MAYA

Annual Report
Operating year 2010-11

This Annual Report is for the period April 2010-March 2011. The report provides an overview of the key initiatives undertaken by MAYA. The report also provides details on each of the activities undertaken by MAYA during the course of the year along with key supporting metrics that are used to monitor and measure performance.

Movement for alternative and Youth Awareness (MAYA)

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MAYA (Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness) is a Karnataka-based non-governmental organization (NGO) for the last 22 years, working to create an empowered and equitable society that systemically addresses livelihood and education. All the programs are built upon MAYA's core values of collective approaches to systemic problems, as well as processes of continual learning and reflection. MAYA's interventions are at the level of policy, social and political structures. They are strongly rooted for the personal and collective empowerment of the poor. MAYA currently has two broad areas of focus:

- The right of every child to quality education
- Labour and livelihood

The MAYA group is organized into five main projects called MAYA-Prajayatna, MAYA Organic and MAYA LabourNet.

In education, **MAYA-Prajayatna** reaches out to 50,000 schools across 20 districts of Karnataka and several districts of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. We also ran a large program that reaches out to more than 400 community-run early childhood care and education centres thus impacting the lives of about 45000 children in the 0-6 years age group. This program has now been completely mainstreamed by the government and now MAYA plays a monitoring and support role to see that the centres are effectively run.

MAYA Organic is a Programme of MAYA that focus on Training of women in the lacware sector and closely works with MAYA Organic Support Services (MOSS) a Section 25 (C) company that supports more than 20 informal sector enterprises employing more than 500 informal sector workers in the Channapatna belt of Karnataka. MOSS helps artisans with design elements and marketing support.

MAYA-LabourNet
MAYA seeks to provide easy and institutionalized access to jobs, and enhance incomes of over one million workers across seven cities in India in the next 10 years. MAYA is a social enterprise that creates sustainable benefits for workers in the informal sector by offering them a platform to access services. MAYA focuses on improving workers lives through seven strategies:

- Enabling workers build an identity
- Improving productivity through a process of continuous assessment and skill training
- Facilitating work linkages through UdyogaJeevanMelas
- Providing workers with information to live in the city
- Facilitating access to accident insurance as a first step to social security
- Linking workers to state sponsored social protection schemes (i.e. Construction workers welfare Board, Unorganised sector workers welfare board etc.)
- Facilitating financial inclusion by opening bank accounts and encouraging savings by encouraging them to participate in bank linked savings programmes.

Interventions in Schools

Education contains in its tongue the promise of peace and in its hands the tools of change. To be educated is to constantly examine and influence the terms of one's existence, to locate the fury of one's passions and missions, and to find resonance in the lives of others. As such, the most gainful endeavour in the history of human society has been to provide every individual with the tools of examination and action. Schools, pre-schools, colleges, universities and other professional bodies are all invested with this weighty activity but they are known to falter on various counts. It is the role of local communities to constantly shape and infuse institutions of learning with a collectively evolved vision of the future.

Prajayatna meaning the 'citizens' initiative' evolved in 2000 in the state of Karnataka as a means of engaging the primary stakeholders in the management of education systems. During the past 8 years, Prajayatna's strategy has been to create and institutionalise structures for community harbouring, in effect, an environment conducive to deliberation and collective action.

Reflection revealed that inorder to impact upon the system in any substantial way we needed to consolidate our efforts and scale up operations. Hence, we began work in two districts of Andhra Pradesh and multiplied our presence in Karnataka.

Our strategy comprises of the following steps:
1. Find a means of engagement with the communities
2. Institutionalize the process of engagement
3. Nurture the processes to institutional maturity at various levels
4. Strengthen an information management system and a feedback and monitoring mechanism among stakeholders

Strengthening Institutional Structures

Shikshana Gram Sabhas

The Shikshana Gram Sabhas are conducted at the village level, wherein all the stakeholders namely the parents, elected representatives, teachers, anganwadi teacher, the school development and monitoring committee members, representatives of the local community based organisations such as women's groups, youth groups, etc come together on a common platform to address issues pertaining to education, mainly their local government school.

In Karnataka, 571 Shikshana Gram sabhas have been conducted in the 4 districts. In these meeting 3360 SDMC members, 896 teachers, 574 anganwadi teachers, 524 elected representatives, 10380 parents and 3901 elders and interested persons have participated in these meetings.

In Andhra Pradesh, 88 Shikshana Gram sabhas have been conducted in Mahabubangar. In these meeting 650 AMC members, 142 teachers, 121 anganwadi teachers, 258 elected representatives, 962 parents, 42 representatives from the education department such as the Master Resource Person (MRP), Mandal Education Officer (MEO), etc and 287 elders and interested persons have participated in these meetings.

The gram sabhas have helped communities:
- Understand the mechanisms of learning and assessment
- Identify the weaknesses of their school
- Perceive the linkages between institutional lacunae and school misfunctioning
- Document their concerns

- Articulate these at appropriate forums
- Evolve plans of action

School Development and Monitoring Committee network at the Gram Panchayat level

The Gram Panchayat network is formed of all the SDMCs of the schools and the Civic Amenities Committee of the Gram Panchayat. Its purpose is to evolve a joint Gram Panchayat education plan and to relay issues to the next level of governance. It also seeks to entrench decentralisation of governance at the Panchayat level and build the capabilities of the Panchayat in handling their powers responsibly and authentically.

The networks have enabled communities to:
- Plan for the educational progress of their Panchayat as a cohesive unit
- Understand the division of responsibility and the flow of accountability within the Panchayati Raj system
- Direct their concerns to the appropriate authorities within this structure, thereby fortifying the linkages that bind it together

After every quarter, these networks are supported by follow-up meetings at the Gram Panchayat level. In these meetings, in addition to the review of the plans, an approach to understanding the learning status of children at each school is also discussed.

In Karnataka, the School Development and Monitoring Committees are the structures at the school level formed to manage the schools. These were formed in 2001 and after many amendments were finally identified as the subcommittee of the Civic Amenities Committee – one of the standing committees of the Gram Panchayat.

78 such network meetings have been conducted at the Gram Panchayat level across the 4 districts. 924 SDMC/AMC members and parents have participated in these meetings along with 353 teachers, 31 representatives from the Education Department, 103 anganwadi teachers, 364 elected representatives, 80 parents and 102 other interested persons in the community.

The discussions in the network meetings have focussed on:

- Delineating the role of the School level committees and the Civic Amenities Committee(CAC):

Quarterly meetings required to be held between the Civic Amenities Committee and the SDMC are not being conducted with any regularity in many Gram Panchayats. In still other Panchayats, the CAC itself is yet to be consitituted. An SDMC that is not working in co-ordination with the Gram Panchayat through the CAC is destined to be ineffective and powerless. Hence the network meetings have directed their energies towards vitalising the linkages between the SDMCs and the CACs.

The Academic Monitoring Committee, which is the community body in government schools in Andhra Pradesh were constituted in the month of January, 2010 by Prajayatna. Training has been provided to these bodies and the network meetings have only served to clarify their role and duties.

The Academic Monitoring Committees were formed in 5 schools in Mahabubanagar as an outcome of the Shikshana Gram Sabhas in these schools. Similarly the SDMC was formed in 25 schools in the 3

districts in Karnataka.

- Addressing low learning levels in schools:

Inorder to raise the low levels of learning prevailing in schools, local resources that could be harnessed for learning were mapped by the community. Additionally, parents felt that the existing systems of assessment involving progress cards were summative and intermittent in nature, thus inadequate at tracking a child's progress This was discussed and it was decided to maintain individual files for each child within which details of their daily progress will be charted for examination by parents and teachers.

- Solving the teacher shortage:

In Mahabubanagar, many schools, especially in remote hamlets are run by single teachers due to a transfer order that relocated a large contingent of teachers. A provision made by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to appoint 'Vidya volunteers', local volunteers from the community, to address the issue shortage of teachers has offered only a temporary and short sighted solution to the problem, with many communities extremely unhappy with the poorly trained vidya volunteers. The community has approached various levels of the education department to address this issue. In many cases, vidya volunteers have been selected in the meetings by the community in order to address the issue temporarily.

- Increasing enrolment in government schools:

With the number of private schools on the rise in the country and especially in Andhra Pradesh, the decreasing number of children in the government schools is a cause of serious concern. There are many such government schools on the verge of closure. One reason for the proliferation of private schools is the low quality of education assumed of government schools. This problem was discussed at great length in the network meetings and ways to increase attendance were devised. It has been noted that wherever the community has increased their involvement and participation, there has been an increase in the enrolment of the children in government schools.

- Tackling migration:

Migration is a disruptive force in a child's educational acquisition. Parents often migrate from their rural homes to urban unorganised workforces, pulling their children out of classrooms and onto city streets, unsupervised and unoccupied. They may not have any other choice, what with very few government programs tailored to their very precise needs. Since migration is intensifying in both the states, the communities have initiated discussions with the authorities on building residential facilities for children whose parents migrate.

- Fixing anganwadis:

The dysfunctional state of the anganwadi was cited as a major concern in meetings in both states. Communities bemoaned the lack of infrastructure, inadequate provision of nutrition, lack of accountability of the teacher and the low learning levels amongst the children. It was felt that a structure that could facilitate communication between the community with the anganwadi was missing. It was identified that the lack of a structure that could engage with the anganwadi was a key impediment in addressing these issues. Though there is a community structure – the Bal Vikas Samithi in Karnataka, and the mother committees in Andhra Pradesh, these were practically non-functional with many of the members being unaware of their roles and responsibilities. Efforts have been made in these meetings to activate the Bal Vikas Samitis and mothers committees and also to facilitate the Gram Panchayats to take greater responsibility for the anganwadis in their jurisdictions.

- Ensuring maintenance of basic amenities:

With many schools still not having basic infrastructure such as sufficient rooms, toilets, water, kitchen room, etc., accessing infrastructure for the schools have been discussed and plans have been made to identify resources. Where the community has been able to address the infrastructural needs of the school, the issue of maintenance has been a major agenda in the meetings.

Taluk and District Education Committees

With a view to expanding the scope of people-determined educational processes, taluk level education committees have been formed in all the taluks of the 3 districts in Karnataka. Additionally, each district has formed a district committee consisting of 15-20 members each representing different stakeholder groups such as the SDMC, CAC, BVS, interested educationists, etc. These committees function as effective groups that will engage with certain processes of educational planning at the taluk and district level. Keeping in mind the limitations of existing structures, these committees bring together stakeholders to work collectively on aspects that need to be addressed at a higher level (i.e. beyond the village and Gram Panchayat). This would include addressing issues of factors affecting enrolment and retention at a block level, strategies for addrerssing teacher absenteeism, implementation of schemes, resource allocation etc.

These committees meet on a quarterly basis and discuss issues in the agenda (depending on the need/context). They are also assisted in building their institutional capabilities in terms of understanding educational data, planning, mobilization of resources etc. It is also planned to forge linkages of these groups with the standing committee on education in the Zilla Panchayat (District level Panchayat).

199 members of the Taluk Education Committee were part of the process to form the District Education Committees in the 3 districts.

Gram Panchayat President and Secretaries Workshop at the Taluk Level along with the Education Department

In Karnataka in coordination with the Department of Education and Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, a meeting was held at the taluk level with all the GP Presidents, Vice Presidents and one representative from the CAC committee from all the Gram Panchayats in 18 of the 22 taluks of Prajayatna's working districts. The taluk officers of these bodies were also present at the meeting. The issues explored in these workshops were:

- The role of the Gram Panchayat in education:

Gram Panchayats, being the lowest and thereby most potent structure in decentralized governance, are reduced to being mere providers of infrastructure for the village with discussions always centering around facilities and services like roads and lights etc. The need to bring education into the gambit of the Gram Panchayat was reiterated in these meetings. Efforts were undertaken to outline the roles and responsibilities of the Gram Panchayat vis- vis the scope of self-governing institutions and develop an enhanced understanding of the school in a larger systemic framework.

- Furthering collaboration between the Civic Amenities Committee (CAC) and the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC):

Since both the above bodies are standing committees of the Gram Pamchayat, it is important that these two bodies are able to collaborate and work together. There is a need for mutual sharing of information,

from the names of the members in both the committees to the funds available and jointly planning for the optimum utilization of the same. To institutionalise this process, the representatives of the SDMC and the CAC are supposed to meet once every three months, but this has not been the case in many Panchayats. A decision was made to ensure that the CACs and SDMCs were constituted properly in all the GPs and in future the quarterly meetings of the CAC and SDMC happened regularly. A copy of the minutes of the resolution passed in these meetings would be sent to the Taluk and District Panchayats' Executive Officers and Chief Executive Officers respectively along with the Education Department.

-Accountability:

The workshop saw elected representatives demanding enhanced accountability from school functionaries. It was recognised that a mechanism needs to be created wherein the system becomes more transparent and accountable to all the stakeholders.

18 such workshops were conducted across the taluks throughout the 3 districts where 242 Presidents/members and 168 Secretaries participated in the discussion. 61 persons from the Education/Panchayat Raj Department/Women and Child Development were part of the process.

Engaging with the Department of Education

In Karnataka, regular meetings are held with the Department of Education wherein the processes conducted, issues discussed and the impact that has been observed in all the taluks are shared. The plans made by the SDMC and the CAC are consolidated and shared so as to enable the department to incorporate these into their own plans. Periodic reports of processes are shared with the Department at regular intervals. As the Cluster Resource Person and Cluster Assistant Education Officers are part of the processes at the school and the Gram Panchayat level, there is constant interaction with the department at all levels.

Strengthening information management systems

Strengthening the Centre for People's Policy in Education (CPPE):

The CPPE has been vested with the objective of equipping local communities and institutions with research findings and policy analysis that will assist them in framing their plans, setting their priorities and tackling issues in the field of education. To this end, small studies are conducted and periodicals and various reports are published on a regular basis. Efforts are underway to strengthen this unit inorder that it serve as a more authentic and effective base for arriving at community articulated decisions. The study on migration in Mahabubnagar was an effort in this direction.

Inter-state labour migration is a phenomenon that scarcely receives the attention it deserves. Every year, lakhs of people trudge family and belongings across hundreds of miles, hoping to find refuge from poverty and hunger in burgeoning cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Gurgaon. For all the succour it provides to families that peddle away their days for meagre sustenance that might not otherwise find them, migration has been proven to critically endanger the already flimsy academic foundations of the children who accompany their migrating parents. Though it is recognised that migration can only be resolved through fixing regional imbalances and planning for the long-term growth of the rural economy etc., there is an urgent need to address the despairing issue of so many interrupted educations.

In an effort to investigate this problem and thereby frame suitable interventions in its regard, a study was undertaken by Prajayatna in its area of operation since 3 years, Mahboobnagar in Andhra Pradesh.

Methodology: Questionnaire administered through a house to house survey. The respondents in some cases were relatives/neighbours etc of those migrating.

Sample: 73 Gram Panchayats comprising of 100 villages (including tandas) from the 10 mandals considered as having a high incidence of migration. These are mandals where there are no irrigation facilities and hence their agrarian livelihood is dependent on the rains, which are proving to be highly irregular and insufficient in these regions, leading therefore to migration of large masses of people.

Findings

- 43% of the families interviewed have been migrating for the past 1-3 years , while 18% have been migrating for around 5 years. Around 32% have migrated for the past 6-10 years while 7% have been migrating for more than 10 years.

- 48% migrate to Hyderabad, 18% to Mumbai. 11% to neighbouring parts of Andhra Pradesh such as Vijayawada, Guntur, Mahabubangar town, etc. With Mahabubanagar bordering Karnataka, around 10 % migrate to neighbouring parts of Karnataka such as Raichur, Gulbarga with very few migrating to Bangalore.

- The incidence of migration has increased over the last three years. Scarcity of rainfall maybe one of the reasons. It is also seen that in many cases where the families have been migrating consistently, after a couple of years they tend to shift to the migrated place permanently and completely. In some mandals, the incidence of migration has come down slightly with the availability of livelihood. For eg, with the construction of the canal for the past three years in Pedakothapally – the Mahatma Gandhi Lift Irrigation Project has been providing livelihood for many of the villagers. The proper implementation of NREGS has seen migration reducing to some extent.

- Both men and women migrate in equal numbers as in most cases the husband and wife migrate together. One of the reasons for women also migrating in equal numbers is low wages. In comparison to a wage of Rs. 30 – 50 that they get in villages, women can expect to make atleast Rs. 100 in the cities. If children are left behind, they are taken care of by the grandparents.

- 61% of children went along with the parents whereas only 39% children were left behind in the villages.

- Of the 1153 migrating children whose information was recorded, 46% were going to school. The remaining 54% children are out of school children who have either dropped out of school or have not been enrolled in many cases. 39% of these children have never been enrolled. These were found to be mainly in the age of 7 and 8 and then in the age group of 12-14. 36% have dropped out of school and were not doing anything specifically with some of them taking care of their younger siblings while others helped in the household chores by cooking, getting water, washing clothes, etc. Another 25% who had dropped out due to financial reasons, were found to be working. This was found to be mainly in the age group of 12-14.

- Of the 777 children left behind in the village 90% go to school. But as the parents were not there to pay attention, the children were often found to be irregular in attendance. The remaining 10% children are out of school children of which some have never been enrolled in school.

Citizens' reports

In order to represent the reflections of the community that gets articulated during the various community processes facilitated by Prajayatna, a monthly and quarterly citizens report is generated

which is disseminated to all the concerned stakeholders. It is a form of a feedback to the department to enable effective response from their side and has been appreciated by the department as a valuable source of information.

Newsletter

The newsletter has been developed as a medium for interaction among the different stakeholders and to create an interest among the readers to become partners in development of the schools. A district wise newsletter was published in all the 6 districts and distributed to all the key stakeholders that Prajayatna engages with.

Web portal

In order to create an online database of all the schools, information of 8875 schools across 6 districts have been hosted on the web portal. Reports are being generated on various aspects. At present, it is being accessed internally and will be made available for the public towards the latter part of this year (2010).
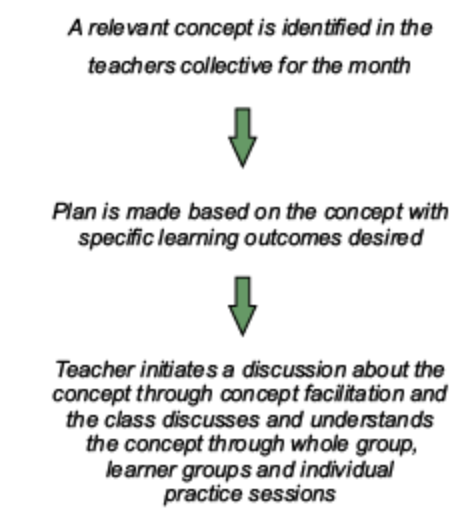
Improving learning levels

Kalikayatna is an approach to learning that focuses on learning 'how to learn'. It emphasizes the development of abilities to create, evaluate, recall, analyse, apply, understand etc. Kalikayatna is a holistic approach that promotes any learning method and structure that supports a child's learning style to achieve capability-based learning outcomes. It seeks to influence all classroom processes from facilitation to assessment.
The following are its premises:
Children learn when
- They have interest in what is being learnt.
- They have a context to construct meaning out of their experiences.
- They are given feedback on what they have learnt

The Process:

A relevant concept is identified in the
teachers collective for the month

⬇

Plan is made based on the concept with
specific learning outcomes desired

⬇

Teacher initiates a discussion about the
concept through concept facilitation and
the class discusses and understands
the concept through whole group,
learner groups and individual
practice sessions

The learning initiative in Konnur cluster (Bijapur) and Gajapura cluster (Bellary) had 1501 children in the academic year 2008-09 in Std 1, 2 and 3. In the following academic year 2010-2010, with the extension of the approach to class 4, the number of children has increased to 2382 of which 2197 attend regularly. This year with the addition of class 4, the number of teachers involved in this initiative is 61. The CRP and CAEO are actively involved in the programme with both of them visiting the school and the teachers' collective meetings on a regular basis.

Classroom process

Through training and sensitisation, teachers have understood that children require different kinds of exposure and learning experiences inorder to achieve whole-rounded appreciation of a subject area. In keeping with this philosophy, learner grouping has become a key pedagogical tool.

During the whole group session, the concept that has been decided upon is discussed in the entire group. Here, the children along with the teacher explore different dimensions of the concept based on their experience and understanding. New aspects are discussed as a group. Different mediums are used to explore the concept further such as stories, newspaper, etc.

During the learner group session, the children are divided into smaller groups of mixed age groups where the concept is further explored in detail by the children. One among them facilitates the group with the teacher moving around the classroom from one group to another and intervening wherever her support and facilitation is required. In this session the children try to understand the concept further by relating it to their own experiences and trying to understand it in the context of what was discussed in the whole group. They then make a presentation where their understanding is shared with the larger group. This in turn is discussed and debated which enables the children to come to their own understanding of the concept.

During the individual practice time the children practice the new letters/words/numbers that have been learnt during the day in the earlier sessions. The teacher then goes around providing feedback, correcting and helping those children requiring support.

Baseline assessment of the children

The basic profile and competency levels of children are documented at the beginning of the year. This enables the teacher to identify the conceptual and practical areas in which the child needs support inorder that the teacher can incorporate such support in her teaching during the year.

Continuous assessment of the children

Individual learners files are being maintained by schools. Samples of work that demonstrates the academic progress made by the child is filed in the portfolio every week. This enables continuous tracking of learning achievement and areas of deficiency. The learners' file is sent home every week to enable the parents to see the progress of their child on a regular basis. The teachers make their observations separately in their observation book which becomes the base along with the portfolio to provide an integrated learning status of the child. A consolidation of the child's learning is done every six months wherein a capability based progress card is provided which also includes abilities related to reading, writing and arithmetic.

Teacher's Collective meetings

Towards developing an approach of teacher empowerment, teachers collective meetings are held on a monthly basis. 12 such collective meetings were conducted during January to December 2010. At these

meetings, teachers discuss about the problems they face in motivating children to learn, the different kinds of learning resources they could use, how to vary and enhance their classroom practices and how to assess children in a continuous and comprehensive way.

Challenges and learning's

- With majority of the School Development and Monitoring Committees completing their term this year, there has been a delay in many processes as time is being taken for the re-formation of the SDMC in the schools. The completion of the term of the Gram Panchayat in the month of December is another dimension to be considered as the entire election process will hamper the pace of the activities in the coming quarter.
- The constant changes made by the Department of Education, Andhra Pradesh with regard to the constitution of school committees has been a hindrance to the work in the district, as it prevents in building the institutional capabilities of these structures. This also prevents the community from taking complete responsibility for their schools. The existing AMCs are thus dysfunctional and do not fully enable the realization of the objective of decentralisation of education governance. Efforts are being made by Prajayatna to ensure that the AMCs are being formed through a democratic process in all schools and that they are functioning properly through sessions where their roles and responsibilities are shared.
- Similarly the lack of a community structure for the anganwadis has led to the complete neglect of the anganwadis which has again affected the impact of the processes in the districts.
- The demand by communities for English in all the schools is a challenge. It is recognised that in the initial years of learning the importance of learning in the mother tongue is very important from the child's point of view. The challenge is to facilitate the spirit of learning in the mother tongue while taking into account the community's perception of learning in English. It is also in this context that the urge of parents to send their children to private schools is increasing and simultaneously reducing the number of children going to government schools. It therefore becomes important for the team to be able to facilitate the   community in taking responsibility for their school thereby enhancing quality of learning and leading to greater enrolment.
- The transfer of the bureaucrats at short notice at all levels of the department creates a certain level of difficulty in terms of implementation as any new bureaucrat needs to be oriented to the work of Prajayatna. In the meanwhile, any process with the department gets delayed.
- The work of Prajayatna in both Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh strengthens the understanding of Prajayatna that the problem affecting primary education is systemic and is similar across the country. Further on, it also reaffirms the organizational belief that each community is different and their contexts specific which makes it difficult for a model or the 'same size fits all' approach in terms of learning outcomes, etc. to be defined across the state.
- A lot of attention needs to be paid to the building of the team in terms of skills and content and most importantly to the larger vision of the need for reform. It becomes important to ensure that the basic principles of decentralization which is the core value of the organisation is maintained along with establishing a through line which connects every process and individual in the programme.

The mainstay of Prajayatna's ECCE approach has been to empower people in understanding better the issue of early childhood care and education in the context of their own communities, and to institutionalize this engagement either through improvements in the government run anganwadi centres or community run centres

To this end, 150 Community Owned Centres (COCs) have been provided with continued support, reaching out to over 4500 children and their families. The focus has been on strengthening these centres and attempting to create mechanisms of sustainability such that they are able to function independently within their local contexts with supplementary support from private institutions and companies interested in collaborating with them.

Notably, interventions with the WCD (Department of Women and Child Development) expanded to include conversion of 16 more COC's (in addition to the earlier 21) into AWCs (Anganwadi Centres). These earlier 21 centres, though converted into anganwadis continue to function as community owned centres, running for the entire day and retaining the teachers who had earlier effectively fulfilled the same role in the COC.

Further strengthening the effective functioning of anganwadis, work has been initiated in 124 AWCs across 4 educational divisions (1 circle per division) in Karnataka in addition to continuing the work in 2 circles in Doddabalapur taluk of Bangalore Rural where the collaborative initiative with the Department was underway.

In keeping with the recent developments, The Centre for Peoples' Policy has, in the last year, been effective in reaching out to all the stakeholders through the publication of its first periodical. Its objective is building a more comprehensive understanding of issues of ECCE in local contexts and reaching out to groups or individuals who would like to collaborate with these centres in future.

Facilitating the independent functioning of community owned centres

The ECCE programme has, over the years, sought to define means of engagement with various stakeholders, moving on to then institutionalizing this engagement and streamlining each of these processes in accordance with the needs of the communities. The centres are capacitated through various process involving the primary stakeholders. These processes are:

- Development Planning:

Development plans were drafted, prioritizing the issues in the Centres that needed to be addressed within a specific timeframe. These plans were then reviewed in follow up meetings. This process of deliberation enables the community to identify issues, prioritize them, identify resources, implement and reflect on the implementation. The process saw the community planning for different aspects of the Centre ranging from physical infrastructure such as own building for the Centre to purchasing of crayons for the children to use in the classroom process. In many Centres, the response of the community to the entire process was overwhelming with many of the members of the community mobilizing resources in the meeting itself. For the anganwadi teachers who had been working in the community for many years, the entire process was an eye opener as they now understood the importance of engaging the parents in the functioning of the centres. They also understood that it was not a one time meeting to raise resources but rather a continuous process of facilitating the community to take ownership of their Centre and learning of their children. The plans are meant to be taken forth by the Bal Vikas Committee – the parents' structure. The process of implementing this plan further strengthens the capabilities of the structure.

2 Gram Panchayat level meetings have been undertaken towards the formation and strengthening of

local Bal Vikas Samithi institutions, ensuring mechanisms of accountability, consolidating anganwadi development plans and collaborating on roles and responsibilities towards the effective functioning of anganwadis.

- Parental Expectation meetings:

The parental expectation meetings are held to enable parents evolve a common understanding on the desirable learning outcomes to be achieved in school by their children. The meetings help foster in parents a sense of responsibility towards their children's learning and gives them an opportunity to reflect upon its goals and means and they help our team understand the expectations of the community. For instance, a parent from one village community clearly articulated that he would expect his child to be able to identify and name objects, things and relationships; and stay in a safe and secure place till they come back from their work/fields, whereas a group of mothers in a low income area in Channapatna Town expressed the desire for their children to be fluent in Kannada, Urdu and English alike, with specific emphasis on English.

- Formation of Representative Community Institutions:

At the end of each Plan and Budget exercise across 150 centres, a parent's committee of five parents and one teacher was constituted at each individual centre. The responsibilities of these committees are to articulate and share tasks, assist the teacher in conducting the day to day activities of the centre, establish a stable relationship with the community and parents and work towards the overall betterment of the facility.

A General Body Meeting was convened of all the committees within the cluster. This group consolidated the budgets of all the centres within the cluster, providing an overview of resources to be locally generated and to be otherwise accessed. They also unanimously decided on timely and regular monitoring of their centres, linking with local Primary Health Centres & Hospitals for accessing health facilities, mobilising local community resources, accessing supplementary support towards strengthening the existing facilities from the Gram Panchayat or the local counsellor, maintaining cluster related accounts, solving operational issues of the centre- such as enrolment, cleanliness of teachers and children, collection of fees, teacher timings, children's regularity in schools, expectations from teacher training programmes and admission of children to primary schools upon finishing at the ECCE centre.

- Data collection:

To address the lacuna of information in the area of anganwadi functioning and to build a comprehensive primary database, information was collected from all 145 anganwadi centres in 4 circles. A questionnaire was designed for the same which consisted of aspects concerning physical infrastructure, enrolment and retention, learning materials, teachers information, training of the teachers, governance structures such as the Bal Vikas Samithi, Gram Panchayat etc. This information was collated and presented in different forms for discussion at various fora. For e.g., a block level report was prepared and presented at the department meeting of the Child Development Programme Officer and the supervisors.

- Shikshana Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayat level meetings:

This information was also presented in a pictorial form in the village level meetings known as the Shikshana Gram Sabhas. The Shikshana Gram Sabha brings together all the concerned stakeholders on a common platform to discuss issues of common concern. The anganwadi teacher, bal vikas samithi (the local committee of the anganwadi constituted by the government for the overall management of the anganwadi), gram panchayat members, parents, women's self help groups, youth groups, elders, etc. participate in this Sabha. It is a democratic process wherein the stakeholders concerned are able to plan

and determine solutions with regard to issues affecting their own development. Issues discussed at these meetings include irregularity/absence of teachers, poor infrastructure, inadequate nutritional focus and non-functioning of the Bal Vikas Samitis, community based committees mandated by the government to oversee anganwadi upkeep and management. Certain decisions which had been pending for many years because of years of inattention, got resolved at such meetings.

Improving Health

Research has confirmed that in the initial years of a child's life, wholesome nutrition is crucial for normal brain development and therefore denial of food at this stage can put the child 'at risk'. Inadequate or inappropriate feeding practices, poor access to health care and sanitation and general neglect cause a substantial proportion of children to become moderately or severely malnourished. In the ECCE programme, efforts have been made to make health an agenda of the community.

To this end, each teacher collected and collated information of every child in her centre, assigning a grade of malnourishment in terms of physical growth of the child and also documented the child's immunization status. In order to support the teachers in facilitating the process, a flip chart with information on immunization and diseases, nutritional content of the different food types and fundamental lessons on hygiene and good health was used. This tool provided the teacher with the much required confidence to undertake the process which earlier was conducted by the lead teachers of the community run centres. Teachers were trained intensively on the subject and their facilitation skills strengthened. Parents greatly appreciated these efforts.

Following these interventions, it has been observed that in centres where there were instances of malnourishment, the parents structures have initiated supplementary nutrition. They raised the basic resources required for cooking. There has been an increase of 5% over the past 6 months of children having completed their immunization. By negotiating with the local Primary Health Centres, the cluster and parents structures work actively towards ensuring that the ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) and the medical doctor visit the centres on a regular basis.

Enhancing Learning

A key aspect of the ECCE programme is enhancing learning outcomes – through empowering community processes, building ownership for the ECCE concern, building teacher capability for better quality services or focusing on child teacher interactions within the classroom for enhanced learning levels of children. The ECCE program, based on years of experience in working with local communities, has been able to evolve a learning/ability framework, weaving in expectations of the parents and the local community for their children. This has helped the teacher to identify themes and concepts which form the basis of centre classroom transactions. These concepts are then used to achieve the several learning outcomes that the child should acquire (that is to identify, classify, compare, name, express etc) and thereon the teacher develops a lesson plan detailing activities for children individually and in groups. Various concepts are explored during the year some extending to months and some to mere weeks.

The basic learning methodology continues to focus on ensuring that the classroom offers each child a space to learn experientially and at her own pace. The methodology, drawing from eclectic sources, brings together learning inputs from across innovative methods rendering the classroom interesting and child centric. In addition to supporting children in developing other abilities, the concepts of language and numeracy, which form the basis of all future learning, are introduced to a child in a progressively sequential manner and over the years, the teachers have created affordable and adequate materials to aid their classrooms. Additionally the trainings have also helped in conceiving and

generating materials which are low cost and locally available and that facilitate a child's learning in her own context. Nearly 300 teachers and assistant teachers have been part of the monthly trainings during the last 6 months.

Towards creating mechanisms of sustainability and monitoring, a chart enlisting key information, such as teacher name, assistant teacher name, area name, no of children, structure and cluster details, infrastructure conditions, frequency of ANM and doctor visits, condition of malnourishment, learning and play materials in use, has been designed and developed for display in each centre.

Strengthening effective functioning of government run anganwadi centres

The ICDS primarily functions through centres known as the anganwadis which literally means 'courtyard gardens', constituted to attend to the needs of the very young children. Though meant to address the overall development of the children in terms of learning, nutrition, health and care, the absolute lack of community structures, the ineffectiveness of the teacher and the centralized system of functioning has rendered the system incapable of delivering. There has been a slow degradation of the anganwadis into dysfunctional centres instituted only to deliver food supplies to its beneficiaries. Hence, it was decided that work with the department run anganwadis should be initiated in 6 circles across 5 districts. Engagement with 2 such circles was initiated in 2008 and the remaining 4 was initiated in the latter part of 2010. The outcomes of working with these anganwadis are as follows:
- Building the capabilities of the Bal Vikas committees, thereby enhancing the quality of the anganwadi.
- Redefining teachers training, thereby empowering teachers in conducting early childhood care and education
- Enhancing the quality of learning, health and nutrition of the children.

Empowering teachers

With the ICDS lacking any kind of structured training other than the refresher courses for newly appointed teachers and some trainings that are planned ad hoc every few years, the anganwadi teachers lack any kind of pedagogical support that would enable the teacher to redefine herself and her teaching in changing environments and contexts. As part of the empowerment process, a monthly training is conducted for all the teachers. These are structured as collective meetings where teachers come together to discuss, learn and support each other. In these meetings, a member of Prajayatna is a facilitator, enabling teachers to explore different concepts/aspects and assisting them in planning for the next month.

In the meetings, community expectations from the centres were explored and the teachers' role clarified in the context of these expectations. Outcomes for the development of the Centre was delineated and plans to achieve them were drafted for the following year. The major outcomes decided upon were in the areas of learning, health, building community relationships and ensuring a learning environment in and around the Centre.

The timetable was reorganized and structured in a manner to ensure that children were exposed to different kinds of activities/experiences contributing to their overall development. Sessions also included supporting the assistant teachers to understand their role in the Centres, relationship with the teachers, assisting the teacher in the learning process etc,. The impact of these efforts can be witnessed in the fact of teachers organizing village level meetings namely the Shikshana Gram Sahbas thus putting an accountability mechanism in place. Centres which used to remain closed for days together are now opening on time and providing a safe learning environment for children. Learning and play materials which have always been a problem in the Centres have been mobilised and a decision to ensure that all

materials are available in the Centre at all times was taken by the Bal Vikas Committees. Basic amenities have been accessed for the Centres from local and external resources. The biggest change in these anganwadis can be seen in the classrooms which have been made more appealing for children. Teachers sit together with children while facilitating the understanding of concepts using a variety of materials and tools, some which they have prepared themselves.

Learnings and the way forward

- The need to make the Community Owned Centres independent and the cluster committee sustainable: Through the process of grading, the centers have been categorized and preliminary processes have been initiated to access support through other stakeholders such as individual donors, companies, etc. Simultaneously, the teachers and the community structures need to be further equipped to be able to access resources on their own and manage the centres without the support of the organization. Though the teachers have been facilitated to conduct various processes on their own, their skills in terms of perceiving problems at the earlier stages, decision making, facilitating parent committee meetings need to be enhanced further to enable them to address issues more effectively. The need to strengthen the cluster committees to address cluster level issues and make them sustainable is another aspect that needs to be focussed upon in the coming year.

- As many of the Centres have earlier been converted into ICDS centres, the capability of the teachers in these Centres needs to be strengthened vis-à-vis their roles, given the new context wherein these centres are a combination of the community run pre-schools and the government run anganwadis. In a context where the anganwadis are being run merely as places for the distribution of nutrition, the community owned centres reflect a totally different work culture where the engagement of the teacher is relatively higher. As this approach stands out in terms of its functioning, the teachers in these converted centres are under pressure on many occasion to fall in line with the functioning of the regular anganwadis. Since these centres are now ICDS centres and not meant to take fees (as it is a government facility) or function full day , efforts have been made to ensure that these teachers are provided support by the WCD administration at the block.

- The last year has seen attempts made by the team to further streamline and consolidate the programme by refining certain aspects of its approach. A range of documentation tools have been developed by the team members for use in the centres- a centre information chart for display in each centre, a planning booklet to help the parents of each centre to plan and record their activities, booklets to record attendance of teachers and parents in meetings etc. Though the teachers have been engaging with these tools, there is a need to strengthen the usage of these materials.

Why the Enterprise exists?

Over 90% of the total 400 million people that comprise India's workforce work in the unorganized sector. Much of this population comprises of migrants moving into cities looking for a job and a promise of a better future.

These workers often have no recognized identity in the cities, slipping through the cracks of the social register. Hence, they are denied access to fundamental services such as banking and insurance since the delivery of their services is contingent on a traceable and trustworthy identity. Even their employers invest as little as possible in their wellbeing offering them no training, meagre pay and no effort towards improving awareness about safety and compliance.

While government has defined benefits and schemes for their welfare, the execution has been abysmal due to lack of accountability and awareness. For instance, the Government of India has enacted the 'Building and Other Construction Workers Act, 1996' under which each State Government must allocate the Cess collected from the builders to the welfare of the construction workers. While the state governments are responsible for implementing the schemes, there has been very little progress on the ground. Even in case of social welfare schemes that have been successful (e.g. Bhagyalakshmi that provides financial support to families with girl child), workers have not been able to leverage them because they lack essential identification documents like residence proof and income certificate.

The absence of an established community model (such as the self-help groups for women) among these workers makes it difficult for any organized and sustainable intervention. There is a strong need for a mediatory organization that is willing to engage with the workers, vouch for their identities and ensure the last mile access to services that they are rightfully theirs.
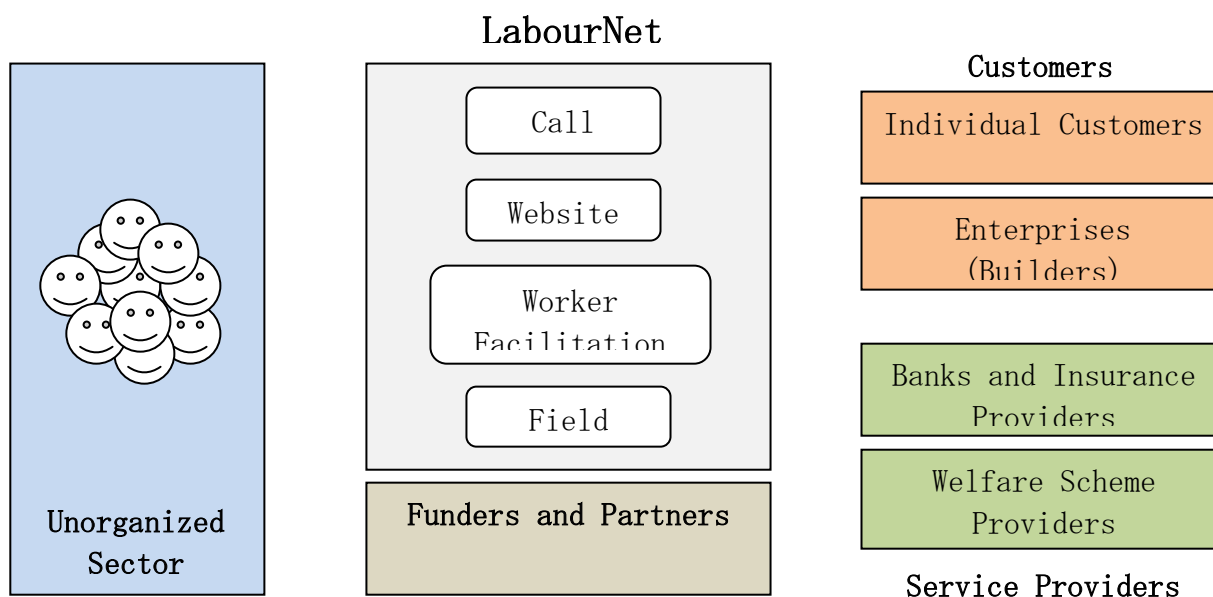
LabourNet aims to address this key gap, as a platform that addresses these pressing needs of the workers.

LabourNet was started in 2005 as a pilot in Bangalore and has since then mainstreamed its operations in Bangalore and Haryana. LabourNet is structured into two separate legal entities – LabourNet, as a non-profit organization, works in Bangalore and Haryana. The for-profit organization is only based out of Bangalore. Within the Informal sector, LabourNet activities are concentrated in the construction and maintenance sectors with capabilities to service a wide range of its registered workers such as masons, carpenters, painters, electricians, plumbers, domestic workers, office housekeepers etc.

LabourNet focuses on three key aspects – Firstly, link workers in the informal sector who need a job and clients who need skilled workers. Secondly, provide an identity for migrant informal sector workers by registering them to its network and formalizing their identity based on their trade and occupation. Thirdly, based on the identity LabourNet provides these workers get access to services to which they hitherto had no access like accident insurance, bank accounts, healthcare services, etc.

Key activities

The following graphic illustrates the ecosystem that LabourNet engages with today

LabourNet

		Customers

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Call
Website
Worker
Facilitation
Field
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Funders and Partners

Individual Customers

Enterprises
(Builders)

Banks and Insurance
Providers

Welfare Scheme
Providers

Service Providers

Unorganized
Sector

LabourNet, in collaboration with its partners, facilitates the engagement of the workers with the customers and service providers. While the workers enjoy better job opportunities and access to welfare schemes, customers get access to the vast pool of skilled workers to address their immediate needs. Service providers get access to a hitherto unreachable and unviable customer base by streamlining the engagement through LabourNet.

The following section details how LabourNet collaborates with these stakeholders and delivers its services.

Providing identity to workers

LabourNet maintains a registry of workers as part of their system and offers these workers ID cards as a proof of their identities. To engage with the migrant workers, LabourNet has built a strong on-the-ground presence through field staff that goes to construction sites and conduct camps among communities to register the workers into the system. In addition, LabourNet has setup Worker Facilitation Centres (WFCs) in locations where there is a strong concentration of migrant labourers.

Today, LabourNet runs four Worker facilitation Centres in Bangalore, Faridabad and Gurgaon respectively. LabourNet complements their strong field presence with mobile technology to stay in touch with the workers.

Creating Job linkages

In addition to providing identities, LabourNet also creates job linkages for the workers by placing them in homes as domestic help and in construction sites by partnering with the leading builders.

To engage with individual customers (who typically have sporadic need for, say, 1 worker), they have setup a call centre and a web-based model for gathering customer requirements. The

Coordination team in LabourNet retrieves the requests from these channels and then connects the customers with the relevant workers. In the last 4 years, over 6000 requests have been recorded and the registered workers have, on an average, 12-14% increase in income through their engagement with LabourNet.

With builders and large enterprises, LabourNet has setup partnerships to source workers for their construction projects. LabourNet has worked with some of the biggest builders in Karnataka like Sobha, Purvankara and BCIL to establish links for registration and job placements.

LabourNet also provides trainings to these workers - With the help of Accenture India, it has developed 9 training videos which teach various skills and safety aspects in an engaging manner. These videos have been prepared in Hindi, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu. These trainings are provided with twin objectives – Firstly, the training helps the workers hone their skills and help them use the latest tools and technology relevant to their skills. Secondly, it also helps them formalize their skills through an established accreditation system such as the Modular Employable Skills (MES) program setup by the government.

Facilitating delivery of services

As with the builders, LabourNet has also built enduring partnerships with the Service providers. For instance, LabourNet works with Punjab National Bank to open 'no-frills' bank accounts for these workers that allows the workers to have minimal bank balance in their accounts. LabourNet have also partnered with Oriental insurance to provide accident insurance services to the workers. While LabourNet buys it as Group Insurance from Oriental insurance, they have structured it in such a way that the workers see it as individual insurance. While group insurance is a common instrument, LabourNet was the first organization to track it at the level of individual workers thereby insuring each of their lives while reducing the risk to the insurance provider.

Across Bangalore and Haryana, LabourNet works closely with the government to compliment government's initiatives to implement the welfare schemes and policies on the ground. LabourNet entered into a partnership directly with the Haryana Building and Other Construction Workers welfare board (HBOCWWB) (part of the Department of Labour, Government of Haryana) to ensure effective service delivery to construction workers. Together they provided services under four broad categories: Enrolment of the workers (registration), healthcare delivery, early child care and training.

In Bangalore, LabourNet has partnered with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit [German Society for Technical Cooperation] (GTZ)[1], a private international enterprise owned by the German Federal Government specializing in technical cooperation, to make the welfare schemes provided by the Karnataka government accessible to the workers. While GTZ engages with the various departments in the Government of Karnataka, LabourNet is responsible for running the Worker facilitation Centres (WFCs) and engaging with the workers on the ground.

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[1] http://www.gtz.de/en/index.htm

Key stakeholders

Ford Foundation provided the seed fund to get LabourNet started. Since then, they have been supported by investors who have been able to support the organization both financially and also broaden their network. For instance, America India Foundation introduced them to Punjab National Bank (PNB) that provides the banking services to the workers registered with LabourNet. Grassroots Business Fund (GBF) helped LabourNet with marketing and linked them to builders such as Purvankara[2], BCIL[3]. In addition, GBF provided expertise in helping LabourNet create Service Level Agreements (SLA) for workers and customers.

Today, LabourNet works closely with CHF International who provide them funding and also collaborate with them on the implementation on the projects. Founded in 1952, the Cooperative Housing Foundation—now known simply as CHF International—serves more than 20 million people each year, empowering them to improve their lives and livelihoods for a better future. CHF currently has programs in more than 25 countries around the world, across Asia, Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, Europe & the Caucasus, and the Middle East.

Key Differentiators

Holistic engagement with the workers

There are comparable models offering some of the capabilities LabourNet offers. For instance, there are services that act as an employment exchange connecting customers to the workers by doing a basic skill match and providing contact information. There are also for-profit and non-profit organizations that providing training – including life skills, technical skills and finishing education – to youth and create employment opportunities for them.

What differentiates LabourNet from these organizations is an integrated approach that combines job linkages, training and delivery of welfare services across the entire spectrum of workers. LabourNet not only limits itself to creating jobs and providing them training but also has created an extensible platform for delivering relevant services to them.

Another key differentiator is the focus on adult workers. Almost all the organizations focus on providing skill training to adolescents and youth. While the justification is that such skill training is essential for the youth before they embark into employment, there are many adult workers who form a substantial part of the unorganized sector. They put their lives at risk everyday with minimal focus on safety and compliance and lack of access to welfare services. Almost 90% of the workers who engage with LabourNet are over 25 years of age. These workers are provided access to welfare schemes and training programs to upgrade their skills.

Strategic partnerships

The problems that LabourNet tries to address are of a magnitude that is much bigger than any other organization. For instance, providing identity to migrant workers and making it widely accessible and acceptable is a task that requires alignment across various government bodies and private organizations.

One of the models that LabourNet has successfully employed to address these complexities is to establish strategic partnerships that address the end to end value chain in delivering services to the worker. For instance, workers need better tools to work more efficiently. But to address the

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[2] http://www.puravankara.com/
[3] http://bcil.indiaproperty.com/index.php

need requires an organization to provide the worker access to buy the right tools, the skill to use the new tools and financing options to be able to leverage the tool as a micro-entrepreneur. In order to address this need, LabourNet partnered with Bosch and Punjab National Bank. LabourNet, in collaboration with Bosch, provided the training. On completion of the training, Bosch provided the required tooling to the workers. And if the workers chose to setup their own business as a micro-entrepreneur, Punjab National Bank provided the required financial assistance as bank loans.

In addition to the service providers, LabourNet has also forged partnerships with leading research organizations in India. For instance, Microsoft research India[4] helped in addressing key topics that have been central to LabourNet's engagement with the poor. As one of the projects, Microsoft Research India conducted an extensive study on how the poor and the unlettered population use mobile phones. This helped LabourNet to better tailor the engagement with the population through this communication medium. Microsoft Research India also suggested the idea to LabourNet to create videos in local languages for training the workers.

Similarly, LabourNet partnered with the government in order to realize scalable and institutionalized solutions. A good example of the same is the approach LabourNet adopted to certify the workers after they underwent training. The key goal for providing training to the workers is to ensure that their skills are recognized in the market by the employers and other stakeholders. Hence, LabourNet provided certification based on the Modular Employable Skills (MES) rather than providing their own certification.

Delivery platform

One of the key reasons LabourNet can scale its operations is because it is not designed to be just a service provider but a delivery platform that can be provide services to customers that are offered by other providers as well. Today, LabourNet provides services offered by banks, insurance companies and healthcare providers like Swasth and Ayurved.

In Haryana, Swasth India manages the healthcare service delivery at the 4 WFCs as well as the outreach health camps set up by the WFCs. Swasth India also provides the construction workers visiting the clinics (established in the WFCs) and camps access to best quality medicines at a heavy discount of a flat 50% on all medicines. This is accomplished by tying up with pharmaceutical companies.

In Bangalore, LabourNet has partnered with Ayurved to provide healthcare services to workers. Ayurved's fundamental approach is to focus on the lifestyle to address health issues rather than just provide medication for all ailments. This is especially relevant to workers who undertake physically strenuous tasks throughout the day. By focusing on their lifestyle habits, Ayurved is able to provide a long-term solution for better health while moving them away from the mindset of spending unnecessarily on medicines for all kinds of ailments.

LabourNet's platform approach enables these partners focus on their core competence which is in healthcare service delivery, thereby achieving maximum impact for the workers.

Results

The table below compiles the results achieved by LabourNet in numbers

Service	Results

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[4] http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/labs/india/default.aspx

Worker registration	36,000
Bank accounts	12,000
Health Checkups	25000 – 26000
Hospitalization Insurance	300 workers
	18000 accident insurance along with welfare schemes of Haryana welfare board in Haryana
Children in Crèches	262
Trainings	5300 (including 1800 MES Certification and 400 BOSCH training certification)
Job Linkages	

In the state of Karnataka, LabourNet has registered over 18,000 workers who are all covered under accident insurance, opened 12,000 PNB bank accounts for them, prepared 9 trade videos which it uses for training workers who normally are averse to training, provided job information to 6,000 workers and directly facilitated jobs for 3,000 workers.

Scale and Sustainability

One of the clear proofs of scaling LabourNet's initiative is to be able replicate its efforts in different locations. LabourNet has been able to demonstrate the same – Having started LabourNet as a pilot in Bangalore, LabourNet has since then partnered with the Haryana government to start their operations in the state.

Financial sustainability

Unlike regular service providers who address an explicit need that customers have, LabourNet evangelizes their services to the workers so that they understand the value of the same. LabourNet identifies key services that workers need to have access to ensure safe and sustainable living – However, the workers themselves are not able to associate a certain monetary value to the services provided.

Hence, LabourNet has observed that the services provided to the workers go through a lifecycle. In the initial phase, the delivery of the services is focused on constant engagement with the workers to help them understand the need for such a service. During this phase, the service is not financially viable on its own requires substantial investment from LabourNet. Once the services are mainstreamed and once LabourNet is able to create a pull for these services, they attain financial sustainability and can then be scaled.

For instance, when LabourNet introduced accident insurance, the workers were not ready to pay for the service. However, based on the successful delivery and increased awareness, the workers are willing to pay for these services today. Similarly, when LabourNet partnered with PNB to open bank accounts, the first two years they did not charge for bringing in the new accounts. However, once a working relationship was established based on mutual trust and performance, LabourNet was able to charge for these services as well. In order to realize such a model, LabourNet achieves financial viability through both external funding and its revenue.

LabourNet's structure reflects this lifecycle of services. LabourNet today comprises of two legal entities – A non-profit entity focused on increasing the basket of services that is provided to the workers. And a for-profit entity focused on designing and packaging 'mainstreamed

services' as products to workers.

While the for-profit organization is funded by Grassroots Business Fund (GBF) and individual investors, the non-profit entity gets grants from foundations. The for-profit entity is also designed to generate revenue by creating job linkages by selling worker services to individual and business customers.

Such a structure – combining for-profit and non-profit models – brings to focus the choice that LabourNet has to make between leveraging short-term financial benefits out of mainstreamed services versus investing in crucial but financially unviable new services. With its focus and selection of services strongly based on the social impact on the workers over financial attractiveness of the services, LabourNet is clear that complete financial sustainability of its operations is not a short-term target but a long-term objective.

Operational efficiency

Operational efficiency is essential for any enterprise to scale its operations. However, this is especially crucial for LabourNet given the nature of its activities. Individual customers who request for domestic help expect responsiveness and in many cases constant follow-up after the job placements are done. It is especially important to ensure predictable response times while providing services to migrant workers, who might not be able to leverage services if there is a delay in delivering it to them. While working with the government (as in the case of Haryana), it is important for LabourNet for establish and deliver based on mutually agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) so that it can demand the same level of responsiveness from the government as well.

Keeping this in mind, LabourNet has put in place processes to ensure efficiency. They have established standardized training modules to train and upskill their staff so that they are able to handle both the individual customers and workers.

With the government, LabourNet agreed on a clearly defined process map along with timelines attached to each process step. The process map covered the planning of registration camps, enrolment of the workers, data entry of the details onto a central database to create a unique ID and finally distribution of the ID cards that are signed by the Labour office, and if the workers have moved away posting it to their permanent address.

Each process step has a strict timeline attached to it, is documented and tracked in documents and reported in a periodic manner. This helps to ensure that delays can be effectively tracked and bottlenecks identified and fixed. Moreover, strict tracking and reporting systems ensure accountability and complete transparency.

While LabourNet has established such processes with their stakeholders and their staff, one area of continued investment for LabourNet is to ensure operational efficiency while engaging with the workers. To ensure sustained impact, LabourNet has to establish its credibility and establish itself as a trusted facilitator and service provider. However, the social structures and the lifestyle of migrant workers create challenges for LabourNet to achieve the same.

Challenges

As a first of its kind, LabourNet has had to overcome challenges in the existing setup in order to streamline and provide services to the workers. These challenges are present both in the worker engagement space and also in their partnership with the service providers.

Lack of established community structures

Successful interventions in rural areas have often leveraged established social and community structures in order to gain adoption. For instance, bottom of the pyramid initiatives have been successful in rural communities due to the engagement model they adopted with the Self Help Groups (SHGs). The women from these groups were able to spearhead and lead the initiatives at the grassroots level. Similarly, microfinance initiatives have also leveraged such structures to ensure accountability and distributed ownership.

With migrant labour, there are no such established community structures. Hence, interventions with these communities involve substantial investments to create such a self-sustaining structure so that such interventions are sustainable. And this is especially difficult with the migrant community given their transitory nature of livelihood. Workers are often identified with just their mobile phone numbers and basic details. However, workers continuously change their numbers without prior notice, making them unreachable for the intervening organization.

As one of the first organizations to work with migrant labour, LabourNet has had to invest in setting up such social structures. While LabourNet uses the mobile numbers of the workers as a channel to reach out to them, LabourNet offers a diverse set of services so that workers perceive LabourNet as a trusted advisor that they continuously engage with.

Commoditization of labour in the informal sector

One of the services where LabourNet has not had much success is the training services they provided to workers. Accenture and CHF sponsored and contributed to their efforts of creating training videos for the workers to teach them basic skills. LabourNet brought industry practitioners (such as BOSCH) and partnered with the government to provide relevant training and formal certification (through the Modular Employment Skills offered by the government).

However, there weren't able to get the buy-in from the workers because there is a vicious quality conundrum in the informal sector today – There is an excessive supply of unskilled labour that customers can choose from. However, there are no widely accepted quality norms that help the customers evaluate and asses the skills and capabilities of these workers. Hence, they have relegated this sector as a commodity market where workers are chosen based on availability with minimal expectations and investments. And migrant workers do not want to invest in training since it doesn't anyway impact their employment opportunities in such a commodity market.

However, such an approach results in overall low quality and substantially higher risk for the workers in dangerous working conditions. In addition, continuing as contractual and commodity labour severely impacts workers' negotiation potential and the overall quality of life they can demand from their employers.

To address this problem requires LabourNet to not only provide training to the workers but also bring about a mind-shift change among employers to not treat them as low-cost, contractual labour. At the same, LabourNet engages with the government to create a scalable and recognized accreditation system that can be used as a benchmark across the industry as selection criteria for these workers.

Harmonizing delivery

Today, there are many organizations and departments within the government that provide

services to the Labourers. However, the different government departments that provide the schemes to workers are completely disconnected with little to no alignment amongst themselves. Their execution is also riddled with inefficiency making it impossible to have any predictability in delivery. Even other service providers, such as banks, do not agree for any Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor the efficiency of the overall process since these workers are not their most profitable customer segment.

As a platform that offers these services, LabourNet tries to harmonize the delivery of these services by validating which works and also ensuring the paper trail is minimized for the workers. However, workers see LabourNet not just as a facilitator that makes these services accessible to the workers but also as providers of the service. They perceive any delay in responding to them or any miscommunication in the process of delivery as LabourNet's responsibility. Balancing the expectations from the workers with the inefficiencies in providing the services is a constant operational challenge for LabourNet.

Lessons Learnt and Road ahead

While the magnitude of the problems LabourNet is trying solve is huge given the growing number of migrant workers and the share of workers in the informal sector, LabourNet has been able to demonstrate impact on the ground and adoption of their services among the workers community. And having extended their operations beyond Bangalore to another location, LabourNet has proven its ability to put together an extensible model to span their operations across multiple locations.

In the coming years, LabourNet aims to scale by reaching out to more workers while deepening their relationship with the workers by providing more services and increasing their presence on the field. Having started in 2005, LabourNet's goal is to reach out to 1 million workers in 7 years and open 36 worker facilitation centres including extending its operations to a new city in the next four years.

Going forward, there are opportunities, challenges and choices LabourNet has to face that will determine their future course of action.

Enduring engagement with the workers

As has been reiterated before, engaging and creating a sustainable social structure among migrant labour is in itself a great challenge. One of the key challenges for LabourNet is to track the workers continuously and ensure that the information about them is up-to-date in their systems. Given that workers are constantly on the move and change their mobile numbers on a regular basis, it is very difficult to establish and sustain a channel of communication with them. For LabourNet to facilitate this process requires them to create a pull from the workers to reach out to LabourNet on a regular and ongoing basis.

Today, the most successful service offered by LabourNet is opening of Bank accounts to the workers. This service, like other similar services, is transactional in nature and is a one-time activity. LabourNet is constantly striving to identify services that move beyond transactional engagements and create an ongoing relationship. They have currently identified services such as training that will help them build such a relationship with the workers.

Success of these services in the future is crucial for LabourNet to bring about sustainable progress in the lives of these workers.

Financial viability vs. Social impact

Leading companies, especially in the consumer goods sector, seek channels to market and sell their products to the bottom of the pyramid. While they have leveraged the Self Help Groups in the rural areas, they do not have dedicated channel to address the migrant population. Hence, LabourNet's access to these workers is very lucrative to these companies. LabourNet also stands to gain financially by creating such linkages between these companies and the workers. However, from a social impact perspective – would it be the right approach to introduce the workers to these consumer goods and get them into a consumerist lifestyle, which is clearly not sustainable in the long run? On the contrary, aren't these workers already living in a consumerist economy and have access to these services irrespective of LabourNet's strategy towards the consumer goods companies?

These are not simple and straight-forward questions. LabourNet has today agreed to only provide services that they believe are relevant and encourage sustainable living for the workers. This is reflected in their partnership with Ayurved which focuses alternate ways of improving workers' health by rectifying lifestyle issues rather than issuing medicines.

Engagement with the government

On September 29 2010, in a little village called Tembhli, Ranjana Sonawne was assigned an ID card with the number 782474317884. With this number, Ranjana has become the first Indian to get the Unique Identification (UID). The UID project is an ambitious initiative of the Indian government to provide an identity to all the citizens of India based on the resident's demographic and biometric information. This identity can then be used by a citizen anywhere in India to access services offered by various providers.

Similarly, government has also passed legislation to ease access to banking to the poor, to provide insurance free of cost and to encourage banks to create no frills accounts by subsidizing the costs borne by the banks. Such changes are definitely positive since they provide a scalable and institutionalized approach to address systemic issues.

However, these changes also impact the core services offered by LabourNet today. Such changes require LabourNet to relook at their role in service delivery and also their focus on the key services they are required to provide. Going forward, LabourNet has a crucial role to play both in delivering services on the ground and in influencing these new initiatives from a policy perspective.

On the ground, LabourNet's role in delivering services to the workers is still relevant today since these initiatives will take over 3 to 5 years to address the entire population. Also, past experiences with government projects emphasize the need for grassroots organizations to complement the project execution with Last mile access. In the future, LabourNet will also need to identify other services that are essential to the workers but are not provided by the government.

On the other hand, LabourNet can help make these government initiatives more effective by sharing their experiences and highlighting real-life challenges. For instance, LabourNet was on the panel of organizations working on the Unique identification project and plays a direct role to influence policy and implementation approaches.

In the long run, LabourNet could establish themselves in this twin role of grassroots implementation and policy advocacy and thus compliment government's initiatives to address the needs of the workers.

Conclusion

Improving the lives of workers has been the endeavour of organizations worldwide. Advocacy organizations, non-profit organizations and social enterprises have sought to address specific parts of this challenge over the years. By focusing on fundamental issues such as identity, putting together a broad-based approach spanning job linkages, access to welfare and training and by sharing their experiences at the highest of policy and implementation – LabourNet has taken a comprehensive and holistic strategy towards improving the lives of the workers.

Having addressed 36,000 workers, LabourNet has made remarkable but early strides in addressing a problem that impact 90% of a population of 1 billion. While the challenge is daunting, it also provides a unique opportunity for LabourNet to impact the lives of millions of workers.

Clearly, the experiences have highlighted systemic challenges and trade-offs that LabourNet has had to make. A lot of these challenges and experiences are representatives of those faced by social enterprises today. Strong operational efficiency, choice between financial and social impact, effective social engagement strategy with the beneficiaries and the continuing collaboration with the government are issues that organizations have to address to create sustainable social impact, while ensuring their own sustainability.

Going forward, LabourNet has a twin role to play – both in the implementation on the ground and in defining and influencing policy – in collaboration with the government to ensure that there are effective and scalable solutions to the problems that at the centre of their focus and existence.

Data On Maya Labournet Health Check Up Camps-May And July 2010

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    I. All Patients
      1. Attendance and Membership Status
      2. Demographical and Occupational Profiles
      3. Clinical Profiles
          A. Summary Health Risk Assessment
          B. Complaints Presented to Doctors
          C. Diagnosis by Body Systems
          D. Diagnosis in Details
   4. Body Composition, Body Functions and Life Styles

    II. Construction-Related Workers
      1. Attendance and Membership Status
      2. Demographic Profiles
      3. Clinical Profiles
          A. Summary Health Risk Assessment
          B. Complaints Presented to Doctors
          C. Diagnosis by Body Systems
          D. Diagnosis in Details
      4. Body Composition, Body Functions and Life Styles

    III. Housekeepers (Same contents as above)
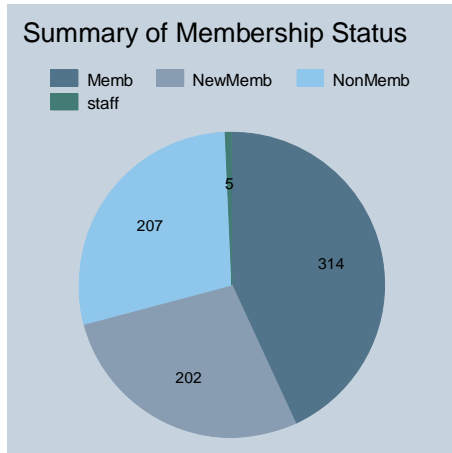
IV. Retailers (Same contents as above)

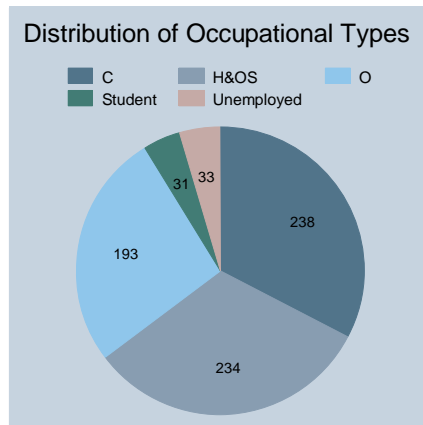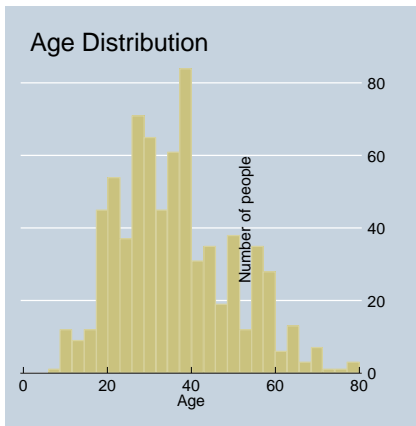

I. All Patients

1. Attendance and Membership Status
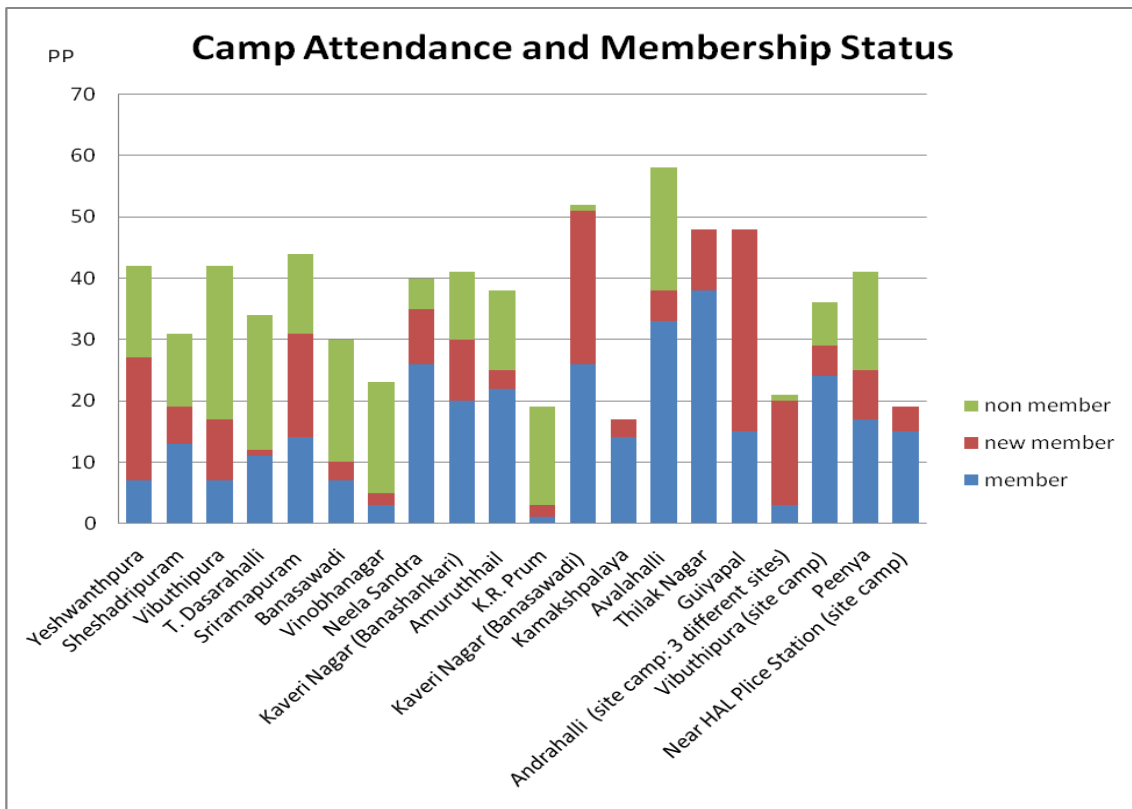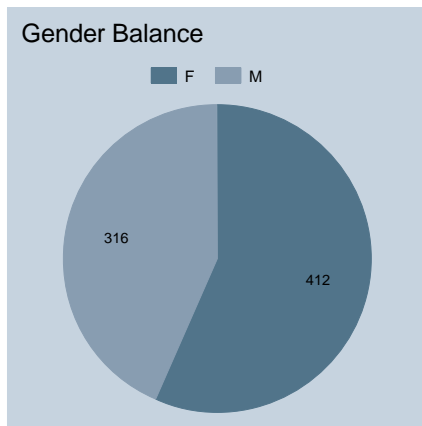

n=723 plus 5 LN staff members. Average number of patients per camp was 36.5. Rs. 10 charge for non-members started at the Kamakshpalya camp.

Summary of Membership Status

Legend: Memb, NewMemb, NonMemb, staff

- 5 (staff)
- 207 (NonMemb)
- 314 (Memb)
- 202 (NewMemb)

n=728: LN Members constitute 70 %

2. Demographical & Occupational Profiles

Gender Balance

Legend: F, M

- 316 (M)
- 412 (F)

Age Distribution

Number of people vs Age

Distribution of Occupational Types

Legend: C, H&OS, O, Student, Unemployed

- 31 (Student)
- 33 (Unemployed)
- 238 (C)
- 193 (O)
- 234 (H&OS)

n=728, 57% female   n=728, mean= 36 years old   n=729: C=Construction-Related, H&OS=Household & Office Support, O=Other

Status report of the MAYA ORGANIC SUPPORT SERVICES (MOSS) clusters: July 2010

Though each of the MOSS clusters have developed excellent capabilities in new product development and production, lack of resources has completely stalled growth, impeding the growth of the entire initiative as a whole. With its sole customer in Maya Organic India Private Limited, the fortunes of MOSS have been tied to the fortunes of MOIPL completely. This has completely affected the operations of the clusters.

There is a significant restructuring exercise going on in MOIPL and the future of the initiative is completely dependent on this.

The wood working cluster:

Presently the cluster employs close to 90 people. Of this, more than 45 unskilled school dropouts have been trained to produce high quality wooden furniture in the last 1 year.

The cluster presently has a capability to produce more than 70 lakh worth furniture (at MRP). But due to shortage of orders, it is presently functioning at $1/3^{rd}$ its capacity. The wood working cluster has been training its staff in cross functional aspects including machining, assembly, finishing and managerial skills.

The wood working unit has already developed a reputation for having unique capabilities of manufacturing high quality solid wood furniture and this fact needs to be leveraged to generate better orders for the unit.

The lacware cluster:

The lacware cluster in Channapatna presently reaches out to about 100 people in its lacware and flat wood units. Of the 100 people, more than 50% are women.

The cluster is presently executing orders for major European clients like the retail chain Manor in Switzerland and other smaller distributors in Denmark.

The cluster has been more focused to training women and recently trained 30 women into toy making and wooden accessories. Some of these women are now employed in other toy making units in their respective villages.

Though there are good export orders, there is need to develop a domestic sales network for its toys.

The garments cluster:

Presently the garments cluster is restricted to a stitching unit reaching out to about 30 people. The stitching unit has been largely producing accessories for the furniture and toy clusters. In addition to this the cluster has been doing job works for other garment companies and brands. The garment cluster has been unable to expand given to situation the Industry is in as this calls for enormous resources which the organization does not have.

Board of MAYA

NAME	DESIGNATION IN MAYA	OCCUPATION
RAJEN JOSHUA	PRESIDENT	President in the Board of MAYA, Director and founder of an NGO-SEDS. Working since 1976 in a Semi Arid region on forestation, watershed and community development.
MUTHU KRISHNAN	TREASURER	Treasurer of MAYA, Industrialist and Trainer, owns and runs SSI industry for the last 12 years. Has been conducting training on time management and Human development for the last 15 years.
SOLOMON JAYA PRAKASH	SECRETARY & CHIEF FUNCTIONARY	Chief Functionary, Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness.
ALEX RODRIGUES	MEMBER	Director - MOIPL, Board Member and Heading Finance and Administration in Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness (MAYA).
BADRINATH GULUR	MEMBER	ISO Auditor for the last ten years
MS REKHA RAMESH	MEMBER	ISO Auditor in Bureau of Indian Standards for Fifteen Years
MR ANTO VINCENT	MEMBER	Consultant HRD. EX Vice-President HR of Ford Motor Company and MRF
MR T VASUDEV	MEMBER	Specialist Ophthalmologist