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Fundraising: Nurturing Nonprofit Lifeline

CONTENTS

03

Reflections & Opinions

On Fundraising

Mainak Roy

A Perspective on the Challenges of Fundraising

Rajul Bharti

Fundraising: An Art, A Science Or A Sport?

Sneha Arora

11

Resources & Reviews

Our Experiences Shape Our Ability to Seek Help

Rishabh Lalani

How Do Courses on Fundraising Work

Perspectives from Three Participants

Aswathy Preetha Jayakumar, Rohit Kumar, and Vivek Kumar

18

Ground Zero

Fundraising

Nurturing Nonprofit Lifeline

A Maggu

On Fundraising

Mainak Roy

Fundraising is one of the most important aspects of a successful and thriving nonprofit or community organization. Unfortunately, it is often the most neglected and misunderstood aspect in a nonprofit organization's growth journey. Over the last 5 years of fundraising for Simple Education Foundation, I have learned 5 key things, some of them about fundraising and some of them about who I am, that has helped me embrace fundraising more openly. I wouldn't say that we are wildly successful in raising money and supporting current and future projects at SEF. But I definitely think that we have managed to learn deeply that has enabled us to approach fundraising with a sense of positivity and possibility.

1. Separate asking for your cause from your own identity

One of the biggest challenges I faced in my initial years as a fundraiser was my hesitancy with asking for donations and support. I would consistently feel guilty about asking for donations, feeling like the donors are doing me a personal favor by giving to the cause. Several conversations with my mentors later, I look at my role today as an enabler of good, someone who enables individuals and companies to support a cause close to their heart and have an opportunity to make the world better for young people. It was important to understand that my salary might come out of these donations, but I am not asking for myself but for the movement that I am a part of and spend most of my waking hours working for.

2. Fundraising is not seasonal

Just like our programs run through the year, our fundraising efforts must also run through the year. As we started out

in 2016, we would fundraise when we were running out of money or in the last quarter as we were preparing for the new year. However, fundraising is a year-long process. As an organization we focus on fundraising throughout the year now. We have broken down the cycle and spend a considerable time in preparation, which includes research and planning. As an organization, there is some or the other fundraising work that is happening all round the year.

Our research work includes identifying companies that fund our kind of work in our region of operation, we often look at annual reports and websites of similar organizations in the ecosystem and find names of companies and foundations to reach out to. The research also includes looking at their funding patterns, funding size and key priorities, which then help us in crafting the most appropriate pitch and proposal for them. It is extremely important to understand organizational philosophy and priorities before reaching out to them.

3. Fundraising is as much about retention as it is about acquisition

Fundraising has 2 key aspects, acquisition and retention. Acquisition is looking for and finding new donors, while retention is about keeping your current donors invested, interested and informed. In our early years we spent way too much of our time in looking for new funders and did not spend a proportionate amount of time working on retention.

Fortunately for us, our supporters mostly stayed. But if I could go back, then I would definitely spend more time on retention than we did back then. Ensuring

that our funders are informed of what is happening on the ground and how their contribution is making an impact is extremely important. And what is equally important is using different methods and channels of communication while working on retention. Monthly emails or common newsletters are great starting tools. But investing in phone calls, structured spaces to engage with our work, and building a relationship beyond the boundaries of fundraising is important.

4. Prepare for fundraising just like you prepare for your interventions

We spend hours researching, designing and building our ground interventions. But our approach to fundraising was very reactive in our initial years. We would write grants and proposals when someone would ask for it, and it would often mean scrambling at the last minute. Over the last few years we have focused a lot on preparing for the year before hand. Writing responses for common questions asked in grant applications, preparing master decks, and designing communication material in advance have made our responses faster and our ability to tailor proposals while keeping a common narrative, easier. I strongly recommend preparation as an important element of fundraising. The first quarter is a great time to prepare as the number of applications that are open during that time are less.

One of the things that has worked for us is the creation of specific program kits, which include a one-page long state or regional need analysis, a concept note, or brief description of our intervention in that area, a master pitch deck which has all the necessary information about the program and a program budget.

Preparing them in the first quarter gives us the flexibility to reduce turnaround time when we start conversations with donors. It also helps us constantly

personalize pitches because the base pitch is prepared.

5. Fundraising needs full time focus

Within a year of running full operations, we realized that fundraising is a cyclical process and has various aspects to it, from research to retention. It wasn't something that we could do on the side along with full-time program responsibilities. While burning the midnight oil was inevitable in the first few years, we were very certain that we wanted to delegate someone for fundraising. This decision has not only helped us raise more funds but also opened opportunities that we didn't know existed.

One of the other things that has worked for us has been finding a connection - someone who knows us and our work, within the organization, foundation or institution that we are reaching out to. This helps in building credibility and trust in the organization. We have also observed an increase in the conversion rate where we have approached the funder through a connection. As a co-founder and fundraiser for my own organization, Simple Education Foundation, these are a few things I keep in mind all the time. Fundraising is a difficult task and needs the kind of work that we put into our programs. Building a strong foundation in fundraising is extremely important. It will go a long way in making our organizations sustainable.

Mainak Roy is the co-founder and CEO of Simple Education Foundation. When he's not thinking about reinventing India's government schools, he loves reading and writing poetry.

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A Perspective on the Challenges of Fundraising

Rajul Bharti

A few weeks back I was attending a workshop with small and big not-for-profits. We all reflected upon our organizational journeys and also indulged in the mandatory ‘how times have changed’ discussion. Samerth Charitable Trust (SCT), though registered in 1992, has been actively working since the early 2000s. I have been with SCT since 2009, in some or the other capacity. Along with my other roles, one of my chief responsibilities has been fundraising and engaging with donors.

Coming back to the workshop, fundraising emerged as one of the most complex and challenging aspects of our work. It was an area where everyone wanted support. Every organization on the forum picked fundraising as their choice of area for expertise development. We all lacked a well-defined strategy – in line with the current external environment.

All donors, whether corporates, individual philanthropists or international agencies, now focus on sustainability of the initiative that they are supporting.

The younger organizations felt lost – with the due diligence processes required to even apply to funding sources other than individual donations from friends and family. Those that had been around for a few years like Samerth had their own sets of challenges. So, when I was requested to write this reflective piece

on our challenges surrounding fundraising, we did a deep dive into our own needs, what and where were we heading, and tried to crystalize our thoughts on these themes.

Due Diligences and the Demand for Articulation

Most Non-Government funding opportunities now require a certain finesse and articulation – in English. Usually, formats are to be filled online, expecting logical reasoning and clarity of ideas to be articulated well. There are few donor agencies that are open to small grassroot organizations, since the focus is on presentation.

Increasing requirements of due diligences need dedicated human resource to focus on just doing the basic paperwork. It also requires financial stability to be able to invest in doing the same. In the last few years, new opportunities have opened up through Corporate Social Responsibility (Section 135, Companies Act, 2013). This has made it mandatory for corporates to spend a percentage of profits, thus opening up new avenues of funding. But the requirements for accessing these funds are stringent and time consuming, making it difficult for small organizations.

This has resulted in more and more grassroot organizations shutting operations every year. In the past any big civil society organization when entering a new, remote area, would look out for a robust grassroot organization to partner with. The grassroot organization would bring in expertise of understanding the pulse and needs of the area, while the bigger organization would bring in technical expertise.

Every year we see fewer grassroots organizations, especially in remote locations. They have not been able to keep up with new rules and regulations. This makes programs less effective. Organizations coming from outside do not enjoy the same level of trust as grassroots organizations, not to mention here the duplication of time and efforts involved.

The Urban v/s Rural Divide

As discussed in the above section, the development sector is becoming more and more professional and process oriented – which in turn gives more opportunities for ‘Urban’ organizations – as they have the required skills and access. But, in our experience, quite a few donors still prefer rural areas to fund. According to current reports we are one of the nations with fastest levels of growth in urbanization. Currently more than 38% of the total population lives in urban areas. Yet there still seems to be some hesitancy to support these first-generation migrants, who have come leaving their families and social fabric behind in search of better lifestyle for themselves and the people back home. Agriculture is no longer the primary source of income for most rural families, and migration contributes to access to cash.

Urban poverty is stark. The traditional work that was done by the DNT (De-Notified Tribe) communities has dwindled. They come looking for work in cities, and often lack skills for urban jobs. They are pushed to take up begging, become child laborers, and sometimes are forced into prostitution. Entitlements of these migrants are not clearly defined and this leads to non-accessibility of small loans for micro-enterprises.

Children are not admitted to schools and they end up joining the informal workforce - selling balloons and other petty items at traffic signals - or begging. Thus, along with rural areas, marginalized communities and

domains in urban areas also need urgent funding support.

We have realized that it is imperative to work on a fund-raising strategy and pipeline. To identify one’s strengths and work towards finding the right partners – rather than donors.

Empowerment/Awareness Building Issues

In my experience, it is relatively difficult to get funding support for work related to empowerment and awareness building. Sometimes due to this perception, certain niche organizations find it difficult to obtain funding after they grow to a certain size.

This is true especially for CSR funding. It is sometimes difficult to show demonstrable impact on empowerment and awareness building programs over the short term. This usually deters CSR donors. The CSR work then acts as a band aid, and fails to reach to the core of the problem.

The Focus on Impact

Let me begin by saying that, donors demanding measurability and accountability has led to more robust strategies. This has helped program teams design sustainable and impactful programs. But sometimes the stress on quantitative impact – reaching out to maximum population with multiple activities - takes away its essence.

The expectation of impact sometimes feels like the need for instant gratification – expecting immediate results in a sector that prides itself in having its heart at the right place. Impact is long-term. Donors have to be patient and invest in long-term associations with civil society groups. Unless the approach is not fundamental to the issue that is being supported, the impacts end up being superficial.

The External Environment

In the past, not-for-profit NGOs commanded a certain respect for the work they did at the grassroot level and otherwise. They were seen as acting as a bridge, a support mechanism, and contributing towards making the government answerable. We now see a paradigm shift in the way people perceive non-profits. Today they are seen as anti-nationals, expected to have non-scrupulous dealings. This not only impacts the overall morale of the people within the community but also deters outsiders – other talented, skilled people to offer support.

The expectation of impact sometimes feels like the need for instant gratification – expecting immediate results in a sector that prides itself in having its heart at the right place.

The environment of distrust towards civil society groups needs to be changed. These organizations have an advantage of reaching out to the remotest areas. They have built strong relationships and developed a good rapport. They are usually the ones who are the first to reach in times of disasters and emergencies. This should be looked upon with respect if not admiration. The donor world, along with bringing in robust systems, could be more emphatic.

Limitations of Funding

All donors, whether corporates, individual philanthropists or international agencies, now focus on sustainability of the initiative that they are supporting. And yet, most funding is directed towards field-based activities – direct service delivery models. Very little or almost negligible amounts are earmarked for capacity building of

organizations, or for covering expenses such as HR costs for the people who will be delivering those services.

This leaves very little room for planning capacity building activities or for extending any kind of benefits to the staff. Most donors do not allow the funding to be used for building a corpus fund – for the organization to survive during a lean period. Thus, very little investment can be made for organizations' future plans or to strengthen the core for long-term impact.

Lessons Learnt

In spite of all these challenges, the communities that we work with, peers of the sector, and finally our donors help us grow and keep the sector dynamic. At times a gap is felt between the two worlds (Civil Society Organizations and Funders), both working towards a common vision but facing different sets of challenges. Bridging this divide and coming to a common ground would make a difference and help us all work better towards our goals.

We have realized that it is imperative to work on a fund-raising strategy and pipeline. To identify one's strengths and work towards finding the right partners – rather than donors. In today's times, it is imperative to work towards getting organization's due diligences in order, to create a robust finance system from the initiation of the organization itself. Finally, one has to focus on capacity building of the team, and work towards sustainability and long-term impact of programs.

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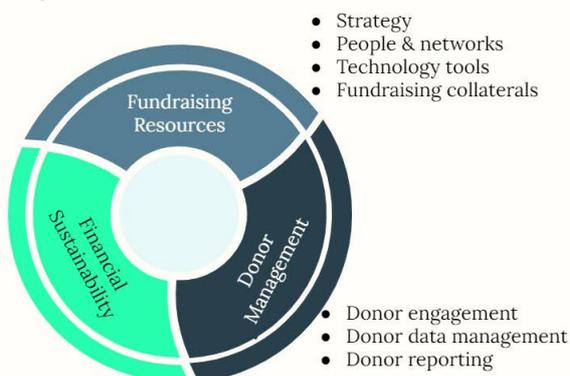
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Fundraising: An Art, A Science Or A Sport?

Sneha Arora

Let's start by addressing the elephant in the room - fundraising is a Pandora's box for most small and mid-sized NGOs in India. One enters the development sector with the assumption that funding will follow strong program delivery and impact. But that's not always the case. We have seen NGOs delivering strong programs, but falling prey to either organizational or systemic deficiencies impacting fundraising. Successful fundraising requires a triad - strong program results, organizational capabilities and a conducive environment.

Organizational capabilities refer to the internal aspects of NGO management that a Founder/CEO typically has full control over. When Atma works with NGOs to strengthen their fundraising capacities, we focus on a prioritized set of three critical organizational elements.



An organization should spend time in understanding and reflecting on their own strengths and weaknesses across these elements. We often find that Founders/CEOs tend to look outward for solutions to or causes of their fundraising troubles, without first taking a step back to look inward and understand where their fundraising capabilities might be broken.

Whether we like it or not, fundraising is both an art and a science; and if I may add, it's actually more of a sport. Sports research reveals that there are seven key traits that determine the success of an athlete - Concentration, Commitment to Excellence, Desire and Motivation, Goal Setting, Optimism, Confidence and High quality of relationships and Support. If you're a fundraiser, I am sure you can relate to most of these traits and might even have experienced moments of both strength and weakness in them.

Environmental Factors at Play

Though organizational factors play a large role in fundraising successes of NGOs, environmental factors can often prove to be a spanner in the works. Environmental factors may have a low traceability of occurrence, but can prove to have a high impact on the fortunes of a nonprofit, depending on any number of factors (sector, NGO size, geography etc.). Unlike organizational capabilities, these are often not in control of the Founder/CEO. There are five environmental factors which in my view dominate the fundraising landscape for NGOs in India.

Mandate Mismatch: Much like modern day dating, a mid-sized NGO leader is often trying to find the best donor match. Sector alignment (Education), sub-sector alignment (Life Skills), program alignment (Teacher Training vs. Student Intervention), annual budget size (<Rs. 5 crore), grant duration (Annual vs. Multi-year) are a few of the top traits that one tries to match early on. 3.1 million NGOs in India have to align with these

criteria of the top thousands of institutional donors. This often proves to be a herculean task in itself for a leader to manage.

Asymmetry of Information: A related second challenge is the asymmetry of information which compounds the mandate mismatch. NGOs often invest in donor research, but there are only a handful of donors that invest in NGO research. Information - both with regards to the giver and the receiver - is fairly broken in the sector. Reliability on databases can prove to be helpful to an extent, but we have often seen that NGOs lack the resources to tap into sources of information that could help them overcome the mandate mismatch. These two challenges alone often trap nonprofit leaders in a loop which becomes difficult to break out of.

Regulatory Challenges: Regulatory challenges have been a recent addition to the list of macroeconomic factors plaguing nonprofit fundraising efforts. Reduced access to foreign funds and license renewal requirements have kept NGO finance teams, often overseen by the CEO, busy in the last 1-2 years. This impedes both the access to funds as well as the bandwidth to invest in fundraising efforts for a small or mid-sized nonprofit.

Domino Effect: The fourth factor that I would like to call out is what I call the Domino Effect. Not all NGOs experience it, but the ones who do, end up being the tail ends of

the bell curve. NGOs that have been able to successfully raise large amounts of funding (due to any number of factors) tend to continue to build onto their success and scale up rapidly to be large organizations - oftentimes backed by a strong program performance, no doubt. However, I have also seen the reverse occur, where small NGOs that lose out on funding due to factors beyond their control, see a domino effect of funders pulling out one by one, putting their very existence at risk.

Randomness: My thoughts on environmental challenges would be incomplete without discussing the role of luck or randomness in fundraising. I am sure we've all experienced the paradox of cultivating a donor through extensive efforts over the years, only to get a rejection, and the seeming serendipity of someone picking up the phone to call and tell us they would like to make a donation to our cause. As fundraisers, while we might not be able to 'plan' around this randomness, we cannot ignore its occurrence and impact on the success or failure of fundraising in our organizations.

Elements of Effective Fundraising: What Works

Being an eternal optimist, while I started this article on a note involving challenges, I would like to end it with solutions and recommendations that I have seen work for many mid-stage NGOs as part of our work in the Atma Accelerator.

Embrace the Grind: In my view, fundraising is 80% effort and 20% luck. Put another way, organizational factors can play a major role in the success of fundraising efforts. Given these are well within the control of the Founder/CEO, it is imperative for them to internalize and learn that fundraising is an effort-reward game. As Atma, we advocate for metrics to help NGOs track their fundraising efforts, before aspiring for fundraising results. This means setting targets not only for the amount to be raised, but also for the

Organizational Capabilities for Fundraising



number of meetings conducted, proposals sent and new leads added to the pipeline. A strong research and an execution orientation is a non-negotiable for a fundraiser.

Resource Tip: [Streak](#) is a great software to invest in to manage funding pipelines. It allows the fundraising team to be organized and methodical in pursuing leads.

Diversify Your Donor Base: Never put all your eggs in one basket, or if I may add, even one kind of basket. Diversification has two dimensions - one is the number of donors which contribute to your organization's annual budget, and the other is the nature of these donors. Keep the number of donors large. Even though this presents challenges in donor management, its benefits in terms of risk mitigation far outweigh its costs.

The second is to ensure that your donors are spread across the spectrum; a healthy mix of corporates, foundations, Indian as well as international funding, HNIs, non-HNI individuals, recurring and one-time donors, single year and multi-year donors - helps to ensure stability over a longer period of time.

Resource Tip: [Read this article on IDR to understand the different categories of donors and assess what your organization's donor mix currently is.](#)

Invest in Donor Relationships: I have found that fundraising can be one of the most tactical things a leader can do; but it can also be one of the most strategic. Investing the CEO/Founder's time in cultivating and nurturing a donor relationship that goes much beyond funding can be a catapulting force for the organization.

When was the last time you had a call or a coffee with a donor who supported your organization 5 years ago? It might not seem like the most pressing need for your organization, but it is an investment in its future. Invest in strong donor relationships.

Build a Reserve: This is a more recent lesson that we have learnt and advocate for passionately post pandemic. Saving for a rainy day hardly seems critical until the rainy day is upon us. If there is one thing that 2020 has taught us, it is the sheer uncertainty of our times. If you are driven by the long-term change your organization can create with stakeholders, set aside time, energy and a strategy to build a general reserve fund.

Resource Tip: [CAP](#) is a great one stop shop to help an NGO strengthen its compliances, finance and fundraising. Its annual membership is reasonably priced and we would recommend them as advisors for building a reserve.

Build a Support System for Yourself: Yes - for you. Fundraising is a mentally challenging sport to play, since it's mostly played alone and vs. an ever changing team. We recommend NGO leaders to invest in building a network of supporters - friends, family, Board members, advisors and mentors that can guide them through the ups and downs that come with fundraising. As is the case in a game, you might lose after doing everything right. In those moments, I go back and read the definition of success by John Wooden that I have subscribed to for the last decade of my life - "Success is a peace of mind attained only through self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do the best of which you're capable."

Resource Tip: [Read an article by Atma's fundraising associate to get a feel for what a day in the life of a fundraiser looks like here.](#)

Sneha Arora joined Atma in 2018 and served as its Chief Programs Officer for 3 years before transitioning into the CEO role in 2021. An MBA from Indian School of Business in Strategy and Finance, she is passionate about applying her skills to enable education NGOs to accelerate their impact.

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Our Experiences Shape Our Ability to Seek Help

Rishabh Lalani

I often facilitate workshops for adults, who are looking to build their capacities to raise funds. In these, I ask them to close their eyes and get into a time machine. The imaginary time machine is supposed to transport them back to their childhood. In this shared space of vulnerability, we discuss how they asked for their choicest things, ranging from a sweet to a day out in the park to getting their favorite puppy to buying a cycle.

What Did We Ask?

A Cycle	Class 6 School Trip	Asked for a Pegasus (video game console)	A Yonex Baddie Racquet
Roller Skates	Chocolates / Ice Cream Outside School Gate	Books	Movie Rental
A Puppy	Milo. The Fog from The Mask.	Buy a Nintendo	A Dog

When I ask people how they managed to get what they wanted as children, it ranges from raising a tantrum to designing a long winding strategy that involved stakeholders from grandparents to parents to close relatives. Sometimes it involved making a strong case for having something against a deliverable that the parents wanted. One could extract all potential skills and strategies that people used as children as illustrated in page 12.

A cursory look at this illustration tells us that we possibly had all the skills needed to raise funds as children. Sometimes as young as 8-10 years old. This is phenomenal. But something changed along the way. So I ask

people to step out of the time machine. And think of life in the present. What feelings do they experience when they think of asking?

Somewhere our conditioning took over. Our social circumstances, our deepest fears and what was considered unacceptable in society, all changed what was our default state. The journey really is to rediscover our inner child and inner joy in seeking the help of others.

A Mental Model for Fundraising

The question, therefore, is what are we to do when confronted with the mammoth task of raising money. Fundraising is meticulous work, which means you have to do small things on a daily basis for everything to count. I have tried to enumerate what those small actions could be in some order. This is not prescriptive, but to help you get started in your journey. For each organization, iterations will be different, but the fundamentals will remain the same.

- **Be your own inspiration.** The only inspiration that counts is your own, the one that comes from within. For you, inspiration could be a personal connection with a cause or that you've been making contributions to a particular organization. And if you haven't found inspiration, go ahead and make your first contribution somewhere. See what feels the most relatable to you.
- **Go public.** Don't feel shy about seeking support for causes and asking for contributions. Let others know of successes and failures, [share](#) what you've learnt and be open to receiving all kinds of responses. Someone is always watching,

What Skills/Tools Did We Use?

Knowing Who to Ask	Finding Trigger Point - 'Help Me Realize My Potential'	Rapport, Matchmaking
Persistence x2	Non-cooperation	Establishing Trust
Context	Exchange of Value x 2	Rejection
Specifying the Ask	Constrained Environment	Storytelling
Costbenefit	Common Ground	Building Bridges x2
Knowing What to Ask	Building a Case, Case for Support	Asking at the Right Time
Building a Blue Sky Narrative	Negotiating	Making it Easy
Approach / Process	Knowing Your Audience	

and you don't know how the causes could benefit from the attention. And yes, always end with an ASK.

- **Reach out to everyone.** A good fundraising engine survives on both warm and cold contacts. This means we must tell everyone about what we are doing and seek their time. While communicating on public platforms is important, reaching

out to those on your emailing lists, WhatsApp contacts, phone book and other mediums are equally important.

- The **narrative** is more critical than the story. A story is a sequence of events, but the sequencing defines the narrative. Narrative is everything. In a world where nearly a third of our citizens are hungry and stranded, you've got to establish need, credibility and action - sometimes in just a matter of seconds.
- **Matchmaking is your superpower.** Hundreds of great proposals get rejected because either they don't reach the right person at the right time or because there is a mismatch between what the donor can give and what you're asking for. Not everyone can give everything, but everyone can give something. Take some time to figure out what that is and make an ask (again if needed).
- **Persistence and perseverance go a long way.** Don't take NO for an answer. Ask multiple times, ask multiple things, ask multiple people in the same organization. Don't be afraid of being a little irritating and also give the other person a way to gracefully say no to you. None of this is personal, everyone understands.
- **Find connectors-collaborators-believers.** While reaching out to those you know and you don't know, keep a keen eye out for those who will stand by you, will believe you and will work with you. Solidarity is a crucial weapon; so hold on to any kind of support you can get.
- **Build trust.** Trust is a tentative thing during these times. The speed at which requests come and the sheer volume of it can be exhausting for everyone. Figuring out ways in which one can be transparent, to the point and supportive of both funders and nonprofits is the job of the person liaising. Unitize the cost, give context, report from time to time, and

Feelings Associated with Asking

Shame	Judgement	Do I deserve this?
Familiarity	Fear	Weakness

make it really easy to understand what you are doing.

- **Communicate, communicate, communicate.** Closing every open loop and opening every possible door keeps campaigns alive. Every contribution has several checkpoints. Telling the donor why you need (narrative), what and how much you need (product), getting the donor to contribute (channel/platform), informing them on what happened with the contribution (servicing), continuously updating on new developments (engagement), and finally making them part of your story (believer). Keep communicating at all stages.
- **Take care of yourself.** On many days, I have slept feeling anxious, worried if a donation will come through or if I'll end up burning bridges with some donors, friends and supporters. Fundraising is a high octane and exhausting job. Rejection is a large part of the game, and you are most likely to feel dejected, sad, alone, and sometimes even broken. Forgiving oneself is key. Seek the solace of friends and family. But, get back up again. Acknowledge your efforts and move forward knowing that despite how large the problem is, you still stood up against it.

Last year during the first wave of the pandemic, I started writing to everyone I could think of. From India's richest individuals to some well-known philanthropies and

philanthropists. It was a leap of faith that humanity will come together in a time of great distress. Not everyone responded.

Some well-meaning people did, but one individual stood out with his generosity. He responded first with a small set of donations. And then wrote back asking for more names and places to give. And this continued well into this year. This single individual and his family have contributed close to INR 4 crores to 51 organizations spanning the length and breadth of India, supporting the most marginalized when they needed it the most.

One may ask what is the relevance of this anecdote. Not everyone who we approach needs to support us. Find, nurture and nourish those few who will believe in your work. It's all you need to change the world.

Some Resources on Fundraising

1. An excellent set of training resources is available at <https://www.changethegameacademy.org/>
2. If you want to understand your asking style, you can look at <https://askingmatters.com/>
3. Some excellent case studies on fundraising are available at <https://sofii.org/>
4. Another excellent resource for fundraising training is available at <https://acumenacademy.org/course/nonprofit-fundraising-essentials>
5. A game on understanding trust (30-40 mins) - <https://ncase.me/trust/>

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How Do Courses on Fundraising Work

Perspectives from Three Participants

Aswathy Preetha Jayakumar, Rohit Kumar, and Vivek Kumar

India Leaders for Social Sector (ILSS) was set up in 2017 with the goal of building capacities for leadership in various domains of social development in India. It is incubated by Central Square Foundation and has Indian School of Development Management (ISDM) as a knowledge partner.

It runs a flagship leadership program since January 2018. It launched a similar program for fundraising in 2020, that is designed for social sector leaders and fundraising professionals. In this feature we provide perspectives of three participants from this program.

Aswathy Preetha Jayakumar, Ayang Trust

As a person who took on the responsibility of formally fundraising for Ayang Trust early this year, I was clueless about where to begin. Most of our existing funding has been through contacts who did the convincing part for us with the donors. The ILSS Fundraising Program was an opportunity I was fortunate to get to know of and then grab at the right time.

Apart from offering a well-structured curriculum on fundraising, the program matches you with a mentor who is an expert in fundraising as well. It also connects you to a network of passionate and committed peers.

From understanding donor mind-sets, be it individual, CSR or Foundations, to engaging donors through regular reporting, the nature of communication and investing in them as long term partners in the work you do,

to ensuring you have a strong and inspiring pitch, no topic was left unexplored.

I was a part of the program during the lockdown period. It was fully virtual.

The program opens up a world of funding opportunities for the participants that is out there for anyone to grab, only if you know where to look, how to structure your approach, and when to make the jump.

The program has been instrumental for me in gaining the confidence and vocabulary to showcase the work that Ayang Trust does and to navigate the philanthropy landscape in the country on a better footing.

Some Key Features of the Program

The ILSS Fundraising Program is a certification course that is open to founders, fundraising professionals, both seasoned and beginners, with at least 5 years' of experience.

The program faculty range from CSR leaders, individual philanthropists, seasoned fundraising officers of large and established non-profits etc.

It is tightly structured, demanding an average of 6 hours per week for nearly 4 months. One will need to clear their schedule for 4 months to accommodate these sessions, as each session builds on another.

Each session is between 1.5 to 3 hours in length, and is delivered in English with Hindi translations if needed. To miss even one session would be a huge loss. However, the ILSS team is highly proactive and tries to



Ayang Trust

ensure that everyone is getting the best out of the program.

The pedagogy differs according to the resource person, mostly following a presentation and then a Q&A format. Some resource persons also conduct group-work, or follow hands-on work approaches, with pre-readings and assignments. The course provides the participants with examples and proven frameworks for key needs of a fundraiser.

These include, how to tell your organization's story to inspire action from a potential donor, frameworks for engaging donors, finer details of how often to communicate, the various types of communication, the checklist of legal compliances organizations need to be ready with for effective and diverse funding opportunities, steps of converting potential donors to long term partners, etc.

The course fee is around 1.2 Lakhs, however there are scholarships available for small and beginning stage organizations. The ILSS Fundraising program is an unparalleled course for anyone who wants to ensure financial stability and sustainability of their social purpose organization. I would highly recommend every founder of social purpose

organizations to be a part of this program, especially in the early years.

Aswathy Preetha Jayakumar is the co-founder and Education Director of Ayang Trust, a social purpose organization committed towards facilitating quality education and dignified livelihoods for geographically isolated and marginalized communities of Northeast India.

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Rohit Kumar, Apni Shala Foundation

The ILSS Fundraising Program is designed for building knowledge and skills in fundraising for social sector professionals and leaders. It is meant for those who have some experience in fundraising so that they can engage, critique, and dialogue with the presenters and the content. If I had not done fundraising before, a lot of the language would have been relatively new for me. For example, it helped that I had known what a pitch deck is - because the program does not introduce me to it but helped me get better.

The sequencing of the content was thought through well. It started with an overview of the landscape, understanding the different

types of fundraising, and orienting us to the required skills. Towards the end, we were asked to do a simulative pitch.

The course offered a great space to practice the skills we learned. There were many opportunities to actually work on the pitch and communication pieces with each other. Case studies on fundraising strategies of organizations were discussed; it helped us understand the nuances.

The diversity of speakers they got for the sessions was great. I personally loved learning from Rukmini Banerji (Pratham's CEO) and Aditya Natraj (Kaivalya). Their perspectives on fundraising were wholesome and insightful.

During the program, all the participants received mentorship support from experts as well. We had monthly calls with our mentors. I received some useful insights on fundraising strategy from my mentor.

The duration of the course was doable for me, primarily because it was online. The course began right after the first wave of the pandemic hit. Our own lives were all over the place. So I did miss some sessions. But overall, it worked for me.

I found the sessions to be heavily instructor-led. If that were to be balanced with listening to the cohort's insights, then these sessions would be more enriching. I felt that the program primarily took a position that it's

the social good organizations (NGOs/NPOs) who primarily have to do the work of 'asking' better.

I wonder what would become possible for the cohort participants - as well as the funding sector as a whole - if there were more organized spaces built for discussions on how we can alter donor mindsets and behavior, when they are not aligned to justice and equity for communities.

The distraught socio-economic class-based relational spaces were not part of the course content - which I think is at the crux of the problems related to fundraising in the sector. We must ask, what happens when a social impact organization leader is from a poor or lower/middle-income group, and they have to 'ask' a rich donor for money? How does gender-relations impact asking for funds?

The ILSS team's flexibility helped here, as when offered feedback to bring these conversations into the program's discourse, they created additional spaces for the cohort to discuss these further.

Rohit Kumar, CEO, Apni Shala Foundation, was part of the first cohort (September 2020 - February 2021) of the India Leader for Social Sector's Fundraising Program.

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Vivek Kumar, Kshamtalaya Foundation

There were around forty-five-course participants and the classes were held online. For five months, we had sessions thrice a week. Each session was around two and a half hours long. The sessions were delivered in English.

These sessions were facilitated by speakers who came from a diverse spectrum. There was an expert from Dalberg, which is a development consulting firm. Ashish Dhavan, who is a philanthropist and Founder of Central Square Foundation, shared his



Apni Shala Foundation

insights. Members from the leadership team of non-profits such as Child Rights and You, Teach for India, among others, also led sessions. These speakers shared their insights and discussed case studies for an hour or so, followed by a round of questions and answers.

There were also peer-led sessions organized fortnightly. In these sessions members in the cohort were encouraged to share their reflections and insights on certain aspects of fundraising with other program participants. In these sessions, a lot of us worked in groups of four or five. We were given an organization for which we had to prepare a fundraising pitch. We presented our pitch to the cohort and received feedback. This process proved to be helpful.

One feedback that I shared with the ILSS team was that, the literature and resources shared would hold true for the western context. But in the Indian context, a lot of these things change. In the West, fundraising is driven by volunteers. But here in India, it is driven by the CEO of the non-profit. The motivations of why people donate and the approach to fundraising are vastly different here in the Indian context.

I really enjoyed learning the craft of storytelling – how to make your story relatable, how to frame a compelling pitch, how to add a sense of urgency to address a particular cause, helping donors recognize your passion, and use a language that would help your donors to better understand the context you operate in.

For instance, if I want to tell donors that I work with children in a remote geography and that children in this region lack access to quality education, I will have to tell them how is it that this region is isolated from other parts and what I mean by quality education.

Another important takeaway from the course was that I need to be more empathetic towards the donors. If I am pained about a

cause, the donor might also be equally pained by another cause. We could explore synergies in the causes we are addressing. For instance, if they are working on livelihood interventions, we could perhaps synergize our interventions around education. It is also alright if we are not able to synergize our efforts. As long as we are all working diligently towards social justice in our own ways, we should respect each other's work. Empathy is two-way traffic and we need to build that for donors and partners as well, and see fundraising from a larger goal of achieving social justice for all.

The course fee is INR one lakh eighteen thousand with taxes included. They offer need-based scholarships. Since the course fee is quite high for individuals from many non-profits, there were donors who were willing to cover the course fees. It does make me wonder about how team members from young non-profits might find it difficult to afford the course and learn the relevant skills for fundraising.

It is good to know that if an applicant reaches out to the ILSS team and lets them know about their inability to afford the fees, the program team does reach out to people in their network for sponsors.

The program team at ILSS is accessible. If alumni request to connect with an expert in the ILSS team's network, then the team does the needful. I am impressed by the commitment of the team to seek and incorporate feedback. It is great to see the team being so keen on dynamically improving their curriculum.

Vivek Kumar, CEO, Kshamtalaya Foundation, was part of the first cohort (September 2020 - February 2021) of the India Leader for Social Sector's Fundraising Program.

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ILSS Fundraising Program's Website:

<https://indialeadersforsocialsector.com/the-ilss-fundraising-program/>

Fundraising

Nurturing Nonprofit Lifeline

A Maggu

Many NGOs often struggle with building a long-term fundraising strategy. In this story, we share the experiences and learnings of education non-profits who realized early on that in fundraising, there can never be a one-size-fits-all approach.

The teams innovated their fundraising strategy by increasing awareness about the causes they work for, exploring collaborations with other NGOs and government organizations, seeking support from their network, and the communities they work with. Their passion for the causes and the communities they work for, helped these organizations navigate difficult waters and mobilize resources.



Shiksharth

Shiksharth: Addressing the Needs of Children in a Conflict-Affected Zone

Shiksharth, a non-profit operating in Sukma, South Bastar, Chhattisgarh - a region struggling with underdevelopment and left-wing extremism for decades - was established in 2015. Their focus remains on developing a community-led model of education. They currently work on ways by which the community, its wisdom, culture, and customs can be contextually

incorporated in classrooms transactions and pedagogic practices.

Ashish Shrivastava, co-founder of Shiksharth, shares that for fundraising one has to reflect on what is the general perception around the issue they are addressing and its understanding in the philanthropic ecosystem.

He says, "It gets difficult for people to relate to the cause we are working for. For instance, a donor might be able to relate to the cause of education of a child in a nearby slum and there is nothing wrong with that. However, for a donor to relate to the problems of a child in a conflict-ridden region devoid of access to quality education can be difficult. Here, I am also referring to how people can relate rationally and understand the magnitude of the issue."

The Shiksharth team, as part of its activities, requested children to make a sketch that represents their everyday lives. Children below the age of ten had drawn sketches that showed the cycle of violence they faced. Ashish shares, "It is important to humanize the cause for our donors. There have been a few times when to explain the lived realities of these children to potential donors, I have used these sketches for reference. I ask them whether children in their families or neighborhood would ever draw such a thing. It helps me drive home the point that the children in Sukma need their support."

Shiksharth relies on three major funding avenues - a majority of its donations come from retail fundraising, followed by support under varied incubation programs and institutional donors. Retail fundraising refers

to an organization seeking donations in small amounts from individual citizens. Methods used may include online crowdfunding, payroll giving, and fundraising through marathons etc.

Ashish adds, “With retail funding, an increasing number of donors means that the number of people understanding the issue is growing. I came across many people who never knew where Sukma was. But the challenge with it is that these funds cannot be used for multi-year support and one cannot plan long-term operations.”

Retail fundraising refers to an organization seeking donations in small amounts from individual citizens. Methods used may include online crowdfunding, payroll giving, and fundraising through marathons etc.

Shiksharth, as part of its fundraising strategy, lays a heavy emphasis on maintaining relationships. Ashish adds, “I remember someone telling me that it is sometimes not about connecting the dots but collecting the dots. Some friends from school and college, ex-colleagues, and relatives among others have closely observed our journey, and they have spread the word about our work in their networks as well. Their generosity in donations, and the faith reposed in our work, has helped us maintain a steady flow of funds.”

Ashish has also been associated with [Daan Utsav](#), a voluntary initiative that is celebrated every year from October 2 to 8. It is India’s biggest festival of giving during which people come together and perform acts of kindness by giving their time, material, or money to causes of their choice.

In Daan Utsav individuals undertake acts of giving across the country, corporates organize volunteering and activities with their employees and customers, and NGOs organize awareness building or fundraising events, etc. Shiksharth also mobilizes funds for its initiatives through Daan Utsav.

Ashish adds, “We have celebrated Daan Utsav with community members as well. In tribal communities, families rarely have any pictures together. If the elders in the community donated something then the children used to get their family photo clicked, printed, and framed. Their parents used to feel happy with these small gestures and the children understood that receiving gifts is also about showing gratitude.”

Although the donors might not be able to recall Sukma’s location on India’s map, the Shiksharth team is determined to amplify the voices of the marginalized communities residing there and to arrange resources for the children pushed to the fringes of society.

Apni Shala: Reimagining Relationships with Donors

Apni Shala Foundation, established in 2013, works with children and educators to build stronger emotional intelligence and strengthen educational institutions for promotive and preventive mental health. Apni Shala saw that existing curricula do not factor in social-emotional learning (SEL) wherein the children can understand and manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, and make responsible decisions. Apni Shala collaborates with the government and low-fee schools, and works towards the socio-emotional development of children. They use stories, drama, films and games as tools to engage children in SEL.

Rohit Kumar, CEO of Apni Shala shares, “For an organization, a lot of initial focus goes on strengthening operations and designing interventions. The co-founders are tasked to do everything - fundraising, program

management, liaising with stakeholders, etc. Initially, Apni Shala was not able to chart out a long-term fundraising strategy. But we continued to engage with retail donors. These were people like you and I who believed in our work and came forward to support our crowdfunding initiatives.”

The Apni Shala team focuses on sensitizing the general public and donors on SEL. Regular communication covering not just programmatic updates but major discussions surrounding SEL are shared with all the donors over emails and touchpoints.

Rohit says, “With the funders who give us time, we try humanizing the problem. SEL focuses on self-awareness. When we speak with the donors, we ask these questions - how are they feeling today, how their family is doing, and whether they checked in on them recently. Then we draw attention to how these discussions are infrequent in the lives of people with certain privileges and it is worse for children who are systemically marginalized or face violence daily. We back our claims with evidence that shows that when compared with children from middle- and upper-income homes, children from low-income homes are three times more likely to struggle with mental well-being. For instance, there could be an amazing teacher for English taking a class. But a child will be unable to concentrate in class when they were abused by their father the previous night and would not have any outlet to share their emotions.”

In 2018, the Apni Shala team decided that it was time to pause and prepare a roadmap for

the next five years. In an attempt to synergize the strengths of an individual to their role, the team in a major overhaul reallocated the responsibilities of the employees.

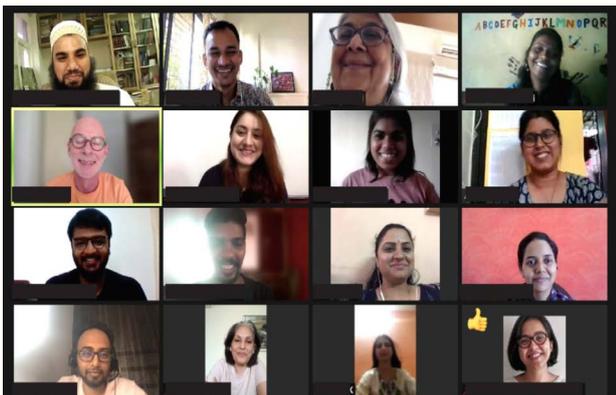
Rohit adds, “We wanted the team to be passionate about the work they do. It became important for us to ensure that the right kind of people do the work they enjoy. For fundraising, none of us had any formal training. But we attempted to have team members who were excited to raise funds for Apni Shala.”

The team decided to actively understand the nitty-gritties of fundraising – developing a pitch deck, conveying their story, etc. They attended courses and workshops and actively shared the learnings amongst themselves.

The team also reached out to their peers in other organizations to understand their fundraising approaches. Rohit adds, “I was impressed by a crowdfunding campaign of an organization and reached out to them asking about their strategy. We should be open to learning from our peers.”

Rohit draws attention to the Apni Shala team’s attempt to first heal their relationship with the idea of money. Rohit says, “When a team comes from middle or lower-income backgrounds, they have a very distraught relationship with money. There is a certain shame and guilt to requesting funds. I do realize that I am not requesting funds for myself but for the cause. But there’s a lingering hesitance that made me nervous to ask for funds.”

Apni Shala’s work is informed by Narrative Practices, a postmodern therapy process where the core value is that the people are not the problem, but the problem is the problem. Rohit highlights how in the fundraising landscape, the donors come from a certain social and economic background that invariably differs from the non-profits. Their background plays a key role in shaping their outlook.



Apni Shala Foundation

He adds, “We leveraged the lens from Narrative Practices to understand that the funders are not the problem but their decisions are governed by their experiences. A new possibility that emerged for us was that, we started looking at our funders as our partners.”

Inqui-Lab team forged partnerships with other organizations working on the same set of interventions or in the same geography. These partnerships focused on sharing resources to maximize the reach of their work, helped enhance Inqui-Lab’s capacities, and stabilized program delivery.

The team started to use this lens to push back the hierarchy that some of the funders enforced. Rohit says, “We pushed back the hierarchy with love and care for our funders. There are times when some funders will not engage with us because of the stands we are taking and that is alright. The funders who decide to engage, we can respect their intentions and then we can educate them about our work in a respectful and honourable manner. For instance, we follow the same empathetic approach in building relationships with the municipal schoolteachers we work with because we believe that they are also people who are stuck in a bureaucratic system and they’re trying to do their best. We brought the same empathy while working with our funders.”

The team heavily focuses on building relationships and maintaining a consistent channel of communication with their donors. They spoke with donors to understand why they are donating to Apni Shala, what are the

things they believe were not working for Apni Shala, how they can improve their work, etc.

Using the insights from the inputs shared by donors, at the beginning of 2021, the team put together a fundraising strategy that responded to their organizational needs.

Rohit shares that the team focuses on being realistic about their fundraising goals and strategy. For instance, many retail donors were chatting with the team on WhatsApp. The team did not have the time to regularly engage with these 600-700 donors. They tailored the frequency of their touchpoints with these donors to once a month wherein the team would share updates and engage with them.

In the past few years, increasing evidence on the efficacy of SEL has helped it find footing in the education and fundraising landscape. The Apni Shala team is optimistic about the growing acceptance for SEL especially for children hailing from marginalized communities and are keen to scale up their work.

Inqui-Lab Foundation: Forging meaningful partnerships

Set up in 2017, Inqui-Lab Foundation works to build the abilities of innovation & problem-solving in students by nurturing a culture of creativity, design, and innovation among the educational community. They design platforms and interventions that transform student learning spaces into places of innovation. The team, in their initial few months, focused on validating the interventions.

Vivek Piddempally, co-founder of Inqui-Lab Foundation says, “If I were to use start-up terminology, we started with a bootstrapping approach. As we progressed in our journey and validated some of our assumptions, we realized that we will have to transition from the project mode and focus on setting up an organization. We were working with government schools and since families are from low-income backgrounds it meant that

they will not have the capacity to pay for our support. We realized that we need to ramp up our fundraising efforts. We focused on reaching out to high net-worth individuals, and organizations who would trust our idea and believe in us. In the initial phase of any organization or idea, it is very important to find your first believer – for us it was our friends at Teach for India and Mr. Mekin Maheshwari.”

Vivek emphasized how it is important for every non-profit to focus on and get its legal and accounting processes in order right from the initial stages, as most of the organizations especially young non-profits are mission driven and fall short on strong organization management capacities.

He says, “For the donors and people to gain trust in your mission and work, it is important to have your 12A, 80G, and standard operating procedures for accounting in place. We felt that having these would help us quickly reach out to institutional and corporate donors. It proved to be helpful as presently 30-40% of our funds come from these donors.”

The team then initiated processes to carefully document their impact through reports that gave an overview of their approach, work, outreach, progress on impact indicators, and anecdotal evidence.

The Inqui-Lab team started focusing on diversifying portfolios to minimize risks. The team, to support its operations, attempted to figure out a different revenue model - they started facilitating small workshops around Design Thinking and Problem Solving with sub-themes around upcycling, mechanics, scratch coding etc.

These funds were envisioned to be used for Inqui-Lab’s work. However, the team soon realized that they did not have the time and energy to go ahead with this model and maximized efforts towards building partnerships.

Although, for Inqui-Lab Foundation, the contribution of crowdfunding to their annual budget is a mere 10-15%, the team believes that crowdfunding can be used as an advocacy and outreach tool. It is seen to help people to understand the cause better, repose faith in the work, and build community.

Vivek says, “With crowdfunding, what we have noticed is, it depends on how strong your reach and network is. It is proportional to the first, second, and third circles of your network. The success of crowdfunding also depends on the cause you are working for - when it is not directly something that people can comprehend, say like a natural calamity, it gets difficult for people to connect. In the education space, the outcomes are long-term and intangible, and for people to relate to your cause, to garner funds, it takes time and one needs to design strong campaigns.”

In 2018, the team reached out to Telangana Social Welfare Department where they proposed to start a pilot with 20 schools. The Department agreed to provide a minimum financial support of 10-15% of the project costs. Vivek says, “With the government buy-in, we approached CSRs and institutions, saying who would be interested in supporting government schools and impact more than 2000 students with this partnership. There were a few big and even local organizations who came forward to support us through their CSR funds.”

The team supports 30-40% of its program costs through partnerships with other organizations. Inqui-Lab team forged partnerships with other organizations working on the same set of interventions or in the same geography. These partnerships focused on sharing resources to maximize the reach of their work, helped enhance Inqui-Lab’s capacities, and stabilized program delivery.

Vivek adds, “The support extended by CSRs and institutions is focused more on programs.

As a young organization, the expenses on organizational capacity building are critical and with the mandate of funds by CSRs and institutions, it gets difficult to train staff, help them attend workshops, etc. This is where the invaluable support of our partners helped us.”

Through partnerships, their network has grown. For instance, Inqui-Lab partnered with the Telangana State Innovation Cell and the Telangana Social Welfare Department. Their financial contribution is modest. But that has helped the Inqui-Lab team to expand its network to local and international organizations. The team secures 30-40% of its funding through partnerships.

In the coming few years, collaboration amongst all stakeholders – donors, non-profits, communities, and the administration - to do meaningful work, learn from each other and mobilize resources may take different forms.

With the support from incubation programs for early-stage non-profits, the team has been further able to build capacities and a strong network. These programs have well-structured modules that cover different aspects of leadership, team management, fundraising, etc.

There is also a seed grant provided to the founders of the organization which acts as a safety net and helps them remain committed to grassroots work. Inqui-Lab was incubated by IIM-B NSRCEL, InnovateEd, Wipro Education Fellows Program, among others. The team is keen on actively exploring partnerships with organizations that share a similar vision and are taking the necessary steps. For now, they are trying to diversify their fundraising portfolio.

Sahodaya Trust: Leveraging Community Support

Set up in 2016 in Kohbari village, Gaya district, Bihar, by Anil and Rekha, Sahodaya Trust’s vision is to create an environment where children are given a space for holistic and experiential learning. They run a learning center with 33 children where the team facilitates an environment in which children can learn in a free, healthful and eco-friendly way. They are trying to reduce the dichotomy between learning and living, knowledge and experience, thought and action, and self and the other, including non-humans.

In the initial two years of the organization, both Anil and Rekha used their savings to set up operations. Anil, co-founder of Sahodaya Trust says, “Funding has been challenging for us. The good thing is that since we mostly use natural things for our daily requirement, and all the food we get is locally sourced, our expenses remain modest.”

People in the network of both Anil and Rekha, who have been closely following the journey of Sahodaya Trust, have generously extended financial support. They have professors from their alma mater, relatives, and friends who have donated.

Anil says, “People around us are aware that we used all our savings and there is no source of income for both of us. Their contribution has helped us cover our expenses.”

The Trust is located on a seven-acre land that was donated to the villagers during the Bhoodan (land-gift) movement. This movement was initiated by the Gandhian Vinoba Bhave in 1951 wherein for over twenty years he walked through the length and breadth of India to persuade wealthy landowners and landlords to donate their lands to their poor and landless neighbors.

When Anil and Rekha came here in 2016, the villagers were inhabiting this land donated to them under the Bhoodan movement.



Anil says, “We first decided to identify a village where the people needed us the most. Once we identified Kohbari village, we talked to the villagers and explained to them our reasons for starting the Trust, how we wish to work, and engage with them and their children. We requested them to donate a piece of land where we could set up a learning center for the local children. Initially, there were various conflicts with some people who said they did not know our work and could not trust our intentions. We reasoned with them and told them that we are not claiming personal ownership over the land but it would be registered in the name of Sahodaya Trust. Once everyone understood our intentions, we contacted Bhoodan Yagna Committee’s chairperson who happily obliged to register this land under the name of Sahodaya Trust.”

More than half of the land remains untouched. Anil believes that the land in its native state will have a lot to teach the children about the natural world and biodiversity. In the other part of the land, they have a learning center and practice farming.

Anil and Rekha manage the everyday operations and they get little time to focus on fundraising efforts. In the long-run, the team wishes to minimize its dependence on external funding and create its own avenues for supporting their livelihood. The children enjoy participating in farming and plantation-related activities. So the team believes that they will be excited to join this initiative.

Anil adds, “We are planning activities with the children to encourage them to make craft items they enjoy producing, and then we will explore to sell these in the market. On our campus, we have started farming and, in the future, we are thinking of selling the produce in the local market. As we practice organic farming, currently, the produce is little and it is not enough to meet our requirements.”

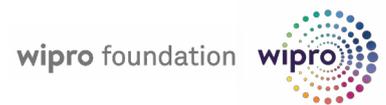
While the road to fundraising might not be easy, Anil and Rekha are making sustained efforts to arrange for resources by involving the community members and the children. Sahodaya Trust sets an example for other organizations that if the community members are confident about the intention and the nature of work, their support can prove invaluable.

In Conclusion

Fundraising poses a host of challenges and opportunities for young organizations and it may seem overwhelming for them to chart out their fundraising strategies. In the fundraising landscape, things might be less daunting if the donors and non-profits respect each other and repose faith in their relationship.

In the coming years, collaboration amongst all stakeholders – donors, non-profits, communities, and the administration - to do meaningful work, learn from each other and mobilize resources may take different forms. One-size-fits-all fundraising approaches need to be debunked. We must create an environment where there could be room for non-profits to experiment with their fundraising strategies to tailor pathways that respond to the communities they serve in a meaningful and sustainable fashion.

You can reach out to the organizations featured in the story at: contact@apnishala.org (Apni Shala Foundation), info@inqui-lab.org (Inqui-Lab Foundation), anilkumar108@gmail.com (Sahodaya Foundation) and info.shiksharth@gmail.com (Shiksharth)



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