

*April 2022*

**Mapping of potential  
funding sources for  
research-based Indo-  
Finnish collaborations in  
the field of education  
development**



**Narrative report**

Dr Anoushka Davé, Love Edander Arvefjord



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## Summary

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Technopolis conducted a mapping of potential funding sources which could support research-based Indo-Finnish collaborations on education development in India for the GINTL India network. The assignment was aimed at supporting efforts to identify and engage with new partners in India and Finland alongside identifying the common areas of interest for collaboration. The funding landscape was mapped making use of information from both primary (qualitative interviews) and secondary (desk research) sources.

We identified a variety of relevant governmental and non-governmental sources ranging from research councils (e.g. Indian Council of Social Science Research) to independent foundations (e.g. Tata Trusts, Aga Khan Foundation). In addition, we also identified funding schemes as well as potential partner organisations. However, availability of funds to support collaborations remains an issue.

With the advent of the New Education Policy (2020) and the new National Research Foundation in India, the timing is ripe for exploring international collaboration opportunities with Indian partners in educational research. There is general interest from Indian stakeholders in exploring collaboration opportunities with GINTL India. However, funding will depend on the nature of the envisaged collaboration. Therefore, we recommend GINTL India members adopt the following steps to establish new collaborations:

1. Identify potential partners through direct approaches or umbrella organisations/funders such as Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Nordic Centre India
1. Discuss and decide on topic and nature of collaboration with preferred partner
2. Select appropriate funder based on the scope of the collaborative project and apply for funding



# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 GINTL India

The Global Innovation Network for Teaching and Learning (GINTL) India is a network of Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs) and India-based partners, which aims to collaborate in research and education and co-create research-based solutions to address global educational challenges. The network also seeks to facilitate staff and student mobility between Finland and India in the area of educational sciences and teacher training. Other collaborations of interest include consulting in curriculum and capacity development, professional development, development of new courses and dual- or joint degrees.

Thematic focus areas for education science research collaborations (as identified by prospective Indian partners) include:

- Early childhood care and education
- Inclusive education
- Quality teacher training
- Integrated and phenomena-based learning
- Quality assessment framework
- School management and leadership
- Educational technology
- Integrating climate change awareness in education
- Vocational education and training

The network is coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä (JYU).

## 1.2 Project scope

GINTL India is looking forward to its next programme of work (2022 to 2024) and in early 2022 the network is trying to identify and engage with new partners in India and Finland alongside identifying the common areas of interest for collaboration. To support these efforts, the independent policy consultancy, Technopolis, was commissioned to map potential funding sources for research-based Indo-Finnish collaborations on education development in India.

In terms of scope, the mapping focused on funding sources outside Finland i.e. sources other than Finnish government institutions, research bodies and foundations.

## 1.3 This report

This narrative report sets out the findings of the mapping study based on evidence collected from primary and secondary sources.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** – presents the methodological framework utilised in the study, including data collection methods and reporting
- **Section 3** – summarises the higher education and research funding landscape in India
- **Section 4** – presents an overview of funding sources for educational research in India and some key considerations for approaching and applying to funders

## 2 Methodology

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We followed a pragmatic approach, making use of information from both primary and secondary sources to deliver robust and transparent information on relevant funding sources that could support Indo-Finnish research collaborations on education development in India.

### 2.1 Data collection

Two main data collection methods were deployed: desk research and qualitative interviews.

3. Desk research involved review of the funding landscape through relevant literature and online sources to identify and map major actors and funders supporting international collaborations in educational research in India, including those that could potentially partner with GINTL India. We explored the following types of organisations:
  - Nordic institutions
  - EU institutions
  - International organisations such as United Nations organisations (e.g. UNESCO), non-governmental organisations (e.g. Global Partnership for Education), foundations (e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Botnar Foundation, Kusuma Trust)
  - International and regional development banks e.g. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank
  - Public funding bodies in India e.g. University Grants Commission (UGC), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
  - India-based charities and foundations e.g. Tata Trusts, Ahmedabad Education Society, Azim Premji Foundation
  - Indian universities and research institutes
4. Qualitative interviews – We conducted a number of exploratory interviews with funders and academics (see Table 1) active in educational research in India to further our understanding of the funding sources available. The interviews also helped us to develop a more nuanced understanding of the large versus niche funding sources and their likely interest in supporting GINTL India activities.

*Table 1 List of Interviewees*

Interviewees	Organisation	Organisation type
Dr Kaushal Yadav, Officiating Principal	A. G. Teacher's College	Higher education institution
Prof Mythili Ramchand	Tata Institute of Social Sciences	Higher education institution
Dr Pankaj Mittal, General Secretary	Association of Indian Universities (AIU)	Umbrella organisation
M.P. Madhukar, Deputy Director (Research)	Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)	Funder



## 2.2 Reporting

Information collected was collated into

1. An Excel database of funding sources with details of organisation type, funding scope (e.g. topics or areas of interest, activities funded, etc.), funding streams including typical deadlines (if relevant), typical funding amounts, previous track record of funding programmes similar to GINTL India, contact information and website links.
5. This narrative report, which provides a brief overview of the overall findings and highlighting key funders identified in the database. The narrative report provides a further steer on funders and schemes most aligned with GINTL India's scope and perhaps more amenable to provide funding

Drafts of the database and narrative guide formed the basis of a 2-hour workshop for GINTL member HEIs and potential Indian partners. The workshop served to validate and disseminate the findings of the mapping exercise.



## 3 The higher education and research funding landscape in India

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### 3.1 The higher education landscape in India

The higher education system in India includes public and private universities and other HEIs. Public universities are supported by the Government of India and the state governments, while private universities are generally financed by private organisations and societies including foundations and charities. The main categories of university-level institutions are central universities, state universities, private universities and deemed-to-be (deemed) universities. In addition, so-called autonomous higher education institutes are also granted permission to award degrees while not being called universities.<sup>1</sup>

A further description of the different categories of HEIs is provided below.

#### 3.1.1 Types of higher education institutions in India

**Central universities** are established or incorporated by a Central Act of Parliament. They are under the purview of the Government of India through the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education and are funded by the Central Government through the University Grants Commission (UGC). Currently there are 54 central universities operating in the country.<sup>2</sup>

**State universities** are established by a provincial or state act and fall under the control of state governments. Many state universities also incorporate affiliated colleges that focus on specific disciplines. Colleges typically focus on teaching, offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses. While state universities are funded by the state governments, they can also receive funding from the UGC if they are declared eligible. As of 2022, the UGC lists 442 state universities.<sup>3</sup>

**Private universities** are established through a state or central act and are supported by a sponsoring organisation such as a society, public trust or foundation. They are recognised and regulated by the UGC. The UGC regularly sends committees to inspect private universities to ensure that they meet the required standards. Private universities in India are usually self-financed through their sponsoring body and student fees. However, universities that excel and exhibit good results can receive additional public funding.<sup>4</sup> Certain private universities also receive funding from donations, development projects and advisory services. Currently, there are 397 private universities in the country.<sup>5</sup>

**Deemed universities** are high performing HEIs, often operating within a specific discipline. They are accredited by the central government through the Department of Higher Education on the advice of the UGC. The status of a deemed university allows them the same academic status and privileges as other categories of universities, i.e. full autonomy in courses, syllabus, admissions and fees.<sup>6</sup> Deemed universities generally get the majority of their funding from specially allocated funds from the Ministry of Education, grants from the UGC and from private sponsors. As of 2021, 126 deemed universities were active in India. Some examples of well-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education.gov.in/en/university-and-higher-education>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Consolidated CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES List.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Consolidated%20CENTRAL%20UNIVERSITIES%20List.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/State%20University/Consolidated%20State%20%20University%20List.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://targetstudy.com/university/private-universities-in-india/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Private%20University/Consolidated List Private Universities.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/Private%20University/Consolidated%20List%20Private%20Universities.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.education.gov.in/en/deemed-university>



known deemed universities are the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) in New Delhi, the Bharati Vidyapeeth University in Pune, and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

**Autonomous higher education institutes** are institutes granted permission to autonomously award degrees, while not being called universities. Generally, autonomous institutes fall under the administrative control of the Department of Higher Education and are regulated by the UGC. These institutions receive public funding from the central government and UGC grants. Some of the well-known autonomous higher education institutes include the Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIIT), the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) and the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER).

### 3.1.2 *Assessment and ranking of higher education institutions*

Indian HEIs are assessed and accredited by the government through the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), while the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) ranks HEIs across the country. Accreditation via the NAAC happens every five years and involves comprehensive assessment of an institution as a whole, while NIRF ranking is conducted annually and is relative to other similar institutions.<sup>7</sup>

**The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**, an autonomous institution of the UGC established in 1994 is responsible for assessing and accrediting HEIs in India. NAAC functions through its General Council and Executive Committee which comprise educational administrators, policy makers and senior academics from a cross-section of the Indian higher education system. NAAC's purpose is to evaluate, and to derive an understanding of the quality status of recognised institutions across the country. The overall vision of NAAC is to "make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives". The agency evaluates HEIs e.g. for their performance related to educational processes and outcomes, curriculum coverage, teaching-learning processes, faculty, research, infrastructure, learning resources, organisation and governance.<sup>8</sup>

The overall results of the Assessment and Accreditation exercise are compiled as a document which institutions need to display on their website. Another key outcome is a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) score (maximum value 4), which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative metrics. The CGPA score is an indication of the quality of the institution and associated with a grade (A++ to D). Only institutions achieving grade C or above (i.e. CGPA score > 1.5) receive accredited status.<sup>9</sup>

**The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)** is a methodology adopted by the Indian Ministry of Education to rank HEIs across the country since 2015. The methodology is based on the recommendations of a core committee set up by the Ministry of Education to identify broad parameters for ranking India HEIs. Broadly, the parameters cover Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, and Perception. Depending on their areas of operation, India HEIs are ranked under 11 different categories including overall, research, universities, colleges, medicine, engineering, law and management.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, there is no separate ranking for social sciences or

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nirfindia.org/FAQ.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://naac.gov.in/index.php/en/about-us>

<sup>9</sup> <http://naac.gov.in/index.php/en/assessment-accreditation#units>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nirfindia.org/About#>



education. Currently, the three highest ranked universities in India are Indian Institute of Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Banaras Hindu University.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 How research is funded in India

Research in India is funded by both public and private sources. However, the share of public funding is considerably larger. At the central level, the Government of India funds research through various government departments and agencies e.g. the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Governmental agencies in India are both funding institutions performing research regularly and provide research grants for individual researchers through various schemes.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the central government funds research through the UGC, which provides grants for eligible institutions, departments and individual researchers.

State governments support research through funding to state universities. Funding from the central government flows through state governments to state higher education and research councils before reaching identified institutions under the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) framework.<sup>13</sup> Further, state higher education councils often have MOUs with international research institutes and provide various schemes and programmes for institutions and individual researchers to facilitate international research collaborations.

Moreover, multilateral agencies (e.g. the World Bank and Asian Development Bank) and country-specific development agencies and funders (e.g. UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; International Development Research Centre, Canada) fund developmental research in India which can include research on education and health. The United Nations has funded development research studies on poverty, employment, education and health in India through various programmes of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, domestic and foreign foundations contribute with considerable amounts of research funding every year. The most noticeable foundations include the Tata Trusts, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Aga Khan Foundation.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.3 Main policy developments in recent years

The main policy reforms that will shape HE and research in India for the foreseeable future are **Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**, the **National Education Policy (NEP)** and the **Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP)**.

#### 3.3.1 RUSA

The Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a programme sponsored by the central government that provides strategic funding to eligible state HEIs via the State Higher Education Councils (SHECs).<sup>16</sup> The key objectives of RUSA are to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development of higher education at state level. The

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nirfindia.org/2021/UniversityRanking.html>

<sup>12</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08abee5274a31e0000754/60911-MappingReport\\_social\\_science.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08abee5274a31e0000754/60911-MappingReport_social_science.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://kshcec.karnataka.gov.in/page/RUSA/Overview/en>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/\(httpResearchHome\)/\\$first?opendocument&count=1000](https://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/(httpResearchHome)/$first?opendocument&count=1000)

<sup>15</sup> <https://ngosindia.com/funding-agencies/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://rusa.nic.in/about-us/overview/>

programme was launched in 2013 and allocates funding based on critical appraisal of state higher education plans.

The key activities of RUSA in the context of internationalisation are:

- Improving the overall quality of state institutions by ensuring conformity to prescribed norms and standards, and adopting accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework
- Ensuring adequate availability of quality faculty in HEIs and capacity building at all levels of employment
- Creating an enabling atmosphere for R&I in HEIs
- Improving equity in HE by providing adequate opportunities to socially and educationally disadvantaged classes, women, minorities, and differently abled persons<sup>17</sup>

### 3.3.2 NEP

The Government of India published the NEP in 2020. The NEP articulates the government's view that HE forms the basis for knowledge creation and innovation, thereby contributing to the development of the national economy. It also includes ambitions for the globalisation of education in India. The overall aims of the NEP are to enable delivery of high-quality HE, with equity and inclusion, while also increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio. Furthermore, the Government aims to increase both the inward and outward student mobility. Changes relevant to internationalisation and future Indo-Finnish HE partnerships include:

- Moving towards more multidisciplinary education and HEIs. There is an aim to provide opportunities for internships in industry or research to all students
- An academic bank of credit (ABC) to be established to collect credits earned across different recognised HEIs and use them towards earning a degree
- Establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges
- Increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures including online and digital education. The government expects to support activities related to digital infrastructure such as e-learning platforms, virtual labs, teacher training and online assessment

These changes are expected to make it easier for international students to come to India and Indian students to go abroad for visits, study, and research, with the option to transfer credits. There are plans to further promote research/teaching collaborations and student/faculty exchanges with global institutions, but the underlying mechanism and funding for these are not clear.

NEP 2020 further focuses on increasing research options at undergraduate and postgraduate levels (e.g. integrated five-year Bachelors/Masters programmes). It instructs HEIs to set up start-up incubation centres, technology development centres, centres in frontier areas of research, create greater industry-academic linkages, and support multidisciplinary research. These developments present opportunities for cooperation with other countries since internationalisation and global competitiveness aims are also reflected in NEP 2020.

#### 3.3.2.1 National Research Foundation (NRF)

The NRF is a key development that is set to transform how research is funded in India. Its main objective is to seed, grow and facilitate research at academic institutions, where the research

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<sup>17</sup> <http://rusa.nic.in/about-us/objectives/>



capacity is starting to develop and to strengthening linkages between R&D, academia and industry in India. The NRF intends to fund high-impact, large-scale, and, in some cases, interdisciplinary or multi-national projects in collaboration with relevant Ministries, Departments, and other Governmental and non-Governmental entities. 500 billion rupees (i.e. €6 billion) have been allocated to the NRF for a five-year period.<sup>18</sup> However, the Foundation is not yet fully operational.

Even though the NRF indicates a strong ambition from the government to strengthen research across the country, the foundation has received some criticism for its design and proposed implementation. Critics state that the NRF does not balance the disciplines adequately and shows a clear bias for the Natural Sciences and engineering, thereby failing to present an inclusive and inspiring long-term vision for the whole research community.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.3.3 STIP

While focused on Science and Technology, the STIP gives an idea regarding the strategic direction of travel of India with regard to research more generally. A new draft of the STIP was published in late 2020, aiming at achieving economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. It is guided by the following vision:

- To achieve technological self-reliance and position India among the top three scientific superpowers in the decade to come
- To attract, nurture, strengthen and retain critical human capital
- To double the number of Full-Time Equivalent researchers, Gross Domestic Expenditure on R&D (GERD) and private sector contribution to the GERD every 5 years
- To build individual and institutional excellence in science, technology and innovation with the aspiration to achieve the highest level of global recognitions and awards in the coming decade

International engagement will be encouraged to facilitate development of indigenous technologies and to align with national sustainable development goal (SDG) strategies. The STIP also outlines measures to support more innovative programmes for international collaborations as the Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) faculty scheme and GIAN (Global Initiative of Academic Networks). There are also plans for International Knowledge Centres, preferably virtual, that will promote global knowledge and talent exchange through visiting fellowships, joint research schemes, and training programmes.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://indiaeducationdiary.in/national-research-foundation-to-strengthen-the-research-ecosystem-in-the-country/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.edexlive.com/news/2021/nov/08/has-the-national-research-foundations-draft-let-down-the-indian-research-scene-25405.html>

## 4 Funding sources for educational research

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### 4.1 Overview of funding sources

Education research collaborations between Finland and India could be covered by a variety of funders considering the topic and type of collaboration (e.g. mobility scheme, research project, etc.). The full details of these can be found in the Excel database that accompanies this report. In the database, we include details of funders, funding schemes and potential partners for Finland-India collaborations in education research. We cover relevant

- EU funding programmes
- International non-governmental organisations and foundations e.g. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Botnar Foundation, Kusuma Trust
- International and regional development banks e.g. The World Bank, Asian Development Bank
- Public funding bodies in India e.g. University Grants Commission (UGC), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)
- Non-governmental organisations including charities and foundations based in India e.g. Tata Trusts, Azim Premji Foundation

Many European Commission research funding programmes are open to non-EU partner countries including India. These include Horizon Europe, European Research Council grants (e.g. starter, advanced, consolidator and synergy grants) as well as Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions (including staff exchange, co-funding, postdoctoral and doctoral grants).

International non-governmental funders such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Ford Foundation as well as development banks such as The World Bank and Asian Development Bank fund education-related research projects from a development point of view. These funders do not accept unsolicited proposals and advertise grant opportunities or tenders for specific topics or projects with an open invitation to submit.

India-based funders are covered in detail in the next section.

### 4.2 Key Indian funders

In this section, we briefly describe the major governmental and non-governmental funders and schemes for education research in India.

#### 4.2.1 Government funders

The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** is a statutory organisation of the Government of India and is responsible for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in university education.<sup>20</sup> In addition to regulating universities, the UGC also disburses funds to them and provides scholarships for postgraduate, doctoral and postdoctoral research.<sup>21</sup> The UGC also funds major research projects and has grants oriented towards college teachers including for minor research projects, travel and

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ugc.ac.in/page/Mandate.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ugc.ac.in/page/Scholarships-and-Fellowships.aspx>



organising conferences, workshops, seminars or symposia.<sup>22</sup> However, none of the schemes are open to European citizens.

The **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)** is the major governmental funder for social science research in India. It supports any research in the social sciences including education. ICSSR has been supporting international research collaborations for 30 years and is currently collaborating with around 60 countries in the world.

ICSSR also provides maintenance and development grants to 30 research institutes across India. Sponsoring research institutes (outside the scope of UGC) is one of the major mechanisms to strengthen social science knowledge and research in India.<sup>23</sup> ICSSR has six regional centres as part of the objective to decentralise administration and to spread quality social science research to all regions in the country. ICSSR currently has established centres in Kolkata, Shillong, Chandigarh, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai.<sup>24</sup>

The following schemes are open for international collaborations<sup>25</sup>:

- Visit of Scholars under Cultural Exchange Programmes
- Participation in International Seminars/Conferences Abroad
- Data Collection Abroad
- Organising Seminars/Conferences/Workshops in India

Non-Indian researchers cannot apply for funding, but ICSSR funding could be obtained to cover the costs of the Indian side of a collaboration with a Finnish partner. Since October 2020, Indian researchers supported by ICSSR can join research teams backed by the European Research Council. In addition, the Council develops bilateral programmes with Funding Councils in other countries, so would be open to designing a joint research programme with the Academy of Finland.

The **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** is an autonomous organisation set up in 1961 by the Government of India to assist and advise the Central and State Governments on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education.<sup>26</sup> One of its major objectives is to undertake, promote and coordinate research in areas related to school education. In addition to research, development, training and other activities, NCERT is an implementation agency for bilateral cultural exchange programmes with other countries in the field of school education. NCERT and the National Agency of Education (EDUFI) of Finland have signed an MoU on education collaboration. This aims to support Indian education reforms and the internationalisation of Finnish education expertise, and mentions GINTL India specifically.<sup>27</sup>

The Educational Research and Innovations Committee (ERIC) of the NCERT is responsible for promoting and sponsoring research in various areas of school education and teacher education.<sup>28</sup> It considers proposals for research programmes put forward by the constituents of the NCERT and other institutions/organisations and provides input on these proposals to the

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ugc.ac.in/page/XII-Plan-Guidelines.aspx#quality>

<sup>23</sup> <https://icssr.org/30-research-institutes>

<sup>24</sup> <https://icssr.org/regional-centres>

<sup>25</sup> <https://icssr.org/international-collaboration>

<sup>26</sup> <https://ncert.nic.in>

<sup>27</sup> Finnish Embassy in India on Twitter and personal communication from stakeholder at workshop

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.riemysore.ac.in/programme-advisory-committee-pac>



Programme Advisory Committee (PAC), which in turn recommends specific programmes to the NCERT Executive Committee for a final funding decision.

Central government funding also supports many student and staff exchange programmes. The following three programmes may be of interest to GINTL members.

1. The Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)<sup>29</sup> is a broad scheme aimed at improving the research ecosystem of Indian HEIs. It funds a variety of activities including visits and long-term stays of international faculty or researchers to Indian institutions for teaching and research; development of niche courses, books, monographs and technologies; workshops and international conferences. Education and learning and technology-enhanced education and learning, including assistive technologies are areas of focus for the scheme. To apply for funding, a joint research project for a two-year interaction programme has to be submitted by the Indian institution.<sup>30,31</sup> Depending on the duration of visits by foreign faculty, funding from € 60000 to € 120000 may be available to cover travel, stay, honorarium, workshop and other costs.<sup>32</sup> While 2022 dates are not available, the application window in 2019 was from 1 September to 15 November.
2. Global Initiative of Academic Network (GIAN) for foreign faculty to deliver short or semester-long courses in Indian HEIs.<sup>33</sup> Proposals are accepted on the online portal<sup>34</sup> and can be put forward by Indian or foreign faculty. A lump-sum amount of up to € 7200 for 12 to 14 hours of contact (1 course credit) and up to € 10800 for 20 to 28 hours of contact (2 course credits) can be paid to foreign experts for covering their travel and honorarium. The duration (number of weeks/days) can be mutually decided by the host institution and the visiting faculty. There is also a procedure to develop courses delivered under GIAN to massive open online courses (MOOCs). All courses are advertised on the GIAN portal.
3. Visiting Advanced Joint Research (VAJRA) Faculty Scheme for overseas faculty to spend 1 to 3 months to undertake high quality collaborative research in public-funded academic and research institutions in India.<sup>35</sup> Applications can be submitted online by the lead Indian collaborator throughout the year and are reviewed twice a year. Up to € 31500 funding is available for 3 months. Travel and accommodation costs are not covered but the host institution might provide some support for this. This scheme is directed at science and technology research and development and as such would only be relevant for educational technology research.

#### 4.2.2 Non-government funders

Non-government funders of education research in India are typically charitable foundations and trusts set up by industrialists such as Tata Trusts, Azim Premji Foundation and Aga Khan Foundation. Many of these organisations run their own education or research institutions.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://sparc.iitkgp.ac.in/index.php>

<sup>30</sup> [https://sparc.iitkgp.ac.in/nature\\_proposal.php](https://sparc.iitkgp.ac.in/nature_proposal.php)

<sup>31</sup> Key requirements: (1) The project team should contain at least two international Faculty members, two Indian Faculty members and two Researchers pursuing PhD or post-docs from each side. The Faculty members may be from one or two eligible institutions on each side. (2) Two visits by the Foreign Faculty to India totalling a combined 2 to 8 months over two years. During a visit, in addition to the project related collaboration and research the Foreign Faculty will teach one course on the topic of the proposal for 12 to 36 hours depending on the period of stay.

<sup>32</sup> [https://sparc.iitkgp.ac.in/funding\\_budget.php](https://sparc.iitkgp.ac.in/funding_budget.php)

<sup>33</sup> <https://gian.iitkgp.ac.in>

<sup>34</sup> <https://gian.iitkgp.ac.in/cgenmenu/submproposal>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.serb.gov.in/vajra.php>





**Tata Trusts** are a group of trusts set up by the Tata Group of companies covering a varied portfolio of strategic areas from health and nutrition to education and skill development.<sup>36</sup> Their education portfolio involves themes such as broadening access to education, deepening learning through access to better materials and pedagogy as well as fostering a culture of active learning, developing teachers and strengthening the entire value chain of the education system.<sup>37</sup> Its activities cover all Indian states. Academic partners include the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research. Tata Trusts may fund projects of interest by directly approaching relevant academics or organisations through their own networks. Calls for applications for grants on specific topics are advertised online from time to time. However, there is no such information available currently on the Tata Trusts website.

The **Aga Khan Foundation** and Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) have a global presence. AKES operates more than 200 schools and educational programmes worldwide. The Aga Khan Foundation works in partnership with governments, school faculties, parents and communities to develop affordable, innovative solutions that raise the quality and accessibility of public school systems. In India, interventions include training of teachers in government schools (through a Professional Development Centre), improving the teaching and learning environment through the adoption of child-centred learning material, strengthening school management committees to increase parental involvement in child learning and improving school management.<sup>38</sup> While largely an implementation organisation, some limited funding might be available for research purposes or for partnering with GINTL India members on a research project in the areas of early childhood development and school education.

**Azim Premji Foundation** is a not-for profit organisation that has been working since 2000 with the elementary education system in rural government schools.<sup>39</sup> Previous programmes funded by the Foundation include Education Leadership Development Programmes, Computer Aided Learning Programme, Accelerated Learning Programme, Child Friendly Schools Initiative, etc.

Through its work, the Azim Premji Foundation identified a great shortage of talent in the Indian education sector in areas such as curriculum development, assessment reform and teacher education. Additionally, there was a dearth of Master's level and Ph.D. level programmes in school education. For this reason, the Azim Premji University was set up in 2010. The University manages an annual research funding programme on topics of interest to the Foundation.<sup>40</sup> These are internal grants and application details are not publicly available. The 2021 programme concentrated on a variety of topics which included climate change education. Applications for 2022 have already been submitted and projects are due to start in April.

**Central Square Foundation** is a non-profit organisation that is working to transform the school education system in India in order to improve learning outcomes, especially of children from low-income communities.<sup>41</sup> To that end, the foundation supports and partners with organisations working on innovative solutions in education and engages with the education system to achieve sustainable and positive impact. Key areas of activity include foundational learning, technology-based solutions and improving learning outcomes in the private sector.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.tatatrusts.org/our-work>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.tatatrusts.org/our-work/education>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.akdn.org/where-we-work/south-asia/india/education-india>

<sup>39</sup> <https://azimpremjifoundation.org/about/who-we-are>

<sup>40</sup> <https://azimpremjiversity.edu.in/funding/research-funding-2021>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.centalsquarefoundation.org/>



The foundation also funds research with partners through calls for proposals published on its website.<sup>42</sup>

### 4.3 Key institutions

In India, only a few research institutes focus solely on educational research. Educational research is often conducted in institutions with a broader scope such as social science research institutes and universities.

One institution that solely focusses on teacher education is **The Centre of Excellence in Teacher Education** within the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), in Mumbai. The centre was established 2015 with the vision to strengthen teacher education and to develop new pedagogical methods in India, with the insight that good teachers are one of the most important pillars of the education system. The centre offers bachelor's, master's and Ph.D. level courses and programmes. It has ongoing collaborations with HEIs and research institutes across the country and in other parts of the world. Through SPARC (See Section 4.2.1), the centre also has received grants to formulate collaborations with several research institutes in the UK and South Africa.<sup>43</sup>

**NCERT major constituent units**<sup>44</sup> which are located in different regions of the country, such as the National Institute of Education, Regional Institutes of Education, the Central Institute of Education Technology and the PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education, are other institutions that focus on educational research (specifically school education and teacher training) and could be potential partners for GINTL India members. With a remit to conduct educational research and budgets for that purpose, researchers in NCERT units may have easier access to funding, provided the research topic concerns the needs or problems of the Indian education system.

Of the social science research institutes supported by the ICSSR, the key institutions focussing on educational research are the **Indian Institute of Education (IIE), the Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE) and Centre of Development Studies (CDS)**. The IIE, Pune offers graduate and postgraduate courses. Research has focussed on areas such as health, inclusive education and tribal studies.

IITE is a state public government university established by the Government of Gujarat.<sup>45</sup> The university's vision is "*to nurture teachers of tomorrow with the transformative knowledge of Indian tradition and usher in a new era of teacher education, focusing upon the integral development of teachers*". It offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and also pursues research in areas such as contemporary teaching, inclusive education, philosophy and psychology of education as well as problems of childhood, adolescence and youth.

CDS focusses on research in development studies and is supported by both the government of Kerala and ICSSR. One of the centre's main research themes is human development, health and education.<sup>46</sup> Some of the research problems being tackled in education concern assessment, quality of education, higher education and technical education. The centre has

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.centalsquarefoundation.org/call-for-proposals/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://tiss.edu/view/6/mumbai-campus/centre-of-excellence-in-teacher-education/about-us-11/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://ncert.nic.in/index.php?ln=>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.iite.ac.in/about-iite>

<sup>46</sup> <https://cde.edu/research/human-development-health-and-education/>



on-going collaborations with 11 international and nine national institutions and has visiting faculty from countries such as the UK, US, Canada and Australia.<sup>47</sup>

There is no single comprehensive database which indicates which universities have departments of education, which of these departments conduct research in addition to training and what the quality of the research is. However, teacher training is often delivered through university-affiliated teacher training colleges and colleges of education. A list of colleges that have achieved CGPA > 3.25 in NAAC assessments is shown in Appendix A. It is important to note that the CGPA covers aspects other than research quality (see Section 3.1.2).

#### 4.4 Some considerations for approaching and applying to funders

The Indian HE and research sectors are being reconfigured in light of the NEP as well as the establishment of the NRF. For instance, the Government of India allocated 500 billion rupees i.e. 6 billion Euros for the new NRF in the 2021-22 federal budget. While NRF is not yet up and running, universities and national funders are looking at greater internationalisation to drive up quality and standards as well as find solutions to societal problems. As such, this is an ideal time to look for collaboration opportunities with Indian partners at the systemic (national and state) level as well as institutional level. However, it should be noted that many high-income countries are vying for collaboration opportunities in India. Finland holds a competitive edge in the field of education however owing to the global reputation of its education system and there is great interest among Indian universities to explore collaboration opportunities with Finnish universities in this field.

##### 4.4.1 Availability of funding

There is very high competition for research funding in India owing to the large number of universities and other research performing organisations. As such there is limited funding for foreign universities to conduct India-related research compared to the funds available to Indian researchers. Moreover, research with a practical application may be preferred by some funders compared to basic, 'blue skies' research.

Many non-governmental sources including international and India-based NGOs and foundations do not accept unsolicited applications for funding and have their own key objectives and interests in terms of educational research, which restrict funding opportunities.

In this scenario, it may be easier and in the Indian view more equitable to fund the Finnish part of a collaborative project through Finnish sources and Indian part through Indian sources. This would mean that the Indian partners apply for grants to research councils, foundations or trusts with specific collaborative projects in mind. Many Indian funding sources are not accessible by non-Indian organisations. For example, GINTL India cannot apply to ICSSR for funding, but an Indian counterpart can, allowing collaborations to be partially funded by ICSSR (on the Indian side).

Private universities may be able to cover costs of collaboration through their sponsoring organisation e.g. a foundation or trust. Similarly, central/state universities might be able to apply for research funds from the central/state government bodies funding them.

Funding for short faculty or student exchanges is more readily available through existing schemes such as GIAN and SPARC. Host institutions in India may also be ready to pay for accommodation and hospitality in India if visiting scholars are able to manage travel costs. Moreover, with the COVID-19 pandemic, many Indian researchers have become more

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<sup>47</sup> <https://cds.edu/history-and-background/>



experienced with conducting virtual collaborations using online platforms, which may be another way to engage with Indian partners and reduce costs.

#### 4.4.2 Identifying partners

In light of the problems with availability of funding, the first step to establish research partnerships with Indian academics, universities or funders would involve identifying the right partner.

Organisations such as Nordic Centre India, Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and ICSSR are well-placed for matchmaking between Finnish and Indian academic partners. The AIU is happy to play a matchmaking role between Indian universities and GINTL India network members in two ways – (1) using its collaboration portal where member universities identify their areas of excellence and areas where they want to collaborate and (2) by writing an open letter to universities with interest/excellence in education research introducing them to the GINTL India network.<sup>48</sup>

Outside application cycles, Nordic Centre India or funded universities (e.g. TISS, Azim Premji University) may provide routes to form relationships with major foundations such as Tata Trusts and Azim Premji Foundation.

Online training sessions e.g. webinars by GINTL India would also be a good way to engage with stakeholders. Such short-term training may help to network with Indian academics and find potential partners for larger research projects.

Once the partners have been identified, it is important to agree on the structure of specific research projects or programmes (including scope, responsibilities, expectations etc.) that would be the basis for collaboration and any future funding applications. This is key to ensuring a smooth working relationship for the project and common goals to work towards. The financial arrangements, i.e. which partner will cover what part of the project, will depend on the type of project and type of university.

#### 4.4.3 Areas of opportunity

The desk research, interviews and stakeholder workshop, identified certain areas of interest for collaborations from the point of view of Indian stakeholders. These include educational technology, early childhood education, school leadership, quality teacher training, problem-based learning, higher education and inclusive education.

The **Educational Technology (EdTech)** sector in India has been thriving in the last years, in part as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions and new safety protocols imposed by the Indian government has forced the implementation of new pedagogies. The whole Indian educational system, from primary school to higher education, has needed to adopt to a new digital mode of learning. The edtech sector in India is estimated to have grown 32 times since 2010 coupled with the growing popularity of MOOCs and distant education. India's EdTech industry is poised to reach US\$ 30 billion in revenue in the coming 10 years which will make it the largest in the world.<sup>49</sup> Because of the growing interest in EdTech, both from the government and the private market in India, EdTech could be a key area for Finland-India collaborations. The interest in collaborating on projects related to EdTech and digitalisation of education was confirmed in the interviews and workshop.

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Dr Pankaj Mittal, General Secretary, AIU

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/edtech-the-new-growth-catalyst-of-indian-education-industry-1912116-2022-02-12>



**Early childhood education** is another important area of interest for Indian stakeholders. This is an area where Indian stakeholders are interested in learning from the Finnish experience to develop teaching methods and materials for the Indian context both in government-funded public schools as well as private schools. In addition, there is interest in studying and learning from how Finnish teachers and schools managed the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic in delivering a quality education to their students.

**Teacher training** is one of the main areas where Indian stakeholders would like to conduct research with Finnish counterparts. It is also an area of interest for policy makers and the NGO community. Sub-topics of interest within teacher training include teacher training syllabus, primary school education, inclusive education, hybrid learning environments and assessment methods.

Universities in India have traditionally tended to focus on teaching and while they are getting more involved in research, professional development of faculty would also be of interest to Indian partners. For example, A. G. Teacher's College (Ahmedabad, Gujarat) is interested in learning from the Finnish experience of teacher training and delivering education in schools and incorporating that for an Indian context in its own courses.<sup>50</sup> There is also interest in professional development of faculty through collaboration or short courses, etc.

#### 4.4.4 *Conclusions and recommendations*

To conclude, the timing is ripe for exploring collaboration opportunities with Indian partners in HE and research. There is general interest from Indian stakeholders in exploring collaboration opportunities with GINTL India. However, funding is an issue and will depend on the nature of the envisaged collaboration. Therefore, we our recommended approach is to

1. Identify potential partners through direct approaches and umbrella organisations/funders such as AIU, ICSSR and Nordic Centre India
2. Discuss and decide on topic and nature of collaboration (e.g. research project, faculty exchange, joint course) with preferred partner including expectations, ways of working, etc.
3. Select appropriate funder based on scope of the collaborative project and apply for funding

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Dr Kaushal Yadav, Officiating Principal, A.G. Teacher's college

## Appendix A List of education-focussed colleges in India

*Table 2 Teacher training colleges and colleges of education with NAAC cumulative grade point average (CGPA) > 3.25*

No.	Name of college	State	CGPA	Grade
1	Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya College of Education (Autonomous), Perianaickenpalayam, Coimbatore – 641020	Tamil Nadu	3.82	A++
2	St. Ann's College of Education (Autonomous), Mangalore, 575001 Karnataka	Karnataka	3.71	A
3	St. Xavier's College of Education (Autonomous), Palayamkottai	Tamil Nadu	3.67	A
4	MIER College of Education, Jammu – 180001	Jammu and Kashmir	3.64	A+
5	Babe - Ke College of Education, Mudki, Ferozpur – 140060	Punjab	3.64	A+
6	Babe - Ke College of Education, V. P. O. Daudhar, Moga – 142053	Punjab	3.57	A+
7	Chhatrapati Shahu Institute of Business Education and Research, Kolhapur – 416004	Maharashtra	3.55	A+
8	Gandhi Shikshan Bhavan's Smt. Surajba College of Education, Mumbai – 400049	Maharashtra	3.54	A+
9	Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal – 462013	Madhya Pradesh	3.53	A+
10	Gujarat Research Society's Hansraj Jivandas College of Education, Khar (W), Mumbai – 400052	Maharashtra	3.53	A+
11	Regional Institute of Education, Ajmer – 305004	Rajasthan	3.52	A+
12	Society of our Lady of Grace Convent Pushpanjali College of Education, Vasai (W), Palghar – 401207	Maharashtra	3.51	A+
13	Bhutta College of Education, Bhutta, Ludhiana – 141206	Punjab	3.5	A
14	Stella Matutina College of Education (Autonomous), Ashok Nagar, Chennai, 600083 Tamil Nadu	Tamil Nadu	3.48	A
15	Loyola College of Education, Nungambakkam, Chennai – 600034	Tamil Nadu	3.48	A
16	St. Christopher's College of Education (Autonomous), Vepery, Chennai, 600007	Tamil Nadu	3.4	A
17	M. B. Patel College of Education, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand – 388120	Gujarat	3.39	A
18	G. H. G. Harparkash College of Education for Women, Sidhwan Khurd, Ludhiana – 142024	Punjab	3.38	A
19	Baba Farid College of Education, Bathinda – 151001	Punjab	3.38	A
20	Mahatma Education Society's Pillai's College of Education and Research, Chembur Naka, Mumbai – 400071	Maharashtra	3.36	A
21	Pillai College of Education and Research, Panvel – 410206	Maharashtra	3.31	A
22	A G. Teachers College, Ahmedabad – 380009	Gujarat	3.3	A
23	Amity Institute of Education, Saket, Delhi – 110017	Delhi	3.3	A
24	G. H. G. Khalsa College of Education, Gurusar Sadhar, Ludhiana – 141104	Punjab	3.3	A
25	Bombay Teachers' Training College, Colaba, Mumbai – 400039	Maharashtra	3.28	A



26	Khalsa College of Education, Amritsar – 143001	Punjab	3.28	A
27	South Konkan Education Society's Rani Parvati Devi College of Arts and Commerce, Belagavi – 590006	Karnataka	3.27	A
28	Government College of Education, Aurangabad, 431005	Maharashtra	3.27	A
29	St. Teresa's Institute of Education, Mumbai – 400054	Maharashtra	3.27	A
30	M. V. P. Samaj's College of Education, Nashik – 422002	Maharashtra	3.26	A

Source: NAAC

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