

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



VOICES FROM:

The Netherlands p. 10

Northern Ireland p. 36

Palau p. 40

Ghana p. 30

India p. 45

Canada pp. 47, 49

Australia p. 26



June 2024, Vol. 45, No. 3

Inside Learning Forward's global community



Tip O’Neill, former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, famously said, “All politics is local,” meaning that people experience policies, even national and international ones, in the context of their own communities and lives.

Educators know that all learning is local, too. Many best practices apply across very diverse settings, as this issue of *The Learning Professional* illustrates, but they must ultimately be applied in ways that are responsive to local contexts.

Learning Forward Affiliates foster local application of best practices in professional learning and are a vital part of building and maintaining Learning Forward’s vibrant, diverse, and international community. Affiliates are branches of Learning Forward with deep local expertise and a commitment to equity and excellence in professional learning.

State and provincial affiliates build educators’ and systems’ capacity to design, facilitate, and assess high-quality professional learning that aligns to the Standards for Professional Learning and improves educator and student outcomes. They do this through a range of events and resources, including conferences, book studies with expert speakers, podcasts, tool kits, and videos.

Affiliates also work with Learning Forward to influence state and local policies and practices and advocate at all levels of government for sustained funding. Collaborating with state departments of education and other policymakers, they raise awareness about the impact professional learning can have on educators and students and offer resources and tools to collect data and measure impact.

Importantly, Learning Forward Affiliates provide an active community of like-minded colleagues and professional learning experts from around the world. They learn with and from each other and Learning Forward. They share lessons and insights from their own contexts that inform Learning Forward’s work and resources.

Learning Forward has 24 active affiliates, including three outside of the U.S. *The Learning Professional* invited leaders of Learning Forward British Columbia, Learning Forward Ontario, and Learning Forward India to share highlights from their work and the role of standards-aligned professional learning in their local contexts. The commonalities and uniqueness of these three affiliates underscore the breadth and strengths of Learning Forward’s global community of thoughtful and dedicated educators.



Learning Forward India

Affordable, quality professional learning puts teachers at the center

BY SANDEEP DUTT, RAJINDER PAL DEVGAN, NEETU KORANGA, AND KUNAL RAJPUROHIT

The National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020) aims to reshape India's academic landscape to develop global citizens rooted in local values, with teachers being the catalyst for school transformation. However, a recent report on the education workforce in India found that students lack sufficient access to quality teachers (Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education, 2023). India needs better working conditions and affordable professional learning resources for teachers.

Addressing those needs is the goal of Learning Forward India, which was founded in 2015 by Sandeep Dutt. We aim to transform schooling in India through a focus on modeling and providing high-quality professional learning. We help children and teachers learn together through the Good Schools Alliance, a network of schools across India that works to empower learners for a brighter future.

As of 2024, 25 member schools are part of the growing Good Schools Alliance. Teachers from the alliance schools engage in personalized professional learning as well as a professional learning community across schools. Students join an online program that meets every Sunday to read, reflect, and build relationships.

We are committed to providing professional learning that is not only high-quality but also affordable for all teachers in India. The annual fee for the professional learning is INR 1100 (\$13

U.S.) so even educators with limited incomes can participate. In addition, the foundation provides scholarships to selected teachers. Expert mentors and coaches work pro bono with the Learning Forward India Foundation to facilitate high-quality learning.

ABOUT OUR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The professional learning program provides custom-built learning for each participant or team to match their needs, with the teachers' happiness at the core. It promotes a holistic development practice for educators, enriching their teaching methods and engagement through a blend of activities:

1. **Reading and discussion:** The learning modules based on books help teachers improve the classroom environment.
2. **Individual/group assignments:** The social and emotional learning-based assignments focus on collaborative learning and teacher-student relationships inside a classroom.
3. **Writing:** Teachers are encouraged to write and publish their thoughts online. It helps teachers build their professional writing, language, and communication skills.
4. **Speaking:** Teachers are encouraged to communicate and share their experiences on Learning Forward India's podcast.

5. **Progressive teachers'**

community: The focus of this community is to have an open platform where teachers can share best practices and updates from education sectors across the globe.

One of the focus areas is e-learning because many teachers are not digitally literate (UNESCO, 2023). We encourage teachers to use open educational resources, and we provide free digital tools like a learning assessment management platform and Blogger to learn, track, and share progress.

Teachers learn how to navigate the new technology supported by coaches, paying close attention to using technology flexibly and in ways that promote diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. We use open source resources and social media, using the hashtag #HappyTeachers.

We also offer additional opportunities for teachers to connect with one another to learn and grow. For example, a cohort of 63 teachers and coaches meets online every Saturday for a program we call Masterclass.

APPLYING THE STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

We ground our work in the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2022). In the table on p. 46, we explain how Learning Forward India applies the standards to the professional learning we facilitate and to our internal operations.

Standards frame	Standard	How Learning Forward India addresses the standards
Rigorous Content for Each Learner The essential adult learning content that leads to improved student outcomes	Equity Practices	Our professional learning programs are affordable to all in our country.
	Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction	Learning Assessment Management Platform helps manage the operations and the learning programs.
	Professional Expertise	Coaches and passionate educators help strengthen the professional learning communities.
Transformational Processes Process elements of professional learning, explaining how educators learn in ways that sustain significant changes in their knowledge, skills, practices, and mindsets	Equity Drivers	Diversity, inclusion, and belonging are at the core of all our professional learning and school programs.
	Evidence	We collect data about participation as a measure of engagement. Our learning community consists of over 500 members from 25 schools that reach over 25,000 students. Multiple graduates return to volunteer, which demonstrates the joy and success of their learning.
	Learning Designs	Collaborative learning is one of the research-based learning designs we use to explore core values like happiness, respect, and humility.
	Implementation	On Saturdays, teachers meet with the school improvement coach to collaborate and get feedback, a key part of implementing professional learning.
Conditions for Success Aspects of the professional learning context, structures, and cultures that undergird high-quality professional learning	Equity Foundations	Our offerings are affordable and include micro-learning that is accessible to large numbers of people.
	Culture of Collaborative Inquiry	Our professional learning includes a focus on collaborative reading, reflection, and relationships.
	Leadership	The Teacher’s Academy graduates are our champions and brand ambassadors. They experience and then advocate for high-quality professional learning.
	Resources	Open educational resources are available online and via Telegram. We share news, updates, and resources for building professional learning communities.

TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Improving the conditions of teacher professional learning in India can be critical and challenging, but we are taking steps in the right direction and putting teachers at the center, as the agents of change. We will continue to deepen our work as we grow.

Learning Forward India has a robust development plan and is committed to onboarding 100 schools and program partners by 2025, building capacity to serve 100,000 students, and helping empower over 2,500 teachers.

REFERENCES

Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education. (2023). *The right teacher for every child: State of teachers, teaching and teacher education report for India 2023.* Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Learning Forward. (2022). *Standards for Professional Learning.* Author.

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. (2020). *National Education Policy 2020.* Author.

UNESCO. (2023). *Global education monitoring report: Technology*

in education — A tool on whose terms?
 Author.

•
Sandeep Dutt (sd@ebd.in) is founder of Learning Forward India, Rajinder Pal Devgan (rpdevgan@gmail.com) is chairman of the Learning Forward India Foundation, Neetu Koranga (nk@learningforward.org.in) is learning and development manager at Learning Forward India, and Kunal Rajpurohit (kuna120805@gmail.com) is a fellow at The Teacher’s Academy, Learning Forward India. ■