



Young Leaders for Social Impact

Insights and Perspectives for the Crossover Journey

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This Insights and Perspectives document is authored by Dr Rajneesh Chowdhury.

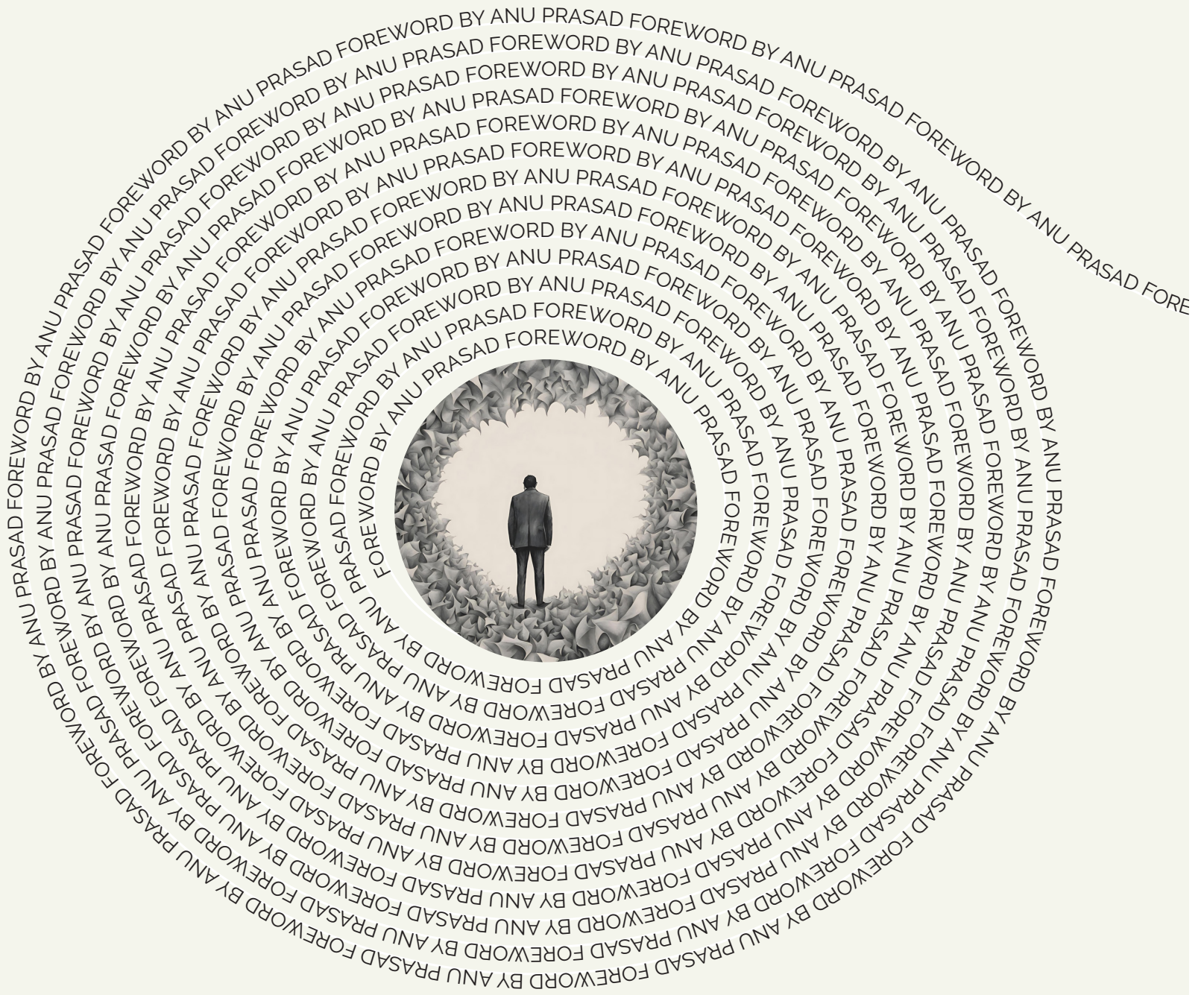
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FOREWORD BY ANU PRASAD



ILSS began because we saw people from across sectors, fields, and domains, looking to find ways to engage with the social sector and contribute as citizens.

The social sector is in a high-growth phase in India, driven by the escalating availability of corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds and philanthropic capital. The sector's rapid expansion has underscored the need for young leadership capable of driving innovation and navigating complex challenges. At the same time, the symphony of youthful idealism is rising, fuelled by the passion to drive economic prosperity and champion social justice.

The overall theme of the discussions, presented in this document, aligns with the understanding that the social sector can greatly benefit from young leaders from the private sector to effectively cater to its own scale and rapid pace of growth, as witnessed in the last decade.

The sector offers leaders the opportunity to work on some of the most complex challenges that humanity faces. Solving for such problems demands the coming together of the best brains and adopting a multi-stakeholder approach with the government, civil society, and communities. The sector today uses strategic planning, data analytics, and innovative solutions to approach complex goals of social and

economic justice. It is evolving to offer a competitive work environment featuring structured career paths, professional development, robust talent management, and improved salaries. This will help attract, engage, and retain leaders with the desired competencies.

We present our insights and perspectives on the nature of initiatives that must be undertaken at the ecosystem level to address the leadership need in the social sector at the middle level, and how ILSS is actively working to address the need by launching The ILSS Young Leaders Program. We are excited to design this Program hinged on our point of view on Social Sector Leadership that encompasses five pillars: Developmental, Perspectival, Sectoral, Functional, and Organisational.

I hope you will find this document insightful. I appeal to young leaders in this country to come and join us in our endeavour to create a more equitable and just world.

- Anu Prasad, Founder and CEO - India Leaders for Social Sector

Executive Summary

The insights and perspectives presented in this document have been inspired by our recognition of the growing need for young leaders in the social sector, which drove us to dig deeper into understanding the dynamics of crossover leadership in the sector. We have tapped into our organisational knowledge, highlights from

The rapid growth of the social sector in India has created a substantial demand for leadership at the middle level.

secondary published research, and learnings from a focused roundtable discussion that we hosted, to arrive at our insights and perspectives.

The social sector encompasses a wide array of organisations and activities aimed at addressing challenges in areas such as social justice, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability, amongst others. The rapid growth of the social sector in India has created a substantial demand for leadership at the middle level. The sector increasingly draws professionals from the private sector to respond to this demand. Crossover leaders bring a lot of valuable skills that the sector is in need of. Their ability to foster a culture of innovation can lead to the development of pioneering programs that may have the potential to address the root causes of social problems.

At the same time, leadership development and talent management in the social sector are undergoing a transformative shift towards increasing professionalism, aligning more closely with corporate sector practices and accommodating its own sector-based nuances. Career development within the sector has become more defined, with clear progression paths and opportunities for growth. However, the transition for young leaders from the private to the social sector comes with its own dynamics and myriad of challenges, including a lack of understanding of the sectoral context and culture, limited exposure to sectoral issues, lack of awareness of the variety of roles in the social sector, and doubt about transferability of skills.

To address such challenges, the social sector in India must transform its narrative from one of distress and scarcity to one of excitement, promise, and abundance. Building a shared narrative that highlights the dynamic and





impactful nature of its contribution is crucial for attracting the right and capable leaders, fostering public engagement, and driving real change. By focusing on showcasing innovative solutions, inspiring success stories, and the tangible impact on communities, the sector can redefine how it is perceived and experienced.

There is a wide variety of roles in both the private and the social sectors that young leaders can actively contribute to and realise their full potential. Indicative roles in the following areas can offer young leaders exciting and promising spaces to contribute to: **(i)** Social sector: Research and Analytics, Strategy and Impact, Project Management, Enabling Functions, and Fundraising; **(ii)** Private sector: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), Social Impact Consulting.

To support leadership development and prepare professionals to work more effectively in the social sector, a wide range of programs exist; these include short-term certifications, extended postgraduate diplomas, and fellowships. The existing social sector development programs primarily target entry-level graduates or aim to harness the experience of senior leaders. These programs offer invaluable experiences but are not designed to address the unique needs of mid-career private sector professionals. Drawing from the unique dynamics of the social sector, young leaders must be orientated to what working in the sector really entails and how they can navigate this journey effectively. They must

appreciate that, in the social sector, leaders must balance the need for operational discipline with the discretionary nature of the work, where creativity and normative decision-making are crucial. At the same time, they must navigate the tension between adhering to processes and prioritising the overarching purpose or mission, especially at the middle level.

The growing demand for leadership at the middle level in the social sector necessitates a focused program that targets young leaders. Such a program requires to be transparent about the various sectoral and lifestyle challenges that working in the sector entail. A focus on mindset becomes important in a situation that balances purpose and pay for a life of greater wellbeing. Fortunately, with the variety of organisations in the sector, there is nothing like a standard pay scale across organisations. Large foundations, international organisations, and various social sector advisory firms have a propensity to pay higher than the average. It is important that the target audience is made aware of the realities – both challenges and opportunities – as they navigate their journey into the sector.

To meet this demand, we have crafted The ILSS Young Leaders Program, a specialised Program to hone the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for a meaningful transition to the social sector. Our Program provides comprehensive training in social sector dynamics, stakeholder engagement, impact evaluation, and policy analysis whilst leveraging the wealth of expertise that young leaders from the corporate sector bring in. This Program is meant for young professionals passionate about challenging the status quo and driving positive social and economic change in India.

1. About This Document

The insights and perspectives presented in this document have been inspired by our recognition of the growing need for young leaders in the social sector, which drove us to dig deeper into understanding the dynamics of crossover leadership in the sector. The overall theme of the discussions aligns with the understanding that the social sector must attract young leaders from the private sector to effectively cater to its own scale and rapid pace of growth, as witnessed in the last decade. We present our insights and perspectives on the nature of initiatives that must be undertaken at the ecosystem level to address the leadership needs in the social sector at the middle level, leading to the introduction of The ILSS Young Leaders Program that commences on the significant date of 2 October 2024, being Gandhi Jayanti. We are inspired by Gandhi's vision of youth mobilisation and the ability to see abundance in the midst of scarcity.

The document will begin by sharing how we have arrived at our insights and perspectives. The social sector in India will be described,

including the key types of organisations it encompasses. Next, a discussion on the middle-level leadership landscape in the sector will be presented. This discussion will include the topic of the growing demand for middle-level leadership in the sector and why private sector professionals are well-equipped to meet this demand. This will be followed by a note on the increasing professionalism in talent management practices in the social sector. The dynamics and challenges for young crossover leaders will be highlighted, leading to a discussion on why building a shared narrative for the social sector in India is important. An indication of the career opportunities in the sector will be provided, followed by a discussion on the landscape of social sector leadership development programs in India. This discussion will present a gap in the market in initiatives that can cater to the nuanced requirements for potential crossover young leaders that The ILSS Young Leaders Program proposes to cater to. Finally, The ILSS Young Leaders Program will be presented in detail that hinges on the ILSS point of view on Social Sector Leadership.

Young professionals are increasingly seeking more challenging and impactful work. They are highly purpose-driven and want to see the needle move.

- Amitav Virmani, Founder – The Education Alliance

2. How We Have Arrived at Our Insights and Perspectives

ILSS has been a key player in cultivating leadership within the social sector by engaging extensively with a broad spectrum of pioneers, entrepreneurs, changemakers, and mentors. We are at the forefront of building sectoral leadership through a suite of programs that include The ILSS Leadership Program, The ILSS Emerging Women's Leadership Program, The ILSS Board Governance Program, The ILSS Board Leadership Program, The ILSS People Practices Program, and The ILSS Digital Transformation for Social Impact Program. Additionally, we curate and deliver customised programs for corporates and social purpose organisations (SPO), apart from organising regular webinars and discussion forums. Our rich network includes 850+ alumni and 100+ faculty and speakers. Engaging with a diverse array of stakeholders has allowed us to gather valuable insights and perspectives, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the social sector leadership landscape in India. These engagements enabled us to arrive at our hypothesis that there is a burning need for an infusion of leadership at the middle level in SPOs. This hypothesis shaped the thinking that a focused program to build middle-level leadership is urgently required to fill the gap in the sector.

Our understanding was substantiated by a range of published reports and research articles that touch upon the talent and leadership needs, and dynamics of the sector. These publications offered us the learnings from thought leaders and practitioners regarding their experiences with leadership development for the sector, and the key aspects to keep in mind whilst we craft a customised program for young leaders. A list of selected published reports and research articles is provided in the bibliography.

To further inform our hypothesis, we hosted a roundtable discussion on 22 May 2024. 15 participants contributed to the roundtable discussion (See Table 1). Insights that surfaced during the roundtable discussion validated our hypothesis, supported by perspectives and anecdotes from our participants.

Experts Consulted



Participants



The panel of contributors was carefully curated to have a mix of profiles – social sector employers, crossover leaders, potential crossover candidates, thought partners, and a private sector leader. The roundtable discussion was facilitated by Dr Rajneesh Chowdhury, Head of the Centre of Excellence for Leadership at ILSS. The format followed was a structured discussion guided by highlights and insights about the sector that were presented before the panel was opened for discussion. Initial learning from the roundtable, leading to our approach to crafting a new program for young leaders, was later taken up for discussions and feedback with a range of experts from our network.

They included (*alphabetically*)

1. **Professor AK Shiva Kumar** (Development Economist, Professor and Policy Adviser),
2. **Mihir Mathur** (Systems Thinking Practitioner and Founder, DESTA Research)
3. **Piyush Doshi** (Operating Partner, The Convergence Foundation)
4. **Shantanu Ghosh** (Growth Partner, Angel Investor, ex-business leader and CFO)
5. **Sudarshan Rodriquez** (Founder and CEO, RTL Works)
6. **Vinita Singh** (Trustee, We, The People Abhiyan)
7. **Vishal Doshi** (Head of Talent Acquisition, The Convergence Foundation)

Table 1: Participants Contributing to the Roundtable Discussion 22 May 2024

S. No.	Name (Alphabetically)	Organisation	Designation	Capacity in which participated
8	Amitav Virmani	The Education Alliance	Founder and CEO	Social sector employer
9	Anisha Grover (TCF)	The Convergence Foundation	Lead – Strategy, Investments and Portfolio	Crossover
10	Anu Prasad	India Leaders For Social Sector	Founder and CEO	Social sector employer
11	Anyesha Mitra	Independent	Freelance consultant	Potential crossover
12	Archana Ramachandran	India Leaders For Social Sector	Chief Operating Officer	Thought partner
13	Bopanna Prakash	The Convergence Foundation	Program Lead - Strategy and Investments	Crossover
14	Himansshi Singhal	Deloitte	Deputy Manager	Private sector employee
15	Jyoti Shresth	Deloitte	Assistant Manager - CSR	Private sector employee
16	Kritika Choudhary	Air Pollution Action Group	Head – Strategy, Planning and Policy	Recent crossover
17	Monica Hemrajani	India Leaders For Social Sector	Chief of Staff	Crossover
18	Rahul Ahluwalia	Foundation For Economic Development	Founding Director	Social sector employer
19	Tarun Cherukuri	Indus Action	Co-Founder and CEO	Social sector employer
20	Vishal Chowla	RoundGlass Foundation	Leader	Social sector employer



*Moderated by
Dr Rajneesh Chowdhury,
Head of the Centre of
Excellence for Leadership,
ILSS*

3. Social Sector in India

The social sector encompasses a wide array of organisations and activities aimed at addressing challenges in areas such as social justice, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability, amongst others. The social sector operates alongside the public (government) and private (business) sectors, often filling gaps that the other two are not able to address adequately. Its primary focus is on generating social value rather than profit. Organisations within this sector can vary greatly in size, scope, and function, but they share a common goal of fostering positive social change.

KEY TYPES OF SOCIAL SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

The social sector includes implementation organisations, donor organisations, research organisations, policy and advocacy organisations, and impact investment firms.

Implementation organisations: They work directly with the community to design and implement initiatives in education, health, livelihoods, gender, environment and sustainability, disaster relief, civic area regeneration, and other areas fostering bottom-up development. Some prominent implementation organisations include: SEWA, which focuses on empowering self-employed women through support in areas such as finance, healthcare, and education; Pratham, which works on improving education quality focusing on children's literacy and numeracy skills; and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme that works on enhancing rural development by promoting sustainable agriculture, water management, and community empowerment initiatives.

Donor organisations: These entities provide financial resources to support the initiatives of other organisations within the sector. Some prominent donor organisations include: the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which supports initiatives in health, sanitation, education, and agriculture to improve the lives

The social sector is a diverse and dynamic field that encompasses a wide range of initiatives and organisations and plays an indispensable role in fostering a more equitable and sustainable India.



of vulnerable populations; Tata Trusts, which focuses on areas such as health, education, livelihoods, and rural development, providing grants and support to various NGOs and projects; and Azim Premji Foundation, which primarily supports education initiatives, working to improve the quality of education in rural and disadvantaged communities across India.

Research organisations: They conduct studies and provide critical insights that help shape policies and programs. Some prominent research organisations include: the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy at Ashoka University, which aims to develop a robust ecosystem for philanthropy and social innovation through research, knowledge dissemination, and capacity-building initiatives for social sector leaders and organisations; the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, which focuses on economic policy research, providing insights into trade, investment, and macroeconomic policy; and Public Health Foundation of India, which conducts research to strengthen public health systems, improve health outcomes, and influence health policy and practice.

Policy and advocacy organisations: These organisations work to influence public policy and advocate for systemic changes to address social issues. They engage in creating government influence through public education campaigns and direct advocacy. Some prominent policy and advocacy organisations include: the Centre for Science and Environment, which engages in environmental advocacy, promoting

sustainable development policies related to air and water quality, climate change, and urbanisation; National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, which advocates for the rights of Dalits, working to combat caste-based discrimination, and influence policies to promote social justice and equality.

Impact investment firms: These firms invest in projects and companies that generate social or environmental benefits alongside financial returns. They support sustainable development and social entrepreneurship. Some prominent impact investment organisations include: Aavishkaar, which invests in enterprises that create social and environmental impact, focusing on sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, and renewable energy; Omidyar Network, which provides investment and support to innovative organisations working on social impact areas such as digital identity, education, and financial inclusion; and Acumen, which invests in companies that tackle poverty by providing essential goods and services to low-income communities, particularly in areas such as agriculture, healthcare, and clean energy.

Intermediaries: These organisations play a critical role by connecting SPOs, funders, and communities to enhance impact and efficiency. An example is the Social Venture Partners (SVP). SVP provides capacity-building support to SPOs, helping them scale and improve their operations. They offer technical assistance, facilitate knowledge sharing, and foster collaboration among stakeholders. By mobilising resources and providing strategic guidance, SVP helps SPOs achieve greater

Needless to say, the social sector is a diverse and dynamic field that encompasses a wide range of initiatives and organisations and plays an indispensable role in fostering a more equitable and sustainable India.



4. Middle-Level Leadership Landscape

The rapid growth of the social sector in India has created a substantial demand for middle-level leadership. The sector increasingly draws professionals from the private sector to respond to this demand. Crossover leaders bring a lot of valuable skills that the sector is in need of. Let's understand the dynamics of the middle-level crossover leadership landscape in the following discussion.

4.1. Growing Demand for Middle-level Leadership

The growing demand for middle-level leaders in the social sector is primarily driven by the escalating availability of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and philanthropic capital.

Middle-level leadership is essential for translating organisational vision into actionable strategies, managing teams, and ensuring the efficient implementation of programs for SPOs. Young leaders play a critical role in bridging the gap between senior leadership and ground-level staff, ensuring that strategic

Key cohorts shaping the giving landscape include CSR activities, retail givers and family philanthropies. According to the India Philanthropy Report 2024, co-created by Dasra and Bain & Company, private philanthropy grew 10% in FY 2023, to Rs 1.2 lakh crore (\$15 billion)

- Neera Nundy, Partner, Dasra
(Nundy, 2024 - The Economic Times)

objectives are met and that operational activities are aligned with the organisation's mission. The availability of philanthropic capital has also spurred innovation and the scaling of social enterprises. This financial growth has

In the middle level, we struggle to find leadership talent. We see the biggest gap when people have to move from project manager to project leader roles.

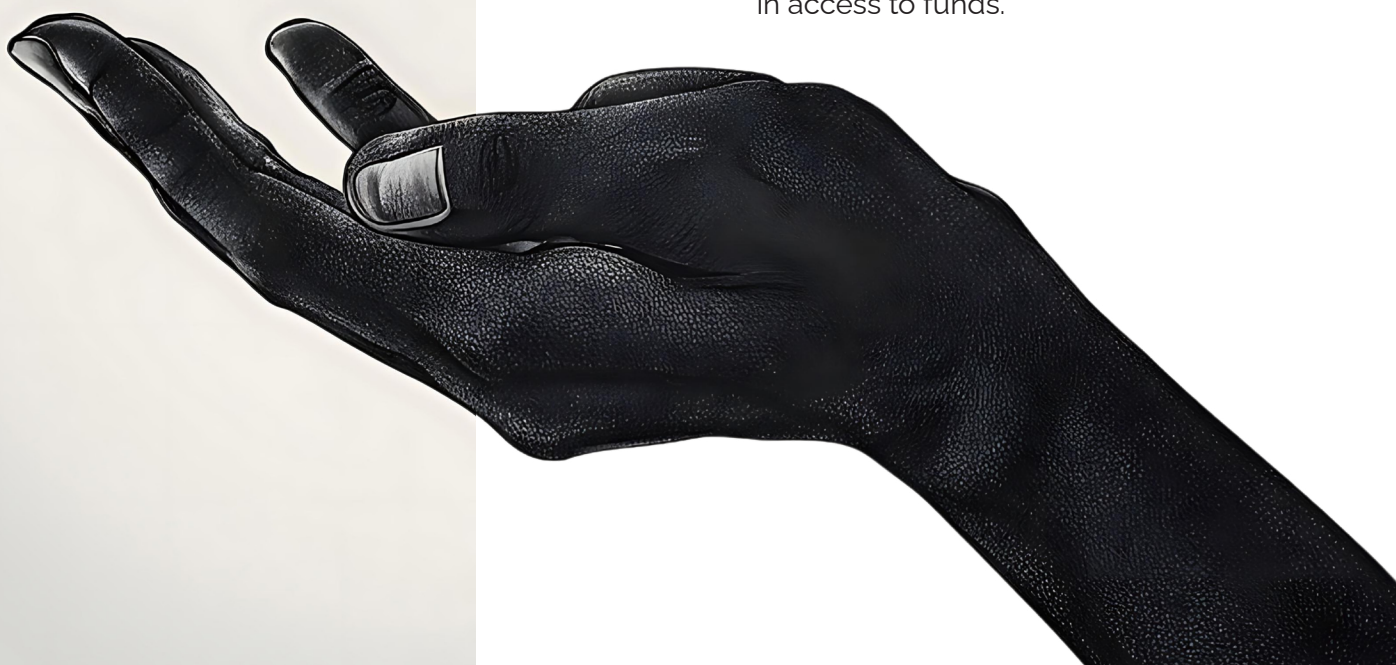
- Amitav Virmani, Founder and CEO – The Education Alliance
(Excerpt from the roundtable).

led to the establishment of new programs and initiatives, which require strategic planning, effective execution, and robust monitoring and evaluation. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the supply of young leaders to the social sector, who can bring fresh perspectives, business acumen, and strategic thinking that the sector demands.

4.2 Why Private Sector Professionals Are Well Equipped to Address the Demand



Young professionals from the private sector are particularly well-suited to address the leadership needs that the sector faces at the middle level. Young private sector professionals have to regularly engage with strategic planning, project management, financial analysis, and operational efficiency. The private sector's focus on results-oriented approaches and metrics-driven performance is highly beneficial for the social sector, where impact measurement and accountability are increasingly important. Additionally, private sector professionals bring expertise in areas like marketing, communications, and technology, which are crucial for scaling social enterprises and enhancing programmatic reach and effectiveness. At this point, it is also important to acknowledge that private sector professionals undergo regular training and benefit from various developmental interventions that help them build their skills and enhance their leadership capabilities. Such regular training and development are not common in the social sector, primarily due to challenges in access to funds.





Young crossover leaders bring many transferable skills to the sector such as process management, problem-solving, structured approach, team management, and stakeholder management. The lack of awareness about opportunities in the sector and how their skills can be utilised in the sector, act as a barrier for them.

- Anyesha Mitra, Freelance social sector consultant
(Excerpt from the roundtable).

The social sector faces multifaceted challenges, including navigating regulatory environments, engaging with diverse stakeholders, and addressing deeply rooted social issues. Young leaders from the private sector are adept at problem-solving and can leverage their experience to develop innovative solutions to such challenges. They also bring a

structured approach to program management, ensuring that projects are delivered on time and within budget. Further, innovation is crucial for the sector to develop scalable and sustainable solutions to pressing social issues. Young leaders with experience in innovation management can introduce new methodologies, technologies, and business models that enhance the effectiveness and reach of social initiatives. Their ability to foster a culture of innovation can lead to the development of pioneering programs that may have the potential to address the root causes of social problems.

Especially in recent years, the social sector has benefited enormously from an infusion of ideas and practices from the corporate world. People who have built software, scaled businesses, marketed products, understand financial transactions, built high-performing teams are invaluable to a nonprofit. You just have to be ready



to accept that you are starting from a place of limited understanding and that your implicit biases and working models may have no place in the journey you are about to take.

- Aparna Sanjay, Director – Impact
Catalyst Foundation Inc.
(Sanjay, 2019 - LinkedIn)

The good news is that select organisations in the social sector have proactively started to make investments to build capacity and capability in the sector with an ecosystem approach. A.T.E. Chandra Foundation, Nilekani Philanthropies, Lal Family Foundation, Wadhvani Foundation, and Edelgive Foundation focus on strengthening the overall infrastructure of the sector by providing training, resources, technical assistance, and strategic guidance to SPOs. These foundations foster collaborations, share best practices, and support innovative solutions to complex social

issues. By enhancing the operational efficiency and sustainability of SPOs, they ensure a greater impact on the communities they serve. However, the opportunity to do more is immense.

Having talked about the middle-level leadership landscape in the sector, it is imperative for us, at this stage, to highlight that the social sector is increasingly becoming more professional in leadership development, talent management, and employee engagement practices, a topic we turn to in the next section.

Young leaders with experience in innovation management can introduce new methodologies, technologies, and business models that enhance the effectiveness and reach of social initiatives.

5. Increasing Professionalism in Social Sector Leadership Development

Leadership development and talent management in the social sector are undergoing a transformative shift towards increased professionalism, aligning more closely with private sector practices. Leading SPOs are now offering structured career paths, 100-day induction plans, performance management systems, and robust employee engagement initiatives. These advancements signal a significant change from the traditional perceptions of the sector, showcasing a commitment to nurturing and retaining talent through systematic and strategic approaches.

Career development within the sector has become more defined, with clear progression paths and opportunities for growth. For instance, organisations such as Pratham and Teach For India have established comprehensive career frameworks, enabling employees to visualise their growth trajectory within the organisation. New hires undergo thorough induction programs, ensuring they are well-versed in the organisation's mission, values, and operational procedures.

Performance management systems have been implemented to provide regular feedback, set clear objectives, and recognise achievements, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Organisations such as Dasra, Magic Bus, and ILSS have adopted practices to ensure that their teams are aligned with their goals and are continually developing their skills. Large foundations such as the Tata Trusts and the Azim Premji Foundation have introduced proper

organisational structures and advanced talent management practices, ensuring that they can attract and retain competent professionals.

Employee engagement initiatives have also taken centre stage, aiming to boost morale and foster a sense of community and purpose within the team. These initiatives range from regular team-building activities and wellbeing programs to opportunities for professional development and skills training. The foundations under The Convergence Foundation, of which ILSS is a part, regularly organise various workshops, offsites, and other team engagement activities. These activities are not just focused on fun but address deeper issues like uncovering one's values, nuances of partnership working, and systemic leadership.

Moreover, there has been a notable correction in salary structures over the past decade. Competitive compensation packages are increasingly common, reflecting the growing recognition that professionals in the sector must be adequately rewarded for their contributions.

Communicating these developments to those outside the sector is vital. By highlighting the professional growth opportunities, competitive salaries, and supportive work environments, the sector can attract a new generation of leaders who are eager to make a meaningful impact without compromising on their personal growth and career aspirations.





6. Crossover Dynamics and Overcoming Challenges with a Shared Narrative

6.1. Typical Challenges

The transition for middle-level professionals from the private to the social sector comes with its own dynamics and challenges.

SECTORAL CONTEXT AND CULTURE

One of the most significant challenges for private sector professionals crossing over to the social sector is adjusting to a vastly different sectoral context and culture. Whilst the private sector prioritises profit, social sector organisations operate with a mission-driven focus, prioritising social impact over profit. This calls for a change in mindset from maximising financial returns to measuring success through qualitative outcomes such as community wellbeing, social equity, and sustainable development. In the private sector, efficiency, competition, and performance metrics

are paramount. In contrast, the social sector emphasises collaboration, empathy, and long-term impact, which may necessitate a period of cultural acclimatisation. Professionals need to adapt to working environments that prioritise stakeholder engagement, community participation, and a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Quick results are not possible in social impact work because social problems are inherently complex and interconnected. Unlike the private sector, where clear metrics and short-term goals drive rapid outcomes, the social sector deals with systemic issues. These issues require comprehensive multi-faceted approaches that address root causes and involve sustained efforts over time. Crossover leaders must understand that measurable impact in social impact work often takes

years, sometimes even decades. They need to display patience and resilience as they navigate these challenges. Impatience can lead to frustration and a sense of futility, potentially undermining the commitment and morale of those new to the sector. Recognising the long-term nature of social impact work is crucial for maintaining

Quick impact is not achievable in the social sector. One needs both determination and patience to make change happen in the sector.

- Kritika Choudhary, Head – Strategy, Planning and Policy, Air Pollution Action Group
(Excerpt from the roundtable).

motivation and ensuring sustained efforts towards meaningful change. Embracing this mindset will allow leaders to appreciate small victories and incremental progress, ultimately contributing to significant and lasting improvements in society.





transition will require substantial on-the-job learning. Consider a finance professional crossing over to an SPO focused on rural development. In the corporate world, their role might have involved managing large budgets with sophisticated financial tools and abundant resources. In the social sector, however, they may find themselves working with limited funds, navigating grant applications, and developing creative solutions for financial sustainability. Additionally, they must understand the socio-economic contexts of rural communities, which requires empathy and a nuanced approach to financial planning that

LIMITED EXPOSURE TO SECTORAL ISSUES

Many private sector professionals are drawn to the social sector by a desire to contribute to positive social change, but they may lack in-depth knowledge of the social issues they wish to address. This limited exposure can lead to a steep learning curve as they work to understand the root causes of problems, community dynamics, and effective intervention strategies. For example, a marketing professional moving to an SPO might need to quickly grasp the nuances of behaviour change communication, which is essential for campaigns addressing public health or education. Without prior experience in these areas, the

A lot of people are not even aware of what they want to do in the social sector; so sensitising about the sector is important. The ILSS Leadership Program was waiting to happen. The ILSS Young Leaders Program is the next big opportunity

- Vishal Chowla, Leader – RoundGlass Foundation

(Excerpt from the roundtable).

considers the community's needs and constraints.

LACK OF AWARENESS OF THE VARIETY OF ROLES

Young professionals looking to transition from the private sector often harbour misconceptions about the types of roles available in the social sector. Many envision the social sector as limited to grassroots or 'jhola wala' roles, typically associated with fieldwork in rural areas or direct community engagement. However, the reality is different – the social sector is far more diverse and dynamic. Opportunities abound in areas such as strategy and planning, where professionals can shape organisational goals and devise impactful initiatives; program management that requires overseeing the execution of projects, ensuring that they meet objectives and deliver sustainable

‘There has been a significant correction in social sector pay in the last 10 years. The sector has realised that it has to reward appropriately to attract the right talent and motivate people to bring in their best.

- Anu Prasad – Founder and CEO, ILSS
(Excerpt from the roundtable).

outcomes; research and analytics that focus on positions involving data-driven decision-making to inform policies and programs; advocacy roles that focus on influencing public policy and driving systemic change; marketing and communications roles that help raise awareness and mobilise support for social causes; and impact evaluation roles that are crucial for assessing the effectiveness of interventions and guiding future improvements. There can be several other roles.

IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Young crossover professionals often experience imposter syndrome, doubting their ability to contribute effectively despite their valuable skill sets. Although skills such as problem-solving, strategy and planning, analytics, and



project management are highly beneficial and transferrable, these professionals may still feel inadequate. This stems largely from a lack of awareness about the actual work and demands

Social sector employers have realised that they have to reward deserving candidates adequately so that they are able to attract the best talent for the complexity of issues that they are trying to address.

of the social sector. The reality is that the social sector greatly benefits from strategic thinkers, efficient planners, and adept problem-solvers who can bring fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. By understanding that their private sector skills are not only relevant but essential for driving systemic change and organisational growth, young private professionals can overcome imposter syndrome.

FINANCIAL AND LIFESTYLE ADJUSTMENTS

Given the stage in life they are at, young professionals must seriously consider their financial commitments and priorities. As a result of crossing over, they might have to make financial adjustments. A report released by the Centre for Social Impact and Philanthropy, Ashoka University, 2022, highlighted significant disparity in pay within the social sector, particularly among NGOs, social enterprises, and funding organisations, when compared to the broader Indian market encompassing local corporations, multinational corporations, and other industries. In private companies, it is often noticed that payscales of the CSR teams can be lower than

People evaluate current as well as future compensation given it is a career switch with long term implications. Hence, lot of fellowships don't become viable for many. A social sector job must be able to offer a package that is viable and looks attractive.

- Anisha Grover, Lead – Strategy,
Investments and Portfolio,
The Convergence Foundation
(recent crossover from Bain & Co.)
(Excerpt from the roundtable)

other teams. Young leaders must reconcile their desire for meaningful work with the financial realities of limited pay and benefits. This financial gap is often compounded by the need for increased resourcefulness. SPOs frequently operate with limited funds, necessitating employees to juggle multiple responsibilities and wear various hats. This environment requires a high degree of flexibility and adaptability, which can be a significant shift from the specialised roles and structured environments typical to the private sector. Having said that, there have been significant pay corrections in the social sector in the last decade. For several leading SPOs today, the pay may be lower than in the private sector, but the difference is not significant. This is also because social sector employers have realised that they have to reward deserving candidates adequately so that they are able to attract the best talent for the complexity of issues that they are trying to address.

To overcome the perception challenges that the sector faces, it is important to address the myths and create a shared narrative for the sector.

Paying well in the social sector is certainly possible, but paying equal to the corporate sector is not possible.'

- Amitav Virmani, Founder and CEO – The
Education Alliance
(Excerpt from the roundtable).



Swami

ivekananda

”

Take risks in
your life, if
you win, you
can lead! If
you lose, you
can guide!



6.2. Tackling Myths with a Shared Narrative for the Sector

The social sector in India must transform its narrative from one of distress and scarcity to one of excitement, promise, and abundance. Building a shared narrative, that highlights the dynamic and impactful nature of its contribution, is crucial for attracting the right and capable leadership, fostering public engagement, and driving real change. By focusing on showcasing innovative solutions, inspiring success stories, and the tangible impact on communities, the sector can redefine how it is perceived and experienced.

Organisations like SEWA, Central Square Foundation (CSF), and Indus Action have crafted a positive shared narrative in the social sector by creating significant impacts at both policy and grassroots levels.

SEWA, for example, focuses on rural development and has been instrumental in empowering women through microfinance initiatives. By providing women with the financial resources to start their own businesses, SEWA has not only transformed individual lives but also informed policy changes to support women entrepreneurs. Anecdotes from SEWA's work include women who, with a

small loan, started their own weaving business that eventually employed multiple villagers, showcasing the ripple effect of their grassroots impact.

Central Square Foundation (CSF) targets educational reform in India. Through rigorous research and advocacy, CSF has informed national education policies, emphasising the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy. Their work at the policy level ensures that millions of children benefit from improved educational standards. At the same time, they collaborate with schools to implement these policies effectively, ensuring that changes are felt at the classroom level.

Indus Action leverages data and community engagement to ensure the implementation of government policies such as the Right to Education Act. It works with communities to build awareness and active citizenship through rapid last-mile campaigns, civil society to nurture community leaders and coalitions to build platforms like Bharat Welfare Stack and Universal Benefits Interface, and Governments to enable digital public goods through policy

implementation efforts at scale.

Building a shared narrative entails portraying the sector in a desired light, substantiated by stories of real impact and innovation, to engage with the ecosystem. Here are some of the pegs that can be used to inform messaging and communication for the sector:

The social sector in India must transform its narrative from one of distress and scarcity to one of excitement, promise, and abundance.

Solving some of the most complex problems:

The sector offers leaders the opportunity to work on some of the most complex challenges that humanity faces. Solving for such problems demands the coming together of the best brains and adopting a multi-stakeholder approach with the government, civil society, and communities.

Celebrating successes: Highlighting successful interventions and positive outcomes showcases the sector's effectiveness and potential. This can be achieved through impact reports, case studies, and multimedia storytelling.

Emphasising professionalism: Demonstrating the sector's use of strategic planning, data analytics, and innovative solutions can dispel myths of inefficiency and attract leaders with diverse skill sets.

Promoting collaboration: Showcasing examples of successful partnerships between NGOs, corporations, and governments can highlight the sector's collaborative spirit and capacity for large-scale impact.

Focusing on abundance: Shifting the lens from scarcity to abundance involves highlighting the resources, opportunities, and innovative solutions available within the sector. This positive outlook can inspire confidence and engage stakeholders looking for meaningful and impactful avenues to play their role as active citizens.

Highlighting a professional working environment:

The sector is evolving to offer a competitive work environment featuring structured career paths, professional development, robust talent management, and improved salaries. This will help in attracting, engaging, and retaining leaders with the desired competencies.

From my volunteering experience, I can vouch for the crucial role that storytelling and messaging play in communicating a cause and its passion. Crafting a promising narrative has the power to galvanise young leaders towards change.'

- Himansshi Singhal,
Active volunteer in community-based projects,
Deloitte India
(Excerpt from the roundtable).

By embracing a narrative of abundance, excitement, and promise, the social sector in India can redefine itself as a vibrant, professional, and impactful field. This shared narrative will not only help attract capable young leaders but also foster greater public engagement, driving the sector towards achieving its mission of creating a better future for all. Through a shared narrative that celebrates successes, emphasises professionalism, promotes collaboration, and focuses on abundance, the social sector can inspire a new generation of leaders eager to contribute to the nation's economic equity and social justice goals.

7. Social Sector Career Opportunities

In this section, we will provide an indicative list of roles that crossover leaders can expect once they have acquired the knowledge, skills, and mindset required for this transition. It is important to note that there are a variety of roles in the private sector too that serve social and environmental concerns; this may be due to Government mandate or purely social responsibility or both these reasons.

With more and more people realising the urgency of progressive development, climate change and empowerment of marginalised populations, social sector jobs are only going to multiply.

- Mehwash Hussain, Sub Editor – The Telegraph
(*Telegraph India*).

7.1. Social Sector

RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS

Research and analytics professionals play a crucial role in gathering, analysing, and interpreting data to inform decision-making and strategy. They conduct needs assessments, baseline studies, and impact evaluations to understand social issues, identify target populations, and measure the effectiveness of programs. Their work involves using statistical tools and methodologies to derive insights from data, producing reports that guide program design, policy advocacy, and resource allocation. By turning data into actionable information, they help organisations optimise their interventions, track progress, and demonstrate impact to stakeholders, including funders and communities.

STRATEGY

Strategy professionals focus on long-term planning and aligning organisational activities with mission and goals. They develop strategic

plans that define objectives, identify opportunities for growth, and outline paths to achieve desired outcomes. This involves market analysis, stakeholder engagement, and scenario planning to anticipate future challenges and trends. They work closely with leadership teams to ensure that programs and initiatives are cohesive and effective, driving innovation and organisational development. By providing a strategic vision, they help SPOs navigate complex environments and enhance their overall impact.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project management professionals oversee the planning, execution, and completion of projects aimed at achieving defined objectives. They are responsible for defining project scope, setting timelines, allocating resources, and managing budgets. Their work involves coordinating with various stakeholders, including beneficiaries, partners, and funders, to ensure that projects are





delivered on time and within budget. They use project management tools and methodologies to monitor progress, mitigate risks, and address any issues that arise. Effective project management ensures that social initiatives are implemented effectively and efficiently.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Impact Evaluation professionals assess the effectiveness of social sector programs by measuring their outcomes and impact on target populations. They design and implement evaluation frameworks using qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data before, during, and after program implementation. Their work involves analysing this data to determine whether the programs meet their objectives and deliver meaningful change. Impact evaluators provide critical feedback and recommendations for program improvement, ensuring accountability to stakeholders and informing future program design. Their insights help organisations understand what works, what doesn't, and why, ultimately enhancing program effectiveness and impact.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising professionals are responsible for securing financial resources necessary for organisational sustainability and program implementation. They develop and execute fundraising strategies that include grant writing, donor cultivation, and fundraising events. Their work involves building relationships with individual donors, corporate sponsors, foundations, and government agencies. They also manage fundraising campaigns and use various communication channels to engage potential supporters. Effective fundraising ensures that social sector organisations have the financial stability to continue their work and expand their reach, enabling them to achieve their mission and goals.



ENABLING FUNCTIONS

Enabling functions encompass a range of roles that facilitate the smooth operation and effectiveness of the organisation. This includes roles in finance, human resources, IT, legal, and administration. These professionals ensure that the organisation's operations are efficient, compliant with regulations, and equipped with the necessary resources and infrastructure. For example, HR professionals manage recruitment, training, and employee wellbeing; finance professionals handle budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting; and IT professionals maintain technological systems and data security. By providing these essential services, enabling functions support the overall mission and enhance the organisation's capacity to deliver social impact.



7.2. Private Sector

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Professionals in CSR roles design, implement, and oversee initiatives that align with the company's values and community needs. This involves focusing on specified impact areas to ensure compliance with the Companies Act, 2013, which mandates CSR spending for private sector companies based on a set of criteria. Key responsibilities include identifying partnership opportunities with SPOs, managing CSR budgets, and ensuring the effective use of funds. They are also tasked with measuring and reporting the impact of CSR activities, often collaborating with various departments to integrate CSR into the broader business strategy. Stakeholder engagement is crucial, requiring CSR professionals to communicate effectively with internal teams, community leaders, government bodies, and other stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNANCE (ESG)

The ESG function focuses on integrating environmental, social, and governance considerations into business operations and decision-making processes. Professionals in ESG roles ensure that the company's activities are sustainable and ethically sound, addressing the increasing demands from stakeholders for transparency and accountability. Their work involves developing and implementing policies that reduce environmental impact, such as carbon footprint reduction, initiating good practices in waste management, and fostering sustainable sourcing. On the social front, ESG professionals focus on issues such as labour practices, community relations, and

human rights. Governance responsibilities include ensuring compliance with regulatory standards, promoting ethical business practices, and enhancing transparency through robust reporting mechanisms. Key tasks include conducting ESG risk assessments, setting performance targets, and preparing sustainability reports aligned with the National Guidelines on Responsible Business

Needless to say, compensation comes in many forms, money being just one of them. The challenge, the satisfaction and the impact that you are able to create [in the social sector] are less tangible but no less valuable and enriching.

- Aparna Sanjay,
Director – Impact Catalyst Foundation Inc.
(*LinkedIn Pulse*)

Conduct (NGRBC), 2019. They collaborate with various departments to embed ESG principles into corporate strategies and operations, driving initiatives that contribute to long-term business sustainability.

SOCIAL IMPACT CONSULTING

Social impact consulting firms provide strategic guidance and support to organisations aiming to achieve significant social outcomes. They leverage expertise in various sectors to help clients design, implement, and scale impactful initiatives. Dalberg, for instance, operates globally, working with governments, corporations, and SPOs to develop innovative solutions to development challenges. They conduct rigorous research and analysis to inform policy and strategy, driving sustainable development. Sattva focuses on end-to-end solutions for social enterprises and nonprofits.

They offer services from strategic planning and organisational development to impact assessment and implementation. Sattva's comprehensive approach ensures that social initiatives are scalable and sustainable, aligning with the broader goals of clients and stakeholders. The Bridgespan Group collaborates with SPOs, philanthropists, and foundations to address critical social issues. They provide strategic planning, leadership development, and organisational support, helping clients maximise their social impact. Bridgespan's work includes extensive research and publication of insights on best practices in the social sector, contributing to the broader knowledge base and advancing the field.

To focus on enhancing capability and leadership development for the social sector, various programs and fellowships have been initiated over the years.



8. Landscape of Leadership Development Programs

8.1. Existing Programs and Fellowships

The landscape of leadership development programs for the social sector is dynamic and constantly evolving. Several institutions provide programs ranging from short certification courses to diplomas and fellowships.

A peep into some of the prominent courses, programs, and fellowships in India is provided below under three categories:

FEE-BASED COURSES

The Post Graduate Program in Development Management (PGPDM), offered by ISDM, is a one-year full-time program that integrates management principles with social sector needs, covering crucial modules such as development theory, organisational management, fundraising, and program design. The Dasra Social Impact Leadership Program aims to help SPO program heads elevate their leadership styles, foster organisational culture, craft compelling narratives, and promote sustainability and resilience. IIAS School of Social Sciences is an associate centre of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, for conducting their Post Graduate Diploma, Advanced Certificate, and Certificate programs in Social Entrepreneurship and CSR. These part-time programs target early to mid-career professionals interested in social entrepreneurship. The Post Graduate Programme in Development Management (PGPDM), offered by Shreyans Prasad

Jain Institute Of Management And Research, targets professionals working in or intending to work in the social sector, including SPOs, foundations, corporate for-profit CSR functions, social policy or welfare departments of governments, and social enterprises specialising in development management. Jagriti Yatra is a unique and transformative 15-day train journey across India, aimed at inspiring and nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among the country's youth.

Over the past five years, we have spoken to more than 200 young people who've wanted to do something impactful but were confused about how to go ahead with it. We have had similar experiences, taking the corporate route at McKinsey for a few years before joining the nonprofit space by working at SEWA and Pratham.

- Azeez Gupta and Namya Mahajan (in 2020); currently Founder and Co-Founder of Rocket Learning.

(India Development Review).
(*LinkedIn Pulse*)

Finally, The ILSS Leadership Program is the flagship offering of ILSS that equips senior leaders with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to navigate the complexities of the social sector effectively.



SOCIAL IMPACT FELLOWSHIPS

There is a range of fellowships that aim to build leadership and operational skills to address complex social challenges. These fellowships target early-to mid-career professionals from diverse backgrounds who are committed to social impact. The fellowships normally span between 1-2 years and include a mix of in-person and virtual components. The programs combine on-the-ground experience with structured learning and mentorship. Fellows work on live projects, focusing on areas such as education, health, and livelihoods, amongst other social issues. These programs emphasise collaborative problem-solving, hands-on experience, and networking opportunities, with regular feedback and support to enhance the fellows' capabilities and impact. Prominent fellowships include: Young Leaders Collective by Akshaya Patra, Acumen Regional Fellowship, Azim Premji Foundation Fellowship, Gandhi Fellowship, Banyan Impact Fellowship, SBI Youth for India, Teach for India Fellowship, and Goonj Fellowship, amongst others.

CHIEF MINISTER'S FELLOWSHIPS

There is a range of Chief Minister's fellowships promoted by various States: Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister's Fellowship Program, Haryana Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates Program, Maharashtra Chief Minister Fellowship Program, Odisha Chief Minister's Fellowship for Excellence in Public Service, Rajasthan Chief Minister Fellowship Program, and Telangana Chief Minister Fellowship Program, amongst others. Such fellowships are typically for one year. They aim to leverage the skills and enthusiasm of young professionals to assist in the implementation of key Government projects and policies, driving efficient governance and socio-economic development. Fellows are placed in

various State Government departments and projects where they work on initiatives related to education, health, infrastructure, and rural development. The curricula emphasise hands-on experience, with fellows engaging in field visits, data analysis, and the implementation and monitoring of Government schemes. Regular mentoring sessions, workshops, and review meetings are conducted to provide continuous learning and professional development.

Despite the myriad of social impact programs and fellowships available in India, there remains a conspicuous gap in the ecosystem of a dedicated program tailored for young private sector leaders aspiring to transition into the social sector. This is an emerging need in the social sector that must be met squarely.



8.2. The Emerging Need

The existing social sector leadership development programs primarily target entry-level graduates or aim to harness the experience of senior leaders. These programs offer invaluable experiences but are not designed to address the unique needs of mid-career private sector professionals. Young leaders in the private sector possess critical skills in strategy, planning, analytics, and project management, which are highly beneficial for social impact work. However, their transition is often hampered by a lack of awareness and understanding of the social sector's intricacies, complexities, and on-ground realities. The available initiatives do not sufficiently bridge this gap, leaving many professionals feeling uncertain about their relevance in a new context.

Unlike the private sector, where the focus is primarily on first-order effects, the social sector requires professionals to consider second-order effects and unintended consequences of their actions.

Drawing from the unique dynamics of the social sector, young leaders must be orientated to

what working in the sector really entails and how they can navigate this journey effectively. They must appreciate that, in the social sector, leaders must balance the need for operational discipline with the discretionary nature of the work, where creativity and normative decision-making are crucial. At the same time, they must navigate the tension between adhering to processes and prioritising the overarching purpose or mission, especially at the middle-level. This demands the prioritisation of purpose over strict adherence to process, while still maintaining process integrity to ensure organisational effectiveness and credibility. Unlike the private sector, where the focus is primarily on first-order effects, the social sector requires professionals to consider second-order effects and unintended consequences of their actions.

The growing demand for leadership in the social sector underscores the need for a focused program that targets mid-level professionals. The social sector is expanding rapidly, creating numerous opportunities that require strategic, analytical, and managerial expertise to navigate complex challenges and drive innovation, a growing need that young private sector leaders are able to address. It is equally important for such a program to be transparent about the various sectoral and lifestyle challenges for professionals working in the sector. A focus on mindset becomes important in such a situation that balances purpose and pays for a life of greater wellbeing. Fortunately, with the variety of organisations in the sector, there is nothing like a standard pay scale across organisations. Large foundations, international organisations, and various social sector advisory firms have a propensity to pay higher than the average. It is important that the target audience is made aware

The leaders who will take missions forward tomorrow can't be a carbon copy of today, not if organisations hope to bring the best of their teams and communities to bear in the work. A leadership development system can drive professional growth for a more diverse set of leaders in an organisation, considering race, ethnicity, gender, caste, and other markers of identity that have historically excluded talent or created “ceilings” for advancement.

- Lindsey Waldron, Preeta Nayak, Teni Lanre-Amos, Bradley Seeman – Bridgespan Group
(*Bridgespan Blog*).



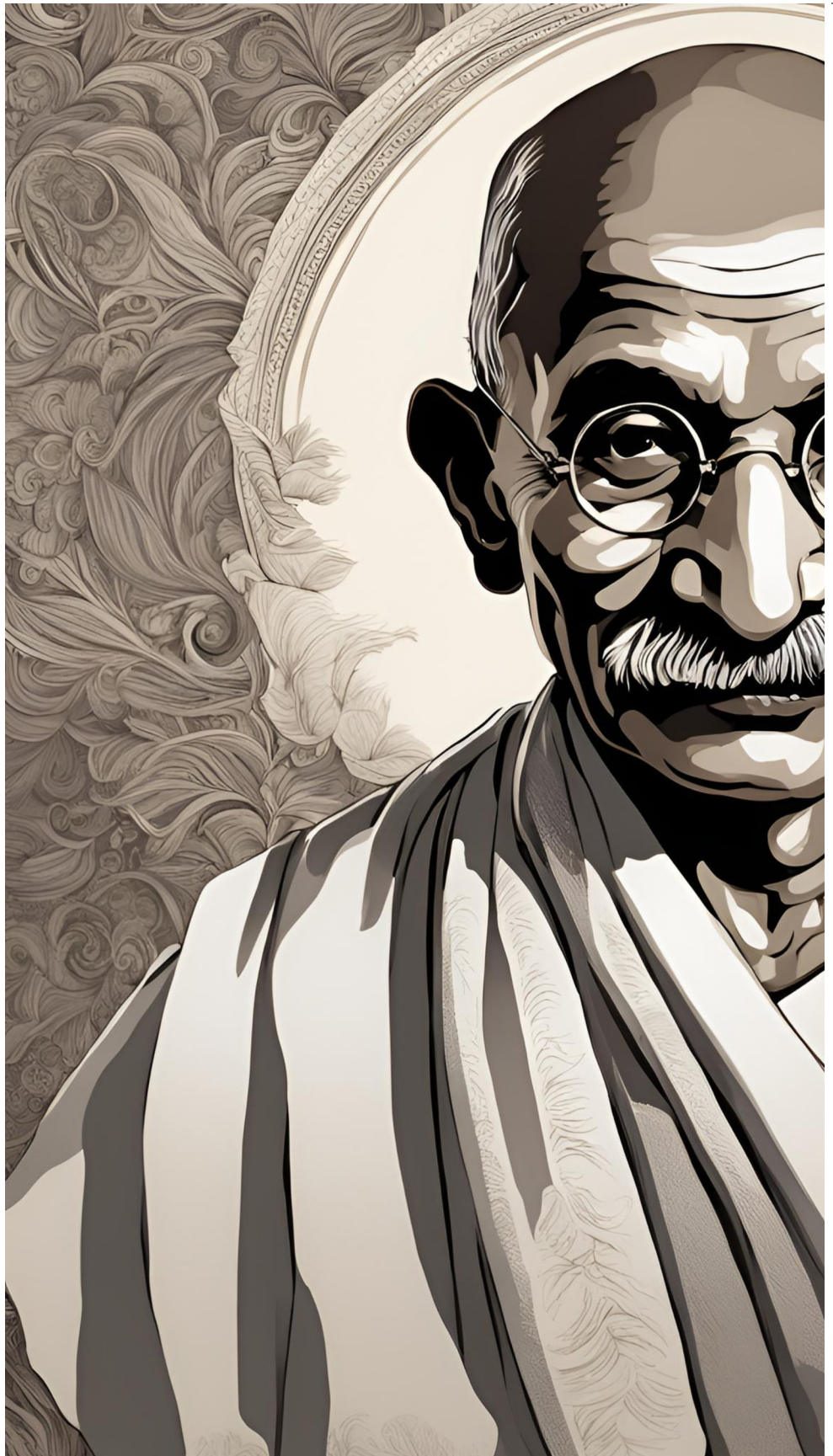
of the realities – both challenges and opportunities – transparently, as they navigate their journey into the sector.

To cater to this varied and nuanced range of requirements for potential young crossover leaders, a specialised program is required to hone the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for effective social impact. Such a program must provide comprehensive training in social sector dynamics, community engagement, impact evaluation, and policy analysis while leveraging the professionals' existing skills. By addressing this gap, we can facilitate a smoother transition for private sector professionals, enriching the social sector with experienced, driven individuals capable of leading transformative change. This focused approach will not only strengthen the social sector's capacity but also fulfil the aspirations of many seeking to make a meaningful impact. This is the thought that fuelled our interest in designing and launching a focused program for young leaders, The ILSS Young Leaders Program is detailed in the next section.

”

Your beliefs
become your
thoughts.
Your thoughts
become your
words.
Your words
become your
actions.
Your actions
become your
habits.

Mahatma
Gandhi



9. The ILSS Young Leaders Program

9.1. Why Do We Need This Program?

The social sector is in a high-growth phase in India, driven by the escalating availability of CSR funds and philanthropic capital. The sector's rapid expansion has underscored the need for young leadership capable of driving innovation and navigating complex challenges. Parallely, the symphony of youthful idealism is rising, a chorus of young leaders fueled by the passion to drive economic prosperity and champion social justice. The transition for young leaders from the private to the social sector comes with its own dynamics and myriad of challenges, including understanding the sectoral context and culture, limited exposure to sectoral issues, lack of awareness of the variety of roles in the social sector, and doubt about transferability of skills. Such realities endorse the need for a focused program that targets young leaders. To meet this demand, we have crafted a specialised program to hone the knowledge, skills, and mindsets necessary for a meaningful transition to the social sector. Our Program provides comprehensive training in social sector dynamics, stakeholder engagement, impact evaluation, and policy analysis whilst leveraging the wealth of expertise that young leaders from the corporate sector bring in.

9.2. Program Outcomes

The ILSS Young Leaders Program is designed to achieve the following outcomes:

Sharpened leadership acumen: Participants will hone leadership capabilities that will enable them to think strategically, navigate complex social sector challenges, and make data-driven decisions that drive positive social impact.

Social sector expertise: Participants will build deep understanding of the social sector landscape, fostering an informed and impactful approach to social change.

Build an entrepreneurial mindset: Participants will foster a lens of abundance, rather than scarcity, and the ability to unearth high-leverage opportunities that can create catalytic impact by overcoming challenges at every level.

Confident career transition: Participants will benefit from personalised career roadmaps and placement support, ensuring a smooth and successful entry into the social sector.

Enabling engagements: Participants will engage with a vibrant ILSS community of alumni, faculty, and mentors, fostering personal learning and growth.

9.3. Program Curriculum Pillars

The ILSS Young Leaders Program curriculum stands on our five pillars of Social Sector Leadership:

DEVELOPMENTAL

Effective leadership must begin with self-discovery and self-awareness. Self-discovery is the process of gaining insight into one's own personality, values, beliefs, strengths, and weaknesses. It involves introspection and

reflection, leading to a deeper understanding of oneself. Self-awareness is the ongoing conscious knowledge of one's character,

**Effective leadership must
begin with self-discovery
and self-awareness.**



feelings, motives, and desires. It allows leaders to understand how their actions and decisions impact others and the environment in which they operate. Together, these processes help leaders align their personal values and motivations with their professional roles, enabling them to lead with authenticity and integrity.

PERSPECTIVAL

India's social fabric is intricately woven with layers of cultural, economic, and political diversity. Each region has its unique challenges and opportunities, shaped by historical, geographical, and social

India's social fabric is intricately woven with layers of cultural, economic, and political diversity.

factors. A one-size-fits-all approach to social impact interventions often fails to address the specific needs and circumstances of different communities. Therefore, a perspectival approach that takes into account local nuances is necessary for effective intervention. Such an approach considers the unique characteristics and needs of specific target geographies and populations, ensuring that strategies are tailored and contextually relevant.

SECTORAL

Effective leadership in the social sector necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the various sectors in which interventions are designed and implemented. These mandates cover critical sectors such as education, health, livelihoods, climate and sustainability, gender, civic area regeneration, and the restoration of places of historical and environmental importance, amongst others.

FUNCTIONAL

Involves understanding of the policy context and program design that includes strategic planning, resource mobilisation, program development and evaluation through theory of change, programmatic communication and advocacy, the ability to think creatively, adapt to changing circumstances, and embracing innovation to address evolving social challenges and opportunities. Such understanding hinges on a systems thinking mindset that appreciates and accounts for interconnections, feedback, and emergent behaviours and patterns.

ORGANISATIONAL

Effective social impact leadership demands a suite of organisational capabilities such as talent management (recruiting, developing, and engaging diverse sets of sectoral and crossover teams), fundraising (securing resources through grants and partnerships), marketing (storytelling, branding, reputation management), digital (tools and platforms process efficiency, knowledge management, analytics and innovation), and board governance (ensuring oversight, accountability, and strategic guidance).



9.4. Program Curriculum Overview

Each module consists of a fixed number of focused sessions designed to achieve its specific learning objectives:

Module 1 – Foundational leadership: This module sets the stage for the young leader's social sector journey starting with self-discovery and self-awareness. Participants will be led on to explore the complexities of India's social sector landscape through a systems thinking lens.

Module 2 – Sectoral landscape: This module forms the core knowledge base for the young leader's social sector journey. It dives deep into the nuances of the social sector in India, equipping participants with the necessary understanding and practical skills to navigate complex challenges.

Module 3 - Innovation and transformation: This module ignites the young leader's creativity and equips them with the understanding of approaches and tools to craft innovative solutions for social transformation.

Module 4 – Networks and careers: This module equips young leaders to make their foray into the social sector. They will learn valuable communication and networking skills, explore marketing and storytelling strategies for social good, and receive a tailored career roadmap and counselling.

9.5. Our Pedagogy

We adopt a holistic pedagogy that hinges on self-reflection, expert-lead sessions, and peer learning. Our pedagogy is supported by a suite of learning approaches and tools, including exposure to theories and frameworks, casestudies, discussions, and immersive experiences.

Self-reflection: Our facilitators help participants unlock their inner potential by aligning their personal motivations with opportunities where they can make an impact.

Expert-lead sessions: Participants will learn from leading social sector and industry experts as they share their real-world experiences and good practices.

Immersive experiences: Participants will immerse themselves in fieldwork and personal interactions with founders and stakeholders.

Stakeholder engagements: Our program fosters ongoing engagements with peers, alumni, mentors, and the ILSS network, supporting the participants' personal and professional growth.



9.6. Program Structure

Our Program structure leads participants through an engaging and dynamic 60+ hours of blended learning.

PART 1: INTENSIVE RESIDENTIAL COMPONENT (4 DAYS)

The Program kicks off with a dynamic 4-day intensive residential experience. This in-person component allows for immersive learning, fosters strong connections within the cohort, and establishes a foundation for the online modules to follow. Here's what participants can expect:

Core leadership modules: In-depth training sessions on strategic leadership, social sector good practices, and innovative approaches that are aligned with our five pillars of Social Sector Leadership.

Interactive workshops: Engagement in interactive workshops designed to hone participants' communication, collaboration, fundraising, and program management skills. Faculty sessions and panel discussions: Participants will gain insights from inspiring leaders in the social sector and the industry through keynote addresses and thought-provoking panel discussions.

Field immersion: Participants will benefit from a curated field immersion with a social purpose organisation and will receive the opportunity to engage with the founder.

Networking opportunities: Participants will connect with fellow aspiring leaders, share experiences, and build a strong support network

through dedicated networking events and social activities.

PART 2: ONLINE LEARNING COMPONENT (8 SATURDAYS, 4 HOURS EACH)

Following the intensive residential program, the learning journey continues with a series of online modules spread over 8 Saturdays. Each online session will last approximately 4 hours. Here's what participants can expect:

Deep dives and case studies: Participants will delve deeper into specific sectoral domains such as education, health, gender, livelihoods, and sustainability, amongst others.

Catalytic innovations: Participants will learn about innovative finance, fundraising, and storytelling for the social sector that can enable catalytic impact.

Faculty sessions: Participants will learn from renowned experts and practitioners in the sector through direct interactions and engagements.

Peer-learning and group activities: Participants will continue to engage with their cohort through online discussions, group activities, and peer-learning opportunities.

Expert mentorship: Participants will benefit from personalised guidance and support from experienced leaders and gain firsthand exposure to the sector by closely engaging with a social purpose organisation.

9.7. Who Is This Program For?

This Program is specifically designed for young professionals who are passionate about challenging the status quo and driving positive social and economic change in India. Participants with 5+ years of experience and demonstrating a strong ability to deliver results for their organisation are eligible. Participants must be driven by a strong desire to enable direct engines of economic growth and advance social justice goals.

[Find out more about The ILSS Young Leaders Program.](#)

Dhawan

Ashish



“The social sector in India is at the forefront of solving for some of the most complex and challenging problems that humanity faces.

The ILSS Young Leaders Program is a one-of-its-kind Program that will equip you with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to navigate the sector’s complexities with purpose and for impact.”

- Ashish Dhawan,
Founder & CEO -
The Convergence
Foundation

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