



CENTRAL SQUARE FOUNDATION

Job Description - Research Director

About Central Square Foundation

Founded in 2012, Central Square Foundation is a non-profit philanthropic foundation working with the vision of ensuring quality school education for all children in India. We are driven by a mission to transform the school education system in India with a focus on improving learning outcomes for all children, especially from low-income communities.

Over the past six years, we have closely engaged with leading practitioners, foundations and think tanks in India and around the world on different elements of building high-quality school education. We have supported social entrepreneurs, worked on generating evidence, established collaborative platforms for knowledge building and provided strategic & implementation support to Central and State governments in India.

In 2018, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation(BMGF) partnered with CSF, with CSF becoming an integral part of BMGF's core global education strategy (which includes providing education systems with better information, evidence, tools, and approaches to improve teaching and learning, with an emphasis on foundational learning).

We also consolidated our learnings and prioritized on ensuring that all children in India achieve foundational learning by class 3 i.e. attain basic proficiency in literacy and numeracy. We believe that achieving foundational learning is a gateway skill since a child who does not achieve foundational learning in early years is unlikely to catch up in later grades. This is impactful at both an individual and system level as it is directly correlated to increased workforce participation and better life outcomes. It is a key lever in pulling up the entire system's performance.

In order to achieve this ambitious goal, our strategy looks at this issue holistically, including informing policy, improving classroom instruction, partnering with governments to scale programs, filling gaps in research and incubating high-quality organizations.

About Our Founder - Ashish Dhawan

Ashish Dhawan is one of India's leading philanthropists and a key voice for education reform in the country. In his corporate stint, he founded and led one of India's leading private equity firms, ChrysCapital, before shifting tracks about 6 years ago to focus on India's education transformation. He founded CSF with the mission to improve learning levels of students from low-income communities.

In 2014, he spearheaded the launch of India's first liberal arts university, Ashoka University, a philanthropic effort of over forty leaders in education and industry.

Ashish currently serves on the board of several other non-profits including Bharti Foundation, Teach For India, Akanksha Foundation, Centre for Civil Society, Janaagraha, India School Leadership Institute, 3.2.1 Education Foundation.

Role Summary

As we pivoted towards our updated strategy, we realized the importance of building a world-class Research team at CSF. We want our programs and interventions to be both evidence-informed and later evaluated for efficacy. We also want to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on key areas related to pedagogy, implementation, and science of delivery, education technology, and private schools.

India on its own requires research that caters to its context of multilingual, multigrade, and multi-level classrooms. Given the vast context variation, there is a need to invigorate a host of researchers who understand the Indian context and have a deep interest and ability to study issues in education. There is also a need for rigorous and reliable measurement tools and metrics that speak to the education work and progress in India.

We believe that research findings need to be taken beyond published papers to actual practice and scale. This requires identification of learnings and thinking deeply of how practitioners can scale their practices that demonstrate effectiveness. We envision building platforms that facilitate discussions between different researcher and practitioner groups on findings from research. This will help implementation organizations improve practices for improving educational outcomes in India. Getting different groups to talk and maintain a cycle of dialogue to identify further evidence gaps, and iterating on evidence that proves to work.

CSF is looking for a Research Director who can identify gaps, and learnings - and accordingly mobilize research communities to complement their respective methods and varying lenses for conducting research that enables us to find answers to pressing questions regarding the Indian education system. We require someone who has published thoughts/opinions/findings relevant to evidence-based education reform. We also plan to form partnerships with leading national/international researchers in the area of governance, pedagogy, system improvement, education technology, and private schools.

CSF's research team is also deeply engaged with renowned experts like Luis Crouch (Chief Technical Officer, RTI International), Prof. Karthik Muralidharan (Professor - Economics, University of California, San Diego and co-chair of the education programme, J-PAL) and Yamini Aiyar (President, Centre for Policy Research) to create public goods around our work.

The Research Director will be expected to deepen engagements with these experts and build partnerships with other leading sector experts.

S/he will join a high caliber leadership team with a collective experience of over 100 years working in both corporate and development sector organizations like BCG, IFMR, J-PAL, Dasra, NITI Aayog, and National Skill Development Corporation.

The role reports to the Managing Directors at CSF.

Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Design and Execute Research agenda:**

- Shape CSF's research agenda by actively engaging with leading research practitioners and being abreast of national/ international research.
- Lead the design, implementation, and monitoring of different research and evaluation projects at CSF.
- Establish systems for rapid feedback and learning within CSF for various programs and also for developing a long-term research agenda.
- Productize existing knowledge by drafting research summaries, policy briefs, recommendations and vision documents for external stakeholders.
- Identify research gaps in existing programs and produce relevant evidence backed learning.
- Ensure timely implementation of research projects with a strong focus on execution and quality assurance - including data validity checks, analysis, and editorial support.
- Guide conversations related to measurement, and monitoring & evaluation activities at CSF.
- Guide CSF's strategy based on learnings from CSF's research projects and program implementation.

- **Build Partnerships with Research Community:**

- Ensure that CSF's research output meets the rigour and relevance for publication in leading journals; represent CSF (and its knowledge) in these forums.
- Build and maintain relationships with domestic and international/multilateral organizations that have worked in educational interventions.
- Collaborate and engage with research groups and practitioner groups - to facilitate information exchange and continue with agenda setting.
- Analyze and summarize external research for the identification of relevance to team-specific research and monitoring and evaluation activities.
- Lead collaborative research studies that provide inputs to reducing knowledge gaps in the research literature in the education ecosystem and also contribute to CSF's programmatic work.

- **Supporting CSF strategy and Team-Building:**

- Lead and manage a high-quality team and effectively break down workstreams and ensure high outcome-orientation.
- Actively build internal capabilities and support team members by sharing learnings, providing feedback, and ensuring their training and development.
- The Research team works with all other issue area teams at CSF (such as tech and non-tech classroom instruction, public and private governance teams) to identify, guide and drive research and evaluation projects. As a senior researcher at CSF,

the research team, specifically the Associate Director, provides thought leadership in addressing critical gaps in research, monitoring, and evaluation.

Required Qualifications, Skills and Abilities

The ideal candidate would be a highly respected researcher who has extensive experience leading and conducting high-quality research. S/he should be interested in designing and addressing research gaps in the Indian education ecosystem.

- A Doctorate from a reputed institution in a relevant field including statistics, research, measurement, evaluation, economics or a related field.
- Should have produced high-quality research for publication in monographs or recognized high-quality journals.
- 12+ years of work experience with team management responsibilities, demonstrating superb project delivery and leadership.
- Ability to analyze complex qualitative and quantitative data, craft possible solutions, and recommend actions.
- Ability to commission and monitor research and exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.
- Knowledge of a wide range of research methodologies and techniques, including qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Ability to engage actively with leading researchers in India and around the world.
- Excellent presentation skills, with the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with policymakers and external audiences.
- Ability to manage project budgets to meet agreed on targets and timelines.
- Should have a thorough understanding of evaluative research design and its application in different settings and contexts.
- Excellent networking and relationship-building skills and the ability to interact with stakeholders, both public and private players.
- Strong planning and organizational skills, and an ability to be able to set priorities, plan timelines and meet deadlines.

Personal Characteristics and Desired Qualities

- Ability to effectively communicating research and evaluation findings to a range of different stakeholders.
- High ability to collaborate and actively listen to others, understanding and valuing others' views.
- Keen interest in education and working with the Government.
- Operating style suited to working in a small-organization setting, where teamwork and resourcefulness are highly valued.

- Excellent leadership skills, including the ability to manage multiple projects at a time.

Location

This role will be based out of the CSF office in Delhi.

Compensation

Remuneration will be competitive with Indian philanthropy pay scales and will depend upon the candidate's experience levels.

Apply

Interested candidates can click on the [Application Form](#) and fill the required details in the form.