



At The Same Table™ (ATST), hosted by EdelGive Foundation, is an equal platform for free and frank discussion on issues and ideas that collectively concern the funding community.

AT THE SAME TABLE™

MUMBAI, 15th APRIL 2019

On 15th April 2019, The Bridgespan Group and EdelGive Foundation hosted At The Same Table™ in Mumbai, where organisations shared their insights on the value of strategising and supporting **capacity building as a critical enabler of social development programmes**. EdelGive Foundation and A.T.E. Chandra Foundation who understand the long-term implications of the problem, are investing in institution building of NGOs. The Bridgespan Group is building and sharing knowledge on the salience of “pay-what-it-takes” philanthropy.

It was reiterated at the discussion that delivering strong and sustainable social outcomes are also achieved when we invest in capacity building of organisations. Traditionally, funders have been investing in program delivery and services, while the underpinnings of those programs—organisational capabilities and financial health—are mostly neglected. Participants also agreed that programme strategy and efficiency, monitoring and evaluation, communications and branding, legal support, human resources and organisational development, IT and Data support are all areas which can enhance the productivity and effectiveness of programs, but which most often remain out of the mandate of donors.

However, participants also clarified the need to be able to define capacity building, as not just the process of scaling, but of building efficiency in any aspects of programme delivery. Also, the need to be able to create a focus on the establishing the outcome of investing in capacity building, which might not be quantitatively measured but is significantly improving the process.

The conversation concluded with participants agreeing to create a collective group focused on investing in building capacities of organizations towards achieving their goals.

Other key highlights of the conversation are shared below:

- The participants agreed that investing in capacity building of organisations enables them to create efficiency in their programme creation and delivery and build sustainability of the organisation as it continues to grow.
- However a clear definition of capacity building was required which not only includes scaling and sustainability, but mainly building efficiencies in achieving targets, whether immediate or forthcoming.
- Participants also reiterated that philanthropic giving and funding in the social sector continues to be traditional in nature, limiting to funding in the programme and its elements and not in growing organisations running these programmes.
- The Bridgespan group highlighted that globally as well, the focus on funding capacity building has been low, with one of the main areas of contention of senior management of some of the largest foundations, being inability to recover costs.
- Another challenge within capacity building which limits the interest of the funder is the inability to quantify outcomes. The participants reiterated that capacity building outcomes, though different for different organisations, need to somehow be pre-defined by both the funding partner and the organisation.
- One of the areas where capacity building has enabled outcome delivery has been in the area of program strategy. Organisations are increasingly seeing benefits in focussing on a strategic plan while creating programmes. Other areas where capacity building is increasingly required is in building M&E systems, strong IT back-end support, communications and branding, and legal support.
- Omidyar Networks shared their 'trust to transparency' model which creates a structure of funding which is not focussed on the entrepreneur or the organisation but focused on the mission at large. This stems from the existing overall lack of trust within the industry and understanding between the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors which also limits direct funding for organisational growth.
- There is also a lack of knowledge sharing within the sector to understand the benefits and needs for funding capacity building. The participants discussed the need to showcase the best case studies across the sector, to generate wider awareness and acceptance.

The session concluded with a consensus that there needs to be a collaboration of efforts that bring together a group of investors, willing to fund capacity building and NGOs, willing to assign that funding towards immediate organisational needs. The Bridgespan Group will curate the process and create a platform for further discussion.



EdelGive Foundation

EdelGive Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Edelweiss Group of companies. It is a non-profit company registered under section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (now Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013), engaged in philanthropy, and promotion and development of public charitable activities.

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