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## Introduction

Masoom is a non-profit organization with a passion for effecting impactful interventions in the night schools of Mumbai. Masoom is currently the only organization which has developed a program to cater to the needs of night school students. With its vision of helping youth 'learn while they earn', Masoom aims to enable night school students to reach their full potential through educational and policy support.

Established in 2008 with 2 schools under its aegis, Masoom currently works with 30 schools and impacts 3500 students in addition to school administrators and teachers. By 2020, Masoom plans to work with 210 night schools and make a positive change in the lives of 20,000 students across Maharashtra.

Masoom's 'Night School Transformation Program' (NSTP) is specifically tailored to meet the needs of students who are mainly school dropouts from poor socio-economic backgrounds, most of them working during the day and supporting their families. As part of this program, Masoom adopts a school and after initial evaluation, places it on a predefined grading scale (D to A, being the highest grade achievable). Masoom provides specific interventions throughout the lifecycle of a school in the NSTP to enable it to progress through the grades.

Masoom follows a three-pronged model to achieve this aim:

1. Educational infrastructure building and support - provide critical educational infrastructure and resources including but not limited to notebooks/textbooks, science labs, libraries computers and evening meals.
2. Capacity Building support - training sessions and support for all levels of school administration and, where applicable, community members
3. Advocacy - lobbying for policy changes in favour of Night Schools and embarking on awareness-building programs with the public and key decision-makers.

## **Key Problem Statement**

Masoom has been working with schools for the past 8 years. During this time period, it is assumed that Masoom has provided uniform inputs to all schools across all areas as indicated on its grading tool. However, some schools have taken longer to meet the requirements to move to the next grade. Additionally, Masoom has had to end its relationship with a few schools for non-compliance and inability to meet targets. Given the existing conditions in schools, it is imperative for Masoom to identify key metrics and areas of intervention for schools in the first few stages of its lifecycle with the NSTP in order to effectively allocate resources for the same. Schools (and the resultant communities) that initially join the Masoom program may not be receptive to all interventions from the start. As a school progresses and develops the capacity to independently handle initiatives, Masoom's efforts and resources should be diverted to other more meaningful interventions and stakeholder interactions that will eventually allow them to setup stronger and more sustainable systems for the school to function independently.

## **Objective of the Study**

- Identify areas where Masoom can continue its existing efforts and what new avenues to pursue as part of its model that would increase sustainability of its work in schools and communities
- Create a model for the ideal lifecycle of a school in the NSTP to enable Masoom to effectively differentiate its efforts for schools and accordingly allocate its resources
- Identify differentiated support for all stakeholders involved with Masoom schools through its lifecycle
- Critically examine sustainability of the program and its impact once a school reaches optimal levels.

## **Scope of the project**

This project examines data provided by Masoom on the functioning of schools and makes strategic recommendations for resource allocation and management as well as capacity building for stakeholders at the senior management level based on a 6 month time frame. This study assumes the validity and relevance of the Grading Tool as a measurement instrument and accordingly suggests recommendations for prioritization of Masoom's efforts. The study also considers all Masoom staff Project Managers to be adequately trained and capable of assessing and addressing all necessary interventions. All analysis and recommendations have been made on the basis of data obtained from survey results and interviews with Masoom staff and headmasters only. The project will suggest recommendations for stakeholder engagement and resource allocation, and minor restructuring of the Grading Tool in order to allow Masoom to effectively monitor the impact of their interventions.

## **Toolbox’s Methodology and Impact Assessment Approach**

- Reviewed data provided by Masoom’s Grading Tool
- Created templates to categorize data and analyze trends
- Interviewed key stakeholders
- Identified specific recommendations based on existing processes and interventions

### **Data Sampling**

Toolbox used Masoom’s internal Grading Tool to benchmark performance of a 30 schools supported by Masoom between the period April 2014 and October 2014, representing the academic mid-year. The Grading Tool determines school performance in key outcome areas and assigns grades from A through D, by posing specific questions related to key stakeholders – students, teachers and headmaster, parents, and trustees.

15 Project Managers and 5 Headmasters were interviewed to corroborate the findings from initial data review and explore further trends arising out of their experiences with Masoom.

### **Analytic Approach and Process**

#### **1. Grading Tool Data Review and Trend Analysis**

The first part of Toolbox’s assessment focused primarily on analyzing key trends arising from Grading Tool data for all schools and conducting extensive primary research to crystallize the true impact of Masoom’s interventional program. The detailed process is as follows:

1. Masoom had already allotted each school a grade (ranging from A to D) based on their scores on the Grading Tool in April 2014 and then later in October 2014.
2. Based on movement in grade category between the period observed – April 2014 to October 2014, Toolbox separated the schools into eight further categories in order to study trends across schools that had received the same grade. Schools were divided into the following categories:

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Lower D to D (5 schools)</b></li> <li>b. <b>Lower D to C (7 schools)</b></li> <li>c. <b>Lower D to B (1 school)</b></li> <li>d. <b>D to C (6 schools)</b></li> <li>e. <b>D to B (2 schools)</b></li> <li>f. <b>C to B (3 schools)</b></li> <li>g. <b>Stagnant at D (2 schools)</b></li> <li>h. <b>Stagnant at C (2 schools)</b></li> </ul> |
|---|

\* Note: A grade of Lower D denotes that insufficient data is available for a school. Normally all schools that are new to the Masoom program start with a grade of Lower D, which changes by the subsequent assessment.

3. Within each of these categories, we looked at components of the Grading Tool measured and noted the movement in each area into 4 categories<sup>1</sup>:
  - Significant Negative Movement – the school dropped by two grades in this area during the assessment period (eg. Teaching outside the classroom dropped from B grade in April 2014 to D grade in October 2014)
  - Moderate Negative Movement – the schools dropped by one grade in this area during the assessment period (eg. Life skills program dropped from a C grade in April 2014 to D grade in October 2014)
  - Significant Positive Movement – the school grew by two grades in this area during the assessment period (eg. Staff Engagement increased from a D grade in April 2014 to B grade in October 2014)
  - Optimal levels - the school maintained an A grade in this category for the assessment period (eg. Trustee Financial Viability was at an A grade in both April and October 2014 Assessments).
4. The top ten areas of assessment the Grading Tool that fell in these four categories were collated as a representative summary of the performance of schools within each of eight categories identified previously as per grade movement. This allowed us to identify issues of underperformance, stagnation and growth.
5. Based on these insights, 3 schools in each grade movement category were selected through random sampling methods to further understand the causes behind the movement in grades.

## 2. Key Stakeholder Interviews

1. For each school selected, in-depth interviews were conducted with the Headmaster to understand Masoom’s intervention and impact through the school’s lifecycle. A list of questions

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<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that Toolbox’s assessment period was from April – October 2014. Masoom has noted that the negative movement shown by schools for this period in certain categories changes during the progression of the

asked as part of the interview can be found in the appendices. The interviews were semi-structured and allowed the interviewers to ask specific follow up questions based on interviewee responses.

2. Two open forums were conducted with 15 Masoom staff including Project Managers and Project Specialists where they were asked a series of questions exploring Masoom's intervention model, intended impact and areas of development.
3. Classical content analysis was applied to the interview transcripts in order to identify key concepts and code the same for comparison between interviews.
4. Results from Program Manager and Head master interviews were compared for corroboration of data and results were categorized based on the grade category that each school represented.

## Key findings

Toolbox analyzed transcripts of in-depth interviews with a sample of Head Masters (n=5), focus group interviews with Masoom Project Managers to look for trends in Masoom's impact in order to identify the most effective interventions. We reviewed the Grading Tool analysis and selected the activities where schools scored the highest consistently and correlated those areas with the answers shared in the interviews and focus groups as a means of comparison and corroboration. Based on the information, we identified three key aspects of Masoom's interventions on the schools and the Night School Transformation Project that, when combined together, allow for a holistic understanding of *what* a Masoom school should experience during its time with the organization and *how* can maximum impact be achieved through Masoom's interventions by effectively redistributing resources and effort.

### 1. Effort Analysis

As an organization, Masoom's strength lies in supporting schools in areas with clearly pre-defined targets and outcomes. Almost 85% of our interview and focus groups respondents highlighted Masoom's success in the following areas and were able to provide examples of the situations in their schools pre and post Masoom's intervention, thereby highlighting the impact of the same.

1. **SSC improvement program** - providing course materials and external training to support school efforts and succeeding in almost doubling the SSC pass percentage in a number of schools
2. **Enrollment** - increasing enrollment numbers significantly and providing a strong set of resources to allow schools to customize the same and begin running their own Enrollment programs after a few years of observing Masoom's efforts in the local communities through initiatives such as street plays, fliers, announcements, etc
3. **Infrastructure support** - providing basic educational resources from scratch and establishing programs in the schools that will hopefully be continued by school staff post adequate training (eg. libraries, science labs) as well as addressing key needs such as Evening Meal program and books/other stationery needs).

4. **Head Master support** - both HMs and Project Managers reported strong levels of satisfaction with Masoom's focus on supporting school principals throughout the program, through difficult circumstances and in challenging school environments. The Peer Learning platform in particular was highlighted by many HMs as a means of collaboration and learning as part of a larger network and a tool to strengthen their skills as school leaders.

In the above mentioned initiatives, the focus has primarily been on infrastructure support as well as setting up systems. Since many of these are key metrics for assessing school performance, it is heartening to note the effort placed by the Masoom team on ensuring stability of these programs from the outset and across multiple grade levels within the schools groups.

On the other hand, there are a number of activities where Masoom has perhaps not achieved the desired impact due to a number of reasons. The initiatives mentioned below have been selected in light of what we presume is their criticality to the success of the NTSP, and the need for Masoom to further investigate what action can be taken towards the same.

1. **Teacher training and development/teacher interest** - while there are several indicators of teacher performance in Masoom's Grading tool, we look at these together in one bucket in order to evaluate the support needed by them in order to positively impact student outcomes. Both HMs and Project Managers reported low levels of teacher buy-in and support into the program to varying degrees - however, it must be noted that this was not the case with two Head Masters who have very strong existing relationships with their teachers. This was corroborated by low scores for those schools in teacher attitude as well as teaching methodology.
2. **Attendance** - While Masoom has had a positive response towards its enrollment drives, grades for attendance programs have not progressed at the same rate and HMs/Project Managers have expressed their difficulties in maintaining high rates of enrollments. We also need to question just how much of a role does Masoom have in this area, given that continued attendance is a factor of both the school environment - how engaged can a student remain in the classroom - as well as other external factors such as family/work situations. As per our analysis of Grading Tool records and interviews, efforts towards increasing and improving Attendance remain high but with mixed, mostly low results leading us to believe that there may be other factors impacting this that are currently not being addressed by Masoom.
3. **Holistic Development and ancillary activities in schools** - as per the Grading Tool, it is unclear which of these activities Masoom is specifically responsible for, i.e. has put in targeted efforts and interventions towards increasing impact, and also what the priority for the same is in light of other more pressing immediate issues. However, given that many of the activities under this bucket have shown low scores as per Grading Tool Analysis (activities related to extracurricular efforts - annual days, sports days, field trips and programs related to support for career placement - Role Models, Life Skills, Vocational Guidance)<sup>2</sup>, we need to critically examine the impact of these programs, the current interventions that go towards the same and what role exactly does Masoom play here - are they the facilitator, the enabler or the supporter of these programs? Accordingly, we'd also know whether to attribute the success of the same towards Masoom or towards the school teams.

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<sup>2</sup> As per Masoom's calendar, these activities are scheduled to take place in the second term of the school year – hence the low scores during Toolbox's Assessment period.

## Masoom’s Current and Proposed Effort Analysis

### Masoom Current Effort Analysis

Based on the above, the Toolbox team prepared an Effort Analysis to understand if higher intervention is truly leading to impact, and if not then how should Masoom restructure/redistribute their efforts for the same.

- The diagram below shows the output and outcome of Masoom’s intervention based on the programs listed within its School Transformation Model. This table is not indicative of the importance of specific programs, but rather highlights the correlation between Masoom’s intervention and the impact of the same during the assessed grading period.
- Results are determined by examining areas where Masoom has or hasn’t had a certain number of interventions. Impact is recorded as per the grade awarded in that area on the Grading Tool.
- Selected activities from the Grading Tool have been listed below based on in-depth interviews with current HMs and Masoom staff about Masoom’s actual efforts in their schools. Not all of the activities listed in the Grading Tool always receive the same intervention due to a variety of reasons both from the school and Masoom’s constraints.

High Intervention / Low Impact (Quadrant 4)	High Intervention / High Impact (Quadrant 1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge Course</li> <li>• Enrollment</li> <li>• Staff engagement</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Extra-curricular programs (sports day, annual day, cultural day)</li> <li>• Curricular planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSC Pass Percentage</li> <li>• SMDCs (formation and functioning)</li> </ul>
Low Intervention / Low Impact (Quadrant 3)	Low Intervention / High Impact (Quadrant 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher training (professional development and pedagogy methodologies employed)</li> <li>• Teaching Outside Classroom</li> <li>• Curricular Planning</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Holistic Development               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Role Model Program</li> <li>○ Life Skills Program</li> <li>○ Alumni Support</li> <li>○ Vocational Guidance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure (science labs, libraries, other construction, books, etc)</li> <li>• Computer education</li> <li>• Trustee Financial Viability</li> <li>• Non-teaching Staff Management</li> </ul>

Fig. 1



We can see above that Quadrant 3 contains some critical areas that impact student outcomes that are currently not yielding the desired efforts. However, we learned through our analysis and interviews that as of now Masoom’s focus was not explicitly on teacher training and development, as compared to the other programs. This could be one potential explanation for the placement of these initiatives in Q3, as compared to the ones mentioned in Q1 which have evidence of consistent and extensive inputs from Masoom.

**Masoom’s Proposed Effort Redistribution**

- A proposed Effort Distribution for Masoom could be as follows, with activities in Quadrant IV up for review about their inclusion in the Grading Tool/list of activities under review based on their impact to the overall development of the school.
- Activities listed below reflect a combination of insights from the Grading Tool Analysis, interviews with HMs and Masoom staff and predictions from the Toolbox team based on observed and studied trends in capacity building and stakeholder management. These are a proposal for the Masoom team to consider and evaluate, and provide a guideline for how to conduct a pre-emptive Effort Analysis before commencing, strengthening or terminating an intervention in a school.

<b>High Intervention / Low Impact - Quadrant 4</b> (activities that require consistent long-term effort and follow-up, and are necessary to create systemic impact)	<b>High Intervention / High Impact - Quadrant 1</b> (key metrics of the School Transformation Model that are also important for external reports)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• SMDC Role and Functioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSC Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Enrollment</li> <li>• Teacher Training               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Teaching Methodology</li> <li>○ Teacher PD</li> <li>○ Curricular Planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Staff Engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Low Intervention / Low Impact - Quadrant 3</b> (activities that are “nice-to-have” as part of the social fabric of the community that require stronger school/community support and reduced efforts from Masoom as a school progresses through the model)	<b>Low Intervention / High Impact - Quadrant 2</b> (interventions that allow for sustainability and continued functioning of the school but do not necessarily require Masoom expertise or intervention)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classrooms Displays *</li> <li>• Teaching Outside the Classroom</li> <li>• Extracurricular activities **</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure (science labs, libraries, other construction, books, etc)</li> <li>• Computer education</li> <li>• Trustee Financial Viability</li> <li>• Non-teaching Staff Management</li> <li>• PTA Interaction</li> </ul>

Fig. 2

Ideally, Masoom should spend the bulk of its efforts focusing on activities in Quadrant 1 - High Int / High Imp. The activities in Q2 - Low Int/High Imp are also important because they require less effort but yield immediate results. Masoom should revisit activities in Q3 - Low Int/Low Imp to evaluate if these activities ultimately need to be included in Masoom's scope of activities. If Masoom is not conducting significant enough interventions in the same, they should be outsourced to the school and removed from the Masoom model and included as "highly recommended activities". Activities listed in Q4 are those which require significant and ongoing interventions, with results important to the functioning of the school but whose results may not be immediately visible in the short term.

We estimate that by redistributing their efforts in those areas where they can have immediate and maximum impact, Masoom will be able to convey priorities to the schools they are working with and also allow the schools to develop their capacity for addressing the secondary/ancillary activities that are still necessary for the functioning of the school and increasing student outcomes. In doing this redistribution, Masoom should critically question which initiatives it is uniquely equipped to address (in terms of the training of its staff/Project Managers) and the resources only they can access. As difficult as it may be, if the school and larger community can be trained to handle other activities, Masoom should focus on empowering them to do so within a specified time frame as well. In order to achieve this, expectations for the same should be laid out at the beginning of their involvement with the school.

**Notes:**

\* "Classroom displays" is a misleading term and does not refer to the complete scope of what is encompassed/understood under this term. As per discussions with Head Masters and Masoom staff, Classroom Displays actually refers to teaching aids and methods employed in the classroom in order to make learning more interactive. In that case, this would fall under Quadrant II - Low Intervention / High Impact

\*\* Extracurricular activities - placing this in Quadrant III - Low Intervention/Low Impact does not negate the importance of social gatherings and cultural activities in the educational setting. However, in the interest of resource allocation and efficient utilization of Masoom staff, these activities will yield low impact against the primary goals of increasing academic achievement while involving significant planning and effort.

## 2. The ideal lifecycle of a school in Masoom’s NTSP

Currently, as per the Masoom model, a school is a part of the NTSP for a total of 60 months (5 years) and will be a recipient of interventions, resources and support for that time. Since the inception of the NTSP, there have not yet been schools that have “graduated” out of the program - successfully navigated the levels of growth and established themselves as capable of sustainably continuing their progress as per the targeted areas. As Masoom gets ready to both graduate a set of their older schools as well as expand their program as per their strategic objectives and impact a larger number of night school students, it is imperative to develop a basic template that would guide Masoom’s interventions in a school and establish broad guidelines for schools in order to progress through the NTSP model and achieve the requisite milestones. By doing so, both Masoom and the school can ensure an objective evaluation of its progress and readiness for independent operation.

In order to best understand the needs of a school that is a part of the Masoom program, we use the analogy of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs - a conceptual framework introduced in 1943 by renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow to identify and address human motivation and the intrinsic desires to progress ahead. Maslow’s basic theory identified five stages of needs that, if fulfilled, would enable people to reach their maximum potential.

If we equate the lifecycle of a school as part of the Masoom program to Maslow’s Hierarchy, we are able to get a broad sense, in thinking of the school/school team as a functioning entity, of what specific needs/criteria need to be successfully met in order to allow the school/stakeholders to move on to the next level of engagement and impact. For the sake of this model, we will compare the lifecycle of a sample school in the program to this progression of needs.

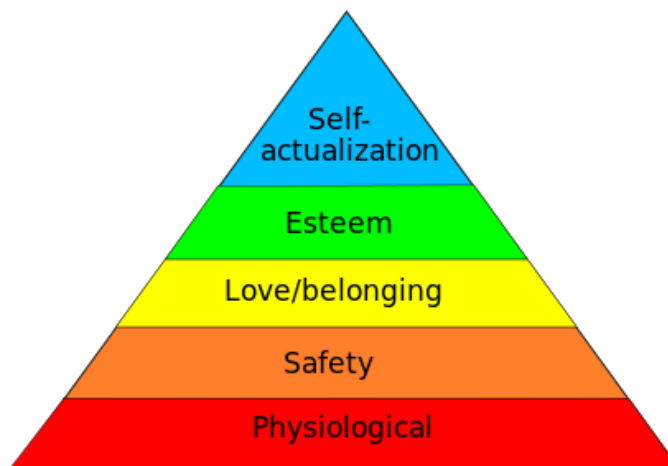


Fig.3 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

### Stage 1

At this stage, a school is newly inducted into the Masoom program. While it is yet being evaluated, it is placed at a grade assessment of Lower D. During this stage, it is imperative to address the basic needs of the school and the staff, namely expectations from both sides, the vision of what the school would eventually achieve and basic structures for key programs as part of the model. A critical component of Masoom's work also involves accurately assessing the school at this juncture in order to suitably recommend interventions down the road. We recommend starting work with the programs where Masoom already has proven impact, in order to show early structure and see quick results, such as the SSC Improvement Plan and the Enrollment programs. In comparing this to Maslow's pyramid, if these basic requirements are not met (clear expectations, initial systems and structures and early implementation of critical programs), it is difficult for the school to progress smoothly to subsequent stages. It is recommended that this stage last no longer than one grading cycle as the school is appropriately assessed and slotted into the requisite grade level.

### **Stage 2**

The second stage of the Masoom lifecycle will ideally involve activities that provide a sense of security to the school's stakeholders and will demonstrate stronger results in the areas of intervention. It is recommended that Masoom continue to focus and setup programs to deliver on all Key Metrics as part of the Grading Tool. The second stage of a school's lifecycle should ideally be longer than the first one, in order for the school stakeholders to be better acquainted with the Masoom process. In their interviews with the Toolbox team, many Head Masters who had positive experiences with the Masoom process highlighted the importance of strong support to the HM at this point in order to allow him to effectively handle other stakeholders in the school at this point in time. We recommend that a school remain at this stage/the next level assigned the them for at least two consecutive grading cycles in order to experience the impact of Masoom's interventions as well as strengthen their capacity for responding to the same.

### **Stage 3**

A key component of Maslow's Hierarchy at the third stage is Love and Belonging, and it can be aptly translated to a sharp focus by now on Teacher support and development. While the Head Master of the schools are one of the most critical levers for school transformation, studies have shown significant improvement in student academic outcomes based on the investment levels of their teachers. It is recommended that Masoom begin working with teachers towards the end of stage 2 in a more comprehensive manner that involves curriculum development and methodology support and continue into stage 3 with a focus on their professional development. One of the indirect outcomes of this process is to also distribute the burden of leadership and administrative activities between the Head Master and the teachers, as their investment levels would increase in accordance with their improved skills and capacity. It is recommended once more that a school stay here for at least two grading cycles in order to continue to demonstrate consistency and an ability to meet results.

### **Stage 4**

The fourth stage as per the model of human motivation indicates a natural progression to esteem and a need to be respected for one's efforts. When we place this within the framework of a school's lifecycle, it is prudent to consider the involvement of the larger community in the working and progress of the school. Community engagement, SMDC functioning and larger involvement by external stakeholders becomes a critical part of the school's lifecycle at this point in order to build upon the proof points of academic achievement and increased enrollment/attendance that should hopefully have been an

outcome of the earlier stages in the school's lifecycle. At this stage, given both the quantity and quality of interventions by Masoom, we recommend that the school stay at the one of the higher grade levels for three grading cycles. In doing so, the school is expected to maintain both consistencies in its results while having sufficient time to focus on building stronger stakeholder relationships, a task that cannot be necessarily time bound.

### **Stage 5**

In the final stage of the school's lifecycle, we do not anticipate things to be perfect. However, as part of the Masoom program, we expect a certain level of academic outcome, a higher investment from teachers and other stakeholders as well as improved leadership capabilities shown by the school principal. The key to a successful school transformation program is the ability to maintain these high levels in the absence of external intervention and support. Therefore, in accordance with the idea of "self-actualization" and the ability to do one's best at this level, Masoom should withdraw its support for programs at this stage that do not have a direct correlation with students' academic improvement by focusing mainly on HM support and allowing him to execute and envision many of the ongoing and future programs for the school. Based on the current offering of programs, we recommend that the following programs be handed over completely by Masoom to the school for implementation, design and execution:

To be run by school:

- Talent Competition
- Annual Day
- Sports Day
- Picnic

To be run by school in conjunction with another supporting organization who can provide focused support/resources:

- Health Camp
- Life Skills Training
- Role Model Program

By playing mainly a supportive role, Masoom can also evaluate their own efforts as well as plug in any gaps in skill/capacity they notice at this stage with the school leader mostly in charge. In doing so, Masoom will effectively setup a school to transition out of its program.

The above mentioned stages of a school's lifecycle are depicted below with a rough estimate of timelines and how a school would move through the levels of the Masoom Grading Tool.

## Lifecycle of school with Masoom

\* Expected time with Masoom: 60 months

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
<b>Grade level</b>	Lower D	D	C	B	A
		(or next grade level assessed)	(or next grade level assessed)	Time spent in this stage can be variable based on school performance, with preferably more time spent at A level than B to show consistency and ability to meet/maintain quality outcomes	
<b>Key targeted outcomes</b>	Evaluation of school; assessment and slotting into category, norms established on expectations from Masoom	Focus on deepening interventions for Key Metrics and HM support (eg. SSC pass %, enrollment, etc)	Teacher training and development, impact in curricular interventions, initiate targeted interventions with larger community	Creating proof points in certain programs - SMDCs, community engagement and involvement in school activities, empowerment of SMDCs, increased parental engagement	Demonstrate consistency, HM leadership development, develop second level of support for HM (through teachers, SMDCs, infrastructure independence) and other systems for sustainability
<b>Time spent at this grade</b>	6 months/1 grading cycle till full assessment occurs and school is appropriately slotted in requisite grade bucket	12 months / 2 grading cycles	12 months / 2 grading cycles	18 months / 3 grading cycles to allow school to stabilize and spend significant time meeting outcomes at this level	12 months / 2 consecutive grading cycles at A to demonstrate ability to maintain standards with reducing Masoom intervention and support across programs

Fig. 4

### 3. Differentiated Stakeholder Engagement

One of the most critical elements of successful capacity building is stakeholder engagement - a model where a company or an organization interacts with each stakeholder involved in the outcome of a project/program/initiative in a customized way that enhances their motivation for supporting the program. In the case of schools, the adage “It takes a village to raise a child” is not far from the truth. In order to successfully achieve targeted educational outcomes, it is necessary for all stakeholders involved in a student’s education to be engaged and involved on many levels.

Masoom’s program works primarily in this space, aside from its work on infrastructure support and government advocacy, and as such a large portion of its efforts should be concentrated in this area. While stakeholder mapping has taken place among the organization, results from the Grading Tool and in-depth interviews reveal that there have been no such targeted efforts for one section of stakeholders, quite possibly due to it being a high intervention/low impact area and low return on investment. All stakeholders falling within the Community bucket for Masoom schools play an important role when it comes to ensuring both the sustainability and the smooth functioning of a school within the community. Parents, Alumni and other community members play a crucial role in stages 3-5 of a school’s lifecycle with Masoom since they have the potential to support the school team in running additional activities and banding the community together around efforts to support students.

By inserting our stakeholders into a simple Stakeholder Mapping Matrix, we can see at a glance what Masoom’s *engagement outcomes* should be with all of its stakeholders. It is not feasible to have all of them involved to the same degree and it would be counterproductive as well. However, given the importance of many stakeholders such as school Trustees who still have the final say in many school administrative matters, their engagement strategies need to be well-planned in order to ensure a low-touch high-impact method of engagement and ensure that their needs are being met as well and their concerns are aired.

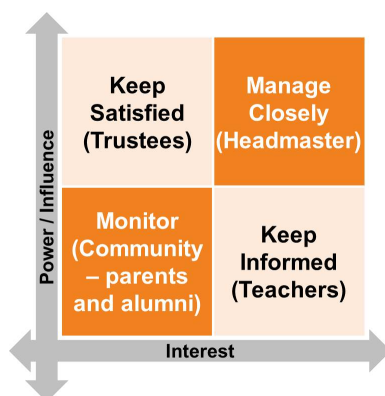


Fig. 5

A stakeholder matrix allows Masoom to prioritize whose demands to meet first based on their influence and interest levels in the outcome of the work.

Based on the Stakeholder Mapping Matrix, the table below shows a recommended differentiated engagement framework corresponding to the proposed lifecycle for a Masoom school (Fig. 4) and explains both the targeted outcome and processes that Masoom could adopt in dealing with the

different stakeholders in the school environment.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan					
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
<b>Target Stakeholder</b>	HM Trustee	HM Teachers SMDC	Teachers Parents/Alumni/ Misc. community	Teachers SMDC	HM
<b>Target Process</b>	Assess school resources Identify plan and division of labour Establish expectations for trustee and HM	Focused interventions for teacher training to increase student engagement, which should impact attendance Continued support to HM Create systems for SMDC - vision, agenda, structures and involvement of HM and trustees in the same	Continued focus on teacher training to increase accountability Develop community engagement strategy (parents, alumni and other stakeholders)	Capacity building for SMDC Bridge skill gaps in teacher training Community/extracurricular events run by school	Focus on building systems and capacity Develop secondary support for HM
<b>Target Outcome</b>	Implement interventions for Key Metrics Initial investment from teachers	Teacher investment with clear goals for training and outcomes, curricular planning and expectations for rigor Vision set for SMDC Investment of SMDC members Transparency in functioning	Increased SMDC involvement School and community involvement in Holistic Development programs (Career Placements, Role Model, Life Skills) Stable/increased enrollment	SMDC addresses key issues Invested teachers Improved academic performance Options for financial/infrastructure support explored	Almost independent functioning of school with adherence to Masoom's model Consistent grades Systems in place for sustainability Financial and infrastructure plan in place

Fig. 6



## Recommendations

In the previous section, we proposed revisions to existing frameworks and strategies in order to enhance the impact of Masoom's interventions and ensure that their efforts were being directed to the most needed areas. The following recommendations mentioned below are an outcome of some of the earlier revisions, qualitative information shared during focus groups/interviews as well as best practices selected from the field of available research in this area. We recommend that Masoom explore the possibility of adopting these initiatives in order to strengthen their program and their own internal capacity to evaluate the impact of their efforts going forward.

### 1. HM Development and Support

The role of the school leader cannot be underestimated in evaluating student outcomes. Global research studies shared through the Wallace Foundation state that approximately 25% of student outcomes are impacted by the school leaders/principals. Both the Masoom staff as well as their current cohort of HMs agree to the criticality of HMs as a crucial lever in the School Transformation Project. However, currently as per existing practices in India, the senior most teachers are usually promoted to Head Master/principal status in schools, and as such these individuals rarely possess the leadership/administrative skills required for school leadership, aside from curriculum development.

While Masoom runs a strong program with a few touch points in the year and has successfully managed to pique HM's interest in their collaborative Peer Learning network, we recommend the creation of a structured module/program to focus on training school leaders from Stage 1 of the school's lifecycle in order to provide them with leadership and management tools to work with all stakeholders. An adapted version of the Five Dimensions of School Leadership from the Wallace Foundation (2006) shared below is a strong starting point for the same:

- a. Focus on learning
- b. Use of data and evidence
- c. Aligning resources with learning improvement goals
- d. Construction of roles in the school team that enable leaders to focus on learning improvement
- e. Engagement with the larger community

Based on Masoom's observation of the Head Masters it has worked with over the years, we also recommend the creation of a framework to help HM's develop their own leadership skills - ***what would it look like for a Head Master to be rated an "A" as per Masoom's current framework of rating schools?*** We would like to leave the Masoom team with this question and the option to dedicate specific staff members towards this program since its importance cannot be underestimated.

As a country, India still has a long way to go in terms of support for school leaders which will ultimately lead to improved school results. However, given the growing evidence for the impact of a strong school leader on teacher performance as well as student achievement, we recommend that Masoom staff reach out to national organizations currently working on school leadership programs such as the

Kaivalya Foundation and India School Leadership Institute and develop a method to share best practices from these organizations with the Masoom school principals who may be unable to do longer programs such as these at the moment. This structured focus on the Head Master as a critical component of the success of the NTSP will pay off dividends as school principals leave behind their role as head teachers and step into the challenging shoes of administrators. Please refer to the appendices for links to studies on school leader/head master effectiveness and sample training modules.

## **2. Increase focus on Community Engagement and Support**

Currently, Masoom does not have a clear strategy for Community Engagement. While it carries out various activities that relate to the larger community, the organization had not prioritized this bucket of stakeholders until now given their focus elsewhere. However, analysis of the Grading Tool Results, interviews with Head Masters and the Effort Analysis conducted earlier all suggest that Masoom would benefit greatly from a clear policy that outlined how community members (parents, alumni, other NGOs, local key players) could be involved in various projects, and in doing so reduce the amount of time and effort spent by Masoom on the same.

Suggestions of some areas of involvement for Community members include organizing Sports/Annual days and cultural events, providing financial/infrastructure support in terms of resources/stationery, Alumni support to current students and increased rates of Attendance for students that may be an outcome of more support from parents in the community. Currently the SMDC is an integral component of school administration where Masoom is focusing much of its efforts, and which has the potential to develop a strong governing body for the school. As a result, it is imperative that other activities that have a low return on investment but still require high intervention/organizing efforts be “outsourced” to other members in the community in a bid to create greater involvement and reduce Masoom’s efforts towards the same.

## **3. Redesign staff profiles to include Intervention Specialists**

One of the key outcomes of redesigning the Masoom lifecycle and the stakeholder engagement framework is the renewed focus on catering to schools and stakeholders at different stages in the process. From the point of view of organisational sustainability, Masoom would strongly benefit from restructuring some of their staff profiles to allow certain Project Managers/other staff to develop specialized skills in addressing specific intervention initiatives and serve as a single point of contact and training for the larger staff team. By doing this, Masoom would significantly enhance the internal career progression for its staff members by allowing multiple levels of growth while at the same time enhancing their own internal understanding of the exact effort and inputs required to move schools to different stages in the lifecycle. Toolbox recommends that these Intervention Specialists also be trained in the Training-of-Trainers approach to disseminate their information more widely to the larger group of Project Managers. In practice, a few of these positions could be as follows, with more to be added as Masoom expands its operations and depth of impact as well.

- HM Leadership Development Specialist: key point of contact for the HM training module, implementing and sharing best practices for school leaders from the Indian education sector and supporting Project Managers in helping their HMs achieve their full leadership potential.
- Primary Stages Intervention Specialist: focused on helping schools meet the early benchmarks of success and implementing strong programs for Key Metrics.
- Later Stages Intervention Specialist: focused on helping schools develop mechanisms for consistent performance over a long period of time.
- SMDC Specialist: focused on understanding effective advocacy strategies and trained in community organizing/consensus building in order to design strong structures and processes for SMDC functioning and effectiveness.

#### **4. Restructure Grading Tool to align with stakeholder engagement framework**

The last recommendation we have for Masoom is to restructure their current Grading Tool in order to make it easier to evaluate and track their own intervention and efforts. The table below shows the current Grading Tool and the format of the same, with a revised version side-by-side which has been segregated on the basis of each group of stakeholders, with the relevant metrics in each section. This was also an observation by the Toolbox Team as we conducted our analysis. Given the criticality of the Grading Tool as an instrument of comparison and to check progress, Masoom needs to ensure that it is easily readable and provides a succinct snapshot of the hard work that has gone into their multiple programs. As part of the Grading Tool revision, we also recommend that a norming session take place once or twice a year based on resources and availability to ensure that all Project Managers are normed on the interpretation of each indicator as well as the grade levels to be assigned. This will ensure validity of the results in the Grading Tool and allow either Masoom or an external evaluator to provide accurate analysis in the future.

The current Grading Tool is divided into four sections:

- Survey A - Some key metrics
- Survey B1 - Educational Infrastructure and Inputs
- Survey B2 - Capacity Building for all stakeholders
- Survey B3 - Advocacy

The revised Grading Tool redistributes the activities based on the key stakeholders and support services provided to the school. Proposed breakup of the revised Grading Tool would include the following. A complete version of the revised Grading Tool can be found in the appendices.

- Key Metrics
  - Key outcomes that indicate success and sustainability of school
- Stakeholder Survey A: HM/Trustee
  - Metrics related to Head Master/senior management/Trustee functioning
- Stakeholder Survey B: Teacher Training Support
  - Metrics related to inputs into training teachers on methodology as well as student outcomes
- Support Survey 1: Infrastructure/Resources
  - Metrics related to products delivered
- Support Survey 2: Student Development

- Metrics related to additional support for students
- Support Survey 3: Community Engagement
  - Metrics related to parental support and community-wide events
- Advocacy
  - Metrics related to SMDC functioning

## **5. Knowledge, Skills & Attitude Mapping.**

Toolbox recommends that specific programs be designed for developing and supporting the stakeholders of the school in developing their skills and abilities at each stage of the School Lifecycle in order to effectively enable the school to move up a certain level. A competency map has been designed and shared with Masoom identifying a clear progression of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will allow them to design specific intervention programs for the same and will hopefully lead to more targeted results.

Refer Appendices 2 for the Competency Map

## Conclusions, Limitations and Further Research

By focusing its efforts on high intervention/high impact activities primarily together with reviewing their support for Head Masters as well as increasing their community-based interventions, Masoom will hopefully be able to address the needs of its schools in a manner that makes optimal use of its resources, skills and manpower.

We anticipate that basis this implementation, Masoom and its schools will have a clearer idea of expectations and estimated timelines of completion. Further, this may also allow for specialization and training within the group of Masoom Project Managers to develop specialist roles based on certain PM's success in moving schools at certain grade levels and/or specific capacity building interventions. Without having undertaken a detailed manpower analysis, we anticipate a reduction in time spent on low impact/high intervention activities over a period of time. Another expected outcome is a higher number of schools moving out of the Lower D category within the first six months as a result of clarity in expected timelines and lifecycle stages with Masoom.

Limitations of this study primarily involve the data reporting mechanisms, as primarily evidenced in the grading tool. We were unable to ensure that all data was 100% objective since ratings were provided by Project Managers based on their interpretation of the ratings. Additionally, the ratings were examined for one grading cycle, given the changes in Masoom's internal monitoring and evaluation instruments, which made it difficult to compare previous years' data accurately.

Further research can potentially be conducted in the areas of teacher training and Advocacy/effective SMC management to understand what best practices can be applied to the same, and how Masoom may need to change their interventions/develop additional capacity and specialization to make their interventions effective. Another additional area of study could be the adaptation of the current model to Masoom's expansion plans and examining the feasibility of continuing this level of support.

## About Toolbox India Foundation

Toolbox India Foundation works as a catalyst to provide strategic assistance to non-profit, growth-stage organisations through its portfolio of highly skilled, corporate volunteers. It was established in 2007 as an overseas extension of its Belgian counterpart, Toolbox Belgium. The original concept was first conceived when its founders noted the severe lack of management support within the non-profit community. They realised that this need could be provided for by drawing on corporate professionals to volunteer their pro-bono consulting services. Toolbox was therefore founded to serve as an intermediary platform that matches expert volunteers to its non-profit partners through a comprehensive assessment of both parties' expertise and needs. ToolBox India Foundation is registered as a not for profit organisation under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956. TBXI helps non-profits in the definition of their objectives and the development of their organisational capacity to best reach those objectives, while enabling volunteers from the private sector to share their experience and know-how in the field of management.

Over the last 4 years, Toolbox has established itself as a capacity-building intermediary in India. It has drawn on its experiences in both Belgium and India; constantly refining its practices to address challenges, and seeking to bridge the skills gap between the social and corporate sectors. Through its partnerships with various non-profits, Toolbox has greatly honed its tactic in identifying the needs of social organisations early on. It has also greatly improved in managing project timelines and assessing its impacts. Most significantly, Toolbox has altered the non-profit landscape in India—allowing social purpose organisations to see the less tangible value of capacity building, to focus on developing systems, tools and processes rather than solely on principal functions of fundraising.

For more details : [www.tbxi.org](http://www.tbxi.org) / [info@tbxi.org](mailto:info@tbxi.org)

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## Appendices

### 1. Current v/s Proposed Grading Tool

Current Grading Tool	Proposed Grading Tool
<b>Survey A</b>	<b>Key Metrics</b>
Attendance: How many students were present (head count) last year in classes VIII, IX & X?	Attendance: How many students were present (head count) last year in classes VIII, IX & X?
Attendance: What was the average attendance last year against enrollment?	Enrolment: How many students were enrolled (out of school) last year in class 8th, 9th and 10th?
Enrolment: How many students were enrolled (out of school) last year in class 8th, 9th and 10th?	SSC Pass Percentage: What is the SSC pass percentage achieved by the school last year?
SSC Pass Percentage: What is the SSC pass percentage achieved by the school last year?	Infrastructure: Which of the following infrastructure facilities are available in your school? (availability can be through the School or S.M.D.C. or any other sources)
Trustee Financial Viability: What is the financial condition of the school?	S.M.D.C.'s in Schools: What is the status and role of S.M.D.C.'s in Schools?
S.M.D.C.'s in Schools: What is the status and role of S.M.D.C.'s in Schools?	Trustee Financial Viability: What is the financial condition of the school?
Student placements: What is the status of 10th graders post their exams?	<b>Stakeholder Survey A (Head Master/Trustees)</b>
Infrastructure: Which of the following infrastructure facilities are available in your school? (availability can be through the School or S.M.D.C. or any other sources)	Senior Leadership Involvement: Do the trustees inspect the schools to check records and results? Do the trustees conduct a meeting with the staff to discuss the progress of the school and set goals?
<b>Survey B1 (Educational Infrastructure and inputs)</b>	Non-Teaching Staff Management: Does the school have adequate non-teaching staff and how responsive are they?
Student Information: Does the school collect and maintain information of its students?	<i>(Include an indicator on the effectiveness/leadership/management of the Head Master)</i>
Staff Engagement: Are staff meetings held in the school?	<b>Stakeholder Survey B: Teacher Training and Support</b>
Enrollment: How the school conducts Enrollment Drive? Repeat	Staff Engagement: Are staff meetings held in the school?
Academic Achievement (Bridge Course): Is subject wise Bridge Course of Masoom conducted in schools on time? (July)	Staff Engagement: During Staff Meetings, what issues are discussed?
SMDC: how are S.M.D.C. members supporting in the overall development and governance of the school? - Should be Key Metric?	Staff Accountability: What methods are used to improve accountability of staff?
Classroom Displays: What displays do you see in each classroom? (Charts, Globe, etc.)	Curricular Planning: Do you have a yearly curriculum plan? Does the school prepare the school's monthly action plan (class and subject wise syllabus as well as extracurricular activities)?
<b>Survey B2 (Capacity building for all)</b>	Teacher Professional Development: Do teachers attend

stakeholders)	workshops conducted by Masoom or the Government?
Attendance: How does the school plan for improving attendance of the students?	Teaching Methodology: How the teacher engages with the students in the class?
Attendance: What efforts are made to improve the attendance of students? ( <i>repeat</i> )	Rigor: Do students come to school regularly and submit homework assignments on time and teachers check them?
Staff Engagement: During Staff Meetings, what issues are discussed?	Rigor: Do teachers correct students' work on time and give feed back to students?
Senior Leadership Involvement: Do the trustees inspect the schools to check records and results? Do the trustees conduct a meeting with the staff to discuss the progress of the school and set goals?	Academic Achievement: Is SSC Result Improvement Plan implemented in your school?
Non-Teaching Staff Management: Does the school have adequate non-teaching staff and how responsive are they?	Student Assessment: Are CCE methods used for student assessment?
Teaching Outside Classroom: Do you have Assembly sessions?	<b>Support Survey 1: Infrastructure/resources</b>
Teaching Outside Classroom: Does the school organize any annual activity on their own (sports, picnic, field visit and health camp)?	Student Information: Does the school collect and maintain information of its students?
Staff Accountability: What methods are used to improve accountability of staff?	Academic Achievement (Bridge Course): Is subject wise Bridge Course of Masoom conducted in schools on time?
Community Engagement: What are the different ways in which the community engages with the school stakeholders?	Computer Education Does the school provide computer education?
Holistic Development: Does the school conduct sessions on hygiene, gender and sex education?	Classroom Displays: What displays do you see in each classroom? (Charts, Globe, etc.) A ( <i>this indicator to be renamed to Visual Aids</i> )
Extra-Curricular Activities: Does the school have a cultural event (annual event) like talent competition?	<b>Support Survey 2: Student Development</b>
Participation- Student Committees etc.: Does the school involve students in governance?	Inclusiveness: Does the school have policy for needs of special students?
Life Skills: Are sessions conducted on life skills such as goal setting and personality development?	Holistic Development: Does the school conduct sessions on hygiene, gender and sex education?
Vocational Guidance and Interest Mapping: What activities are undertaken by the school to prepare Class X students for their future career?	Extra-Curricular Activities: Does the school have a cultural event (annual event) like talent competition
Role Models: Does the school have Role Models Program?	Participation- Student Committees etc.: Does the school involve students in governance?
Alumni Network: Has the school created Alumni Association? Is it active?	Life Skills: Are sessions conducted on life skills such as goal setting and personality development?
Curricular Planning: Do you have a yearly curriculum plan? Does the school prepare the school's monthly action plan	Vocational Guidance and Interest Mapping: What activities are undertaken by the school to prepare Class X students for their future career?
Teacher Professional Development: Do teachers attend workshops conducted by Masoom or the Government?	Role Models: Does the school have Role Models Program?

Teaching Methodology: How the teacher engages with the students in the class?	Alumni Network: Has the school created Alumni Association? Is it active?
Rigor: Do students come to school regularly and submit homework assignments on time and teachers check them?	<b>Support Survey 3: Community Engagement</b>
Rigor: Do teachers correct students' work on time and give feed back to students?	Community Engagement: What are the different ways in which the community engages with the school stakeholders?
Academic Achievement: Is SSC Result Improvement Plan implemented in your school?	Teaching Outside Classroom: Does the school organize any annual activity on their own (sports, picnic, field visit and health camp)?
Student Assessment: Are CCE methods used for student assessment?	Parent-Teacher Interaction (PTA): How many times in a year Parents-teachers meetings are held by the School?
Parent-Teacher Interaction (PTA): How many times in a year Parents-teachers meetings are held by the School?	Parent-Teacher Interaction (PTA): What percentage of parents attends these meetings and is there any specific agenda for the PTA by the School?
Parent-Teacher Interaction (PTA): What percentage of parents attends these meetings and is there any specific agenda for the PTA by the School?	<b>Advocacy</b>
Inclusiveness: Does the school have policy for needs of special students?	SMDC Formation: Is SMDC formed in your school and how is it functioning?
Computer Education Does the school provide computer education?	SMDC: Is SMDC working with a proper VISION towards the School Development Plan?
<b>Survey B3 (Advocacy)</b>	SMDC: How frequently does the S.M.D.C. meeting take place with specific agendas?
SMDC Formation: Is SMDC formed in your school and how is it functioning?	Core Committee: How the core committee is assisting the night schools to upgrade them to next level?
SMDC: Is SMDC working with a proper VISION towards the School Development Plan?	
SMDC: How frequently does the S.M.D.C. meeting take place with specific agendas?	
Core Committee: How the core committee is assisting the night schools to upgrade them to next level?	