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4th December ' 2010

The Nataraja Foundation

Kind Attn: Dr. Narendra Jadhav
Member - Education
Planning Commission , Govt Of India

Sir,

Subject : Indian Education Megaproject ... 70 Pilot Projects to test project concepts and systems before mass rollout of 30,000 New " Teacher Centric " schools across India

This letter is a follow up on the communication received from Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia (Dy. Chairman Planning Commission) dated 16th Sept' 2010 regarding the Indian Education Megaproject .

Very briefly The Education Megaproject has the following salient features

Purpose of the Project :

1. Education to 126 + Million Children ... totally free of cost
2. Builds 30,000 New Schools ... across 28 states and 7 Union Territories without taking any money from current and future SSA budgets
3. Project creates Human Resources to sustain a US \$ 4.5 Trillion economy in India by 2025.
4. Investment multiplier impact on the Indian economy will be in excess of US \$ 300 Billion by 2023. Rural economy impact will be in excess of US \$ 200 Billion.
5. 80 % of the new schools will be built in Rural areas and 80 % of the children will be from the poorest families in the country
6. Project assists an additional 4,20,000 existing SSA schools through a massive teacher sharing programme that builds skill sets and dramatically reduces cost of coverage , while providing high quality inputs.

Specific Targets :

1. Project is targeted at students from Class V to Class XII (Upper Primary to Higher Secondary Levels) , where there is a shortage of close to 4,92,789 schools in India, according to the XIth plan document.

2. Focus of the project is on providing locally relevant knowledge suited to the needs of the local economy . Special attention will be on the development of local languages (There is a Rs 28,000 Crores budget for this) so that a majority of the rural population can participate in the growth of the economy. This will maximize the rural economy and stop migration to already crowded cities.
3. Project transforms education in India through its “ teacher centric design “ by bringing the best minds back to a career in education.
4. The scheme is the worlds largest environmental project because of its use of environmentally friendly building materials and the planting of 1 Billion trees by 2023.
5. Phase I is in 6 states with the highest percentage of out of school children

Project Cost / Finance

Project Capital cost is US \$ 131.38 Billion (Rs. 5,97,651 Crores) and Operations cost is US \$ 42.57 Billion (Rs. 1,93,633 Crores) each year after 2023. Please note that these Opex numbers are within a US \$ 4.5 +Trillion Economy that India will be after 2023 assuming an 8.5 % growth rate) .

Physical Limits On SSA Expansion

Over the next 6 – 8 years , over 100 Million children are going to exit the school going age bracket in India without any employable skills. This huge problem needs a serious response , in “ Project Mode “.

However, With 46 % of India's 4.7 Million teachers not having passed their 12th class exams and 25 % not having passed their 10th class exams, it is not possible to expand the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan any further without creating huge HR conflicts within the SSA system which is already facing serious challenges in terms of teacher quality. The Project Presentation which is attached explains the issues involved and how the proposed Education Megaproject solves these problems by expanding the school system, in a manner acceptable to all.

Proposed Forward Path

Given the seriousness of the situation , it is important that the 70 Pilot projects (1 day school + 1 fully residential school) be set up in each of 28 states and 7 Union Territories. Also the first batch of 70 Teachers Training institutes and 70 masons training institutes and the context based communications platform along with its reporting system , need to be set up simultaneously , within the projects

startup phase as soon as possible so that all project concepts and systems can be tested in time for the launch of the first PPP bidding round (3000 schools) in 2014.

Role of Nataraja foundation

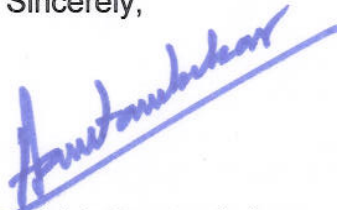
The Nataraja Foundation (of which I am Project Designer and a trustee) is interested in setting up one fully residential school in Nashik district in Maharashtra (one of the 70 pilot projects) and in sharing teachers from this school with 14 other schools in the tribal areas. This project will also help improve the education standards in another 200 schools in the Tribal areas of the adjoining Thane district by means of a teachers training institute. A Masons training institute on the same campus (based on the Auroville & Laurie Baker Schools of Architecture) will also train hundreds of rural masons each year in environmentally friendly building skills. Thereby creating the human resource skills, in teaching and construction , in time for mass project rollout in 2014.

On a personal level , I would naturally be interested in being a consultant (On a formal retainer salary with expenses paid) to the Government of India for this project. Request you to please consider this.

Finally, I would like to request a meeting with you to take this matter further. Please let me know when I can come to New Delhi to discuss the scheme with you and other senior members of the Planning Commission / National Knowledge Commission / Ministry of HRD personnel.

Looking forward to working with you to make this project a success.

Sincerely,



Ashish Puntambekar
Project Designer
The Indian Primary & Secondary Education Megaproject
www.nataraja.org.in

Copy to :

1. Mr. Kapil Sibal , Minister of HRD, Govt of India
2. Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia , Dy Chairman Planning Commission, Govt Of India
3. Dr. Sam Pitroda , Chairman , National Knowledge Commission, Govt Of India
4. Ms. Anshu Vaish , Secretary , School Education and Literacy, Govt of India

“Determine that a thing can and shall be done, and then, we will, find a way “ - Abraham Lincoln