SUCCEEDING IN PARTNERSHIPS A GUIDE

SAHAYOG
FOUNDATION

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AMIT CHANDRA AND GAYATRI NAIR LOBO

We, at the A.T.E. Chandra Foundation (ATECF), deeply appreciate this body of knowledge that Sahayog Foundation has painstakingly put together. The focus on partnership readiness, in the leadership of the partners, and also how that readiness permeates through their organisations, strongly resonates with our own philosophy and work.

Our focus on serving society is via strengthening the capacity of the social sector / NGOs, and initiatives in sustainable rural development. Across the breadth of these, we believe that great impact can only be made via a committed set of capable partners, with whom we share a common vision and values. We are a small team with aspirations for large scale impact. This would not be possible without driving deep collaboration where each partner comes together to solve big complex issues – that no single one of us could do.

Our work on water security for farmers in the drought-prone districts of Maharashtra is a good example of such collaboration. This is a sticky problem that has caused deep agricultural and socio-economic distress impacting millions over the past few decades. Over the last 5-6 years, we have built a collaborative network of the community, government, NGOs, donors, and also researchers - all taking ownership of their own parts of this complicated long-standing problem. The collaborative has been able to rejuvenate over 2,500 water bodies, attached to ~4,000 villages, improving the availability of water to ~ 58 Lakh villagers while boosting farm income for tens of thousands of farmers.

Another example of such a collaborative emerged during the pandemic, when many diverse organisations came together to solve unique problems that had never been addressed before, in a rapid manner. At the peak of the pandemic, many felt the need for a much higher quality of data and insights to inform decision making by policymakers and civil society.

To address this issue, a collaborative came together to build credible data on seropositivity in the city. Without this data, it was hard to make policy decisions around hospital capacity planning or decide on opening up the city after the lockdown or be able to predict the disease in any informed manner. A partnership was formed between the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI), IDFC Institute, ourselves, ACT Grants, Godrej CSR, and a few prominent NGOs (who could help execute the sample collection).

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Additionally, there were vendors like an app company, a private lab, communications firm and corporators who stepped in. No party alone could have pulled off collecting close to 10,000 blood samples, running the tests and doing the analysis, all in a period of a few weeks. It needed the right leadership, strong communications between the different groups, aligned intent and an overall culture of collaboration. It was perhaps the first major credible Seroprevalance study done globally during the pandemic and cited in many major news sites, both globally and nationally. Importantly, it facilitated informed decision making by those in positions of responsibility.

Both these examples demonstrate ATECF's deep belief in the power of collaboration. We are happy to see the partnership readiness survey in this publication. It is simple to execute and helps focus one's attention to the specific areas that need strengthening within the organisation. It goes further to then provide case stories and tool kits to help prepare you as a leader and your organisation to be a more valuable partner in any collaborative. Using the partnership strategies articulated, we believe several collaborations can get stronger and new collaboratives can be forged as we all strive towards a better future.

We wish you, the readers, the very best of success in your endeavours, and that you and your loved ones stay safe through the pandemic.

San to ATECF Website

FOREWORD
SAFEENA HUSSAIN

Partnerships are critical to scaling social impact. To get closer to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), developing a systems-change lens is a must. This can be achieved through partnerships and collaborations.

At Educate Girls our programme model addresses not just one SDG, but nine. It is clear that working in isolation is not an option as we seek to achieve interconnected development goals while sustaining the transformation among the communities we work with.

Over the past 13-year journey, we have taken steps early on to partner with like-minded and goal-focused organisations to strengthen our programme and its reach. We identified partners who are aligned with our approach to social development, our vision, mission and values. This helped us as we strengthened the quality of the impact we have been creating in the most rural, remote geographies of India. Being partnership-ready meant that we had clarity on what we wanted to achieve through these collaborations early on.

Non-profits need to be encouraged to consider the benefits of partnering with others, whether to strengthen the quality of their existing programmes or to sustain impact among the communities for social transformation.

This guide helps non-profit leaders to take a step back and think deeply about the partnership approaches they wish to take. It guides you to be conscious about your internal capabilities, the collaborations that are being sought, and how this can affect the outlook when looking out for partners. It provides the know-how and measures to amplify social impact through partnerships in the long term.

San to View Educate
Girls Website

INTRODUCTION

India's commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signalled a shift towards a more holistic approach to addressing the nation's complex societal issues. Today, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, our nation ranks 117th on the SDG index.[1]

major challenges remain | significant challenges remain | challenges remain | SDG achieved

The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have submerged an additional 75 million people into poverty.[2] Millions of children are out of school, and access to immediate nutrition, health care and dignified livelihoods are all at stake. Girls are at heightened risk of early marriage, shattering decades of work to empower communities.

As part of the developing Third Sector, it is obvious that we are burgeoning with ideas to create social change. Way back in 2010 India had a ratio of one non-profit organisation (NPO) for every 400 people.[3] While it is encouraging to see an increasing motivation to tackle inequality and eventually alleviate poverty, the emergence of thousands of NPOs shows that we are arriving at individual solutions instead of joining forces to reduce duplication and increase effectiveness.

As a sector, we have zealously worked towards realising our vision of a more equitable world. Whether we are part of large 100-crore organisations scaling nationwide, or a smaller NPO working in smaller, more focused areas, we have reached a point where the problems themselves are so layered that our solution alone cannot address them. Therefore, to achieve the dream for society is to scale our ideas and approaches instead of multiplying our presence everywhere. Partnerships are the driver that catalyses this process.

Imagine an organisation that helps empower women and young girls in urban communities. It has a system of creating women champions in the communities they serve. These women leaders have the know-how to deal with hostile situations and advocate with the police and law & order machinery. This organisation has a gold mine of knowledge, beneficial for building supportive eco-systems for women in communities across the nation irrespective of the domain. Therefore, organisations specialising in girl-child education, women's nutrition, women's self-help groups could create programmes for their target audiences by sharing this organisation's expertise.

Whether it is joining forces with other non-profits, the government, social enterprises or academic bodies, it is a partnership that builds resilience and helps cohesively address multi-faceted problems.

LET US REALISE THE DREAM OF SUSTAINED SOCIAL CHANGE BY CONVERGING THE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE OF THOUSANDS OF NPOS THROUGH THE SILVER BULLET THAT IS PARTNERSHIPS.

WHAT ARE PARTNERSHIPS?

For the purpose of this guide, **Partnerships** are a form of collaboration through which an equal, formalised relationship between two or more non-profit partners is used to amplify the impact of successful programmes in a sustained manner.

The above word cloud was created from non-profit leaders' responses when defining Partnerships.

TYPES OF PARTNERSHIPS[4]

Association	Joint Programmes	Shared Resources
An informal partnership between NPOs, such as sharing and learning platforms.	When NPOs grow existing interventions jointly, ensuring necessary adaptation to meet community needs.	NPOs either jointly hire the same service provider or share their existing resources.
There may or may not be a contractual agreement between the NPOs		This approach intends to reduce the cost for NPOs seeking the same services.
There is an understanding of support to achieve a common goal		It involves contractual agreements on the security and confidentiality related to each non-profit involved.

Merger	When one NPO integrates with another organisation or creates a new entity.	

WHY ADOPT PARTNERSHIPS?

As committed non-profit leaders, we seek to make a tangible impression on the nation's social development. Building resilient communities is possible both through direct interventions and/or through partnerships. However, it is critical to evaluate the pros and cons of the strategy you adopt vis-a-vis your programme and its benefits to each community.

DIRECT INTERVENTION VS. PARTNERING TO AMPLIFY IMPACT

Increasing impact through direct interventions requires:

- Building relationships in new communities, establishing trust to enable programme implementation
- Infrastructure investments across geographies
- Time investment in hiring, recruiting and inducting additional personnel
- Additional administrative capacity

This often comes with the burden of <u>fundraising exhaustion</u>[5] over an extended period of time, and potential delays and roadblocks associated with inexperience in new geographies.

LIMITATIONS

Increasing overheads

Fundraising exhaustion to cope with expansion

Knowledge barriers of the complexities of working in new geographies and communities

Human resource constraints to meet the skill and knowledge demands of the rapidly increasing scale of work

Partnerships promote convergence between non-profits, utilising existing community relationships, infrastructure, human and administrative resources to amplify impact at a greater rate.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed <u>non-profits collaborating due to three particular needs</u>:[6]
1. Connections to enable efficient responses
2. Information on how to organise responses to the pandemic
3. Expertise to create a collective solution

Partnerships address these needs, establishing clear strategies for sustained amplified impact.

WHY DON'T NON-PROFITS PARTNER?

The Collaborating in the Social Sector survey,[7] taken by 160 NPO leaders revealed the gap between the intention to and taking action to partner. Although 95% of non-profits surveyed agreed that it is possible to scale programmes through collaboration, just 53% have incorporated partnerships in their organisational strategy.

BARRIERS[7]

Financial resources

Credible partners

Talent with partnership expertise
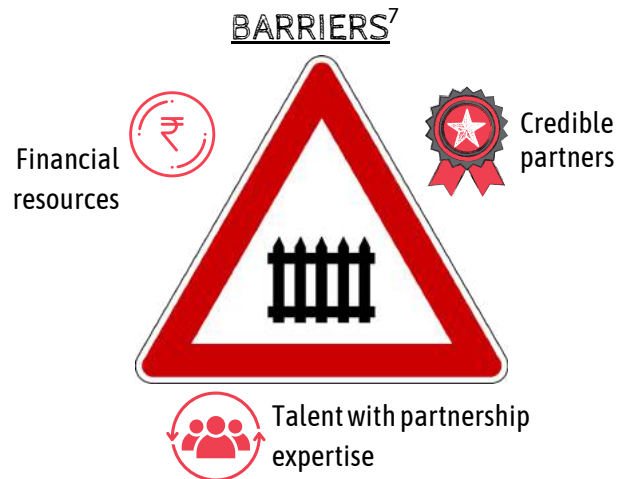
Adopting a partnership approach requires adapting mindsets, building strategy, setting criteria and planning. Preparing for partnerships creates the foundation to develop the necessary talent, focus your partner-search using specific criteria, and present the case for partnerships to funders highlighting the rate of impact that can be achieved. The first step, however, is to truly believe in the power of partnerships yourself.

PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS

When your mindset shifts from individualist to collectivist, you will recognise and utilise existing expertise to avoid duplication of efforts and maintain focus on the social impact purpose to be served. Partnerships provide a vehicle to scale successful programmes, amplifying impact to create long-lasting change .

"Partnerships need to be formed to scale up programmes as we will need partners who better understand the local context and have the trust of local communities."
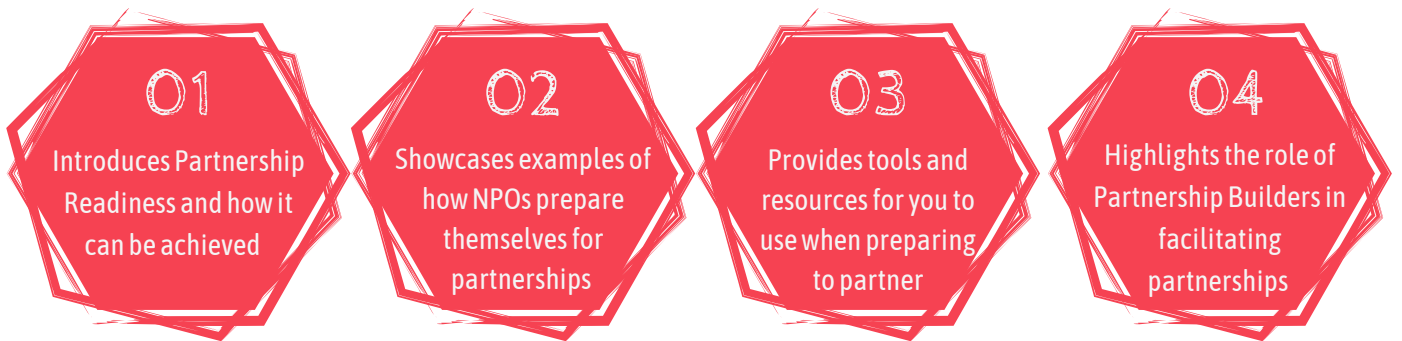**Vanessa D'Souza, CEO, SNEHA**

BENEFITS

Amplify the impact of successful programmes to achieve common goals

Augment programme sustainability by leveraging local expertise and native wisdom

Avoid re-inventing existing interventions

WHY USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide supports you to prepare for partnerships so that you can amplify the impact of your programmes. It:

01 Introduces Partnership Readiness and how it can be achieved

02 Showcases examples of how NPOs prepare themselves for partnerships

03 Provides tools and resources for you to use when preparing to partner

04 Highlights the role of Partnership Builders in facilitating partnerships

Being partnership ready establishes a strong foundation upon which you are able to engage productively with others to drive partnerships.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide is structured to introduce the what, why and how of Partnership Readiness. Placed in a sequence, the four components of Leadership; Organisation Culture; Organisation Strategy; and Programme Preparedness takes you on a journey from self to organisation level development. This prepares you to partner with other organisations.

FIVE STEPS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS GUIDE

READ THE SECTIONS

GO-TO PAGES

USE THE TOOLS

ACCESS EXAMPLES

GET IN TOUCH

WHAT IS PARTNERSHIP READINESS?

Partnership Readiness involves four components:

01
Leadership Preparedness
→
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02
Organisation Culture
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03
Organisation Strategy
→
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04
Programme Preparedness
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Who can help non-profits with preparing for partnerships?

A Partnership Builder facilitates non-profits to develop their partnership strategy and connect them with compatible partners.

→ *Page 49, to read more about Partnership Builders.*

03

LEADERSHIP PREPAREDNESS

WHAT IS LEADERSHIP PREPAREDNESS FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Are you, as a non-profit leader, prepared to partner? When you demonstrate a systems-change perspective and adopt collaborative leadership, you will be prepared for initiating partnerships with non-profits.

Leadership Preparedness for partnerships includes collaborative practices that foster trust, transparency, and ownership across teams.

> **We must aim at system-level changes. People level changes come from system-level changes.**
> Ananthapadmanabhan Guruswamy, Founder, Socratus Foundation for Collective Wisdom
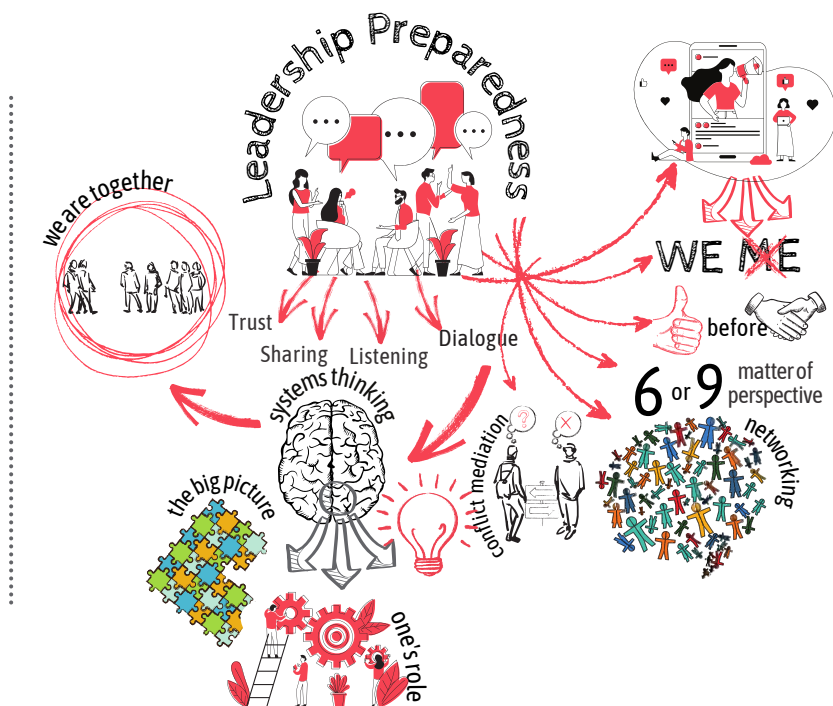
WHY SHOULD YOU, AS A LEADER, PREPARE YOURSELF?

Adopting a collaborative leadership approach sets the direction of the organisation and creates opportunities for growth. Developing your ability to encourage collaboration underlines the importance it has in the organisation, as a culture.

Engaging in open dialogue and fostering collaboration internally will bode well when interacting with prospective partners; the way you are seen practising collaboration internally is indicative of how you would engage externally.

Are you ready to consider alternative approaches in order to partner for greater social impact?

When your organisation has demonstrated impact, you will consider amplifying impact to continue transforming lives. There is a distinction between intent and action when it comes to adopting a systems-lens towards social impact. You are at risk of isolating your organisation if you do not identify how your work contributes to the eco-system, or you ignore the contribution of peers towards social impact.

> **74% of NPO leaders surveyed, agree that it is sometimes hard to let go of a programme they have built.**
> Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey[7]

Taking steps to recognise your organisation's contribution and role in the larger eco-system, generates an openness to partner with other organisations.

Partnerships require you to acknowledge the strengths and limitations of others' approaches and focus on strengthening your programme for easy adoption. It is essential to account for changes in the eco-system, geographies and communities you seek to serve. As a leader, this process requires courage since adapting a programme you have meticulously designed is not easy. However, keeping the communities and the end goal in focus, will help to ensure you prepare yourself and your organisation to amplify impact.

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE, AS A LEADER, TO PARTNER?

Leadership Preparedness depends on your desire to adopt a collaborative approach, internally, as well as when interacting with partner organisations.

You can develop your leadership preparedness through a combination of:

Developing Collaborative Leadership skills

Eco-system Awareness

Role modelling leadership practices

Professional development programmes

Platforms

1 Developing Collaborative Leadership skills:

Role modelling leadership practices

As a non-profit leader, your actions determine the culture of your organisation. Positively engaging with your teams lets them know that you value their contribution to the organisation's goals. Examples of practices that non-profit leaders adopt are:

ACTIVE LISTENING   **DEEP LISTENING**   **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY**   **LEADERSHIP FEEDBACK MECHANISMS**

Active Listening[8] involves being present in the conversation and being fully focused on what the other person is saying. Maintain eye contact to indicate your concentration on the conversation and avoid being distracted by your inner voice attempting to formulate a response.

Appreciative Inquiry[9] is a practice that creates a conducive environment to establish a shared vision. It involves four phases:

1. **Inquire:** Reflect on key achievements and identify the strengths of your organisation that led to success.
2. **Imagine:** Challenge the status quo and identify themes for future success, based on the previous inquiry. Build a shared vision.
3. **Innovate:** Design how to achieve the shared vision within your systems and processes, and identify what skills and knowledge you will need.
4. **Implement:** Create commitments to implementing innovations whilst maintaining learning practices, celebrating successes and identifying the next topics of appreciative inquiry.

Deep Listening[8] is the focused action of listening to understand and being mindful of your resulting actions. Practicing deep listening will help to promote a genuinely inclusive culture in which team members feel heard and valued.

When engaging in conversations with others, suspend judgment or preconceived ideas. This allows you to explore perspectives, approaching conversations with curiosity as opposed to pre-made responses that often stifle the flow of a conversation.

As collaborative leaders, we are keen to know about the health of our organisation's culture at any point in time. Asking for **anonymous feedback** from team members helps to keep us informed of how collaborative the organisation is, and how to develop the culture further.

A **pulse survey** is an anonymous survey that highlights cultural strengths and asks for suggestions on what needs improvement. The survey gives an indication of how well your organisation is doing in building the culture you want.

DO IT! When creating a pulse survey for your organisation, consider the core elements of your organisational culture that you want to receive feedback on. In subsequent pulse surveys, maintain questions that you want to track the answers to over time. Add contextually relevant questions for specific focus areas.

The Education Alliance: Pulse Survey

Organizational Objective and Culture	Teamwork	Manager/Supervisor Evaluation	Work - Life Balance
Do you believe in the vision & mission of TEA? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Can't Say	Do you feel that your team is aligned to the overall project & organizational objective. ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree	Do you feel your manager/supervisor clearly communicates the short term & long term goals of the project to you and your team. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree	Do you feel the amount of work allotted to you is reasonable. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
Do you feel that people in your team are aware of their tasks and responsibilities & perform to the best of their abilities. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree	Do you feel TEA encourages and provides an environment for free and open expression of ideas, opinions & beliefs. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree	Do you feel you have received constructive feedback & recognition from your manager/supervisor during this year. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree	Do you feel that you are able to give a fair amount of time to your family during work from home conditions. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree
Do you feel that you are effectively communicated about the changes in policies and procedures at TEA. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree	Rate your team on a scale of 1 to 10 *With 10 being excellent in - collaboration, support, ideal team to work in; 5 being moderately supportive, sometimes collaborate, room for improvement & 1 being least supportive, lacks communication and collaboration, stressful environment & if given an opportunity would like to shift to another team.*	Rate your team on a scale of 1 to 10 *With 10 being highly supportive, cooperative & inspirational; 5 being moderately supportive, only task oriented, needs improvement And 1 being least supportive, non-co-operative & poor in communication.*	**Suggestions** Please mention below in no more than 150 words, your suggestions that will help us in enhancing and offering a better working culture for our people.

Professional development programmes

An evolving social, political and economic context requires you to be equipped with the knowledge and skills that enhance your strategic thinking and collaborative practices. Look out for professional development programmes that support your journey.

Co.Lab^x: The Art of Collaborative Facilitation Course

Co.lab^x is a mission-driven, leadership consulting firm working to realise a more integrated world - one where people, profit, and planet co-exist. To this end, they support early and growth-stage organisations to solve tough problems by enabling individuals in leadership and management roles to hone their 'inner game'. They do this by facilitating 'leadership labs' - personalised, action-learning journeys (ranging from 3 days to 3 months) for teams to build key 21st-century skills and create solutions to real-time challenges.

The Art of Collaborative Facilitation is an experiential course for non-profit leaders to explore collaborative approaches to leadership. It encourages practices that enable NPO leaders to design and facilitate for emergence and collaboration. This is done through **practical tools and experiential spaces that involve generating ownership and agency across team members, helping team members develop a shared vision, common goals and creating spaces for open dialogue.**

Additionally, the course provides leaders with access to tools, strategies and skills that can be used within their organisations, teams, or with their stakeholders to **nurture a collaborative culture, providing the foundation for a partnership approach.**

Acumen Academy:
Leadership Development Online Course: The Path to Moral Leadership

This online course allows individual leaders along with their leadership teams to focus on their own skill development. By focusing on mindset change and visioning for sustainable social impact, the course builds the capacity of leaders to practice skills necessary when collaborating.

It provides leaders with the opportunity to explore, reflect, and apply practices of moral leadership, such as listening intently to conflicting perspectives, critical thinking, and strategically identifying partners best suited to their organisation and its goals.

2 **Eco-system Awareness:**

70% of NPO leaders surveyed, agreed that their organisation's social impact is dependent on working together with other NPOs.
Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey[7]

> **"When you are dealing with multi-faceted problems, you have to understand that you cannot be the only solution"**
> Amitav Virmani, Founder and CEO,
> The Education Alliance

Platforms

Platforms like professional development programmes and incubators provide the opportunity to network, understand the broader eco-system and meet other non-profit leaders. With the opportunity for open dialogue and engagement with other non-profit leaders, it is beneficial to keep your ears and eyes open to meeting potential partners.

Although platforms may not have a structured approach to facilitate partnerships, they can foster trust between leaders since there is a common focus that is beyond individual interests.

Participation in group discussions can often reveal insights about non-profit leaders and can help you to consider their credibility as well as a commitment to larger social impact goals. Discussions provide the opportunity to explore different perspectives and develop relationships with leaders committed to achieving similar goals. You never know – you may meet non-profit leaders who you otherwise would have never come across in your area of work.

Whether you meet a future partner or not, platforms that encourage peer-learning, provide exposure to an eco-system that allows you to think beyond the constraints of your organisation or area of focus and consider how you contribute to the larger social impact agenda.

Project Potential: **Relationship building through professional development programmes**

Project Potential's CEO, Zubin Sharma, has participated in numerous fellowships and social sector professional development programmes. He also did his Masters in Nonprofit Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania.

"Without an initial feeling or sense of trust, non-profits never move forward with partnerships...platforms and fellowships do a good job of fostering trust"

Project Potential has engaged in partnerships as a result of Zubin's participation in professional development programmes such as Acumen, N/Core, Hacking the Education Fellowship, and Dasra's Social Impact Leadership Programme.

EduMentum: **Providing platforms to foster collaboration**

EduMentum is an incubator for change-makers to transform Indian education. It provides **a platform for non-profit leaders with a common vision to share and learn, building relationships that foster collaboration.** It establishes a safe space for social entrepreneurs to learn from each other's experiences to innovate, mitigating notions of competition between organisations committed to ensuring quality education for all.

Keeping focused on the goal of quality education, **Lantern**[10] **Edu Sports and Barefoot Edu Foundation merged** to form one organisation committed to a common goal. From meeting at an EduMentum event to piloting co-created programmes, the leaders agreed to more formally combine their expertise to enhance social outcomes.

Are you prepared to partner?

As a leader, it is critical to know your strengths and areas to focus on while preparing yourself to lead your organisation's partnerships approach.

The leadership section of the Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment helps you reflect on your next steps.

*Scan to take the **Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment***

HOW PREPARED IS MY LEADERSHIP, FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Select the most appropriate response, objectively, to identify current strengths and key actions to take to enhance your leadership preparedness for partnerships.

STATEMENTS	Not Yet	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP					
I am aware of the contributions each member of the team has made to the collective effort and recognise them for this.					
I highlight the contribution(s) each member of the team has made to the collective effort and recognise them for this.					
I acknowledge team members for their ideas as well as actions that contribute to the organisation's success.					
I incorporate the team's views in key decisions.					
I ask open-ended questions so that others elaborate on their point(s).					
I focus on the intent of what someone else is saying.					
I share examples of my failures with my teams, focusing on what I learnt from it.					
Appraisal meetings with team members focus on strengths, areas for improvement, and the support to be provided by the line manager.					
I evaluate my collaborative leadership skills by requesting anonymous feedback focused on this aspect.					
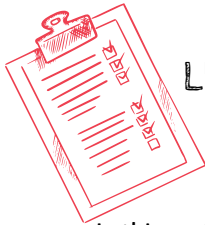
LEADERSHIP PREPAREDNESS SECTION SUMMARY

In this section, you were introduced to the components of Leadership Preparedness for partnerships.

Leadership Preparedness for partnerships includes collaborative practices that foster trust, transparency, and ownership across teams. It also involves the mindset to understand the eco-system and your contribution to greater social impact.

Develop Collaborative Leadership skills by
- Role modelling leadership practices
- Engaging in professional development programmes

Build eco-system awareness by
- Engaging in platforms that encourage collaboration

To find out more about Partnership Readiness:

O4

ORGANISATION CULTURE

WHAT IS THE ORGANISATION CULTURE THAT SUPPORTS PARTNERSHIPS ?

What use is it for a non-profit leader to adopt a collaborative mindset, if the rest of the team remains individualistic in their approach?

A collaborative culture is one that encourages open dialogue and increased ownership of the organisation's goals across all stakeholders. Team members value each other's opinions and work together to achieve common goals.

Working as a team and integrating your efforts to create greater impact for the community you serve must be one of the key things you focus on as a non-profit leader.
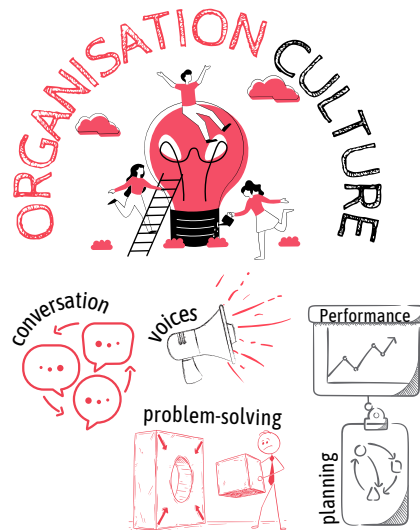
WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANISATION DEVELOP ITS COLLABORATIVE CULTURE FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Before embarking on a journey of creating collective impact with a partner organisation, it is essential that your own team is open to working collaboratively. As a leader, you must create opportunities for **establishing a culture of collective responsibility, collective accountability and collective achievement.**

This will help your team perceive people from partner organisations through a collaborative lens. For you to work in harmony with another organisation it is important to reinforce how both of you are seeking to achieve the same goal. This will allow both teams to work with openness and cooperation.

> " *Ownership for the initiative should start within the organisation.* "
> **Kalyani Subramanyam, COO, The Naz Foundation (India) Trust**

04 ORGANISATION CULTURE

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP AN ORGANISATION CULTURE THAT IS PREPARED FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Each non-profit is unique. We develop our culture and strategy dependent on the teams we employ, our vision and mission, and the goals we set out to achieve. You can enhance your organisation's collaborative culture through:

Building collaborative platforms

Providing opportunities for team members to have their voice heard

Preparing the second line of leadership to collaborate externally

Setting expectations and managing performance
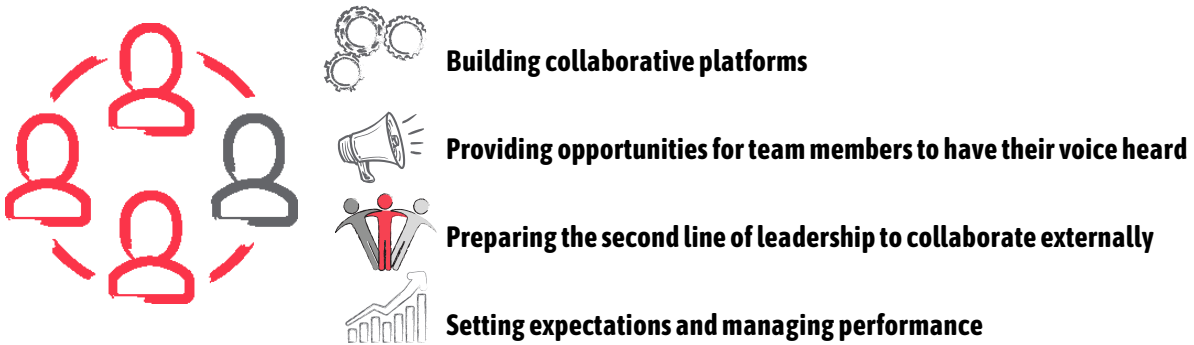
Building collaborative platforms

As a collaborative leader, ensure platforms are provided for internal sharing and learning. Increase team ownership of projects and undertake initiatives to keep yourself updated with the successes and challenges experienced by all.

Some collaborative platforms you can incorporate in your organisation's calendar include:

DO IT!

- Weekly check-ins
- Reflection meetings
- Leadership review meetings
- Internal newsletters
- Team building activities
- Opportunities for teams to experience each other's work
- Activities to maintain team alignment between programmes and the organisation's goals

The Education Alliance: Fostering collaboration internally through platforms

As an organisation centred on collaboration with multiple stakeholders, The Education Alliance, ensures that its teams imbibe openness and a collaborative spirit. Directed by leadership, several initiatives have become embedded in the organisation's culture. For example,

- ***Cross-sharing of information across geographies:*** This occurs through weekly whole-team meetings as well as fortnightly senior review team meetings. Rosters are organised to ensure each team leader has the opportunity to share and lead discussions.
- ***Monthly Intra-newsletter:*** It captures individual stories about team members which helps them to get to know each other; it shares recommendations about movies and books as well as sharing work updates.

Central to this has been the formal ***hiring of an HR manager who focuses on building the culture*** and embedding initiatives to ensure the team functions collaboratively.

To sustain alignment to partnerships, periodically incorporate team-building activities to ensure clarity of partnership goals across the team. For example, asking teams to define each of your organisation's values from a partnership perspective.

This requires them to apply their understanding of your organisation's values and vision to the work that they do.

Activities like this also serve as checking-in points for the leadership team, to know if all are aligned or if there are any interventions required to build consensus.

Naz: Aligning partnerships to the organisation's values

The Naz Foundation (India) Trust - Naz is underpinned by four **key values: inclusion; integrity; commitment and excellence.**

Naz's partnerships teams are often asked to reflect on their work and explain how it is connected to each of the four values. It reinforces the values within the organisation, reiterates the connection between the team's work and the larger organisational culture, and provides the leadership team with insight on value alignment. As a result, each team member involved in the partnership is able to articulate each of the Naz values and how they are being demonstrated through each partnership.

04 ORGANISATION CULTURE

Opportunities for team members to have their voice heard

There are various ways to gather suggestions and provide avenues for team members to express their voice. These initiatives establish transparency within the organisation. They are useful for the leadership to address questions raised by the team. Building a culture in which team members trust each other and the leadership to be objective and transparent is an ever-evolving practice.

Antarang Foundation: Using democratic platforms to encourage transparency

Antarang Foundation believes in creating a democratic organisation for all. One way they do this to by **holding a Town Hall twice a year.** The Town Halls build transparency and the ability for everyone to voice what they feel. An **anonymous Google form is circulated in advance to help the leadership team to organise the questions and address them systematically.**

Examples of questions asked to highlight the degree of critical thinking that is encouraged and the **opportunity for open dialogue.**
- Which are the geographies or areas that we will cater to? How much of this would be centralised and decentralised?
- What offering should we stop? What are the latest offerings that we will give to our beneficiaries?
- How impactful do you see this model? Are we going to monitor its impact of converting to livelihood or a program delivery and reach?
- Are there any plans on the tech expertise, system development & maintenance, and content developers for implementation of the new version?

The benefit of the Town Hall approach is evident amongst team members because their **queries are addressed.** It also gives an opportunity for them to **provide suggestions and creates a democratic space for all.**

Preparing the second line of leadership to collaborate externally

Although as a non-profit leader you acknowledge your organisation's connection with the wider eco-system, it is important for this awareness to be developed throughout your leadership team. **Encourage learning exchanges between the second line of leadership across organisations,** to normalise a culture of sharing. We all have a lot to gain by forming learning exchanges with like-minded non-profits operating across different geographies.

> *We asked NPO leaders, what could have been better when you partnered?*
> **"Buy-in from other members of the partner organisation (not just leaders) to ease execution,"**
> **A Non-Profit Leader,**
> **Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey**[7]

Praja Foundation: Relationship building between the second line of leadership across non-profits operating in the same domain.

Praja Foundation have engaged with like minded peer organisations in the public policy/governance space. With complementary pan-India experience and expertise, the leadership sought guidance and support from one another. Running professional development programmes and sharing insights with each other's teams, both leaders were inspired to deepen the relationship between the two organisations.

They organised a *learning exchange for their second lines of leadership,* enabling the relationship to continue. This reduces dependency on the senior-most leader to connect with external organisations.

To further encourage this sharing and learning initiative, Praja Foundation has *set up guidelines for information sharing* that help team members to understand what can and cannot be shared beyond the organisation.

Setting expectations and managing performance

Hiring

Inductions

Performance appraisals including collaboration metrics
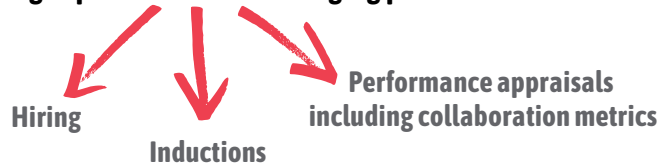
Hiring

First impressions, last. Ensure your recruitment and induction procedures are indicative of the type of culture you seek to build institutionally.

During the recruitment process, incorporate questions that will tell you how collaborative the candidate is in their approach to problem-solving. When interviewing candidates, you may also determine their ability to actively listen based on their responses to information shared with them.

> **"**_hire people with the skills and confidence to own the mission and not just implement programs. The best metric for this is when all members of staff develop game-changing ideas on their own initiative, not just senior leadership. When this happens, organizations can move forward beyond its wildest dreams._**"**
> **Roshan Paul, Co-Founder, Amani Institute** [5]

Inductions

When inducting new recruits, think about their involvement in collaborative practices from the get-go. If your organisation has a well-established partnership approach, senior members can be entrusted to mentor new recruits, helping them understand the organisation's philosophy and culture.

Prerana: Role modelling good partnership behaviour and inducting new recruits

In their work against Human Trafficking, Prerana has always worked with different partners - other non-profits, the police or the government. Prerana's team from the senior-most to the newest employee, _**interact with partners as part of their daily operations of the programme.**_
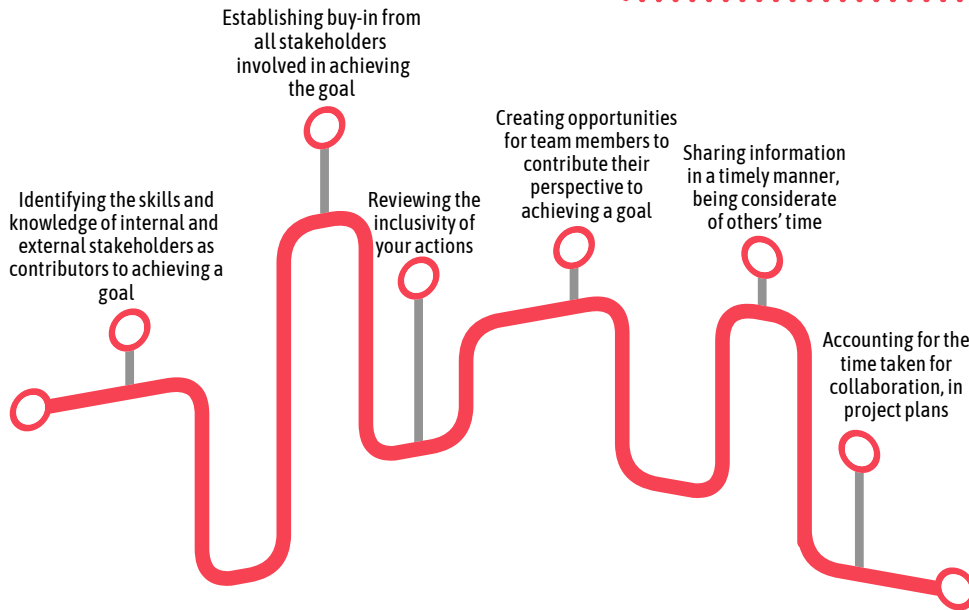
The _**senior members**_ ensure that they _**model good partnership behaviour and incorporate sensitive communication while inducting newer recruits.**_ Therefore, coming together, co-creating solutions, alignment with partners, working closely with governments to accelerate results and the concept of partnerships is integrated from the beginning.

Performance appraisals including collaboration metrics

Metrics used in performance appraisals highlight the key skills, knowledge and attitudes expected of team members. Including metrics related to the ability to collaborate, demonstrates your intent to establish collaboration as a core aspect of your organisation's culture. In measuring collaboration, we should include:

39% of NPO leaders state that their organisation includes collaboration related metrics in performance appraisals e.g, listening skills, team work, cooperation.
Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey[7]

Establishing buy-in from all stakeholders involved in achieving the goal

Creating opportunities for team members to contribute their perspective to achieving a goal

Sharing information in a timely manner, being considerate of others' time

Identifying the skills and knowledge of internal and external stakeholders as contributors to achieving a goal

Reviewing the inclusivity of your actions

Accounting for the time taken for collaboration, in project plans

Antarang Foundation: Incorporating collaboration metrics in the annual performance appraisal
Antarang incorporates metrics to understand how collaborative team members are when completing their responsibilities. Their annual review includes the core competency of **Engages, Collaborates and Builds** which is defined further as communication, problem-solving, building and managing relationships.

Antarang Foundation - Development Matrix

Core Competencies	Level 1 SUPPORT Reliable replication	Level 2 EXECUTE AND LEARN Perform defined tasks	Level 3 APPLY AND ADAPT Recognised contributor with demonstrated ability	Level 4 ORIGINATE Regarded as a lead	Level 5 INTEGRATE AND EMPOWER Strategic Lead
Leading by example					
Thinks critically and drives results					
Engages, collaborates and builds					
Learning oriented, embraces change					

Is your organisation culturally prepared for partnerships?

Knowing that your organisation's culture is ready for partnerships is critical to initiating sustainable partnerships.

The organisation culture preparedness section of the Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment helps you reflect on your next steps as you prepare your organisation to partner with other non-profits.

HOW PREPARED IS MY ORGANISATION'S CULTURE, FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Select the most appropriate response, objectively, to identify current strengths and key actions to take to enhance organisation's preparedness for partnerships.

STATEMENTS	Not Yet	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS					
Weekly/monthly scheduled meetings are dedicated to brainstorming ideas.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Meetings adopt an 80:20 balance, i.e. 80% of the time I am listening to the team members views.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Monthly reflection meetings involve team members celebrating successes, sharing best practice and co-creating solutions to improve.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Team members respond to my open-ended questions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Team members are provided opportunities to share their views on the organisation's strengths and improvement areas.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Team members are provided opportunities to share their vision for the organisation.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

*Scan to take the **Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment***

ORGANISATION CULTURE SECTION SUMMARY

In this section, you were introduced to the components of Organisation Culture preparedness for partnerships. This comprises of:

1. **Building collaborative platforms**
2. **Providing opportunities for team members to have their voice heard**
3. **Preparing the second line of leadership to collaborate externally**
4. **Setting expectations and managing performance**

Establish a culture of collective responsibility, collective accountability and collective achievement.

To find out more about Partnership Readiness:

- **Leadership Preparedness - page 12**
- **Organisation Strategy - page 27**
- **Programme Preparedness - page 37**
- **Partnership Builder - page 49**

05

ORGANISATION STRATEGY

WHAT IS ORGANISATION STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS FOR PARTNERSHIPS ?

You have a goal and a vision to achieve through the work that you do. As an organisation you have decided on a strategy or strategies to reach that goal. When considering partnerships as a strategy, it will help to have clarity at:

1. A **strategic level** in how partnerships will help you grow and reduce effort and duplication
2. A **systemic level** where legal compliances, financial systems and human resources are streamlined

Ensuring these two aspects are in place will help you focus on partnerships that add value to your organisation and enable you to work towards your goal(s).
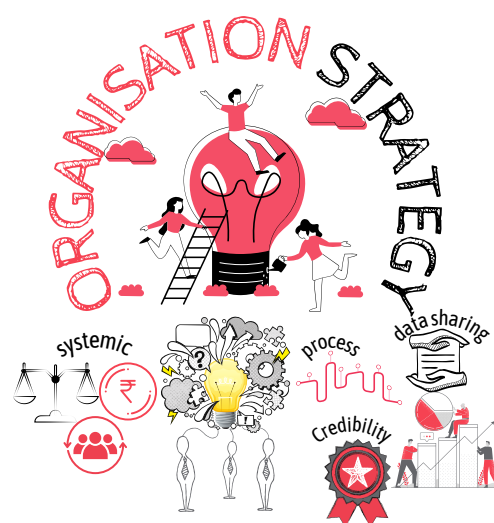
WHY SHOULD YOUR ORGANISATION'S STRATEGY INCLUDE PARTNERSHIPS?

It is important to ensure that your **partnership approach is fully integrated into your organisation's strategy**. It not only provides a focus for all stakeholders to achieve a common goal but also presents a clear roadmap for your team to engage with. It, therefore, helps all members to be aligned when undertaking partnerships and finding suitable partners.

> **53% of NPO leaders surveyed state that scaling programmes through partnerships is integral to their organisation's strategy**
> Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey [7]

HOW DO YOU INCORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUR ORGANISATION'S STRATEGY?

Preparing for partnerships requires clear intent at a strategic level. Ensuring your organisation has the technical and resource capacity provides a sound foundation to adopt a partnership approach to growth. **Legal compliance, financial stability and evidence of programme success, all contribute to showcasing your organisation as a credible and viable partner.** Clarity on your non-negotiables enables you to focus your efforts when considering partners.

05 ORGANISATION STRATEGY

Keeping your stakeholders aligned throughout this strategic process establishes co-ownership and allows for different perspectives to contribute to a collective goal. The Board, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Executive Director (ED)/Founder and Senior Leadership Teams would have different roles in the process. However, engaging all three groups facilitates the implementation of your partnership strategy.

Aspects to consider when incorporating partnerships in to your organisation strategy:

Reviewing your organisation strategy and embedding partnerships in it

Aligning the Board, CEO/ED/Founder and Senior Leadership Team to the partnership strategy

Maintaining your organisation's compliance

Reviewing your organisation strategy and embedding partnerships in it

Once you have defined the goals your organisation wants to achieve, identify how you will achieve them. Are partnerships the appropriate vehicle to do so?

Consider the following questions:

1. What are your strategic goals?
2. What are your current interventions to achieve them?
3. How will partnerships help you to achieve your goals?
4. What role should the partner play?
5. What are some of the non-negotiables for you when you partner?

> "Realising our partnership philosophy really helped us in the initial stages."
> **Shruthi Iyer, CEO, FMCH-India**

Read on for examples of how non-profits have embedded partnerships in their organisation's strategies.

Tool to use:

Scan to use these tools to **incorporate partnerships into your organisation strategy.**

Reviewing strategic goals and current interventions

Your strategic goals and interventions should be aligned with the organisation's vision and mission. Inclusivity in the goal-setting and planning process establishes buy-in across stakeholders, creating a stable foundation to achieve its goals.

<u>**Naz:**</u> **Being inclusive when incorporating partnerships in the strategic plan**

In 2015, Naz set out to review its mission statements and articulate how the organisation's vision would be achieved over the next five years. Naz followed an inclusive process; by involving all its staff members to share their views, through surveys. The new mission emerged from their dialogue and focussed exercises during team workshops. Although partnerships have been a part of Naz's Theory of Change, they found that *stating the role of partnerships in the mission has helped team members understand how it will contribute to Naz's goals.*

Vision: To create a just and equitable society by transforming individuals from socially and economically excluded communities into agents of change.

Mission: To build vibrant ecosystems that:
- *Energise* and enable individuals from excluded communities to realize their potential and act as agents of change;
- *Expand* partnerships, networks, and linkages to catalyse a critical mass of such leaders;
- *Engage* and influence governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to take this movement to scale.

Using partnerships to achieve your goals

There are advantages and disadvantages to using any approach. It is important to know **why you want to embed partnerships in your organisation strategy**.

It is essential to remember that no organisation is static. Strategies evolve over time, and it is possible to incorporate different types of partnerships to achieve your goals. You may begin with non-profit partnerships and evolve to partnerships with the government in order to enhance the reach of your programme. In this guide, we focus on non-profit partnerships.

Magic Bus: The role of different partners when amplifying impact

Magic Bus has focused on inculcating life skills and employability skills in adolescents and youth using games and activities as a medium. Through this they ensure children complete school and higher education and access sustainable livelihoods.

Magic Bus has evolved as an organisation over the years and their interventions have undergone changes while keeping the focus intact. ***An element of partnerships has been part of their implementation strategy over the years.*** The three ways they had partnered:

1. ***Partnerships with non-profits*** to conduct Magic Bus's life skills programme in partner communities
2. ***Partnerships with domain experts*** in education and livelihoods
3. ***Partnerships with government schools,*** training teachers to implement the Education to Livelihood programme

The role of a partner in supporting you to achieve your goals

Maintaining a focus on your organisation's vision and mission, define how partnerships will facilitate the achievement of your organisation's goals. **Some non-profits create programmes with the intention to scale through partnerships, contextualising them to other geographies. Others opt to focus on a particular geography and invite non-profit partners to address the needs of the community, thus strengthening the impact** they seek to achieve. Here are two case studies.

> "We do not look at scale in the stereotypical sense of multiplying operations. In terms of our programming, data, evidence and learning there is much that we bring to the sector for a larger learning and understanding of the urban poor and sustainable social development... for instance the Citizenship Approach. Enabling people to participate in their development - that is scale for us."
>
> **Dr. Arun Kumar, CEO, Apnalaya**

Prerana: Creating programmes with the intention of scaling through partnerships

Prerana works to protect potential and actual women and child victims of trafficking. When they began their work in the red-light areas of Mumbai, they had extensive conversations with the women there and with civil society organisations and donors to understand what the intervention should be able to accomplish. It was then clear that their intervention had to have a component that would help prevent and eliminate second-generation trafficking. To this end, they began a Night Care Centre for the safety and development of children in the red-light areas. The centres provide protected shelter, wholesome nutrition, education support, safe play options, safe sanitation options, and opportunities for skill development.

The model and broad structure of the Night Care Centre was built with the intention of contextualising it to the needs of other regions and non-profits who would want to follow a similar model. Prerana has built the capacities of partner non-profits to replicate Night Care Centres to protect vulnerable children in red-light areas in Kolkata, Delhi, Pune, Ahmednagar, Yewatmal, Nanded, Latur, Chandrapur (Vani) and Rajasthan.

This model, which has been deployed by Prerana since 1986, has:
- Influenced government policy that incorporated this model into the first National Policy against child trafficking - Plan of Action, 1998
- Been acknowledged as a best practice by the UN General Assembly Congress.
- Proven to be replicable and has been shared with NGOs from India, Nepal and Bangladesh

Project Potential: **Maintaining a geographical focus and strengthening programmes through partnerships:**

Project Potential is a non-profit that empowers community leaders and change-makers towards rural development in Kishanganj, Bihar. They partner with organisations to provide the necessary skills development, health and education support that the Kishanganj community needs.

According to Project Potential, there are four key elements to community development, and partners play a role in providing the expertise required.
- *Talent:* High-quality personnel with complementary skill sets help to develop local talent in areas of need.
- *Innovation:* Selecting partners with the best possible model to a particular problem, combined with Project Potential's contextual knowledge and relationships, enables the sourcing and spreading of innovations in areas of need .
- *Investment:* Non-profit partners can stimulate investment, with greater visibility of local needs
- *Functioning institutions:* Partners provide expertise in training government personnel, monitoring institutions and/or improving systems, technologies, and processes.

If Project Potential were to do all of the above themselves, they would face the following challenges:
- Fundraising for all of the above diverse yet interconnected focus areas
- Building an organisation competent in all of the areas.

Therefore, *Project Potential adopts a partnership approach to strengthen the impact of its work in the Kishanganj community.*

PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN OR BEYOND YOUR DOMAIN – WHAT SHOULD YOU CHOOSE?

Whether you choose to partner with an organisation that operates within or external to your domain is dependent on your partnership goals and what you seek to achieve. Partnering with non-profits of different size and within the same domain can be advantageous to enhance an existing solution, utilising resources that are already familiar with the domain knowledge.

Alternatively, partnering with organisations beyond your domain area provides the opportunity to address community needs more holistically. For example, if you have a maternal health programme, you can partner with a non-profit whose field staff deliver financial literacy training. Through this partnership, the same community benefit from two initiatives that are delivered by one organisation.

> **74% of NPO leaders felt their CEO/ED/Founder is aligned on the need for including partnerships as an approach to scale our organisation's programmes**
> Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey[7]

Some non-negotiables to underpin your partnership approach

MUST HAVE

- ⓘ The demographic you are committed to serve
- ⤵ The process that will achieve the outcome
- The skills of the implementing team
- ✓ The compliances of a partner

You should consider your organisations ideological perspective with respect to your organisation's values.

For example, if you are committed to the eradication of malnutrition, your core demographic would be mothers and children up to the age of five.

While it would be great to have an intervention around adolescent girls who are in fact the next generation of mothers, a partner who works only with adolescents and not with mothers and children will not be ideal. Instead, **identifying partners working with the same demographic as your organisation** may be better.

There may be a **combination of processes** that will help you achieve your goal. In this case, it could include prenatal care for pregnant women, counselling on breastfeeding, monitoring the baby's weight and so on. If these processes are not included in the intervention, the desired outcome may not be achieved.

If you have a programme for children all partners would have to undergo sessions on child protection before the roll out of the programme. **Your partner's compliance in this area would be of utmost importance.**

Your programme may require **specific skillsets** and expertise to be delivered appropriately. For instance, it may be essential for all field staff to be **comfortable using technology**, or it may be necessary to have partners who have established a **good rapport with the local government.**

Aligning the Board, CEO/ED/Founder and Senior Leadership Team to the partnership strategy

Ensure you demonstrate inclusivity throughout the strategy-building process. Alignment particularly of the Board and Senior Leadership is critical to set a direction for the organisation's partnership approach.

Keeping the people, you serve and the problem you are trying to solve at the centre, it is essential that you have enough open discussions where the Board Members and Senior Leadership can share their views. It is possible that you are contemplating a shift from a direct implementation model to an indirect reach model. This involves partnering with like-minded organisations that can help scale your ideas, solutions and programmes. It may require a mindset shift especially among long-standing members of the Board. Therefore, it is important to how using partnerships enhances the value of your intervention.

Members of the Board and the Senior Leadership are accountable legally for the actions of the organisation. Adopting a major shift in the implementation model and partnership means aligning with other non-profits and entering into agreements with them. Adopting a partnerships approach may also need you to alter your strategic plans for staffing and team structure. Therefore, it is imperative that the partnership strategy and process has complete buy-in from the Board.

Apnalaya: Aligning stakeholders to a partnership strategy

Apnalaya works to empower the urban poor, and have focused their work in the most marginalised settlements of Mumbai to ensure the recipients have access to better health care, education and livelihoods. While they consider relief in cases of extreme deprivation as the right of the poor, over the years *their focus is to enable a sustainable solution where citizens would participate in their development and advocate for their rights* which would eventually make the organisation's exit possible.

Apnalaya has made a very conscious shift from a purely service-provision model to entitlements and rights-based framework. The framework emphasises building grassroots leadership so that people within the community can take up issues that matter to them and work with the local government authorities to avail their civic entitlements. This process is called the *Citizenship Programme.*

With evidence of success, Apnalaya felt this process could be adopted by others to build sustainability. Hence, they decided to scale this programme through partnerships. This also needed a deliberate shift in the mindset of the implementing team, the leadership as well as the Board Members.

To align all the stakeholders within the organisation the CEO and the President of the Board had *several rounds of open dialogue and honest brainstorming.* The priority was not to fall back on what would be the most comfortable and easiest approach for the organisation but on what was the most sustainable solution that will work from the community's point of view. Moreover, it meant looking for resources outside the organisation that could strengthen the Board and guide them. *Aligning all stakeholders helped in creating a sustainable community programme.*

Dividing responsibilities – playing to each stakeholder's strengths

When developing your partnership approach, be sure to make the best use of the strengths of each stakeholder. The Board, CEO/ED/Founder and Senior Leadership Team members each have different roles to play in enabling your organisation's preparedness for partnerships.

STAKEHOLDERS	THE BOARD	CEO/ED/ FOUNDER	SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM
ROLES	Directional guidance to avoid mission drift	·Strategic direction of the partnership strategy	Operationalise partnership-related systems and processes
	Ensure alignment between the partnership and organisation strategy	Build stakeholder alignment	Align teams to the partnership strategy
		Establish systems and protocols to maintain mission focus when engaging in partnerships	
		Demonstrate the benefits of a partnership approach for the organisation and programne	
		Ensure appropriate resources are available in the organisation	
		Maintain compliances to signal credibility when engaging with potential partners	

05 ORGANISATION STRATEGY

Maintaining your organisation's compliance

In addition to creating your partnership approach, it is critical to ensure that your key compliances are in order. Maintaining compliances will ensure you remain a viable partner for NPOs since there would be fewer legal or financial barriers to partnerships.

Ensuring the following are in place will keep your non-profit compliant and credible for potential partners:

DO IT!

- Registration Certificate
- Memorandum of Association
- Up to date 12 A Certificate
- Up to date 80 G Certificate
- Up to date FCRA certificate (if you are seeking international funding)

- Registration with concerned departments to run programmes (specific to Domain)
- Accreditiation showing your financial transparency and IT compliance
- Required licenses and renewals are up to date and meet statutory body requirements
- Safety and security rules are written and published in the organisation

Click here to refer to
Dhwani Foundation's Assessment Tool for Defining a Credible NGO

Is your organisation strategically prepared for partnerships?

Knowing that your organisation is strategically ready is critical to initiating sustainable partnerships.

This section of the Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment helps you reflect on your next steps as you prepare your organisation's strategy for partnerships.
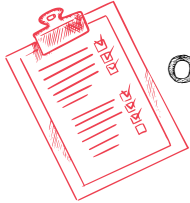
*Scan to take the **Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment***

HOW PREPARED IS MY ORGANISATION, STRATEGICALLY, FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

05 ORGANISATION STRATEGY

ORGANISATION STRATEGY SECTION SUMMARY

In this section, you were introduced to the components of organisation strategic preparedness for partnerships. It comprises of:

1. **Reviewing organisation strategy and embedding partnerships in it**
   - Reviewing your strategic goals and current interventions
   - The role of a partner in supporting you to achieve your goals
   - Some non-negotiables to underpin your partnership approach
2. **Aligning the Board, CEO/ED/Founder and Senior Leadership Team to the partnership strategy**
3. **Maintaining your organisation's compliance**

No organisation is static. Strategies evolve over time.

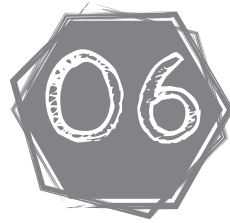**Tools to use:**

- Scan to use a tool to _**incorporate partnerships into your organisation strategy.**_
- Scan to refer to _**Dhwani Foundation's Assessment Tool for Defining a Credible NGO**_ [11]

To find out more about Partnership Readiness:

- **Leadership Preparedness - page 12**
- **Organisation Culture - page 19**
- **Programme Preparedness - page 37**
- **Partnership Builder - page 49**

06

PROGRAMME PREPAREDNESS

WHAT IS PROGRAMME PREPAREDNESS FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Programme preparedness involves ensuring the programme you are planning to scale or strengthen is ready for transfer to an appropriate partner for adoption and implementation.

When preparing your programme for partnerships, focus on codifying content and processes for ease of replicability. Ensure the specific outcomes of your programme you want to scale are aligned with your organisation's strategy, goals and vision.

Make sure you have clarity on your programmes Intellectual Property as well as your data sharing policy to avoid questions of ownership and usage.
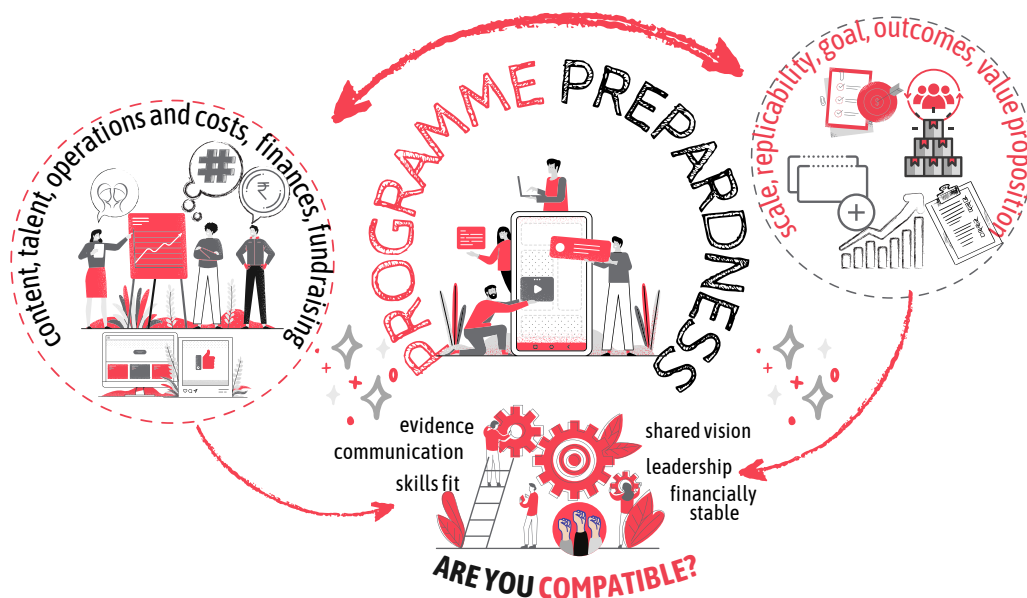
WHY SHOULD YOU PREPARE YOUR PROGRAMME FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

Amplifying impact is possible when you prepare your programme. Codifying it will enable a partner organisation to contextualise your programme and achieve similar outcomes, so both of you can show a collective impact.

Raising **funds to sustain the partnership is necessary.** There are costs to the partnership such as the time and resources involved in building the capacity of a non-profit partner. The partner will also incur implementation costs for which they would require additional funds. Often, budgeting for these costs is overlooked.

For funders, it is viable to **fund a partnership as it is a more efficient use of existing resources** by non-profits, rather than each organisation spending money on overheads and administrative costs.

For instance, partner A (an organisation working in maternal health) and partner B (an organisation working on domestic violence prevention) can complement each other.

Since their target audience is similar; if partner A adopts the programme on violence prevention it avoids the additional overheads and administration costs for partner B and partner B can achieve scale at a more efficient cost, which is also beneficial for the funder.

91% of non-profits surveyed believe that every collaboration should have clear outcomes
Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey[7]

HOW DO YOU PREPARE YOUR PROGRAMME FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

5 STAGES TO PREPARE YOUR PROGRAMME FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Set your programme outcomes and identify how you want to achieve them

1

2
Articulate partnership outcomes to achieve the programme goal

Define your programme's value-proposition

3

4
Apply a partnership lens to your programme

Find the right non-profit partner

5

1 Set your programme outcomes and identify how you want to achieve them

The first stage in preparing your programme is reiterating the outcome and outlining what you need to do to achieve it. For instance, your programme outcome could be to reduce violence against women in a given community. This will involve you working with women to improve their knowledge of their legal rights and how they can take action in case of violence against them.

Your programme outcome and how you want to achieve it, must be clear.

2 Articulate partnership outcomes

Once your outcome is clear, you must articulate what you both will achieve together for the partnership. For instance, if you have a violence prevention programme, what will your partner help you to do? Will they help you reach more women? Will they ensure you reach more marginalised areas? Will they bring in technical expertise such as legal aid that will help you strengthen your programme?

Articulating clear partnership outcomes is essential.

3 Define your programme's value-proposition

The next stage is ensuring you have clarity on what makes your programme unique. Why would a non-profit want to adopt your programme to amplify impact? For instance, how would you distinguish your violence prevention NPO from other similar organisations? Do you help community women become efficient first responders when there are instances of violence, or are you able to train them better on legal processes with the police?

Spend time to articulate what sets your programme apart from others. How can your programme add value to collective impact?

4 Applying a partnership lens to your programme

Once you have the above three aspects clear it is time to focus on the practical application of the programme itself.

When preparing your programme for partnerships, consider the following:

- **Content**
- **Human Resources**
- **Operations and Costs**
- **Financial Resources/Fundraising**

Content

Information and insights about the programme should be available to your partners. This could include:

- Training material
- Implementation processes
- Frequently asked questions
- Evidence supporting the success of your intervention

When considering the preparation of the content for adoption by a partner NPO, it is important to discuss your organisation's data sharing policy and how it would impact programme monitoring and evaluation.

> "It is important to be flexible about things that are not at the core— these can and must be opened up for adaptation and modification."
>
> **Roshan Paul, Co-Founder, Amani Institute**[5]

Railway Children India: Fine-tuning an existing programme to be partnership ready

Railway Children India works with children forced to live on the streets. Along with the Government Child Protection mechanisms and Indian Railway stakeholders, they work around the clock to recognise children who are alone and at risk at railway stations. *Along with partner non-profits, they have Help Desks for children at ten major railway stations in India.*

Railway Children India has always believed in scale through partnerships. With this end in mind, they have fine-tuned a process by which they co-implement the programme with a partner organisation. To do this, they have *worked closely with partners over the last 20 years to develop a standardised model and a quality framework including aspects that are non-negotiable.*

They *customise aspects of the programme as per geography.* For example, all the Help Desks under the Railway Children India programme provide 24x7 support. This means operating in three shifts and is non-negotiable. However, the timings that will have the greatest passenger or child footfall varies from station to station. Therefore, the partner can choose to structure the three shifts and deploy human resources as per what works for them.

Railway Children has spent significant time to learn the process, permissions and approvals needed to set up Children's Help Desks. They have *refined their process to include the gestatation period required from onboarding a partner, to having a fully functional Children's Help Desk at the station.*

They continue to have direct intervention in one of the ten railway stations as it serves as a lab for them to understand first-hand what the challenges are and what changes are needed in their processes with the partners.

Data Sharing

We all collect and use data to inform programmes and measure impact. Before engaging with a partner, it is essential to have clarity internally on data ownership, access and usability. Including data sharing clauses in the partnership Memorandum of Understanding allows you to articulate the agreement between partners. Ask yourself the following questions when articulating data sharing clauses:

- What sort of data will be collected?
- Will both organisations have equal rights to access the data?
- How will the data be stored?
- Where will the data be used?
- What systems do you have in place to protect personal information, and what do you expect of your partner in this regard?
- Are there circumstances in which permissions will need to be granted by partner organisations?
  - Will you allow third-party access to the data? If so, will access be limited to a specific type of data?
- How will publications and dissemination of end-line results be managed?

Throughout your discussions on data sharing, keep in mind **how ethical, efficient and equitable your decisions are towards all stakeholders** involved.[1,2]

Human Resources

Although your implementing team would have the best experience of on-the-ground nuances of programme delivery, they may not necessarily be equipped to train others in implementation. It is important to build responsiveness and flexibility to meet the changing needs of the partnership model. Different partners and different geographies may need customisations or tweaking of the process. Intransigence can be very detrimental when it comes to scaling and growing through partnerships.

It is ideal to appoint someone to manage partnerships. The responsibilities may include the day-to-day nuts and bolts of the operations, to the relationships between the partner organisations. Preparing for effective communication is essential.

> **SNEHA: Managing human resources to facilitate partnerships**
>
> SNEHA is a Mumbai based non-profit that engages partners to scale its programmes on maternal and child health and Gender-Based Violence (GBV).
>
> Since data collection, analysis and feedback for improvement are critical to achieving outcomes, they provide due importance to the potential partner's adoption and use of technology. Where partners are in the early stages of technology adoption, they **support capacity building of the partner's staff in the M&E format creation, data analysis and feedback loop for strengthening processes.** Therefore, before engaging with a partner they consider the Human Resource implications on their own teams and identify suitable members to contribute to a partnership's success. For example, when scaling a Child Health and Nutrition program in a district in Gujarat in partnership with another NGO, SNEHA considered the expertise of the partner's Community Mobilisers and how they can support partners to adapt approaches more suited to their local context.
>
> **Reviewing the skills and expertise of one's own team members helps to understand resource capacity and the support that can be provided to potential partners.**

Operations and Costs:

Amplifying impact through partnerships can be a more efficient way to channelise resources. However, there is an initial investment of time when it comes to conceptualising how the programme operations will pan out with partners. It is important to look at the time and financial resources needed for the end-to-end implementation including needs assessment, monitoring, communications, and documentation. Operations and costs may vary depending on geographies, the size of the partner organisation and whether you adopt an online, offline or blended method of training.

Partnership costs may include:

1. Talent
   - Personnel requirements such as a Partnership Lead/Manager
   - Programme and/or organisational capacity building for partnership readiness and implementation
2. Materials and technology
   - Programme and communications collaterals
   - Technology to monitor programme adoption
   - Travel, Accommodation and Logistical costs
3. Meetings and retreats during which partner non-profits get to know each other and co-create the programme
4. Partnership Management
   - Administration
   - Partnership Monitoring and Evaluation

Financial Resources/Fundraising:

It is essential to have an open conversation with partners on raising funds for the partnership. It may be that partner non-profits will have to approach funders together. In that case, there should be transparency and clarity on what the partnership programme will cost, leveraging existing funder contacts and equity in representation to the funders.

What to consider when seeking funds for a partnership?

There are multiple ways through which you can raise funds for a partnership you are engaging in. Whether through retail-fundraising or more traditional routes, the following are critical to ensuring clarity in your proposal and commitment from funders.

Why are the two organisations partnering?

1. Express compatibility in values, missions and visions of the partnering non-profits
2. Explain how this partnership helps your organisation achieve its long-term mission and goals and how to incorporate it into the organisational strategy
3. Show demonstrated evidence of a pilot of the partnership or examples of previous partnership success both organisations have had.
4. If partners are operating in two different domains, explain how they complement each other
5. Undertake an analysis of the cost-benefit of individually achieving goals vs achieving goals with a partner

What is the expected impact of partnering?

1. Define direct and indirect impact indicators for each partner and the communities to be impacted
2. Highlight the reduction in duplication of effort and knowledge through the partnership
3. Identify quick wins and outline milestones of programme success
4. Select partnership-related metrics to highlight the outcome of partnership management

Logistical and administrative considerations:

1. Identify one individual and organisation to be accountable
2. Ensure programme reporting mechanisms are clear and there is one point of contact throughout to the funder
3. Clearly define roles and responsibilities (consider planning, capacity building, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the scalable programme, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the partnership itself)
4. Transparency of fund distribution

As with all fundraising opportunities, it is essential for you to know the funders interests and appetite for engaging in non-financial as well as a financial investment.

> *The way your case for partnerships is marketed is critical to gaining funder's support*
>
> **Akshay Soni, Managing Director, The/Nudge Accelerator**

CareNX: Joint fundraising for partnerships

CareNX Innovations Private Limited is a social enterprise that provides digital solutions to healthcare providers to improve the quality of pregnancy care, thus creating equal opportunities for care for women. Their product **CareMother AnandiMaa is a pregnancy care platform** including a) a diagnostic kit for doorstep antenatal screening, b) a mobile app for nurses and doctors that helps them identify and manage high-risk pregnancies, and c) a web portal for real-time analytics on the health status of all mothers covered under the platform. Care Mother acts as a mobile monitoring tool and mHIMS (Health Information Management System).

CareNX ensures that pregnant women from marginalised communities can have a safe pregnancy. To realise this goal they partner with NGOs that work with the government health system in improving maternal and child health outcomes through community-based support. Organisations working in remote communities with either the government frontline workers and doctors or their own field force are selected for program implementation. The health workers are trained by the CareNX team to use the AnandiMaa kit and mobile app to manage high-risk pregnancies.

Funding support for such initiatives is from international grants and CSR funds that are raised jointly by CareNX and the corresponding NGO partner. A broad project plan and budget are worked out between the partners jointly beforehand, and the impact of previous programmes is documented for evidence. The role of each partner is clearly laid out, with the NGO leading the project as the implementation partner and CareNX as the technology partner. As CareNX is a social enterprise and a for-profit, Corporate entities prefer giving CSR funds to their partner non-profits for the programme, while CareNX is brought on as a technology support partner.

Keeping documentation ready helps both organisations to reach out to donors jointly and individually among their networks as well. Many times, donors have very immediate requests and need to see three-year budgets projected to scale. Therefore, the groundwork in preparing the proposal and permutations of costing comes in handy.

The partnership with grass-root level organisations as implementation partners is important for CareNX to showcase impact as they aim to have the government authorities adopt the CareMother AnandiMaa app and embed this into their health portal. In this case, the combination of a start-up social enterprise and a non-profit widens the scope of access to funding as there are grants intended for start-ups.

Railway Children India:
Raising funds for the partnership programme

Railway Children India approach donors along with their partners. Once the programme is established, after a period of 2 to 3 years the partner demonstrates benchmarks as per the programme quality framework. They are then strong enough to attract alternative funding on their own. Railway Children India also works towards government funding so that their partners are selected to receive the government grants set aside for running Children's Help Desks at railway stations. 4 out of the 10 Help Desks under the partnership programme have now moved from private funding to government funding.
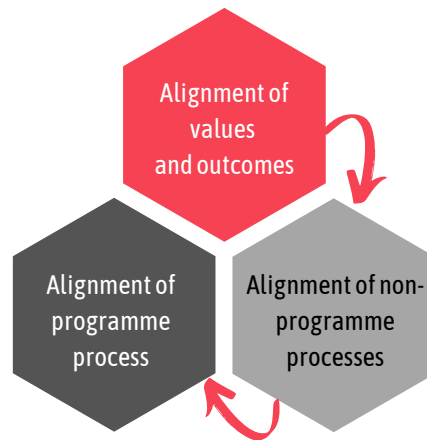
Tool to Use
Scan to access the **Partnership Programme Preparedness Guidance Document.** It provides key questions for you to use with your teams when preparing your programme for partnerships.

Steps of Partner Compatibility

Step 1: Alignment of values and outcomes

Partnership hinges largely on trust. Ideological alignment is critical to establishing trust. What are your values and ideologies about your work that you hold dear? A partner in disagreement with those will not be able to work in harmony with you.

> **What could have been better when you had partnered?**
> **"Not all partners are aligned to our vision equally and sometimes have their own agendas. Expectations on both sides should be matched well before we begin"**
> **A Non-Profit Leader, Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey**[7]

Let us consider partner compatibility for the example of the non-profit working on domestic violence. Working directly with women in communities, it may be beneficial to partner with a non-profit that focuses on men, teenage boys and police officers i.e. the ecosystem that would facilitate the prevention of violence against women. ***Finding a partner who shares this view would be a value-addition, enabling the adoption of a holistic approach to violence prevention.***

> ❝*the golden rule we have is that we are all aligned in terms of the outcomes we are looking at, otherwise we will end up providing different viewpoints to the young child.*❞
> **Priya Agrawal, Founder and Director, Antarang Foundation**

Ensuring there is **ideological alignment and agreeing upon a shared vision for the partnership is critical.** The leadership on both sides should be convinced about the value of the partnership. However, it is also important to focus on achieving a larger collective impact, and therefore both sides will have to accommodate the other's point of view. Remember to reflect on what you call a non-negotiable. Is it something that is truly core to your organisation and a genuine deal-breaker? If not, maybe a middle ground can be reached to ensure the partnership goes ahead.

5 Finding the right non-profit partner

As you prepare your programme for partnership, you should outline the types of non-profit partners whom you will approach.

It is something that needs careful consideration. What may seem like an obvious choice may not be the best partner.

In the earlier section on programme preparedness, we had spoken about articulating outcomes, what you want to achieve as per your mission, and what you want the partnership to achieve. Revisit those outcomes as that will serve as your anchor. It firmly places you in the landscape of the issue you are working on.

For example, a domain like domestic violence could have multiple points of access such as counselling services, training community groups, training police to improve their sensitivity, direct legal redress for survivors of violence, and so on. **Defining outcomes brings clarity to where an organisation stands in the interlinked interventions** and therefore determines its potential partners.

If you provide direct counselling services and want to empower women in the long-run, you may want to partner with an NPO who can train women in the community to build support groups.

If you are running a programme that trains women on their rights, a more suitable partner would be an NPO working with women and girls. This partner may be working in a different domain but could be open to equipping their programme recipients about their rights as the issue is relevant to them.

> **88% of non-profit leaders who responded to the survey agree that finding the right partner(s) is the most challenging when collaborating.**
> Collaborating in the Social Sector Survey[7]

Outreach to connect with potential partners:

Before reaching out to partners, go back to your organisation strategy. Be clear on the types of partners you are seeking to engage, and decide on outreach strategies accordingly.

Outreach may include the following:

- Reach out to your network of trusted non-profit leaders to explore partnership potential.
- Publicise your partnership approach on social media to garner the attention of a wide range of non-profit leaders interested in partnering
- Build on your existing relationships with non-profit leaders to explore the mutual benefits of partnering

→ Page 28 for guidance on your organisation strategy

→ Page 17 to know about professional development programmes.

Step 2: Alignment of non-programme processes

Discuss the following with your partner:
- legal and financial compliance
- programme costs and fundraising
- branding and communications
- data sharing and access

Articulate these aspects in the final partnership agreement. Seek guidance from your Board and advisory members since you will require their sign-off.

Step 3: Alignment of programme processes

This is the nuts-and-bolts section where the following operational process are finalised:
- programme training
- programme roll out
- roles and responsibilities
- monitoring and evaluation

These elements will also be part of the final agreement including the frequency of review and the feedback mechanism to be used.

The process and criteria followed by a few organisations to find a suitable partner have been included here for your reference.

Care NX: Partner Selection Criteria

CareNX chooses partners strategically and works with them over a significant period of time so that they can showcase impact. They are happy to expand the programme wherever the strategic partner takes it and remain as technical partners. It is because of this commitment that they are particular about their partner selection. Some of the major aspects they look at are:

1. **Domain focused work** for at least five years
2. History of **positive engagement with the government** at Municipal, State or Central government level
3. **Ability to use technology,** open to innovations and willing to use technology in their expansion.
4. A well-established **on-ground implementation team** and network that can establish their intervention and showcase results
5. **Strong leadership,** with **grant writing skills** and awareness of the rigours of working with large scale funders.

Parameters	Explanation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
SHARED VISION	There is a clear common goal that the partner organisations want to achieve	○	○	○	○
LEADERSHIP	Leadership of the partner organisation believes in the value of this partnership	○	○	○	○
LEGAL COMPLIANCES	The partner organisation fulfils all requisite legal compliances	○	○	○	○
STRENGTHS AND SKILLS FIT	Both partners understand each other's strengths, what they bring to the table and complement each other	○	○	○	○
DECISION MAKING AND COMMUNICATION PROCESSES	The partner is willing to co-create and follow clear communication and decision-making protocols	○	○	○	○
M&E	The partner has data collection and M&E processes in place and can incorporate the partnership project	○	○	○	○
DEMONSTRATED EVIDENCE	The programme /solution implemented by the partner has clear demonstrable evidence	○	○	○	○
FINANCIAL RESOURCES	The partner organisation is financially stable	○	○	○	○

Tool to Use
Click here to use the **Partner Compatibility Tool**

Foundation for Mother and Child Health - India (FMCH-India): **Decision-making matrix for partner compatibility**

FMCH-India have developed a matrix to guide decision making on a suitable partner when scaling their programme.

An extract of FMCH-India's decision-making matrix for partner compatibility is below

		DIRECT	INDIRECT - GOVT	INDIRECT - PARTNER (HEALTH)	INDIRECT - PARTNER (NON HEALTH)
TASKS (Activities to be done - each type of partner might do one or more of these)	Identification				
	NC/PC				
	1:1 Counselling				
	Anthro				
	Events				
	Family engagement				

The table highlights the process FMCH-India follows in identifying suitable partners for their programme. For each partner they consider, they classify the type of tasks that can be achieved through a potential partnership. They also categorise the potential partner under direct and indirect impact to ensure they have a sufficient balance. FMCH-India considers both domains related and non-domain related partners, with the overall goal of increasing the use of their NuTree* app to facilitate better mother and child health support.

NuTree is an app on which frontline health workers can record data on the mothers and children they are monitoring for reducing malnutrition. The app also provides frontline workers with information and other interactive media pieces on nutrition that they can use to counsel mothers when they do their home visits. Once a pregnant mother is registered on the NuTree app her progress through pregnancy and up to the first 1000 days of the child's life can be tracked, and customised counselling can be planned for them.

Partnership Roll-out:

It is important to revisit the aspects of partnership selection during the course of the relationship to ensure you are on track to achieve common goals. It is important to consider the following during partnership roll-out, to sustain the relationship with your partner:

- Fundraising and funding to sustain the programme
- The process of communicating feedback between the partners
- The process of addressing conflicts - what gets escalated and resolved at various levels
- Documenting the learnings that emerge from the programme and creating Standard Operating Processes to deal with issues that recur and need process-level solutions
- An exit strategy that will make the intervention sustainable either with the partner organisation or within the partner- community where the programme is being implemented
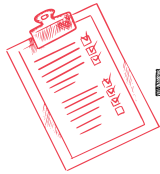
Is your programme prepared for partnerships?

The programme preparedness section of the Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment helps you reflect on your next steps, as you prepare your programme to amplify impact.

HOW PREPARED IS MY PROGRAMME, FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

STATEMENTS	Not Yet	Initiated	Completed
The concept of the programme is clearly articulated.	◯	◯	◯
The uniqueness of the programme is clearly articulated.	◯	◯	◯
The programme my organisation wants to scale has been put together for easy transfer to a partner.	◯	◯	◯
The programme outcomes are clearly defined.	◯	◯	◯
There is evidence of programme success over at least 3 years of implementation.	◯	◯	◯
We have the Intellectual Property of the programme we intend to scale through partnerships.	◯	◯	◯

PROGRAMME PREPAREDNESS SECTION SUMMARY

In this section, you were introduced to the components of Programme Preparedness for partnerships.

The five stages are:

Stage 1 - Set your programme's outcomes and identify how you want to achieve them

Stage 2 - Articulate partnership outcomes to achieve the programme goal

Stage 3 - Programme uniqueness to highlight programme value-addition

Stage 4 - Apply a partnership lens to your programme – the Content, Human Resources, Operations and Costs, and Finances required for partnerships

Stage 5 - Find the right non-profit partner

Partnership hinges on trust. Ideological alignment is critical to establishing trust.

Tools to use:

- Scan to use the **Partnership Programme Preparedness Guiding Document**
- Scan to use the **Partner Compatibility Tool**

To find out more about Partnership Readiness:

- **Leadership Preparedness - page 12**
- **Organisation Culture - page 19**
- **Organisation Strategy - page 27**
- **Partnership Builder - page 49**

07
PARTNERSHIP BUILDER

WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP BUILDER?

You may find you need third-party support to review and strengthen your partnership process. Partnership Builders facilitate the process alongside you and your teams by:

- navigating your readiness to partner
- helping you prepare your programmes
- providing expertise on strategies and models, and
- engaging with partners to amplify impact.

> Partnership Builders such as Sahayog Foundation facilitate an NPO's partnership journey, ensuring they are ready to engage with partners to generate sustained impact.

NPOs are often married to 'how' they execute their interventions and often miss out on taking a more broad view of the 'what' which can be achieved in partnership with others. Their interventions can be made much more effective through partnerships reaching sustained change by avoiding duplication and reinventing the wheel. A Partnership Builder like Sahayog helps in ensuring NPOs can embark on a mutually beneficial journey.

This is the approach followed by Sahayog Foundation to ensure non-profits are partnership ready, and partner with suitable organisations to scale or strengthen their programmes.

CONNECT
Outreach and engage with NGOs / Donors to evaluate potential for partnership

Step 01

Step 02

FACILITATE
Meetings to gauge interest, models and feasibility through a rigorous assessment process

CO-CREATE
Co-create a sustainable and achievable plan

Step 03

Step 04

INVEST
Resources, expertise, access to networks and mentorship for capacity building and increase effectiveness.

COLLABORATE
Scope for potential partners. Facilitate dialogue and structure the partnership, roles & goals

Step 05

Step 06

REVIEW
Evidence-based outcomes after implementation to build a sustainable model

6 to 9 months

Leadership Preparedness | Organisation Culture | Organisation Strategy | Programme Preparedness

Here are examples of how this approach has been applied when facilitating partnerships for two NPOs.

Foundation for Mother & Child Health - India:
Replicating a First 1000-Days Programme in additional geographies

Objectives

1. To turn FMCH-India's First 1000-Days Programme into a replicable model for non-profit partners including civil society organisations.
2. To co-create a strong partnership strategy for FMCH -India that ensures the First 1000-Days Programme is ready to scale.

Solution

FMCH-India has established itself as knowledge experts in nutrition, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices, and behaviours necessary to prevent malnutrition. In their direct intervention in Mumbai, they successfully implemented a programme using a a blend of counselling, monitoring, and eco-system building. They made the concept of nutrition accessible to marginalised families, teaching them to live a healthier life at an affordable cost.

What difference did a Partnership Builder (PB) make to the outcome?

Leadership Preparedness:

- Served as a mentor and sounding board as the leadership team decided on how best to leverage partnerships to scale their programme.
- Facilitated the leadership to articulate the 'what' and the 'how' of the programme, to make it easier for partner adoption
- Supported the leadership to transition from being a training organisation to scaling a full-fledged programme.

Organisation Culture and Strategy:

- Encouraged more FMCH-India team members to participate in discussions on programme scale-up. This established buy-in across teams, establishing a uniform understanding of partnerships.
- Helped in objectively approaching and asking critical questions to probe FMCH-India to think more deeply about their partnership strategy
- Connected FMCH-India to a legal expert to help them draft agreements with partners clearly defining their intellectual property and terms of usage for partners

Programme Preparedness:

- FMCH-India had clarity on the goal that they wanted to attain viz. ensuring more mothers from marginalised communities were able to have better pre and post-natal care and follow practices in the first 1000 days of their child' life to avoid malnutrition.
- FMCH-India worked on its programme content and the process including a technology platform to ensure ease in adoption by a partner.
- An important aspect that the partnership builder was able to work on was helping FMCH-India articulate a process and criteria to evaluate and onboard non-profit partners.

The outcomes achieved so far:

1. Two successful partnerships implemented in 2020-21 as follows:
   - **Partnership project initiated between FMCH-India and SNEH Foundation in Pune** with a **target of 600 new mothers** each year for 3 years as part of the First 1000 days programme
   - **Partnership project initiated between FMCH-India and non-profits** in **Karnataka and Nepal,** increasing reach of the First 1000 days programme
2. **Partnership process established for FMCH-India** so that they may explore and take on more partnerships with non-profits

Apnalaya:

Equipping non-profit partners to integrate a Citizenship Programme to build grassroots leadership

Objectives

1. Co-create a strong partnership strategy for Apnalaya that ensures the Citizenship Programme is ready to scale.
2. Codify Apnalaya's Citizenship Programme for ease of adoption by partner non-profits and civil society organisations.

Solution

Apnalaya works in the informal settlements of Shivaji Nagar, M East ward Mumbai, the most underserved municipal ward in the city. To support community development, they have interventions in health, education and livelihoods. However, they have always worked towards creating leaders within the community, training them to advocate for their own rights and entitlements.

Over the years, Apnalaya has established enough knowledge within community residents on issues that their own intervention is no longer needed. For example, they have trained so many community leaders on the procurement of ration cards that they were able to phase out their intervention. Now, the community members help each other.

Similar breakthroughs in active citizenship have been achieved by grassroots leaders in procuring legal water connections, electricity connections, voter ID cards, Aadhar cards, ensuring the construction of roads and drains etc.

Since a sustainable model of community citizenship and advocacy has been established in Shivaji Nagar, they are seeking to scale this citizenship approach through other non-profit partners. It will help other non-profits structure a more sustainable model of social development around the capacities of community leaders.

What difference did a Partnership Builder (PB) make to the outcome?

Leadership Preparedness:
- Worked alongside the programme team to fine-tune the model and strategy, preparing a pilot that would gather evidence for long-term partnerships.

Organisational Culture and Strategy:
- Helped Apnalaya to articulate the process so that they may explore and take on more partnerships with non-profits.
- Connected the team with a legal expert to define their intellectual property and how it can be shared with other non-profits.

Programme Preparedness:
- Worked with Apnalaya to articulate their partnership outcomes. This was essential as the Citizenship Programme does not have a specific domain focus but can be adopted by organisations across the board that want to build sustainable community leadership. Defining what this leadership would look like was important from the partners perspective.
- A Master Trainer's manual was created with the assistance of the partnership builder. This helped to train partner organisations to adopt the Citizenship Programme.
- They were supported in identifying and assessing eligible non-profit partners to scale the Citizenship Programme.

The outcomes achieved so far:

A successful **partnership rolled out with Prerana** where they trained to implement the Citizenship Programme in their community in Chembur, Mumbai to empower citizens and create groups of active citizens.

07 PARTNERSHIP BUILDER

What partnership readiness support do you need?

Use the Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment Tool to identify your strengths, and what you need help to develop further, as you prepare to partner.

*Scan to take the **Partnership Readiness Self-Assessment***

HOW PREPARED IS MY PROGRAMME, FOR PARTNERSHIPS?

STATEMENTS	Not Yet	Initiated	Completed
The concept of the programme is clearly articulated.	◯	◯	◯
The uniqueness of the programme is clearly articulated.	◯	◯	◯
The programme my organisation wants to scale has been put together for easy transfer to a partner.	◯	◯	◯
The programme outcomes are clearly defined.	◯	◯	◯
There is evidence of programme success over at least 3 years of implementation.	◯	◯	◯
We have the Intellectual Property of the programme we intend to scale through partnerships.	◯	◯	◯

PARTNERSHIP BUILDER SECTION SUMMARY

In this section, you were introduced to:

- The **role** of a Partnership Builder
- The **process** a Partnership Builder uses to build capacity in NPOs and facilitate partnerships

A Partnership Builder helps in ensuring NPOs can embark on a mutually beneficial journey.

To find out more about Partnership Readiness:

- **Leadership Preparedness - page 12**
- **Organisation Culture - page 19**
- **Organisation Strategy - page 27**
- **Programme Preparedness - page 37**

Get in touch with us for advice and guidance on your organisations partnership readiness.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we look at life. It has changed the way we live our life. It has changed the way we think about life. It has questioned the status quo and has shown us a new world can be full of challenges and opportunities. Hence, change is inevitable and constant. Being ready to change is imperative in the dynamic world we live in today.

According to the UNDP,[13] the SDGs are a roadmap for humanity. They encompass almost every aspect of human and planetary wellbeing and, if met, will provide a stable and prosperous life for every person and ensure the health of the planet. But none can be tackled by a piecemeal approach and hence, the need for collaboration.

It is complementary to Sahayog's mission to build non-profit capability to partner and facilitate collaboration to amplify impact in the social sector. We observed that the organisations across the social ecosystem have been open and willing to partner in more ways than one. Our research divulged that 95% of non-profit leaders agreed that collaboration is essential to achieving sustained impact. However, just 53% incorporate partnerships in their organisational strategy. To address the gap between intention and action; Sahayog has come out with this partnership readiness guide that shares best practices and examples of collaborative models. As told by Rumi, *"Don't be satisfied with stories, how things have gone with others. Unfold your own myth."*

I often get asked what should leaders keep in mind? In my experience, when two partners trust each other and are ideologically aligned, it lays a strong foundation for the partnership. However, it should be not just at the leadership but through the organisation. Thus, establishing a culture of collective responsibility, collective accountability and collective achievement.

Partnership readiness is a developmental process; it requires patience and commitment. The variables are many, and strategies do evolve. Leaders and organisations should always stay true to the why. In the process, they will need to consider different partnership approaches/models with diverse partners in varied contexts. In the long run, collaboration can amplify impact than would be possible by any organisation working alone.

Before I sign off, I would like to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all our contributors who have been open and collaborative whilst sharing their knowledge, experiences, examples and insights. However, none of this would be possible without my meticulous team – Chandrika Rao and Amisha Modi, who spent countless hours researching, discussions with leaders, making copious notes, debating and deliberating on different aspects of partnership readiness. Finally, I want to thank our board members - Aarti Madhusudhan, Pravin Gandhi and Ujwal Thakar and our mentor - Suman Srivastava for their unending support.

I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it for you.

In the spirit of collective action,
Sheena Gandhi.

CONTRIBUTORS

We would like to express our immense gratitude towards ths social sector leaders and organisations who so openly shared their partnership experiences with us. Each contribution has led to greater awareness of what it takes to be partnership ready. Resources shared with us have been compiled into short case studies and examples to support non-profit leaders to take action as they partner to amplify impact.

Acumen Academy

Akshay Soni, Managing Director - The/Nudge Accelerator

Amit Chandra, CEO - A.T.E. Chandra Foundation

Amitav Virmani, Founder and CEO - The Education Alliance

Ananthapadmanabhan Guruswamy, Founder - Socratus Foundation of Collective Wisdom

Dr Arun Kumar, CEO - Apnalaya

Dhwani Foundation

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Milind Mhaske, Director - Praja Foundation

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Poonam Shukla, Program Director – EduMentum

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Zubin Sharma, Founder and CEO – Project Potential
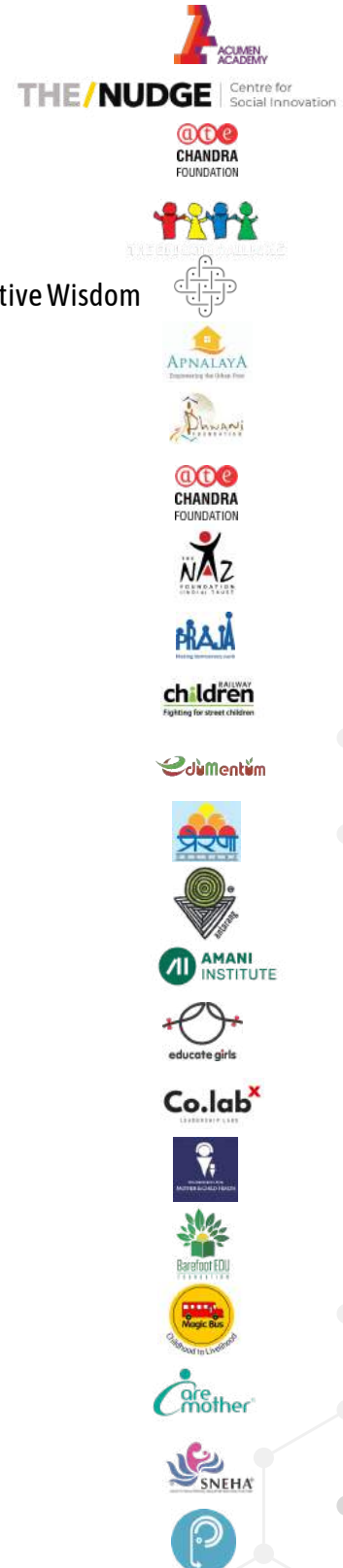
Scan to Know More About Contributing Organisations:

Education Alliance	ColabX	Acumen Academy	Edumentum	Project Potential
Naz	Antarang Foundation	Praja Foundation	Prerana	Magic Bus
Apnalaya	Railway Children	Sneha	Care Mother	Foundation for Mother and Child Health India

KEY TERMS

Partnership - a form of collaboration through which an equal, formalised relationship between two or more non-profit partners is used to amplify the impact of successful programmes in a sustained manner.

Partnership Readiness - preparedness of a non-profit at the leadership level, at the organisational culture level, at the strategic leve and the programme level.

Partnership Builder - one who helps non-profits to develop their partnership strategy and connect them with compatible partners.

Partnership Model - the way the partnership process is articulated for engaging with a partner non-profit.

Partnership Strategy - use of partnerships as a vehicle to meet your organisation's strategic goals

PARTNERSHIP READINESS EXAMPLES

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TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Scan to View

Partnership Readiness
Self-Assessment Tool

Incorporate Partnerships into the
Organisation's Strategy

Partnership Programme Preparedness
Guiding Document

Partner Compatibility Tool

TEAM SAHAYOG

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AARTI MADHUSUDAN

Board Member

PARAMITA GHOSH

Partnership Lead

UJWAL THAKAR

Board Member

Guide prepared by Amisha Modi, Chandrika Rao and Sheena Gandhi

NEED ADVICE ON YOUR PARTNERSHIP READINESS?

Partnership readiness is an internal journey that leaders and organisation embark on to best prepare when partnering with organisations.

Reach out to Team Sahayog for assistance in taking the self-assessment and/or identifying how to enhance you and your organisation's partnership readiness.

GET IN TOUCH

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