A Review of the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI)

By the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative September 2009
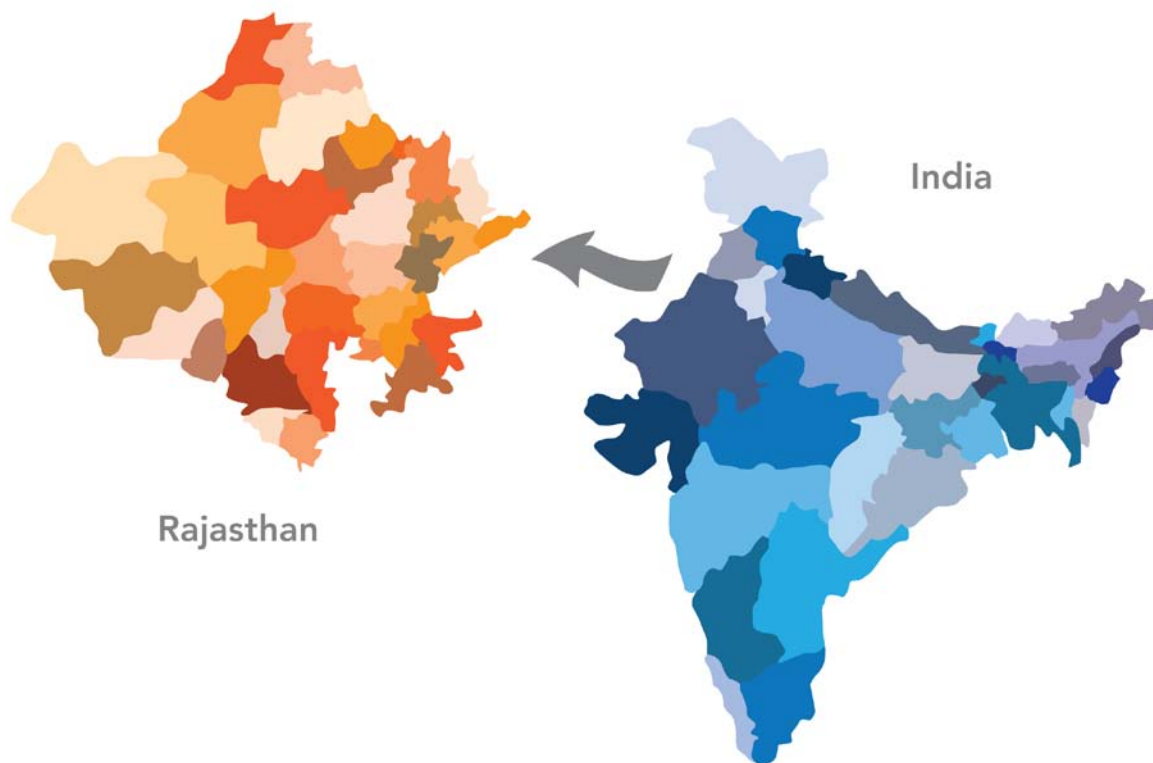
India

Rajasthan

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Acknowledgement

GeSCI would like to acknowledge the gracious contributions of many committed organizations and people to this Review and Assessment process. Of special note are the valuable contributions made by Sh CK Mathew (the then Principal Secy Education), Smt. Shubhra Singh, the dynamic Commissioner RCEE who provided a new dimension to the REI, Mr Alex Wong, Head GEI of the World Economic Forum , Mr Anshul Sonak, Head of Education South Asia Intel, Ms Safeena Hussain, CEO Educate Girls Globally; members of each private sector organization in implementing the project; participating ministries of education and the teachers, students and heads of the participating schools.

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Acronyms

CII – The Confederation of Indian Industry

FEGG – Foundation for Educating Girls Globally

GeSCI – Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative

GOR – Government of Rajasthan

PPP- Public-Private-Partnership

RCEE – Rajasthan Council for Elementary Education

REI – Rajasthan Education Initiative

SSA - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

UEE – Universal Elementary Education

WEF – World Economic Forum

A Special note on this report

Limitations

The REI review report aims to describe the lessons learnt in implementing the Rajasthan Education Initiative in the state of Rajasthan. The report hopes to shed light on the process of managing a complex Public Private Partnership (PPP); the administrative challenges at the state capital, district and school level; training and support requirements for teachers; the provision of curriculum-relevant digital content and learning how best to assess student learning through the implementation of ICT in schools. While the project should still be considered a work-in-progress, this 'public report' is not an end-of-project, summative evaluation. Rather, it is intended as a description of general lessons learned by project stakeholders within a larger community of interest. This report should be read with the following in mind:

- ❖ The observations concern general "lessons learned" rather than an *assessment of impact*;
- ❖ The observations represent a synthesis of the data collected during the Base Line Study, and do not comment on individual partners or specific ICT and Non ICT models;
- ❖ The data collected during the baseline study was both qualitative and quantitative, based on the perceptions of respondents, with actual on-site verification by a team comprising of GoR officials and core partner GeSCI;

Even though the REI has not been fully implemented in all the schools in the state, the report is being released now because of the need for reasonable consistency in data collection and provision of feedback to partners that are ready for the next phase.

This report draws on information and analysis presented in a series of internal reports carried out by GeSCI staff members in consultation with the officers of the Govt of Rajasthan namely, the Officer on Special Duty and the Deputy Director of Education, under the leadership of the Commissioner RCEE. The team worked with each of the respective partners to review the progress against the parameters set in their individual MOUs with the Govt.

The first interim internal report was the Base Paper prepared by GeSCI for the Govt of Rajasthan. The document reviewed partner MOUs, the outreach of the REI programmes and the strategies used by the govt to use the REI as a vehicle to achieve its educational goals. It proposed new partnership areas and models along with institutional and implementation frameworks and guidelines for the REI. Innovative inputs for creating new models also came from co partners who had practical on field experience of working with teachers in the schools of Rajasthan.

The second interim internal report i.e the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was prepared by GeSCI. A Concept Paper was also developed on the M&E process. A Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) Matrix was developed for the REI and its programmes carried out by the co-partners. The LFA proposed a set of indicators for the Initiative as a whole and for the individual programmes of co-partners. It also addressed some post-MOU issues that were emerging with regard to implementation. Both reports are available from the GoR and GeSCI.

Foreword

Ms. Shubhra Singh
Commissioner
Rajasthan Council of Elementary Education
Government of Rajasthan

The REI was founded in September 2005 to play the role of facilitator for PPPs to improve the delivery of educational services and fulfil the goal of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) in Rajasthan.

The initiative was driven by four core partners – GeSCI, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the GoR and the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The REI has helped synergize the resources and opportunities in the government and private sector to improve the access to quality education through ICT and non-ICT interventions. It has assisted children in underserved areas, especially from tribal groups, urban slums, and the girl child. It has helped in community mobilization, pedagogical innovations and e-literacy.

The greatest success of the initiative lies in the fact that the GoR is considering mainstreaming REI under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) as a thematic component of the flagship programme.

I am thankful to GeSCI for all of their support on the REI and also for commissioning this review. I hope that this report will guide us not only in measuring the current status of various initiatives but will also provide insight into future options.

Executive Summary

The REI was launched as a platform for Public Private Partnerships, to bring together different actors and stakeholders from the private and public sector and civil society in support of the educational objectives of the State of Rajasthan. By December 2008 the GoR had signed 26 MoUs with global and local partners bringing a variety of initiatives to the schools of Rajasthan ranging from ICT based learning and teaching methodologies, Health Education, Special Education for girls and Community classes for out-of-school children and others.

This phase of inception, experimentation and trial can be called the First Phase of the REI. The REI, Phase I, was marked by a huge learning curve in managing multiple stakeholders in education and integrating ICTs in schools with community development goals. Traditionally considered an educationally backward state, Rajasthan has had to address some deep rooted issues in providing access to education. This report is a synthesis of the lessons learned from Phase I, based on a series of internal reports provided to the GoR during this phase and the meetings and interviews with the partners and beneficiaries of the REI.

It is important to note that there is no real precedent to the REI. At some point the REI did derive inspiration from the Jordan Education Initiative, but as the REI started to take shape it soon became clear that the REI was pitted differently and the expectations and outcomes would vary considerably.

In terms of its vision, its ambitious plan, the scope of partnerships and international access set against a traditionally anemic education system with more than 90,000 schools, beleaguered with intricate socio-economic challenges, there was no model that the REI could replicate. Its mistakes and its achievements are all its own.

The REI is in many ways an extremely ambitious undertaking. In its attempt to underpin positive outcomes from the new initiatives, it took on too much and became too broad based to be handled by frequently transitioning Govt staff and officials. Early changes at the leadership level resulted in a lack of consistent vision and clear direction. The REI needed a strong PMU and a set of clearly articulated goals, objectives and outcomes at the beginning of the Initiative. The REI objectives were linked to the SSA which is the flagship programme of the Government of India, launched in Rajasthan in the year 2001-02, with the objective of achieving UEE by 2010. But by the time the PMU was set up and project deliverables outlined, several of the main programmes were already half-way to completion. As such, several pilots continued to work on individual deliverables rather than REI deliverables.

The REI was intended to run for three years at which time it would be followed by a programmatic evaluation. However, various projects continued to be added to the REI right through the three year period. As such it became very difficult to create a uniform Baseline Study of the REI. There was also a change of guard at the political level. During the parliamentary elections in India in May 2009 the ruling party which was instrumental in initiating the REI was replaced. Therefore, for a period of more than six months the fate of the REI was uncertain. However, UNICEF and several co-partners are now working with the new ministry on developing Phase II of the initiative. Core partners WEF and GeSCI will continue to provide strategic guidance in Phase II of the REI.

It is difficult by any standard to measure the success of the REI, partly because it was not meant to be evaluated against a set of defined parameters at the end of three years. As said earlier, projects like the REI create an environment for social change and the impact of social change by itself cannot be measured against a set time frame, much less in a period as brief as three years. However, if for the purposes of this report, we must assess its outcome, it would be wrong to say that the REI failed completely, or that it succeeded in all respects. Its most notable outcome is that it became a precursor for attempting the unknown, by creating an open platform to bring world class educational facilities to its schools. Its long term vision of creating an empowered state ready for the Knowledge Economy, and the primary objective of the initiative - to create robust delivery mechanisms which would provide equitable access to education - continue to be of critical importance to the development of not only the state of Rajasthan, but to many other states in India as well.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships between the private sector, civil society, and government can be a catalyst for innovation and new ideas, while providing government with resources to help achieve its national education sector plan. The common REI platform provides an important opportunity to maximize collaboration and synergy between the many partnerships formed.

Alex Wong, Head of the Global Education Initiative (WEF)

The purpose of the review is to inform a subsequent broader rollout of the REI and to position the importance of community development as an integral element to the progress of education in the state. As such, the observations presented in this report are intended to help shape the decision making process of the broad range of stakeholders in the wider REI going forward. They should not be interpreted as direct comment on the success or failure of the REI more generally, nor on the success or failure of the activities of specific stakeholders.

1. Project Background

1.1 REI Vision Statement

The Rajasthan Education Initiative serves as an umbrella under which innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships are catalyzed by engaging the global and local private sector, foundations and charitable organizations and other grass root level NGOs in support of Rajasthan's education objectives.

The main education objectives identified for Rajasthan by its Government are:

- ❖ Access – 100% enrollment in primary education by 2010, 100% enrollment in secondary education by 2020;
- ❖ Retention – increase in numbers finishing primary school by 100% by 2010 and for secondary to considerably higher levels;
- ❖ Girls' Education – increase access and retention of girls in primary to near 100% levels;
- ❖ Enable them to lead productive lives with employment opportunities;
- ❖ Empowering for a Global Knowledge Economy – expanding curriculum to provide ICT skills to secondary school students, and to enable formation of human capital for the economy.

1.2 REI Objectives

The REI was created with a focus on improving the delivery of educational services, and in particular on promoting equitable access, enrolment and retention of children in schools, reducing gender disparities, promoting skill development and enhancing learning levels. The overall objective of the REI was to demonstrate robust, sustainable and scalable models, approaches, tools and methodologies that may significantly impact educational outcomes and transform the educational scenario of the State.

REI stimulated the urge and action towards improving the quality of teaching and learning in the state. This has created the right environment, space and willingness for the state to make the big leap in education.

Mr.Nitesh Mathur, REI Project Manager , Cisco

Under this directive, the Department of Education undertook a broad range of activities viz; several high level REI Update Meetings were organized in 2006 and 2007 to convene important stakeholders and to provide much needed impetus and direction to the REI. The MoE constituted ICT and non-ICT tracks, segregated REI projects under the two tracks and organized regular meetings with its core and co-partners in the ICT and non-ICT tracks to discuss issues related to planning and implementation of projects under REI. An institutional mechanism comprising of the REI Governing Council and REI Steering Committee was set up to provide direction and vision to the work of the REI. A PMU was set up at the state capital and district level committees were set up in each district thus decentralizing some of the tasks from the state capital. These structures proved helpful in implementing the vision of the REI.

1.3 REI Strategies

The REI sought to bring a new educational paradigm to the State, based on the following strategies:

- ❖ Evolve innovative and locally appropriate models of Public-Private-Partnership with scale-up potential;
- ❖ Adopt and adapt best practices from both the public and private sector while ensuring community participation;
- ❖ Deploy new technologies, particularly ICTs, for modernizing educational service delivery, skill development and quality learning;
- ❖ Create systems for enabling greater community participation in the State's educational programmes;
- ❖ Enhance the flow of resources into the educational sector in Rajasthan by structuring suitable projects and creating incentives for increased participation of different stakeholders;
- ❖ Focus efforts on serving underprivileged communities in urban and rural areas as well as on the girl children and children with special needs;
- ❖ Demonstrate the success of such public-private partnership interventions, by evaluating their impact on students with reference to the overall objectives of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan;
- ❖ Disseminate the outcomes and learnings from the REI for replication in other parts of the State, other states in India, as well as in other developing countries.

REI is a role model PPP program that is trying to leverage strength of all four pillars of PPP (i.e. Academia, Government, Civil Society and Business Community) in unique collaborative way

Mr.Anshul Sonak, Head South Asia, Intel Education Programmes

1.4 REI Timelines

The REI was set up for three years in 2005 with the understanding that in its first phase of implementation, core institutional mechanisms would be set up in the ministry and the REI would become a part and parcel of the SSA programme. The REI would be allocated space, funds and human resources to carry out the task of supporting the various projects under the REI. Above all, it was expected that a practical and robust model capable of mass scale implementation would evolve limiting the state's dependence on pilot projects.

All partners, public and private, working together towards a common goal helped REI in bringing a favorable social change in Rajasthan. FEGG would like to continue our work with REI at larger scales, taking the model for girls' education from 50 to 500 to 5000 schools in the near future.

Ms.Safeena Husain, Executive Director, Foundation to Educate Girls Globally

1.5 Review Process

Given that Phase I of the REI was essentially intended as a learning exercise to inform the responsible rollout of a larger and more comprehensive Rajasthan Education Initiative, it was decided that the review exercise should include an M&E component for which a baseline study was essential. At the request of the GoR, GeSCI developed the Baseline framework and also commissioned IMRB International, New Delhi, to conduct a survey of the schools in Rajasthan.

The survey was carried out between January 2008 and May 2008 with the objective of providing an integrated, quantitative evaluation of the current state of affairs in the schools of Rajasthan and develop a robust, framework for assessment of the impact in future.

299 schools across 11 districts of Rajasthan formed the basis of the survey. These schools included both REI and non-REI schools i.e. schools falling under the purview of REI as well as those not covered under REI. To cater to the objectives of this study, as part of the sample design, more REI schools were covered vis-à-vis non-REI schools.

Data for this survey has been gathered from the following sources:

❖ Questionnaires, comparable to those used to collect baseline data, completed by teachers, students and school heads at those schools where the project has been fully implemented for a minimum of three months;

❖ A questionnaire, designed to assess the impact of the REI and its programmes in the development of education , completed by a Ministry of Education official; Interviews with the core partners and co partners implementing the REI;

❖ Site visits to selected schools in all the districts where the REI is being implemented;

❖ Interviews with Principal Secy Education, Commissioner Rajasthan Council for Elementary Education and several other ministry officials.

The Rajasthan Education Initiative has been a pioneering educational programme. As a core partner, GeSCI has had the opportunity to facilitate strategic planning and implementation of sustainable educational structures for the REI. The REI is unique; it has been able to create a successful network of global partners in Rajasthan, providing experiential learning possibilities in key areas such as technology options, content and monitoring and evaluation.

Ashish Garg, Asia Regional Coordinator GeSCI

2. Project Implementation

The REI has emerged as a unique model of public-private partnership in education. Partners from the private sector have brought resources, including technologies, training, knowledge and expertise to meet the specific needs of the students, teachers and schools. At the same time, the REI has engaged with NGOs and Foundations to mobilize, sensitize and involve communities in the educational processes leading to the formation of focussed strategies and self sustainable outcomes.

Some of the commendable accomplishments of REI include:

REI Accomplishments at a Glance

❖ The REI has significantly contributed to the fulfilment of SSA goals and different facets of educational development in Rajasthan, including widening access, promoting efficiency and enhancing quality.

❖ Approximately 15,000 schools were impacted through various REI interventions; 30,000 teachers received ICT training.

❖ The REI reached wider geographical areas in the state and addressed the needs of rural and urban underprivileged children, especially girls and children with special needs.

❖ 26 MoUs have been signed with various organizations under the ICT and non-ICT streams.

❖ The District Executive Committee of SSA has been delegated the responsibility of coordinating and monitoring the REI partnerships.

❖ The REI has developed various partnership themes, estimated costs and guidelines for partnership. This will help the potential partners in engaging with the REI in their areas of interest and expertise.

❖ The REI has registered its website with the name "www.rei.org.in".

The Govt of Rajasthan did not depend solely on the ICT and NON ICT initiatives to be implemented under the REI banner. The Dept of Education, Govt of Rajasthan also launched the following programmes en masse in the state schools covering all 32 districts. Organisations like Azim Premji Foundation and America India Foundation joined hands with the Govt of Rajasthan to support and implement several of these Govt run projects.

ICT based programme	Non-ICT programme
Project GRACE (Girls of Rajasthan And Computer Education)	Learning Skills development
District Computer Education Centers	Adoption of schools
School Computer education programme CALP	Scholarships for indigent children
Computerization of department	Mid-Day meals programme
EDUSAT	Children with special needs
Teacher training Technology Academies	Health and sanitation

Core partners GeSCI and WEF conducted regular meetings between REI PMU and Co-partners to review the progress of their projects and address recurrent implementation issues. These meetings provided a single window opportunity for the partners to have their problems discussed and redressed by the relevant government authority. Several path breaking decisions were taken at such meetings focusing on reduction of red tape, loss of time in communication or transition and easing the outreach to schools. Partners working at the grass root level also brought home the realisation that Education in Rajasthan is intertwined with community empowerment. Some outstanding projects were undertaken:

The accomplishments and contributions of the REI can be summarised as follows :

❖ REI introduced several innovative partnerships not only to attract children to the schools, but also to improve the quality of education for retaining them in schools. Bodh, FEGG and Bharti foundation have rendered a yeoman's service to several communities in the districts of Rajasthan. Their focus has been on promoting girls education and bringing the still out-of-school children to schools.

❖ REI partners not only supported the academic needs of the children, but also carried out programmes to look after the health and nutrition of children. Several Non ICT projects provide comprehensive health care to approximately 40,000 students from around 222 schools in Udaipur district. 22 out-patient clinics were opened in 22 schools. Naandi Foundation has also provided subsidized evening meal from Mid Day Meal (MDM) for 70,000 students within 35 km. radius.

Indeed the REI has been very successful, in more ways than one, and yet when measured against the size and scope of problems that face Rajasthan, the REI seems to have failed miserably. Perhaps it is right to say that the REI was too ambitious in its undertaking, perhaps even audacious and therefore, despite its range of stakeholders and its international scope, it still failed to fulfill all its objectives:

❖ The REI failed to convert the identified objectives, needs and priorities into a short and long-term strategic plan, strategies and milestones despite continuous advocacy by core partners GeSCI and the WEF and other partners, especially Intel.

- ❖ In the absence of any strategic plan and dedicated budget, the REI's activities have been ad-hoc. The focus has been on increasing the number of partnerships, which may adopt as many schools as possible and provide management, teachers, training and infrastructural and curriculum support for a significant number (10) of years. The number of schools adopted so far is 55. The results and impact of these experiments are as of yet unknown, especially in view of a large number of primary and upper primary schools (105,000) in the State.

- ❖ The REI has not been able to address the implementation issues of co-partners, who have found it difficult to carry out their projects effectively. The scale of project activities is also very limited and has not moved beyond the pilots. The REI has not produced innovative and successful models, approaches and practices, which may be replicated on a large-scale to make a meaningful impact on the educational system in the State. Also, the Government failed to operationalize the Governing and Steering Committees, which could have provided strategic direction and momentum to the REI.

- ❖ The partners are being increasingly distracted from the REI. A number of MoUs are coming to an end in the year 2009. It is likely that some of the partners will withdraw from the REI. AIF (American India Foundation) reduced its intervention from 213 schools to 96 schools in the State and will close down its programme in 2009.

- ❖ The REI started with a lot of gusto, backed as it was by the highest political authority in the state, the state Chief Minister. The initiative however, continued to remain just that, an initiative, and the govt leadership could not create a sustainable govt structure for the REI. For eg: the REI did not have funding allocated to it nor did the the govt allocate separate govt officials to lead the initiative. The REI continued to sit within the SSA and depend on SSA funds. It also eroded the role that could have been played by the core partners in creating a robust and sustainable initiative.

- ❖ Leadership for complex projects with multiple stakeholders such as this has significant resource requirements, which, if not provided, can seriously compromise the project. The commitment of senior leadership to the project is a major determinant of success. Initially there were frequent changes at the top leadership level , this led to a lot of confusion in interpreting the REI and its work. Support mechanisms such as the PMU, steering committee and the governing body , which could have provided the back up for the initiative took an inordinately long time to be convened. The core partners were already transitioning out by the time the first Steering Committee meeting was held. Also, the lack of any specific provisioning for the REI made it impossible for the Dept of Education to provide regular staff, office or funding for the project.

- ❖ The REI failed to capitalize on the expertise of the partners in successfully launching and running similar initiatives. It failed to create a mechanism for bringing all the partners together under commonly accepted educational objectives. The result is that the REI failed to achieve its basic objective of creating a robust model or a cohesive system of working models capable of large scale implementation.

- ❖ Over time the REI began to accumulate a huge list of partners, and this list became large and unwieldy. Moreover there were no clear criteria for partnering, such as the minimum size of a collaborative project. The situation was compounded by periodic transfer of officers from the REI with the result that every time a new officer took charge of the REI he or she took time to develop an understanding of the initiative which slowed progress. Much of the Partners energy went into establishing their credentials with the new officers.

2.1 Lessons Learnt

However, the REI should not be considered a complete failure. The REI has traversed a brief, yet fulfilling journey. The REI's diverse partnership model has brought some innovative and varied ideas, knowledge, expertise, resources and experiences to Rajasthan's education sector. The REI provided the impetus to take action for improving the quality of teaching and learning in the state. This has created an enabling environment for the state to take further steps.

However, there have been lessons for the REI in the process. The institutional learnings from the REI can be summarized as follows.

- ❖ Need for Gap analysis for mid-course correction
- ❖ Need to create a phased plan for educational restructuring of the state
- ❖ Need for replicable and sustainable models of partnership
- ❖ Need to create template for future engagement and partnership on the basis of gap analysis
- ❖ Need for strengthening REI PMU and MIS for effective monitoring

The Gap Analysis carried out by REI revealed social, physical and gender gaps in the State educational scenario. The following data presents the areas of priorities to address in future:

- ❖ Gender Gap: more than 10% at Primary School level in Jaisalmer, Jalore and Sirohi
- ❖ Gender Gap: more than 25% at Upper Primary School level in Tonk, Sawai Madhopur, Sirohi, Pali, Jodhpur, Jhalawar, Jalore and Bhilwara
- ❖ Social Gap: High Priority Districts (Category A) of Banswara (ST), Sawai Madhopur (ST) and Jaisalmer (Minority); Category C Districts of Dungarpur (ST), Udaipur (ST), Hanumangarh (SC) and Ganganagar (SC, Minority)
- ❖ Physical Gap: Banswara, Barmer, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Dungarpur, Jaisalmer (border area), Jodhpur (desert)
- ❖ Districts with no non-ICT partnerships: Barmer, Bhilwara, Bharatpur, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Churu, Dholpur, Hanumangarh, Jaisalmer, Jhunjhunu, Kota, Sawai Madhopur, Sikar and Sri Ganganagar

The REI has strived to engage partners in priority districts to address gender, social and regional gaps. The REI is also focusing on bringing partnerships to Nodal cluster schools (4,710 in 186 educationally backward blocks) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) in the State.

Education remains critical to India – we cannot afford to lose focus on if we are to take our place in the knowledge economies of the world. We welcome the opportunity to be involved with the Rajasthan Education Initiative: the project is a good example of not just providing educators with the tools, but also resources that build communities of practice and support collaboration.

Mr.Karan Bajwa, Group Director- Public Sector, Microsoft

The launch of the Learning Guarantee programme in the two districts – Tonk and Sirohi was facilitated by the rank and file of the SPD and Commissioner's office. The digital learning resources developed by Azim Premji Foundation could have been utilized in all schools much more effectively by ensuring uptime of the computers and integration of the same in the learning process.

Dileep Ranjekar, CEO, Azim Premji Foundation

3. Sustainability and Replicability

REI's strategy has been to evolve innovative and locally appropriate models of public-private-partnership with scale-up and replicability potential. Some of the REI partnerships have emerged from the pilot phase and have significantly up-scaled their programmes. FEGG successfully completed the pilot project in 50 schools of Pali and Jalore districts. These districts are considered to be particularly challenging as far as girls' education is concerned. An external evaluation at the end of the pilot project found the positive impacts of the intervention in schools targeted.

With the belief that a model has been successfully developed and can be replicated on a larger scale with adaptation and changes as per the requirements, FEGG signed an MoU with GoR in February 2008 to upscale the programme to 500 schools in three blocks of the Pali district. The programme aims to promote enrolment and retention of girls in schools in the Pali district, reducing gender disparity and improving the level of life skills and competency of the girl child. UNICEF will provide IEC and technical support to FEGG in implementation of the project. FEGG has involved community in educational planning, strategies and outcomes to ensure sustainability of the programme.

In order to focus on the importance of creating local competencies and ensuring long term sustenance for Professional Development of teachers, the Rajasthan Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education and Intel Education Initiatives will create local competencies and also ensure long term sustenance for Professional Development of the states teachers. Teacher educators at the DIETs have been trained as key resource persons who will regularly train pre service and in service teachers in the effective use of ICTs in teaching and learning.

4. General observations on the implementation of the project

It is important to note that the purpose of the first phase of a broad based initiative with multiple objectives and multiple partners is not just to demonstrate, but also to learn from the experience. The following observations gleaned from the review process for the REI constitute an important checklist for the future management and implementation of this and similar initiatives:

Managing a public-private partnership of the magnitude of REI is a very complex task. The REI involved 32 districts in the state of Rajasthan, at least four of the world's largest ICT corporations, the best two NGOs known in India for their work with children and education in rural India, International NGOs spearheading the cause of girl education and development, and several of India's best known Telecom companies partnered with the GOR. All parties at the beginning of the initiative underestimated its complexity. The core partners, resource persons of the co-partners and the govt officials responsible for the project met periodically, but individually continued to point out in their reports the challenges of ensuring effective communication, establishing a shared vision and expectations, and holding partners accountable to commitments made to the GOR.Even the creation of the Governing Council and Steering Committee failed to produce a homogenous environment for the REI to function effectively.

Providing leadership for such a complex project requires significant fiscal and human resources. The PMU was under-resourced for the project management tasks it took on. The PMU was expected to raise the funding it needed to carry out its leadership role, placing it in more of a mendicant position rather than one of leadership. As a result, there was criticism from some of the partners that the GoR or the GoR led PMU was not fulfilling its responsibilities under the MOUs.

Leading such a project requires superb project management expertise, extraordinary attention to facilitating communication between the partners and clearly articulated objectives. Early on in the Initiative GoR took a non-directive approach to leading the implementation process. It continued to hold its promise that the REI was initiated as a PPP model and was meant to provide a conducive environment for all partners to come and work in Rajasthan's schools. As such the project suffered heavily from the lack of an institutionalized framework, common stated expectations and guidelines for implementation. Partners who were not conversant with the landscape, govtal structure or demography of Rajasthan found this very confusing. At various occasions the co-partners raised questions about the challenges of dealing with multiple structures within the govt. They would have appreciated a more directive approach from the GoR.

Another drawback of the REI was that it continued to remain a programme at the State Capital, monitored and run by the officials and partners in the capital city. The govt infrastructure in the districts had little knowledge and awareness about the REI or its intent and objectives. As such several programmes met with serious resistance at the implementation stage. These programmes had to continuously seek the govt intervention at the state level to deal with the govt hierarchy at the district or village level. A properly coordinated awareness drive could have minimized much of the chaos, delay and expenditure.

The post-Phase I roles of the GoR, the Core partners and the co partners have evolved as the implementation process proceeded. The implementation experience highlighted the need for adequate leadership for a complex initiative of this nature. This needed to include: (a) Clearly established and accepted roles and responsibilities of the core partners i.e. GoR, WEF, GeSCI and CII with the responsibility of driving the initiative vested with the GoR. (b) Clearly articulated initiative objectives, timelines and expected outcomes would have provided a common background for the projects to be implemented. In this case, partners worked out MOUs with the GoR on individual deliverables rather than the state's educational objectives. This led to a constant tug of war between the state and the projects with the projects asking the state for support and the state unable to provide it (c) An understanding of the REI and its objectives among key ministries of government, particularly those involved with infrastructure, finance, water and sanitation, women and child welfare and rural development. (There were many examples where implementation got bogged down because of the lack of support from the host ministry and other ministries).

Many of the issues that have arisen could have been mitigated had the project begun with a comprehensive review of lessons learned from other projects involving the introduction of ICT in schools in other parts of the country and from initial research about the policies and plans of national / state governments and the initiatives currently underway in several Indian states would have provided sufficient guidance.

5. Concluding Remarks

While the implementation of the REI to date has been uneven, the vision and objectives of the initiative continue to be of critical importance to schools across the continent. The vision may well have exceeded the practical bounds of its reach but the REI remains a 'work in progress', in which lessons are being learned and applied and the catalytic effects of the Initiative on schools, communities and Ministries of Education is already evident.

Rajasthan has benefitted immensely from its introduction to programmes of National and International repute. Consider for example the role played by WEF in bringing International agencies like Intel, Microsoft, CISCO and IBM to Rajasthan and continuing to support advocacy and communications through the provision of a dedicated Global Fellow. It also was instrumental in bringing in the learnings of the GEI to Rajasthan in as much as it was responsible for providing an opportunity and opening for Rajasthan to be known in the International arena.

GeSCI which helped bring in the critical element of documenting the entire process of set up and implementation and the lessons learnt. GeSCI provided strategic advice and helped to develop effective institutionalized mechanisms for long term growth. The setting up of the vision document, the survey of schools in Rajasthan, the development of the Base Paper and the Review Report will provide important lessons for future initiatives of a similar kind.

Irrespective of the net outcome of REI after the first phase, it cannot be denied that the REI helped to create awareness about Rajasthan all over the world and at the same time it helped to bring the world to Rajasthan. The REI had no precedent and therefore, both its mistakes and achievements are its own. The REI should definitely continue to work by distilling the lessons learned from phase 1. It may help to consider the following points as the REI sets up Phase 2 of its tenure in Rajasthan.
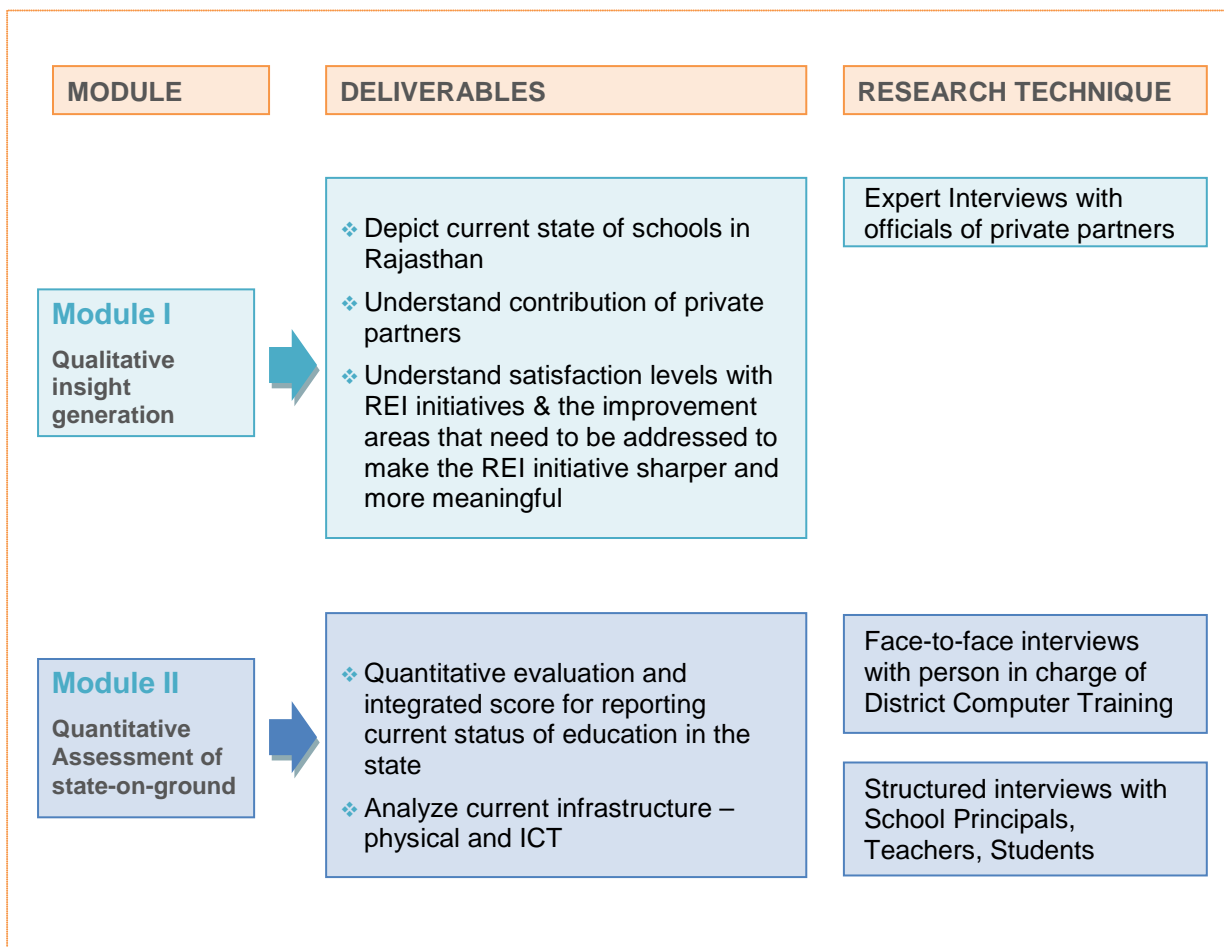
1. Ensure that planning is based on an awareness of global "good practice" regarding the adoption and diffusion of ICT in education, the development of digital content, and teacher-training standards.

2. Develop strategies to take advantage of the successfully operating models that the REI put in place. These models are the most observable legacy from the REI and they can provide a robust platform for ongoing demonstration and research if they are maintained and kept current with developing technology.

3. Review the stakeholder base, with a view to including those organisations that have demonstrated commitment to the REI vision.

4. Ensure that there is a stated commitment for an M&E process with parameters laid out at the inception of the initiative.

Annex I

1. Research Methodology

To explore the impact of ICT and non-ICT stream initiatives being run under Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI) on the landscape of education in Rajasthan a survey across 11 districts of Rajasthan was conducted amongst 299 schools. The survey covered both qualitative and quantitative aspects captured through unstructured and structured questionnaires, respectively. A mix of schools covered under REI and those not under REI were covered to draw a comparison in the level of education. The survey was supplemented by a range of secondary research in order to better contextualize the findings of the primary research.

The research design has been elaborated below:

MODULE	DELIVERABLES	RESEARCH TECHNIQUE
Module I **Qualitative insight generation**	❖ Depict current state of schools in Rajasthan ❖ Understand contribution of private partners ❖ Understand satisfaction levels with REI initiatives & the improvement areas that need to be addressed to make the REI initiative sharper and more meaningful	Expert Interviews with officials of private partners
Module II **Quantitative Assessment of state-on-ground**	❖ Quantitative evaluation and integrated score for reporting current status of education in the state ❖ Analyze current infrastructure – physical and ICT	Face-to-face interviews with person in charge of District Computer Training Structured interviews with School Principals, Teachers, Students

2. Validity of Data

Data collected from the survey was scrutinized and validated at 2 levels:

Field level

The vigilant supervision of the fieldwork ensured that all survey instruments were coded correctly. Immediately after conduction of an interview, the questionnaire was scrutinized for inconsistencies and in case there were any, the same were clarified with the respondent.

Analysis level

All data obtained from survey was entered in the standardized coding scheme only after thorough scrutiny of all questionnaires. All data collected is available at www.gesci.org. Double data entry was done in order to prevent errors during the data entry process. A detailed scrutiny note was prepared before the commencement of data entry which detailed the following:

- ❖ Whether responses were single or multiple responses
- ❖ Data checks with regard to skip patterns
- ❖ Coding of open ended data such as amount, numbers etc

Once entire data was punched, cleaning was performed. Data cleaning mainly involved following tasks:

- ❖ Removing unacceptable values
- ❖ Removing outliers from the data
- ❖ Performing logical checks (filters)

3. Quality Control Norms

❖ To ensure high quality data, IMRB stringently follows its Quality Control Norms (QCN).
  ❖ Team leaders do accompaniments, scrutinize all questionnaires and conduct 15% back checks
  ❖ Field executives conduct a random 10% back checks on all questionnaires

❖ Quality Checks and Audits: In addition to the QCN, there is a separate team named Quality checks and Audits (QCA) to ensure that quality of data being collected is error free.
  ❖ This team back checks 5-10% randomly selected questionnaires. These questionnaires are over and above those questionnaires selected for back checks under QCN.

Annex II

1. List of REI Meetings

- ❖ Partners Workshop – Gap Estimation (April 3-4, 2006) to assess the situation at ground and identify the gaps
- ❖ First REI Partners Update Meeting took place on 22-23 April, 2006.
- ❖ Second REI Partners Update Meeting took place on November 1-2, 2006
- ❖ Workshops with partners in ICT and Non-ICT tracks organized by GeSCI on April 16-17 2007 to seek information and feedback to complete the LFA for REI
- ❖ Meetings of Core and Co-partners on May 15-16'07 on May 15-16, 2007. by the new REI Commissioner
- ❖ REI first Steering Committee Meeting took place on October 15, 2007. The senior officials from the Government of Rajasthan and Core Partners participated in the meeting
- ❖ Third REI Partners Update Meeting was organized on May 26, 2008. The representatives of Core and co partners participated in the meeting

2. REI Partnerships

The Rajasthan Education Initiative is driven by government of Rajasthan and supported by three core partners - Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), World Economic Forum (WEF) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). The REI also received support from approx 24 co partners.

3. Role of Government of Rajasthan
(as defined in the REI vision document)

Government of Rajasthan is leading upfront and steering the overall project management unit. Its role composes of the following:

As leader and driver of the REI, the Government of the State shall:

1. Drive the programme and bring substantial public funding to the REI;
2. Ensure that efforts within the REI are aligned with broader objectives of the State and ensure smooth collaboration in such efforts; and
3. Undertake efforts to scale up successful PPPs catalysed under the REI and to bring them within the SSA and other government supported programmes.

4. Role of Core Partners

Together, the core partners will utilize their particular talents and core competencies to engage the private sector in the REI and synergize corporate and other energies into the specific projects identified for implementation as well as for new projects. Furthermore, they will take common responsibility for the overall oversight and evaluation of the Initiative.

The Description Document, signed by all the core partners, states:

The three core partners will facilitate and assist the State Government in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the individual projects within the REI and evaluate the success of each of them so as to learn lessons from the experience. Efforts shall also be undertaken to encourage the participation of more stakeholders willing to take part in this model of public-private partnership. The core partners will also assist the State Government of Rajasthan to explore the possibilities for scaling up the individual pilot projects presently under execution once their success has been demonstrated, so that a wider canvas with a greater number of schools and students can be benefited with the power of ICT intervention in education and the other related projects involving social responsibility programs. It is our joint endeavor to work together to transform education in Rajasthan.

Confederation of Indian Industry:	

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the growth of industry in India, partnering industry and government alike through advisory and consultative processes. It is a non-government, not-for profit organization which endeavors to catalyze change by working with government on policy issues.

Being a core partner of REI, CII's role is to garner resources and skills for the REI in mobilizing its membership especially amongst Rajasthan's small and medium scale enterprises ensuring the creation of local capabilities and capacities in making the REI sustainable.

The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI):	

The Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI), founded by the UN ICT Task Force in 2003, has the mission to improve education, empower communities and accelerate socio-economic development, thus supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the wide-spread deployment of ICT in schools. Its approach is to catalyze, support and collaborate with national/regional initiatives in the design and implementation of end-to-end systems for attaining desired educational objectives.

Being a core partner of REI, Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative's (GeSCI) role is to:

1. Facilitate the strategic planning and implementation of the REI and assist the Government of Rajasthan in structuring the Initiative for ensuring optimal value;
2. Support the setting up of the REI project management office;
3. Provide access to the services of its own specialist personnel and other experts from partner organizations of GeSCI, in key areas such as technology options, content and monitoring & evaluation;
4. Leverage its knowledge capabilities and its network of global partners to ensure that international best practices are applied to the REI;
5. Deploy a full-time facilitator in Rajasthan to deliver or enable delivery of the above services, and provide advice and support to the Government of Rajasthan on the REI and on ICTs in Education generally.

World Economic Forum (WEF):	

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agenda.

Incorporated as a foundation in 1971, and based in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit; it is tied to no political, partisan or national interests.

Being a core partner of REI, WEF's role is to bring its unique capabilities in catalyzing private public partnerships by engaging its global membership and providing expert support in the management of PPPs.

5. Role of Co-Partners in REI

A number of organizations have collaborated with the REI and pledged their commitment to positive and affirmative action, in providing children with opportunities and resources to bring them at par with other children placed in more advantageous circumstances.

The REI envisaged an integrated strategy revolving around two work streams:

- ❖ ICT Track: Using technological interventions for effective delivery of educational instructions;
- ❖ Non-ICT Track: Creating an enabling environment in which effective learning can take place, including care and concern of disadvantaged students.

The REI has signed 26 MoUs with about 24 partners. These include both ICT and non-ICT track partners including local and global private sector companies, foundations, non-government organizations and other partners working together through a Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Education (MSPE) platform to realize the vision and objectives outlined in its strategy.

Some of the partners who have joined hands with REI in the two streams are:

ICT Based Partners	Non-ICT Based Partners
❖ American India Foundation ❖ Azim Premji Foundation (Computer Aided Learning Programme) ❖ Blossoms Charitable Trust ❖ Cisco ❖ Hindustan Zinc Limited & Sterlite Foundation ❖ HiWel ❖ Intel ❖ IBM ❖ Microsoft	❖ Azim Premji Foundation (Learning Guarantee Programme) ❖ Bharti Foundation ❖ Bodh Shiksha Samiti ❖ CII ❖ Educate Girls Globally ❖ ICICI, Digantar and BVB ❖ K C Mahindra Education Trust ❖ Naandi Foundation ❖ Piramal Foundation ❖ Pratham Rajasthan

The following table provides a glimpse of the partners' activities.

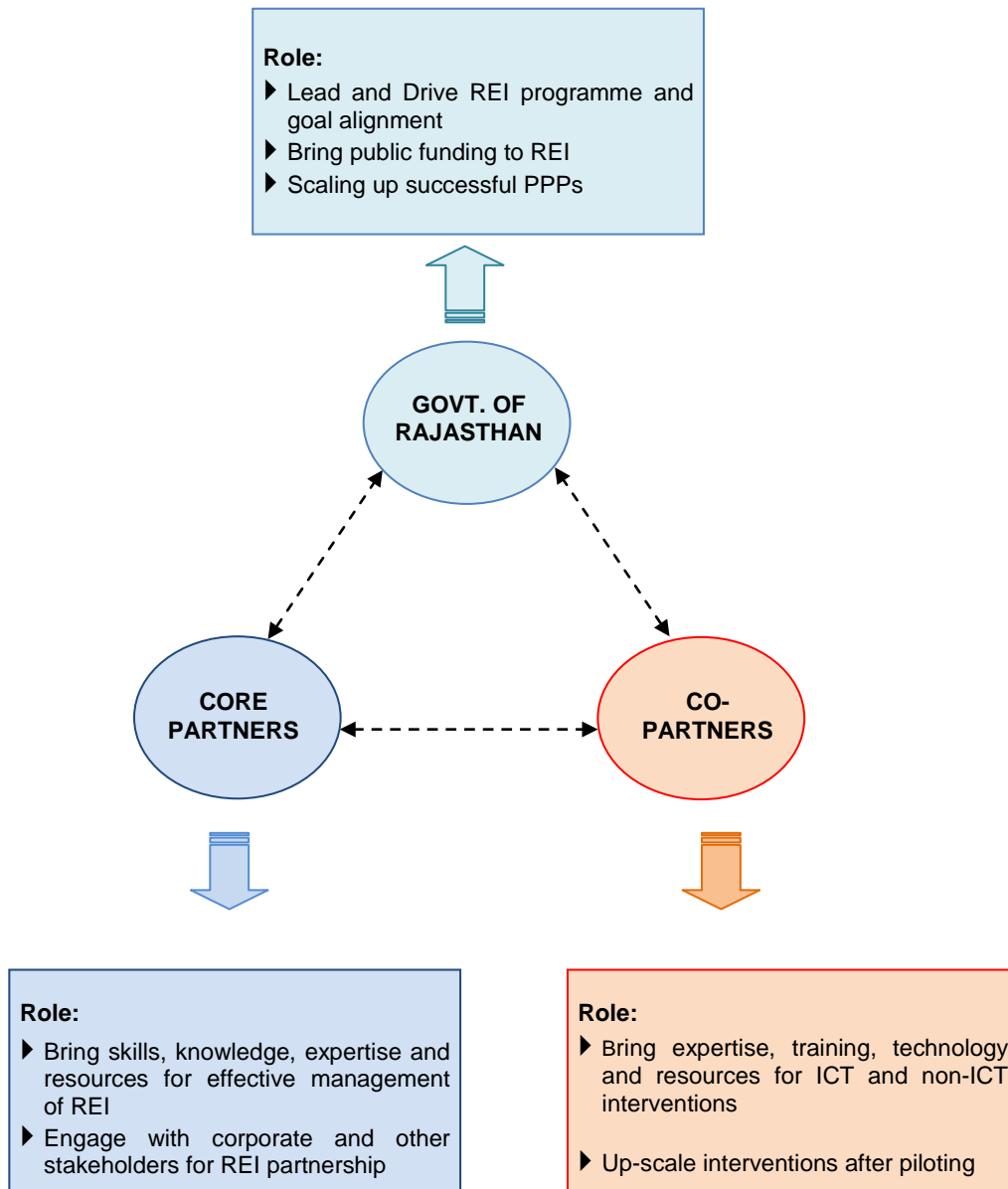| Name of REI Partner	Expected Outputs (Deliverables)
Microsoft	❖ Comprehensive IT curriculum development for students of class 6 upto the plus 2 level ❖ Comprehensive curriculum content for teachers in all classes from 3rd standard upto the plus 2 level. ❖ Complete set of courseware to teachers at ITA ❖ Scholarship programmes for teachers and students ❖ Comprehensive training for about 8,000 teachers, from a minimum of 3,000 schools every year, for a period of 5 years ❖ Six DIETs of Sikar, Sirohi, Sriganganagar, Bhilwara and Jhalawar adopted
Intel	❖ Focus on training 3600 secondary and Sr. Secondary & CALP school's teachers, subject Teachers from all computerized Girls School under Project Grace, and introduce and support Project Based Learning Approaches ❖ Support Government of Rajasthan in framing a state specific ICT in education vision and policy and help arrive at a state wide mechanism to create a systemic linkage between policy, institutional level implementation plans, capacity building and actual classroom level implementations which ensures sustainabililty ❖ Support the Government of Rajasthan in framing a State Professional Development Policy endorsed and aligned with State Education Board, State Teacher Training Institutions and Pre-service Institutions *Today I visited a small village named Vassi Khas in which INTEL Teach Program has been very-very successful. They have shown that how it can be used for practical purpose like re-enrolment etc. Best of luck for all team members.* **Mr. Neeraj K Pawan, District Collector, Dungarpur (Rajasthan)**
HiWEL	❖ Four Learning Stations, each with two computers, in 4 selected schools in Jhalawar, Rajasthan ❖ Access of children to personal computers equipped with a range of learning software

Cisco	❖ Data Center Connectivity Strategy & Development of IT essential Curriculum, replicate Jordan STIC (School Technology Innovation Center) in partnership with Microsoft, INTEL & HP. ❖ CISCO's Networking Academy and e-learning model. The centers' services to be offered to public on a charged basis and thereby run on a self sustaining mode ❖ Two Faculty members from each school to be called for training at DCEC. ❖ At least 100 students to be trained with Networking Academy Programme in each LA every year *The Rajasthan Education Initiative has demonstrated the power and potential of collaborative public-private partnerships to catalyze education reform. Cisco components of the initiative include a top-quality curriculum, teacher training, and an Internet-based delivery model that allows premium education to be imparted at District Computer Education Centers (DCEC) throughout Rajasthan.* **Ms. Shubhra Singh Commission, GoR**
American India Foundation	❖ Digital Equalizer (DE) centers in 200 schools and DIETs in Jaipur, Dausa and Alwar during 2006-09 to support students, teachers and management to use ICT for teaching-learning process in seven years ❖ Teachers and students with IT skills ❖ Detailed training schedule and a binder containing training material
IBM	❖ Up-to-date hardware, software and educational materials for young children ❖ Early Learning Centers in host primary schools, which will also house all the Young Explorer Units ❖ Baseline information of children, teachers and schools
Azim Premji Foundation (APF)	❖ MOU with Azim Premji Foundation signed for CALP ❖ Adequate copies of 25 CDs of validated educational content to be deployed to a maximum of 500 schools without costs ❖ Learning Guarantee Programme in collaboration with Azim Premji Foundation to cover over 5000 schools and 20,000 teachers in Sirohi and Tonk Districts ❖ Memorandum of Understanding renewed and extended till Oct 2011 ❖ Workbooks for children of Classes 1 to 8 for all subjects developed.

	This was to cover a crore of children across the state ❖ Expectation from Learning Guarantee Program: Reforms in examination through use of competency based assessment in all examinations and assessments ❖ Academic capacity building of the functionaries to support assessment reforms
Bodh	❖ New schools/EGS/SM/Bridge course/any other facility for deprived children of 3-14 years and left out adolescents in 324 slums of Jaipur ❖ 25 schools (Bodh school cum resource centers) in above localities to act as resource centers for capacity building ❖ Well managed schools and increased community participation in school functioning
Educate Girls Globally	❖ Two year Pilot Project for identification of critical needs of girls & establishment gender unit for facilitation of project ❖ Quality education, life skills and competency enhancement of girl children in Sumerpur and Ahore blocks of Districts Pali and Jalore ❖ Greater community participation in educational processes and plan of action by them for bringing back dropout girls to schools ❖ `Learn and Earn Model' in schools ❖ Experts and material for vocational training during bridge courses ❖ Bal Sabhas in all schools of focus areas
Naandi Foundation	❖ Health and Sanitation facilities to around 40,000 students in classes I to XII in 219 schools primarily located in Udaipur city ❖ Photo identity cards to students to access the facilities ❖ Out Patient (OP) clinics in nodal schools at 24 locations and In Patient (IP) facility in Zanana Hospital, Udaipur. IP facility to be functional 24 hrs., 365 days in the year ❖ At least 6 ICU beds and 12 regular beds in IP care facility ❖ Food administered to students admitted in the IP facility and to one of his/her guardians ❖ Free surgical procedure on children requiring major surgeries ❖ Toll free number to be accessed by students or their guardians round the clock ❖ An ambulance to pick up the sick children and admit them to IP facility

CII (Adopt a school) Project of R. K. Poddar Charitable Trust	❖ Mechanism for regular monitoring of use of funds, teacher training, quality of education, performance of staff, teachers and students and use of other Govt. aids such as free books, mid day meal scheme, etc. ❖ A report with action plan on the basis of a SWOT Analysis for each school for implementation. ❖ Active participation of CII members in school management. ❖ Quarterly and annual meets of teachers/principals for better management solutions. ❖ Awards for donors, principals, teachers, students on the basis of performance. ❖ CII-REI fund to receive donations for schools. ❖ Public-private partnership to develop and improve infrastructure, day to day functioning and quality of education in the schools adopted. ❖ CII-REI fund for donations from donors for schools
CII Evaluation	❖ Report of periodic assessment of identified schools to the State Government with suggestions for improvement in various areas of education, viz., teaching staff/infrastructure/quality of education etc., through active participation of CII. ❖ Detailed implementation plans for the REI, including formulation of action plans specifying key objectives and milestones, timeliness, assignments of responsibility for different components of the plan, and resource requirements. ❖ Bringing public-private partnership to improve infrastructure in the schools in the State. ❖ Mechanism for monitoring of schools with support and participation of member companies and donors. ❖ CII-REI fund for donations from donors for schools.
ICICI	❖ Improved DIET and SSA activities and processes in Baran district (ICICI) ❖ Formation of a Quality Improvement Unit (QIU) in Baran DIET. ❖ Improved infrastructure of the DIET, BRCs and CRCs. ❖ Training packages for the QIU, BRCs and CRCs. ❖ Survey report on the status of educational situation in the district. ❖ Newsletter for teachers in the project area. ❖ Few pacesetter Schools through training and support. ❖ Experience generated of actualizing ideas in the classrooms

Piramal	❖ A program to recruit and train participants from top institutions (leading colleges and universities in Rajasthan, IIMs, IITs, etc.), organizations and corporations within India and around the world. ❖ Trained volunteers in government schools with acute need for teaching in Jhunjhunu and surrounding districts. ❖ Partnership with like-minded institutions, non-governmental organizations and private enterprise to spread the programme across the entire state of Rajasthan after successful completion of pilot phase.

Role of GoR, Core Partners and Co-Partners in a nutshell:

Role:
- ▸ Lead and Drive REI programme and goal alignment
- ▸ Bring public funding to REI
- ▸ Scaling up successful PPPs

GOVT. OF RAJASTHAN

CORE PARTNERS

CO-PARTNERS

Role:
- ▸ Bring skills, knowledge, expertise and resources for effective management of REI
- ▸ Engage with corporate and other stakeholders for REI partnership

Role:
- ▸ Bring expertise, training, technology and resources for ICT and non-ICT interventions
- ▸ Up-scale interventions after piloting

GeSCI is proud to be associated with the Rajasthan Education Initiative.

REI offers a collaborative environment for multiple partners to work on critical issues of education.

Some truly innovative models and best practices have emerged from this project which will be

useful in further understanding and implementing similar projects. I wish REI all the best.

Mr.Jyrki Pulkkinen, CEO, GeSCI

A Review of the Rajasthan Education Initiative (REI)