



SCHOOL CHOICE

Fund Students, Not Schools!



School Choice Campaign

We don't risk our children's future with substandard education.
We send them to schools that we deem fit for them.
We have a choice.

But we expect the poor to access only what the government
provides. Don't they deserve a choice?



No school choice: Children at the mercy of a government school in Delhi.

City governments, on an average, spend not less than Rs. 1000/- per month per child in a government school. With the same amount of money, the middle and upper classes have access to better quality education, and more importantly, the choice to determine what kind of education their children receive. The rest have no choice but to endure the travails of a poor-quality, government-operated education system.

Our Focus

We believe that all parents should have the **right to choose** the education they want for their child. Our focus is the empowerment of the poor with **School Choice**.

School Choice...

- **Empowers** parents to choose a school they want for their children.
- **Encourages** competition among schools – this improves quality.
- **Enables** entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and teachers to run schools that cater to the parents' needs.

On 29 January 2007, the *Centre for Civil Society* launched its School Choice Campaign. The main goals of the campaign are:

1. To take school choice ideas to at least 50% of parents in India whose children study in government schools. To create around 2,000 delegations of parents who will demand school choice from their elected representatives.
2. To ensure that all state education ministers and secretaries are briefed about the concept of school choice.
3. To equip elected representatives across all levels of the government with material on the ideas of school choice and specific ways to implement them.
4. To demonstrate the power of choice in school education by establishing at least five projects, one being a private school choice fund that will support at least 9,400 students.

Where we work

School Choice Campaign is a national campaign. It is gaining ground in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

How we work

Partnerships with local organisations for mass advocacy

CCS has entered into long-term partnerships with 250 member NGOs in various states to take the message of school choice to people, politicians and bureaucrats. Our key partners, Centre for Rural Education and Development Action in Uttar Pradesh (CREDA), Society for the Development of the Depressed (SDD) in Tamil Nadu, Kalinga Centre for Social Development (KCSD) and People's Rural Education Movement (PREM) in Orissa, Path in West Bengal and Siksha in Delhi are taking the ideas of school choice to all, including Dalit and Tribals—the foot soldiers of the School Choice Campaign.



School Choice Activists take school choice to Self-Help Groups in Tamil Nadu.

Political advocacy

We consistently interact with policy makers to bring in innovative policy changes. Besides vouchers, we also advocate reforms to improve government schooling through per-child funding. We also promote decentralization, regulatory reform – to expand the supply of schools – and transparency by abolishing the license permit raj in education.

Pilot projects

As a demonstration to governments, CCS is distributing 408 school vouchers in the poorest wards in Delhi for a period of three years. Many corporates and civil society organisations are increasingly showing an interest in piloting school vouchers in rural and urban areas.

Encouraging civil society solutions

We encourage civil society solutions by creating synergies between organizations, institutions and people. For example, the School Choice Campaign is networking with budget private schools, venture capitalists and micro-credit organizations to expand the supply of schools.

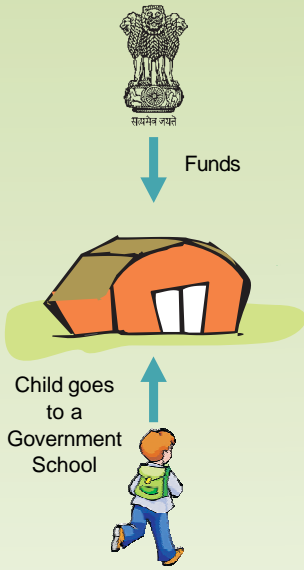
Research

We have a dedicated team of researchers and scholars studying the practical applicability of school choice ideas. We incessantly update ourselves with data and evaluations of school choice ideas like school vouchers, independent accreditation of schools and per-child funding in the Indian context. Our mass and political advocacy is based on these findings and conclusions.

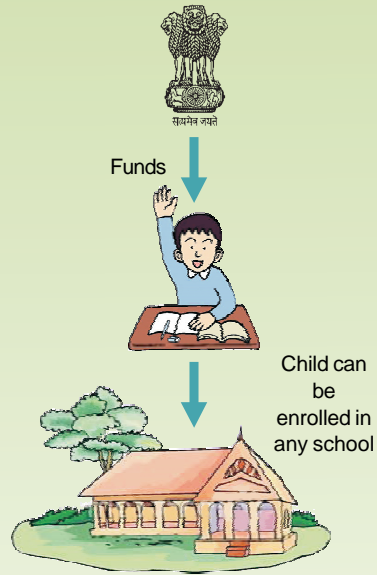
“There is an urgent need for the government to provide vouchers to parents from the economically backward section. That way they can choose to enroll their children in private schools instead of the government-run schools, which are in a pathetic state.”

Nandan Nilekani, CEO, Infosys Technologies Ltd.

Existing System



School Choice System



School Vouchers: Fund Students, Not Schools!

School voucher is a special scholarship that empowers the poor with choice. It is a coupon of a specific amount that can be used to fund a child's education at any school chosen by the parent.

Under the voucher system, money follows the student. To get the voucher, schools –government or private – have to compete and satisfy the parent. If the parents don't like the school, they can take their child (and the voucher) to another school. Parents decide and parents choose, not the government.

Unlike the present system, where schools are accountable to the government bureaucracy, the voucher system makes schools accountable directly to parents since they pay for the education through vouchers.

Besides giving the parent the power of choice, a voucher system instills competition among schools and improves the quality of service. After all, funds will now follow the students!

Conditional cash stipend schemes and tuition-fee reimbursement schemes are other ways of implementing school choice.

"The Colombian voucher programme, provided vouchers to children by lottery. The subsequent evaluation of the programme shows that the children who received vouchers were 15-20% more likely to finish secondary education, five percentage points less likely to repeat a grade, scored a bit better on scholastic tests and were much more likely to take college entrance exams."

The Economist, Free to Choose and Learn, May 3, 2007

Voucher countries

Sweden, Chile, Columbia, the Netherlands, the USA, the UK, New Zealand, Bangladesh, the Czech Republic and Cote d' Ivory.

School Choice Ambassadors

Anu Aga
Pavan Ahluwalia
Madhav Chavan
Gurcharan Das
PV Indiresen
TK Mathew
Jerry Rao
Ajay Shah



A better school for my child too!
As a demonstrative pilot, CCS distributes 408 school vouchers in Delhi.

Partner with us

All good campaigns depend on good people, planning and execution. We have assembled a team of dedicated and competent professionals in New Delhi and in other states but there is lot more to be done.

Mass and Political Advocacy Partners: If you are an organization with a strong grass root presence in our campaign states, partner with us in our mass and political outreach.

Resource Mobilization and Implementation: We are also looking for committed and competent partners to fund and manage our pilot projects.

About CCS

Centre for Civil Society is a resource for innovative community and market based ideas for critical public policy challenges facing India today, particularly in areas of education, livelihood, governance and environment.

In a short time, CCS has built a reputation for rigor, innovation and effectiveness. The impact of its approach has earned support and encouragement from policymakers and leaders in academia, business and media, in India and around the world.



CCS Board of Scholars

Isher Judge Ahluwalia
Swaminathan Aiyar
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Kiran Wadhwa
Leland B Yeager

School choice in India and across the world

School vouchers, cash stipends, tuition-fee reimbursements and per-child funding to disadvantaged groups

1. In Sweden school vouchers have encouraged parents and teachers to join hands and start cooperative schools.
2. The Female Education Stipend Scheme for girl children in Bangladesh deposits a cash stipend in the mother's bank account on the condition that the girl displays satisfactory learning levels in a school of the parent's choice and has the prescribed attendance. The scheme has increased female enrollment in schools and reduced drop out rates considerably.
3. The SC/ST Tuition Fee Reimbursement Scheme run by the Delhi Government gives low-income Dalit and Tribal children the opportunity to go to a private school of their choice.
4. San Francisco funds public schools on a per student basis. The more students a school attracts, the bigger the school's budget. The pressure to attract children has produced not just a greater variety of unique schools but new school capacity based on the specific demands of parents.



Parents and children sign a petition for school vouchers

Micro-credit, venture capital and private investment in education

1. Tribals in Paralakhemundi, South Orissa, contribute to a cooperative education fund from their daily earnings. Using the money from this fund, they convinced a private city school to set up a branch in their village to provide English education. The school caters to 100 students from the community and is managed by the community.
2. NewSchools Venture Fund, a US based nonprofit venture philanthropy firm, funds education entrepreneurs working in under-served areas and communities. In India, ICICI Bank Ltd. has a loan programme to help Rural Educational Institutions expand their services.
3. The Educare Trust in Hyderabad assists private schools in low-income areas to improve their educational standards and facilities. It provides a loan scheme for schools to improve their infrastructure and facilities and a scholarship scheme to help the poorest children attend private schools. a scholarship scheme to help the poorest children attend private schools.

For more information on school choice, contact



Centre for Civil Society

K-36, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi – 110 016

Tel: 011 2653 7465 / 2652 1882 Fax: 011 2651 2347

Web: www.schoolchoice.in Email: joinus@schoolchoice.in