

Conversations Today

Your journal about the world of NGOs and Social Enterprises

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

Swami Vivekananda believed that working for any social change required massive energy and spirit. He requested youth to amplify both their mental energies and physical fitness. What Swami Vivekananda wanted from the youth were 'muscles of iron' and 'nerves of steel'.

Youth possess a lot of energy, and it is our responsibility to channelise them in the right direction. Moreover, it is on the shoulders of the young that the future of our country rests because they represent new values, new thinking and new ways of life.

Family is one of the most important factors that contribute to the life of a youth, and their views towards the past and future. Youth of today are expected to uphold, carry on, and remember the traditions and ways of the past, and yet, it is also expected that they learn, adopt, and embrace the ways of the future. Education affects the views of youth of today. Some people tend to change their views because of new things that they have learnt or knowledge that has reinforced their beliefs. These factors determine what kind of person a youth will grow up to be and how he/she will serve as a link between the past and the future. It is said that misguided youth may do greater harm to the society than what even the worst enemy can do.

Therefore, it is very important to tap the potential of our youth and steer it towards the right direction. By effectively channelizing this energy, our nation can attain limitless heights and win accolades for our country.

Conversations Today has featured several social entrepreneurs and social change agents who have focused on youth empowerment. This issue too talks about a few of them.

Happy reading!

—Marie Banu

EDITORIAL

Latha Suresh
Marie Banu

Design: Blink Foundation

Living in Autopilot

“Very often, human beings are living like on autopilot, reacting automatically with what happens. What interests me about the life of an explorer is you are in the unknown; you are out of your habits.” Bertrand Piccard



“Very often, human beings are living like on autopilot, reacting automatically with what happens. What interests me about the life of an explorer is you are in the unknown; you are out of your habits.” Bertrand Piccard

Autopilot makes it harder for us to make instinctively conscious choices. While living in autopilot, we just “go through the motions” of the day. Our need to accomplish, to be seen important, being safe, keep us in autopilot. Often reacting to external triggers, circumstances largely direct the way we live our life.

Living in autopilot is a kind of continuous partial attention and following set lines of thinking. We have very full schedules and ever-increasing responsibilities and we are surrounded with information and constant distractions. When we choose to live consciously, we can be present to the possibilities in the now. Staying in the now creates a chance to pay full attention which is more efficient and it is much more respectful to ourselves and to those around us.

Our memories, past experiences, both successes and failures, switches on the “unconscious or autopilot”. We are driven by things that we are not aware of. When we are in crisis, autopilot is a way to survive the situation. However, trying to survive even when there is no crisis by being on auto pilot creates an energy deficit for us.

Therefore, making the unconscious conscious is a step towards empowering yourself.

What can you do?

1. Say no to distractions like checking your phone, responding to an email. Stay present and avoid the temptation to get pulled in multiple directions by many distractions.
2. Build in time for self-reflection. Instead of back-to-back appointments, set time for reflection and some “white space” after interactions. Build in, for example, just five to ten minutes after calls or meetings.
3. Practice affirming rituals. Identifying two or three things that will make today a success. This keeps the big picture alive and helps you steer away from the “small stuff” that don’t matter.
4. Challenge yourself. Set a goal of doing something that is exciting, motivating, and stretches you on something that you are aware becomes an interference in living consciously. For e.g.: practicing patience, fearlessness and so on

It takes awareness, it takes work and it takes determination—attuning your attention is a choice that will prepare you to seize the moment when opportunity presents itself!

Yours Energetically

Ms. Bhuvaneshwari Ravi is trainer, facilitator and coach of the Positive Energy (PE) program. She is a spiritual seeker with a vision of transforming her own energy state from surviving to being. In this journey she has gathered deep insights and is continuously working towards creating a pathway for more seekers. With years of exposure to spiritual practices like yoga, reiki, and personal development interventions like coaching, she is working in the Organization Development and Leadership Development space.

She can be contacted at bhuvaneshwari@teamthink.co.in for arranging Positive Energy training and Coaching sessions.

Exploring genuine needs



Often times, the urge to give or contribute is so strong that we tend to zero in on options that we know best. And with the habit of 'giving' during special occasions or events being seen as a noble way of remembering dear ones, it has become convenient to choose from what is usually 'contributed'. "Beyond these well-known options, there is a wide range of needs unknown, unmet and more critical in the lives of various communities. I am trying to walk that extra mile to identify such needs," says Dr Rafia Anjum, Founder of Azvasana Foundation in Bangalore.

Rafia is a dentist by qualification and has worked in different institutions like the Fortis Hospitals and Narayana Hrudalaya. Her post-graduation in Hospital and Health Management exposed her to the 'corporate side of hospitals'. With experience in marketing and management of dental chains across Bangalore, Rafia's life was as simple and career oriented as any young woman, until she took a small break to spend time with her children. "Life easily brings about a huge change in us. We hardly notice the beginnings of such changes. I was clueless too, when my friend invited me to help her in conducting a training programme on soft skills," says Rafia.

This sudden opportunity turned out to be a training programme on soft skills for Bangalore City Police. Rafia successfully completed it and went on to do four more such workshops. "I began to see the civil society that consistently endeavoured to improve the lives of poor and vulnerable. Some dealt with the

needy directly while some others worked with the system to improve the quality of service delivery. Some worked to create dialogues between the two and some more tried to change the status quo radically to establish equity in the society," explains Rafia.

Soon an opportunity with Janagraha (an NGO in Bangalore that works to improve the quality of urban life) helped Rafia comprehend the notion of 'empowerment'. As the Senior Facilitator at Janagraha, she got to manage the Bala Janagraha programme, which was a civic awareness programme for school children. "We worked in government, private and international schools to empower children to use their rights and entitlements. In doing so we believed that we were laying the foundation for active citizenry", she says. Under this programme, children learnt to resolve fundamental issues like water crisis, electricity outages by approaching appropriate authorities. They also learnt about local governance structures. The programme offered a hands-on learning experience for children and Rafia was baffled to see that children from some of Bangalore's Municipal schools had a different gamut of needs.

Rafia realised that civic awareness was delivered in a place where children

were meandering with other serious concerns like a broken or dysfunctional family. Soon, she figured out that working in an organisation restricted her say in prioritising 'actual' needs of the target communities. With neither background nor guidance in development sector, she wondered how to organise her contribution to the society. She says: "I interacted with many friends and began to sense the active citizen in myself. I was advised that to do things in my way, I must do it myself. So, it was time to get my hands dirty."

Rafia learnt about CSIM from a friend and pursued the Inspire programme in Bengaluru in December 2017. According to her, this was more than a foundation course as it used a hand-held approach to everything. During the course, she was able to map the genesis of social issues and more importantly, the emergence of different needs in similar communities. With growing clarity, she became determined to start her own organisation. Thus, she began in-depth analysis of different issues confronting our society. She was astonished to realise that any social issue, be it child sexual abuse or lack of livelihood opportunities or domestic violence, ultimately came down to 'education'. With this, she was clear that Azvasana

Foundation would work with children and education would be the primary domain in all her initiatives. But within education, she was dabbling with multiple concerns.

Given her experience, Rafia did not want to repeat what was already being done. She also did not want to resort to what was being understood as commonly needed by schools or students. As she was introspecting, she also realised that she must work with school administrations for a long term change or impact in anything her foundation chose to do. "I prefer to take it slow. I don't want my foundation to be another regular organisation falling into the trap of giving what it has to offer. I want to understand genuine needs of students in different schools. I cannot be driven by a one size fits all approach," says a cautious Rafia. Evidently, she is growing aware of the caveats in this domain.

Reiterating her emphasis on understanding needs, Rafia recalls her interaction with a school principal who categorically stated that government can manage the needs of teachers and that there was need for interventions that could impact learning levels and lives of children from low income households. She was inspired and touched by the perspectives and vision of many such proactive Principals. "I am still learning and trying to understand further. I have undergone a transition from 'what I can do' to 'what I can do to help them realise their needs'. With all this homework, am sure I will be sustainable when I start," she asserts.

—Shanmuga Priya.T



Leader & Leadership Matters...

4. Detailing: The pearls of quality from the depths of the sea

“The difference between something good and something great is attention to detail.” Charles R. Swindoll



“Detailing for me is the deepest connect to the context. It is the question of trying to see beyond what is seen; thinking through all the pros and cons along with all possibilities before arriving at the decision

The capacity to be able to take a vision and work it down to every last detail is a quality every leader is expected to have. However, not everyone works on this quality. It takes the ability to be able to stay in the present and think on your feet, as you assess what is directly visible and prepare for what isn't. The details lie between what is said and unsaid. This calls for a commitment to stay engaged and involved, every step of the way. A decision formed with high clarity will reflect high quality. But, the question is, does Detailing as an attribute come naturally to a person or can it be learnt and practiced as a leadership quality? The experience of speaking to Mr. Subbu Subramaniam showcases the possibility of learning and practicing the beautiful art of going into details, looking at all perspectives, diving into the deep to bring out the pearls of quality in every task, be it work or home or community.

A soft but firm spoken, adorable and easily approachable despite the high stature in the Business world that he has attained, Mr. Subbu Subramaniam is an avid conversationalist. He is a Finance Professional with Board Level experience across various operating functions like Management Accounting, Accounting, Fund Raising, Mergers & acquisitions. His specialties include Cross Border Acquisitions, Cost Control and Cost Management. He has AICWA, FCA, FCS and PG (finance) from IIMA to his credit. He is a Board Member of several organizations, an entrepreneur managing large funds and has held significant top positions in his over 3 decade career. He has been known for his out of box, quality decisions with high sense of engagement and depth (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/subbu610802/>)

Can you tell us what the attribute ‘Detailing’ means to you? Can it be cultivated?

“Detailing for me is the deepest connect to the context. It is the question of trying to see beyond what is seen; thinking through all the pros and cons along with all possibilities before arriving at the decision”, says Subbu. He goes to explain that detailing is taking all elements of the context into consideration. Most leaders may easily take what is apparently present. But, detailing comes in when we begin to look at what is not apparently present, also the unsaid and hidden while make meaningful connections between all the data collected.

Subbu opines that the art of detailing can be cultivated and has to be cultivated for quality decisions. There is a myth that when a person goes into details, he is questioning the nitty gritty and it is a waste of time and energy. When we make critical decisions, it is those minute details that have come as the most significant data which aided a quality

decision. He adds, “I have had interesting experiences with simple entrepreneurs who taught me the value of going into details”.

Oh, we would love to know about those experiences and understand this attribute better. Can you please share one or two experiences?

Subbu has had innumerable experiences in making decisions relating to finance and investments. He quickly recollects, “When we talk of finance, the metric changes when we talk to different people depending on the context. I learnt this from an entrepreneur who ran a dairy business. While explaining to me he was quoting cost in terms of half a paisa included. Initially, I wondered why he is so precise. Then, I realized when we went into overall calculations that at a single liter, half a paisa may seem hardly significant. But at a volume of over 50 lakh liters even half a paisa would make a difference in crores. I was stunned when I saw the extent to which the entrepreneur had clarity on every detail of the paisa that his business generated”. He adds, that this dimension of going into the details is missed by many. In finance understanding the metric, managing it and monitoring it becomes the most important component which will determine the success that can be envisioned. Detailing will teach at what level should each of the component of the task be monitored and internalized.

The second example, he pulls out of his memory and narrates, “When HR people speak about rate of attrition, it is important to find out if the percentage quoted is per month or per annum. If they quote 8%, it significance is totally changes depending on if it is per month or per annum. That again has a significant bearing on the knowledge management of the organization depending on the change cycle the organization experiences in three years”.

Therefore, while people who are working on the project or pitching for investment may think some data as not relevant or may see me as too inquisitive on every aspect, it becomes most essential if we have to capture the context rightly and make quality decision. He chuckles and adds, “Kalpana, I am many a time not liked by the presenters for the questions I ask. Sometimes, they themselves would have not seen some data that emerges. But for me this action of going into details is very important before arriving at any conclusion”.

Interesting; Subbu, tell me when and how did you learn to go into the depths and see the unseen or hear the unsaid?

“I have from my school days been very good with numbers. I was the best student in math throughout. At a very young age, I was given the opportunity to take over BFL. I was hardly 37 and a Vice Chairman of the

company. I had to locate all problems and resolve it. I was thrown in the deep-end of the pool. I was doing problem solving every day. I had to understand every nuance of information given to me from various stake holders and make my own understanding. I learnt the most in this phase. My ability to connect and correlate information and what I saw as reality had to be sharp to find the right solution”.

Subbu tells us, not to look at the obvious; but to look beyond. If it is about employee relations and engagement, visit the employee washroom and restroom. The cleanliness and



attention to hygiene will give a lot about the organization culture. The details of measurement gives information on the financial acumen and management. By listening carefully a leader can deduce the extent of clarity, confusion, consistency and game played within the organization. The surrogate reasons have to be explored to understand the ways in which the management thinks and acts. Subbu emphatically says, “The main belief of the leader has to be that things don't happen just like that. There are always powerful reasons and without locating the causes, we cannot resolve them in totality. When people blame something outside, get into the details and pin the problem. Most of the times surrogate cannot be measured quantitatively. It is important to then get into details and locate the factors within the organization. It is important to listen carefully when people speak and validate their conclusions. If we are available and engaged deeply, we will catch the things not spoken within the sentences that are spoken”.

Listening and seeing! Very important words, Subbu. Tell me how to listen and see beyond in order to dig deeper?

Subbu has a very captivating smile! He now grins and responds, “Kalpana, over the years of experience I have come to realise people don't actually answer to what has been asked. There are a number of things that influence their response. Look at the Ego; where do they come from? Look at the non-commitment in their responses; listen to the non-accountable flippant statements; look if they are in future fears or justifying from past;

correlate it with the data you have personally collected from the present; Then, you know WHERE TO LOOK!!! For all this, you must be TOTALLY PRESENT IN THE CONTEXT AND BE AWARE OF WHAT YOU ARE PICKING UP”.



The important points to keep in mind while going into details recommended by Subbu are –

1. Appreciate the need for going into details.
2. Identifying the gap and its extent should be clear
3. Awareness of the implications of not going into details and skimming the surface for data
4. Clarity on how far from the goal are we and the critical points where data has to be collected is foremost

What happens when the Leader goes into details but the team is not geared up for it?

When people working in the organization do not appreciate the need

for detailing, but the Leader insists on detailing, the team usually

- Will get annoyed when questioned
- Go into defensive mode
- Will cook data to match their statements
- Get frequently caught with false or incorrect data
- Play the blame game passing the buck to others
- Have difficulty correlating and connecting different points

Subbu says, “I have had these situations in many places when the other person or top management are not wanting to dig deeper and are not appreciating the need for it, I have had to use authority with such teams. When we cannot educate or cultivate and the time is limited then it becomes a challenge. I have had to put my weight from role or position or expertise and cull out the data from them. They will at the end appreciate when they see the accurate decisions or out of box solutions”.

Subbu, for you to have integrated the art of detailing into your life, is there any childhood experience that taught you to go into details and look beyond?

Sampath, his childhood friend intervened to add, “Oh! There is one that I know. Subbu, just before the board exams got hold of notes that are most useful to write the exam. He requested his Dad to make a photocopy of the same so he can return the original to the teacher. His Dad

got him 32 sets of photocopy. Subbu was wondering why so many sets when he had just asked for one copy. His Dad told him, I would rather you come first among equals than you alone having the privilege of the material. His Dad saw beyond what was to be seen in the context. This also built in Subbu, a deep ethical sense into all his decision, while teaching him to see the context with a holistic perspective”.

Subbu in all modesty adds, “Kalpana, there have been experiences of failure to



go into details too. When we invested in a windmill manufacturing company, we focused more on the big picture and missed the details which costed us a lot”.

Subbu, lastly what would be your word



for caution for leaders who cultivate detailing?

Subbu opines, Detailing is essential for all professions and for life itself. While analysis is the width and detailing is the depth, everything has to be done at the required level. Analysis should not lead to paralysis. There is a purpose that has to be achieved at the end of the exercise. The important determinant factor to be kept in mind is the amount of TIME spent for analysis and detailing. Planning and organized action and detailing have to go hand in hand if decision should be of great value along with great quality.

The natural progression therefore is to understand PLANNING AND ORGANIZING as the next attribute for a Leader.

—Dr. Kalpana Sampath

Seeing



There was an old blind woman who lived with her daughter in a little fishing village on the sea shore. The daughter dived for pearls, which she sold to the local agent and from the proceeds, they lived their lives. Before selling each day's collection however, the daughter kept aside in a little bag some of the choicest pearls as a hedge against difficult times.

One day, during a dive, the daughter was attacked by a shark and killed. The mother was desolate as not only had she lost her only child and companion but also her only means of support. In the midst of her grieving and loss she remembered the little bag of pearls that her daughter had kept aside and decided to see the agent and sell them for her own livelihood.

The agent examined the pearls and paid her the exact market value for them and advised her about investing the money so that she would have a regular income for the rest of her life.

When the old woman had gone, the agent's assistant who had observed the whole deal asked, “Those were black pearls and you paid their full value! Why did you do that? After all, the woman was blind and could not see the colour of the pearls?”

The agent replied, “But I am not blind and I can see.”

Explicit Learning

- A. Many of us look at life; very few of us see life.
- B. It calls for personal conviction to look beyond what we see.
- C. We need to look beyond what is visible to the eye.

Introspective Learning

- A. What prevents me from seeing everything?
- B. What is the nature of 'Seeing'?
- C. How do I learn to see beyond what is visible?

ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENTS... WITH A LITTLE HELP

In the last 23 years, FFE has helped over 18,500 scholars across India, with over 52,000 scholarships worth Rs 115 crores being awarded so far.



In a country of nearly 1.7 billion people, brilliant minds are never hard to come by. The problem usually arises when academically inclined individuals don't have the means to further their academic skill and stay in an institution. Oftentimes, the lack of financial support is the main cause for this factor. And that is precisely where organizations like FFE have come to the rescue of such students with their scholarship programme.

A publicly supported, not-for-profit organization, The Foundation for Excellence is focused on funding higher education for academically gifted students, with low-income backgrounds. In other words, it funds for students who can't fend for themselves, financially, when it comes to academic advancement.

The organization was established by Dr Prabhu and Poonam Goel as part of the Indians of Collective Action established in Santa Clara in 1994. "FFE has established an organization in India called the Foundation For Excellence India Trust (FFEIT), which is recognized as a charitable trust under section 12A(a) of the Indian Income-tax Act, 1961," says Ms. Sudha Kidao, Managing Trustee, FFE. "FFEIT is a member of Credibility Alliance, Mumbai.

Credibility Alliance is an initiative of voluntary organizations in India that seeks to enhance accountability, transparency and good governance within the voluntary sector. A Board of Trustees under the overall guidance of the FFE India Advisory Board manages the Trust." The Trust's registered and administrative office is located in Bangalore, Karnataka.

While FFE's mission in India is to transform the lives of academically accomplished students who have no proper financial means, it has managed to successfully accomplish this through its primary methodology of awarding merit-cum-means scholarships. Since its inception in 1994, the NGO has already helped over 17,400 scholars across India, awarding more than 47,000 scholarships totaling to a whopping 98 crore rupees. The organization selects top performing students based on national and state entrance examinations. "These students usually come from constrained backgrounds and are sure to be benefited by the programme," says Sudha Kidao. "Once the financial need is verified by FFE's facilitator, the scholarship is awarded."

The prime focus areas are Engineering, Technology and Medicine. The scholarships provide financial and other means of assistance to qualified students pursuing degrees in these fields. "The assistance provided is irrespective of the caste, community, gender or religion of the applicant," says Sudha Kidao. "The only criteria is academic performance and family income (or the lack of it)."

There are a set of qualification criteria that the organization goes by. The first of this is that only professional courses (BE/BTech) or integrated five-

year dual-degree MTech or MBBS courses are eligible for scholarships. Then of course, only first-year applicants in the academic year 2017-18 are eligible to avail of these scholarships. "The applicants should have passed their Higher Secondary/Pre-University/Intermediate/CBSE/ISC or equivalent board qualifying examination not earlier than 2016," Sudha Kidao adds. "The applicants should have scored not less than 70% marks in the qualifying examination." Another key factor is the applicants' admissions to professional degree courses or institutions should be on the basis of the open/general merit rank awarded at the state or national level entrance examinations or through a counseling process conducted at the state level (as in the case of Tamil Nadu). "Diploma students admitted to BE, B Tech courses on a lateral basis, B Arch, BDS & B Pharma students are not eligible," says Sudha Kidao.

FFE's scholarships are applicable to families whose gross income does not exceed Rs 1.8 lakh per year. "In addition to family income, the education and occupation of parents and family members including elder siblings and living conditions are also taken into consideration," says Sudha Kidao. "The approximate total expenses being incurred by the family on the applicant's education will be taken into consideration for determining the financial eligibility of an applicant." A crucial factor in determining eligibility has to do with applicants who are first-time graduates in a family who receive preferential treatment over applicants who are the second or third children to graduate from the same family.

In the last 23 years, FFE has helped over 18,500 scholars across India, with over 52,000 scholarships

worth Rs 115 crores being awarded so far. "Our scholars come from families of agriculturists, weavers, coolies and lorry drivers," says Sudha Kidao. "In the past, children belonging to this economic and socio-economic strata had to quit school and start working to support their families. However, our scholars have been blessed with parents who understand the importance of education and who encourage their children to dream big." FFE's scholars, he adds, are known to be hard-working and determined to succeed. As a result, scholarship based on the eligibility of merit alone is not hard to come by.

A crucial factor in FFE's scholarship programme is its alumni. As Sudha Kidao says, "They (alumni) are the pillars of our strength." He adds: "The support we receive from our alumni plays a key role in expanding our network and touching more young lives." While this propels the trust towards self-sustainability, the alumni network also extends support by referring FFE to individual CSR programmes. "Our alumni also go so far as to pledge support to at least two scholars whenever and wherever this is possible, ensuring that what we call the 'Circle of Giving' continues, unabated," says Sudha Kidao. "This also ensures longevity of the programme and its mission."

So, with more students opting for professional courses and a thorough vetting process that aims to provide scholarships for those with an academic proclivity, molding young minds just received a major shot in the arm. And therein lies the key to academic growth, especially among the financially marginalized.

A FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO REPORTING ON SOCIAL IMPACT

For many organisations seeking to report on their social purpose there is now a bewildering array of options to choose from – making it difficult to see the wood for the trees.



In the last 10 years or so, numerous organisations have been set up to provide toolkits and offer support and advice on producing social impact reports. The Social Value Act (SVA) 2012 was like an injection of steroids into the sector and we now probably have more organisations offering consultancy and information than we can usefully make sense of.

For many organisations seeking to report on their social purpose there is now a bewildering array of options to choose from – making it difficult to see the wood for the trees. The SVA and recent procurement policy guidance requires organisations to demonstrate their social value as well as reporting on their financial capability.

What many people probably don't realize is that the antecedents for reporting on social value and social impact stretch back to the 1970s when the term 'social audit' was first used. Social Audit Limited was a company formed at that time to consider using 'social audit' to outline the effects of large factory closure on local communities.

'Social auditing' was then further developed by Freer Spreckley and his pioneering work with Beechwood College in Yorkshire in the 1980s, producing the first social audit toolkit. In the late 1980s the Community Business Movement in Scotland extended this work to community enterprises – John Pearce and Alan Kay amongst the prime movers in this work – leading to the establishment of the Social Audit Network (SAN).

The 1980s was Thatcher's decade, and

the idea of demonstrating social value was counter to the strict Conservative Party policy of financialising pretty much everything. A great deal of experimental work was carried out in Scotland between 1980 and 2003 when the Social Audit Network was officially launched; seeking to demonstrate that it isn't just money that matters.

I recently attended the Social Value UK (SVUK) Members Exchange meeting in Birmingham (November 2016), where there were representatives from practitioner and social impact reporting services organisations.

I participated in a round table discussion of about 12 people at the meeting exploring how the information produced for the quality assurance and management of organisations could be integrated into social impact reports.

We know that some community and social enterprises already provide data to meet the requirements of quality assurance/management bodies such as PQASSO, European Foundation for

Quality Management (EFQM), Investors in People & the Matrix Standard. A number of them use the SAN Social Accounting and Audit (SAA) framework and included this data into their social accounts.

We also know that some organisations using the SAN framework include Social Return on Investment (SROI) type analysis on some part of their activities – most notably Birmingham Council of Voluntary Organisations (BCVO), All Saints Action Network (ASAN) in Wolverhampton and Five Lamps in the North East and Yorkshire.

There were probably as many consultants as practitioners at the Members Exchange meeting, and that left me wondering whether practitioners – particularly those that SAN has traditionally represented, voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises – are sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of information available to report on social impact and confused about which

approach would best suit their needs.

In terms of finding a suitable approach to reporting on social value and impact, it seems to me that there are a few fundamental questions to ask;

What is the purpose of producing a social impact report?

Who is going to see it and what use can they make of it?

Does it need to be complex or could it be done relatively simply?

What detail is needed to satisfy the stakeholders?

Organisations that use SAN's social accounting and audit framework like the flexibility to include an array of different tools in their reporting. They can draw on existing quality assurance/management information AND include a SROI element to dig deeper into financial returns if they choose to.

The point is that the SAN SAA framework offers the flexibility to use different tools and data in the reporting of both performance and impact.

Additionally, SAN uniquely has a network of accredited social auditors who can be contracted to audit the social accounts. At a time when demonstrating social value is becoming an increasingly necessary requirement, the independent auditing of the accounts is a vital component of verifying the authenticity and validity of the information, provided in much the same way as financial auditors do with financial accounts.

—Sean Smith

SAN Director and
West Midlands Regional Coordinator
www.socialauditnetwork.org.uk

Organisations that use SAN's social accounting and audit framework like the flexibility to include an array of different tools in their reporting.

Beyond Gender



*People Living
with HIV/
AIDS face
stigma, and
this is severe
when they are
transgenders*

Noori Saleem, a 68-year-old transwoman, is an inspiration for transgenders, especially those living with HIV/Aids. She was the third person to be officially declared HIV-positive by the Indian government in 1987. She was born as the second male child in the family, followed by a younger sister.

Despite the progress made in recent years, India still has a long way to go in acknowledging the rights of transgenders. If such is the scenario today, it definitely wouldn't have been easy for Noori about 30 years ago.

"I was born in Ramanathapuram district, and the pressure from my community when they learnt that I was a transgender was dreadful. They said that they would have killed me if I had born in their family. My neighbours blamed me for things that I didn't do and my parents tortured me due to societal pressure. I had to discontinue my studies and was insulted in my school because of my mannerisms and way of expression. I was therefore forced to leave my home when I was 13 years old," she says.

Noori came to Chennai as she had nowhere to go. In a city full of strangers,

and with all the things she had gone through, she was clueless on what to do next. "I met a transgender person in the Chennai railway station who advised me to be a bar dancer or a sex worker. I requested for domestic work instead and worked in a house for over three years," she says.

When Noori heard about her father being very ill, she rushed back home. Sadly, he passed away a few days later. Her mother coaxed her to marry a girl and fixed her wedding too. She left her house yet again and this time went to Mumbai to live in a commune and earned money for three years.

"I returned to Chennai, underwent castration, and married my close friend. As time passed, people looked at us with disgust and hatred. I survived all of this because of my husband who was there to support me. I was forced to become a sex worker due to lack of employment opportunities. In July 1987, I was diagnosed for HIV/AIDS. I visited the hospital for treatment and when I mentioned my gender in the registration form 'female', the hospital authorities demanded me to write as 'male'. Although I refused, I was asked to stand

in the queue for men. This again was a problem as men did not allow me to wait in their queue. We are always fighting for our recognition! I finally managed to get the treatment. I did not inform my husband as he was working in Sri Lanka as a guard and died in a helicopter crash in 1993," she adds.

People Living with HIV/AIDS face stigma, and this is severe when they are transgenders. It is difficult for them to get first line ARV treatment as it is not provided free of cost by the government.

"I am now undergoing second line ARV Treatment. I hope that transgenders are provided free treatment and they are also recognized equally as men or women. Even animals have rights and are covered under insurance. Are we worse than that? We are not recognized by our own families or societies or government. We do not need charity but recognition as equal to men and women as we too need a lead a life with dignity," she says.

Noori started working as a social activist and launched a 'South Indian Positive Network'. Her aim is to serve all people who are affected by HIV/AIDS. The organization offers

support to HIV positive people, besides funeral services.

In 2005, she started South Indian Positive Network Memorial Home in memory of her three close friends who died due to HIV/AIDS. This home is running successfully and has 40 children now. "I have a lot of friend at UNAIDS who offer free treatment to those affected by HIV/AIDS. I owe my thanks to them for making me who I am today, and fighting for those who are affected by HIV/AIDS," she says.

Noori has received a number of awards from the Tamil Nadu government, including the Life Time Achievement award. She has also been recognised as the best woman social worker by Raj TV. Noori has travelled to over 26 countries like Canada, Japan, Australia, and Thailand as a public speaker on AIDS-related issues.

Noori Saleem is the newly elected APACHA International Board member. "I am very happy to be the Executive Member of such a large alliance. I hope I will be able to contribute for the growth of the alliance and together make a difference in India and Asia," she says.

—Marie Banu

How to throw a party for a good cause

Let Catherine help you celebrate special occasions with a purpose.

It's your birthday, and besides celebrating with family and friends, you want to share the day with others who may not have the chance to celebrate their own. MyBirthday Foundation wants to help you do just that.

Based in Manila, Philippines, Catherine Vital founded MyBirthday Foundation for those who wish to throw a party in support of a cause or individuals in need.

She works with charities and institutions to plan these celebrations. Those who sponsor the parties can participate in the event, and invite friends and family members along too.

Catherine aims to encourage volunteerism, generosity and selflessness by spreading "one's blessings to others".

Through the organisation, you can celebrate your birthday with different segments of society, including children, prisoners, and the elderly. You can also choose a specific cause to champion, such as protecting the environment by planting trees or cleaning up the beach.

But Catherine does not want to limit the occasion to just birthdays -- think anniversaries, or any other special event in your life.

And if you do not live in the Philippines, but would still like to contribute, MyBirthday Foundation makes it easy for you to do so.

Take Leedel, a Filipino working in Doha, Qatar who simply donated some money to MyBirthday Foundation. She



requested that a party be organised on her behalf for the children at the Philippine Children's Medical Center.

The single mother explains why she chose to give to children, who are ill, "I know the feeling of having a child, and how important the child is to you, and how much you want to care for her, and make her happy."

When she saw the kids in the video, she cried, "Despite the pain they are experiencing, they still managed to smile."

Catherine emphasises that it is not what or how much you give, but the thought that counts. She says one student was apologetic about only having enough to buy sandwiches, but she explained that it still means a lot to someone unable to afford three meals a day.

MyBirthday Foundation helps you to celebrate special occasions with purpose.

And what could be a better present than bringing a smile to others, as your loved ones have done for you.

You can celebrate your birthday with MyBirthday Foundation, or volunteer as a party facilitator, or a host for the beneficiaries.

—A story by Our Better World – the digital storytelling initiative of the Singapore International Foundation
(www.ourbetterworld.org).



Centre for Social Initiative and Management

Centre for Social Initiative and Management (CSIM) is a unit of Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani. It is a learning centre that promotes the concept of social entrepreneurship.

CSIM offers **training and consultancy to social enterprises** – for-profits and non-profits – to facilitate them to apply successful business

practices and yet retain their social mission. It also offers training and hand holding support to prospective social entrepreneurs and enable them to launch their social initiatives.

For more information, please visit our website www.csim.in

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CSIM also facilitates **Social Accounting and Audit** for social enterprises, CSR projects, and NGOs through Social Audit Network, India (SAN India).

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Social Impact Measurement - Workshop



The idea of triple bottom line and social accountability has gained credence all over the world. Business enterprises need to take social needs into account and being socially conscious is increasingly becoming their *raison d'être*. Businesses need a moral compass in addition to its practical reliance on measures of profit and loss. The bottom line is that a good business delivers excellent products and services, but a great business does all that and also strives to make the world a better place.

Understanding the Social Impact created by CSR projects helps the organisation to evolve and strategize policies and practices that promotes social capital and harmonious relations between business and other segments of society. Respecting stakeholders beyond shareholders, contributing to the economic, social and environmental development of the communities in which it operates, conscientious stewardship, respecting human dignity, etc. are a few principles businesses need to adapt.

By adopting these policies, businesses can experience a wide range of bottom-line benefits including: increased sales and market share; strengthened brand positioning; enhanced corporate image and clout; increased ability to attract, motivate and retain employees; decreased operating costs; and increased appeal to investors and financial analysts.

Social accounting and audit allows a socially responsible business to build on its existing monitoring, documentation and reporting systems to develop a process whereby it can account fully for its social, environmental and economic impacts, report on its performance and draw up an action plan to improve on that performance. Through using the social accounting and audit process an organisation can understand its impact on those that benefit and build in accountability by engaging with its key stakeholders.

Social Audit Network (SAN) India conducted a two-day workshop on Social Impact Measurement in Chennai on 27th and 28th of April, 2018.

Participants were oriented on the benefits of measuring social impact and sessions on logical Theory of Change, techniques used in data analytics, communicating impact stories, stakeholder consultation tools, and social return on investment were covered.

Dr. Archana Pillai, Social Auditor and resident mentor of IIM, Bengaluru; Mrs. Latha Suresh, Director of SAN, India and Social Auditor; and Ms. Marie Banu, Social Auditor handled the sessions.

If you wish to organize a similar workshop for your organization, please write to info@san-india.org or call Mr. Vimal at 9841416840 or 044-42805365.

Social Audit Network, India is the Indian Chapter of SAN, UK. Launched in 2010, SAN-India, a project of the MSDS Trust, Chennai, shares its brand and affiliation to its parent organization, Social Audit Network, UK which is the technical and a knowledge partner for SAN, India. To know more about SAN India, please visit www.san-india.org



“MY MESSAGES ARE THROUGH MY ART.”

Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh shares with Marie Banu how dance could be used to bring about social change



Dr. Sonal Mansingh is India's iconic personality, Cultural educationist of International repute & Living Legend. She is the recipient of highest civilian awards the Padma Vibhushan (2003) and the Padma Bhushan (1992) from President of India among many coveted national & international awards & honours. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi nominated her as a NAVRATNA for Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission).

She is proficient in several languages and their literature. She is unique among performing artists of India because of her training and deep knowledge of several Indian dance styles as well as the three prevalent classical music traditions of India, which are Hindustani, Oriya and Carnatic. Her unique contribution has been her lifelong work using her knowledge to address socio-cultural issues through chosen mediums of solo and group choreographies as also Naatya-Katha.

As the Founder-President of Centre for Indian Classical Dances, established in 1977 at Delhi, she has trained several thousand talented artists who are carrying the message of Indian culture all over the world.

Her book 'Incredible India - Classical Dances' in English published by Wisdom Tree and books on her 'Devpriya' in Hindi written by Yatindra Mishra & 'SONAL MANSINGH - A Life Like No Other' by Sujata Prasad have gained

wide readership. She had also contributed number of articles on dance and Indian culture in prestigious magazines and newspapers.

Her tele-films DEVI DURGA and KRISHNA CHARIT commissioned by Doordarshan in 1993 and 1994 saw hundreds of re-runs. Prakash Jha made documentary on her SONAL which won National Award.

Currently she is serving a second term as Trustee of Indira Gandhi Centre for the Arts (IGNCA). She is now the Kalapeethadheesh of Kalayoga Peetham at S-VYASA University, Bangalore. She has served as Chairperson of Central Sangeet Natak Akademi and on several important official and cultural bodies.

In an exclusive interview, Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh shares with Marie Banu how dance could be used to bring about social change

What efforts should be made in order to make dance viewed as something beyond entertainment?

In the past two decades, especially ever since hundreds of television channels started, I have been asking, "what is the role of media?"

The largest viewing is that of television. It even overtakes social media. Television channels are backed by corporate houses, who own 24-hours News and Entertainment channels. Where do they position

Indian arts? I could name only one— DD Bharati. I do not know any other channel to be sensitive to arts. Do they have CSR or not?

I would include the press in this list as well. Earlier they used to have plenty of space for book reviews, films, dance, theatre, music, and poetry. I don't see that now. The English print media like The Hindu, The Pioneer, Asian Age as also vernacular Press in Hindi and regional languages do try to have at least a weekly page or column. But, the English language magazines like India Today, Outlook, The Week, etc hardly ever give space for art news.

So, dance as entertainment is a 'yes', but what you are asking is something different. How can it happen if you serve maggi noodles or burgers or ice cream every day and suddenly ask: "Why am I eating fast food and not nourishing food like roti, dal, chawal or salad?" Mental obesity is increasing day by day and people are just consuming whatever they see. They get habituated because they do not have good options.

I should also say that unfortunately artists don't protest about this. Apart from me and a couple of others, who else is speaking out?

Theatre lobby and film lobby are very strong, because they are group art forms whereas classical dance and classical music have their solo performance with their music groups. In recent years, choreography and group dance forms have come into fashion. Everybody is busy trying to get an inch in this crowded space. So who has time or inclination to speak out?

How can we use dance as a medium to bring about social change?

The social messages are inherent in most of our historical legend and stories. I will not include mythology in this because myths i.e. fairy-tales are not what we have in India. Whereas pauranic is purana, purathan—which is something that happened long ago, yet is contained in the collective memory and is what we should know.

If art forms are encouraged to portray such legends and stories, especially those that talk about social issues, the younger generation would become aware that these issues are not happening only now but had occurred earlier too. They will learn about the problems and how they have been addressed.

The society is divided today based on caste and class. As a social activist, how do you think we can overcome this?

Caste and class have existed in every society or rather in every civilization. But, they keep changing. During the Middle Ages in Europe, they had serfs who tilled the land and did all the menial jobs for the Landlords, Dukes and Counts. Women had no power. Several social issues and hierarchy existed. Slowly, they were broken after World War I and II. Europe went through a lot of seminal changes. Today newer issues with the immigrants are creating social problems.

In America too, there are racial

problems. They do not want Mexicans, Vietnamese, Indians, etc. The aborigines in Australia and Maoris in New Zealand are finished. Every country has their own sets of issues and problems.

So, the point is what you call them: as issue with immigrants or social hierarchy or caste or creed. The way in which we understand these issues in India and the way in which they are seen across the world are different.

Human nature does not allow for a plateau. It is always shifting from one point to another. Our social psychology is built that way. India was a feudal country till 70 years ago ruled by several different people. Our society has undergone many changes and is still undergoing. It is never static. Today, it is a different situation than what was yesterday and therefore difficult to comment on India as one social entity.

Even in the North East, Meghalaya is different from Tripura and Tripura is different from Arunachal; Assam has a different social construction. I feel that these kinds of generalisations are never correct. In fact, they give us an incorrect biased view. Social, psychological, political, and economic situations keep shifting.

Your thoughts on Swachh Bharat?

When Shri. Piyush Goyal asked if my name could be included in Swachh Bharat Mission's Navaratna list as our Hon'ble Prime Minister was announcing the names, I happily agreed. My work is through my art and my messages are carried through dance, music, katha, interactions, interviews and workshops.

I can give you examples of how symbolically river pollution is addressed. For instance, you would have heard about Samudra Manthan - churning of the Milky Ocean. For once, the Gods and anti-Gods came together to get Amrita. It was a selfish motive! See, this is what happens to all of us who want something and for getting something we have to undergo many trials, tribulations, problems and obstacles. What happened was that before Amrita came Haalaa-Hala (poison) and nobody could handle it. They had to plead to Mahadev - who is also known as Shambu, one who can solve and resolve everything. He comes and he drinks the poison. The poison is all the negativities, the Cosmic Negativities. You can call them societal or personal negativities. But, He contains it in his throat as Parvati holds his neck so that poison does not go down. That is the role of a woman! Negativities have to be contained as they have to be treated as poison in which Woman's role of Balancing the Energies is crucial!

Keeping in mind dire need of Swachhthta in today's world for the betterment of our nation & society I insist on three things:

- Swachh Vichar: Pure Thought
- Swachh Vaani: Good Speech
- Swachh Vyahavaar: Correct Behaviour

This should be applicable at all levels in the society. It is a tall order but is necessary to keep talking about.