

# STRENGTHENING NEXTGEN LEADERSHIP

28 - 29 December 2021



## Introduction

Indian society and its challenges are diverse, complex, and multi-faceted. This diversity is historically rooted in culture, ethnicity, geography, ecology, gender, religion, caste, etc. Indian civil society has evolved as a highly heterogeneous, diverse, and multi-dimensional web of organizations, actors, and coalitions, pursuing diverse sets of agendas, using multi-pronged strategies. The sector faces unprecedented expectations, especially in the post-COVID-19 context, to do more with lesser resources. This is particularly so for small CSOs working with excluded communities. Today, more than ever before, social organisations need to evolve rapidly – to be competitive, agile, and capable of responding to crises like the COVID-19 pandemic that can affect a range of development outcomes. Organisations realise that to survive in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, they need leadership skills and organisational capabilities different from those that helped them succeed in the past.

A CSO may initially be founded by a person or a group of persons with a missionary zeal who provide charismatic leadership in initially defining its vision and mission. In many cases, this person becomes the 'god-father', whose vision and style deeply influence the organisation. Experience suggests that most CSOs suffer from a neglect in development of a second line of leadership; and many organisations have faced serious crises when the founder charismatic leader is no longer as effective or as active. One thing marks every long-standing organisation or institution: the ability to transfer purpose, vision and meaning to the next generation, so they can continue to influence and to carry the legacy.

PRIA in partnership with Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra, Unnati and Samarthan organised a two-day training workshop on **"Strengthening NEXTGEN Leadership"** for 11 individual leaders from different parts of the country – Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. These leaders have recently assumed leadership role in the organisations. The training, therefore, focussed on broadening their skills, knowledge, and confidence to take on leadership responsibilities in their respective organisations. The main learning objectives of the workshop were:

1. **Articulating the social change that each organisation wants to achieve**
2. **Clarifying leadership functions in preparing the organisation to achieve this social change**
3. **Preparing a pathway for leadership and organisational development**

## Sessions and content

To achieve the above objectives, the following contents was dealt with during the training workshop:

- **Visioning – Social Changes that We Want to Make and Why**  
*(The session discussed what societal vision and organisational mission is and why it is important to articulate them clearly)*
- **Analysing the Context – Recent Trends in Civil Society and Governance**  
*(The session did rapid analysis of the recent trends in civil society environment and governance (locally and nationally) which affect the organisational functioning)*
- **Stakeholder Analysis – Identifying Actors Whom We Engage With**  
*(The session enabled participants to identify who the organisational stakeholders are and their interests and how to design a participation strategy for identified stakeholders)*
- **Organisation Board and Governance**  
*(The session helped participants to understand the roles of governing board in the organisational governance and the relationship between board and chief executive)*
- **Role of Leadership**  
*(The session focused on understand the multiple roles of organisational leadership, identify gaps and plan for future leadership functions)*
- **Participatory Organisational Diagnosis**  
*(The session discussed the organisational framework and applying this framework to identify/assess areas of strengths and weaknesses)*
- **Mentoring and feedback**  
*(Individual mentoring and feedback sessions were conducted with participants to support to identify areas of improvement and create plan for action for future interventions)*

## Discussions and learnings

The focus of the training was not to provide information on theories of leadership but to encourage them to reflect and learn from their own experiences. Sessions included various reflective activities which enabled them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, and thus make action plan to work on these attributes. During the workshop, important discussion on leadership and organisation diagnosis took place, the key learnings and discussion points of the sessions were:

- All CSOs exist for a certain specific purpose and believe in a particular ideology. The ideology essentially means a unique formulation of why the world is the way it is and how it can be changed. At a broad level, there is considerable consensus and agreement among the organisation leaders about the overall purpose for existence of CSOs, and the ideology on which they function. Major conflicts arose out of the differences in understanding of the operational strategy derived from the same statement of ideology, and almost led to crisis, tension and parting of ways. Therefore, an important aspect of effective management of CSOs is a

simultaneous articulation of the organisational ideology, a set of purposes, and an elaborate operational strategy consistent with the purposes and the ideology. Such an articulation can promote shared understanding of these critical parameters within the organisation as well as outside it.

- There are different elements in an organisation – vision, mission, strategy, technology, tasks and activities, formal structure and arrangements, informal organisation, and human resources – that work together and support one another. It is especially important to carefully consider advantages and disadvantages of different organising elements. CSOs cannot afford to reject tools for organising, as some have rejected formal hierarchy, without carefully examining how they might be adapted and used to achieve CSO missions. CSOs have enough problems even if they do not give up useful ideas without testing them.
- In changing organisations, the fit among mission, strategy, and organisation needs continuous review and rearticulation. As external circumstances change and as organisational capacities evolve, CSOs need to re-evaluate the ways they organise and use their resources. Since resources will probably always be in short supply in the voluntary sector, CSOs need to be as productive as possible in using them to carry out CSO missions and strategies.
- To be productive, CSOs need to define, build and maintain balanced relationships with their multiple constituencies, on an on-going basis. As it happens, most CSOs seem to define themselves exclusively or largely in relation to the local people among whom they work; and it is that relationship that they cherish most and pay greatest attention to. There appears a need to recognise the multiple constituencies with which a CSO must relate to for optimum organisational effectiveness, and to define a set of principles by which each of these relationships will be conducted.
- In the development sector, leadership plays a major role in shaping organisations, their culture and processes, and the behaviours of the organisational members. Many voluntary organisations take their visions, missions, and strategies directly from the commitments of their founders, and rely on the analysis and plans put forth implicitly in decisions of the founders. This reliance on leaders means that NGOs can respond quickly to external and internal changes, because they need only await decisions by their leaders before they can act. On the other hand, dependence on leaders may often lead to long delays in important decisions, if leaders are overburdened or their attention is elsewhere. More generally, dependence on a single leader or founder can present problems when the founder is ready to move on. If the agency's dependence on the funder has hampered the development of second-line leadership, there may be no one available to take over the founder's leadership role. All too often good CSOs have collapsed, or spent many years rebuilding, after the departure of the founder leader because they relied too heavily and too long on the leadership of a single person.

- An important issue concerns an increasing trend among the leadership to spend time, attention, and energy on managing and administering assets, funds, and properties of the CSO, as opposed to its vision and direction; or developing its programmes and people. While management of assets, funds and property can be delegated, and others can acquire the requisite skills; the leader's charisma is best used in aid of the vision and mission, which, are not easy to comprehend.
- Management of organisations involves the capacity to understand the behaviour patterns of individuals, groups, and organisations, to predict what behavioural responses will be elicited by various managerial actions, and finally to use this understanding and these predictions to achieve control.
- Any organisation has a range of different assets to which it has access. These include human resources, technology, capital, information, and so on. Resources also include less-tangible assets, such as goodwill and image of the organisation in its constituency, a positive organisational climate, etc. Any set of resources can be shaped, deployed, or configured in different ways by an organisation.

## **Mentoring and feedback**

Towards the end, Individual mentoring and feedback discussions were done with each participant. During this, facilitators supported participants to identify the areas of improvement needed to successfully lead their organisations. It also helped participants to acknowledge their strengths, areas of weakness and give directional for future plan of action.

## **Follow ups**

The process of learning initiated during the training workshop will continue even after the training. The ideas discussed and identified by the participants will be implemented by them whereas PRIA, Unnati and SSK will keep extending their support to these organisations to achieve these goals.

**Annex 1: List of participants**

#	Name	Email	Organization
1	Rashtradeep	abssspc@gmail.com	Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Sewa Sansthan, UP
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9	Narbada	narvada.singh@gmail.com	Khushali foundation, UP
10	Geeta	geeta@sahbhagi.org	SSK Coordinator, UP
11	Jayantilal	jayantilal@unnati.org	Unnati Coordinator, Gujarat

## Annex 2: Training Design

Time	Session Details
<b>Day 1: 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2021</b>	
Pre-Lunch	<b>Welcome, introduction and objective setting</b>
	<b>Session 1: Visioning – Social Changes that We Want to Make and Why</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to understand what societal vision and organisational mission is and why it is important to articulate them clearly.</i>  Methods: Participatory Lecture, Individual Reflection, Individual Presentations, Discussion, Consolidation
	<b>Session 2: Analysing the Context – Recent Trends in Civil Society and Governance</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to do a rapid analysis of the recent trends in civil society environment and governance (locally and nationally) which affect the organisational functioning.</i>  Methods: Brainstorming, Participatory Lecture
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Lunch (and preparing individual presentations)
Post Lunch	<b>Individual Presentations, Feedback and Discussion</b>
	<b>Session 3: Stakeholder Analysis – Identifying Actors Whom We Engage With</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to identify who the organisational stakeholders are and their interests and how to design a participation strategy for identified stakeholders.</i>  Methods: Participatory Lecture, Individual/Group Exercise
	Overnight Exercise: Individual Organisational Stakeholder Analysis
<b>Day 2: 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2021</b>	
Pre-Lunch	<b>Presentation of Individual Organisational Stakeholder Analysis</b>

	Methods: Presentation, Feedback and Discussion
	<b>Session 4: Participatory Organisational Diagnosis</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to understand the organisational framework and applying this framework to identify/assess areas of strengths and weaknesses.</i>  Methods: Participatory Lecture, Exercise (in dyads)
	<b>Session 5: Participatory Organisational Diagnosis Continues</b>  Methods: Exercise in Dyads, Presentation, Feedback and Discussion
	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm      Lunch
Post Lunch	<b>Session 6: Organisation Board and Governance</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to understand the roles of governing board in the organisational governance and the relationship between board and chief executive.</i>  Methods: Participatory Lecture, Reflections
	<b>Session 7: Role of Leadership</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to understand the multiple roles of organisational leadership, identify gaps and plan for future leadership functions.</i>  Methods: Participatory Lecture, Reflections, Individual Exercise
	<b>Session 8: Mentoring and Feedback</b>  <i>The objective of this session is to identify and plan for back home tasks and facilitation support that each organisation might need.</i>  Methods: Brainstorming, Exercises