

# BACKGROUND NOTES

## GROWING NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR APPLIED LEARNING

This section outlines the different kinds of partnerships available in Australia and India, key actors involved, and practical ways they can work together. It shows how schools can connect at multiple levels – from policy and peak bodies to universities, industry, civil society and other schools – to build sustainable, future-focused applied learning programs.

### SCHOOL-TO-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

#### ACTORS

- **Australia:** Public (government), Catholic and independent secondary and senior secondary schools; Tech Schools
- **India:** Government schools; Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools); Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (National Residential Schools); private schools; Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) school networks

#### AREAS OF SYNERGY

##### 1. Create structured sister-school partnerships

- » Modelled on Australian cluster arrangements, where schools co-deliver applied learning units.
- » Pair an Australian school with strong applied learning practice with an Indian school to design joint projects, share teaching plans and develop parallel assessment tasks.

##### 2. Share specialist learning spaces and facilities

- » Victorian Tech Schools regularly host students from multiple schools to access industry-grade equipment (e.g., robotics, VR, fabrication labs).
- » This model can support Australia-India collaboration by enabling:
  - › virtual demonstrations of Tech School equipment for Indian partner schools
  - › access for Indian schools to curated learning modules developed with industry
- » joint design of low-cost, locally adaptable equivalents for Indian schools.

##### 3. Co-design inquiry and industry-linked curriculum modules

- » Victorian Tech Schools co-develop curriculum with teachers, based on industry problems (e.g., in digital manufacturing, biotech, cybersecurity, sports science).
- » Indian ATL schools similarly design maker and innovation projects.
- » Schools in both countries can:
  - › co-author project briefs tied to real issues in each community
  - › use shared protocols for design thinking, prototyping and reflection
  - › collaborate on industry-aligned modules (e.g., cybersecurity, agri-tech, sustainability).

##### 4. Share teacher professional development resources

- » Australian clusters regularly run joint CPD sessions where teachers observe model lessons, co-plan units and share assessment practices.
- » These practices can be transferred through:
  - › shared CPD workshops between Australian applied learning leaders and Indian educators
  - › online CPD short courses hosted by an Australian Tech School for Indian teachers
  - › joint teacher 'studio days' when teachers trial learning activities together

##### 5. Teacher exchange or virtual team-teaching sessions

- » Australian and Indian teachers can:
  - › jointly deliver online lessons in shared units
  - › co-lead student workshops in ATL labs or Tech Schools
  - › run virtual 'lesson studies' to observe, refine and improve applied learning methods.

**6. Develop shared resource banks and teaching tools**

- » Australia's secondary schools and colleges produce publicly available curriculum units, videos and teacher guides.
- » Indian school bodies such as CBSE, NCERT and NCTE provide resources for teacher education in applied pedagogies and curriculum adaptation through a variety of platforms such as DIKSHA, NISHTHA.
- » Cross-country partnerships can merge these into:
  - › bilingual resource banks
  - › step-by-step project kits with local adaptations
  - › assessment rubrics tailored to both countries' (and states') curriculum frameworks (ACARA, Australian states' senior secondary certificates and CBSE/SCERT frameworks).

**7. Launch cross-country innovation challenges**

- » Inspired by Australian Tech School challenges (e.g., design sprints, hackathons).
- » Pairing Australian and Indian schools allows students to collaborate on real-world issues such as water management, energy, health technology or climate resilience.
- » Teachers can receive training together on how to mentor students through these challenges.

**8. Build multi-school applied learning hubs**

- » Australian schools frequently pool resources, sending students to centralised hubs (Tech Schools, TAFEs) for specialised experiences.
- » Indian networks can adapt this model by linking ATL labs, ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) and State Skills Universities with schools.
- » Australian partners can support hub design, governance, safety protocols, and teacher capacity-building.

**9. Create international Communities of Practice for teachers and school leaders**

- » Use platforms supported by organisations like the AITSL and AERO, combined with TISS's and Azim Premji University's online teacher communities, to create:
  - › cross-country teacher forums
  - › school leader networks
  - › applied learning project exchanges.
- » Themes could include applied learning assessment and integrating industry or community partners into classroom learning.

## TRAINING PROVIDERS AND SKILLS ORGANISATIONS

### ACTORS

- **Australia:** Technical and Further Education (TAFE) providers; Tech Schools; secondary schools registered as training organisations (RTO) e.g., Northern College of the Arts and Technology (NCAT); Skills and Jobs Centres; Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs)
- **India:** Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs); National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) training partners; State Skill Development Corporations; Sector Skill Councils, Indian Institute of Skills

### AREAS OF SYNERGY

#### 1. Co-design teacher professional development programs

- » Australian TAFEs and teacher training bodies can collaborate with Indian Skills Universities and schools to develop PD programs that incorporate industry-relevant projects, workplace skills, and applied learning pedagogy.

#### 2. Deliver workshops and mentorship by industry-experienced trainers

- » Industry-experienced trainers from Australian TAFEs and teacher training centres can work with their counterparts in India or collaboratively with school teachers, in applying hands-on, work-integrated learning approaches and designing student projects that reflect local market needs.

#### 3. Share curriculum, project templates, and assessment tools

- » Supply adaptable modules, competency-based rubrics, and project guides to support applied learning and teacher capability.
- » Teacher training bodies can supply ready-to-use or adaptable modules, competency-based rubrics, and project guides, helping Indian teachers integrate applied learning practices aligned with industry expectations.

#### 4. Build professional communities of practice

- » Create ongoing networks where Indian teachers, TAFE trainers, and teacher education bodies exchange ideas, co-develop lessons, and share reflections on applied learning.

## CIVIL SOCIETY AND INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

### ACTORS

- **Australia:** Australian Multicultural Business Alliance (AMBA); Australian Education Union (AEU); Tech School industry partners; cybersecurity firms; local manufacturing and technology companies
- **India:** Lend a Hand India; Sambhav Foundation; Quest Alliance; AMBA India; Tata Trusts; Azim Premji Foundation; Annual Status of Education Report (ASER); National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM); Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI); Confederation of Indian Industry (CII); regional technology start-ups; manufacturing clusters

### AREAS OF SYNERGY

#### 1. Leverage civil society as applied learning trainers and school partners

- » Indian civil society organisations (CSOs) such as Lend a Hand India, Quest Alliance, and Azim Premji Foundation have strong, long-standing partnerships with schools and act as training providers, delivering teacher professional development programs in applied learning, project-based pedagogy, and community-linked initiatives.
- » Australian education unions (e.g., AEU) and peak bodies can collaborate with these organisations to co-deliver PD, share teacher resources, and adapt applied learning programs for diverse school contexts.

#### 2. Co-create applied learning modules and real-world projects

- » Jointly design modules that connect classroom learning to community or industry needs, including gender-inclusive STEM, vocational pathways, and social impact projects.
- » CSOs provide contextual insights from local schools, while Australian partners contribute expertise in curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment.
- » Local industry and workplaces can contribute to project design by identifying real-world challenges, providing mentorship, and offering workplace-based learning opportunities.

#### 3. Mentoring, work immersion, and cross-country teacher networks

- » Deliver mentoring and facilitation programs for teachers and students, including virtual or in-person work immersion experiences.
- » Build cross-country Communities of Practice where teachers from Australia and India exchange applied learning strategies, co-develop lesson plans, and share experiences from low-resource and diverse school environments.
- » Workplaces and local industry partners can host teachers for short-term immersion to understand skill demands, applied learning methods, and workplace problem-solving approaches.

#### 4. Industry collaboration and innovation initiatives

- » Co-design real-world industry challenges, innovation competitions, or hackathons for students.
- » Provide access to guest experts, simulators, emerging technologies, and industry tools to enrich learning.
- » Share models for linking schools with local industry, drawing on Indian CSO-school partnerships (e.g., Lend a Hand India) and Australian Tech School-industry engagement practices.
- » Encourage joint curriculum adaptation between schools, CSOs, and local industry to ensure applied learning projects are aligned with both educational and workplace skills needs.

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