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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the years, India has successfully managed to achieve a 100% enrolment rate for primary education (UDISE+, 2021-22). However, student retention in higher levels of education has proved to be a challenge, as is evident from the dropping gross enrolment ratios (GER) in the higher grades (GER Higher Secondary stands at 57.6%). Considering the successively increasing level of drop-outs at higher levels of education, it becomes imperative to address this issue if we are to achieve the National Education Policy (NEP) vision of 100% enrolment upto the age of 18 years. One of the possible solutions to address this issue, is setting up of State level student transition tracking systems to identify and mainstream out of school children. Tracking of student transitions and their career aspirations assumes critical importance not only from the perspective of curtailing drop-outs, but also from the standpoint of studying the quality of these transitions as this has a direct bearing on the social and economic mobility of youth.

Antarang Foundation (AF) has been working towards provision of career guidance and counselling services to students from municipal and low-income schools as well as employability skills training to students from low-income colleges/communities since about a decade. Since inception AF has provided career counselling services to close to 2 lakh students across the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Goa and Nagaland. Considering the long line of AF’s work in the field of career counselling and youth employability, study of factors influencing school to work transitions has organically emerged as an area of interest for AF. Accordingly, AF has initiated a transition survey for Grade 10 students with the objective of not only informing and pivoting its interventions with youth, but also with the intent of advocating for the right set of policy initiatives so as to create an enabling environment for aiding school to work transitions. Through our Grade 10 transition survey we have tried to answer the following questions:
The transition survey was conducted across the cities of Mumbai, Pune, Udaipur and Goa State in the schools in which AF had executed its CareerAware (career guidance) program in the academic year 2022. Grade 10 students who had appeared for their board exams in 2023 and who had participated in AF’s career guidance program were part of this survey. Given below is a brief synopsis of our survey findings and the conclusions that we could draw from this survey:

- What are the career aspirations of the students – what is the breadth of these aspirations?
- How do transitions look – what is the percentage of youth who transition?
- What is the quality of these transitions – do they amount to informed transitions?
- How diversified are these transitions – do they amount to stereotypical choices?

The transition survey was conducted across the cities of Mumbai, Pune, Udaipur and Goa State in the schools in which AF had executed its CareerAware (career guidance) program in the academic year 2022. Grade 10 students who had appeared for their board exams in 2023 and who had participated in AF’s career guidance program were part of this survey. Given below is a brief synopsis of our survey findings and the conclusions that we could draw from this survey:
## SURVEY FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Mumbai (N=978)</th>
<th>Pune (N=428)</th>
<th>Udaipur (N=427)</th>
<th>Goa (N=495)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were the career aspirations of the students – what was the breadth of these aspirations</td>
<td>&quot;Engineer&quot;, &quot;Doctor&quot;, &quot;Accountant&quot; emerged as top 3 career picks accounting for 37% of the student preferences. Around 6% of the students aspired to be &quot;Entrepreneurs&quot;. Non-conventional careers such as &quot;Performing Artist&quot;, &quot;Film Production Specialist&quot; etc. which had figured amongst the top career picks during the CareerAware (CA) program seemed to have lost flavour at the time of the survey. This possibly points out to a scenario of students adjusting their final career preferences in line with job market realities as well as in confirmation with the popular career pathways. Around 36% of the students did not have clarity of career aspirations</td>
<td>&quot;Engineer&quot;, &quot;Accountant&quot;, &quot;Nurse&quot; emerged as top 3 career picks accounting for 47% of the student preferences. While students seemed to be inclined towards wider variety of careers during the CA program [top 15 careers accounted for ~70% of career preferences], the basket of career choices narrowed down substantially at the time of Transition survey [top 15 careers accounted for 90% of career choices] with students shifting preferences in favour of conventional career pathways. Around 22% of the students did not have clarity of career aspirations</td>
<td>&quot;Teacher&quot;, &quot;Engineer&quot; and &quot;Accountant&quot; emerged as top 3 career picks accounting for 44% of the student preferences. In fact, teaching profession itself bagged 28% of the student votes. The preference for teaching profession was largely driven by the female survey respondents again reiterating the fact that career choices seemed to be informed by gender biases and societal norms. Around 3% of the students did not have clarity of career aspirations</td>
<td>&quot;Engineer&quot;, &quot;Doctor&quot;, &quot;Teacher&quot; emerged as top 3 career picks accounting for 39% of the student preferences. Around 15% of the male students (9% overall across genders) aspired to be &quot;Entrepreneurs&quot;. While students seemed to be inclined towards a relatively wider variety of careers during the CA program, the basket of career choices narrowed down substantially at the time of Transition survey. In fact, top two careers accounted for almost 30% of the career picks at the time of the survey as compared to 16-18% during the program. Again, students had shifted preferences in favour of conventional careers at the time of survey. Around 25% of the students did not have clarity of career aspirations</td>
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<td>How did transitions look – what was the percentage of youth who transitioned</td>
<td>92% of the surveyed students had either transitioned or were intending to study further. Balance 8% of the students had no intentions to study further mainly due to the following reasons: failed in board exams (30% of the drop-outs), not interested in studying</td>
<td>97% of students had either transitioned or were intending to study further. Around 3% of the students had no intentions to study further mostly because they were planning to start work</td>
<td>Around 97% of the students who were surveyed had transitioned into future educational/working pathways. Chief reasons for drop-out included marriage plans and loss of interest in studying further</td>
<td>&quot;97% of the youth had transitioned into future educational pathways. The balance 3% had dropped out either because they had no interest in studying further (42% of drop-outs) or were planning to work (33% of drop-outs).</td>
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<td><strong>What was the quality of these transitions — did they amount to informed transitions</strong></td>
<td>further (12%), not sure about future plans (15%), planning to work (9%).</td>
<td>On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 428 students (irrespective of career clarity), 53% of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Comparing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 92%, it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps.</td>
<td>On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 427 students (irrespective of career clarity), 68% of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Again, comparing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 97%, it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps.</td>
<td>On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 495 students (irrespective of career clarity), 62% of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Comparing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 97%, it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps.</td>
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<td><strong>How diversified were these transitions — did they amount to stereotypical choices</strong></td>
<td>~53% of the students aspired to pursue graduation in Commerce followed by Science at 28%. The demand for Commerce stream was not only driven by those students who wanted to pursue careers aligned to this stream, but also to a great extent (~38% of the demand) by students who were not clear about their career aspirations at the time of survey. Around 5% of the students were interested in taking up Diploma and Vocational certificate courses.</td>
<td>~45% of the students aspired to pursue graduation in Science followed by Commerce at 35%. Around 7% of the students were interested in taking up Diploma and Vocational certificate courses.</td>
<td>Considering the pre-dominance of “Teacher/Facilitator” as career preference for the population as a whole and females in particular, “Arts stream” was the preferred educational pathway for both these population sets. Around 49% of the students had opted for Arts stream. There were not much takers for alternative educational pathways such as Diploma, Vocational courses and Apprenticeship.</td>
<td>With Engineering and Medicine emerging as top career picks for Males and Females respectively, Science emerged as the preferred stream of transition (accounting for ~39% of the transitions) for both the genders. Around 17% of the Male students displayed interest in pursuing MCVC, Vocational and Diploma courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As is evident from our transition survey findings presented above, across the four geographies, notwithstanding the fact that CG did help in broad-basing career choices and improving acceptance of non-conventional career pathways, when it came to actually effecting their career decisions, students seemed to fall back on traditional career and educational choices indicating that extraneous factors such as societal conventions, gender biases etc seemed to override programmatic influence. Further, a significant level of the surveyed population (~36% across all the four geographies covered by the survey) seemed to be transitioning in the absence of career aspirations or into educational pathways which were not aligned to their aspirations. Our on-ground experience has given us to understand that influencers of such transitions very often tend to be parents, peer opinions. AF has tried addressing some of these issues by ensuring a continual engagement with students through a long-term four-year program (covering Grades 9-12) with multiple touchpoints. During the course of this long-term engagement, students are given continual exposure to myriad of career and educational options. Besides, AF has also developed a chatbot which helps answer student queries on careers and educational pathways in a simple and engaging manner. AF also conducts career related workshops/webinars which can be attended by its alumni.

Nevertheless, despite the steps taken by AF to address some of the issues raised above, the need of a stronger and comprehensive CG solution cannot be denied. The CG solution will need to be strengthened to work towards a) equipping students with necessary skills to negotiate gender biases and societal conventions b) ensuring greater engagement with parents and school system both with the objective of raising awareness of alternate career and educational pathways amongst them as also for enlisting their support towards championing the career aspirations of students. Considering that these stakeholders have a significant say in student decisions, a break-away from conventional career and educational pathways can be rendered difficult for students without the support of these stakeholders.
Besides, broad-basing of career and educational choices amongst youth would perhaps require efforts at a systemic level also through execution of massive school/college level awareness drives and possibly higher levels of government investment in supporting development of alternate educational streams/pathways.

Finally, it would also be equally critical to supplement the CG solution with strong state-level transition tracking systems both to study the quantum and quality of student transitions as also to ensure informed interventions that support students to stay on course to achieve their educational and career aspirations!
SURVEY BACKGROUND

1. What was the objective of this study?

Most countries, including India have made schooling until age 14 mandatory. The SARTHAQ document which lays down the implementation plan for The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP), in fact talks of extending the right to free and compulsory education until the age of 18 years. The SARTHAQ implementation plan recognises the need of making concerted efforts to achieve 100% GER at all levels by providing universal access to free and compulsory quality school education for all children in the age group of 3-18 years, including open schooling and vocational education by 2030.

Over the years, India has successfully managed to achieve a 100% enrolment rate for primary education (UDISE+, 2021-22). However, like many countries facing rapid population growth coupled with rapid industrialization and economic growth, India has struggled to keep children in school past age of 14, as is evident from the dropping gross enrolment ratios in the higher standards of education. While the gross enrolment ratio in secondary (standards IX-X) stood at 79.6%, it dropped to 57.6% in higher secondary (standards XI-XII) (UDISE+, 2021-22). The enrolment ratio beyond XII standard (18-23 years) stands at a dismal 27.3% (AISHE, 2020-21).

Considering the successively increasing level of drop-outs at higher levels of education, it becomes imperative to address this issue if we are to achieve the NEP vision of 100% enrolment up to the age of 18 years. In fact, the SARTHAQ document highlights a possible solution to address this drop-out problem. As a corrective measure, SARTHAQ suggests the creation of systematic student tracking systems in order to mainstream the children who are identified as Out of School. Thus, tracking of student transitions and career aspirations especially at crucial educational junctures such as Grade 10 and Grade 12 assumes critical importance not

only from the objective of tracking and curtailing drop-outs but also from
the perspective of studying the quality of these transitions, as the same
would serve as a litmus test for measuring the success of the educational
inputs given to children as well as guide future educational interventions,
programs and policy measures.

Antarang Foundation (AF) has been working towards provision of career
guidance and counselling services to students from municipal and low-
income schools as well as employability skills training to students from
low-income colleges/communities since about a decade. AF commenced
its field of work in Mumbai and today the scope of its activities has
expanded substantially across districts of Mumbai, Pune, Osmanabad in
Maharashtra, Udaipur district in Rajasthan as well as the states of Goa and
Nagaland. Since inception AF has provided career counselling services to
close to 2 lakh students.

Considering the long line of AF’s work in the field of career counselling and
youth employability, study of factors facilitating and impeding school to
work transitions has organically emerged as an area of interest for AF. AF
has therefore initiated a transition survey for Grade 10 students with the
objective of not only informing and pivoting its interventions with youth, but
also with the objective of advocating for the right set of policy initiatives so
as to create an enabling environment for aiding school to work transitions.
Through our Grade 10 transition survey we have tried to answer the
following questions

- What are the career aspirations of the students – what is the breadth of
  these aspirations
- How do transitions look – what is the percentage of youth who
  transition
- What is the quality of these transitions – do they amount to informed
  transitions
- How diversified are these transitions – do they amount to stereotypical
  choices
2. What was the population studied?

The transition survey was conducted across the cities of Mumbai, Pune, Udaipur and Goa State in the schools in which AF had executed its CareerAware (career guidance) program in the academic year 2022. Grade 10 students who had appeared for their board exams in 2023 and who had participated in AF’s career guidance program were part of this survey.

3. What was the survey methodology?

The survey population was selected on a sampling basis. Broadly, our Grade 10 program reach in each of the above geographies formed the population base for selecting the sample. By and large depending on the total population size for each geography, the minimum statistical sample size was arrived at on the basis of a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The survey was conducted telephonically in the geographies of Mumbai, Pune and Goa and student’s willingness to participate in the survey influenced the survey coverage (convenience sampling methodology).

In Udaipur the survey was conducted physically in schools. The choice of telephonic/physical survey was dictated by the nature of schooling system in the respective geographies. For example, since the schools in Udaipur had an integrated educational pattern (Grade 1-12 in the same school premise), it was possible to conduct the survey physically. On the other hand, in the case of Mumbai, students pass out of school and join college which is independent of the school, hence these students are reachable only through calls post their Grade 10 exams. Geographic specific nuances of the sampling details have been covered in the subsequent sections of the report.
SURVEY FINDINGS

4. What did our Transition tracking survey find out?

A. Mumbai
   1. Sampling Coverage:

AF has reached ~12000 Grade 10 students in Mumbai in partnership with MCGM and ~2100 students in certain Private Schools through its CareerAware program in academic year 2022. Estimating a survey non-response rate between 40-50% on account of the telephonic nature of survey in Mumbai, the schools which were randomly chosen for the Transition survey were such that AF’s programmatic reach per school was at least 30 students so as to improve chances of survey response. The schools were also stratified to ensure representation of both Government and Private Schools as well as medium of instruction (English, Hindi, Marathi and Urdu). A total of 2019 calls were made of which 978 students (570 MCGM students, 408 Private students) participated in the survey (minimum statistical sample which was required to be achieved for AF’s total student reach of ~12000 MCGM students: ~375 students, while for Private schools it was ~325 students). Given the telephonic nature of the survey, student’s willingness to participate in the survey influenced the survey coverage. List of schools which participated in the survey is contained in Annexure 2 to this note.

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2 The number of students per school was geography-specific depending on AF program coverage and reach in 2022
2. Survey Results

a) What were the career aspirations of the students surveyed – what was the breadth of these aspirations?

All Students

The above graphs represent top 15 careers voted by the surveyed students at the beginning of the CareerAware program (Baseline) and post its conclusion (Endline) as either their main career plan or back-up career plan, and their final career choice at the time of Transition tracking survey.³

³All through the analysis contained in this note, ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.
Girls accounted for 53% of the students surveyed. Around 37% of the students did not have clarity of the careers that they would like to pursue at the beginning of the program. This number reduced to 36% at the time of the transition survey.

Interestingly, while students seemed to be inclined towards wider variety of careers during the program [top 15 careers accounted for 67% career choices at Baseline and 65% at Endline], the basket of career choices narrowed down substantially at the time of Transition survey [top 15 careers accounted for 89% of career choices] with traditional career choices like “Engineer” “Doctor” and “Accountant”, “Teacher” emerging as the top career picks. Non-conventional careers such as “Sportsperson”, “Performing Artist”, “Film production specialist” which had figured amongst the top career picks during the program (in fact careers such as “Performing Artist” and “Film production specialist” emerged amongst top career picks only post program indicating the role of career guidance in broad-basing career choices) seemed to have lost flavour at the time of the survey. This possibly points out to a scenario of students adjusting their final career preferences in line with job market realities as well as in confirmation with the popular educational pathways. It was however heartening to see the greater interest in pursuing “Entrepreneurship” as a career pathway during the survey as compared to the status during program implementation. Close to 76% the surveyed students had changed their career preferences between Baseline and Transition survey.

### MCGM School Students Career Preferences

![Bar chart showing career preferences](image)

- **Baseline**
  - Engineer: 15%
  - Accountant: 10%
  - Teacher/Facilitator: 10%
  - Entrepreneur/Business: 8%
  - Doctor: 7%
  - Government Services: 6%
  - Banker: 6%
  - Fashion Designer: 6%
  - Pharmacist: 6%
  - Nurse: 5%
  - Office Administrator: 4%
  - Military: 3%
  - Beautician: 3%
  - Tradesperson: 1%
  - Medical Lab Technician: 1%

- **Endline**
  - Doctor: 8%
  - Fashion Designer: 7%
  - Engineer: 6%
  - Accountant: 6%
  - Office Administrator: 5%
  - Government Services: 4%
  - Lawyer: 3%
  - Film Production: 3%
  - Banker: 3%
  - Sportsperson: 3%
  - Entrepreneur: 3%
  - Beautician: 3%
  - Performing Artist: 3%
  - Medical Lab Technician: 3%

- **Transition**
  - Doctor: 7%
  - Fashion Designer: 6%
  - Engineer: 6%
  - Accountant: 5%
  - Office Administrator: 4%
  - Government Services: 3%
  - Lawyer: 3%
  - Film Production: 3%
  - Banker: 3%
  - Sportsperson: 3%
  - Entrepreneur: 3%
  - Beautician: 3%
  - Performing Artist: 3%
  - Medical Lab Technician: 3%

![Bar chart showing career preferences](image)
Mirroring the overall picture for Mumbai, students from MCGM schools seemed to have largely zeroed down on safe careers such as Engineering, Accountancy and Teaching with risk aversion for non-conventional careers such as Sports. Around 40% of the students did not have clarity of the careers that they would like to pursue at the beginning of the program. This number stood at 41% at the time of the transition survey. Close to 76% of the students had changed their aspirations by the time of the survey with substantial narrowing down of basket of career choices (Top 15 Career aspirations accounted for 89% of the preferences at the time of the survey as compared to 66-67% during the program). The heightened interest in Entrepreneurship as a career pathway both during the course of the program and further at the time of the survey (evident from the consistent increase between Baseline to Endline and finally Transition Survey) has been a welcome development, considering the multiplier potential for employment generation, and probably serves as a pointer to the need for creation of incubation hubs/labs in schools which can help students nurture and shape their business ideas. The CA program does emphasise on entrepreneurship and freelancing as a career pathway as part of every career stream/field, and the students increasingly opting for entrepreneurship as a career pathway could possibly be a result of this programmatic intervention.

**Private School Students Career Preferences**
Medicine consistently continued to be the most popular career choice for students from private schools along with other conventional choices such as engineering, accounting and teaching. *It was however interesting to note that students from MCGM schools seemed to be more interested in entrepreneurship as a career pathway as compared to their counterparts in private schools.* Again, there was substantial narrowing down of choice of career pathways with top 4 careers accounting for 52% of the career picks as compared to ~30-31% during the program. Around 34% of the students did not have clarity of the careers that they would like to pursue at the beginning of the program. This number stood at 29% at the time of the transition survey. Private school students seemed to fare better when it came to clarity of career aspirations in comparison to students from MCGM schools.

**Female Career Preferences**
Although Teaching/Facilitation had figured almost at the bottom of the Top 15 career list during the program, female students seemed to have finally swerved to this traditional career choice when it came to actually walking the talk. Thus, career decisions continued to be informed by gender biases and societal norms. About 76% of the female students had changed their career aspirations at the time of the survey. Around 36% of the female students were not sure about their career aspirations at the time of the survey, at par with the levels prevalent during the program.

**Male Students Career Preferences**
Of the 978 youth who participated in the survey, 74% had already transitioned into their further educational pathways. Of the balance 26% of the students, close to 68% indicated that they were planning to study further post 10th. The level of transition in Mumbai might have also been influenced by the timing of the survey which was undertaken while the college admission process was as yet underway post announcement of 10th results. Thus, the total percentage of students who had either transitioned or were intending to study further stood at 92% [Male:91% Female 92%, MCGM: 89% Private: 95%). Balance 8% (comprising equally of male and female) of the students had no intentions to study further mainly due to the following reasons: failed in board exams (30% of the drop-outs), not interested in studying further (12%), not sure about future plans (15%), planning to work (9%).

b) How did transitions look – what is the percentage of youth who transitioned?

Of the 978 youth who participated in the survey, 74% had already transitioned into their further educational pathways. Of the balance 26% of the students, close to 68% indicated that they were planning to study further post 10th. The level of transition in Mumbai might have also been influenced by the timing of the survey which was undertaken while the college admission process was as yet underway post announcement of 10th results. Thus, the total percentage of students who had either transitioned or were intending to study further stood at 92% [Male:91% Female 92%, MCGM: 89% Private: 95%). Balance 8% (comprising equally of male and female) of the students had no intentions to study further mainly due to the following reasons: failed in board exams (30% of the drop-outs), not interested in studying further (12%), not sure about future plans (15%), planning to work (9%).

c) What was the quality of these transitions – did they amount to informed transitions?
Of the 978 students surveyed, 627 students were aware of the careers that they wanted to pursue. Of these students having career aspirations, close to 83% had made an informed transition, i.e. transitioned into educational pathways aligning to careers of their choice [Female: 86% Male: 79%, MCGM: 79% Private:87%]. On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 978 students, 53% [Female: 55% Male: 51%, MCGM: 47% Private 62%] of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Juxtaposing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 92% (including those who were intending to transition), it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps. Our on-ground experience has shown us that Influencers of such transitions very often tend to be peer and parent opinions.

Further, of these students with career aspirations, close to 58% had clarity of what educational steps that they would like to take both post their 10th and 12th in line with their career choices.

d) How diversified were these transitions – did they amount to stereotypical choices?
As is evident from the graph above, Commerce followed by Science seemed to be the preferred stream of transition for both the genders as well as MCGM and Private schools. The demand for Commerce stream was not only driven by those students who wanted to pursue careers aligned to this stream, but also to a great extent (~38% of the demand) by students who were not clear about their career aspirations at the time of survey. Thus, Commerce stream appeared to be the “safe harbour” for students lacking career aspirations. Demand for Science stream was largely driven by students who aspired to be doctors and engineers which happened to be top 2 career aspirations of the students surveyed in Mumbai.

On an overall basis, around 5% of the students were interested in taking up Diploma and Vocational certificate courses.

B. Pune

1. Sampling Coverage:

AF had reached out to 1221 Grade 10 Marathi and English Medium students in Pune through its CareerAware intervention during the academic year 2022 in partnership with Pune District Education Association (PDEA) as well as with certain Private schools. Estimating a survey non-response rate between 40-50% on account of the telephonic nature of survey in Pune, the schools which were randomly chosen for the Transition survey were such that AF’s programmatic reach per school was at least 35 students so as to improve chances of survey response. The schools were also stratified to ensure representation of both PDEA and Private Schools as well as medium of instruction. A total of 630 calls were made of which 428 students participated in the survey (minimum statistical sample which was required to be achieved for AF’s total student reach of 1221 students: ~300 students). Given the telephonic nature of survey, student’s willingness to participate in the survey influenced the survey coverage. List of schools which participated in the survey is contained in Annexure 2.
2. Survey Results

a) What were the career aspirations of the students surveyed – what was the breadth of these aspirations?

All students

The above graphs represent top 15 careers voted by the surveyed students at the beginning of the CareerAware program (Baseline) and post its conclusion (Endline) as either their main career plan or back-up career plan, and their final career choice at the time of Transition tracking survey.

Girls accounted for 61% of the students surveyed. Around 32% of the students did not have clarity of the careers that they would like to pursue at the beginning of the program. This number reduced to 22% at the time of the transition survey.

\[4\]

All through the analysis contained in this note, ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.
Interestingly, while students seemed to be inclined towards wider variety of careers during the program [top 15 careers accounted for 71% career choices at Baseline and 68% at Endline], the basket of career choices narrowed down substantially at the time of Transition survey [top 15 careers accounted for 90% of career choices] with traditional career choices like “Engineer” and “Accountant” emerging as the top career picks. This possibly points out to a scenario of students adjusting their final career preferences in line with job market realities as well as in confirmation with the popular educational pathways. Close to 82% the surveyed students had changed their career preferences between Baseline and Transition survey.

**Female Career Preferences**

Engineering and Accounting emerged as a top career pick for female students at the time of the transition survey which was the not the case during the program. Nursing which did not figure amongst top 15 career picks during the program emerged amongst the top 3 career picks again reinforcing the gender stereotype. Around 21% of the Girls were not sure of their career choices at the time of Transition survey, the number stood at 30% prior to commencement of CareerAware program.
Male Career Preferences

Although non-conventional pathways such as “Sportsperson”, “Entrepreneur” emerged as top career choices during the course of the program, Male students seemed to finally find safety in traditional career picks such as Engineering and Accountancy at the time of the survey. Around 35% of the Male students were not sure of their career pathways prior to commencement of the program, this number dropped to 24% at the time of the Transition survey and was a tad higher than female students.

b) How did transitions look – what was the percentage of youth who transitioned?

Of the 428 youth who participated in the survey, 84% had already transitioned into their further educational pathways. Of the balance 16% of the students, close to 80% indicated that they were planning to study further post 10th. The level of transition in Pune might have also been influenced by the timing of the survey which was undertaken while the college admission process was as yet underway post announcement of 10th results. Thus, the total percentage of students who had either transitioned or were intending to study further stood at 97%. Around 3% of the students had no intentions to study further mostly because they were planning to start work.
c) What was the quality of these transitions – did they amount to informed transitions?

Of the 428 students surveyed, 335 students were aware of the careers that they wanted to pursue. **Of these students having career aspirations, close to 87% had made an informed transition, i.e. transitioned into educational pathways aligning to careers of their choice [Female: 87% Male: 87%].** On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 428 students, 68% [Female: 68%; Male: 67%] of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Juxtaposing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 97% (including those who were intending to transition), it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps. Our on-ground experience shows that influencers of such transitions very often tend to be peer and parent opinions.

Further, of these students with career aspirations, close to 56% had clarity of what educational steps that they would like to take both post their 10th and 12th in line with their career choices.
d) How diversified were these transitions – did they amount to stereotypical choices?

As is evident from the graph above, Science seemed to be the preferred stream of transition for both the genders. This was in line with the “Engineering” stream emerging as top career pick for both girls as well as boys. While Science seemed to be the preferred stream for Girls, Boys were almost equally divided between Science and Commerce streams. Around 22% and 24% of the demand for Science and Commerce streams respectively was driven by students who were not clear about their career aspirations.

On an overall basis around 7% of the students were interested in taking up Diploma and Vocational certificate courses.
C. Udaipur

1. Sampling Coverage:
AF had reached out to 2335 Grade 10 Hindi medium students in the district of Udaipur in academic year 2022 in partnership with Udaipur District Education Office. The survey in Udaipur was conducted physically in schools which were chosen randomly. Calls were made to a few students who were not present in the classroom at the time of survey. A total of 427 students participated in the survey (minimum statistical sample which was required to be achieved for AF’s total student reach of 2335 students: ~330 students). List of schools which participated in the survey is contained in Annexure 2.

2. Survey Results

a) What were the career aspirations of the students surveyed—what was the breadth of these aspirations?

All Students
The above graphs represent top 15 careers voted by the surveyed students at the beginning of the CareerAware program (Baseline) and post its conclusion (Endline) as either their main career plan or back-up career plan, and their final career choice at the time of Transition tracking survey. Girls accounted for 79% of the students surveyed.

Around 37% of the students did not have clarity of the careers that they would like to pursue at the beginning of the program. This number reduced to 3% at the time of the transition survey.

While students seemed to be inclined towards a relatively wider variety of careers during the program [top 15 careers accounted for 79% career choices at Baseline and 77% at Endline], the basket of career choices narrowed down marginally at the time of Transition survey [top 15 careers accounted for 82% of career choices]. However, the top 15 careers witnessed extreme polarisation of career preference with traditional career choice like “Teacher” accounting for 28% of the votes. Considering that girls accounted for ~79% of the population surveyed, it appears that they might have finally veered towards a more conventional career pathway when it came to actually effectuating their career decision. The same is evidenced by the substantial change in top career pick from “Doctor” at Baseline/Endline to “Teacher” at the time of the transition survey both for the population as a whole and females in particular (refer graphs below). Close to 92% the surveyed students had changed their career preferences between Baseline and Transition survey.

All through the analysis contained in this note, ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.
Female Career Preferences

The above graphs clearly indicate the change in top career preference for females from “Doctor” during the program to a more traditional “Teacher/Facilitator” at the time of the Transition survey. Close to 92% of the girls had changed their career preferences at the time of the survey as compared to beginning of the program. Around 4% of the Girls were not sure of their career choices at the time of Transition survey, the number stood at 41% prior to commencement of CareerAware program.
Male Career Preferences

Top 15 Aspirations - Transition Survey Male

- Accountant: 18%
- Engineer: 16%
- Teacher/Facilitator: 9%
- Lawyer: 7%
- Banker: 7%
- Military: 4%
- Coach/Trainer: 4%
- Pharmacist: 3%
- Event Planner: 3%
- School: 2%
- Performing Artist: 2%
- Microfinance: 2%
- Medical Lab: 2%
- Curriculum Designer: 2%
- Urban Planner/City: 1%

Top 15 Aspirations - Endline Male

- Engineer: 12%
- Banker: 12%
- Social Worker: 11%
- Accountant: 9%
- Accountant: 6%
- Sportsperson: 6%
- Doctor: 5%
- Lawyer: 5%
- Government: 5%
- Teacher/Facilitator: 3%
- Interior Designer: 3%
- Fashion Designer: 3%
- Nurse: 3%
- Mental Health: 3%
- Graphic Designer: 3%
- Architect: 3%

Top 15 Aspirations - Baseline Male

- Engineer: 12%
- Social Worker: 8%
- Accountant: 8%
- Doctor: 7%
- Teacher/Facilitator: 6%
- Other: 6%
- Banker: 6%
- Sportsperson: 5%
- Nurse: 3%
- Government: 3%
- Cyber Security: 3%
- School Administrator: 2%
- Interior Designer: 2%
- Fashion Designer: 2%
- Application: 2%
The basket of career preferences narrowed substantially for male students with top 15 career pathways accounting for 90% of the career picks at the time of Transition survey as compared to 72% at Baseline and 86% at Endline. Interestingly, “Teaching/Facilitation” emerged amongst the top 3 career choices of male students at the time of the survey which was not the case earlier. Close to 93% of the boys had changed their career preferences at the time of the survey as compared to the beginning of the program. Traditional career pathways such as “Accounting”, “Engineering”, “Banking” continued to dominate student preferences, although, non-conventional career pathways such as “Performing Artist”, “Urban Planner” also found a place amongst top 15 career picks. All the male students had clarity of the career pathway that they wanted to pursue at the time of the survey, the number stood at 76% at Baseline.

b) How did transitions look – what was the percentage of youth who transitioned?

Around 97% of the students who were surveyed had transitioned into future educational/working pathways. The drop-out rate stood at 3% with girls accounting for 75% of the drop-outs. Chief reasons for drop-out included marriage plans and loss of interest in studying further.

c) What was the quality of these transitions – did they amount to informed transitions?
Of the 427 students surveyed, 414 students were aware of the careers that they wanted to pursue. Of these students having career aspirations, close to 89% had made informed transitions, i.e. transitioned into educational pathways aligning to careers of their choice [Female: 91% Male: 83%]. On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 427 students, 86% [Female: 87%; Male: 83%] of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Juxtaposing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 97%, it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps. Influencers of such transitions very often tend to be peer and parent opinions.

Further, of these students with career aspirations, close to 60% had clarity of what educational steps that they would like to take both post their 10th and 12th in line with their career choices.

d) How diversified were these transitions – did they amount to stereotypical choices?
Considering the pre-dominance of “Teacher/Facilitator” as career preference for the population as a whole and females in particular, “Arts stream” seemed to be the preferred educational pathway for both these population sets. With “Accountant”, “Engineer” “Teacher”, “Lawyer” and “Banker” emerging as top five career picks for males, males seemed to be more or less equally divided between “Arts”, “Commerce” and Science streams. Again, there were not much takers for alternative educational pathways such as Diploma and Apprenticeship.

D. Goa

1. Sampling Coverage:

AF had reached out to around 1839 English medium students in Goa across Government and Government Aided schools through its Grade 10 CareerAware intervention in academic year 2022. Estimating a survey non-response rate between 40-50% on account of the telephonic nature of survey in Goa, the schools which were randomly chosen for the Transition survey were such that AF’s programmatic reach per school was at least 25 students so as to improve chances of survey response. A total of 828 calls were made of which 495 students participated in the survey (minimum statistical sample which was required to be achieved for AF’s total student reach of 1839 students: ~320 students). Given the telephonic nature of survey, student’s willingness to participate in the survey influenced the survey coverage. List of schools which participated in the survey is contained in Annexure 2.

2. Survey Results

a) What were the career aspirations of the students surveyed – what was the breadth of these aspirations?
All Students

The above graphs represent top 15 careers voted by the surveyed students at the beginning of the CareerAware program (Baseline) and post its conclusion (Endline) as either their main career plan or back-up career plan, and their final career choice at the time of Transition tracking survey. Girls accounted for 46% of the students surveyed.

Around 22% of the students did not have clarity of the careers that they would like to pursue at the beginning of the program. This number stood at 25% at the time of the transition survey.

While students seemed to be inclined towards a relatively wider variety of careers during the program [top 15 careers accounted for 70% career choices at Baseline and 67% at Endline], the basket of career choices narrowed down substantially at the time of Transition survey [top 15 careers accounted for 85% of career choices]. In fact, top two careers accounted for almost 30% of the career picks at the time of the survey as compared to 16-18% during the program.

All through the analysis contained in this note, ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.
Traditional career choices like “Engineer”, “Doctor” “Teacher” emerged as the top career picks with non-conventional career pathways such as “Sportsperson”, “Performing Artist” as well as other careers such as “Chef”, “Fashion Designer” seeming to have lost flavour with the students at the time of survey. Close to 75% the surveyed students had changed their career preferences between Baseline and Transition survey.

Female Career Preferences

Career preferences for females showed substantial narrowing down of choices, with top 15 choices accounting for 88% of the career picks as compared to 75% during the program. In fact, top 3 career picks accounted for 48% of female career preferences as compared to 26-29% during the program. Although, “Doctor” continued to be the most popular career choice, traditional career pathways such as Teaching and Nursing gained significant traction during the survey. This again reiterates the fact that when it comes to actually walking down a career path, students seemed to find safety in making conventional choices.
Male Career Preferences

Engineering continued to dominate male career preferences, although, again similar to females, there seemed to be substantial narrowing down of career preferences, with top 2 career picks accounting for 44% of the male career preferences [top 2 career picks accounted for 22-23% of career preferences during the program]. It was heartening to note the substantial interest shown by males in Entrepreneurship as a career pathway, this assumes critical significance in Goan context considering the State’s unemployment rate coupled with potential for generating self-employment on account of the significant scope of the hospitality and the emerging creative sectors.

b) How did transitions look – what was the percentage of youth who transitioned?

Out of the 495 youth surveyed, ~97% of the youth had transitioned into future educational pathways. The balance 3% had dropped out either because they had no interest in studying further (42% of drop-outs) or were planning to work (33% of drop-outs).

c) What was the quality of these transitions – did they amount to informed transitions?

Of the 495 students surveyed, 370 students were aware of the careers that they wanted to pursue. Of these students having career aspirations, close to 83% had made informed transitions, i.e. transitioned into educational pathways aligning to careers of their choice [Female: 80% Male: 86%]. On an aggregate basis, considering the entire student population of 495 students, 62% [Female: 61%; Male: 63%] of the students had transitioned into educational pathways aligning to their career choices. Juxtaposing this rate of informed transitions with the actual transition rate of 97%, it is rather clear that students tend to transition irrespective of clarity of career aspirations or next steps. Influencers of such transitions very often tend to be peer and parent opinions.

Further, of these students with career aspirations, close to 54% had clarity of what educational steps that they would like to take both post their 10th and 12th in line with their career choices.
d) How diversified were these transitions – did they amount to stereotypical choices

With Engineering and Medicine emerging as top career picks for Males and Females respectively, Science emerged as the preferred stream of transition for both the genders. Teaching and Entrepreneurship being the next most popular career choices for Females and Males respectively, Arts and Commerce seemed to have emerged as the next most preferred stream of transition respectively for these genders. Demand for Commerce stream was also driven by students who were not clear about their career aspirations (~33% of the demand). **Around 17% of the Male students displayed interest in pursuing MCVC, Vocational and Diploma courses.**
5. What does this survey tell us and what is the way forward?

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) in a path-breaking move seeks to embed a multi-disciplinary approach to education right from higher secondary (9th standard). As per the policy vision, students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school so that they can design their own paths of study and life plans.

While opening up of a multi-disciplinary approach to education is indeed a welcome development, what then becomes equally crucial is the need to equip students with the requisite know-how to navigate this plethora of educational and consequently career pathways. This can probably be best achieved by embedding and more importantly, mainstreaming strong career guidance solutions within the ambit of the education system itself.

In fact, as per OECD the policy rationales for attention to career guidance (CG) as a public as well as a private good can be considered to fall into three main categories:

- Improving the efficiency of the education and training system and managing its interface with the labour market: i.e. If individuals are enabled to make decisions about what they are to learn in a well-informed and well-thought-through way, linked to their interests, their capacities and their aspirations, investments in education and training systems are likely to yield higher returns.

- Promoting social equity goals, including supporting equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion: This is because career guidance services can raise the aspirations of disadvantaged groups and support them in gaining access to opportunities that might otherwise have been denied to them.

- Achieving labour market goals, including improving the match between supply and demand and managing adjustments to change: i.e. If people are able to find jobs which utilise their potential and meet their own goals, they are likely to be more motivated and therefore more productive.

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Thus, CG can serve as an effective tool for catalysing the NEP vision of a successful multi-disciplinary and holistic education system which is capable of equipping students with the necessary skills to meet the challenges of an ever evolving and dynamic world of work.

But it is equally pertinent to note that CG solutions need to be mainstreamed, standardised as well as contextualised where necessary to match the local employment market structures to ensure their acceptance and relevance. Unless the rigor of CG solutions is increased and they are made a way and part of student’s educational journey with strong involvement of both the school authorities as well as parents, the chances of the career recommendations translating into actions become weak. As is evident from our transition survey, notwithstanding the fact that CG did help in broad-basing career choices and improving acceptance of non-conventional career pathways, when it came to actually effecting their career decisions, students seemed to fall back on traditional career and educational choices indicating that extraneous factors such as societal conventions, gender biases seemed to override programmatic influence. Further, a significant level of the surveyed population (~36% across all the four geographies covered by the survey) seemed to be transitioning in the absence of career aspirations or into educational pathways which were not aligned to their aspirations. Our on-ground experience tells us that Influencers of such transitions very often tend to be peer and parent opinions.

AF has tried addressing some of these issues by ensuring a continual engagement with students through a long-term four-year program with multiple touchpoints. During the course of this long-term engagement students are given continual exposure to myriad of career and educational options. Besides, AF has also developed a chatbot which helps answer student queries on careers and educational pathways in a simple and engaging manner. AF also conducts career related workshops/webinars which can be attended by its alumni.
Nevertheless, despite the steps taken by AF to address some of the issues raised above, the need of a stronger and comprehensive CG solution cannot be denied. The CG solution needs to be strengthened to work towards meeting the needs of less-privileged students as well as equipping students with necessary skills to negotiate gender biases and societal conventions regarding acceptable career pathways.

Also, considering that parents and school authorities serve as a significant influence on children's career development and career decision-making, the success of any CG program would invariably hinge on drawing the support of these two stakeholders. Hence, a strong CG solution would need to have inbuilt elements which target at enlisting support of parents and school systems in the entire CG process by

a) building awareness of the criticality of career guidance in shaping career journeys of youth  
b) sensitizing these stakeholders of their need to participate in the entire CG process considering the significant influence that they wield in shaping student choices and  
c) raising awareness of alternative career and educational pathways amongst them so that they can support students in breaking away from stereotypical career and educational choices.

Besides, broad-basing of career and educational choices amongst youth would perhaps require efforts at a systemic level also. A possible channel for creating awareness of alternative career and educational pathways could be through conducting of systematic awareness drives in schools and colleges. This could also possibly entail higher levels of government investment in supporting development of alternate educational streams/pathways.
Although, an effective CG solution can undoubtedly help realize the NEP objective of a multi-disciplinary education system, this NEP objective gains meaning only when we succeed in retaining students in education in the first place. Hence, it would be vital to supplement the CG solution with strong state-level transition tracking systems. Setting up of transition tracking systems is required not only from the perspective of tracking and mainstreaming drop-outs, but equally for the purpose of studying the quality of transitions, since the quality of transition has a direct bearing on the social and economic mobility of students.

A transition tracking system would also facilitate study of career and educational aspirations of the students and help design educational programmes and offerings to support their achievement (Note: We have tried capturing the career aspirations of all the students who underwent our CareerAware program in Grade 10 in 2022 in Appendix 1 to this note. The same can serve as a pointer to aid the creation of appropriate support structures by way of mainstream as well as alternative educational programs, career guidance solutions etc, preferably as part of the educational setup itself).

In the final analysis, while the emphasis of NEP on bumping up enrolments, curtailing drop-outs from education and opening up plethora of educational pathways to students is extremely commendable, the ground-work to achieve these objectives would need to be of high rigor. Much will need to be done on various fronts such as mainstreaming and intensifying career guidance programmes in schools, ensuring buy-in of school administration as well parents for ensuring the success of CG interventions and finally setting up of effective state-level transition tracking systems at least for crucial educational junctures such as Grade 10 and 12 to track both the quantum and quality of transitions as well as to support students in staying on course to achieve their educational and career aspirations.
Appendix 1

Range of Career Aspirations – AF Total Program reach

This appendix contains information on the career preferences of all the Grade 10 students who underwent the CareerAware program in the cities of Mumbai, Pune, Udaipur and Goa in academic year 2022. The information contained herein can help throw light on the gamut of careers that students aspire for and thereby serve as a pointer to aid the creation of appropriate support structures by way of mainstream as well as alternative educational programs, certifications, courses, career guidance solutions etc, preferably as part of the educational setup itself, to support the achievement of these aspirations.

Mumbai

[Graph showing Mumbai Baseline Top 20 Aspirations and Mumbai - Top 20 Endline Aspirations]
The above figure denotes the top 20 aspirations voted by students either as their main or backup career plan during the course of the Grade 10 CareerAware program conducted in Mumbai in academic year 2022. While Baseline denotes their career choices pre-program, Endline denotes career picks post program. It is pertinent to note the myriad of careers that the students aspire for beyond the traditional choices such as “Doctor”, “Engineer”, “Accountant” and “Banker”. Further, widening of career choices is also evident post the program.

While top 20 careers accounted for 75% of the career picks in Baseline, it declined to 72% at Endline. Careers such as “Pharmacist” emerged amongst the top 20 careers at endline which was not the case at Baseline indicating the influence of career guidance in widening of career choices. “Doctor”, “Fashion Designer” and “Beautician” were the top 3 career picks for Female students at Endline accounting for 10%, 8% and 6% of their career preferences respectively. Female students accounted for 46% of the population for whom Endline Aspirations data was available. “Doctor”, “Engineer” and “Sportsperson” were the top 3 career picks for Male students at Endline accounting for 8%, 6% and 6% of their career preferences respectively.

*Ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of their career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.
The above figure denotes the top 20 aspirations voted by students either as their main or backup career plan during the course of the Grade 10 CareerAware program conducted in Pune in academic year 2022. While Baseline denotes their career choices pre-program, Endline denotes career picks post program.

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*Ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of their career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.*
While there was no significant widening of career basket (Top 20 careers accounted for 77% of the career picks pre and post program), it is interesting to note the change in top career picks pre and post program. Careers such as “Interior Designer”, “Pharmacist” emerged amongst top career picks post program which was not the case pre-program. “Fashion Designer”, “Government Service Professional” and “Beautician” were the top 3 career picks for Female students at Endline accounting for 10%, 9% and 7% of their career preferences respectively. Female students accounted for 53% of the population for whom Endline Aspirations data was available. “Entrepreneur”, “Accountant” and “Engineer” were the top 3 career picks for Male students at Endline accounting for 12%, 8% and 5% of their career preferences respectively.

**Udaipur**

![Udaipur Baseline Top 20 Aspirations vs Udaipur - Top 20 Endline Aspirations]
The above figure denotes the top 20 aspirations voted by students either as their main or backup career plan during the course of the Grade 10 CareerAware program conducted in Udaipur in academic year 2022. While Baseline denotes their career choices pre-program, Endline denotes career picks post-program.

It is interesting to note the shift in career preferences of the students pre and post program. Non-conventional careers such as “Performing Artist”, “Social Worker”, “Sportsperson” which were not figuring among the top 20 career picks at Baseline emerged amongst the top 20 career picks towards the Endline indicating that career guidance can actually widen the career horizon of students and help them identify their interests. “Accountant”, “Nurse” and “Fashion Designer” were the top 3 career picks for Female students at Endline accounting for 6%, 5% and 5% of their career preferences respectively. Female students accounted for 51% of the population for whom Endline Aspirations data was available. “Banker”, “Accountant” and “Engineer” were the top 3 career picks for Male students at Endline accounting for 5%, 5% and 4% of their career preferences respectively.

Ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of their career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.
The above figure denotes the top 20 aspirations voted by students either as their main or backup career plan during the course of the Grade 10 CareerAware program conducted in Goa in academic year 2022. While Baseline denotes their career choices pre-program, Endline denotes career picks post program.

\[\text{Ranking of career preferences takes into consideration only those cases wherein the students had clarity of their career aspiration. N denotes the entire student population for whom aspirations data was available irrespective of clarity.}\]
Widening of basket of career choices was visible in Goa post program. While top 20 career picks accounted for 82% of the career picks pre-program, the same dropped to 80% post program. It was also interesting to note that students were interested in pursuing non-conventional careers such as “Sportsperson”, “Performing Artist”, “Social Worker”, “Animator”. In fact, some of the non-conventional careers such as “Social Worker” and “Animator” emerged amongst the top career picks post program indicating that career guidance can actually widen the career horizon of students. “Doctor”, “Nurse” and “Fashion Designer” were the top 3 career picks for Female students at Endline accounting for 9%, 8% and 8% of career preferences respectively. Female students accounted for 49% of the population for whom Endline Aspirations data was available. “Sportsperson”, “Engineer” and “Entrepreneur” were the top 3 career picks for Male students at Endline accounting for 12%, 9% and 8% of career preferences respectively.
### Appendix 2 – Transition Survey Schools

#### Mumbai Schools

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<th>No. of students surveyed</th>
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## Pune Schools

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# Udaipur Schools

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<td>Goverdhan Vilas school</td>
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<td>PAHADA School</td>
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<td>Paneriyon ki Madri school</td>
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<td>Savina Kheda school</td>
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<td>Sector 4 A Girls school</td>
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<td>Govt. High School, Daushirem, Tisk Usgaon</td>
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<td>St.Britto High School</td>
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