>Parents participate in school events in a variety of ways - volunteering for various school activities and so on.</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Community Involvement				
Paramaters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Understanding of the community	<p>Teachers have a limited understanding of the community and its circumstances.</p> <p>They have little or no contact with the community on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Teachers have some understanding of the community gleaned through sporadic participation in community events and community visits.</p> <p>They are sympathetically disposed towards understanding the community and its issues, challenges and culture and the impact on the education of their children.</p>	<p>Teachers have a good understanding of the community - culture, issues and challenges; They have good relationships with the members of the community.</p> <p>They maintain relationships through participating in community festivals and periodic community visits; especially if a child is experiencing a problem of any kind. (Illness, difficulty with studies, long absence, problems at home)</p>	<p>Teachers have a deep understanding of the community and a sense of empathy with their issues and challenges.</p> <p>They value the culture and assets of the community and this is reflected in their curriculum and their transactions in school.</p>
Resourcing from the community	<p>Contribution of the community towards schools is adhoc. It varies depending upon relationships and circumstances and is not consistent.</p>	<p>Community's contribution towards certain resource needs of schools is consistent. However this is largely individual school based.</p> <p>There are some instances of aggregating of contribution by community for the cluster/group of schools; these instances are driven by a few influential community members who are actively involved in schools.</p>	<p>Schools and the community are able to aggregate needs and resources at the cluster level.</p> <p>It makes a consistent contribution to schools across the cluster - based on the cluster needs.</p>	<p>Community is aware of the resource needs of the schools.</p> <p>The schools are able to mobilise a large percentage of resources from the community as per requirement.</p> <p>Representatives of the community are involved in planning and prioritising the resource needs.</p>
Partnerships & Networks	<p>Schools are aware of some influential people and organisations in the cluster and reach out to them in an adhoc fashion.</p>	<p>Schools systematically create a database of influential people and organisations in the cluster. They cultivate good relationships with some of them.</p> <p>These persons contribute to the schools' resources in a consistent manner; the relationships and mechanisms are informal.</p>	<p>Schools reach out consistently to the network of individuals and organisations.</p> <p>There are mechanisms in place for community and schools to connect. (Example regular cluster meetings)</p>	<p>A strong network of partnerships exists in the cluster between schools, NFGos, GP members, SMC members and other stakeholders in schools.</p> <p>There are effective systems for planning and communication amongst this network, led and driven by the stakeholders in school.</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

System Leaders in the Cluster				
Parametres	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Stakeholders take on roles of system leaders	School leaders and others in the community work towards the improvement of their own schools exclusively.	<p>Select stakeholders group/s across schools, who are motivated and ready to take on leadership roles and work for school improvement, volunteer for specific projects from time to time.</p> <p>This may not be a stable group of people who volunteer for taking on responsibility.</p> <p>Additionally participation is limited to taking on responsibility for that particular project.</p>	Stable group/s of critical stakeholders comprising of CRP, HTs, teachers and some active SMC members and other community members work towards improvement of the cluster.	<p>Stable group/s of critical stakeholders comprising of CRP, HTs, teachers and some active SMC members and other community members, work towards the improvement of the cluster on an on-going basis.</p> <p>The group consists of representatives from all schools and all types of stakeholders.</p>
Systems & Structures supporting system leaders	There are no structures or systems to foster any leadership beyond school	<p>There are rudimentary stuctures like a committee in place to enable the above.</p> <p>Processes such as meeting times vaary according to need;</p> <p>Participation and discussion may not be consistent and may need external motivation and support.</p>	Structures and participation enabling these proceses are reasonably stable.	<p>Smoothly operating systems and structures for these system leaders to plan, meet and work together.</p> <p>There are mechanisms for ensuring adequate membership and induction into the groups.</p>
Shared Vision	No vision on a cluster-level.	Select stakeholders who take on resposnsibilty have some rudimentary idea of the cluster as a distributed school	<p>There is a widely disemminated understanding of the cluster as distributed school amongst the system leaders.</p> <p>They make efforts to share this vision with other concerned stakeholders in the cluster.</p>	<p>There is a clearly understood and disseminated vision of the cluster as a distributed school amongst all concerned stakeholders.</p> <p>The CRP and teachers across all schools share and own the vision. There is a clear understanding of what it takes for the cluster to function as a distributed school and the benefits from it.</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

System Leaders in the Cluster				
Parametres	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
CRP's role	CRP's role is limited to administrative duties with no active contribution to the vision	<p>CRP has a rudimentary understanding of this vision.</p> <p>Has no felt appreciation of the benefits and possibilities.</p>	<p>CRP has a good understanding and conviction in the vision of the cluster as a distributed school.</p> <p>Works towards making this vision a reality.</p> <p>Supports and encourages stakeholders across schools to take on system leadership roles.</p>	<p>CRP understands and owns this vision.</p> <p>Works closely with system leaders to make this vision a reality.</p> <p>Makes every effort to onboard other stakeholders.</p>
Resource Mobilisation	Resources are mobilised as per need by individual schools.	System leaders mobilise resources for the projects that they are working on.	<p>Resource needs are aggregated across schools.</p> <p>System leaders are able to mobilise resources from the community quite consistently.</p>	<p>Resource needs are aggregated across schools consistently.</p> <p>System leaders are able to mobilise more than 75% of the resources required for cluster improvement from community and NGOs.</p>
Planning	No plans for cluster development	<p>Rudimentary or basic targets and plans for cluster improvement are created by system leaders; these may be a collection of projects. May or may not be based on data.</p> <p>They are shared with other stakeholders in the cluster..</p>	<p>System leaders develop plans for cluster improvement; these plans are more holistic and coherent and based on some data and evidence ;</p> <p>They find ways to involve other stakeholders in the process but this process may not be streamlined; monitoring of progress is ad-hoc.</p>	<p>System leaders collaboratively develop a cluster improvement agenda and specific improvement goals are set. Plans are based on data and evidence.</p> <p>There are specific mechanisms for involving stakeholders across schools in the planning process. There is also a plan for monitoring progress.</p>
Data collection & Decision Making	Data mandated by the system is captured individually by each school and submitted to the required authorities. No consolidation of data takes place at the cluster level.	Some data relevant to the cluster as a distributed school is captured sporadically on an as needed basis. Stakeholders have a rudimentary understanding of how to interpret the data and use it for decision making.	There is a process for capturing and collecting data across schools; The process has to be driven by individual stakeholders and is not automatic. Data is used to make decisions for the schools in the cluster	There are streamlined processes for systematic capturing and collection of data from schools across the cluster which are owned by the stakeholders. There is a system for consolidating data at the cluster level. Schools undertake the responsibility to capture and collect the data. Decision making is data driven on the basis of clearly established norms.

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

System Leaders in the Cluster				
Parametres	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Structures for communication between schools	No communication	Informal communication takes place between select system leaders at their own initiative.	There are some formal structures for communication between schools - like whatsapp groups; newsletter. System leaders, teachers, Head teachers all communicate regularly to understand the happenings in the cluster.	Systems and processes for Communication across schools are established and streamlined. The schools are able to work as one unit
Documentation	The mandated documents are maintained at individual school level only.	Documentation is adhoc and rudimentary and sporadic . It is the responsibility of external people like - intervention partner, NGOs working in the cluster. Limited to MoMs of meetings; details of planned projects etc.	There a some documentation processes in place. A few critical stakeholders take some responsibility for some processes but not for all; It is in place for basic things like Mom, details of projects.	Streamlined processes for documentation exist. Cluster stakeholders have ownership of the process; It is updated and people see the value in it. Documents like processes and norms for decision making and functioning of the cluster, MOM, Project reports, Annual Newsletters etc. are in place.

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Teachers as Leaders				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Teacher Participation & Voice at Cluster level	<p>Teachers primarily limit their involvement and responsibility to their classrooms and respective schools.</p> <p>A few teachers volunteer and participate in events and activities beyond their classrooms but within their own schools.</p>	<p>A few teachers volunteer for cluster level projects; extended involvement is on a project to project basis;</p> <p>The leadership and initiative is external (intervention partner; CRP, HTs);</p> <p>These select teachers attend cluster level meetings/events when held, but are not active participants;</p> <p>A few select dominant stakeholders take centre stage during such events.</p>	<p>A large number of teachers' involvement in schools extends beyond the boundaries of their classrooms;</p> <p>There is significant representation of teachers in the system leaders group.</p> <p>These teachers are regular and active participants in cluster level meetings; they volunteer for cluster level projects.</p> <p>Meetings are no longer dominated by a few stakeholders.</p>	<p>Teachers involvement in schools extends much beyond the boundaries of their classrooms;</p> <p>There is a high representation of teachers in the system leaders group.</p> <p>Teachers are regular and active participants in cluster level meetings; they volunteer readily for cluster level projects.</p> <p>They realise that their responsibility is not limited to their individual school. Teachers in the cluster proactively undertake joint school development projects</p>
Teacher Participation & Voice at School level	<p>Teachers take on additional responsibility beyond classroom when they are asked</p>	<p>Teachers volunteer for roles beyond the classroom within their own schools on an adhoc or periodic (irregular) basis.</p> <p>They do not participate in making any decisions for the school.</p>	<p>Teachers volunteer for roles within school actively and regularly.</p> <p>Teachers are involved in the decision making process for the school level activities/events</p>	<p>Teachers actively take initiatives within their schools; they are focussed on student learning;</p> <p>They actively participate in decision making at school level; they have a voice in decision making</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Teachers as Leaders				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Collaboration amongst teachers	<p>Teachers come together only when summoned for a cluster meeting by the CRP;</p> <p>Cluster meetings are not very regular and focus primarily on exchange of information and data gathering.</p> <p>All teachers work within their own schools; within schools they may co-operate or work on joint projects on an adhoc basis</p>	<p>CAMs are held regularly; they are well attended.</p> <p>Content is focussed on classroom issues. Some discussions amongst teachers takes place during these CAM meetings.</p> <p>Select teachers also volunteer and collaborate for cluster level projects.</p>	<p>Groups of teachers from across schools, meet periodically to share classroom challenges and do joint problem solving on a cluster level.</p> <p>The CRP and HTs encourage and support these groups.</p> <p>The content of the meetings is focussed on classroom challenges, student learning and teaching learning issues.</p>	<p>Groups of teachers self motivated and self regulated meet periodically to share and learn from each other.</p> <p>There are set structures to ensure these meetings are being conducted and facilitated well.</p> <p>The content of the meeting is focussed on classroom challenges, student learning and teaching learning issues.</p> <p>Certain cluster wide decisions are made and implemented by these groups of teachers on an on-going basis; example - the academic calendar, academics resource planning for joint cluster events</p>
Communication between teachers	<p>Teahers work in an isolated manner within the bounds of their own school;</p> <p>Interaction with other teachers is limited to CAM meetings or any other official events.</p> <p>There is little or no communication between teachers across schools.</p>	<p>Teachers across schools communicate with each other on an as needed basis for particular projects .</p>	<p>There are structures for communication between teachers like whatsapp and email groups;</p> <p>Teachers are aware of them but do not necessarily use them.</p>	<p>Teachers are well connected across schools;</p> <p>They have established structures for communication which are vibrant and actively used.</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Teachers as Leaders				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Systems & Structures for collaboration	<p>There are no structures for collaboration across schools amongst teachers except for the CAM meetings which mandatorily brings teachers together;</p> <p>Meetings may not be regular or focussed on academic issues; they most probably focus on exchange of information and data and administrative matters.</p>	<p>The CAM is held regularly. It also includes some discussions on academic matters . It is attended by 75% of teachers.</p> <p>Besides CAM, certain structures for teachers collaborating and working together are in place (committees, meeting times & venues) but they are rudimentary.</p> <p>Membership of committees is limited and not representative of all schools ; it is not stable ; meetings are not always regular or well attended; can be erratic. No fixed and agreed norms for interaction.</p>	<p>There are structures in place for teachers to be able to work together, create joint goals and timelines and plan for achieving them.</p> <p>Mechanisms like fixed meeting times, places, designated representatives of each school. Norms for interaction are fixed. PLCs are in nascent stage</p>	<p>Sound structures for collaboration (like PLCs) exist across schools in the cluster. For example there are groups of teachers who are part of a stable group that meets periodically;</p> <p>Time is set aside for this ; it is respected and adhered to by all members of the group;</p> <p>The discussions are focussed and productive; teachers share their problems and jointly come up with solutions in these meetings.</p>
Connection & Involvement with the Community	<p>Teachers do not reach out to the community beyond the mandated structures like the parent teacher meetings and SMC meetings;</p> <p>They have little or no contact with the larger community beyond parents.</p>	<p>Teachers reach out and involve community in a limited manner for adhoc support.</p> <p>They have some understanding of the community it's challenges and aspirations;</p> <p>They participate in select community events.</p>	<p>Teachers reach out to parents and members of the community periodically for joint projects;</p> <p>They work towards building relationships with the community.</p>	<p>Teachers in the cluster seek and regularly involve parents and other members in the community for joint projects; They have structures in place for parent and community communication</p> <p>They work towards building productive strong school and community partnerships; they have relationshipp of trust with members of the community.</p> <p>They have a deep understading of the community and their culture and assets.</p>

Annexure 1 - Cluster Assessment Framework

Teachers as Leaders				
Parameters	Lacking	Emerging	Proficient	Mature
Teachers Attitude to Professional Development	<p>Teachers participate in the mandated training and workshops;</p> <p>Some may display a resistance to change and to learning;</p> <p>They do not seek out professional development opportunities of their own volition.</p>	<p>Teachers begin to see the value of learning through participation in projects, workshops and discussions during CAM meetings;</p> <p>They articulate some of their challenges and associated professional development needs; they participate in peer forums (arranged at the behest of external persons like intervention partner, CRP)</p>	<p>Teachers in the cluster are able to articulate their professional learning needs;</p> <p>They take the initiative to arrange forums for sharing and learning amongst teachers across schools.</p>	<p>Teachers in the cluster place a high priority on their own professional development; they seek out opportunities and participate in professional learning opportunities;</p> <p>They recognise the potential to learn from each other and participate in peer learning forums such as PLCs</p> <p>They are open to giving and receiving feedback and act on the feedback ; they are able to reflect on their own practice and implement learning from peer consultations and discussions.</p>

Project for Active Cluster Engagement

