# Coalition to convergence: Best Practices in Outreach and Advocacy

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# Introduction to the Best Practices Series

NGOs often emerge as a response to community needs. They typically begin with a vision to be realised, and efforts are driven by passion and commitment. Program implementation and direction is ever-evolving as the NGO faces and works through ground realities.

It has been EdelGive's endeavour to support these visionaries and emerging NGOs and help them develop solid programs. EdelGive Foundation believes that 360-degree support is critical for these visions to translate into reality. It is thus committed to contributing towards the philanthropic ecosystem of donors, government, civil society, academia and researchers, media, and others. Besides providing funds to an NGO, EdelGive links NGOs to relevant and effective capacity building efforts, to aid its progress and growth.

This series of '**Documentation of Best Practices**' is born out of EdelGive's commitment to enhancing the knowledge and skills of its partners within this philanthropic ecosystem. The findings from this series will be used to aid capacity building of EdelGive partner NGOs (through cross learning); inform donors about existing best practices in the sector, thereby enabling them to optimise funding decisions, and to contribute to the existing knowledge on the development sector in India.

This series explains selected Best Practices that directly help NGOs scale, in size and reach. The papers are a mix of secondary research and interviews with representatives of NGOs which are recognised for being mature and effective players in the development sector. The Documentation of Best Practices series is a set of five papers:

a. Paper 1: Best Practices for Building Strong Foundations
b. Paper 2: Best Practices for Building Sustainability of NGOs for Social Impact
c. Paper 3: Growing at Scale: Best Practices in Scalability
d. Paper 4: Skilled Futures: Best Practices in Capacity Building and Community Engagement
e. Paper 5: Coalition to Convergence: Best Practices in Outreach and Advocacy

The Best Practices identified throughout the series are overarching practices that can be adopted and applied to achieve scale, reach and impact, by any NGO irrespective of sector focus. Each paper outlines a different set of Best Practices relevant to a broader goal. The figure below shows the methodology followed.
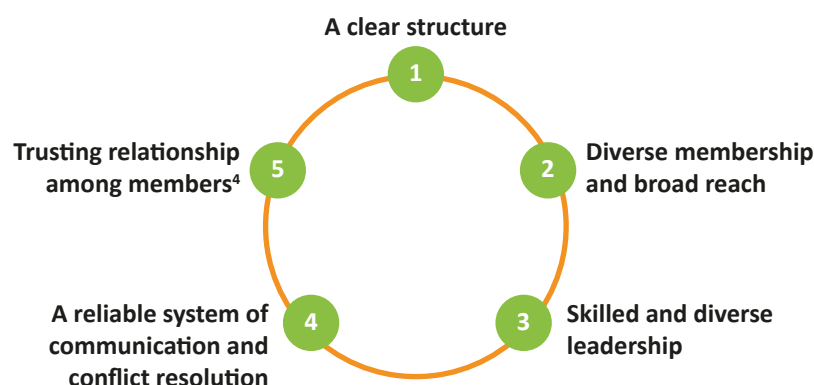


Figure 1: Mapping the Methodology

# Coalition to Convergence: Best Practices in Outreach and Advocacy

Coalitions are defined as partnerships that are formed to allow the sharing of ideas, resources, and information between diverse groups of stakeholders. As civil society organisations often differ in terms of their reach, visibility, and credibility, such coalitions help them garner support from other organisations working on similar causes. This helps all the stakeholders involved, increasing their chances of achieving mass awareness. Coalitions can be both small-scale as well as large-scale, as long as there is commitment and motivation from all parties involved to work towards a common goal.[1]

While there are many approaches to such coalitions, civil society needs coalitions that are value-based in their orientation. These values include social justice, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These coalitions are also characterised by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange, and have their respective degrees of centralisation or decentralisation. Since different NGOs have diverse areas of expertise, varied resources, and numerous stakeholders, these coalitions increase the chances of success for collaborating NGOs and prove to decision-makers that there is broad social support for the desired policy change.[2]

Just like coalitions, convergence also plays an important role in outreach and advocacy activities. According to resource mobilisation theory, for organisations to enable radical social change and organise social movements, they need to come together to share "moral, material, human, and informational resources material". When individual groups come together to form "social movement resources", they are likely to garner more public attention. Such a convergence is likely to drive policy change in the desired direction as it results in coming together of individual organisation's power, belief systems and resources.[3]

Both coalitions and convergence are dependent on trust, respect, and a commitment to work together. It is imperative for the participating organisations to respect each other and the decisions to be taken in a democratic manner for the partnership to remain strong. A successful coalition and convergence comprises of:

**A clear structure**

**1**

**5** Trusting relationship among members[4]

**2** Diverse membership and broad reach

**4** A reliable system of communication and conflict resolution

**3** Skilled and diverse leadership

While there are similarities between both coalition and convergence, their reach varies from each other. Coalition refers to the collaboration between partnering organisations working on similar social issues whereas convergence can be seen in the form of linkages between the institutions of the poor, Panchayati Raj Institutions, and the respective line ministries to enhance the effectiveness of public welfare programs (e.g. sanitation programs such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan). Convergence enables the formation of different models for service delivery to build synergies. Such convergence ensures a mutually beneficial working relationship and formal platforms for consultations. A good example is the Government of India's flagship rural livelihoods program, the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).[5]

Convergence between various departments of governmental or non-governmental sectors take place with the goal of improving service-delivery, encouraging beneficiaries of government schemes, and bringing these services closer to the community. Such alliances between stakeholders are also likely to improve overall outcomes with respect to the thematic areas. Improving outreach of the program or intervention, too, becomes an important goal of convergence. For instance, the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) was found to have poor implementation at the grassroots level. However, improving interdepartmental convergence and facilitating

[1]Bunn, C., & Ayer, V. (2004). Building and Maintaining Coalitions (1st ed.). The Advocacy Expert Series Book 4.   [2]Fox, J. (2010). Coalitions and networks. In International encyclopedia of civil society (pp. 486-492). Springer, New York, NY.   [3]Gen, S. & Wright, A. C. (2013). Policy advocacy organisations: A framework linking theory and practice. Journal of Policy Practice, 12 (3), 163-193.   [4]Ibid.,1   [5]Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (2019). Convergence and Partnerships, National Rural Livelihoods Mission. Retrieved from https://aajeevika.gov.in/content/convergence-partnerships.

participation of local systems helped the program reach out to far more beneficiaries.[6] Convergence between different organisations or departments helps to further advocacy efforts. Issues that call for convergence are likely to improve public awareness and gain more visibility for policy decision makers.[7]
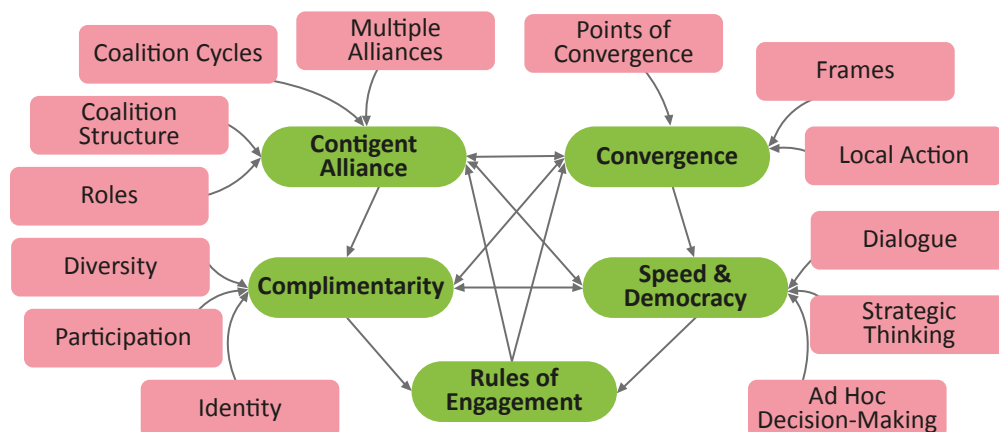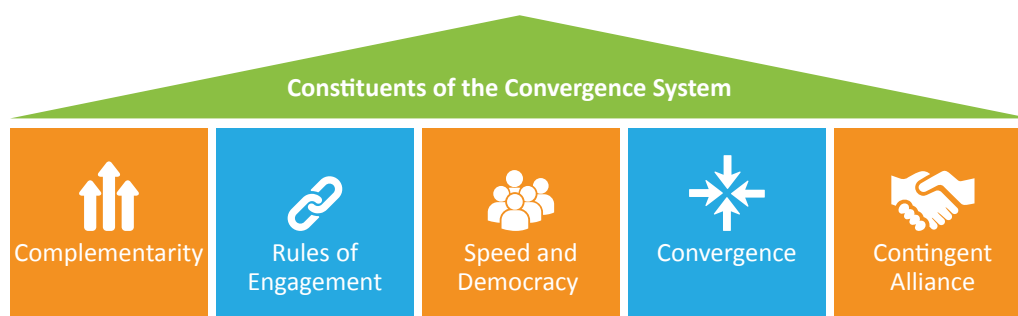


Figure 1: The Convergence System: Finding Collective Voice in Diversity
Source: Global Civil Society: Finding Common Voice in Diversity[8]

The Convergence System recognises the importance of the participation of a diversity of belief systems, opinions as well as identities in coalitions. The five main constituents of The Convergence System are:



Their interconnectedness places emphasis on structural aspects of coalitions wherein multiple organisations, sectors, stakeholders form alliances and are assigned or voluntarily take up roles to meet the goal of coalition formation. While recognising that member organisations' might be different, it is their common goals, principles and strategies that bring them together. This makes it even more important for the partner organisations to reflect on their common points of convergence while ensuring that every member has the opportunity to share lessons, participate and drive change.[9]

**Majlis** was founded in the year 1991 as a cultural centre and space for asserting women's rights. Over the years, Majlis has been working as a legal centre for women's rights discourse and legal initiatives. Majlis actively engages with multiple stakeholders by offering legal services, conducting legal awareness training, engaging in policy level interventions, public campaigns, and public interest litigation in order to help women access justice.

**Labour Education and Research Network (LEARN)** was started in the year 2008 with the membership of home-based workers, domestic workers, street vendors, micro-factory workers, garment workers' and rag pickers in three districts of Maharashtra. The objectives of LEARN

[6]Kansara, Khushi & Saxena, Deepak & Puwar, Tapasvi & Yasobant, Sandul & Trivedi, Poonam & Savaliya, Shital & Fancy, Manish. (2018). Convergence and Outreach for Successful Implementation of Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram. Indian Journal of Community Medicine. 43. 18-22. doi:10.4103/ijcm.IJCM_226_18.    [7]USAID (1997) Advocacy Strategies for Civil Society: A Conceptual Framework and Practitioner's Guide. Retrieved from http://www.pointk.org /resources/ files/Advocacy_Strategies_for_Civil_Society.pdf.    [8]Magis, K. M. (2007). Global civil society: Finding collective voice in diversity. Portland State University.    [9]Magis. K, (2007). Global Civil Society: Finding Common Voices in Diversity. Retrieved from:https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/istr.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/working_papers_barcelona/Magis.pdf

have always been to assist in building the collectivisation of workers in informal employment, to conduct research, and to develop collective grassroots responses to issues that affect informal sector workers.

Since its very inception in the 1970s, **Child Rights and You (CRY)** has been working towards tackling issues plaguing children of the country that deprive them of basic rights like lack of access to education, abuse and neglect, child labour, etc. In the last 40 years of their functioning, CRY has partnered with various organisations based on child centricity. Apart from child centricity, this multi-sectoral engagement is based on shared ethics, principles, values of the partner organisations as well as their credibility.

**Atma** was established in 2008 with a mission to support existing education NGOs by transforming them into sustainable and scalable organisations. Atma enables these NGOs to reach out to more children by transforming their potential into high impact. The Atma Network acts as an information bank that NGOs can consult to solve challenges by connecting them with field experts. Apart from their online presence on various social media platforms, Atma has recently started a Remote Accelerator Programme to increase their outreach to NGOs that are outside Mumbai. Atma mentors these NGOs for a period of 6 months and then regularly follows up with them with respect to their managerial systems.

Thus, while it is important for organisations working on different social issues to come together and collaborate to form coalitions and converge with the larger ecosystem, they also need to be cognizant of the ways in which they are collaborating and the objective of such partnerships. Without having a strategy or a shared common goal, such partnerships can often lead to conflicts resulting in increasing the gap between various actors in the civil society.

Based on the research done, this paper looks at four Best Practices that indicate how coalitions can assist in impactful outreach and advocacy.



Civic Participation and Volunteerism     Use of Technology     Collectivisation     Multi-sectoral Engagement
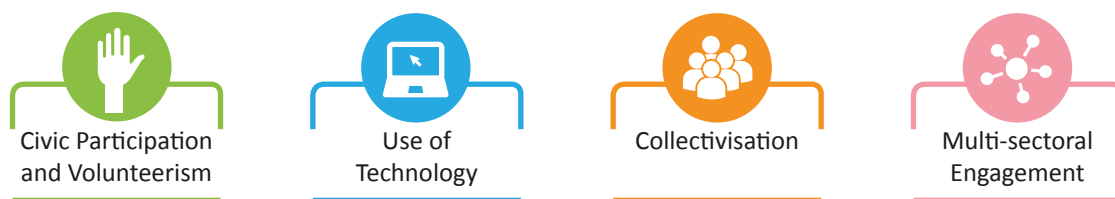
Figure 2: Best Practices in Outreach and Advocacy

To illustrate and explore these best practices in outreach and advocacy in India, key parameters were used to shortlist NGOs. These parameters are:

- **Program reach (State-level or Pan-India)**: Profiling NGOs with a localised presence, state-level presence, or have a pan-India presence.

- **The maturity of NGO (Time since incorporation)**: NGOs that are at least a decade old to understand the nuances of community engagement and have synthesised their process backed by evidence.

- **Focus area (Urban, rural, or both)**: To contrast best practices between NGOs with a rural focus and those with urban or both.

- **Cross-sectoral nature of NGOs**: NGOs that work in various thematic areas (example: health, livelihood, education, sanitation, women empowerment, media advocacy, among others).

# Civic Participation and Volunteerism

**What is civic participation and volunteerism?**

- Civic participation refers to engagement with diverse formal and non-formal networks that arise out of political consciousness. Typically, the purpose of such engagement is to address grievances of economic injustices and hold state structures accountable. Similarly, volunteerism is a way in which non-governmental organisations facilitate participation of the common public in bringing about social change.[10]

**How do civic participation and volunteerism help in outreach and advocacy?**

- A strong and formal system of civic participation and engagement plays an important role in creating democratic societies, especially in a world where NGOs are constantly pushing for social change and a human rights agenda at the global level.

- Civic engagement requires involvement right from the steps of identification and analysis of the issue to collection, dissemination of findings related to the prevalence of the issues and possible solutions.[11]

- Similar to civic engagement, volunteerism fosters a shared vision for service and solidarity among volunteers, and aids in the formation of networks, bonds, and a sense of cooperation that form the basis of a stable and healthy community.[12]

- Volunteerism also utilises and trains local talent, building leaders within the community and exerts pressure on local authorities and governance structures driving change in the desired direction.[13]

> *"A lot of women also come to us through organisations that are based in the community. While we are not based in the community, we have a fairly good understanding of the problem women face in the community because we are working so closely with these organisations."*
>
> *-Persis Sidhva (Advocate, Majlis), when asked about Majlis' outreach in the community*

## Excerpts from the Case Study | Majlis

**What is Majlis?**

Majlis is a broad-based pluralistic organisation encompassing two centres, legal and cultural. Established in 1991 as a response to a growing need for lawyers with a gender perspective, their agenda for social change works via quality legal representation for individual women in court, changing mindsets through advocacy and training, and evolving gender-just ideology through campaigns and interventions.

**How does Majlis engage in outreach and advocacy through civic participation and volunteerism?**

- *By focusing on building a strong and formal system of civic participation and engagement.*

  - Building accountability of stakeholders through formally-structured training programs is an integral element of Majlis' interventions.

  - Majlis has both voluntary and formal collaborations with multiple community-based organisations and provides legal support to communities through these organisations. For instance, Majlis lawyers go to Apnalaya (NGO working in Shivaji Nagar slum in Mumbai on issues of health, education and livelihood) every week to provide legal consultation to the women who come there.

  - The NGO builds capacities of social workers in these organisations, through their PLUS (Para-legal Understanding for Social Workers) course, which provides them with a basic understanding of intervention and rights. This helps in demystifying the law, thus, making it accessible to the communities.

  - Majlis also collaborates with organisations such as Childline that have different areas of expertise. For instance, Childline assists in immediate crisis interventions through their helpline, while Majlis provides sustained legal support through legal representation, interactions with police, etc.

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[10]Volunteerism, civic engagement and the post-2015 agenda. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.civicus.org/images/Volunteerism civic engagement and the post 2015.pdf.
[11]Gemmill, B., & Bamidele-Izu, A. (n.d.). The Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Global Environmental Governance. Retrieved from https://environment.yale. edu/publication-series/documents/downloads/a-g/gemmill.pdf.   [12]Volunteering in India. (2012). United Nations Volunteers.   [13]Brown, E., & United Nations Volunteers. (2008). Volunteerism: Harnessing the potential to develop Cambodia. Retrieved from http://youthstarcambodia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ Volunteerism-Harnessing-the-Potential-to-Develop-Cambodia.pdf

- *By focusing on building a network of volunteers to encourage a sense of cooperation and solidarity.*

  - Majlis has a six-month internship program for law students who assist social workers or lawyers in cases of violence. Interns are also engaged in the research and compliance related work, where they are involved in conducting interviews as part of the ongoing programs.

  - The interns have to go through an induction process before starting work to get acquainted with the context of interventions.

  - Majlis has two programs targeted at college students: Expressions and Know Your Right that helps them understand their rights, build perspective, and legal awareness around subjects of domestic violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment at workplaces, thus making them aware citizens.

**Challenges and Considerations**

- On working with issues of domestic violence and child sexual abuse that are extremely personal, Majlis faces resistance from the families of survivors that impedes their interventions. The PLUS course (conducted with the collaborating/ grassroot organisation) helps to empower the woman as it empowers her first point of contact (the collaborating/grassroot organisation) through transfer of knowledge about the processes of justice system. This aids in strategising a future course of action while keeping her consent and security at the centre of the process.

- Due to the sensitive nature of such issues, Majlis faces resistance from college authorities when trying to conduct civic engagement activities with college students.

- Discussion around taboo and sensitive issues tends to make some people who are part of this process uncomfortable. However, such programs in colleges and communities has also led to young girls opening up about sexual abuse, domestic violence and sexual harassment.

- Majlis constantly attempts to maintain accountability of stakeholders especially those in the justice system, by pointing out violations on their part. This at times, leads to hostility from these actors towards Majlis during their work. However, this also leads to increased accountability of these very actors towards the survivors.

# Collectivisation

**What is collectivisation?**

- Collectivisation is when organisations or individuals working on the same set of related issues form networks to achieve strategic outcomes and advocate common causes. Due to the common (or overlapping) values and principles that guide social change, the process of collectivisation helps in making inroads to achieving real impact on social policy.[14]

**How does collectivisation lead to advocacy and outreach?**

- The first step to collectivisation comprises of a needs assessment to understand the context of the problem and the needs and hopes of the target group for a symmetrical understanding between all stakeholders associated with the collective.

- The needs assessment requires research initiatives through baseline measures, surveys, and questionnaires to understand the depth of the problem other approaches to tackle it and to help organisations understand the current political and social environment.

- It is also important to understand infrastructure requirements and financial resources, at the collective's disposal. Identifying other key stakeholders and organisations working in the same thematic area, scheduling regular face-to-face or e-meetings and focus group discussions facilitate appropriate role allocations and strategise future interventions and work plans.

- Collectivisation often brings to the table divergent perspectives and requires participating organisations to work together in a democratic manner. It is therefore important to reiterate the importance of collective action for all parties involved to both enhance the visibility of the issue or problem at hand and help all the NGOs benefit from the collectivisation.[15]

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**Excerpts from the Case Study**    **Labour Education and Research Network (LEARN)**

**What is Labour Education and Research Network (LEARN)?**

Labour Education and Research Network (LEARN) was established in 2008 and is dedicated to mobilising female informal sector workers in the urban slums of Maharashtra. Their membership includes home-based workers, domestic workers, street vendors, micro-factory workers, garment workers, and rag pickers in Mumbai, Nashik and Solapur districts of Maharashtra. With the aim of collectivising workers in the informal sector, LEARN conducts research to develop collective grassroots responses to issues faced by them.

**How does LEARN engage in advocacy and outreach through collectivisation?**

- *LEARN underwent the following process to understand the context of the problem, and the needs and hopes of the target group.*

  - LEARN acknowledged early on that people's work conditions and wages/income affect their access to health and education.

  - Therefore, the NGO started engaging with trade unions around Mumbai, and realised that they do not represent the interests of the people adequately.

  - Additionally, LEARN also understood that collectivisation is virtually absent in the informal sector, and does not address the issues of women workers.

  - They discovered very poor working conditions after studying women vegetable vendors in the Parel Bhoiwada area in Mumbai. Since women in this community were not aware of the value of their work and importance of collectivisation, a starting point for LEARN was to raise awareness amongst women by addressing a tangible issue in their lives: that of ration cards.

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*"We decided to do a morcha at the ration office. We did a morcha around various slums of Dharavi... It was a good thing because this mobilised women and brought a sense of understanding in the process to apply for a ration card as most of these women had no idea what was being demanded inside. They just knew we want to get our ration card. The morcha was also a good opportunity for women to engage collectively, as there are very few opportunities for them to come together and be part of a group brought together by a common need. I realised that being a part of this collective process is very meaningful, just the art of participation."*

-Indira Gartenberg (Organising Secretary of LEARN Mahila Kamgar Sanghatana) when asked about the process of collectivisation

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[14]InterAction. (2013). Collective Responsibility The Perceptions, Expectations and Realities of NGO Coordination in Humanitarian Leadership. Retrieved 2013, from https://www.interaction.org/sites/default/files/Collective Responsiblity NGO Coordination in Humanitarian Leadership.pdf.    [15]Mulgan, G. (n.d.). Collaboration and collective impact: How can funders, NGOs and governments achieve more together? Retrieved from https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/collaboration_and_collective_impact_-_geoff_mulgan.pdf

- *LEARN attempted to address the immediate needs of the target group through the process of collectivisation.*

  - Women started attending meetings in the hope of getting ration cards as this was an address proof for schools, hospitals, and bank accounts, and they did not have any identity cards.

  - When LEARN got identity cards made for these women, it increased their validation in the community. Collectively with the community, LEARN did a 'morcha' around various slums of Dharavi on the issue of ration cards.

  - LEARN registered this union as the "LEARN Mahila Kamgar Sanghatana" with the Maharashtra Labour office.

  - The union has since enabled women to receive ration cards, and in turn use it to get other documents such as PAN cards, bank accounts, etc., and to also gain access to other public goods and services (e.g. schools and hospitals).

  - LEARN has a democratic structure as it is a union and works as such. All members are classified into groups of 20 and usually, these groups are clustered as per geographical locations.

  - These groups meet regularly and elect their leaders who act as area leaders in the union which in turns makes their model sustainable in nature.

- *LEARN uses collaborations with other organisations to enhance the visibility of different issues.*

  - LEARN associates with other organisations and networks such as Majlis, Home Net South Asia (HNSA), Rationing Kruti Samiti (RKS), among others who are working on related issues.

  - The organisation has completed state-wise consultations for the National Alliance for Social Security. The NGO is also acting as an advocacy and unifying platform for labour unions and NGOs in Maharashtra.

- *LEARN uses research on collectivisation to further advocacy by bringing about awareness on various allied issues.*

  - LEARN has generated literature on the urban informal economy in India based on the findings and learnings from the work of the trade union (For instance, "Report on the Status of Occupational Safety and Health of Home-based Workers in Nasik and Solapur, by Indira Gartenberg, January 21, 2015).

  - In this sense, the two processes are interlinked – field findings inform research, which in turn help in developing strategies for field mobilisation.

## Challenges and Considerations

- LEARN struggled to address the contradiction of values of community members from that of the NGO. For instance, women collectivising for the common good of all women outside their homes may not hold the same empowering gender norms at home towards their young daughters who might be forced to engage in domestic work.

- Because of the fundamental process of unionisation and collectivisation, the lack of focus on managerial processes such as having a screening process before extending membership has led to many processes-related issues in the past.

- Despite their model of collectivising being sustainable in terms of its leadership and reach, LEARN is struggling with issues of scaling up.

- Collectivisation as a goal in of itself is not enough for fundraising, and there is a constant demand for visible tangible outcomes.

- Lack of physical infrastructure poses logistical challenges to conducting meetings in bigger groups. They address this by conducting these meetings in the homes of community members.

# Multi-Sectoral Engagement

**What is multi-sectoral engagement?**

• As social problems and issues addressed by NGOs are complex and interconnected, a multi-sectoral engagement addresses these problems in a holistic and sustainable manner by collaborating with various sectors both within and outside government.[16]

**How does multi-sectoral engagement help in advocacy and outreach?**

• A multi-sectoral engagement must aim at sustainability along with recognising that social problems require a 'whole systems approach,' as such an approach sees the interconnections between systems, holds the functioning of these systems accountable, and calls for their active participation for systemic change.

• A well-thought-out vision and outcome, sufficient resources, and a socio-political environment consisting of relevant ministries, various sectors and international organisations and their willingness to support such an engagement is crucial at every step.

• A multi-sectoral engagement needs to mobilise greater resources to achieve impact while acquiring a sense of coherence between different sectors in order to reap benefits for all parties involved.[17]

• In a multi-sectoral engagement, such a coherence between sectors is achieved through the flow of information, evidence-driven practice, effective communication, coordination, and realisation of a common goal and vision for policy change.[18]

*"Networks are spaces where the organisation can put forward their points of view and agree or disagree on the same. It is also a platform where NGOs extend solidarity even if they are not working on the core issue. Networking and coalitions give the liberty to the organisation to extend solidarity if they deeply believe in the cause/issue. With this there are deep-seated social issues which our country faces, it is important that civil society organisations come together in one voice to share their opinions."*

*-Kreeanne Rabadi, (Regional Director, West, CRY) when asked about the importance of building networks and coalitions in furthering advocacy efforts*

## Excerpts from the Case Study — Child Rights and You (CRY)

**What is CRY?**

Established in 1979, CRY is committed to a happy, healthy and creative childhood for every child. CRY partners with grassroots level non-governmental organisations to uplift thousands of underprivileged Indian children denied of basic rights by working across levels – from direct action, advocacy, mobilising public opinion to policy change.

**How does CRY engage with multiple actors in the ecosystem to facilitate outreach and advocacy?**

• *CRY focuses on a holistic approach as essential for driving social impact.*

  • For CRY, the premise for partnering with other organisations is child centricity. For example, while collaborating with housing rights groups, they look at the impact on the child and the extent to which the program is focused on its approach towards children.

  • CRY aligns with other NGOs at both national as well as state levels for collectively raising issues pertaining to children or extending solidarity. For instance, CRY is a part of the Pro-Child Network, Right to Education Forum, Early Childhood Care, and Development at the National level.

  • At the state level, CRY collaborates with other NGOs thematically on various issues ranging from health and nutrition to education.

  • CRY's network of volunteers engages with a range of issues starting from community-level work, to public campaigns, to campus action on child rights. This is driven by their idea to engage the public at large for different child-centric causes.

  • Through campaigns, fundraisers, and civic engagement activities, CRY focuses on bringing about child-friendly policies through advocacy.

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[16]WHO. (n.d.). *Multi-sectoral and intersectoral action for improved health and well-being for all: Mapping of the WHO European Region Governance for a sustainable future: Improving health and well-being for all.* Retrieved from http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file /0005/371435/multisectoral-report-h1720-eng.pdf?ua=1.    [17]ibid.    [18]UNDP. (2006, November). *Multi-stakeholder Engagement Processes: A UNDP Capacity Development Resource.* Retrieved from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/drivers-of-change /accountability/multi-stakeholder-engagement-processes/Engagement-Processes-cp7.pdf

- *CRY ensures coherence between sectors through the flow of information, effective communication, coordination, and realisation of a common goal and vision for policy change.*

  - While collaborating with other organisations/groups across sectors, CRY looks at aspects such as ideological fit, ethics, principles, and values of the organisation in order to ensure proper coherence and cooperation.

  - Sharing/dissemination of knowledge and best practices occur in forum meetings of such collaborations. Networking and coalitions give the liberty to the organisation to extend solidarity if they deeply believe in the cause/issue.

  - The decision for such collaborations with respect to multi-sectoral engagement is taken by the organisation's Development Support Team, who are also responsible for providing technical support to partners, regular support and training during their visits, and monitoring and management of funds.

**Challenges and Considerations**

- CRY has occasionally experienced differential levels of engagement from different partners in larger coalitions for multi-sectoral projects, which has had an adverse effect on the project. In such multi-sectoral projects involving multiple partners, CRY has experienced that consensus building can be a long process and as a result of timely intervention turns out to be weak.

- Since CRY partners with a lot of grassroot NGOs who do not have funds, sustainability of the projects in some cases can be a challenge. Running a secretariat for larger coalitions is logistically expensive in terms of human resources, meeting costs, etc.  Therefore, a weak secretariat and staff turnout due to lack of funds often weaken the whole process. To address this issue, CRY has a Development Support Team which handles these issues.

# Use of Technology

**What does use of technology refer to in the case of non-profit organisations?**

- Technology has provided a platform to 21st century NGOs to increase awareness, campaign for their causes, create networks, and engage in policy-level advocacy by garnering support online. Such online support has not only helped NGOs to extend their capacities and improve their productivity but has also aided them in adopting innovative strategies to reach out to their target group.[19]

**How does use of technology further advocacy and outreach?**

- The usage of technology harnesses the potential of the internet by increasing participation, including voices of those on the margins in order to drive social change.

- Social media provides a transformative space for NGOs to interact with the public, raising awareness about their campaigns, and helps them document their work on an accessible platform. This aids in gathering evidence to make a strong case for financial support of donor and funding agencies, and humanitarian support of volunteers and for advocacy issues at the local, national and international level.

- The online community, even though lacking a geographical sense of space, is able to create a sense of togetherness and solidarity, whereby divergent perspectives surpassing differences in geography, culture, and languages are heard and understood.

- Apart from social media, there are other ways in which the internet is being used by organisations to disseminate information for NGOs to not only work on their thematic areas, but to also help organise themselves better.[20]

> *"We also use technology for the network and we have an online repository. Monk Prayogshala is one of the NGOs listed on it and we engage with them on a monthly basis through webinars. It's an offsite-based enabled model of engagement and we're also now piloting an offering which will allow us to provide our accelerator program that is a Mumbai-Pune program to NGOs all across the country remotely."*
>
> *- Sneha Arora (Chief Programmes Officer, Atma) when asked about the use of technology in programs*

## Excerpts from the Case Study — Atma

**What is Atma?**

**Atma** was established in 2008 with an aim to strengthen organisations to impact education. With a vision to ensure quality education for all children, Atma provides strategic solutions to help education NGOs scale. Atma has partnered with 61 education NGOs who impact the lives of over 16,00,000 children.

**How does Atma use technology to further advocacy and outreach?**

- *Use of social media to drive social change*
  - Atma has dedicated social media associates who take care of publicising the organisation's programs and campaigns across major social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, etc.

- *Using technology for building networks and collaborations*
  - Atma has an online portal called the Atma Network, which is an online hub of all the knowledge it has accumulated through 10 years of work aimed at building capacity across functional areas for NGOs.
  - Atma actively engages with NGOs on this platform through monthly webinars that provide knowledge relevant to the NGOs such as issues of financial compliance, budgeting, fundraising, etc.

- *Using technology to build capacities of NGOs across varied geographical locations*
  - The accelerator is a part of the organisation's flagship program where they provide management consulting support and capacity building for NGOs to either strengthen or to scale up (depending on where they are at their life stage) through a three-year course.
  - The remote accelerator provides the same kind of support for scaling up, and/or setting up systems and processes for NGOs remotely through the use of basic technologies like Skype, Google Hangouts, Trello, emails, WhatsApp, etc.

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[19]Alammary, Jaflah. (2012). Information Technology for Enhancing NGO's Performance in the Kingdom of Bahrain 3. 111-120.    [20]Özdemir. "Social Media as a Tool for Online Advocacy Campaigns: Greenpeace Mediterranean's Anti Genetically Engineered Food Campaign in Turkey." Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition, vol. 5, no. 2, 2012, pp. 22–39.

- The pilot for this program was launched in August 2018 with 4 NGOs from different parts of the country.

- For instance, one of these remotely-located NGOs needed support in developing a structured fundraising strategy. Atma's team worked with them to try and understand their issues, and they call this stage a Detailed Diagnostic state, which is the first step of the remote accelerator program.

- Within two and half months of remote engagement with this NGO, Atma facilitated a fund-raising strategy and created a Fundraising Tracker Calendar that gave the NGO a stipulated target. Atma also gave them leads for potential funders, thus providing implementation support along with capacity-building.

**Challenges and Considerations**

- Due to the remote nature of the program, it became difficult for Atma to constantly follow up with the partner organisations leading to projects getting delayed.

- Therefore, despite an initial pilot deadline for the program in October 2018, it got extended till December 2018 for one partner as they got caught up in other commitments.

- Because Atma cannot provide direct implementation support to the partner organisation, it becomes difficult to see results in terms of the impact of the program.

- The Remote Accelerator Programme is project-based (accelerator is 3 years long) and typically lasts between 3 to 6 months. Therefore, the accelerator is a deeper and longer engagement, whereas the remote accelerator is a shorter and shallower engagement that might impede the partner organisation's ability to internalise capacity-building activities.

# Key Lessons from Best Practices

## Best Practice 1  Civic Participation and Volunteerism

- An induction program for potential volunteers can aid in increasing their understanding of the context of the organisation's functioning.

- The organisation should have a broad range of activities to engage volunteers including those that focus on increasing awareness about their own rights.

- Having regular training with partner organisations can transfer knowledge to the communities these organisations are working with, thus making the different stakeholders such as state actors and delivery systems more accessible.

- The larger the participation, the more likely it will snowball into individuals and communities receiving information about their fundamental rights and duties.

> **Key Tips:**
>
> From Majlis' experience in engaging with multiple stakeholders at the community-level, the following key tips emerge:
>
> - **Key Tip A:** *How to engage in civic participation without having a direct presence in local communities?*
>     - Organisations can engage in civic participation by working with grassroot level NGOs that have a rapport with local communities.
>     - Amongst other ways of civic engagement, rallies and signature campaigns via grassroot NGOs (rallies) as well as directly engaging with the public (signature campaigns) can aid in spreading awareness on different issues.
> - **Key Tip B:** *How to engage volunteers as part of program intervention?*
>     - One way would be to directly approach schools and colleges, as these institutions have the correct demographic required to build a network of volunteers.
>     - Social media can spread awareness about volunteerism and internship programs for organisations.

## Best Practice 2  Collectivisation

- While the needs of the community can be a good starting point to start the collectivisation process, the organisation should focus on going beyond this needs-based-approach.

- The NGO should aim at making the community realise the importance of collectivisation as a goal in of itself while moving away from service provision as a goal.

- Grooming existing members to become future leaders can help in saving resources in the future.

- The organisation should acknowledge the importance of research in developing strategies for field mobilisation.

> **Key Tips:**
>
> From LEARN's work in activating workers and labourers in Maharashtra, some key insights are:
>
> - **Key Tip A:** *How to start the process of Collectivisation?*
>     - Identifying a common ground is essential to start the process of collectivisation to demand fundamental rights of the target population.
>     - Since the process of collectivisation brings together different individuals and groups with competing interests, it is important to be equipped with conflict-resolution tools for consensus building and arriving at a common goal.

- *Key Tip B:* How to ensure sustainability of a Collective?
  - In order to remain relevant, the collective must constantly be in touch with the larger socio-political-economic context at both the national and state levels.
  - The leaders of the collective have to be mindful of the politics and in-fighting amongst members and factions.

## Best Practice 3 Multi-sectoral Engagement

- Building coalitions and collaborations with like-minded NGOs and networks can help the organisation in developing a holistic approach while being attuned to its own vision.

- Through networks and coalitions, organisations are able to extend solidarity to issues they might not be directly engaged in.

- The organisation should be mindful of the sustainability of projects in non-financial partnerships.

- In the case of multi-sectoral collaboration, all the member/partner organisations should have clearly-defined key responsibility areas.

*Key Tips:*

From CRY's strategy for multi-sectoral engagement while keeping child-centricity in mind, the below key tips are essential:

- *Key Tip A:* How to ensure that the vision of the organisation is not compromised while engaging in different projects?
  - While choosing multi-sectoral projects, the organisation should not lose sight of its original vision. For instance, CRY engages in projects across sectors, but retains child-centricity at the core of all work.
  - While building coalitions and collaborations, the organisation must look for partners who are in sync with their ideological position and vision.
- *Key Tip B:* How to build sustainable coalitions?
  - The coalitions must come up with a proper structure of functioning along with conflict resolution methods for working effectively.
  - The coalition must have a dedicated team to manage its programs and activities, including fundraising.

- While using technology, the organisation should have an equal physical connect with people as it has online.

- Technology should be leveraged to send periodic updates to donors, subscribers and supporters for them to be updated about the projects the organisation is working on and the goal it is headed towards.

- Technology can be used to bring greater visibility to the issue that the NGO is working on by sharing and disseminating knowledge about it.

- Organisations using technology also need to be extremely mindful of their political location and the opinions that they express online so as to not polarise citizens.

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**Key Tips:**

Atma's experiences in promoting education sector NGOs to use social media consistently for outreach and advocacy motivate a few key tips:

- **Key Tip A:** *How to use social media for achieving organisational goals?*
  - The organisation can use social media to spread the word on events and activities conducted.
  - Social media can also be an effective fundraising tool through methods like crowdfunding through portals such as Ketto and Milaap.

- **Key Tip B:** *How to use technology to increase outreach?*
  - Online platforms can be used to bring different actors and stakeholders together that can potentially save time and money.
  - Online platforms can also be used to create, access, and store knowledge across geographical barriers.

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## ABOUT EDELGIVE FOUNDATION

EdelGive Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the Edelweiss Group and was established in 2008. Since its inception, almost a decade ago, EdelGive is steadily evolving a philanthropic ecosystem in India. EdelGive works to develop a symbiotic relationship between the different members of the ecosystem viz. investors (donor corporate agencies, partner CSR agencies, and individual donors), investees (NGOs and other sub sets of the NGO sector), and collaborating partners like the government, like-minded agencies, capacity building organisations, and policy experts. EdelGive has fostered the growth of the synergies inherent to an ecosystem, to leverage gains over and beyond its investment, both financial and non-financial.

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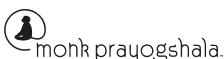
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Monk Prayogshala is a not-for-profit academic research organisation that undertakes projects spanning the entire research life cycle, from conceptualizing research problems to data analysis through to publication and feedback integration. Prayogshala consists of a team of highly-trained researchers from the social sciences and aims to further the cause of academic research in and from India, and improve the quality and volume of the nation's research output into the global academic research community. Prayogshala has been working with reputed Non-Government Organisations and NPOs to measure research impact and publish their work in high impact research journals.

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*For corporates who are looking to deploy their CSR Funds with great NGOs,
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