THE DISCOURSE

Edition 10, Volume 22.4, October' 2022

Leadership & Social Development

Index

Editorial

INDIAdonates is proud to present the 10th Edition of *The Discourse.* We are extremely grateful for all of you who have joined us in this journey so far. When we started with the 1st Edition of *The Discourse*, our aim was to highlight stories of resilience from the NGO eco-system and of unwavering support of conscientious individuals. Moreover, we wanted to create opportunities for dialogue and balanced conversations on emerging issues. Since then, through nine editions of our newsletter, we have endeavoured to create a space for nuanced insights and multiple perspectives into topical issues relevant to the voluntary sector, one discourse at a time.

As *The Discourse* reaches a small milestone, in the form of its 10th Edition, we wanted to look inward and present some critical insights into the development eco-system in India in general. For this edition of *The Discourse* we are looking at 'Leadership' and its relationship with the effectiveness and efficiency of the voluntary sector.

However, when we talk about leadership we are envisaging it in conjunction with community and collectivism. In this Edition,

INDIAdonates' Co-founder, Mr. Sandeep Sharma, while contextualizing leadership and leadership development within the current needs of the social sector, has highlighted the centrality of collective wisdom in achieving our goals.

Further, collectivism and community development has always been fundamental to the ethos of INDIAdonates. INDIAdonates started its journey with the goal to mobilize the power of collective-good towards the most marginalized communities. Then, at the beginning of 2022, INDIAdonates had come forth with its mission #RebuildingCommunities. Throughout the year so far, we have strived to enable bottom-up development within marginalized communities. From children with disabilities to survivors of domestic violence; from adolescent girls rescued from human-trafficking to Hijra or transgender communities, our work has been in empowering vulnerable communities. Now, when we talk about rebuilding communities, central to the idea is the representation of said communities and their ownership

of and within their own social development.

Hence, to further un-pack the idea of leadership, we have invited sectoral experts to share their thoughts on bottom-up leadership building as a tool of development praxis in India. Ms. Madhu Bala Nath, gender specialist, contributor to many UN Agencies and stalwart leader in the social sector of three decades have brought in a gender lens to leadership in India across the board, especially how it can contribute to social development. Mr. Naval Kishor Gupta, India Hub Director of Restless Development, has drawn from Restless' work in promoting youth-led development around the globe to provide practical insight into harnessing the power of youth for social change.

We hope the 10th edition of The Discourse starts meaningful conversation around leadership vis-a-vis social development. We hope to hear from you.

Puja Biswas
Manager- Partnership and Communication, INDIAdonates

Leadership and The Development Sector; What's Next

– Sandeep Sharma

Mr. Sandeep Sharma is one of the founders of INDIAdonates

The contribution of the civil society in India's growth story cannot be undermined. The development discourse of India will remain incomplete without acknowledging and attributing the substantial contribution made by Civil Society Organizations interchangeably referred to as Voluntary Sector. In the journey of the civil society so far, what worked is a flurry of individuals working together, formulating strategies for development, implementing them, delivering essential services and working hard to reach the last mile. However, strictly speaking of the development needs of today, we have a steep climb ahead of us.

Today, India ranks 132 out of 191 countries in the Human Development Report released by UNDP, 177 out of 180 on the Environmental Performance Index (according to a biennial report by Yale and Columbia Universities along with the WEF), and 108 on the Global Gender Gap Index (WEF). It definitely looks to be a daunting task to ensure equitable human development and climate justice in the face of widening resource-gap. Perhaps, the only way to ensure holistic and sustainable development across the board is collaboration and effective partnership between the government, business and civil society. Cross sectoral collaboration and synergies are the only way forward to bring in long term positive change. Civil Society Organizations have a pivotal role to play in ensuring last mile delivery. Hence, it is equally imperative to build the CSOs' internal capacities and focus our attentions to ensuring their sustainability.

One particular threat to sustainability of a thriving voluntary sector, and thereby the future trajectory of development itself, is the growing leadership vacuum within the voluntary sector.

There is a general lack of investment in the overall development of civil society organizations and the people who make up these organizations. For the longest time, the civil society in India has worked with the principles of self-sacrifice and altruism and the idea of 'dedicating one's life for the people' taking the centre stage. As noble a pursuit as it is, this has opened the door for ignoring or sidestepping the need of developing human capital in the large section of the civil society.

The civil society in India has been blessed with many stalwart leaders who have dedicated their lives and expertise in their quest to bring positive change in the society. The strides made by the civil society so far would, indeed, not have been possible without a spate of able leaders who wanted to find solutions to the complex problems. However, the development needs of the country, along with the entire world, has been through an evolution, not to mention there are new opportunities to be leveraged. In this critical juncture, there is a absence of demonstrated second-line leadership and succession plan which is plaguing a majority of CSOs in the country.Leadership in the civil society organizations is still largely constricted to erstwhile leaders who continue to be the flag bearers of the civil society space. A survey conducted in 2017 by the Bridgespan Group revealed that more than 50% of the surveyed CSOs did not have the confidence that someone could lead the organization in the absence of their founder/current leader, nor did they have any leadership succession plans in place. Ultimately, lack of leadership building puts a question mark on the sustainability of the organization and its work, it also means lack of new and 'youth' perspective, losing out on opportunities and not planning for contingencies.

More than 50% of the surveyed CSOs did not have the confidence that someone could lead the organization in the absence of their founder/current leader, nor did they have any leadership succession plans in place.
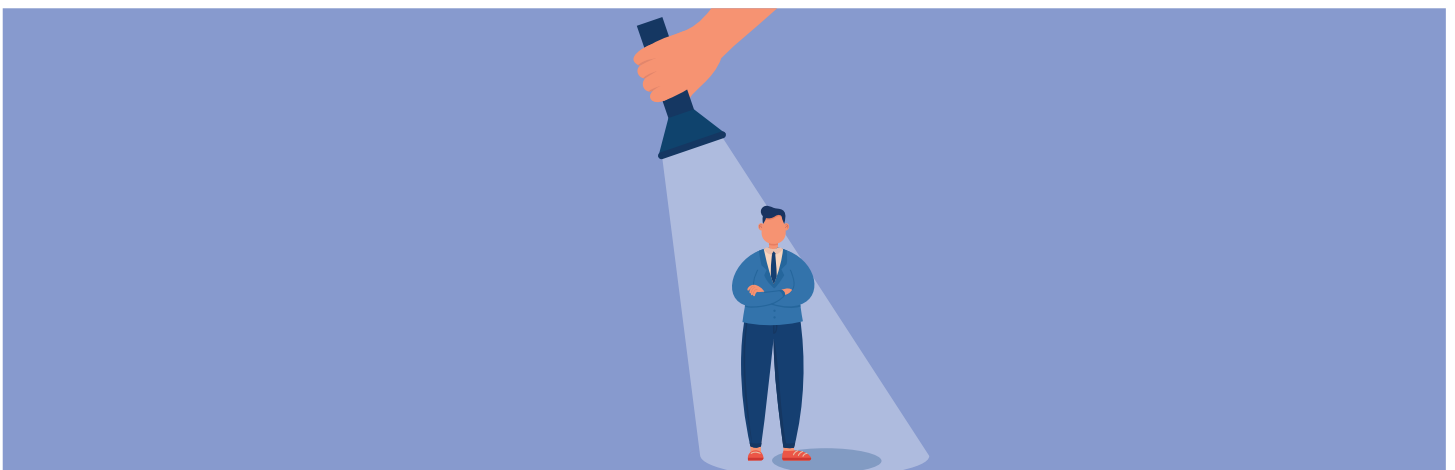
Inadequate investment in human capital, organizational talent and leadership gap has been working as deterrent to the vast voluntary sector to realize its full potential of impact at scale. The question, however, is what does leadership building look like within the voluntary or development sector. We believe, to ensure that the good work of the sector does not fizzle out, it is important to envision leadership beyond charismatic individual leaders. An interesting perspective to keep in mind here is promoting leadership as a culture within organizations. When we talk about leadership, the discussion often revolves around individual leaders and their skills and attributes, however, leadership should be further conceptualized as a culture that goes beyond individuals and rather creates an environment that encourages every employee to take ownership of the organization's growth. In such an environment, the role of a leader is another role to play and are not solely dependent on the skills and characteristics of a particular individual. Second line leadership is also in-built in such an environment

The goal of leadership development should then go beyond nurturing individual talents to ultimately empower employees at different levels of the organization to 'lead' within their spheres of influence. Building a culture of leadership within the organization is essential in ultimately raising what can be called the '*Net Leadership Value*' of an organization.

Especially in the development sector, it is important that we picture leadership as part of culture as opposed to individual attributes of employees. What this does is promote 'collective leadership' that ultimately depends on group wisdom to ensure growth.

Now, when we talk about a culture of leadership, the question arises, what should such a culture entail. Within the nuanced context of the development sector, leadership is intrinsically linked to the complex and multifaceted challenges being addressed by the sector as well as the pressure on the sector to deliver development within a perpetual resource crunch and rapidly changing socio-economic scenario. It goes without saying that leaders need to be able to constantly innovate and rediscover the organizations'

strategies. Agility to adapt to unfavorable situations become vital to leadership within the development sector. Equally vital are collaborations and networking. Partnership building is an innate part of achieving impact at scale.

Effective leaders are successful multipliers of social development, and working in collaboration with other players within the development sector is emerging as the essential way forward in this regard. It is important for CSO leaders to remember that they are not in competition with each other and are ultimately working with the shared goal of human development. Leadership development has to be connected to recognizing the high value in creating partnerships and linkages to create a greater momentum and influence systematic change.

at every level to take care of these concerns. Hence it is absolutely imperative that such values are part and parcel of leadership building efforts within the organization.

Further, when it comes to the effectiveness of leadership, more often than not, we measure it via objective results achieved. While being outcome oriented is an absolutely essential aspect of leadership in the development sector, thinking with leadership lens also requires that one keeps the big picture in mind. The basic tenet of the work of the development sector are people. If human development is the larger goal, perpetuating the values of inclusivity, justice and human dignity also have to receive equal weightage and cannot be sacrificed at the altar of objective results. This is where leadership development differs in the development sector from, say, the private sector. While being ethical, just and inclusive are goals that even commercial entities do pursue, for the development sector these form the cornerstone around which the entire organization's ethos has been built. Further at an organizational level more often than not a CSO is unlikely to have a dedicated team for inclusivity, for promoting diversity, climate justice and for human relations in general, areas that have proved to be intrinsic to growth for private corporations in recent years. So it'll be up to the leaders

So what methods do we apply to build a leadership culture within an organization? There is no denying that training a new generation of leaders by adequately investing in human resources development has become increasingly difficult without much room in institutional funds available to CSOs. The philanthropic landscape has shifted significantly in the last two decades to focus more on 'return on investment (RoI)' in terms of impact created through funds. As more funding agencies are eager to move into project based funding and are looking to measure the fruitfulness of the projects through the number of beneficiaries helped and numeric results achieved, it is extremely difficult for CSOs to account for operational cost that makes the projects possible. Project funding is increasingly looking like 'contracts', with CSOs having to take up the role of 'social contractors'. However, CSOs do not have a 'profit margin' and success of development projects are highly dependent on the people responsible for their execution. So without investment in the people or the institution, this model is not sustainable.

To develop a culture of leadership in the organization, it is important that we leverage this zeal within the people. It is important that employees feel a sense of ownership over the organization's work. This can only happen when employees have a 'buy-in', so to speak.

While these problems are not to be solved overnight, what is that we play to our strengths.The strength of the civil society is in its commitment to do 'good' and it is the strength of the people who make up the civil society as well. These are People who have chosen to spend their professional life within the development sector and wish to do 'good'. To develop a culture of leadership in the organization, it is important that we leverage this zeal within the people.


> *It is important that employees feel a sense of ownership over the organization's work. This can only happen when employees have a 'buy-in', so to speak.*

We are familiar with the culture of providing employees with stock options in a 'start-up' so they can literally own a part of the organization and are open to go that extra mile. For a civil society organization, an equivalent would be for employees to believe in the mission of the organization whole heartedly. It is important that the organizations' ethos, its raison d'etre (reason for being) is felt at every level. This has the capacity for promoting a culture 'leadership' as described earlier. Further, interdisciplinary growth, access to cross-organizational peer network, providing the right mentorship are some of the major factors in ensuring future capable leadership within an organization, especially in the context of the development sector.

Lastly, leadership in the development sector has always been a nuanced conversation. Leadership is tied to growth and objective results across industries, especially when the conversation is around business. In the development sector, on the other hand, leadership has been defined by self-sacrifice and commitment for the longest time. However, our experiences are telling us that the individual centric 'heroic' model of leadership is becoming more and more limited in its ability to mitigate the challenges that have become typical within the current context. We need to depend on alternative frameworks of leadership to find alternative solutions that are unique and aimed at not only responding to a specific pain points but also address the challenges of the future. Leadership that employs different perspectives and is willing to take risks even in the midst of adversity is the requirement for the non-profit sector.Ultimately, leadership in the development sector should also be tied to growth. Here, however, growth can be in finding unique solutions towards scaling up impact while addressing the funding gaps and at the same time upholding the core, people-first values of the sector.
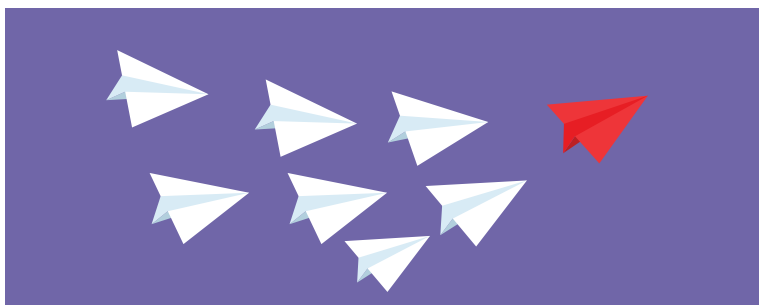
En-gendering Leadership in India

-Madhu Bala Nath

Ms. Madhu Bala Nath is a Gender Specialist with over three decades of experience in leading development in the areas of public health and women empowerment. She has worked with various UN Agencies on issues of reproductive and sexual health and women empowerment. She currently serves on many governing bodies and advisory councils within the development sector including as Board Chairperson of CAF-India and on the boards of India HIV/AIDS Alliance India and Population Services International in India.

The world today is working towards targets with indicators for a more prosperous and equal society through the Sustainable Development Goals.
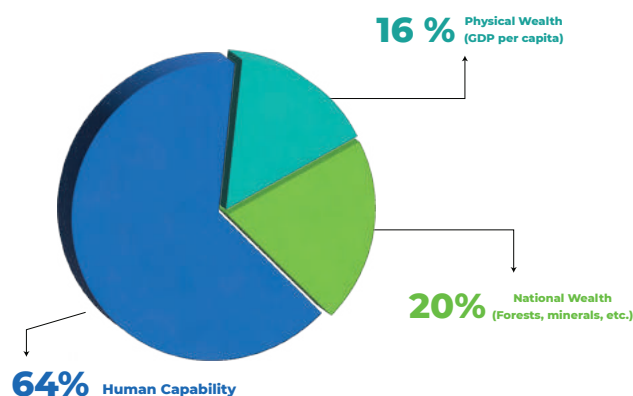
Indicators 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 categorically draw commitment of all nations "to promote and secure women's rights in decision making through political and other forms of leadership."

This focus has been instituted because of the following reasons:

1. The report of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 stated, "Despite continuous progress, the world still has far to go towards equal gender representation in private and public decision-making.".

2. Amartya Sen has been propounding that building talent and leadership is a critical imperative because 64% of a nation's wealth lies in its human capabilities[1].

A NATION'S WEALTH

16 % Physical Wealth (GDP per capita)

20% National Wealth (Forests, minerals, etc.)

64% Human Capability

1. Unrealised Potential - The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings

   – Open Knowledge Repository -World Bank Group

Empirical analyses undertaken by a number of agencies confirm the need to engender leadership in all sectors of development. In a 2007 study, Catalyst looked at three commonly used measures of a company's financial performance namely, return on equity, return on sales, and return on invested capital from 2001 to 2004 in conjunction with data on women board directors. The study found that, in terms of return on equity, companies with the highest percentages of women board directors on average outperformed companies with the lowest percentages of women board directors by 53 per cent. With regard to returns on sales, the number was 42 per cent and for return on invested capital, the figure was 66 per cent. A Harvard Business Review study shows that companies with women occupying 30% of leadership positions are 15% more profitable than companies with no women in leadership positions[2].

In India there are three very pertinent stories where women's leadership has been promoted through affirmative action

1. The National Rural Livelihood Mission - Building on the successes of the women's movement and in keeping with the entitlement approach, women are being organized into self-help groups (SHGs) and are given capital subsidies. These SHGs get help in federating themselves for enhancing joint decision

making and bargaining skills for collective action. Women's group leadership is emerging and showing results. The Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty is reaching to more than one crore women through 9 lakh SHGs federated in Andhra Pradesh. Women's ability to lead and influence is backed by asset ownership as 27 lakh acres of land have been brought under cultivation by them and they have become the primary suppliers of milk to the Andhra Dairy Development Cooperation through door-to-door collection programs. In India, the number of SHGs linked to banks has increased from 500 in 1990 to 1.6 million in 2006 and women have matured from leaders in savings and credit to leaders in credit, livelihood and pension schemes. SHGs have become the nurturing grounds for creating strong individuals who have fought societal battles in groups and are ready to lead and restore.

Credits : ECWG

2. The 73rd Amendment to the Constitution - The spirit of this was that democracy in India without the real involvement of women who formed 50 percent of its population could not be a democracy in real terms unless women were deeply engaged in the processes of governance and accountability. Since 1993, this has brought in lakhs of women in grassroot leadership. Today, there are 14 lakh women in the panchayats with

---

2. Companies with more female executives make more money here's why – Yono Blumberg - 2018

9

86,000 chairing local bodies. Women constitute nearly 45% of the 30 lakh panchayat representatives in India. This was acknowledged in international forums and the Gender Gap report of 2016 placed India in the ninth rank out of 144 countries in the area of women's political empowerment. Challenges persist but women are coming forward, contesting elections, attending panchayat meetings, attending leadership trainings which take them away from their villages into national training institutions that expose them to the outside world.

3. The Skills to Education Framework - In the IT Industry, this breakthrough policy pronouncement has enabled more women to work and lead in this sector. This provides a laddered and modular approach to first equipping the learner with skills to make her employable and then providing her with continuous learning opportunities to upgrade her skills or to get a formal qualification right up to a PhD. As a result, more women are visible in leadership in the IT industry. Its apex body, the National Association of Software and Service Companies has appointed its first ever woman chairperson, Ms. Menon, who along with a woman president, Ms. Ghosh forms an all-women's team of corporate leadership. Infosys has surpassed the SEBI mandate by appointing two women independent directors on its board. In fact 30% of the workforce in the IT/ITES sector comprises of women and there is no inequality in terms of compensation levels. The impact of an engendered leadership in this sector on national growth is documented. The IT sector has increased its contribution to India's GDP from 1.2% in 1998 to 7.7% in 2017[3] Furthermore, a report by the McKinsey Global Institute has estimated that India could add $770 billion

to its current GDP of 2.8 trillion dollars by 2025 simply by giving equal opportunities to women.

These three landscapes where women have been enabled to become leaders are intertwined with stories of success and failure and provide useful learnings for stakeholders Some of these learnings are given below-

▶ To be effective as leaders, women require flexible approaches to respond to their multiple roles especially their reproductive role. Better recruitment and retention have been found to be a key motivation for employers to offer family-friendly policies and flexible working options. A large British telecommunication company reports a clear business case for flexible working conditions as a result of which, 98 per cent of women returned after maternity leave which saved an estimated £3 million and retained 1000

people, who would have left otherwise over the 2002-2003 period. In India some corporates are engaged in constructive ways is to build a pipeline of women executive directors from within the rank along with rigorous mentoring programs. The program is initiated by Shriram Capital, TCS, Aditya Birla Group, Vodafone, and Capgemini as they are the members of the Forum for Women in Leadership (WILL forum) and have been putting high potential women executives to build their aspiration level for acquiring board positions.

▶ But as we promote and support women leaders in institutions of governance and management it is important to keep in mind that institutions require transformation because they govern patterns of exchange that determine who have power and voice. Aligning power and voice with gender equality is where we need to push the reset button in our minds. In the case of engendering grassroot leadership, historically, panchayats were all male and they settled disputes which was largely seen as a prerogative of men and not that of women. The panchayats have an inherent potential of carrying a male bias in the minds of people which needs to be demolished for the effective functioning of women in politics. Capacity building of panchayat functionaries as well as other change makers to unlearn stereotypes is needed along with assessments to measure changes in attitudes and practices in this direction. This unfortunately is not being done and grim realities continue to mar the canvas of engendering leadership.

Forty-eight-year-old Dhoola Ratnam was burnt to death along with her grandson in a village of Andhra Pradesh in India in 2007 as she had dared to contest the elections against an upper caste Kapu community. In one state male panchayat members had spread stories that women members were sexually promiscuous, harassed them with obscene phone calls and made sexual advances during meetings

Because the institution of panchayati raj remained gender blind women leaders became victims of the national population policy and its two-child norm as some states had barred women who had more than two children from contesting elections. This has shrunk the pool of talent at a time when a larger pool would have been a driving force for promoting women's leadership in the panchayats.
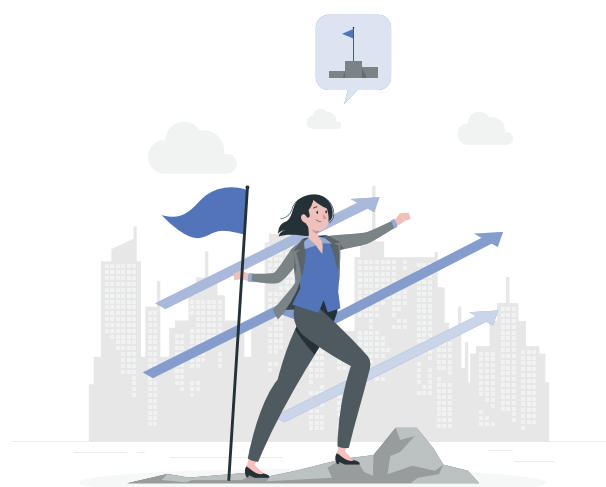
▶ Living in a world of partial realities, there is a mismatch between how women are perceived, and the qualities and experience people tend to associate with leaders. Can a woman leader with so called feminine qualities manage all kinds of challenging situations which uptil now had been in the men's domain is the question that arises in many minds within and outside the workplace. Can a woman be seen and accepted as being assertive and dynamic? As we engender leadership well designed media campaigns are needed to fill this social vacuum; campaigns that use social media and mass media to bring out the reality that female leaders possess the same traits as their male counterparts: vision, perseverance, empathy, passion, assertion, even if she doesn't look or behave like the current generation of

senior male executives. Only then can women-empowered workplaces be created. Gender sensitive men have to be strong partners in such efforts. This is a critical imperative. The harm done by insensitive workspaces to women has been eloquently expressed by Julia Gillard, the former Prime Minister of Australia.

"The longer I served as Prime Minister, the more shrill the sexism became…. What was different was that the go-to weapons in hard political debates became the kind of insults that get hurled only at women – bitch, witch, slut, menopausal, child hating. In retrospect, how could I have done things differently? I could have pointed out the gender bias early, provoked a debate to set new norms, reached out to community leaders beyond the world of politics, and reached out to men's groups who can be seen as more objective than the leaders themselves"[4]

-Julia Gillard, the former Prime Minister of Australia

▶ Another important learning is that the real power that builds and sustains a leader is a strong constituency outside their workspaces to back them up as they take decisions that may sometimes question the social order. Building and nurturing a constituency is not always easy. Experience has clearly shown that when women are part of organizations they engage with women, their lives and their livelihoods. This invests in their confidence and builds their sisterhood which becomes their constituency. Not only in India, but in a number of Asian countries women leaders running self-help groups have become the logical choice for grassroot polity'. Women who had associated with the Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala, a hugely successful women's empowerment group, were better at executing their roles in panchayats. So far, 13,100 of the 38,268 women candidates who contested the local body elections in Kerala in 2015 had links with Kudumbashree.

Rajalakshmi Ammal, president of the Kilimanoor panchayat in Thiruvananthapuram district, said that she never felt that her hands were tied. Ammal worked as a mahila pradhan agent till 1995 before taking the plunge into politics. Now 52-years-old, Ammal completed three terms as a ward member of the panchayat before becoming its president two years ago. "I am confident that I can discharge my duties without male intervention," she said.

In Gujarat, Mahila Samakhya facilitated women's participation in the panchayats by building their constituency providing information, organizing workshops and public events, and of the 295 women who stood for elections, 284 were elected. The data is clearly showing that a strong constituency builds strong leaders by creating a women's agency. Women's agency is therefore an important constituent of women's empowerment. The women's agency is said to be operative when it results in a fundamental shift in perceptions or inner transformation of social and political groups so that women are able to define self-interest and choice.

---

4. Women and Leadership - Lessons from some of the World's most powerful women. by Julia Gillard and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. Penguin books 2021

As stated above we know the problems and women's voices are giving us the solutions. The Global Gender Gap Report, 2022, produced by the World Economic Forum for 146 countries is clearly showing that India's ranking in the global index of political leadership is slipping and our attempts at engendering grassroot leadership have not translated into real gains in education, health and economic participation for women at large. Building on the learnings above, the time to act is now!

Year	Rank	Educational Attainment	Health	Economic Participation	Political Leadership/empowerment
2010	112	120	132	128	23
2016	87	113	142	136	9
2022	135	107	146	143	48

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Understanding Youth leadership and Youth-led Development[1]

-Naval Kishor Gupta

Mr Naval Kishor Gupta serves as the India Hub Director at Restless Development

About Restless Development:

At the heart of everything we do is Youth Power.

We are a non-profit global agency that supports the collective power of young leaders to create a better world. More than ever the world needs young people's power and leadership to solve its greatest challenges. Every year we train, mentor, nurture and connect thousands of young people to use their youth power and lead change. We formed in 1985 and have been working with young people ever since.

In the past decade, the world has woken up to the power of youth-led development. This is inherently based in the contributions made by young people to society in the past as well as renewed focus on their role given we are in the era of peak youth generation. Youth leadership is backed to contribute in solving biggest challenges facing us today. When Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed upon, then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon declared young people would become their "torch-bearers". International bodies like the UN Security Council lined up to agree resolutions and plans of action and the UN launched a Youth 2030 strategy.

Many of the governments like the USA, Denmark and UK published new strategies backing young people to tackle the world's biggest development challenges, recognising them as "proponents of stable democracies, strong societies and prosperous economies", "equal actors with the ability and opportunity to take development into their own hands" and even "agents of change".

1. Based on articles and reports written by Mark Nowottny and Rachel Walker for Restless Development

What does youth leadership and 'youth-led development' mean?

Youth participation can be best understood to mean a process through which young people influence and share control over the decisions and resources which affect them. Two important models - Roger Hart's 'Ladder of Youth Participation[2]' and Naima Wong's 'Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE) Pyramid'[3] – emphasise the steps between tokenistic and meaningful youth participation. Both view shared decision-making between adults and youth as the highest form of participation.

Youth leadership can be best understood to mean when young people have the assets – like skills, knowledge, confidence, agency, values, networks and experience – to inspire others towards a common purpose. Youth empowerment – the process of young people taking on power, authority and agency – can contribute to youth leadership. For many youth initiatives and programmes, youth leadership can be the objective and the endpoint of any intervention.

Youth-led development harnesses youth leadership to achieve positive, external change in wider society:

- It is commonly understood as **an approach - rather than an objective** in itself.

- The **objectives of youth-led development may vary widely** - and do not need to focus on developing young leaders or even working towards the goals of young people. For example, objectives could include anything from building a classroom to developing a national climate change strategy.

- Youth-led development approaches consistently see **young people as an asset instead of a problem.**

- Youth-led development approaches tend to acknowledge that young **people can play multiple roles.** For example, the UK Department for International Development's 2016 Youth Agenda argues young people are (1) experiencing [positive] transitions into adulthood (2) delivering development as agents of change and (3) making their voices heard as advocates.

- The DFID-CSO Youth Working Group's 2010 Three Lens Approach to Youth Participation distinguishes between young people as (1) beneficiaries (2) partners and (3) leaders in development. Similarly, another helpful distinction is between *youth-focused development; youth-implemented development*; and *youth-led development.*

---

2. Roger Hart's Ladder of Youth Participation
3. Naima Wong's Typology of Youth Participation and Empowerment (TYPE)

There are no hard and fast rules about what is and what is not youth-led development. Most youth leadership and youth-led development flies under the radar: it exists in the daily actions, work and civic life of young people - often invisible, unmeasured and undervalued.

Our experiences suggest that programmes and interventions are most effective when their objective is a development outcome, rather than only youth leadership. There is stronger evidence in some areas than others that the approach of young leaders mobilising communities is effective. For example, **young leaders are particularly effective as peer educators on adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights (AYSRHR) issues.** Many civil society organisations (CSOs), governments and development agencies deliver programmes that create more structured pathways for youth-led development. In practice, such interventions most commonly support young leaders **to change behaviour or mobilise action in their communities, strengthen accountability in development, inform and influence policy and practice and organise for long-term power and impact.**

The **objectives** of youth-led development can range from broader goals - like clean water, peace-building, or responsive public services - through to goals that might matter particularly to young people - like a decent livelihood or sexual and reproductive health. **The people whose lives are improved** by youth-led development can range from the wider community to young people themselves. The **role played by young people** in youth-led development can range from delivering or implementing activities right through to designing and initiating a programme themselves. The extent to which youth-led development addresses root causes can vary - from programmes that accept an existing system and work to improve its functioning through to campaigns that aim to fundamentally change or transform a system. No matter the differences, youth-led development interventions share one simple hypothesis: support young people to lead development, and they will improve outcomes.

No matter the differences, youth-led development interventions share one simple hypothesis: support young people to lead development, and they will improve outcomes.

The qualities of a young leader

Young leaders hold multiple identities, defy stereotypes and are not all the same. Their qualities vary enormously, but can include:

- **Lived experience** of the issues affecting young people and often of different types of exclusion

- **Social capital** and the ability to inspire and persuade their peers

- **Creativity, energy** and a willingness to use participatory methods

- A blend of **passion and professionalism**

- An **openness to learn**, with few constraints on their thinking

- **Innovation** and **entrepreneurialism**

- An a**bility to take advantage of new technology and social media** to change behaviour, access information or organise more effectively

- **Different norms**, that can be more progressive, shared **with a generational 'cohort',** and taken into later life

- A capacity to take formative youth leadership experiences into life as an adult - including when they take on decision-making roles.

Lessons for those sparking youth leadership and youth-led development

With an increasing commitment to youth engagement in the development sector, Restless Development often gets asked how international development practitioners can 'do meaningful youth engagement' – so our answer is: let's ask young people. We heard clearly from young people that youth-led civil society and young people don't want to get 'reached', they rather want to meaningfully participate in and lead development. Based on evidence from our multiple decades of experience of youth-led development, and after supporting young people from across the globe, we had a go at answering that question of how to make meaningful youth engagement practical - we came up with this bull's-eye

Youth-led Development

Common mistakes and how development practitioners can make sure to hit the bull's-eye.

1. **A young person in the room is not meaningful**. Youth engagement is not simply having a young person involved or present in a development programme or initiative. There are many forms that young people's involvement can take: from the non-participatory forms of manipulation, decoration and tokenism to the fully participatory standard of youth participation with shared decision-making or youth leadership through young people initiating change and adults supporting. For a young person to meaningfully engage in a development initiative they need to have clear roles and responsibilities, feel ownership over the initiative, have a sense of belonging with it and be able to either partner in or lead development. Shared decision making with young people is key to both of this.

2. **Youth engagement does not happen without people and relationships**. Simply put, youth engagement is a relationship between two actors, a development practitioner and the young person. They way in which this relationship is structured determines whether the engagement is meaningful or not. Development practitioners have two main roles within this. The first is to open up closed spaces or create new spaces. In this sense spaces can be anything from the physical space of engagement to the opportunity within which the young person is being engaged.

The second is through capacity building and individual support to make sure that rather than bringing a development initiative or opportunity 'down to the young person's level,' we are upskilling, motivating and supporting the young person to meet development practitioners or other decision-makers in the development initiative or opportunity.

3. **Youth engagement cannot be our only goal or end goal.** Youth engagement is action orientated and therefore a process rather than an end in itself. While well intended, development initiatives focused only on youth engagement can result in a disempowering experience for the young person if they cannot answer the question of what they are working to achieve. It will be hard for the young person to understand what their role is within an initiative and even harder for them to truly partner in or lead the initiative. It is important, even before considering how to meaningfully engage a young person in development, that the practitioner has already thought about the mandate that development initiative has within which youth engagement will take place. This does not mean that the end goal needs to be decided ahead of engaging the young person. For meaningful youth engagement a young person needs to be involved throughout the entire program or initiative cycle, from agenda setting, to planning, designing, implementation, storytelling and monitoring and evaluating.

4. **Meaningful youth engagement is hard – but worth it.** Hard work yes, but by approaching youth engagement in a conscious and thoughtful way it can be pretty straightforward. All a development practitioner needs to do is **ask, listen, trust,** open up in a **transparent** way and be in it for the **long-term**. And to make it even easier, when you are creating or reviewing a youth engagement opportunity the Meaningful Youth Engagement bull's-eye can be used together with the following five questions to ask yourself:

✓ Which young person(s) are you engaging and why them?

✓ What is the defined role and responsibility for the young person(s) you are engaging?

✓ What is the space within which the engagement will take place?

✓ What is the mandate that the young person(s) will have in this engagement and what is the result they can hope to achieve or the change that development practitioners are prepared to make based on youth engagement?

✓ What support and which spaces will you as the development practitioner be offering them (type, length, activities etc.)?

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
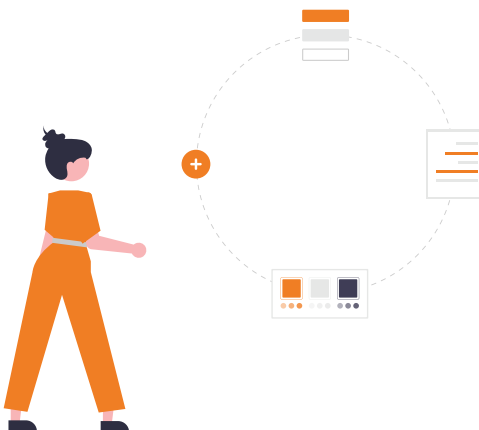
Prevent Starvation and Diseases for Flood Affected Families in Assam

The state of Assam witnessed the worst floods in over a century in the month of June-July. The heavy pre-monsoon rains first hit the region this year submerging large parts of the valley, unprecedented floods affected millions in Assam and took over 135 lives. The situation in Silchar and surrounding areas in Cachar district was especially grim. The condition forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes and give up their land and livelihood leading to hunger and starvation and risk of waterborne diseases. To combat this crisis and prevent starvation and water-borne diseases in displaced and stranded ultra-poor communities, INDIAdonates worked with North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS) to provide emergency relief in terms of food kit and hygiene kit. So far, we have been able to reach out to 100 families with food and hygiene kits to the hardest hit communities at Lakhipur block of Cachar, Barak Valley.

Mission Xohai (Help) Assam: Saving Tribals from Catastrophic Floods

Floods hit the state of Assam on June 19, 2022 when the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries overflowed due to the heavy rains this monsoon. The sheer number of deaths brought on by the Assam floods this year was tragic, the tragedy is made even worse by the destruction of homes, crops, livestock, and farmland. Floods happen in the state every year, however this time they are particularly severe.

Indigenous tribes like (Meitei) Manipuri, Bishnupuriya Manipuri, Dimasa (kachari) and Rongmei-Naga make up a significant population in the district of Cachar. The tribal communities mainly depend on agriculture and because of the recurrent floods in the Brahmaputra, their livelihood and ecosystem had been under utmost danger for a long time now. The severity of this year's floods have pushed them into desperation. So far, we have been able to reach out to over 150 families and provide immediate food and hygiene kits to help them tide through this devastating time.

Empowering Daughters of India through Sports

In India, Santhal Tribe is one of the largest indigenous communities in terms of population. Deep-rooted socio-cultural customs and norms leave the women and girls in the community powerless and vulnerable. Child marriage, early and repeated motherhood, lack of education, ill-health, gender-based violence and discrimination, and even trafficking, continue to form a complex cause-and-effect web that takes away the independence of so many of these girls. The situation is bleak in Jharkhand.

To reignite the progress towards empowerment goals, sports can be used as a platform to catalyse change and bring girls from the Santhal Tribe back to school. INDIAdonates' partner SAMVAD is providing training to 120 tribal girls from the age of 13-17 in football and volleyball. The spirit of sports can unite girls and mobilize them to achieve and aspire for good sexual and reproductive health, employment access, peace and reconciliation and higher education. Women who had previously preferred to stay within the confines of their homes have now discovered a way to rise above.

Community Healthcare for Hijra Samaj

The transgender, "hijra," or "kinnar" community is clearly apparent because most of its members are easily identifiable based on their appearance and demeanour. But in the sense that society rejects them and refuses to even acknowledge their existence, they are invisible. They experience issues in every aspect of life. A majority of this population depends on begging, sex work and other odd jobs to sustain their lives. However, the challenges they encounter in getting access to high-quality community healthcare can occasionally leave them with irreparable physical and mental harm and even put their lives in danger. In terms of community healthcare, a lot of transgender and/or hijra persons are deprived of quality health care support due to a high level of stigma and discrimination at the healthcare facilities, thus increasing the susceptibility of the population to various health hazards. INDIAdonates' partner Alliance India is providing comprehensive healthcare services to 400 transgender and hijra persons in Noida like HIV/AIDS screening and treatment, protection against communicable diseases like TB and chronic ailments like cardiovascular problems and diabetes. Counselling for mental health will also be arranged to provide psychological well-being. This will ensure overall community development with better health outcomes.

Eradicating TB in Bihar

According to WHO, an estimated 9.9 million people contracted TB and 1.5 million died globally in 2020, despite being a preventable and curable disease. With over 2.4 million TB cases reported in 2019, India continues to bear the lion's share of the worldwide TB burden. People living in urban slums are prone to tuberculosis infection as these regions are overpopulated and face a lack of public utility services. It is more common for children to have TB that affects multiple parts of the body than it is for adults, and TB is likely to be more serious in children. One such region lies in Modanganj Block, Jehanabad District in Bihar with a population of around 94,000 people and high vulnerability to the disease.To eradicate and prevent TB, INDIAdonates' partner, Gram Swarajya Samiti Ghoshi (GSSG) has been working under the aegis of TB Mukt Vahini, a network of TB survivors cum Champions who act to strengthen the TB elimination program in India. By working 360 degrees on Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment in a similar TB-prone area in Jehanabad, Bihar, the organisation wants to make the region - a model TB-free block thus setting a precedent for other regions to follow.

Campaign ROSHAN- Training PwD to lead a dignified life

The two districts of Kalahandi and Balangir in Odisha have been designated as one of the most backward regions in the state. Lack of training and skilling opportunities prevent people from getting better job avenues. The situation becomes more challenging for the disabled population. Odisha has around 12.44-lakh people living with a disability (PwD). For a PwD, access to education and training becomes far more difficult due to locomotor/sensory/intellectual barriers. The chances of finding employment are again meagre. INDIAdonates partner Anchalik Samruddhi Sadhana Anusthan (ASSA) is running a project in the two districts where it is training PwD in setting up assembling units for PV Solar LED lights. These training workshops are to skill PwD on installing solar LED lights in rural households which face a perpetual problem of lack of electricity and have to resort to cautious materials like kerosene for lighting.

Partnerships and Collaboration

NGO Partnerships

This quarter we onboarded three partners

RAHAB CENTRE FOR HOPE

Thematic Area: Education, Health
Area of Operation: Uttarakhand, U.P. Punjab, Delhi
E**mail:** rahabch@gmail.com
Website: www.rahabcentreforhope.com

HEALING FIELDS FOUNDATION

Thematic Area: Health
Area of Operation: Telangana
Email: mukti.bosco@healing-fields.org
Website: www.healing-fields.org

SYNERGY SANSTHAN SAMITI

Thematic Area: Education, Health, Income Generation
Area of Operation: Madhya Pradesh
Email: mukti.bosco@healing-fields.org
Website: www.synergysansthan.net

Volunteer Speaks

How was your experience Volunteering with INDIAdonates?

"Volunteering with INDIAdonates was a very enriching experience. My tasks were majorly focused on content creation, especially article writing. The satisfaction that comes with writing was one of the driving forces behind my work, and the fact that I recieved much support from the team was an added bonus. I look forward to volunteering with INDIAdonates especially for the school program. "

-Ahmed Sarim
(Student)

ID VOLUNTEERS

Future Change-Leaders

INDIAdonates' YOUTH volunteering program was launched in Sanatan Dharam Public School, Pitampura with students of grade Eleven.

The unique initiative commenced with a sensitization workshop with the students on 4Es model i.e. **Engage-Enhance-Enrich-Empower**

The goal was for our **FUTURE CHANGE-LEADERS** to be able to empathise with the varied needs of differently abled vulnerable children.

The **YOUTH VOLUNTEERS** engaged in discussions, debates and leadership activities. They got a chance to enhance their communication, public speaking, and interpersonal skills.

We enriched their knowledge of the sociological and psychological perspectives of diversity and inclusion on the **THINK, FEEL, and ACT model.**

Students were empowered to become socially responsible human beings, motivated to bring in **POSITIVE CHANGE** in the lives of differently abled children.

Our **FUTURE CHANGE LEADERS** are now on a mission to help children with disabilities receive special education.

A CHILD with Special NEEDS WILL Inspire you TO BE A SPECIAL KIND OF Person

if you want to share your Ideas of Change on The Discourse or on our Website do write to us directly at **communications@indiadonates.org**

Editorial Team

Uttama Pandit

Puja Biswas

Sasha Samuel

DevPro- INDIAdonates

For Communication
A-5, sector-26, Noida-201301, India

Tel: +91-120-4773200
Email: info@indiadonates.org
Website: www.indiadonates.org