

The National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA) is the unified voice of budget private schools (BPS) in India, that aim at improving access to affordable and quality education for the economically weaker.

editor's pick: WE ARE NOT ALONE

Affordable schooling is a worldwide concept: wherever governments have failed to provide good quality public education, budget private schools have come up to bridge public low quality and private high cost schooling. We introduce you to three such associations across the world, that, like NISA, protect and promote budget private schools:

Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) is the oldest, largest association of independent schools in South Africa and Southern African region, with nearly 700 member schools in South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Angola. Its member schools employ some 12,500 teachers and educate more than 154,000 pupils. Know more: www.isasa.org.

Kenya Independent Schools Association (KISA) is an association of approximately 1,000 independent, community schools serving low income households across Kenya, most of which are found in the informal settlements (slums) in major towns. Know more: www.schoolskenya.net/index.php/Kenya-Independent-Schools-Association-KISA.html.

Nigeria's Association of Formidable Education Development (AFED) comprises of both government-approved and growing schools, and provides education to poor families. The democratic association follows an open door policy and partners with both Federal and State governments in the country. Know more: www.afed.info.



EVENTS

Conference | 25 April 2014, New Delhi
State-wide Conference on Section 12 (1) (c)
Indus Action and Central Square Foundation held a conference to discuss ways of implementing section 12 of the Right to Education Act (that guarantees 25% reservation for admissions of children belonging to weaker or disadvantaged sections in unaided private schools). Two panels of experts discussed the clause in detail to find ways for a smooth socio-academic inclusion of the children. Read full report at: <http://righttoeducation.in/project-eklavya-campaign-10-report>

National Summit | 19-20 April 2014, New Delhi
NISA National Level Meeting
NISA held its first annual national level meeting to finalize the mandate of the Alliance and also chart out an annual plan. 50+ delegates representing 14 states and NISA teams shared updates from their regions and deliberated on different aspects of quality, school recognition/closures and advocacy for budget private schools. NISA Mandate was also finalized. Read full report at: [LINK](#)

featured story: THE BEAUTIFUL TREE

Prof James Tooley's book, *The Beautiful Tree*, is an inspiring journey into the lives of families and teachers in the poorest communities of India, Africa and China who have successfully created their own private schools in response to failed public education. It is a passionate and engaging account of the children, parents, teachers and entrepreneurs who Tooley encounters in the face of staunch government denial that these schools actually exist. They taught him that the poor are not waiting for educational handouts — they are building their own schools and learning to save themselves.

The book, named after Mahatma Gandhi's phrase for the pre-colonial India, is not another book lamenting what's gone wrong in the third world. It is a book about what is going right, and it offers a simple lesson: both the entrepreneurial spirit and the love of parents for their children can help overcome the stifling effects of poverty.

James Tooley is the chief mentor of NISA and a friend of similar organisations world-over.

To secure your copy of *The Beautiful Tree*, write to nisa@ccs.in.

ask your lawyer: LEGAL BOUNDARIES

Q. Is there any set parameter for school and classroom area under RTE?

Hargopal Sharma, Punjab

A. Yes, there are defined norms for infrastructure under RTE. You could access a copy of the Punjab Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules 2011 on the RTE Platform. It is available at: <http://righttoeducation.in/states>.

Q. What are the norms for admitting children with special needs (autism)? Do I need to get some specific documents from the parents?

Kavita Marwah, Uttar Pradesh

A. Children with disabilities should fulfill the definition given under clause 2 (T) of Persons with Disabilities Act 1995. A certificate in this

regard shall have to be furnished by them. Further, the school/local authority will have to ensure transport arrangements for CWSN. They are also entitled to free special learning and support material in Uttar Pradesh.

Q. If the school has not received the govt part fee, what should the management do?

T Basavaraj, Karnataka

A. You should directly get in touch with the Education Department of Karnataka. Also, you could put in a formal grievance on the RTE Platform.

Have a question on RTE? Ask us now!
Visit www.righttoeducation.in.

Legal Boundaries is an answer to all your law-related queries on RTE and budget private schools, whether you are a school administrator, owner or parent.



Centre for Civil Society offers free legal advice and consult on RTE. We consult with Prashant Narang, legal expert and advocate from iJustice.

Write to prashant@ijustice.in with your query. Be as brief, clear and specific as possible, and put the subject line as: 'Legal Boundaries - NISA Query'.

Have a legal question on RTE?
Get free advice and consult!



NISA's first National Level Meeting (NLM) held between 19-20 April in New Delhi aimed at, among other important issues, charting out a **NISA Mandate** — a list of things that define NISA, what it believes, stands for and does (and what it doesn't). Through working groups on needs assessment for budget private schools (BPS), NISA's Executive Council (represented by two members from each state) laid down priorities for the Alliance. The groups then discussed their points with other members of the Council to build synergies. We bring you the top issues that emerged out, as presented by the group representatives:

"We should get to make our own rules when it comes to school fees and teacher salaries; one could look at a salary according to fee model for our schools. Also, our schools should be exempt from commercial charges for utilities like electricity, water, LPG etc. Teacher qualifications/trainings, funding and recognition norms should form the other parts of our mandate."

"Quality improvement in our schools should be an important aspect of our mandate — we should invest in leadership training, good quality assessments, teacher training and retention, and a robust support mechanism for budget private schools. Further, the NISA mandate should have a certain minimum emphasis on improving the overall school infrastructure."

"The issues related to finances, relaxation of recognition norms and teacher/management training are on top priority. Further, we should ensure an equal treatment of teachers and students of budget private schools when compared to other public or private schools. Also, we could look at developing a holistic NISA curriculum"



RC Jain
President, NISA



Ekta Sodha
Vice President—Quality, NISA



Kulbhushan Sharma
Vice President—Advocacy, NISA

nisa at work: STIR INNOVATION

NISA partners with STIR Education towards overall improvement in budget private schools. The partnership works through Micro-Innovations, which are customized, thematic activities designed around specific aspects of education. One such innovation is titled *'Working with Parents'*:

Janta Modern Public School is an affordable private school located in East Delhi's Vijay Park, a place predominantly inhabited by daily-wage workers, most of which have little formal education.

The school's principal and edupreneur, HK Sharma, who has actively worked closely with the community to build up an army of aware and sensitized parents, keen on sending their children to nearby schools. However, Sharma had been constantly noticing that the parents were not always engaged in supporting their children's education or were unaware of how to do so effectively, mainly because they were themselves not educated.

NISA introduced a micro-innovation titled *Working with Parents*, under the theme of *Parental and Community Engagement*, to gauge the level of involvement of parents and suggest ways to enhance it. Sharma worked on a questionnaire for students to gauge the level of support they receive at home, includ-

ing questions like *who watches TV with you and for how long, do you see any fights in the family, what is the profession of your parents* etc. He then collated and analyzed the data so gathered.

Sharma organized meetings with parents and asked them how they wanted their children to be in a few years time. Then, he shared the actual data collected from the students. It was interesting to see the parents realizing the stark differences in how they see their kids getting educated and how the kids view it. Sharma put forward the need for changing the approach to schooling and fostering a supportive, positive environment at home.

Working with Parents turned out to be an interesting innovation. It recognized the need for parents and teachers to work together throughout the year.

Sharma reports to have seen parents realizing their responsibility at home which is helping students a lot. Also the level of trust between the school and parents has improved over time.

Read more about the STIR Micro-Innovations here: http://www.stireducation.org/sites/default/files/STIR_India_2012-14_Micro-Innovations_4.pdf.

RTE NEWS

Times of India | 11 May 2014
Toilet, water must in schools: Supreme Court
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Toilet-water-must-in-schools-Supreme-Court/articleshow/34945462.cms>

Times of India | 7 May 2014
HC relief to Haryana private schools
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/HC-relief-to-Haryana-private-schools/articleshow/34748097.cms>

The Guardian | 7 May 2014
How technology is set to transform India's fragmented education system
<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/may/07/technology-transform-india-education-system>

Times of India | 7 May 2014
State can't impose mother tongue in private schools: SC
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/State-cant-impose-mother-tongue-in-private-primary-schools-SC/articleshow/34750820.cms>

Bar and Bench | 6 May 2014
Supreme Court holds minority schools to be exempt from RTE Act (download judgment)
http://barandbench.com/content/212/constitutional-validity-article-155-and-rte-act-battery#.U3BkdoGSx_U

Courtesy: **RightToEducation.in**



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