Monthly Updates- May 2025

Quality & Universal Access to Early Childhood Care & Education through Systemic Transformation (QUEST)

Overview

CRISP's Centre for **Quality & Universal Access to Early Childhood Care & Education through Systemic Transformation**, is driven by the belief that every child in India deserves quality pre-primary education, achievable through the transformation and convergence of nutrition and education systems. QUEST ado**pts a low-cost, high-impact approach, and works to empower Anganwadi workers, align curriculum and pedagogy, improve infrastructure, and strengthen governance and community involvement**, bridging the gap between policy and grassroots implementation in 11 partner states. QUEST's aim is to ensure universal access to quality Early Childhood Care & Education for all 3–6-year-old children in India through systemic transformation and strengthened public delivery systems.

Strategy

Creating a strong Early Childhood Education (ECE) foundation requires an integrated approach focused on learning environments, curriculum, capacity building, monitoring, community engagement, and institutional strengthening. A robust **learning environment —with safe, child-friendly spaces, access to infrastructure, and play-based resources**— enhances engagement and school readiness. This must be supported by a well-aligned, age-appropriate curriculum delivered consistently, and empowered Anganwadi workers equipped with the right skills and mindset. Regular monitoring through defined indicators, active community involvement, and coordinated institutional efforts are critical to ensuring high-quality ECE delivery across the system.

Key Pillars

- Capacity Building
- Community Engagement
- Monitoring Indicators
- Robust Learning Environment
- Curriculum Alignment
- Institutional Strengthening

Major Highlights

QUEST Central Office

- The QUEST team finalized version three of the Group Assessments Tool evaluating learning levels among early learners in AWCs. Once finalized this tool will be piloted in Vijayawada in consultation experts in ECE.

- As part of MoU with Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, the CRISP team conducted FGDs and training observations in Andhra Pradesh. This will help the Government in further improving and cascading ECE trainings in the Country.

Telangana State

- The team developed, piloted, and finalized the Baseline Assessment Form for Anganwadis; participated in key departmental meetings and contributed to the drafting of co-location, convergence, and ECE strengthening plans across three delivery models.

Andhra Pradesh State

- The QUEST team supported the Department of Women and Child Development in composing rhymes in Telegu as part of new story and rhymes books in revised curriculum with support from Sodhana Trust.

Meghalaya State

- The Meghalaya team, drafted the cabinet note to set up Meghalaya Early Childhood Development and Education Authority and have received the final approval of the note. The Cabinet Note addresses issues of early childhood care, education, quality of caregivers and quality of institutions providing care and early education services for children by bringing the concerned department together for a convergence.

Challenges Faced

- **Internal Challenge:** Group based evaluations of learning outcomes remains a challenge; and the team is exploring feasibility and refining tools accordingly.

- **External Challenge:** Delayed permissions for data collection in Maharashtra persist; the team is exploring alternate plans while engaging the intern in related desk work and field orientation.

Learnings

- Engaging with the WCD Department in Telangana highlighted the value of prepopulating baseline forms to reduce data collection burden, and emphasized the importance of triangulating data sources (e.g., FGDs, training observations) to capture ground realities more accurately and mitigate biases from power dynamics.

- Discussions with peer organizations underscored a critical gap in large-scale ECE learning evaluations that integrate both classroom environments and individual learning outcomes—identified as a "Missing Middle" needing focused attention.

Photo Gallery

Way Forward

- Going forward, the team will finalize videos list for first phase of Adharshila. The team also plans to pilot the group LO tool and share it across experts for review.

- Initiate **Padhai Bhi Poshan Bhi** Evaluation in Maharashtra and organize trainings for remaining AWWs in Andhra Pradesh Pilot Centres.