Broadly, we come across two types of people in our day to day life. The first type goes on complaining regarding the vicious circle of problems, unavailability of opportunity and the whole world being unfair to them. The second type believes in action. They use power of ideas and innovation to leverage the existing resources available and turn challenges to opportunities. By doing so, they become role models and a source of inspiration for others. Pratap Narayan Singh is one such role model of ZIIEI. Here is his experiences in his own words...

“Teachers either owned the ideas or could relate with the ideas as they knew the innovators. This sense of belongingness played a crucial role in successful roll out of ZIIEI in all 2,957 Government Schools of Barabanki.”

I appreciate action-oriented people who try to bring change in those who go on complaining about things around them. So, during my visits to schools, I had been coming across several teachers who were creative and applying innovative methods at their schools. However, such innovations were limited only to the schools where these teachers were posted. I had mixed feelings for the situation — while I was happy that teachers were coming up with several effective ideas, I also saw the lack of sharing of ideas with other schools.

Then, when I attended the ‘Leadership by Consciousness’ training of ZIIEI, I realised that there is a way to scale up the innovative ideas to a greater level. Two things that I liked the most about ZIIEI are the program’s ‘simplicity’ and ‘doable approach’, which takes away the need of huge financial investment.

The major boost came when five ideas from our district found their place in the top thirty ideas! It was a great achievement for all of us in the district. Teachers either owned the ideas or could relate with the ideas as they knew the innovators. This sense of belongingness played a crucial role in successful roll out of ZIIEI in all 2,957 Government Schools of Barabanki. I too had regular meetings and interactions with teaching fraternity and motivated them in this direction.
“Two things that I liked the most about ZIIEI are the program’s ‘simplicity’ and ‘doable approach’”

Students and teachers are also supporting each other in their efforts during the implementation. Due to this, there is visible change from ZIIEI ideas.

One of the best examples in this regard is Gularaiya Primary School. Under guidance of teacher Sushil Kumar, a Children’s Cabinet has been formed and students are involved in day to day activities of the school like health and hygiene, gardening, attendance and quality of mid-day meal.

Now, if you visit the school, it will definitely change your notion towards typical government schools. Gularaiya Primary school resembles any of the well managed private schools of the district. And, the change happened in just few months of students-teachers involvement under ZIIEI.

In my opinion, ZIIEI, if implemented with true spirit and integrity can alter the quality of education in government schools anywhere in India.

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Garima from Barabanki, among top 30 ZIIEI innovators for her idea ‘Khel Khel main Shiksha’

Jyoti and Sushil from Barabanki, making it right through their idea ‘Abhinav Shikshan Techniques’

Namrata from Barabanki, among top 30 ZIIEI innovators for her idea ‘Khel Khel main Shiksha’

Poonam from Barabanki, improving learning retention through self-made comic strips
Unheard of in most government schools, Dr. Shrawan Gupta has devised a way to help students not just remember the answers, but to really understand complex topics using concept mapping technique. Through ZIIEI, Shrawan has taken his idea to the next level to ensure better learning retention, quick revision, and effective lesson planning in his school.

“For quality education, there has to be a relationship between the students and teachers. This relationship is established when teachers are able to impart knowledge to students in an interesting and effective way.”

Dr. Shrawan Gupta is of the opinion that if the concepts are clear to students, they can answer any question on the topic. “I want to see my class having curious learners and not ‘parrots’,” he says.

He is a teacher in an upper primary school with 192 students aged 11-14 years. Year after year, despite repeated revisions in the class, all Shrawan saw in his class was children’s blank, clueless faces. Even when some students were curious to know, they were simply failing at understanding the concepts. So he decided to apply the method of concept mapping.

Concept mapping: An Explanation

“Learning while seeing” is the best form of learning; this is what Concept Mapping makes use of. A framework of a particular topic is created through discussion with the class, which helps students retain what they learn.
When Shrawan attended ZIIEI training, he realised that his big idea can become more accessible if it is a zero-investment idea. “ZIIEI channelized my thoughts in a more effective way. Now when my students ask for chart papers and thermocol sheets to create concept maps, I don’t have to think about money.

In Shrawan’s class, concept mapping has become a standard practice for explaining complex topics, and also serves as an effective tool for revisions. Especially before the exams, concept maps are useful in helping students recall the key points as they get a bird’s eye view of the whole topic. Further, these are coming handy in planning curriculum delivery as well.

“3 lakh navacharon main se concept mapping ka chuna jana, ise ek pehchan deta hai. Ab bachey aur adhyapak ismain ruchi dikhate hain,” he says. (Selection of my idea from among 3 lack entries has given it an identity. Now teachers and students from other classes also want to understand it better and apply in their teaching and learning.)

During the week-long intensive training for ZIIEI innovators, Shrawan has been able to refine his idea further and also improve his communication skills as a teacher. “Exchange of ideas with other innovator teachers and ZIIEI team of trainers was an enriching experience. One important thing I learnt was time management in the classroom. What I say in the first five minutes makes a difference; similarly every minute of a 40-minute class matters.”

Post ZIIEI training, Shrawan also established a Concept Moolyankan Samiti (Concept evaluation committee), where other teacher of the school share their suggestions on improving concepts. Gradually, his concept notes are converting every topic of the curriculum into a more accessible, interesting format.

Further, he is using concept mapping to devise a system for continuous monitoring of the students, and for assessment of syllabus through feedback and supervision from educators.

“ZIIEI has given me a new zeal. To see my idea being implemented in thousands of schools today is an achievement words can’t describe.”

Shrawan Gupta presenting his idea to ZIIEI Jury in Lucknow, July 2016
BASIC SHIKSHA ADHIKARI
SANDEEP CHAWDHURY
“MAKING IT RIGHT”

BSA who ensured participation from 100% schools in the district of Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh.

Change is a process, not an event and it does not always have to be all about investment. Successful implementation of ZIIEI ideas in every government school in Farrukhabad is a classic example of it. Sandeep Chawdhury, Basic Sikshya Adhikari of Farrukhabad and the man who made the change happen, narrates his part of the story...

“ZIIEI has enriched creativity, excitement and analytical capacity of students, enhanced student-teacher interaction, added to attendance of both students and teachers, fostered quality education and has made the entire educational atmosphere stress-free and interactive.”

During the ZIIEI training by Sri Aurobindo Society, I realised that large scale systemic efforts are not always required to bring about change; we can even start it at our individual level without having to depend on anyone.

The more I delved into ZIIEI at the training session, firmer became my belief that this is the way to make teaching and learning landscape more interesting and engaging without adding new layers to the existing infrastructure. All we have to do is leveraging the existing one.

The major hurdle before me as a BSA was to convince the teaching fraternity that innovations can be implemented at zero or minimal cost. To start with, we demonstrated the ongoing innovations at some of the schools in our area. The result was right in front of us. Whether it was teaching about number system, framing sentences or recognising different parts of a plant; simple innovations in teaching made the process more engaging and impactful.

ZIIEI Implementation Progress Report for Farrukhabad

1290 primary schools
565 junior high schools
5 Kasturba Balika Vidyalayas
All implementing ZIIEI ideas.

Sandeep Chawdhury, BSA, Farrukhabad, UP
“As a BSA, I have discovered from my observation that in general schools that are implementing ZIIEI in its true spirit have better students’ attendance than others.”

Navachar Pustika [a booklet containing 11 replicable case studies of the most effective zero-investment ideas]. I won’t be exaggerating if I say that the program is transforming the entire educational landscape in Farrukhabad.

The outcomes? For teachers, it has made teaching joyful, and for students, it has made learning a better experience. Earlier, of course teachers were applying several innovative techniques in their day-to-day jobs, but none were documenting it or tracking the results. With ZIIEI, they could overcome these shortcomings and moreover, see their ideas scaled beyond their imagination.

The results of ZIIEI implementations are already emerging in schools across the district. For instance, children learn as they play, and this learning lasts longer. ZIIEI has enriched creativity, excitement and analytical capacity of students, enhanced student-teacher interaction, added to attendance of both students and teachers, fostered quality education and has made the entire educational atmosphere stress-free and interactive.

Innovations under ZIIEI are not limited to classroom teaching. One example is that a slight alteration in mid-day meal menu (within the allocated budget), or in extracurricular activities can motivated students to come to school. As a BSA, I have discovered from my observation that in general schools that are implementing ZIIEI in its true spirit have better students’ attendance than others.

The most notable thing about ZIIEI implementation in Farrukhabad is that the whole process has triggered a chain reaction. Inspired by the eleven innovations documented in the Navachar Pustika, teachers are now frequently coming up with other zero or minimal cost innovations for different subjects and extracurricular activities. I would say, ZIIEI has caused a paradigm shift in the government education landscape of Farrukhabad!
Disturbed by the poor reading-writing abilities of students, and seeing them discouraged for learning English, Raza Fatima took it upon her self to ‘make it right’. Her aim was simply to not allow the Right to Education Act to fail. She wanted poor students to be industry ready and be at par with their counterparts from public schools in the city.

“With ZIIEI, I’ve grown professionally and have also become more confident. Sharing stage with the most qualified teachers from across the state has certainly broadened my perspective.”

Raza Fatima is an upper primary school teacher in Pohina village. For 68 students aged 11-14 years, there are 3 teachers. Yet she found that hardly any were reading or writing languages at the grade-appropriate level. Learning to speak English then seemed like a far fetched dream. “Students were not getting enough encouragement from the teachers for learning English, I felt,” says Fatima. “‘Forget about learning English, you don’t even know Hindi properly’ is what was most other teachers told them.”

On the other hand, Fatima wanted the students of village schools to feel eager to learn English and not think of it as a nightmare. So she devised a new methodology that made the language a fun activity for students. Starting with the pronunciation of small and similar sounding words, she began to explain language concepts in various interesting ways. Gradually, she introduced comic strips, role-plays, debate competitions, and many more interesting collaborative exercises to help students get over their hesitation for English.

Raza Fatima being felicitated for her ZIIEI idea by UP CM Shri Akhilesh Yadav

Her students who accompanied her to the launch of ZIIEI Navachar Pustika, and spoke to the CM in fluent English.
“The effectiveness of this innovation is that students are now able to read textbooks on their own! This is no small feat considering that just a while back they could not even read simple 3 letter words.”

Being selected as a ZIIEI Innovator Teacher from amongst 3 lakh applicants has helped Fatima’s idea garner attention from her principal and colleagues. More and more students are developing interest in English and understanding its importance.

During the intensive week-long workshop for ZIIEI Innovator Teachers, Fatima improved her idea through several discussions with the trainers and other teachers selected among the top 30. “The case study that emerged has improved my teaching methodology more impactful and easily replicable,” says Fatima. “With ZIIEI, I’ve grown professionally and have also become more confident. Sharing stage with the most qualified teachers from across the state has certainly broadened my perspective.”

Post ZIIEI workshop she has added new role plays and teaching-learning material. Currently she is working on comics written in both Hindi and English languages. “The effectiveness of this innovation is that students are now able to read textbooks on their own! This is no small feat considering that just a while back they could not even read simple 3 letter words,” she adds.

Being recognised for her efforts by the State Chief Minister has turned out to be a turning point for Fatima. Now, she has left her job as a teacher and has set up an Additional Block Resource Centre (ABRC) through which she is now implementing her English teaching methodology in multiple schools. [BRCs and ABRCs conduct academic and co-curricular activities and hold ‘Model lesson’ demonstration for teachers and develop low cost locally available T.L.M. for teaching learning. They also take care of creating congenial environment to facilitate teaching learning process and guide teachers on how they can improve learning levels of children.]

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Shiksha me Shunya Nivesh Navachar

Saral Angrej Aadhikam

एक अभ्यास प्रक्रिया द्वारा शारीरिक धार्मिक समस्या को सरल व चेतना भाषा आयोजित किया जाता है। अधिकांश वर्गों में पाया होता है शिखरांगातिकांश की सहायता, कड़ी-कड़ी, देख-देख और वां-वां पहुंच प्रशिक्षणातिकांश को द्वारा छात्रों की अंग्रेजी के प्रति संकेतक बना होता है।

• शिक्षक और छात्र दोनों को अंग्रेजी में अभिनव
• छात्रों के अंग्रेजी शाब्दकोष में सुधार
• सम्प्रभुक्षण कोशल में सुधार
• आरम्भिकायतां मूल्य
• छात्र नये परिवेश के लिए तैयार

“The effectiveness of this innovation is that students are now able to read textbooks on their own! This is no small feat considering that just a while back they could not even read simple 3 letter words.”

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In her village, godmen fooling the villagers with magic tricks was becoming a common phenomenon. This primary school teacher, Champa Singh, took it upon herself to raise community aware about the magic of science. Alongside, her innovation is bridging the gap between school and the parents and creating a more productive learning environment for students inside and outside the school.

“As a teacher, I strongly felt that it was my responsibility towards my community members to make them aware about what was behind the so called divine tricks — it was the magic of science.”

Interesting story for outsiders, but a very common affair in Indian rural areas is self-proclaimed godmen producing gold from thin air, making milk out of water, or magically producing flowers in their closed fists and giving them out as their ‘blessings’.

“This was very disturbing for me,” says Champa. “These godmen pretended to have divine powers to pinch off money from innocent, illiterate villagers. As a teacher, I strongly felt that it was my responsibility towards my community members to make them aware about what was behind the so called divine tricks — it was the magic of science.”

With this motivation, Champa has been for long organising science-based magic shows in her school for children and for community members. Her efforts have not only been worthwhile in raising their awareness, but has also enhanced parents’ interest in education and has created a more interactive environment in the school.

After refining her idea during the week-long ZIIEI trainings, Champa has been able to organise her shows better, emphasise more on ensuring community participation, and has even started a new campaign to create ‘best out of waste’. Further, she is working on the idea of running “class without teacher”

She says, “ZIIEI karyakram kay antargat rajya kay pratham chuninda navcharkon main chuna jana ek samman ka vishay hai.” (It is a matter of immense pride to be amongst the selected few innovators of the state).
“My biggest achievement,” he adds, “is not in taking this one school to the top, but in sharing this best practice with thousands of schools in my state.”

As a principal of an Inter College in Amroha, Param Singh decided that while bookish knowledge may lead students to jobs, that too not always, so there had to be a system to turn “interests into passion, and passion into identities”. His objective was to create an environment where students were interested in learning, and to motivate the society to get involved in education more actively. uniform, discipline, PTMs, human values, games.

‘Profiling’ then emerged as a system to track students’ complete development as a person. At the beginning of the year, every child is given full marks in areas such as discipline, human values, uniform, and parents’ attendance in PTMs. During the year, every child strives to keep his balance of marks full since he/she has positive motivation. “Children now know that they will be assessed not just in academics, but in all areas of life. This motivates them to be better persons, with a positive constructive outlook to life,” says Param.

For instance, at the start of a new session, if students of one class share their well-kept used books to their juniors, they get some marks. This kind of motivation is instilling a sense of sharing among them and is also helping overcome shortage of books at the start of the new session.
“More than just successful students, we are creating complete people who can face the world with confidence.”

Seeing the success, he has now created a similar system to track teachers’ performance, including on factors such as dropout rate, enrolment, students attendance, and parents’ involvement. Also, performance of the different college departments is assessed using this method.

Through ‘Profiling’ system, every year top 10 teachers are recognised for their efforts and there is visible increase in teachers’ motivation level and the school’s performance.

Today, Param’s inter college is one of the most sought after among both government and private educational institutions. “More than just successful students, we are creating complete people who can face the world with confidence,” says Param.

“My biggest achievement,” he adds, “is not in taking this one school to the top, but in sharing this best practice with thousands of schools in my state. Like all other new steps, this program also received its share of doubts. However, the phenomenal feedback that I received from my teachers motivated me to go ahead and attend the one-day Principals’ training held in 2015. I learnt how ZIIEI could be implemented in a school and how, as a principal, I could lead this initiative.”

The journey to getting his idea published in the Navachar Pustika was not as easy as it might seem. ZIIEI jury refined and shortlisted ideas on various benchmarks. Many sessions were organised, where shortlisted candidates presented their ideas. The book of ideas finally constituted the ideas of 30 innovators based on the areas they covered.

Today, post ZIIEI event with the CM in Lucknow, students and teachers of this inter college carry with a sense of pride with them. “Today all parents come to us for their ward’s admission, already know a lot about my school’s success,” says Param. “Acknowledgment at the state level has given out a clear message that this school is providing a new view to the way education can be imparted.”