

ANTARANG FOUNDATION
CAREER AWARE – CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN GOVERNMENT RUN SCHOOLS IN MUMBAI

Organisation Profile: Antarang Foundation facilitates the transition of young adults from education to employment.

Over the past 5 years, Antarang has worked with ~17000 children across ~60 night schools, ~234 day schools and through 19 community based career service centres across Mumbai in the core areas of career guidance and work readiness with young adults.

Antarang's CareerAware program has been designed for students in grades 9 and 10. The program was piloted in the year 2013. It was further expanded in 2016 to Mumbai's ~120 night schools through a multi-year MoU signed with the Department of Education, Government of Maharashtra. During 2017-18, Antarang also entered into a partnership with Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) to run the CareerAware program in Mumbai Suburban day schools. Antarang was also selected by Rajasthan State Government (SIERT) to run the CareerAware program in the tribal hostels in Udaipur. The program has worked with ~14,000 students since inception.

Antarang Foundation was registered as a Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 in April 2013 & received FCRA approval in 2017.

MARKET NEED/ PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to the [District Information System for Education](#) Reports on Secondary Education in India in 2015-16 and the [District Information System for Education](#); 2015-16 Maharashtra; almost half of the students enrolled in school in India do not graduate grade 10. In Maharashtra, ~36% students drop-out of school between grades 8 and 10. This is in part due to the abysmal learning levels in school. Only 43.3% of the students in grade 8 can solve a 3-digit by 1-digit division problem and only about 45% can read simple English sentences. This learning inadequacy directly impacts school completion rates.

Government data (The Relationship of Career Guidance to VET (2009)) shows that only about 67% of those who complete grade 10 transition to grade 11 (or a small number to vocational education). Literature (The Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Education: Case Studies from Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO 2015) shows that inadequate career awareness, guidance and counselling is a critical gap for this drop during transition and low transition into vocational training.¹

Of those who drop out of school at 18 (grade 11 or 12) ~93% of them typically get jobs in the unorganised sector with no real hope of career progression

At a macro-level, >84% young Indians are unemployable (ILO) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) reports highlight the mismatch between the educational choices, aspirations and aptitudes of young people today with what industry expects.

Despite an increase of upto 14x in public and private spending in India on skills development i.e. \$260 million in 2016, only 1 million youth have enrolled for skilling in 2017. There is immense scope for greater uptake of the schemes with an increase in awareness of the options open to them.²

Antarang's CareerAware emphasizes that an academic option is not the only option - it encourages students to pass class 10 and then go on to academic/ vocational/ technical education on the basis of the students' interests, aptitude, realities and personality. Hence, CareerAware works even in situations where academic learning levels of students are below grade level.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM

Antarang Foundation is seeking funding over the next year to provide and embed career guidance as part of the secondary school calendar and curriculum by the government education system. Earlier this academic

¹ The Relationship of Career Guidance to VET (2009) ; The Transition from Secondary Education to Higher Education: Case Studies from Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO 2015 ; http://schooleducationharyana.gov.in/downloads_pdf/Circullers/GCO.PDF

² <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/gom-suggests-making-gst-inclusion-in-mrp-mandatory/articleshow/61338711.cms>

year, Antarang was invited by the MCGM to provide career counselling to all students from the 9th grade studying in the local government run schools. This came after Antarang's 3-year track record of working with all the 9th and 11th grade students from the government's night school system. These students are at a greater risk of dropping out due to their challenging schedules of working the entire day, often in manually tiring work and then attending school late into the night. ***Antarang's program ensured that over 88% of students completed high school as against an earlier completion rate of 62%.***

The current version of the program will be implemented in all the 234 Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai schools and will provide career awareness, planning and guidance to ~18,000 students in grade 9 enabling them to make informed career decisions at the end of grade 10 and transition to pathways in the careers of their choice. **Antarang proposes to run the CareerAware program across the 50 MCGM school groups, covering ~1500 students. These students will be guided on planning their careers and counselled on career choice in groups of 30, totalling 50 groups across these schools at a total cost of \$12,800.**

Baseline of the class 10 students in these schools: The objective of the CareerAware program is to ensure that students have a clear career plan and an understanding of next steps and make further educational choices in line with their career plans. Antarang proposes to conduct a baseline with a sample of students currently in class 10 who are not covered by the CareerAware intervention to measure the percentage of students who are aware of the immediate next steps towards their career plans and the choice of subjects in grade 11 in line with their career plans.

Content Customisation: The CareerAware tool is a ~50 page tool that includes psychometric tests and activities developed to help students understand their aspirations, interests, aptitude, realities and personality; match this with available career options and arrive at the best fit career plan.

The availability and entrance requirements of educational, vocational and career options after grade 10 is very dynamic in nature in India and vary greatly from year to year. Since the recommendations report and the one on one counseling that is delivered to students is customised to the students' requirements, this information is updated on an annual basis and the necessary upgrades are made to the software to maintain relevance.

Recruitment and Training of Career Aware counselors:

This program is structured to run through the school system and be sustainable. The content and the training of trainers is intensive, modular and has a strong technology backbone. The program is delivered as a structured tool that can be self-administered but considering the variable literacy levels of the students in the government school system. The data is collected through the Optical Mark Reader technology which enables the tool to be administered even in places with no internet connectivity and the answer sheets are subsequently scanned and uploaded into a proprietary software with a counseling algorithm built in. Selected trainers undergo an in-depth train the trainer program before they are sent into the schools. Antarang follows up with quarterly sessions that refresh and upgrade the skills of trainers in both content as well as best practices in student engagement.

One on One counseling:

The 15 hour/ 5 day modular intervention with each student helps him/her complete the CareerAware tool and become aware to 12 - 15 career options that are in line with their aspirations, interests and aptitudes. The career awareness module is delivered through specially curated audio-visual career packs with assessments created to measure understanding. Once the tool is administered, an assessment is done of each student's psychometric profile along with his/her aspiration and an individual counselling report is prepared. This report reiterates the best fit career options and required educational next steps for the students. Equipped with this report trainers then conduct a 1-1 counselling session with each student along with a parent so that they clearly understand why the stated careers are best suited for them and the possible pathways to pursue them. Parents are encouraged to attend the counselling session to ensure buy in and compliance.

Report presentation to government and Advocating for inclusion of career awareness within the system

Successful outcome achievement of the program depends on the ability of the results to encourage change in the system - either in the form of an inclusion of a “career week” or a career guidance period included in the timetables of secondary schools. This is a critical step to ensure sustainability of the intervention through the system. Once career awareness and guidance is earmarked in the calendar and a process is modeled, it paves the way for any provider to fulfill the requirement. The intensive training of counselors also creates a much needed but scarce cadre of career counselors available to the system.

Project Sustainability plan:

Operational:

The sustainability of the program is built in through the **embedding of career counseling and guidance as part of the school curriculum and calendar.**

The long-term sustainability of the program will lie in the success of the program in ensuring that a career week becomes a part of the secondary school calendar as mandated by the RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan - the government policy on secondary education) . Once this provision is made, schools are encouraged to find ways to bring career awareness and counseling to the students

Financial:

Antarang is in the process of digitising and automating the program to enable scale and standardisation. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (government policy on secondary education) already budgets for tablets to be provided for all students in government schools. The digitized content loaded on to the government provided tablets would bring down the cost per student to the government for career guidance. This enables long-term financial viability for the program.

Monitoring processes: A supervision matrix ensures that all counselors are monitored in the implementation of the program. At the student level, Antarang has developed a blended technology model that uses a sensitive software that runs the counseling algorithm to analyse and prepare customised reports for individual students. The analysis and reporting is done using software developed by Antarang Foundation for this purpose and it is built to absorb large volumes of data when the program achieves scale.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

The programme will be measured against the following performance benchmarks:

Outputs	Key performance Indicators (KPI)	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▣ 30+ trainers recruited and undergo a Training of the Trainers▣ 50 groups of 30 students each reached by the CareerAware program▣ ~1500 students undergo 18 hours of training respectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none">60% students will be aware of more than 5 career tracks65% of students will have clear career plans after the CareerAware intervention60% students will be counselled on 3 suitable career recommendations with clear educational next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">50% of students stay in education at least until class 12. This tracking will be done after the program & grant implementation as the students are in grade 9 & will need to be evaluated for outcomes at the end of class 10.50% students will make educational choices in-line with the career choices they are counselled on

BUDGET

Antarang requests funding for 50 groups of ~30 students each at \$ 255/group. **Antarang is seeking funding support of \$12,800 to run this program.**

Outreach to Key constituents

There are 3 sets of critical stakeholders that Antarang will advocate with to ensure that career counseling is a necessary first step to change mindsets around skilling and employment:

1. The Government - Key officials in the Departments of Education and Department of Skills Education to include awareness and counseling as a mandated part of the curriculum.
2. The Parent Community to generate demand for the intervention - even though the School Management Committees are only mandated for the primary school, they function as an important advocacy ally for the program as their children transition from primary to secondary.
3. The donor community - for the discourse to shift from skills education at the post secondary level to career counseling that begins at the secondary school level. This critical shift from skills and vocational education to employability outcomes is necessary even in discourse around young adults.