Zero Investment Innovations for Education Initiatives (ZIIEI)

A Platform for the Teachers, by the Teachers, to Improve the Quality and Reach of Education in India

Activity Report, 2015-17

This document provides details of ZIIEI Program in Uttar Pradesh and other states, including its objectives, implementation strategy, current status, and short and long term impacts.

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To know is good,
to live is better,
to be, that is perfect.

Sri Aurobindo Society’s motto given by the Mother
Executive Summary

ZIIEI is one of the first and largest-ever initiatives of India, and arguably of the world, that will annually facilitate wide-scale, systematic implementation of grass root innovations in Education, that can improve existing systems and processes at zero or minimal cost.

It is part of Sri Aurobindo Society's larger country-wide education transformation program, called Rupantar. With support and encouragement of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), ZIIEI is currently being implemented across 10 states and 2 union territories.

With HDFC Bank as the principal sponsor of ZIIEI in Uttar Pradesh (UP), it has been implemented across all its 75 districts of the state. As part of the program, 1,000 top level and 9,000 block and cluster level officers have been trained. A record number of 5.5 lakh teachers were oriented to come up with solution-focused zero-investment ideas and systematically document the ideas. Over 3 lakh teachers responded, of these 30 most effective entries were shortlisted and were compiled into 11 replicable case. The ZIIEI Navachar Pustika comprising these case studies was provided to 1.75 lakh schools through distribution drives and face-to-face training of 1 lakh principals.

As a result, more than 75,000 (42%) schools of the state today are implementing one or more ZIIEI innovations. Estimates show that in less than 3 years (by 2019) every school in the state will have implemented zero investment ideas to improve the quality of education.

The success and positive impact of ZIIEI in the State of Uttar Pradesh has set an example. The Central and State Governments have endorsed the project for its success. Not only this, the President of India has himself appreciated the program.

Development impacts expected from ZIIEI, in line with Central and State Government programs:

- Improve learning outcomes and decrease learning gaps.
- Enhance focus on girl education.
- Inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools.
- Creation of enquiry-led self-learning environment.
- Increase involvement of parents in their child's education.
- Improve student enrolment and reduce drop-outs rate.
- Inculcate the deeper human values in teaching and learning.
Uttar Pradesh is considered as the fifth largest country of the world by its population. More than 70 percent of its population is rural.

The Education Department of Uttar Pradesh is arguably the world’s largest education department by the sheer number of students it caters, i.e. over 2 cores children in 1.7 lakh schools.

ZIIEI Achievements:

• 10,000 education officers geared up for state wide education transformation.
• 1 lakh principals trained on leadership and innovation.
• 5.5 lakh teachers oriented to ‘zero investment innovation’ as a concept.
• 3 lakh teachers submitted ideas to improve the quality of education.
• 1.75 lakh schools being brought under the new inspection management system.
• 75,000 schools implementing zero-investment innovations in 2017.

• Improve motivation levels among teachers.
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1. CONTEXT

Working for over 55 years to transform Education, Sri Aurobindo Society (www.aurosociety.org) has identified that one of the most game-changing components in India’s Education system has been seriously ignored by the policymakers until now—it’s the **Zero Investment Innovations** at grassroots.

A school in the most interior village of Uttar Pradesh (UP) has probably painted its walls creatively to teach Hindi **varnamala** to its pupils, while another in a city slum might be teaching English alphabets using a game like Tambola, or yet another is helping students master phonics through film songs. Experiments are being done all over the country and most of these require no monetary investment at all! In true sense, these are “renovations” rather than innovations, as they leverage the existing resources to create a novel solution for improving systems and processes.

But who knows about such scattered, isolated and unorganised innovations? Who else can benefit? At a recent International Workshop by OECD CERI1 NGO Pratham highlighted that the main role of the government is to search for the most promising innovations throughout the education system and scale them up if India is to achieve inclusive growth. But despite the urgency, we hardly have any strategic policies in place which facilitate selection and standardisation of best practices.

In a state like UP, which is India’s most populous state with nearly 70 percent population in rural areas, there are more than 6,00,000 teachers for imparting Basic and Secondary Education. Even if 0.5 percent of these have successfully implemented ideas to improve education in their schools, that makes 3,000 relevant innovations to consider for standardisation!

Customarily India has looked to developed countries for their best practices and has tried to adapt them to local context. Often with every change of administration, parallel systems and processes are introduced. This adds more complexity to an already crumbling education system, consumes huge amount of the education budget and taxpayers and donors’ money. It is pitiable that we continue to ignore the goldmine of ideas we have and are not already using them to harness the existing systems and resources.

2. SOLUTION

Our program, Zero-Investment Improvements in Education Initiatives (ZIIEI), breaks ground and addresses the development challenges in the following ways:

a) **It empowers the government school teachers and principals with an inclusive innovation platform, that is also an open forum to share and leverage ideas — an opportunity rarely available to these educators.**

   The first step in transforming education is to start at the very roots — the educators. ZIIEI is first orienting all the teachers of the state to innovation as a concept, its need in education today, and how their individual efforts can make a change.

b) **It facilitates systematic, widespread adoption of zero-investment innovations.**

   Every year, the most effective best practices shared by teachers are implemented in thousands of schools across the state. The effort is led by teachers and principals themselves. In 2017, more than 75,000 schools are implementing ZIIEI ideas, and estimates are that within the next 3 years, every school in the state will see some degree of innovation.

c) **Its innovations contribute to development impacts specifically identified in line with the goals of the strategic Central and State-run programs, i.e.:**

   - Improved education delivery in classrooms.
   - Increased number of children reading at grade-appropriate level.
   - More supportive learning environment for girls and also children with special needs.
   - Increased interest, involvement and ownership of teachers in improving education quality.
   - Stronger collaboration between the educators, the government, non-profits and the corporates.
   - Greater involvement and support of parents and the community in improving education.
   - Increased pride of teacher’s in their profession.

d) **It empowers the education officers and state administration with the knowledge and skills to drive state-wide education transformation.**

   Although its a program driven by teachers, it is being ensured that every rung of the government/administrative ladder understands the importance of this program and is actively supporting the teachers in making this initiative a success. It includes District Inspectors of Schools (DIOSs), Join Directors (JDs), Basic Shiksha Adhikaris (BSAs), Basic Education Officers (BEOs) as well as Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Nyay Panchayat Resource Centres (NPRCs).
3. LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

• Improvement for the Rural Population
  A 21-crore population state, UP has more than 15 crores (70%) people living in rural areas. ZIIEI, with its focus on ‘zero-investment’ and inclusive approach, can help the State solve some of the toughest challenges towards making education more effective and meaningful—despite the financial constraints, low parental education, inadequate quality of schools, geographical inaccessibility, irrelevance of the curriculum to the local conditions and insufficient awareness and motivation. The State will also see improvements in critical areas including reduced drop-out rate, more inclusive education environment, IT-enabled services, and better implementation of government programs such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Girl Child Education, support for CWSN and Digital India.

• Restore trust in the state-run schools
  A stark reality is that despite financial limitations, more and more rural families are choosing to send their children to private schools as they have lost faith in government schools due to the continuously deteriorating quality of education (even though government schools are more affordable and accessible). In the long term, ZIIEI will help improve this situation by bringing about a renewed energy and zeal among the educators to make a difference.

• Overall Social Development
  By involving the government, nonprofits, and corporate players on one hand, and the parents and the community on the other, ZIIEI will help tackle the socioeconomic divide in a more inclusive manner. ZIIEI ideas will impact even factors such as value-system of the youth, parental education, condition of out-of-school children, and community hygiene.

• Innovation Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for the Whole Country
  The work at CoEs to be set up in Varanasi and Lucknow will lead to the development of a new and innovative curriculum for the entire country, as educators and experts from all states will be involved alongside international agencies to find innovative ways to leverage existing resources within the education system and bring about a transformation.

Innovations in classroom delivery, values, administrative processes, infrastructure, parents and community outreach, leadership and technology
4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

4.1 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH PLAN

ZIIEI is the only development program of its kind to strategically enrol and engage all the key stakeholders in the implementation process.

Since it’s a program driven by the teachers, it has been made sure that every rung of the government/administrative ladder understands the importance of this program and is actively supporting the teachers in making this initiative a success.

Towards this, much before the teacher orientation program, a series of extensive trainings and orientation sessions were first organised from October 2015 to January 2016 for 250 top education officers, 500 administration staff, and 2,000 school leaders and principals. Alongside, a one-day pilot workshop was conducted with 13,000 teachers to assess their acceptance and response to ZIIEI program.

As a result, the entire program was finally developed with the suggestions and feedback of all the key government officials and teachers. And when the teachers’ orientation began in January 18, 2016, we could reach out to nearly 6,000 teachers and principals every day!
4.2 ZIIEI ANNUAL WORKFLOW

Every year, ZIIEI facilitates search and wide scale implementation of the most effective zero-investment best practices in education using the workflow shown below:

4.3 QUALITY CHECKS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Every step of the ZIIEI process leads to a specific measurable result, and facilitates not only a feedback process but also a feed-forward process. That is, the feedback received from experts during primary evaluation and shortlisting of ideas, feedback from schools adopting a new idea, feedback from innovators on implementation process, documentation and evaluation, feedback from schools on the outcomes of an idea, creation on impact scorecards…are all converted into realistic insights, actionable items and tangible results at every step. In this way, the program is closely and frequently evaluated vis-a-vis its intended impact or goals.

Measuring the Impact of Ideas vis-a-vis its Goals

First level: At the beginning of the ZIIEI annual cycle, all the ideas submitted will be assessed for quality on the following criteria:

1. Improvement of outdated or inefficient structures and processes
2. Utilisation of existing resources within the school or community
3. Requirement of zero or minimal monetary investments
4. Time since the idea is in use
5. Proof of concept, or proof of idea implementation
6. Number of stakeholders involved
7. How the idea contributes to one or more of the 7 development impacts stated above.

**Second level:** After a test run of two months, schools will review the outcomes of the implemented innovation(s). Based on this data, 4 comprehensive reports will be generated:

- **Innovation Scorecard:** Showing, for each innovation, number of schools who have chosen to adopt that idea, education gaps addressed, and the qualitative and quantitative outcomes achieved as reported by the schools.
- **School Scorecard:** Showing number of ideas successfully implemented by each participating school, the education gaps addressed, and the impact created for its own students, the adjoining community, for other schools.
- **District Scorecard:** Showing district-wise participation level, “Innovation Quotient” of every district, success rate of all the 25 innovative ideas implemented across the district by various schools, and short and long-term impact created across the district.
- **State Scorecard:** An annual scorecard showing the overall level of Innovation within the state and their short and long-term outcomes vis-a-vis the vision and goal of the program.

**Third level:** The ZIIEI team and the concerned state authorities will be able to access the customised reports based on ZIIEI data, such as:

- Recognition and rewards felicitated to innovators and schools annual, based on their participation and innovation success level
- Number of innovations implemented specifically for improving learning outcomes
- Percentage increase in a participating school’s overall annual academic result
- Number of innovations implemented specifically for involving parents and local community
- Improvement in school and district level Innovation Scorecards year-on-year

**Tracking and Reporting**

The evaluation and assessment will be highly transparent as all data will be fed into the online IMS system, and administrators and policymakers will be able to access it online any time, anywhere. *(Details of IMS are provided in the following sections of this document.)*
5. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND STATUS, AS OF FEB 2017

5.1 PRE LAUNCH GROUND WORK

5.1.1 Data Compilation
In October 2015, the very first step to implementation was to compile the data of teachers in 1.7 lakh Basic and Secondary Education schools in Uttar Pradesh. ZIIEI being a large scale project, it was important to ensure that it has sound logistical planning as well as smoothly coordinated resources across all the 75 districts of the state — a huge and complex state considered as the fifth largest country of the world by its population.

5.1.2 Program Design with Education Officers
In the same month, a workshop was organised in Lucknow for the District Inspectors of Schools (DIOS) of Secondary Education. This was to introduce ZIIEI and its goals, and gain initial feedback and suggestions from these officers who were going to be the key drivers at the grass roots in their respective districts.

In November 2015, we reached out to the Joint Directors (JDs). A level above DIOS in hierarchy, the JDs are division heads looking after three to four districts each. ZIIEI program heads visited each of the JDs in their offices for one-to-one meetings and briefed them about the state-wide transformation possible through this initiative. With the support of JDs, an improved plan was presented again to all the DIOS for their further inputs. The meeting was also attended by the State Minister of Education. Thus, ZIIEI development impacts, logistics and roles and responsibilities were finalised with full support and engagement of all the key officials right from design stage.

5.1.3 Orientation of Education Administration Staff
During November-January, we oriented more than 500 administrative staff members across the Basic and Secondary Education departments. This was made possible through a series of presentations during their departmental meetings held in Lucknow, in presence of the higher officials. Here, the staff was explained the entire ZIIEI implementation process, given clarity of their roles and responsibilities and provided answers to their queries.
5.1.4 Pilot with Teachers and Principals
Alongside, to assess the teachers’ interest and acceptance for ZIIEI, we conducted one-day workshop for 15,000 teachers. They were introduced to ZIIEI and encouraged to collectively create innovative ideas to improve existing systems and processes at zero cost. In addition, principals had modules on leadership and management. These pilot workshops were integrated into the three and five-day trainings organised for in-service teachers and principals of UP Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (UPMSA) (which were to help teachers discover individual strengths and develop effective teaching techniques to make education a constrictive process based on deeper human values).

Two key outcomes of this exercise were:

1. Understanding that ZIIEI’s successful execution and making it a permanent part of the state education system requires passionate participation of the decision makers and the administrative staff of the State Government. Therefore, a new training program ‘Leadership by Consciousness’ was created for the top officials of Secondary and Basic Education Departments to ensure that are more connected with program and appreciate the teachers.

2. Realisation that mere sensitisation of educators to the ZIIEI participation process is not enough to create a sustainable ecosystem of innovations in education. Hence, as a modification to the earlier plan of distributing handbooks and connecting with educators via mobile SMS and other social media, now one-day sessions were planned for all teachers to orient them to zero-investment innovation as a concept, its impact and advantages, and how each one of them can bring about a change through their individual efforts.

5.1.5 ‘Leadership by Consciousness’ Trainings for Education Officers
This training program was created with the objective of inspiring officials to embrace zero-investment innovation, empower them with the right program management techniques, and motivate them to ‘lead the change from within’. ‘Leadership by Consciousness’ is the most evolved form of leadership in the 21st century, where leaders focus on individual excellence and are willing to transform themselves, cultivate self-awareness and compassion, and lead social change as role models for all education stakeholder.
The first phase of trainings for the key officials of UP Secondary Education Department was held in December 2015, which was attended by the joint directors (JDs) and district inspectors of schools (DIOSs), along with Shri Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma, Secretary to Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, and Shri C.P. Tripathi, State Project Director (SPD), UPMSA.

Phase two was held in January 2016 for key officials of the Primary Education Department, and was attended by the Basic Shiksha Adhikaris (BSAs) and the Additional Directors (ADs), along with Shri Ashish Goel-Secretary Primary Education, Shri Sarvendra Vikram Singh-Director SCERT, and Shri DB Sharma-Director Primary Education.

The intensive residential program was conducted in batches of about 40 participants, where each batch attended three days of power-packed sessions on leadership and innovation, comprising hands-on activities, group discussions, mindfulness sessions, knowledge sharing, team building exercises, as well as yoga, meditation and trekking.
The outcomes of this one-of-a-kind initiative can be summarised as follows:

- Not only the State Chief Minister’s secretary, Shri Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma, attended the training, the CM himself gave a clear message on the importance of this program and of ZIIEI in several newspapers.

- With the participation of State Project Director of Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan, ZIIEI was further aligned to the education goals of the central government.

- With 100 percent attendance of officers, their keenness to be part of ZIIEI, and acceptance and readiness was clear.

- Key administrative officers were also invited to these trainings and aligned for ensuring backend support.

- The entire flow of the ZIIEI program further was refined through collective inputs from the officials.

While sharing feedback, one of the officials, Shri Jeevendra Singh Airy, Assistant Director, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan, Lucknow, said, “In one word, this training was ‘remarkable’. It is certainly going to benefit our students, society, our co-officers in the education department, and whoever comes in contact with us. What was most influential for me were the sessions on how we can bring our individual deeper human values into action in everyday work for the progress of the whole Education Innovation ecosystem.”

Shri Hifzur Rehman, DIOS, Badha, said, “Out of all the Education-related trainings we have attended, this one has been the most unique and relevant. As Education officers, we have always felt the need to know how we can make the most of the resources and make this huge system work right down to the bottom most level, for the benefit of the teachers, principals and the students. And this we have gained through this training in a very relevant and interesting manner. There’s renewed energy in us and its meaningful results will be evident in our work.”
5.2 RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF TRAINERS

Starting November 2015, a team of trainers was recruited for the teacher orientation centres which were to be launched in 2016. Since 70 percent of the teachers we needed to reach were in rural areas, our trainers were hired locally, district wise, so they could connect with the teachers in their local language, were familiar with the regional issues, and many had even studied in the same schools.

They were geared up to conduct the orientation sessions through a three-day residential training in Delhi-NCR. The focus was on ensuring that they themselves feel passionately engaged in the education transformation process, and are able to explain the entire ZIIEI program to the teachers and encourage them to participate.

5.3 PROGRAM COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT

Once the program design was finalised in November 2015, extensive communication material was prepared for various stakeholder and for various mediums, including:

- **Teacher Orientation Presentation Banners**
  With most of our centres in rural areas, technology-aided content was not a possibility. Hence, the presentation developed for the orientation sessions was printed on flex banners and provided to each trainer as a training aid. The focus of this banners was on ensuring that teachers understand the significance of zero-investment innovation and the power of their individual efforts, as well as know that ZIIEI is a simple yet promising way to see their ideas come alive on large scale.
• **Program Guidelines Booklet**
  The booklet is handed over to every teacher across the state, and explains not just the participation guidelines and idea selection process, but also the reward and recognition due for the most innovative teachers, principals and schools. It also contains the registration and idea submission forms.

• **Mobile SMS Campaign**
  A weekly SMS campaign was used to reach out individual teachers and stakeholders and to motivate them to get associated with ZIIIEI. This campaign was of a great help in terms of sending information regarding the program and make the mission a success. This campaign has also helped ZIIIEI team in getting the feedbacks and taking the follow ups of the teachers involved.

• **Bi-lingual Portal with Offline and Online Components**
  The users have the flexibility to engage in the program online, or offline via hard copy forms, SMS or call centre. The offline registrations and idea submissions by teachers, as well as the innovation assessment by schools, is digitised by our team of data entry operators.

• **Quick Reference Pamphlets and Fliers**
  Understanding the limitation of time with government administration staff, pamphlets and fliers were designed to ensure that all the key information is available to these officials at a glance.
5.4 ZIIIEI CALL CENTER

Ensuring smooth adoption of the program by teachers is of high priority. Even after the orientation sessions at block level and distribution of guidelines booklets, in case they have any queries about the program participation process, a call centre has been set up where they can call during office timings and get further guidance. The call centre numbers are printed on both front and back cover of the guidelines booklet, which is available to all teachers.

5.5 INSPECTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

ZIIIEI innovation impact analyses requires 4 scorecards showing the success rate of each implemented innovation, and the impact of all innovations at school level, district level and state level. The data to create these score cards is collected from across the state using Inspection Management System (IMS).

This IT-enabled solution has been integrated in the mandatory school inspection carried out by the state government at regular intervals. In April 2016, more than 600 BEOs were trained to use IMS for school inspections and enter the date into IMS web-based application. This has helped ensured high user adoption and every month, inspection reports of nearly 5 thousand schools are being made available by BEOs. As of Dec 2016, nearly 35,000 schools’ data has been updated.

Mobile SMS updates of inspection reports are sent to the key government officials, who can access IMS and generate meaningful reports on the factors affecting the development impact areas.
5.6 TEACHER ORIENTATION

5.6.1 Trial Run of Orientation Session
On January 18, 2016, a trial run of the teacher orientation was started with Secondary Education teachers. By February 14, we were able to reach out to 20,000 teachers and received an overwhelmingly positive response. Surprisingly, most teachers were eager to share ideas and thousands submitted them as hand written notes on blank papers with their contact details.

5.6.2 Distribution of Guidelines Booklets
In last week of January, we also provided 3,000 guideline booklets per district for basic education schools, i.e. ensuring that at least one booklet reached every basic education school. This was to ensure some preliminary awareness of the program among teachers, and was logistically made possible through a distribution drive by the Basic Shiksha Adhikaris (BSAs).

5.6.3 Final Program Launch in February
The sessions commenced in full swing in 75 block-level centres across the state of Uttar Pradesh. The sessions are three-hours long and are conducted in two batches every day.

The main objectives and highlights are:
- Teachers understand that zero-investment innovation in education is the need of the hour, and how each one of them can improve the quality of education through their individual efforts.
- Acknowledgement and appreciation for teachers’ concerns for the current status of education in Uttar Pradesh, and explain how ZIIEI platform can finally bring their thoughts into action.
- **Open forum** where we bring teachers to the dais and enable them to speak out their constructive, positive ideas.
- **Presence of Education Officers**, such as the local Additional Director, BSA, Additional BSA, or Basic Education Officer (BEO) at the sessions. The teachers are formally introduced to the
officers to enable better coordination among them, and the officers encourage and recognise teachers to share their ideas during the session.

- **Explanation of the ZIIEI annual workflow** from idea submission to recognition and rewards, guidance for filling the forms, and distribution of the guideline booklets to all participants.

These sessions have made it possible to reach out to an average of 6,000 teachers every day. By June 30, 2016, ZIIEI had oriented 5.5 lakh teachers across 821 blocks in 75 districts. Moreover, 3 lakh teachers submitted their ideas and suggestions, contrary to the perception about government school teachers as being non-participative or uninterested.

### 5.6.4 Seamless Logistics Management

This huge and complex operation was made possible day after day with seamless coordination of the entire machinery prepared pre launch:

- Much before the launch, the Director of Basic Education issued a letter to all BSAs and ADs, informing them of the schedule of the orientation sessions and advising them to line up the resources accordingly.

- For infrastructure support, Block Resource Centres (BRCs) are assigned to us as ZIIEI training centres, with four basic requirements fulfilled—training hall, sitting arrangement, clean drinking water and clean toilets.

- The Block Education Officers (BEOs) ensured that the teachers were informed about their schedule to attend the sessions in their blocks well in advance.

- A WhatsApp group, comprising all the BSAs and ADs, is helping our team in day-to-day coordination to ensure smooth function of the block-wise schedule.

- At the session, all the participants registered their details in a form with us. While some submitted their ideas on the spot, many came back to the training centres after 2-3 days to submit their forms, or they submitted them at the BSA or BEO offices from where our team collected them.

- Every day, after the sessions, our operations team compiled a block-wise report of the number of sessions held, number of attendees in each batch, and number of ideas submitted.

- Once the registration and idea forms reached the main office, the data was entered into the online database.
5.7 SELECTION TO THE COVETED ZIIEI NAVACHAR PUSTIKA (BOOK OF BEST PRACTICES)

5.7.1 Long List of Winning Ideas

The 3 lakh ideas submitted by teachers were converted into an online database by the ZIIEI data entry team. This uphill task gave ZIIEI team a complete detail of the teachers and helped to move further in the process of reviewing ideas, and creating a long list of 80,000 suitable ideas.

Further, the ZIIEI jury, mentored by Director of SCERT, Shri Survendra Vikram Bahadur Singh, further sorted and selected ideas based on their impact, and only 120 entries made it to the next round.

5.7.2 Ideas Exchange Workshop

The 120 selected participants were from different government schools, mostly from rural parts of the state. Their efforts towards implementing innovative ideas were in itself an achievement and there was need to give them a platform to share these ideas with other progressive teachers like them. In July 2017, a 3-day long residential ‘Ideas Exchange Workshop’ was organised for the selected 120 teachers, of which 103 participants could attended.

Workshop objectives were:

- Discussion on individual success stories of implementing zero investment ideas, along with proofs of implementation.
- Enable the teachers with similar ideas to form groups to club their individual ideas into one ‘big’ innovation.
- Facilitate personality development, build confidence and foster collaboration skills.

Teachers from across the state presenting their ideas with passion and commitment
5.7.3 Selection and Training of the ‘Best of the Best’

The Ideas Exchange Workshop led to selection of 70 top ideas, which were then reviewed along with their proofs of concept and other documents, and finally 47 of these were found to be most impactful and suitable as zero-investment innovations.

The final 47 selected teachers attended another 3-day workshop in August at the Directorate of Education, Lucknow. Here, teachers collaboratively worked to refine their ideas and compile them into replicable case studies.

Based on the similarity of the targeted impact, many of the zero-investment ideas could be clubbed together. For example, five ideas from different parts of the state were using games as the means to teach various subjects, and so could be combined into one case study on “Learning through Games”. This could ensure more ease in customisation and implementation for other interested schools later on.

For this, it was essential for the innovators worked together as a team. Yet, the biggest challenge ZIIIEI team faced was in instilling the idea of collaborative design and its benefits among the innovators. Several ice-breaking games, team-bonding activities, presentation, and group discussion were conducted to ensure that these great minds could work together to create sustainable, scalable case studies by combining their ideas.

All attendees were awarded certificates of appreciation for their participation. And ultimately, 30 teachers emerged as winners as they could collaboratively take their ideas to the next level as 11 high quality case studies for the Navachar Book.

Collaborative design sessions during the workshops for innovators, facilitating intensive ideas exchange.
5.7.4 Compilation of Replicable Case Studies

The 30 final ideas have been converted into 11 solution-focussed case studies, that can be customised and replicated by any school to achieve specific, measurable development impacts.
कला-शिल्प से स्वर्णीय विकास

विशेषता और अनुभव के साथ विकास के लिए ग्राहकों के लिए एक उन्नत मूल्य उत्पादन के लिए उच्च ग्राहकों का संकलन अतिमत में प्रवर्तित किया जा रहा है। इनके लिए कला-शिल्प, कला शिल्प, और कला के लिए सम्मानित है।

- कला का पुनर्नवीनित करना, जैसा कि इंडिया की शिक्षा एवं शिक्षा के माध्यम से दिखाया गया है।

- विभिन्न प्रतिभाओं का उद्धारन करना, जैसा कि शिक्षा का विकास और सुधार करना।

- साहित्यिक निर्माण का समर्पण करना, जैसा कि रचनात्मक कला का विकास और सुधार करना।

- सामाजिक उद्देश्यों का लक्ष्य रखना, जैसा कि शिक्षा का विकास और सुधार करना।

- विशेष रूप से, कला का पुनर्नवीनित करना, जैसा कि इंडिया की शिक्षा एवं शिक्षा के माध्यम से दिखाया गया है।

- इंडिया की शिक्षा एवं शिक्षा के माध्यम से दिखाया गया है।
5.7.5 Release of the ZIIEI Navachar Pustika

The ZIIEI Navachar Pustika was launched on November 20, 2016 by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Akhilesh Yadav, at a grand ceremony held at Lok Bhavan, Lucknow. All 30 winning teachers were present along with their principals/school reps and students. They exhibited their ideas to over 400 VIP attendees, and received shawls of honour, achievement certificates and Samsung tablets.

The Chief Minister applauded their efforts and stressed on the need for programs such as ZIIEI for transformation in education. His keen interest in each of the innovations and appreciation for them has not only motivated the winning teachers to continue their creative efforts but has also encouraged all teachers across the state to participate in ZIIEI.

“Never Before has our effort been admired at such a big level”, is what one of the innovators Shweta Shrivastava admits. “The ZIIEI program has infused new energy into the education system and has motivated not just educators but children and their parents too.”
6. HOW 75,000 SCHOOLS IN UTTAR PRADESH ARE INNOVATING EDUCATION

6.1 CREATION OF DISTRICT COORDINATION COMMITTEE

To ensure that maximum number of schools participate in ZIIEI and implement at least one or more innovations, district-wise coordination committees (DCCs) have been created comprising BEOs, Nyay Panchyat Resource Centre (NPRC) and Additional Block Resource Centre (ABRC) representatives. Their role is to encourage schools, guide them in customising the innovations as per their specific requirements, and finally to support schools in rolling out the innovations smoothly.

Nearly 10,000 BEOs, NPRCs and ABRCs across the state have been given a 1-day training to gear them up for the task. During the training, they are:

- Given clear roles and responsibilities for ensuring high participation from schools in their blocks.
- Educated about each of the 11 case studies published in the Navachar Pustika, and how they can be modified according to a school’s requirement.
- Provided with copies of Navachar Pustika for distribution in every school in their block.

6.2 ORIENTATION OF PRINCIPALS AND HEAD MASTERS

The district coordination committees provide a copy of the Navachar Pustika to every principal or headmaster in their block, and get a signed confirmation receipt from them. If a principal is interested, he/she also mentions in the form which of the 11 case studies they will be implementing in their school.

To back this innovation acceptance drive by the district coordinating committee, ZIIEI team is orienting more than 1 lakh principals to ZIIEI. The 1-day training sessions are a in continuation of the leadership training held for principals during May-July 2016. While earlier the principals were
sensitised about their role as a leader in ensuring better quality education, the second round is aimed at helping them see the short and long-term benefits of each of the 11 case studies. This effort has greatly inspired the participants, and many of them are submitting their requests on-the-spot for implementing ZIIEI ideas in their schools.

6.3 WIDE-SCALE IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS

As of Jan 31, 2016, more than 75,000 government schools (42%) in Uttar Pradesh are implementing one or more ZIIEI innovations. Estimates show that in less than 3 years (by 2019) every school in the state will have implemented zero investment ideas to improve the quality of education.

Many district coordination committees have also started sending the progress reports for every implementation in every school across the district, complete with proofs of implementation and impact.

As a token of appreciation, schools that are implementing ZIIEI innovations are awarded with a certificate signed by the state chief minister.

6.4 CALL CENTRE SUPPORT

To ensure that district coordinating committees and the schools are not stopped by any doubts or pending queries, the ZIIEI call centre is regularly reaching out NPRCs and ABRCs to ensure that the Navachar Pustika is reaching every school in their block, and is also answering queries of principals, headmasters and teachers about ZIIEI process.

Implementation progress reports sent by BEOs, comprising details of ideas being implemented in every school in their block / district
6.5 ACTION RESEARCH OF THE ZIIEI IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

To understand the before-and-after ZIIE status of education quality, our research team has undertaken a deep-dive study of each of the 30 winning innovators. The aim is to find the ongoing impacts of their innovation in their schools, and then setting them as the benchmark to measure the success of their innovations in schools across the state in the coming months. The action research involves both qualitative and quantitative analysis, and its report is expected to be available by March 5, 2017.

A collection of representative case studies compiled as part of this research is available as a separate document.

Letter of Appreciation by IAS Gaurav Dayal, District Magistrate, stating increase in enrolment due to ZIIEI innovations.
7. IMPACT OF ZIIEI, OCT 2015-DEC 2016 (FIVE QUARTERS)

ZIIEI is being widely appreciated as the beginning of a transformation across the education fraternity. It has received accolades from not just UP state, but also from the central government. The program is in tandem with the government programs, including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Swachh Bharat. Positive impacts in issues such as drop-out rates have also already begun to emerge in schools that participating in ZIIEI.

The Hon’ble President of India has himself appreciated the program, describing ZIIEI as a beginning of new era in education.

Development impacts expected from ZIIEI in the near future, in line with Central and State Government programs, are:

- Improve learning outcomes and decrease learning gaps.
- Enhance focus on girl education.
- Inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools.
- Creation of enquiry-led self-learning environment.
- Increase involvement of parents in their child’s education.
- Improve student enrolment and reduce drop-outs rate.
- Inculcate the deeper human values in teaching and learning.
- Improve motivation levels among teachers.

Sri Aurobindo Society sincerely extends its gratitude to HDFC Bank for believing in the program and supporting its remarkable journey in Uttar Pradesh.
7.1 QUANTITATIVE IMPACT — PEOPLE

- **200 top education officers** geared up for the state-wide education transformation, including Secretary to the CM, State Project Director-UPMSA, Secretary-Primary Education, Director-SCERT, Director-Primary Education, SPD-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Special Secretary to the CM.

- **500 administration staff** in basic and secondary education departments oriented to ZIIEI and provided clarity of their roles and responsibilities in the transformation process.

- **5,50,000 teachers** oriented to zero-investment innovation as a concept, and explained how their individual efforts can bring about a change through ZIIEI platform.

- **3,00,000 teachers** converted into active participants and inspired to submit their ideas and suggestions towards improving the quality of education in the state.

- **1,00,000 principals** trained on Leadership and Innovation in education.

- **103 innovative teachers identified** and professionally groomed for delivering better results and motivating others to bring about change.

7.2 QUANTITATIVE IMPACT — RESOURCES

- **30 most impactful best practices** compiled into 11 case studies for wide scale implementation.

- **75,000 schools** in UP implementing zero-investment best practices to achieve specific developmental impacts in their community.

- **10,000 people coordination committee** trained and streamlined to assist schools in customising and implementing zero-investment innovations.

- **2 Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for Innovation** planned in Varanasi and Lucknow. The MoUs for these CoEs have been signed with the State Government.

- **5,50,000 teachers’ authentic data** available to the government through the ZIIEI registration process. Earlier incomplete or outdated, it will now help the government to reach out to teachers for other state run programs also.

- **1,75,000 schools under the new inspection method** using Inspection Management System (IMS), where for the first time authentic data will be available in digitised form.

- **20 centres of the National Centre for School Leadership (NCSL) under NEUPA** started work with ZIIEI team on creating education leadership among principals and education officers.

- **200 dedicated trainers by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT)** on board to conduct trainings in UP DIET centres and in other states for ZIIEI.
7.3 QUALITATIVE IMPACTS — A DEFINITE CHANGE OF WAVE IN THE SYSTEM

- **World’s First Initiative for Wide-Scale Implementation of Grassroot Ideas in Education**
  Beyond search for promising innovations, ZIIEI is establishing an action-oriented system driven by teachers themselves to facilitate wide scale implementation of grassroots ideas.

- **Creation of an Open Source Ecosystem of Education Best Practices**
  For the first time in the State, government school teachers have a platform to co-create and share ideas. Many teachers have already started implementing ideas discussed during the orientation sessions. Moreover, education best practices being developed are available to the whole country and are inspiring other states.

- **Mindset Transformation in Teachers, Onset of a Positive, Constructive Environment**
  There is growing awareness among teachers of the change possible through their individual efforts. Evidently, the teachers are more open towards sharing and recognising innovations in education and they can now appreciation zero-investment ideas. Importantly, there is increasing realisation of their role and a boost in their self esteem through this platform.

- **Gradual Development of New, Innovative Curricula**
  The individual ideas submitted by teachers for improving classroom delivery of various subjects, are all gradually coming together to form new, innovative and a far more effective subject-specific curricula created by the educators themselves. And it can be leveraged by any State education board across the country, not just Uttar Pradesh.

- **Developments in Education In-line with Central and State Government Priorities**
  The development impacts in focus of ZIIEI have been identified carefully in line with the larger strategic programs, such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Digital India. The best practices developed by teachers through ZIIEI are not contributing towards education in a general manner, but in a focussed approach towards fulfilling the goals of these programs.
8. THE WAY FORWARD - UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS IN UTTAR PRADESH

8.1 CREATION OF 150 RUPANTAR SCHOOLS

Based on the leadership demonstrated by principals during the idea implementation process, and the innovation and school scorecards created, 750 principals (10 from each district) will be identified for a second round of more intense and in-depth training on transforming their schools.

During this training, 150 principals with extraordinary leadership potential will be selected to undergo further training, where they will get complete handholding for transforming their schools into Rupantar schools, i.e. role model schools for transformation in education.

For creation of Rupantar schools, ZIIEI team has worked with the State Education Department to create a calendar of non-academic learning activities that can be highly effective in improving the quality of education in government schools. Out of the 200 school working days in an academic year, around 125 days will comprise these learning activities.

In addition, Rupantar schools will be technology enabled with the Education Intelligence System (EIS). EIS is a solution designed as part of ZIIEI to collect micro level data from schools and convert it into intelligent reports for decision making. It will enable the officials to monitor transformation of schools vis-a-vis the input by the school management, teachers and block leaders.
8.2 CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR INNOVATION

- The Colleges of Teachers Education (CTEs) in Varanasi and Lucknow have been assigned by the State Government to Sri Aurobindo Society to be transformed into Centres of Excellence (CoEs) for Zero-Investment Innovations.

- These 10 acres of land will not only get a complete infrastructure upgrade with multimedia training rooms, latest equipment, fixtures and furniture, but will also become the hub for developing and honing innovations in education:
  
  i) Round-the-year continuous training program for teachers to gear them up as 21st century educators with the required techniques and tools to make education more interesting, relevant, inclusive and responsive to learners’ needs. It will be open to all teachers of the state who can attend it by nominating their names in advance.
  
  ii) Facilitation of collaborations with international organisations, such as USAID, Harvard, MIT, Oxford, University of Iowa, and University of Oregon, on refining the entire ZIIEI program (including creation of case studies, research, program management) and to develop the new programs.
  
  iii) Regular conferences and exhibitions to showcase global and local best practices developed by teachers and with the international agencies.
  
  iv) Knowledge sharing platform for all interested teachers to participate and share their subject specific innovations, document them and convert them into implementable case studies.
  
  v) Training for the second rung of ZIIEI innovators (not selected in the final 25 but having the potential) to help them improve the quality of education through their ideas.
9. ZIIEI SPREADING WINGS ACROSS INDIA

Seeing the program’s impact in UP, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is making special efforts to introduce ZIIEI in other states as well. The aim is to roll out the program in 9 more states and 2 union territories in 2017, i.e. Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Delhi and Puducherry.

With this expansion, besides 1.75 lakh schools of UP, zero-investment innovations are going to become a part of another 6 lakh schools!

Additionally, the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NEUPA) has signed an MoU with Sri Aurobindo Society to ensure wider reach and greater effectiveness of the program.
10. ABOUT SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY

Sri Aurobindo Society is an international NGO that is recognised by the Government of India as a Charitable Organisation, a Research Institute and an Institution of Importance Throughout India. It is headquartered in Puducherry. (www.aurosociety.org)

ZIIEI is our latest initiative in Education under the umbrella program Rupantar, where we are working with HDFC Bank and others as funding partners and Litchi Knowledge Centre as our implementation partner to bring about a change across the 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Our experience in Education
For the last 55 years, Sri Aurobindo Society is working with students and teachers in private schools as well as at the grass root level across India to develop innovative strategies for education improvement.

Our spread
Based on deeper values, our programs are bringing about social change and transformation in a wide range of fields, including Education, Women and Youth Empowerment, Health, Development of Children with Special Needs, and Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy. For Integral Rural Development, we are working with several villages in Tamil Nadu to develop a progressive village community model that is sustainable, replicable and scalable.

Our network
We work with various government bodies, edu-preneurs, universities, parents and students, to design effective and sustainable initiatives. With a strong focus on grassroots innovations, in 2012, we launched the Education Innovation Fund for India (EIFI), which awarded US$1M to 18 outstanding education innovators from across the country.

Our approach
- We focus on values, innovation and individual excellence.
- We work with the sensitivity to go beyond the numbers and address real issues.
- We bridge the gap between the micro-level requirements at the grass roots and the overall, macro-level aims of the State.
- We focus on strengthening the existing systems.
- We maximise on the existing local ideas and best practices.
ZIIEI is one of the first and largest-ever initiatives of India, and arguably of the world, to orient teachers to innovation as a concept, and annually facilitate wide-scale, systematic implementation of zero-investment ideas to improve the quality and reach of education.

In 2015, Uttar Pradesh was the first state to start ZIIEI implementation. In 2017, the program is expanding to 9 more states and 2 union territories, and will reach more than 6 lakh schools.