CRISP
Deliberate. Design. Deliver.
Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies

Monthly Updates-August 2026

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 (QUEST),** with support from **Gates Foundation** 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 adopts 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.

Project Goal

To enhance the quality of pre-primary education for **14 million** underserved children across 11 states by transforming Anganwadi Centres into vibrant **early learning centres** and ensuring access to quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children under six. This includes the physical and functional co-location of Anganwadi Centres with primary schools **ensure smooth transition** to formal education, and improve learning continuity.

Strategy

Creating a strong ECE foundation requires an integrated approach combining safe, engaging learning environments, an age-appropriate curriculum, skilled Anganwadi workers, regular monitoring, active community involvement, and coordinated institutional support to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery.

Key Pillars

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

Photos





Progress this Month

Central Office

- **MEL and Evidence-Based Programme Development:** Finalised the MEL Plan for QUEST interventions and strengthened the use of field observations, stakeholder consultations, and pilot data to monitor implementation, document learning, refine interventions, and inform course correction and scale-up.

Andhra Pradesh

ACCHA Project

- **District-level implementation and institutionalisation:** Constituted DPMUs across NTR, Bapatla, Guntur, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anantapur and Sri Sathya Sai districts through sustained engagement with Collectors, Project Directors, CDPOs and Supervisors. Created implementation systems by finding training venues and district-level coordination mechanisms established.
- **ECE Leader mobilisation:** Finalised the criteria for selection of ECE Leaders and shared the criteria with the Department. The Department subsequently shared a list of ECE Leaders for review, and the team initiated verification and re-selection against the agreed criteria. ECE Leaders have been identified in two project areas in Vizianagaram, with selection underway in the remaining area.
- **Training module finalisation:** Finalised the ECE Leaders' training module and shared both the English and Telugu versions with the Department for approval. The module was also reviewed with Sodhana Trust, including review of activities, language, QR codes and implementation approach. A workshop was conducted with Sodhana to further review and strengthen the module and align the approach for the upcoming ToT.
- **Content development:** Continued development and dissemination of Aadharshila-based video content. The team created additional AS videos and continued updating the CRISP YouTube channel, with 101 videos updated and two additional videos pending completion/upload.

Learning Outcomes Evaluation

- **LO Tool field piloting and refinement:** Continued field testing of the CRISP Learning Outcomes (LO) Tool across pilot and non-pilot centres to assess the tool's applicability and administration process. The team conducted assessments across 16 AWCs covering 50 children, with additional assessments undertaken in pilot, non-pilot and NATCO centres.
- **LO Tool app development:** Progressed development of the LO Tool application in collaboration with the IT team.

Odisha

- **State-level engagement:** Finalised the Odisha ECE proposal as a basis for engagement with the state government, drawing on preliminary field insights and the broader QUEST approach to strengthening ECE.

Maharashtra

- **State engagement and proposal development:** Continued work towards initiating QUEST's ECCE engagement in Maharashtra, including development/refinement of the state proposal and preparation for high-level engagement with the ICDS Commissioner.





Key Learnings

Working with the existing systems of **governance and departments and enabling them to take ownership of the project is effective for systems strengthening**. This kind of partnership can be sustained through continuous engagement, meetings and stakeholder management.

Way Forward

- Secure **Department approval for the final ECE Leaders' training module** and initiate the Training of Trainers (ToT) with Sodhana and other implementation partners.
- Complete **ECE Leader selection and district-level readiness** across Phase 1 districts and finalise batch-wise training calendars, venues, trainers and participant lists.
- Operationalise **all four DPMUs and strengthen orientation and coordination mechanisms** for DPMU members, CDPOs and other district functionaries.
- Submit the proposal and make a presentation to the Maharashtra and Odisha WCD Department.
- Conduct **teacher's day + VijayaDEEPAM second anniversary** event for community engagement in Vijayawada
- Conduct Vidya Vedikas in the pilot centres.
- Launch the **ACCHA Project in Guntur with the Collector and the Director, DWD&CW**.
- Participate in **Poshan Maas Celebrations** in the 4 full-implementation districts.