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A Strategic Review of Seva Mandir

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Summary

This report is the result of a strategic review of Seva Mandir, prepared at the request of its management. We assessed Seva Mandir's past, present and potential future strategy, on the basis of extensive consultation with the extended management team, existing documentation and field visits. We believe that Seva Mandir is at an important juncture, driven by a significant change in the environment in which it works, including substantial changes in the funding context—what we term the “resource nexus”.

Seva Mandir is a remarkable organization. It has worked for decades in some of the poorest parts of Rajasthan, committed to furthering social justice, improved living conditions, gender equality and equitable deliberative local processes. It has had an especial emphasis on managing common resources, of pastureland and forestry, and providing basic health and education services.

There is extensive evidence of Seva Mandir's impact, notably in the village level organizations it has helped form, the successes in common resource management, in the reach of pre-schools, and in actual results of basic schools it runs. There is, however, substantial scope for better documentation of its impact, and this is of rising importance in the changing environment.

As an organization, Seva Mandir has an impressive alignment between its core values, its organizational practices and structural features—such as human resources. In particular it has an unusual good balance between consensual, participative, supportive (“feminine”) and more target- and data-oriented (“masculine”) organizational practices. This is an important strength, and needs to be maintained in the face of two challenges: significant staff turnover, and shifting demands from the external environment.

In the past Seva Mandir has quite successfully navigated major changes in the context in which it works. Its core approach was developed in the context of a relatively distant state, and was based on a combination of building local deliberative village institutions and working on local problems of managing the commons and basic service delivery. These were mutually supportive in what Seva Mandir refers to as a “constructive” engagement. As the Indian state extended its reach, especially in the 1990s and 2000s—and in many areas encouraged more participatory or cooperative processes—Seva Mandir often worked with the state, for example on Joint Forest Management (JFM) and implementation of local public works under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The last few years have, however, brought substantial changes in Seva Mandir's environment. This has flowed from two sources. First, the donor environment has changed: there has been a major reduction in donor support for core, long-term activities around building village institutions that are central to Seva Mandir's work. Seva Mandir has managed to recover overall funding, but only through a large increase in the number of donors, including from CSR resources, that are typically linked to short-term, easily quantifiable impacts. Second, the state

has in many areas (for example JFM, the Rajasthan Rural Livelihoods Programme), withdrawn from working with civil society organizations. In other areas it has continued to seek cooperation when it recognizes implementation challenges. (Seva Mandir has, for example, agreed to take over the management of a set of government anganwadis/pre-schools).

We believe this new “resource nexus” represents a real shift, that Seva Mandir will have to adjust to. We explored a set of strategic tensions with the extended management team. We found strong agreement on the need to adapt to change and see this is an important organizational strength. We also surfaced a number of choices that Seva Mandir faces, in terms of its business model vis-à-vis donors, alternative modes of engaging with the government, and the case for a significant expansion of revenue-earning social enterprises. The issues, and the views of the management team, are laid out in this report. It is recommended that Seva Mandir undertake a serious process of reflection and then resolve its future direction of travel.

Whichever route Seva Mandir chooses, we believe it will benefit immeasurably from telling its story better, through more systematic data collection (backed by further use of new technologies), along with careful documentation and interpretation of its work. This will also support its capacity to engage more effectively with the new donor environment, as well as underpin its internal processes of management. We also believe that it will benefit from bringing in some more external talent to complement its very strong internal team. It is of great importance that any changes build on its current organizational strength, with explicit attention to the maintenance of its core values and identity during a period of change.

Introduction

Seva Mandir requested IMAGO Global Grassroots to undertake a strategic assessment of its work, in the broader context of development change and the role of civil society in India. This report is the product of this work. The terms of reference are attached as Annex 1. The work involved a visit to Seva Mandir and its field activities in the two weeks of July 11 to 23, 2016, supported by review of extensive background documentation. The work was undertaken in a participatory way, drawing on extensive discussions and interactions with Seva Mandir's management and staff. The results of some of these interactions are reported within this report, especially with respect to the views of the extended management team. However, the report itself and specific recommendations are solely of the IMAGO team.

Seva Mandir's mission and activities have been extensively described in past studies, including the impressive series of reports, plans and other documentation prepared by Seva Mandir itself, the previous review by Deep Joshi undertaken in 2009, and various other documents by observers. There have also been a series of academic studies undertaken in cooperation with Seva Mandir, though most of these have not involved the assessment of Seva Mandir as an organization. In light of this past work, this report undertakes relatively little general description of Seva Mandir, but rather seeks to place Seva Mandir's current strategic choices within the context of the shifting external environment, reviews some of its specific activities (as guided by the TOR), undertakes an assessment of its organizational functioning, and discusses options for future strategy.

The report is organized as follows. Section 1 sets the stage by placing Seva Mandir's overall approach within the context of the changing overall presence of the Indian state. Section 2 provides an assessment of implementation, focusing, as requested, in relative detail on the three areas of village level institutions, education, and gender. Section 3 provides the results of an organizational scan, including an assessment of Seva Mandir's core values and how internal structures and activities align with these values. Section 4 describes the changing patterns of resource availability Seva Mandir faces. Section 5 discusses alternative pathways Seva Mandir could follow to navigate this changing resource (and broader) environment. Finally Section 6 gives our views on how to manage Seva Mandir as an organization in a period of transition. The overall recommendations for the future are in Sections 5 and 6.

Section 1: The context for Seva Mandir's work

Seva Mandir's core mission is to transform the lives of the rural poor in Udaipur and Rajsamand Districts. This is viewed as a task of social transformation: changing social norms away from hierarchies of caste and class to ones based on social justice, gender equality and collective well-being.

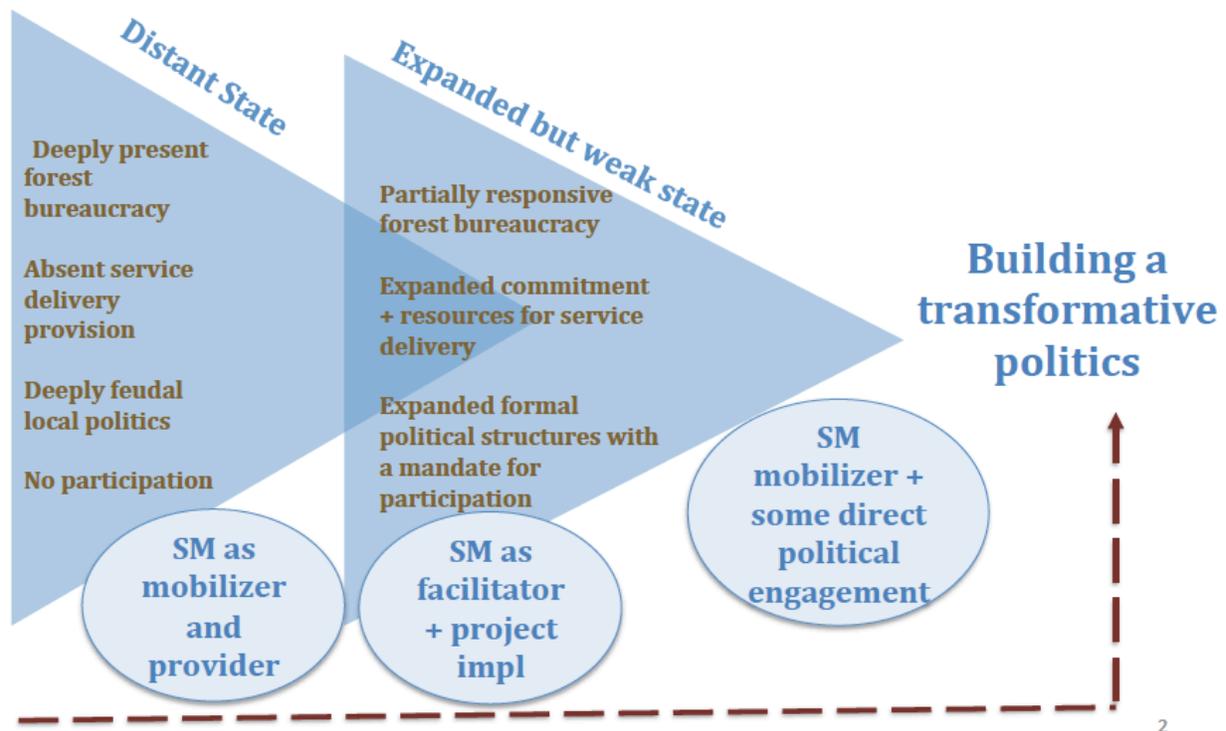
To bring about this social transformation, Seva Mandir undertakes two broad types of activity. The first involves the formation of village-level institutions, with the goal of building the

capacity to collectively solve the community's development problems in an equitable manner. These institutions work through equitable deliberative processes, and see themselves as conscious departures from the common patterns and norms of patronage, influence and corruption. The key organization is the Gram Vikas Committee (GVC, or Village Development Committee), that is elected by the whole village and comprises both men and women. The Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK, or Village Development Fund) is based on contributions from the community and Seva Mandir. There is also often support for women's Self Help Groups and Women's Resource Centres (that especially focus on issues of violence against women).

The second type of activity involves direct involvement in livelihood development service provision, including various aspects of managing the local commons (forestry, pasture land, waterways), basic education in schools run by Seva Mandir (these are now called Shiksha Kendras, or non-formal educational organizations), early childhood development through balwadis (pre-schools) also directly run by Seva Mandir, empowering women, water and sanitation, and improving health.

In Seva Mandir's philosophy and practices these two tiers of activity are inseparable, since the productive and service provision activities provide a "constructive" focus and a domain of action for the collective village institutions. We discuss some of the actual programmes in Section 2. Here, to set the stage for the assessment of current strategic questions, we outline Seva Mandir's strategy in relation to the social and political context in which it has been working over the past 50 years—and in particular in relation to the changing nature of the Indian state and its welfare apparatus. We distinguish three periods: the "distant" state (from Seva Mandir's formation in 1966 to the early 1990s); an expanded but weak state (1990s-2013); and an uncertain present period. This is illustrated schematically in Figure 1 for the first two periods. We discuss the current situation at the end of this section.

Figure 1 Seva Mandir's work in relation to the evolution of the Indian state



The distant state, except for forestry.

Until the 1990s, the average Indian citizen had minimal access to basic public services like health and education, especially in Northern and Eastern India. This was particularly true of the tribal areas of rural Udaipur and Rajsamand Districts. This limited provision of state welfare was overlaid on an inheritance of deeply feudal local politics, and little or no tradition of genuine democratic participation (outside, perhaps, traditional norms of discussion in some of the tribal traditions). People voted in the national and local elections, but this had little impact on the behavior of the local politicians and state actors. This is the context in which Seva Mandir was founded in 1966 and operated until the early 1990s.

During this period, however, one arm of the state that was active was the large and very visible forest bureaucracy. The forest bureaucracy was first created in the late 1800's by the British. Charged with "managing" forests, the forest service was formally reconstituted as part of the Indian civil services in 1966 and was made responsible for conservation, protection and development of forests and wildlife as well as enhancing livelihood opportunities for forest dependent communities. An important role that the Indian Forest Department was expected to play was to negotiate the encroachment of common lands and ensure common access to natural resources. The Department thus had considerable power. However, there were few, if any, working public institutions for citizens to place claims on the state and hold the Forest Department accountable. This was particularly visible in the social-political context of the area

where Seva Mandir works where communities were deeply stratified along caste lines, and local politics still had feudal characteristics.

Against this backdrop, Seva Mandir played a central role both as a community mobilizer and as a service provider, offering welfare services in areas where the state remained distant. The mobilization was a core goal, with the objective of creating the basis for villagers to participate in community-based platforms that then allowed them to manage collective resources and create livelihoods. The work on pastureland development, preschool education centers etc allowed Seva Mandir to learn about the hidden but real conflicts amongst people, and their inability to cooperate, as well as discovering how these same sites could be potentially used for fostering and deepening people's agency. This is the meaning of their being "constructive" programmes as opposed to solely about service delivery. The activities could be independent of the State, but the new community structures also gave villagers a voice to communicate with the State and its bureaucracies in their development efforts.

An expanded but weak state. 1990s-2013

The late 1990s through the 2000s saw a significant shift in the Indian state. The combination of economic growth and political activism resulted in a significant effort to expand the welfare state. This is already seen in the early 1990s: central government spending on education rose from Rps 951 crore to 2042 crore between 1990 and 1995. As growth generated more national level revenues, especially from the late 1990s, this engagement accelerated with a range of "centrally-sponsored schemes" that brought substantial transfers to the states.

The expansion of welfare also coincided with an attempt to expand formal political spaces at the grassroots through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, that made the local government a formal part of the democratic structure. The implication of these reforms in rural areas, specifically the creation of formal elections to Panchayats, was highly relevant to Seva Mandir's work. The extent to which these spaces have been able to initiate an inclusive politics is a matter of debate, with Panchayat elections often being dominated by patronage relations and local elites.

While Panchayati Raj involved formal electoral processes, a different factor that influenced the dynamics of the state in this phase was the effort to foster direct participation. Of particular relevance to Seva Mandir was the policy of implementing a participatory, people-centred approach to forest management, under the "Joint Forest Management" policy. Although implemented with varying degrees of success, this state-led effort to engage citizens created a new set of opportunities for re-shaping the citizen-state dynamic, as well as citizen-citizen dynamics, through the creation of formal participatory spaces to which the state was obligated to be responsive.

A further development was a slew of rights-based legislation from the mid-2000s, including the Right to Information, the Right to Work embodied in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), the Forest Rights Act, the Right to Education and

the Right to Food. This expansion made the state more visible – schools, roads, health centres where constructed and the employment guarantee programme was launched.

But this visibility did not translate into quality services. Absenteeism, poor quality of learning and health provision, and poor infrastructure remained serious concerns. In other words, although present, the state in its new avatar of a welfare state has been described (by Lant Pritchett) as a “flailing” if not a failed state—present in form, but ineffective in real service provision.

The effect of the rights-based legislation was specifically ambiguous for Seva Mandir. The MGNREGA did bring some resources and opportunities for cooperation, but was far from an effective work guarantee for all. The Forest Rights Act has had problematic biases in implementation, as discussed below. The Right to Education was ill-designed, emphasizing school inputs over outcomes. This was highly relevant as Seva Mandir’s schools achieved much better outcomes than government schools despite input standards way below the new norms. Fortunately government inspectors recognized the quality and agreed to a reclassification of the schools as non-formal educational institutions (Shiksha Kendras).

It is in this changing context that Seva Mandir’s current engagement with the government needs to be understood. Underlying Seva Mandir’s programmes is the principle that development and governance must be approached both “separately and jointly” with the state. As the state began to expand, Seva Mandir saw an important role both in acting as a conduit between citizens and the state (though systematic information-sharing seems to be relatively limited) and at the same time began to “jointly” implement programmes in partnership with the state.

In many villages, Seva Mandir was able to successfully leverage the JFM to strengthen and deepen their community mobilization work. JFM allows civil society as a third actor to facilitate the interaction between the state and community. According to its own reports, Seva Mandir has supported 17 village groups to protect and manage about 1,900 ha of forest lands in 33 sites, with 70% of these sites are well protected and managed today. This activity has been in part motivated by the weaknesses of the forest bureaucracy’s own effort to implement the JFM in its letter and spirit. It also reflects the potential of Seva Mandir’s community platforms, when they are utilized to facilitate and give substance to the interaction between the state and community (in addition to their role as autonomous collectives.)

A significant example of this programme implementation role is Seva Mandir’s work on the MGNREGA—in which it has received formal authorization from Panchayats in which it has presence to act as a project implementer for MGNREGA schemes. More recently Seva Mandir has agreed to implement the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme in Udaipur district. This represents a further step since it involves working directly with existing government anganwadis and their staff, and in areas where Seva Mandir has not worked before

and thus does have established GVCs or other community institutions. We discuss issues raised by these engagements in Section 5 on future pathways.

Although Seva Mandir does not have an explicit strategy of working directly with the Panchayati Raj Institutions, there are natural synergies between Seva Mandir's approach of collective mobilization and engagement with Panchayats. The Village Development Committees, Self Help Groups and other community organizations mobilized by Seva Mandir have often worked through the Gram Sabha to engage with Panchayat members. Moreover, the community organizations have also served as political training grounds and there have been instances where organization members have stood for and won Gram Panchayat elections. When a new Panchayat is elected, every five years, There is a familiarization meeting with the elected Panchayat representatives on the Forest Rights Act. However, formal engagement with the PRI system has not been an explicit strategy for Seva Mandir. In fact, Seva Mandir has often argued that these institutions of local government have failed to catalyze social and political change or bring about collective action at the grassroots.

In sum, Seva Mandir's current strategy for engagement with the government is to act as opportunities that are aligned with the organization arise , as a project implementer and development partner. When Seva Mandir can partner with the State in ways that strengthen its core goals of broad-based community mobilization and equitable provision of public goods, it has done so. In areas where partnership is not offered or might run contrary to its core goals, Seva Mandir continues to work independently of the State. The strategies that Seva Mandir does not pursue are also important to enumerate. Only in exceptional cases, such as the ongoing struggle to implement the Forest Rights Act, has Seva Mandir emphasized advocacy and specific claim-making.

This neutrality in the formal political space does not negate Seva Mandir's commitment to transforming civic participation. For Seva Mandir, the process of building community organizations is itself the key to deepening democracy in a way that can indirectly transform the formal political landscape. It views its more typical development activities – in livelihoods, education, health etc. - as providing direct benefits, but also as instrumental—“constructive” in its terminology—to building local capacity for collective civic engagement. In other words, it seeks to build the aspirations, cohesion and habits for local deliberative democracy while staying out of formal electoral politics.

A changing stance of the state to civil society? 2013-present

In recent years, and especially since the Rajasthan state election of 2013 and the national election of 2014, both the state and centre administrations have been pushing better “governance”. However, this has largely been projected in terms of top-down pressures on government bureaucracies. In some areas this has led to a narrowing of the ways in which Seva Mandir has partnered with the government. There has been a clear closing of spaces for cooperation in forestry. As Seva Mandir says in its 2016 report , “The Forest Department made

It clear that an external agency could get involved in the development of forestland only under the provision of Compensatory Afforestation Management Planning and Action. Thus, we have been unable to work on any JFM site.” Collective land rights filed by Seva Mandir’s GVCs under the Forest Rights Acts have also completely stalled, suggesting a practical or ideological prioritization of individual and private land rights by the government.

At the same time, the political pressure for implementation of services has led the State to pragmatically seek cooperation on implementation, especially on programmes with high political profiles, such as Swachh Bharat (the national sanitation programme).

Seva Mandir has successfully built long-term community organizations, but their capabilities seem to have reached a glass ceiling in the current context. In many areas this team visited, while the strengths of the community organization in managing common property resources, government programmes and engaging in collective action were visible and impressive, the extent to which this process has seeded broader long-term civic change in the villages is unclear. We discuss later the importance of more systematic documentation of this. The transformative change that Seva Mandir has been seeking is highly desirable, including changing social norms away from hierarchies of caste and class to ones based on social justice, equality, collective well-being, and equitable local deliberative processes. The extent to which Seva Mandir’s current model of consensus-building and mobilization can achieve it while interacting with the PRI institutions on an ad hoc basis is unclear, and an issue that Seva Mandir will need to grapple with.

We discuss the implications of the current conjuncture for Seva Mandir’s strategy in Section 5.

Section 2: Implementation, outcomes and issues for selected programmes

In this section we undertake a more detailed review of a subset of Seva Mandir’s specific activities. This is based on Seva Mandir’s own reporting and our discussions and field visits. We focused on village institutions, education and gender, as emphasized in the Terms of Reference. The very important area of While we have made every effort to develop a considered assessment, it comes with the caveat that a statistically representative survey of activities and outcomes was completely outside the scope of this review.

Village Institutions

Seva Mandir sets four main goals for its Village Institutions Programme: 1) create democratic, non-partisan community institutions; 2) foster widespread inclusion, especially of women; 3) enable growth and management of village funds; 4) facilitate linkages between GVCs and the Panchayat. By way of context, Table 1 presents some selected patterns of goals and implementation outcomes, as reported by Seva Mandir (for more details see Annex 1 Table 1). We comment on each of these four areas in turn.

Table 1. Plans and Outcomes in the Village Institutions Programme

INDICATOR		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	3 Yr Avg
Statistics in Comprehensive Plan and Annual Reports					
# of Members	Target	55000	57000	59000	
	Outcome	57834	60859	63048	
	Difference*	105%	107%	107%	106%
# of GVKs	Target	630	640	650	
	Outcome	626	632	638	
	Difference	99%	99%	98%	99%
# of GVCs	Target	546	563	583	
	Outcome	532	547	557	
	Difference	97%	97%	96%	97%
# of GVC Reelections	Target	70	70	70	
	Outcome	76	103		
	Difference	109%	147%		128%
Key Statistics Reported in Each Annual Report, but Not in the Comprehensive Plan					
# New GVCs		13	15	10	
% GVC Officers Women		25	38	41	
GVK fund size (Rs)		42,000,000	46,000,000	50,000,000	
GVK fund use (Rs)		812,000	1,176,000	1,021,000	
GVK fund use as % of funds held		1.9%	2.6%	2.0%	
Gov Scheme Applications by GVCs Sanctioned		2550	3473	524	1100 (for 2015/16)

1) Community Institutions

We were impressed with Seva Mandir's village institution work on creating GVCs. They are the embodiment of Seva Mandir's values. Everyone comes together as equals on the same jajum (carpet), they are governed by democratic processes, and they attract people in large numbers to debate and act on issues in the common interest. This is against a backdrop of communities divided by caste, gender and political party, Panchayats governed by patronage politics, and

often weakly functioning Gram Sabhas where most action is top-down rather than bottom-up. In the context in which they operate, the GVCs values and processes constitute a major achievement.

In terms of numbers, Seva Mandir has added between 10-15 new GVCs per year, falling just short of its targets, and meeting overall membership goals within the GVCs. It was hard for us to assess whether Seva Mandir is meeting its goals for the formal functioning of the GVCs, both because of discrepancies between the Comprehensive Plan goals and updates in the Annual Reports, and because some indicators went unmentioned in the Annual Reports. One encouraging indicator is that GVC reelections have been held according to schedule.

In the best villages, GVCs are also the functional nucleus of Seva Mandir's overall work, and have been able to assume significant community ownership over development projects. Common management of natural resources is, by far, the most important glue that unites GVCs. We visited communities which fought for and won rights over land, have mechanisms to distribute benefits impartially, and sanction offenders. Seva Mandir's preschool balwadis and primary schools (Shiksha Kendras) are the second most important programmes that bring GVCs together, and the schools we visited had teachers selected by the GVC, that also regularly monitored teacher performance and attendance, with modest fees collected from parents. The high valuation of the GVCs was apparent not only at the institutional level, but also among staff. In our workshops, both head office and block level staff cited "community groups" in answer to open-ended questions over what is Seva Mandir's "greatest asset." When they work, the GVCs are examples of the often heard, but rarely realized, ideal of participatory development. However, what is hard to assess from the data available is how many of the GVCs are highly functional and effective—we discuss this in our recommendations.

2) *Inclusiveness*

Seva Mandir has made a dedicated effort over the past three years to set quotas for women in elected GVC positions, and for women to serve as GVC office bearers, and the numbers show steady progress in both these areas toward Seva Mandir's goals. It is reported that over 40% of total elected members of GVCs are women.

Despite these numbers, field visits suggested there may be continuing issues over the ability of women to raise their voice and lead during GVC meetings. We observed only a small number of cases, and there is not any comprehensive data on this issue. In one field visit women constituted the majority of the executors of Seva Mandir's projects in villages—doing manual labor, supervising schools, etc.—since men often migrate during the day. In another— involving a women's resource centre—the women were impressively vocal and articulate in a mixed meeting. However in at least three other groups we met, women tended to be silent in the meeting and the discussion was dominated by men. Of course, little can be told from these few examples, especially since our presence and questions transformed meeting spaces into completely atypical settings. Seva Mandir recognizes women's substantive participation in GVC meetings as an issue and is pursuing ongoing qualitative research around this question.

3) Village Funds

The GVKs, or village funds, are another key driver that bring the GVCs together. The GVKs' raison d'être is not the development projects they finance, but the public resource they represent for the community. We heard multiple testimonies from villagers that, even if all Seva Mandir staff left their village tomorrow, meetings would continue in order to manage the village fund. Seva Mandir has nearly met its goals for the number of GVKs created. There is laudable attention paid to auditing of the fund, but while zonal level accountants have been hired and audits conducted, we could not compare this to goals set in the Comprehensive Plan again because of discrepancies in the statistics reported. Progress related to grading of accountants was not found in the Annual Reports.

Fund use is an area where we believe the GVK programme has room to grow. The GVKs have grown at 8-10 percent per year over the past 3 years, but fund use for community projects remains low, at around 2 percent. This is due to the current policy to reinvest half of earned interest in community development projects (and about half of fund growth, or 4 percent per year, is from earned interest). Another third of fund growth comes from community contributions collected from Seva Mandir's other programmes (i.e. MGNREGA wages, school fees, and a percentage of yields from natural resources regenerated by Seva Mandir). However, it is unclear whether the contribution rules around natural resources—a 10% levy of returns on public land, 20% levy on private land—are regularly followed (our field visits involved cases where they weren't.) This has led to the slow growth of funds, and a very small amount to do projects with. A low risk but promising innovation by a small number of GVCs has been to loan their funds through local SHG groups. Alternative strategies might include pilots to invest GVK capital in income-generating projects, leading to a higher rate or return, or federating a portion of GVC funds to be invested in high return assets.

Progress on the key GVK usage goals of protecting common resources and independently paying the salary and administrative expenses of village level workers was not clearly or consistently reported in the Annual Reports. Support to the People Initiative trainings, which capacitate the GVCs to assume management roles in development projects, took place, but significantly fewer than planned.

4) A platform to connect to Panchayats

The GVCs have a complex, and fluid, relationship with the Panchayats, as noted above. GVCs can be effective advocates to the Panchayat on behalf of Seva Mandir's broader work, such as in their applications for No Objection Certificates for work on common pastureland. In the past five years, GVCs have also collaborated with over 50 Panchayats to name Seva Mandir as the official implementer of MGNREGA work (an impressive feat since this means the Panchayat forfeits any opportunity to control and take advantage of MGNREGA funds).

However, beyond these particular areas, the GVCs appear to have little systematic interaction with the Panchayat. The Sarpanch is not usually invited to GVC meetings, and the GVC does not mobilize members to attend Gram Sabhas. The GVC maintains little informal or formal oversight over the Panchayat's work or activities, and has no access to the Panchayat's financial records. The GVCs do make a significant effort to help members access government schemes, although the number of applications has dropped sharply in the last two years, and this appears to be an opportunistic rather than systematic effort (an observation explored further in our recommendations below).

In sum, despite specific areas of collaboration on common land and MGNREGA, and recognizing that some community groups have organized political protests and transitioned grassroots leaders from GVCs to the Panchayats, the GVCs do not consistently act as a pressure group on PRI institutions. This is consistent with the strategic choice by Seva Mandir to limit the fronts on which the GVC engages with the formal political system, and to preserve its independent range of action in focused areas rather than to encourage a broader, more direct confrontation with power structures in the village. We discuss this further in Section 5

Unanswered questions in the village institutions work and how to answer them

What is the quantifiable impact of village institutions?

While the value of the GVCs emerges from Seva Mandir's development philosophy and case studies, the organization does not generate enough internal data to document their impact. The Village Cohesion Index (VCI) currently used by Seva Mandir (and discussed in detail below) is a good monitoring tool, but does not establish the GVCs' impact on other Seva Mandir programmes, or deeper changes such as individual and collective agency. The ongoing collaboration with Professor Raj Desai (Georgetown University) and Professor Anders Olofsgard (Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics) is a significant step toward answering these questions. Preliminary data from this study shows promising differences between Seva Mandir's "treatment" villages and comparable non-Seva Mandir "control" villages in terms of forest quality and the ability to speak freely at the Gram Sabha. There are more modest difference in villagers' subjective views on the responsiveness of local service delivery.¹

The methodology that makes this study so valuable is its use of a counterfactual. By comparing Seva Mandir and non-Seva Mandir villages with similar characteristics, the study can (cautiously) attribute any differences to Seva Mandir's work and help pin down the otherwise frustratingly intangible benefits of "community." For example, the study will answer the question: "In villages without Seva Mandir's GVCs, have communities been able to lay claim to common property rights, equitably distribute production, and sustainably manage the commons?" The study also begins to capture agency through questions such as "Who

¹ These preliminary findings cited are from a June 2016 powerpoint by the study's authors to Seva Mandir. They do not include measures of statistical significance and do not represent the study's final findings.

² This figure does not include funding from government programmes, such as NREGA and NABARD, because these

participates/has influence over the allocation of funds?” for different development projects. Seva Mandir may be able to benefit from this study beyond the papers its authors will write. First, Seva Mandir can adopt some of the survey questions in its regular monitoring. This is especially true for those areas where Seva Mandir is directly active in productive and service activities. More ambitiously, Seva Mandir could continue to track the established treatment and control groups, and thereby maintain an in-house comparator group for its programmes’ impact. This will allow Seva Mandir to ask questions that are not in the study survey, track longer-term outcomes that may not be captured in the study, and assess the impact of new programmes introduced after the study began.

How do GVCs improve the sustainability of Seva Mandir’s projects?

One important part of the GVCs’ impact is their potential to make Seva Mandir’s projects sustainable in a way that sets them apart from most other development work. However, the organization’s current ability to capture this dynamic is largely restricted to case studies. Reporting in the Annual Reports on the Support to People Initiative (SPI), which supports capacity-building of GVCs through trainings, is restricted to number of trainings given and does not measure the impact of those trainings. Part of the VCI captures a GVC’s involvement in other development projects, but only in 1-2 crude indicators, none of which are disaggregated from the VCI composite score in reporting. By creating multiple sustainability indicators, and by reporting on them separately, Seva Mandir could begin to quantify the value of sustainability. It might start with questions like: “Which development projects does the GVC manage?” and “How many physical infrastructure projects did GVCs repair in the period under discussion, and what was the value of the benefit stream that was generated since this repair?”

The work on common pastureland is a good example of where measuring sustainability could be improved. In the 2014-15 Annual Report, benefits were only measured and reported for 90 out of 240, or 38 percent, of pasturelands. This is largely due to the fact that the monitoring of natural resource development does not include sites more than three years old. Only a single extant study we are aware of has looked at how GVCs manage common land more than three years out, and management rates are impressively high (around 80 percent). If GVCs are maintaining assets built by Seva Mandir in the past—protecting pastureland or forestland, repairing water pumps, de-silting dams, or clearing irrigation channels—and are reaping benefits in the present, Seva Mandir can claim due credit. By leaving sustainability unmeasured, Seva Mandir is failing to properly account for its own achievements.

How are GVCs improving over time?

The Village Cohesion Index (VCI) is an index used by Seva Mandir to evaluate GVCs along five dimensions once every three years. Conceptually, it is a very useful tool, and includes many well-chosen indicators. However, there are no clear protocols for how to respond when a GVC scores poorly on a particular dimension. A potential use of this tool could be tracking individual GVCs’ progress through time to help Seva Mandir understand which GVCs are making headway, which are stagnant, and which are in decay, and allocate resources accordingly. One worrying

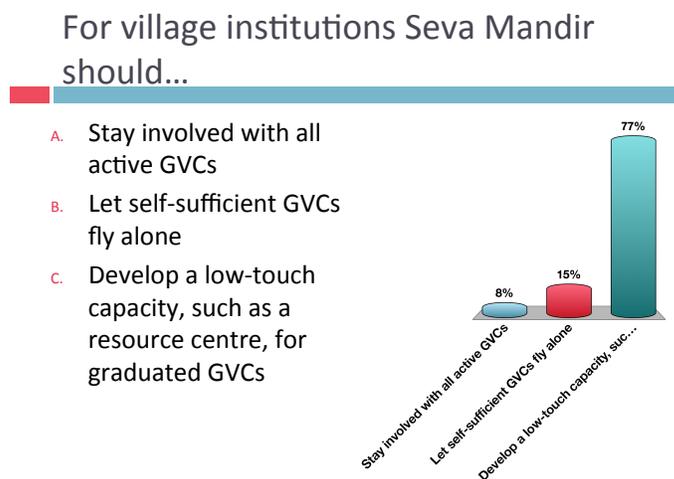
indicator we saw is that the average scores in all dimensions do not vary much by the age of the GVC—a three-year old GVC scores much the same as a 10 year old GVC—suggesting there is not much progress through time. There are multiple possible explanations for this (perhaps the old communities Seva Mandir works with were harder to unite as GVCs, or perhaps Seva Mandir has got faster at creating functional GVCs), but better documentation of progress and the speed of progress merits a closer look.

How often, and under what circumstances, does Seva Mandir exit a village?

Seva Mandir does not keep records of when it leaves a village. This is true both for “negative exit,” where the organization fails to achieve its goals, and “positive exit,” where the organization has achieved its goals and no longer maintains an active presence. Negative exit is a rare occurrence: the best estimate we heard was 15 times over the past 10 years. This raises questions around whether the organization is devoting resources to operate, at times for decades, in “difficult” villages at the expense of catalyzing greater change in less difficult villages. Answering this question requires introspection around whether negative exit is consistent with Seva Mandir’s prioritization of deep, transformational change over scale (we think it is).

It would also be useful to have a strategy for Seva Mandir’s involvement in villages after positive exit. Informal contacts certainly endure, but it would be useful to have a few metrics of how GVCs and projects fare post-exit in these villages. In our clicker poll of senior management, a favored model for positive exit was to build a “light touch” resource center in regular contact with villages and able to connect them to technical advice (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. The views of Seva Mandir’s management group on GVC graduation



Can government schemes work better in Seva Mandir villages?

Apart from MGNREGA, we did not observe a systematic strategy for using the GVCs as platforms to access government schemes. This is not to say that the GVCs are inactive in this regard. In 2014-15, GVCs helped 500 people access Rs.7.4 million in benefits, and in 2015-16 350 individuals accessed nearly Rs.3 million in benefits. However, these are small numbers considering Seva Mandir's scale, and the vast majority of these amounts came from just two schemes, Old Age Pensions and the Chief Minister's Aawas. The Village Institutions team does organize trainings with GVCs to spread awareness about different schemes, but it does not formally monitor the effect of these trainings, or push government scheme registration through its zonal workers (i.e. going door-to-door with appropriate paperwork), or attempt any type of village census to target eligible people who not receiving benefits from schemes (or find ineligible people who are accessing them). A recent effort to train village volunteers as local government scheme resource hubs reportedly did not work well. Seva Mandir may have good reasons for not focusing its community capital on government schemes: they target individuals by design, diluting Seva Mandir's focus on common resources, and engaging with them may risk confrontation with village power brokers who use schemes for political patronage. We discuss this further in Section 5.

Education

Table 1 below takes Seva Mandir's internal plans, as set out in the 7th Comprehensive Plan 2012-15, and compares them to outcomes reported in the three Annual Reports covering the same period. In the final column titled "3-Year Average", green numbers denote goals met or exceeded, while red numbers denote unmet goals (for example, between 2012-15, Seva Mandir ran only 74% of the Shiksha Kendras that it planned to, so that number is red).

The story told in this data is incomplete, as we discuss below, but deserves commentary. Between 2012-15, Seva Mandir ran far fewer schools than planned due to budget constraints, but had only somewhat lower enrollment than planned. This means that more students were enrolled per school than expected, signaling continued high demand for Seva Mandir's schools on the ground, but stretching teacher-student ratios in some areas (as we observed in our field visits). Fee collection, while unmentioned in all annual reports, was reported in our conversations to be far above targets, and also to have exceeded expectations in the amount collected per family. This reinforces a picture of high family satisfaction with schools, and also raises the possibility that Seva Mandir could charge higher fees to allow more schools to self-finance teacher salary and operating expenses. All planned learning camps were held, and 90 percent of targeted students attended. Less than 2/3 of planned youth centres were opened, but more than *double* the targeted number of young people were involved in their activities. This suggests a strong underlying need for youth centre activities. The fact that Seva Mandir served so many youth through so few centres could suggest that these centres have greater capacity than planned. But it may also indicate a case for channeling more resources into this activity. More detailed data on the performance of youth centres would be needed to assess this, and this was not a focus of this review.

Table 2. Plans and Outcomes in the Education Programme

INDICATOR		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	3 Yr Avg
Shiksha Kendras (SKs) Run	Target	225	236	236	
	Outcome	175	170	170	
	Difference*	78%	72%	72%	74%
	Reason	Financial constraints			
Children Enrolled in SKs	Target	6750	7080	7080	
	Outcome	6019	6052	6090	
	Difference*	89%	85%	86%	87%
	Reason	Financial constraints			
SK Instructors Trained	Target	234	243	243	
	Outcome	197	NR	NR	
	Difference	84%			
	Reason	Fewer instructors required			
SK Community Contribution Collected	Target	70%	70%	70%	
	Outcome	NR	NR	NR	
	Difference				
	Reason				
Learning Camps Organized	Target	3	3	3	
	Outcome	3	3	3	
	Difference	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Reason				
Children Enrolled in Learning Camps	Target	350	350	350	
	Outcome	279	290	372	
	Difference	80%	83%	106%	90%
	Reason	High enrollment after 1st session in gov schools			
Youth Centers Run	Target	31	31	31	
	Outcome	21	17	20	
	Difference	68%	55%	65%	62%
	Reason	Financial constraints			
Youth Reached	Target	1500	1500	1500	
	Outcome	2598	3416	4026	
	Difference	173%	228%	268%	223%
	Reason	High demand			
*Difference calculated as outcome/target.					

Telling the full story: school performance beyond inputs

The full story of Seva Mandir's schools is both longer and highly encouraging. As a yardstick of the success of Seva Mandir's schools, the goals set out in the Comprehensive Plan log frame are inadequate. They focus on some inputs—schools run, children enrolled—but are silent on key outputs (children's attendance and teacher's attendance) and—even more important—learning outcomes (test scores). Seva Mandir does, however, closely monitor many of these outputs and outcomes, and actually performs exceedingly well on many of them! These data points are sometimes, but not always, mentioned in Annual Reports. There is a strong case for:

1) including targets for outputs and outcomes in the Comprehensive Plan; 2) adjusting monitoring to report on these targets; 3) regularly reporting on the targets and outcomes in the Annual Reports; 4) using longitudinal data (beyond a particular Annual Report's reporting period), which will both contextualize data and allow Seva Mandir to make much stronger claims about the quality of its schools.

The following are concrete examples of how Seva Mandir could actualize these recommendations:

- *Teacher attendance* is not mentioned in all three of the last annual reports. But the incentive system used by Seva Mandir continues to be a tremendous success. At a technical level this involves the use of time stamped photos of teachers in school, but we believe that of equal importance is that this is effectively managed by the broader system. This has resulted in high rates of teacher attendance—significantly higher than in government schools.
- *Student attendance* has been tracked by the Education Unit at the individual student level since 2013, a noteworthy development. It is flagged as an issue in the 2013-14 annual report, but improvements that have been made since then were not described or reported in the latest annual report.
- *Graduation rates* to government schools are communicated in each annual report as a percentage of total enrolled students (between 20-25% of students join government schools each year). However, the more relevant statistic is graduation as a fraction of children who are supposed to graduate that year and would be highly positive for Shiksha Kendra. Seva Mandir does not do this kind of cohort-wise analysis (i.e. how many children with 4 years of schooling (or less) move on to Class 5), even though it has the data. Another way of communicating this is to report the average number of years a child studies in a Shiksha Kendra, and the average grade in a government school that they enroll in.
- *Dropout rates* are not reported. The Education Unit told us that these are under 5 percent. This is another positive outcome which is difficult to find in the reports.
- *Test scores* are collected at great effort and expense by Seva Mandir twice per year using well-designed and universally administered tests, but yearly progress is not well reported. In the 2012-13 annual report, "13% of students reached level 3", but this is not compared to the baseline or to other levels. The 2013-14 annual report also only gives the percentage of level 3 students, and compares "17.5% of students at level 3" in

May to “31% of students at level 3” in November. This statistic only accounts for half a year of learning and compares different cohorts since 20% of students will have graduated over the summer and new students will have come. The 2014-15 report doesn’t mention scores. It would be useful to report the percentage of students at all performance levels in November and the following May, thereby showing yearly progress among the same cohort of students. Even more detailed reporting would give the percentage of students who advanced one level, the percentage who advanced two levels, and the percentage who dropped one or two levels.

Simply by reorganizing its data, Seva Mandir could greatly enhance the way it communicates the remarkable achievements of its schools. This is a low hanging fruit.

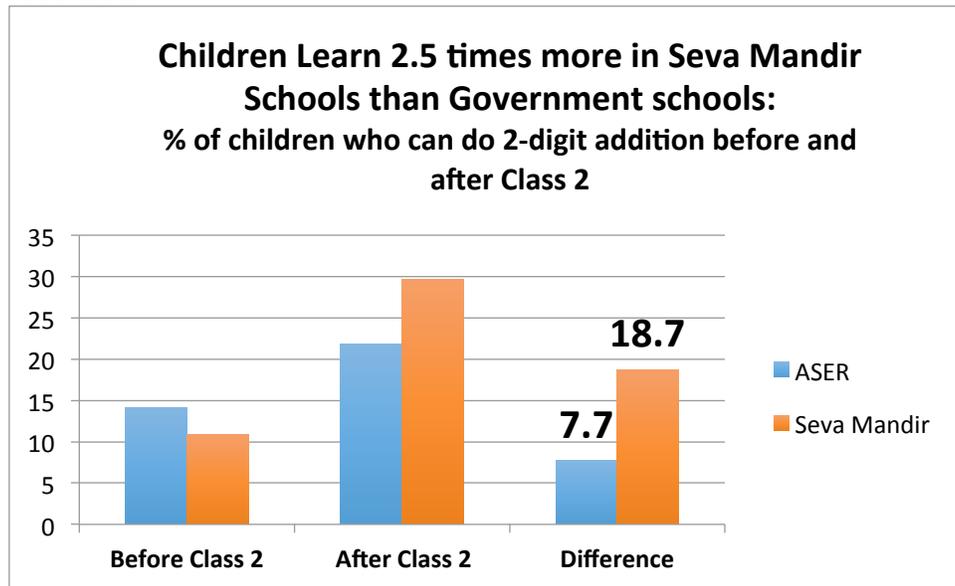
Using Comparative Data

Hanging on a slightly higher branch is the ideal of using comparative data. By this, we mean setting the performance of Seva Mandir’s programmes side by side with the performance of government or peer NGOs. The annual reports, website and other internal documentation we investigated during the review currently benchmark Seva Mandir only to itself. This has the effect, in our opinion, of underplaying Seva Mandir’s strong performance relative to other players. It also makes it much harder for external organizations, particularly donors, to judge the effectiveness of Seva Mandir when they are choosing where to allocate their scarce resources. Beyond effectiveness, comparisons that include programme budgets will allow Seva Mandir to benchmark its efficiency. Having data and ready arguments about programme efficiency will, as discussed in Section 5 of this report, be a key asset as Seva Mandir adapts to a changing external environment of more corporate and outcome focused donors. Some Seva Mandir programmes may not have a natural external comparator, and even when a comparator exists data may not be forthcoming.

While comparative data can be productively used across Seva Mandir’s programmes, this is particularly true for education programmes where abundant external data exists. Figures 2 and 3 below are two examples that our team prepared (in about an hour) using the Education Unit’s MIS system.

In Figure 3 the orange bars represent the learning of 1209 students in the Seva Mandir MIS system who were attending their 2nd year of Shiksha Kendra in 2014-2015. They show the number of students able to do 2-digit addition, a Level 3 competency in Seva Mandir’s scale, at the beginning and end of the 2014-2015 school year. The blue bars are the comparator data for government school performance, taken from the publicly available Rural Rajasthan subset of the ASER 2014 survey. This is a rough comparison since Level 3 includes many other competencies in addition to double-digit addition. To allow for apples-to-apples comparisons suitable for publication, Seva Mandir could adopt a subset of the ASER survey’s exact questions on its annual tests.

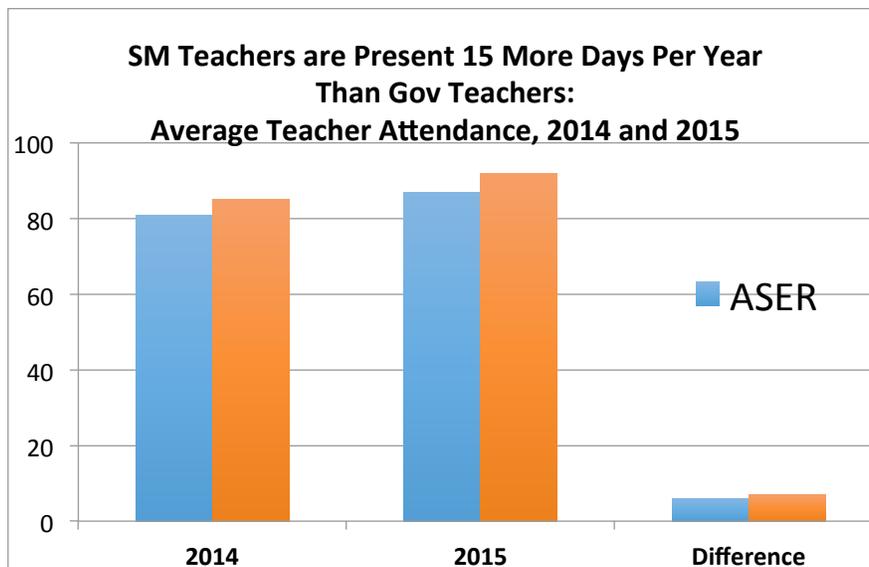
Figure 3 Comparative performance on learning outcomes between Seva Mandir and government schools



Source: Seva Mandir and ASER2014

A second example in Figure 4 uses teacher attendance data Seva Mandir already collects and the same open source ASER data. Translating abstract attendance rates into days in school could improve this figure further. However, the essential idea of measuring Seva Mandir's progress against comparator programmes is well illustrated.

Figure 4 Teacher presence in Seva Mandir and Government Schools



Source: Seva Mandir and ASER2014

Gender

Seva Mandir applies a gender lens to nearly all the work it does. This is in response to the unique and disproportionate challenges women experience in their daily lives in the area where Seva Mandir works. Women have lower literacy rates and years of schooling than men, they are responsible for childcare, cooking and other domestic duties, and face social restrictions on their freedom of movement. All of these factors limit the livelihood opportunities open to them. Women also face unique health risks, especially during pregnancy, and are subject to disturbingly high rates of domestic violence. Women often lack substantive power in social and political decision making bodies ranging from the family to the caste panchayat to the Panchayat itself. Even where reservations have established formal equality, such as in the elections for Sarpanch, change has occurred slowly, albeit appreciably, at the grassroots.

Against this backdrop, Seva Mandir is to be commended for the breadth of its commitment to gender, and the attendant breakdown of much of its reporting by gender, which allows it to keep track on progress. Activities include some programmes that are entirely focused on women's issues—including the women's social and economic empowerment unit and the bulk of the health unit—and other programmes which involve multiple groups but pay careful attention to the equality of benefit for women—including the balwadi preschool program, the education program, and Seva Mandir's core work on governance.

Selected data for plans and outcomes are shown in Table 2, which show a high percentage of targets met in the number of children enrolled in Balwadis, facilitated deliveries, infants reached by Balsakhis as well as WRC leaders trained. (See Annex 2 for more details)

Table 2. Plans and Outcomes in the Gender Programmes

INDICATOR		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	3 Yr Avg
Statistics in Comprehensive Plan and Annual Reports					
# Balwadis	Target	200	200	200	
	Outcome	187	198	192	
	Difference*	94%	99%	96%	96%
# Children Enrolled in Balwadis	Target	4400	4400	4400	
	Outcome	4627	4785	4632	
	Difference	105%	109%	105%	106%
# TBAs trained	Target	448	481	481	
	Outcome	323	309	307	
	Difference	72%	64%	64%	67%
# TBA-facilitated Deliveries	Target	6700	7200	7200	
	Outcome	5136	5615	6711	
	Difference	77%	78%	93%	83%
# Bal Sakhis Trained	Target	151	188	188	
	Outcome	99	94	85	
	Difference	66%	50%	45%	54%
# Infants Reached by Bal Sakhis	Target	1800	2200	2200	
	Outcome	2117	1800	2815	
	Difference	118%	82%	128%	109%
# Women's Cluster Associations	Target	30	35	35	
	Outcome		39	42	
	Difference		111%	120%	116%
# Women's Resource Centers	Target	13	14	14	
	Outcome	9	10	9	
	Difference	69%	71%	64%	68%
	Reason	Closure due to internal conflict, and focus on strengthening existing SHGs			
# Cluster and WRC Leaders Trained	Target	460	500	365	
	Outcome		910	895	
	Difference		182%	245%	214%
# SHGs	Target	650	700	700	
	Outcome	573	579	612	
	Difference		83%	87%	85%
	Reason	Closure due to internal conflict, and focus on strengthening existing SHGs			

Institutional Culture

Seva Mandir's commitment to gender equality is evident at the head office level. There are more women employees than men, and women occupy many senior management positions. There are generous maternity leave and childcare benefits, and an institutionalized and functional sexual harassment policy. There are also a number of young and unmarried women who feel comfortable and professionally valued in Seva Mandir, that provides a significant contrast to Udaipur's conservative cultural norms.

Economic Empowerment

We did not observe many self help groups (SHGs) in person, so our analysis is based largely on Seva Mandir's reporting. While Seva Mandir fell short of its targeted number of SHGs, it did so to focus on SHG quality. The savings-to-credit extended ratio was nearly 1:1 each year, showing high demand for credit among SHG members. However, the annual reports do not paint a clear picture of how these funds were utilized, even at the basic level of consumption versus income-generating activities. SHG accounting and external auditing practices are also unreported, although they do exist. A small minority, of 26 SHGs, were connected to the Rajasthan Rural Livelihoods Project (RRLP), and in 2014-15 had access to over Rs.28 million, half of the collective holding of all Seva Mandir SHGs. We understand that the lack of linkage of the majority of SHGs to RRLP is due to a shift in the government's policy: the RRLP reportedly stopped working with SHGs formed by NGOs, favoring forming its own SHGs. These government-formed SHGs are reported (including by other grassroots organisations) to be driven by specific targets and funds, as opposed to broader cultural change amongst village women. We see this as unfortunate, given the importance of such deeper changes, but it seems to be outside Seva Mandir's control.

Social Empowerment

Seva Mandir has had pockets of success in working with self help groups as the building blocks for larger, more socially and politically influential women's groups: the Women's Resource Centers and the Women's Cluster Associations.

The Women's Resource Centers are an innovative model that, in our visit, we could see is a platform allowing women substantive and confident representation to formal state institutions, such as the police, to informal social structures, like the caste panchayat, and within Seva Mandir's own GVCs. They resolve well over 100 cases of domestic violence per year. Given this success, there is a case for a more aggressive expansion of the WRC network. We encourage Seva Mandir to reflect on the constraints to building more WRCs, and to articulate a strategy for expanding the program.

The way the Cluster Associations work was unclear from the information we received. They resolve over 100 cases per year, mainly related to the functioning of government schemes. We understand there are processes and norms, but we are unclear as to the regularity of their

meeting, how far processes are followed, and their relationship to the GVCs, WRCs and Panchayats.

Health

We did not observe any health projects in person, and so our analysis is based largely on Seva Mandir's reporting. Seva Mandir trained far fewer traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and child health workers (Balsakhis) than targeted, indicating a shift in emphasis away from the health sector. Despite this, the number of TBA-facilitated deliveries and children evaluated by Balsakhis nearly met Seva Mandir's targets. This suggests Seva Mandir has been "doing more with less," and if quality of care goals (which are not reported) have been met then an upward revision of patients per community health worker could make sense in future planning. There was insufficient reporting to judge the TBAs performance on pre- and post-natal care goals.

Research into Balwadi Preschools

A key design aspect of Seva Mandir's preschools is that they provide a full day of childcare, rather than the half-day provided by the government's anganwadis. Seva Mandir has long argued this provides enormous benefits to mothers and older female siblings, who are free to work and study. A randomized control trial being undertaken with external partners will rigorously quantify these benefits over the next 2 years.

Education

Seva Mandir disaggregates enrollment in all its educational programmes by gender, including primary schools (45% in 2013-15), preschools, learning camps and youth centers.

Governance

Women are severely under-represented in the Panchayats, and de jure reservations for female Sarpanch seats is said to have resulted largely in puppet "Sarpanch patis". Seva Mandir has had a successful push to put women in leadership positions on its GVCs, also through a system of quotas. Seva Mandir has had some success in getting women to show up to GVC meetings, and at the handful of village meetings we attended, women often outnumbered men. The degree to which women were able to contribute as loudly and authoritatively as men varied to a considerable degree. In some meetings, and in particular those where a Women's Resource Center or Sadhna group were very active in the village, women leaders were as vocal as their male counterparts. Men in these meetings also articulated widespread male buy-in for a stronger economic and political role for women. In other meetings we observed, men still dominated the conversation.

Our key recommendation here is that women's substantive participation in meetings could benefit from more assertive facilitation tactics by Seva Mandir's zonal workers. Let us offer a concrete example. In most meetings we attended, the women's group sat further away from the meeting convener than the men. To counter the power structure implicit in this seating

arrangement, an action used by General Secretary Narayan was to rearrange the space, separating men and women into groups equidistant from the convenor, and then call on each group in turn during a plenary discussion. This encouraged women's participation. Ensuring that all zonal workers both know and employ such facilitation microskills, and having protocols in all meetings, could help develop an enabling environment for women's participation, which we felt was not always present. This recommendation comes with the open caveat that women's substantive participation in meetings may have been influenced, more so than other areas, by our position as outsiders and foreigners.

Unanswered questions and the data necessary to answer them

There are a number of areas where the data gathered, or presented, by Seva Mandir does not allow us to go beyond tentative programme assessments. These inform our recommendations below on specific data points which could strengthen Seva Mandir's monitoring, and communications, around gender.

- *Overall:* An integrated reporting section on "gender" that unites all relevant data from across the organization could be a highly effective communication tool, especially for those donors with a focus on gender. Currently, Seva Mandir's cross-cutting focus on gender is not immediately apparent in its reporting, although it becomes clear after reading the Annual Reports cover-to-cover.
- *Economic Empowerment:* The breakdown of how SHG funds are utilized is not clearly reported. One essential distinction is between investment in income generation activities and consumption. The rate of return on investment in income generating activities would also be instructive. There is no reporting in the Annual Reports on the SHG accounting and auditing process.
- *Social Empowerment:* The Women's Federations would benefit from concrete goals and reporting beyond those of the Women's Resource Centers. Some staff expressed the view that the Federations and their constituent self-help groups in fact resolve many more cases than are reported each year. These staff were enthusiastic about the possibility of a mobile-based reporting mechanism that could transmit information directly from the grassroots level to the head office. The current system relies on zonal workers periodically collecting information from Federations, and then forwarding this to the head office.
- *Training.* The women's empowerment unit conducts a large number of trainings, especially with caste panchayat leaders. However we did not see any reporting on the outcomes of these trainings, specifically on their stated goal of bringing about "changes in customary laws in selected caste panchayats". The programme would benefit from a clearer link between trainings and outcomes. The Comprehensive Plan also currently lumps together targets for the number of caste panchayat members and youth sensitized on gender issues. The Annual Reports rightly disaggregate these figures, and

sometimes also report separately on the number of PRI members trained. Since trainings for these three groups have distinct goals, targets in the next Comprehensive Plan should also be disaggregated.

- *Governance:* More indicators to substantiate the extent of women's participation in the GVCs would help separate de facto, as opposed to de jure, progress. The most obvious indicator would be women's attendance at GVCs, and relative contribution compared to men. An even stronger comparison would contrast these statistics for GVCs with those for Panchayats. Another way of getting at this would be to measure women's participation in GVC projects. For example, one of our field visits revealed that the vast majority of MGNREGA work on common pastureland was carried out by women, since men often migrated during the day. Capturing this breakdown, which is likely possible from the data Seva Mandir already collects, could help bring the larger picture of women's participation into focus.
- *Education:* While Seva Mandir does an excellent job in disaggregating enrollment by gender, it does not report graduation rates, performance, or retention by gender. Again, Seva Mandir probably has this data already, but tracking these figures by gender is key to determining whether girls are experiencing equitable educational outcomes beyond basic access. For example, if girls drop out at much higher rates than boys at higher levels of education, then the scholarship programme might need to enroll a disproportionate number of girls (i.e. 70 girls for every 30 boys) to achieve equitable outcomes.

Section 3: Organizational Scan

As part of the evaluation, the IMAGO team analyzed Seva Mandir to assess its current organizational strengths and also where the challenges and opportunities lie.

This organizational scan was carried out through: (i) interviews with the teams in different parts of the organization; (ii) analysis of the main practices, rules and regulations in human resources, accounting and finance, IT; and (iii) reviewing the background documents provided to the team.

IMAGO uses a “Flame Analysis” as an assessment framework which includes looking at the organizational identity—its core values—its “tone” (how does it feel to work in Seva Mandir? what is the organizational culture?), formal structures and actions—see Figure 5.

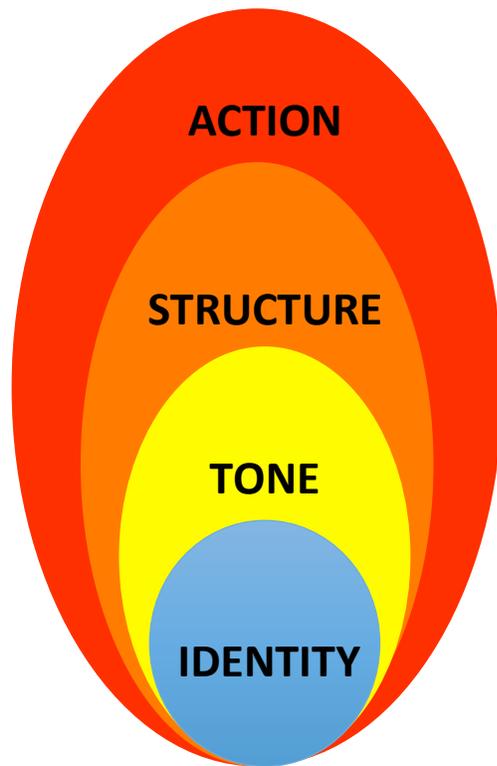


Figure 5 The flame as a prism on Seva Mandir's organizational functioning

Most assessments focus on the structural aspects of an organization: its rules and regulations, the organigram, processes, incentives, procedures, etc. These are important but don't allow deeply seeded problems to be detected. In particular, when an organization faces stubborn problems that can't be easily fixed, it is usually because the source of the problem lies below the surface, either in the values of an organization or in its organizational culture.

This is why we start this organizational scan looking at Seva Mandir's values, followed by its tone or culture, then structure and finally the actions that are required in response to questions the organizations currently has, in a way that is aligned with the its values. We evaluate the alignment across these four levels in order to explore the highest leverage interventions to tackle

organizational issues in the current conjuncture.

Seva Mandir's Identity and Values

Seva Mandir's **values** are an important source of strength for the organization. They are clearly present in the way staff engage with its beneficiaries as well as the way staff relate to each other. The stated values are the following:

- Transparency
- Honesty
- Respect
- Dialogue

- Gender equality
- Jajum (sharing physical presence on the rug used in community meetings)
- Self-governance

These constitute the bedrock of this mission-driven organization. They are implicit in the orientation of new Seva Mandir staff and were easily identified in all the conversations and observations we had throughout the visit. They will help Seva Mandir navigate the inevitable ups and downs and twists and turns of the external environment. However, our observation is that the values are often implicit rather than explicit.

Seva Mandir's Tone

Seva Mandir's **tone**, or organizational culture, is well aligned with its values. While we did not conduct a full survey of staff, our observations support the view that people feel that they work in a positive work environment and this is what makes it attractive to work in Seva Mandir as well as the content of the work. There is frequent deliberation, there are many participatory practices within the organization where teams interview candidates, or design interventions, or solve problems together. These participatory practices are also clearly present when working with the communities.

“Feminine” and “masculine” practices in tone are in an unusually good balance at Seva Mandir. By this we are referring not to the ways in which organizations work—not to the gender balance in employment. Organizations that have a feminine way of working are usually those that work in a collective way, take time for consensus-building, are nurturing of their staff and make sure nobody is left behind. Organizations that have a masculine way of working are very good at meeting goals and targets, doing it on time and having data at the centre of decision-making. Ideally an organization should balance and integrate both ways of working. Too much feminine could lead to endless discussion and endless time required for decision-making. Too much masculine makes people feel they are not valued and that all that matters is to deliver on specific targets. Seva Mandir has both: a consensus-building culture (which was impressively quick in problem-solving together in the participatory sessions that we ran during the visit) combined with a focus on numbers and data which is commendable, and better than many of the large NGOs in India.

The tone in Seva Mandir is humble, people are self-reliant, people feel they are taken care of, there is a culture of service. This is another beautiful balance between caring for others and being taken care off.

While the organizational culture is generally impressive, we find that there is one aspect where it could be improved. There is a lack of balance between inside and outside staff. Most people in Seva Mandir have been around for many years, and management positions get mostly filled through promotions from within. All existing Directors, the COO and the CEO are from inside Seva Mandir. This is a practice in many large organizations (like Coca-Cola, the World Bank, and

so on). The problem that it brings is a lack of renewal in ideas and approaches and a tendency to reinvent the wheel taking a lot of time to solve problems others already have. It also brings too much internal focus, which could be a source of weakness at a time when external conditions are changing so rapidly and organizations need to be agile to adapt.

Seva Mandir's Structure

Seva Mandir's **structure** is largely aligned with its values but presents some challenges that the organization is very well placed to tackle.

(1) Human Resources

Seva Mandir has developed a comprehensive set of HR policies and rules, which reflect its values. They show that staff are not perceived as an instrument but are nurtured and cared for.

There are clear policies for hiring, promotion, benefits, conflicts of interest, annual performance evaluations, and salary increases. There is a range of benefits, including gender and family-friendly benefits like paternity leave and child care facilities.

The salary ratio is 1 to 10, with a minimum wage of 8,000 rupees a month. This keeps social cohesion and is consistent with Seva Mandir's values. While this ratio makes it difficult to match market salaries, it is comparable to other local NGOs in India.

Recently, Seva Mandir increased salaries between 10-20% following (if not fully) the Pay Commission recommendations (this Commission is set up the Union Government to make recommendations on public sector pay). Lower salaries received the higher increases and the highest paid employees received only 10 percent. This is another demonstration of Seva Mandir's values in promoting social cohesion amongst staff, but comes with a potential tradeoff in terms of attracting higher level staff.

Seva Mandir has a range of contractual arrangements (full time staff, consultants, volunteers, and some 150 interns per year) that gives it flexibility to adapt to changing programmes.

Seva Mandir is a medium-sized organization, with around 300 staff and a good manager to staff ratio (1/25). A substantial proportion of staff are recruited from the community and trained on the job. The size of the organization provides an opportunity to have rules that are clear and facilitate work without the negative consequences that come with large staff numbers, and the need to have too many rules that introduce rigidity and detachment.

The main issues in HR are: High turnover of young people and not enough external recruitment at senior levels. Having clear career paths for young people and targeting streams for external recruitment could help reach a better balance.

(2) Financial Management and Accounting

At the time of our visit there was a separate outside team looking into the financial management arrangements of Seva Mandir, so we did not go in depth into this. This was not part of the evaluation and Seva Mandir will be able to use the results of this other evaluation as a complement to what we saw. Our general impression, which will be much less informed than the complementary assessment, is that the systems in place are strong and should be preserved going forward.

There are good budgeting and solid accounting practices. We were impressed by the clarity of accounting reports as well as by their quantity. The amount of information on income, expenditures and the Independent Auditor's report published in Seva Mandir's Annual Report is comprehensive. It puts Seva Mandir ahead of many, perhaps most, local NGOs in India. This strength will serve Seva Mandir well, especially in the current external environment of heightened scrutiny over the practices and procedures of civil society organizations.

The same applies to the way that money is transferred to the field. In many organizations this is a source of risk when transactions are made on a cash basis, making it difficult to trace the use of resources, and confirm that this is as intended. We understood, from our interview with the CFO, that in Seva Mandir all financial transactions are made by direct transfers to the bank accounts. This is the dream of many CFOs we have met who are working with grassroots and NGOs who have a large field presence.

Seva Mandir has a relatively small endowment considering its reach. Endowment funds are carefully managed, and proceeds from it are only use in exceptional years without touching the principal. The analysis of funds (internally generated, donors, government) will be covered in the next section of this evaluation.

(3) Information Technology

A team of three staff manages around 150 computers, the servers, and software of Seva Mandir. It seems to be an effective team, which is managing the whole operation including external vendors and developing some software tailor-made for Seva Mandir. They have clear and well-established procedures and manage a large programme well.

We understand that Human Resources, the Library, the address book, and the project and programme databases are integrated. Accounts, order dispatch, accounts, the hospital and the store management system are external programmes which are run independently.

Work in the field has its own challenges, including low connectivity and low capacity at the block level. This requires adaptation in order to be able to synchronize with headquarters and fulfill demands for timely information. The data is transferred manually to all blocks (except for two) through the use of pen drives.

In Seva Mandir computers are replaced every 8 to 10 years, while the industry standards are around 3 years. Although this could be perceived as disadvantage, given the rapid way that technology is evolving Seva Mandir can turn this into their advantage. Having old equipment that has not been recently updated allows the organization to leapfrog in two ways. First, by switching away from internet to cellular connections, with tablets and smartphones. This would solve the problems at the block level. Second, by being able to benefit from the huge drop in the price of personal computers and laptops of the past couple of years.

Innovation in IT is coming through donor-funded programmes. Both the education and the health programmes are providing tablets for survey collection. This is a very important asset, which could have a transformational effect on the rest of Seva Mandir's information technology system. But so far tablets and smartphones have not been integrated with central IT.

(4) Data management, monitoring and evaluation

The team only undertook an initial review of the data management and monitoring and evaluation system, so these are preliminary impressions.

Overall, Seva Mandir has put a lot of effort into monitoring and data management, and is way ahead of most similar organizations. There are monitoring systems in place for all programmes that we reviewed, and this is linked to systematic use of log frames for setting a hierarchy of goals, inputs, outputs and outcomes. The small team does very good work in implementing this. And there is a core database management system that allows access to a range of data across the organization, even though much of the data continues to be managed by each sectoral group.

There are four issues that we believe need attention, and these will become of rising importance during any change in the current environment.

First, as reflected in specific examples in the programmes reviewed in Section 2, there is a lot of very useful data collected that is not put together to effectively track progress on key outcomes, and so leads to inadequate representation of the social value that Seva Mandir is creating. This is vividly the case for education.

Second, in some areas different types of data need to be collected to document gains achieved, and convey these to outside actors. This was illustrated specifically for the village institutions programme in regards to quantifying impact and claiming the benefits of sustainable outcomes.

Third, the data system has the beginning of a full data analytics system, one that in the future could link field collection to systematic databases, generating both dashboards for management, and more in-depth longitudinal and integrated data. This will require some investment, for which IT is one element. The introduction of tablets for data collection are steps in this direction, as are current pilots by the PME team to get frontline workers (in this case Balsakhis) to respond to digital surveys that transmit data directly from the field to head office, thereby eliminating logistical and IT bottlenecks at the Block level. However

encouraging, these programs are moving much slower than the pace of changing donor expectations for detailed, on-demand data. While managing donor expectations is one side of this equation, hiring staff with more technical training in data collection and analysis is the missing side right now.

Fourth, developing more comparative assessments, whether with similar programmes elsewhere, or internally designed treatment and control (that can be aligned with the phasing of programmes) could bring significant dividends in providing both Seva Mandir management, and external actors more compelling evidence on the impact of activities. This is a more ambitious activity that will either require further cooperation with external technical specialists, or building the capacity internally, over time.

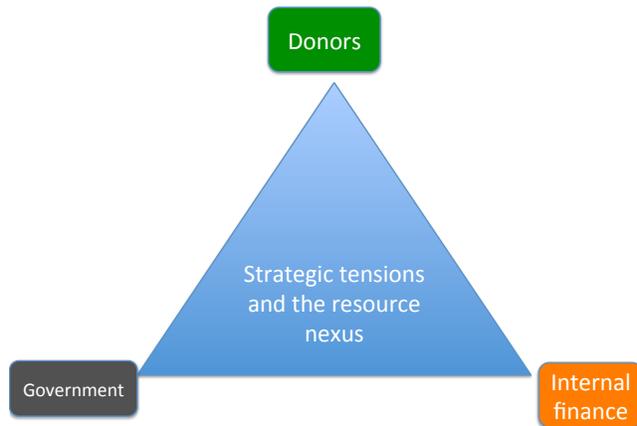
Actions

The top part of the flame is the area of action. This is the focus of many other parts of this report—including in particular the areas reviewed in Section 2. For this section we emphasize one theme: there is substantial alignment between all the levels of internal organizational function—in identity, tone and structure—and the *activities* of Seva Mandir. This is especially because the central feature of Seva Mandir’s work involves engaging with communities, building collective capacities, and seeking effective outcomes in human well-being in the broadest sense of the word.

Section 4: The Resource Nexus: Seva Mandir at a critical juncture

We believe Seva Mandir is at a critical juncture. It has been remarkably successful in its work over the past half century. It has also effectively navigated the substantial shifts in the presence of the state since the 1990s, illustrated in Figure 1. Under any circumstance it would be valuable for Seva Mandir to assess and reflect on the nature and range of its activities. But the need for this is much more acute because of the changing resource conditions. We use the nexus of the shifting resource conditions as a prism on to the strategic tensions faced by Seva Mandir in this period. There are three current, or potential, sources of funds for Seva Mandir’s activities: donors, government and self-finance. Each raises issues.

Figure 6 Seva Mandir's strategic tensions and the resource nexus



Seva Mandir's core funding has historically been from a small group of institutional donors, who shared the values and goals of supporting long-term transformational change through building of local, deliberative institutions.

Since the last evaluation in 2009, the external funding environment on which Seva Mandir depends has undergone a profound shift. In terms of total value, institutional donors, which contributed 70 percent of Seva Mandir's budget as late as 2011, today contribute just over 40 percent of the budget. This created a temporary budget crunch. Seva Mandir successfully weathered this through the temporary use of greater resources from its endowment, followed by a large expansion in the funding from corporate donors, and a proliferation in the overall number of donors. The total budget has recovered (Figure 7) with a significantly changed composition (Figure 8). The organized group of Friends of Seva Mandir also made significant, if smaller contributions, as did a variety of individuals. Government funding that came to Seva Mandir has rarely exceeded five percent of the total budget, though this has involved significant direct payments to villagers in managed activities, notably in MGNREGA.

Figure 7 Seva Mandir's aggregate budget has recovered.

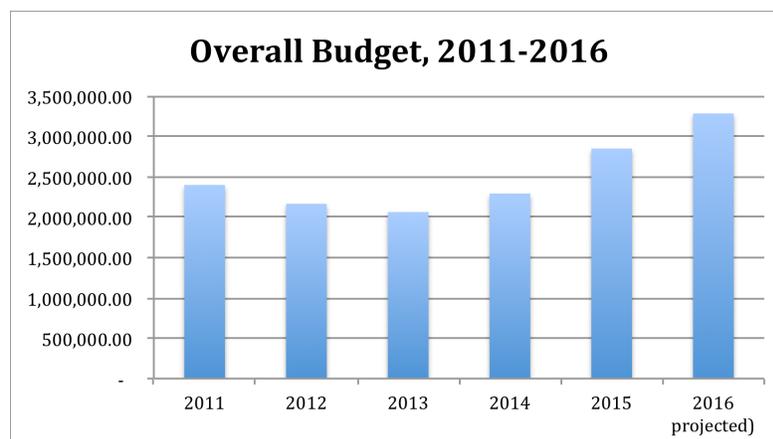
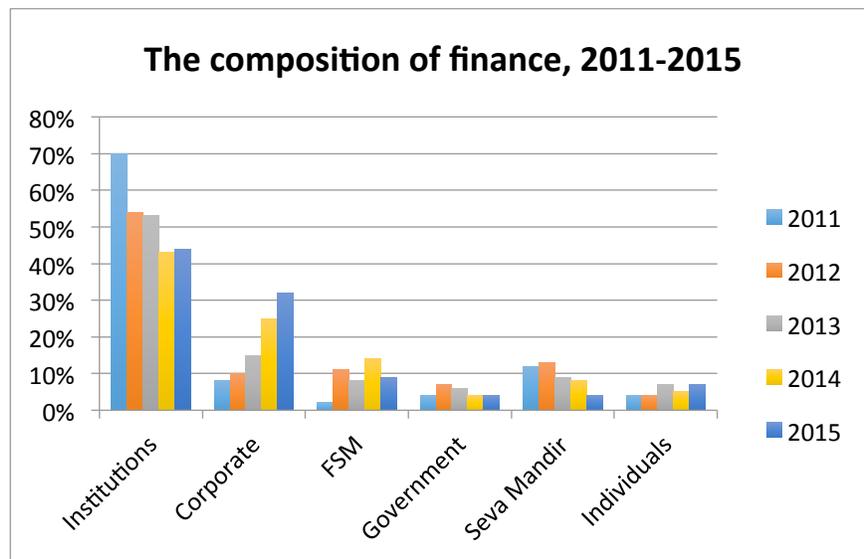


Figure 8 ...but there has been a large shift away from institutional donors

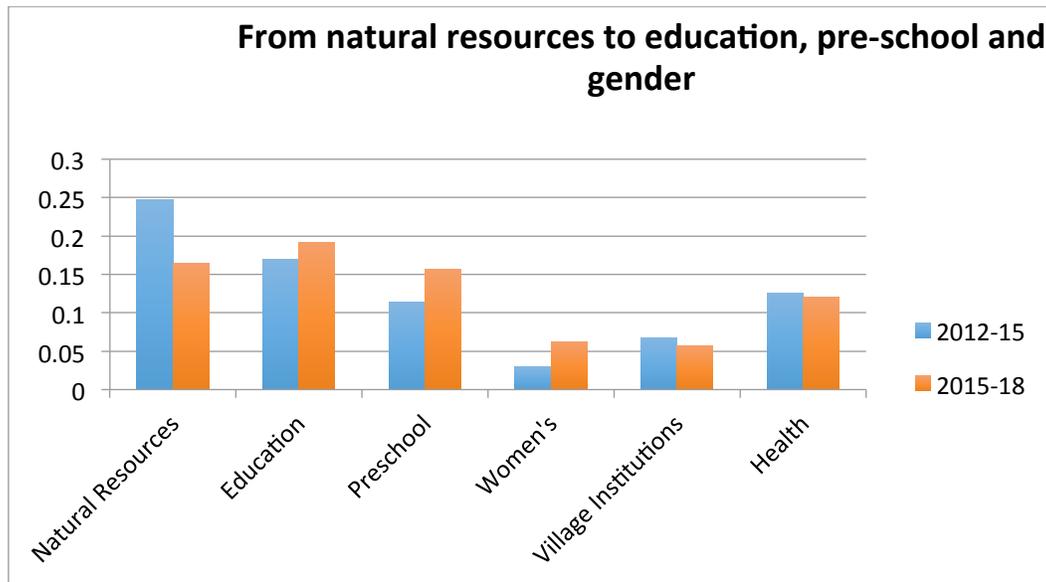


Source: Seva Mandir (FSM refers to Friends of Seva Mandir)

The shift in composition understates the underlying change. For institutional donors have also been changing their approach from “untied” funding, which funded Seva Mandir’s Comprehensive Plan and allowed it discretion in how to spend it, to “tied” funding dedicated to specific projects and linked to particular outcomes. As put by the Fundraising Unit in a 2015 report to the Board: “We managed to secure new money, but most funds were for committed purposes and we have not been able to raise money for some of our ongoing programmes.” This becomes abundantly clear when comparing the 8th Comprehensive Plan budget to the previous budget. Figure 9 below shows programme expenditure as a percentage of the overall budget in both Comprehensive Plans, and features a sharp drop in relative funding for the natural resources² and village institutions programmes, even as activities that tied donor darlings like education and preschool increase.

² This figure does not include funding from government programmes, such as NREGA and NABARD, because these resources are transferred directly to beneficiaries and so is “off the books” and so don’t come to Seva Mandir. These government funds go disproportionately to work on natural resources.

Figure 9 The changing pattern of programme expenditure, between the 7th and 8th Comprehensive Plans.



Source: Seva Mandir

On top of this shift in sources of donor finance is the changing attitude of the current national and state governments to civil society that was outlined in Section 1. Though, as noted there, there is also a countervailing recognition of the weakness in state capacity, and periodic pragmatic requests for cooperation—as in the programme of Seva Mandir taking over the management of a major group of government anganwadis.

Finally, apart from its relatively modest endowment, Seva Mandir has very little internal sources of finance. There are currently two revenue-earning social enterprises, created with seed capital of Seva Mandir: Sadhna, that produces artisanal clothing; and Urja in agricultural inputs. While both are reported to be now self-sufficient, they remain small, and do not provide any revenue to the core Seva Mandir organizations.

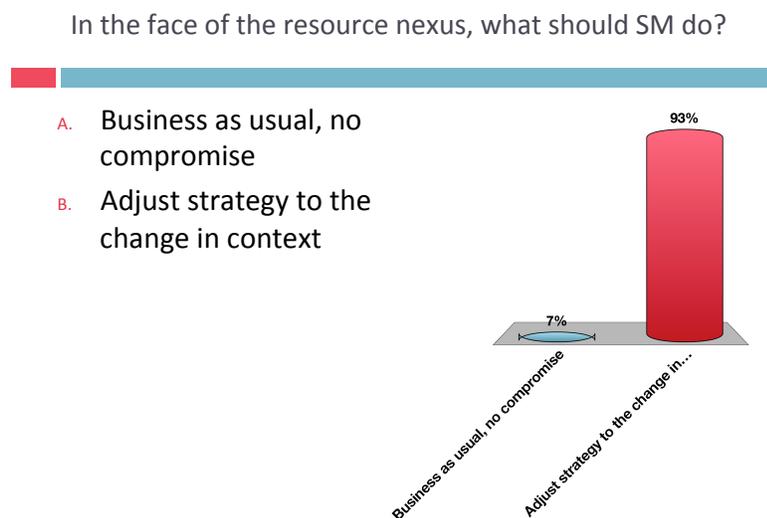
This nexus sets up a profound tension with the activities and organizational system that Seva Mandir now has. The core developmental philosophy and practice has involved patient work, a long time horizon, participatory, institution building, responding to multiple needs, and co-creating solutions with communities. The new demands—from most institutional and corporate donors, as well as government—is for specific, pre-planned, projects with quick, identifiable results either in areas that donors “like” (often for good reason), such as education, pre-school, health, or that is politically salient for the government, such as toilets under Swachh Bharat.

This is a tension that is at the core of Seva Mandir’s organizational functioning precisely because—as discussed in Section 3—at present its organizational values, culture, structure and

activities are substantially aligned, and this is a source of strength, of capital in economic terms, that it is important to preserve.

The resource nexus is profound, and the strategic tension genuine. However, in the clicker survey we conducted with the around 35-strong management team, a striking result emerged—that an overwhelming majority of the team wants Seva Mandir to adjust its strategy to the changing context (Figure 10). This is a major source of organizational strength that will allow Seva Mandir to adapt and find pathways to get out of the triple resource ceilings. We turn to options next.

Figure 10 The management group’s views on the need to adjust to the change in context.



Section 5: Navigating the changing environment: potential pathways

In this section we turn to the central issue for the future: what are the options Seva Mandir has for navigating the changing environment, as vividly presented by the shifting resource nexus? We discuss potential strategies with respect to donors, the government, and self-finance, followed by the question of how to balance competing priorities. Education is then presented as a case study.

In exploring this we consider it a highly desirable goal for Seva Mandir to maintain its current essence: of community-based mobilization; support for collective action and management of collective sources; and the fostering of equitable political development through local deliberative spaces. We also discuss the question of whether it makes sense to maintain the current diversified service presence as a constructive approach to creating domains for engagement.

Donors

To adapt to the new external donor environment, we see three paths forward.

Option 1. Business As Usual

If Seva Mandir continues on its current path, it will quickly hit a constraint in its ability to manage more corporate and multiple institutional donors. Seva Mandir's head office managers, especially the chief executive and programme heads, are already feeling the pressure from the administrative demands of having more donors, and the monitoring and reporting demands of taking tied money. So far, our conversations found that this pressure has remained at the head office and has not trickled down to the block level. Nonetheless, absent change, Seva Mandir will be forced to stop growing or, if institutional donors continue to pull out, scale down over the medium term.

Option 2. Change the Programme Portfolio

Seva Mandir could choose to focus on programmes that align with CSR priorities and the new preferences of institutional donors. These include programme areas like education and health with well-defined, measurable, short-term outcomes. The risk is that Seva Mandir would have to retreat from its core approach of village institution building, and scale back programmes, such as protecting the commons, that require sustained, long-term effort. Even CSR-aligned programmes such as education may be pressured to jettison community-based practices that cannot be tied to results. Seva Mandir may also risk becoming less of a community demand-driven organization, although the large scope of its work area may allow it to continue to successfully match donor priorities with community need.

Option 3. A New Business Model?

Seva Mandir's currently uses a "narrow" framing in its funding applications to donors in that it separates programme costs and the costs of its community based approach. For example, its budgeting for a Shiksha Kendra does not include the cost of running the GVC, even though the GVC is intimately involved in the management and success of the school. An alternative would be to explore developing a new business model, in which the costs of community-building and support are built into the more traditional budget headings. If this can be done, Seva Mandir can preserve both its scale and approach. The risk here is that Seva Mandir will be seen as "expensive" in comparison to other nonprofits that promise equivalent services at a lower per unit price. To the extent that some donors are committed to the Udaipur region, this is not a pressing worry because Seva Mandir is the main NGO operating in many programme domains in the area. However, many donors have a much broader geographic focus, and seek to find activities with a high anticipated probability of specific success. To donors where Seva Mandir needs to be more competitive, defending a high "price tag" will require upgrading the documentation and communication of Seva Mandir results.

(There are, of course, hybrid options combining aspects of the above choices, but we believe if it is useful to structure the strategic decision-making around these alternative overall strategies.)

The views of management and our recommendation

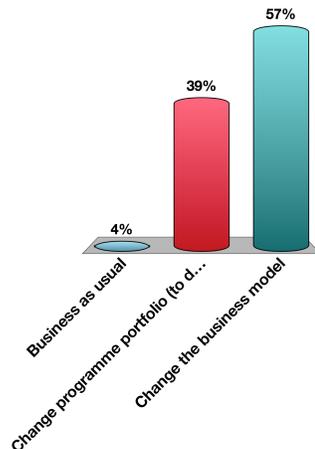
In our poll of the management group, there was an overwhelming majority supporting change, with some 60% favouring a change in the business model (Figure 10). Our recommendation is to systematically explore this third option. We believe this has genuine potential precisely because Seva Mandir is working in some of the toughest areas of development change in India, and can document real benefits: if it can be shown that its deeper strategy is effective within the new metric, donors are likely to provide support.

Developing a new business model, will require some initial work on specifying the processes and causal pathways, working through how to structure the model, and setting up an information and communication system to document results. In the meantime, the existing sector-specific approach should continue in parallel, since this will take time to explore.

Figure 10 The management group's views on the future path

Which path should Seva Mandir take?

- A. Business as usual
- B. Change programme portfolio (to donor interests)
- C. Change the business model



Documentation and communication

Regardless of which path the organization chooses, we see an urgent need for Seva Mandir to change how it communicates in the new donor environment. This has two complementary parts: upgrading monitoring and evaluation and donor engagement.

As noted in Section 3, Seva Mandir has a good approach to monitoring, especially compared with comparable organizations. The small team does excellent work with the available resources. However, the data and evaluation work needs substantial upgrading to meet the demands of the new environment—and a potentially a new business model. Some of this involves working with existing data collection processes to better capture, document and present what is now happening especially in terms of actual changes in outcomes of communities and individuals. In Section 2, we gave examples of potential ways of measuring sustainability, and, for the education sector, using comparative data to show the relative effectiveness of Seva Mandir in areas that known to be tough in India.

There is then a case of doing more carefully structured evaluations that can more accurately assess the causal impact of Seva Mandir's activities. This could involve careful treatment and control effects in areas where this makes sense—as in the McGill/IFMR study of the impact on balwadis on women's empowerment—and integration of the approach taken in the Georgetown study comparing Seva Mandir support for community development with comparable cases. However, it will always be important to combine quantitative approaches with in-depth assessment of processes, especially in areas of success, in order to understand the drivers of change.

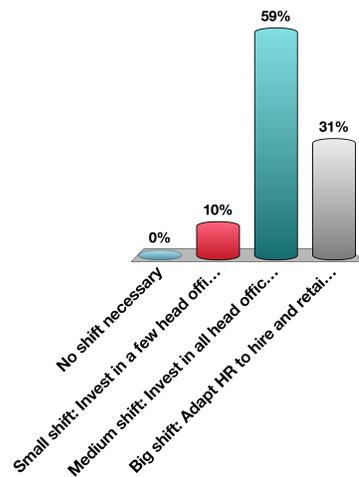
More broadly, Seva Mandir has the potential for some upgrading of its current data system, to provide a more structured data analytics platform, that would both provide dashboards for management tracking and provide the basis for longer-term assessment of its work.

The second issue considers strengthening the capacity to effectively engage with corporate and other donors—beyond the current highly stretched staff. Seva Mandir staff mentioned report writing, data collection systems (and in particular digitizing them), and quick decentralized decision making as the greatest challenges in meeting new donor demands. The good news is that staff, as indicated by our polls, are strongly supportive of strengthening the donor management capacity, even if it means trading off sizable resources from programmes in the short run. What remains an open question is whether Seva Mandir can acquire these skills through upgrading its existing human resources, or whether this will require shifts in human resource structures (especially pay scales) and culture to attract a new kind of talent.

Figure 11 The management group's views on donor management skills

How much should SM shift resources from programs into donor management skills?

- A. No shift necessary
- B. Small shift: Invest in a few head office staff
- C. Medium shift: Invest in all head office teams and RMU
- D. Big shift: Adapt HR to hire and retain new staff with these skills



Government

The opportunities and tensions around the government were described in Section 2. What does this mean for Seva Mandir's strategic relationship with government? And how can Seva Mandir redefine this relationship in a form that enables its community mobilization work to break the glass ceiling and plant direct seeds of political transformation? We outline here the two possible options that Seva Mandir has and examine the associated risks.

Option 1 Working jointly with the state as a project implementer

The greatest strategic advantage from working jointly with the state flows from resources and scale. Working with the state provides reach, both directly in domains of actual service provision, and through channeling of lessons on improving implementation processes back to state actors. While effects of the latter process are both more diffuse and indirect, there is a potential huge multiplier if lessons are internalized.

However, working as a project implementation partner also comes with associated risks: when government fails, this can affect Seva Mandir. This is illustrated by Seva Mandir's experience with MGNREGA. Seva Mandir proactively took on the role of project implementer for MGNREGA—mobilizing beneficiaries, identifying works and facilitating worksite construction. However, owing to a set of factors, the government on its part failed to provide the finances needed to pay beneficiaries their wages. This delay in wages places Seva Mandir in a complicated position vis-à-vis the MGNREGA beneficiaries, as they hold Seva Mandir partly accountable for the failure to pay them their due. This is just one illustration of where problems

with the state can prove costly for the participating NGO. It also stymies the NGOs ability to directly confront and agitate with the state.

A second risk is that it results in shifting institutional focus and priority. Working as a project implementer comes with its own sets of priorities, targets and deadlines. By contrast, mobilizing communities and engaging with them to take ownership of development activities, the core of Seva Mandir's strategy, is a slow, long-term process that isn't always amenable to targets and implementation deadlines. As with the project-specific donor-based work, if Seva Mandir were to actively follow the project implementation style of functioning, it faces the risk of undermining its community mobilization work, which will fundamentally alter the nature of the organization.

Option 2. Redefining "jointly" by building an explicit strategy for engaging directly with the formal political space at the local level

In the discussion in Section 1, we highlighted the dilemma created by the "glass ceiling" for achieving Seva Mandir's long-term goal of building a new, transformative politics anchored in norms of social justice, equality and collective citizenship. One possible route to breaking the glass ceiling would be for Seva Mandir to engage more directly with PRIs. There are two possible pathways, which are not mutually exclusive. The first is to build a more formal and direct engagement between the GVC and other community organizations and the Panchayats through active engagement in Gram Sabhas and sub-committees of the Panchayat. Of course this approach depends on the existence of an active, reasonably well-functioning Gram Sabha, and many areas probably lack this. In such areas, the GVC and other local organizations could act as pressure groups to push for more meaningful and active Gram Sabha meetings. The second is for Seva Mandir to actively engage in using the GVCs as a preparatory ground for its members to participate directly in the formal electoral process by standing for Panchayat elections.

There are again associated risks. These strategies may involve direct confrontation with power structures in the village. This would not just a departure from Seva Mandir's philosophy on consensus-building but could act as a real barrier to entry in to the political process. Moreover, it raises questions about being able to work in villages where GVC candidates fail to win elections. Second, getting drawn in to the power play of local politics runs the risk of undermining Seva Mandir's credibility as an objective interlocutor between citizens and formal institutions of the state.

Option 3. Supporting claim-making on the state

A third approach is for Seva Mandir to become an effective resource for communities on how to support legitimate claims on the state. This activity is referred to in Annual Reports, but our impression is that it is not implemented in a systematic fashion. This can range from individual entitlements—such as for health insurance, pensions, BPL cards—to formal opportunities for communities—for example in Village Education Committees. This is an issue of information,

training, finding community leaders who can be effective channels of communication and advice and so on. It is also in the spirit of Seva Mandir developing a “low-touch” support capability for graduated GVCs, as discussed in Section 2.

The views of the management group and our recommendation

The management group expressed very strong support for developing systematic links between the GVC and Panchayats (Figure 12) but was more divided on providing support for GVC members engaging in the electoral political process—reflecting the risks involved.

Figure 12 The management group’s views on linking GVCs with Panchayats

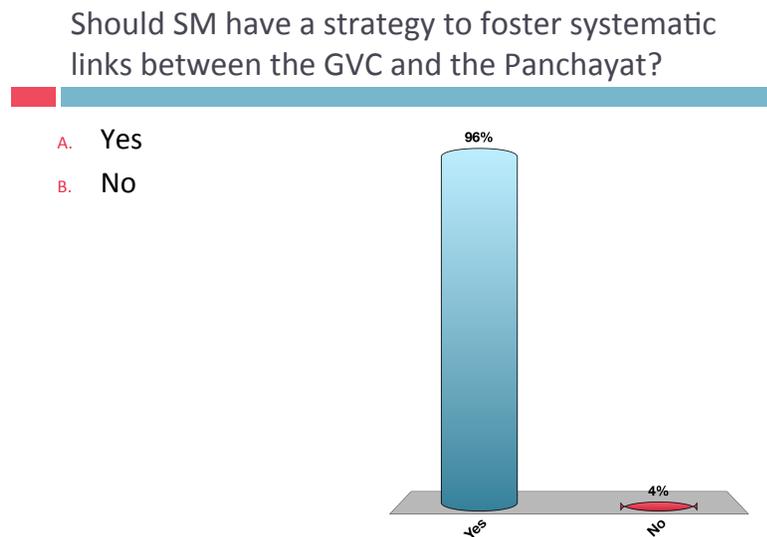
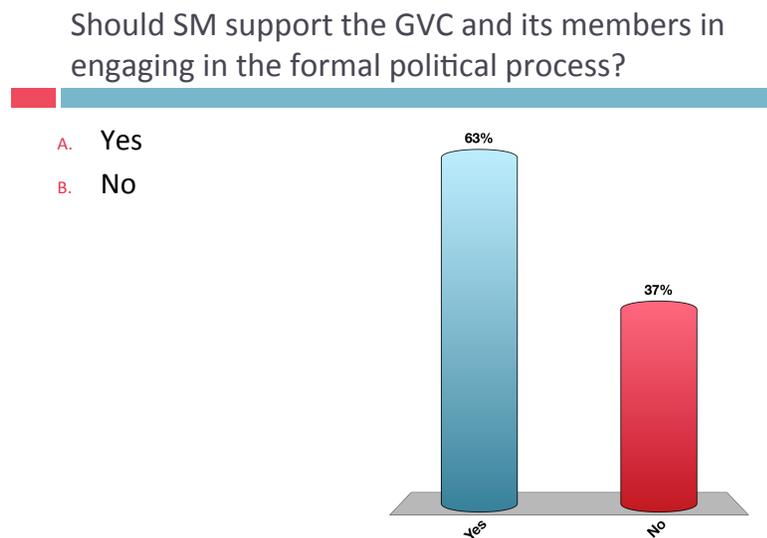


Figure 13 The management group’s views on supporting active involvement in the political process



Our recommendation is based around the current course on government engagement, but against clear criteria:

Engage with government service provision strategically, where this:

(a) is clearly within the capacity of Seva Mandir to deliver;

(b) is with a contractual arrangement that gives Seva Mandir sufficient management and decision-making control; and

(c) with a strong preference (or even a requirement) that this only be in cases in which there is some component of community mobilization and accountability.

(a) and (b) are important for potential effectiveness—and to avoid risks of reputational damage—while (c) is to ensure alignment with Seva Mandir’s core capabilities and values.

Explore enhancing the indirect support for engagement of GVC members in formal political processes, largely through training, possibly complemented by some documentation and indirect monitoring (through GVC members) of the extent to which Gram Sabhas are genuine deliberative assemblies, and Panchayats effective bodies. However, Seva Mandir should tread carefully to avoid any implication of its own partisan involvement, as this is an important part of its capital.

Systematically develop the information and support capacities for GVC and its members to make claims on the government. We believe this is an issue of more systematically investing in and expanding existing practice—backed by an information system.

Continue to maintain Seva Mandir’s presence in District and State-level fora, but maintain the existing strategy of not investing in general advocacy. This is aligned with Seva Mandir’s core approach: other groups are working on advocacy.

In areas of real experience, more systematically document learning to engage with state and other fora on development issues. Seva Mandir has a striking depth of experience of what can work, in areas ranging from pasture management to how to effectively run a school or balwadi, yet have a low profile in broader debates.

Self-finance

As noted in Section 4, self-finance is currently very limited. This is a potentially important long-term opportunity. It is particularly relevant given the issues around other parts of the resource nexus. And it gives autonomy.

An iconic example of the use of self-finance is BRAC (the Bangladesh Rural Action Committee). BRAC started as an organization that was almost entirely grant-financed, outside its (subsidized) microcredit business. However, over several decades it has built a series of social enterprises that are not only self-financing, but also generate a substantial surplus. The practice is for 50%

of the surplus to be reinvested, and 50% to go back to the core BRAC activities, especially to finance its social service provision. As a consequence BRAC is now some 70% self-financed. There are potential lessons here for Seva Mandir. As an example, one of BRAC's leading social enterprises is Aarong, that produces garments, sourced from local artisans, linked to designers, and with a major market presence within Bangladesh. Sadhna could be a very small, early stage version of Aarong.

Scaling a social enterprise brings substantial challenges, especially around developing the business practices, external funding strategy, product development and marketing that can support major expansion, while maintain social commitment. In the social enterprise industry a common concern is of "mission drift", in which the pursuit of financial sales comes at the expense of the original social goal. Sustaining the right balance involves careful development of the incentives and organizational culture that can support both financial and social goals.

The views of the management group and our recommendation

We explored with the management group their attitude to moving in the direction of self-finance and social enterprise development. Large majorities from this group supported the view that financial self-reliance is consistent with Seva Mandir's values (Figure 14) and that it should pursue a strategy of developing social enterprises.

Figure 14 The management group's views on financial self-reliance

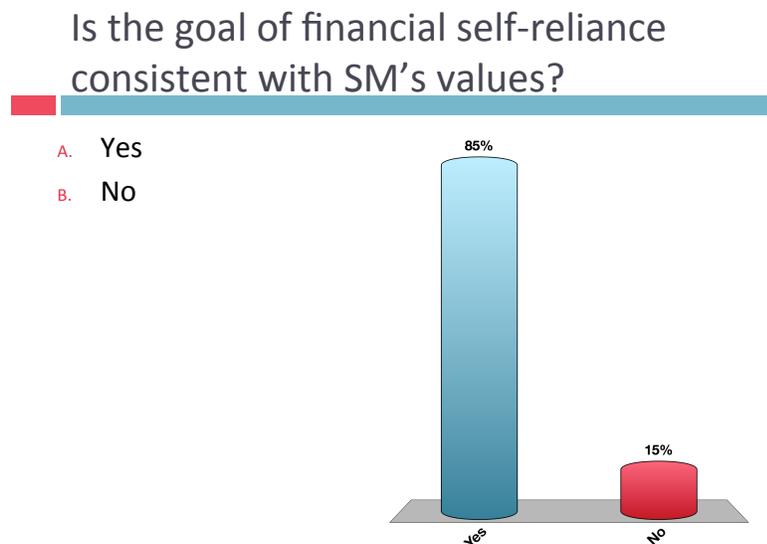
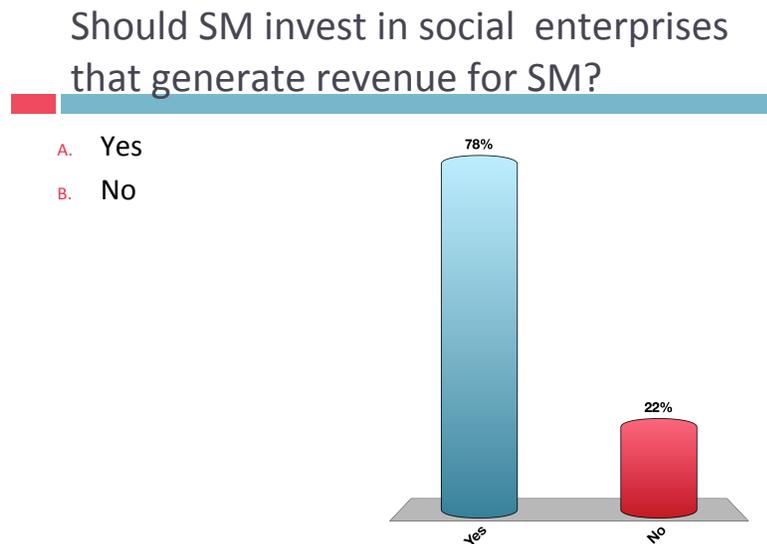


Figure 15 The management group's views on revenue-generating social enterprises



Our recommendation is aligned with the views of the management team. Seva Mandir should consider vigorously deepening its current strategy of having its own social enterprises as partners—as now, potentially supported with seed capital. This would require a significant push on business practices, market development etc. Generating significant surpluses is likely to be a long-term endeavour, but it will be important to consider now the business, legal and governance arrangements that could potentially allow the social enterprises to provide transfers to the core Seva Mandir operations in the future. There are likely to be other areas of potential: in the education example below, we discuss the possibility of having a social enterprise school.

Analogous issues apply to the use of GVK funds. In some cases there is potential to use these for revenue-generating activities—as (potentially) in the case of the Dal Mill. We recommend that Seva Mandir develop a strategy for such community-based social enterprises, paying particular attention to the need to ensure that they are underpinned by sufficient business practices to become a source of productive development for the communities involved.

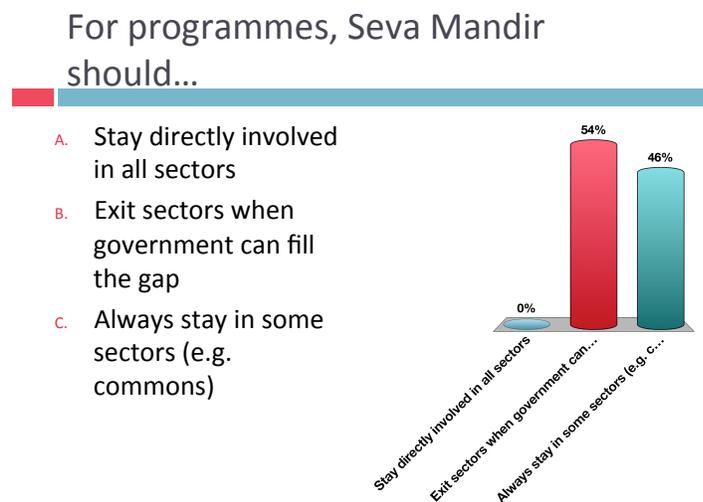
What balance makes sense?

Seva Mandir faces two issues of balance: across different sources of funding; and across different sectors. On the first there is a good case for maintaining the present diversified portfolio—especially including institutional and corporate donors, as well as government. The key issue is the criteria against which financial support is sought or accepted, such that external resources don't undercut Seva Mandir's core mission—as discussed above. Over the long term, this could be gradually substituted by self-finance.

With respect to sectors, it also makes sense for Seva Manadir to maintain a diversified portfolio, especially during this time of transition. While this has costs in the range of technical

skills and organizational resources, this is now an established source of capital, and allows flexibility in response to future demands. Over time, there may well be a case for sector concentration, but this should depend on the state of government (or private provision, in the case of social services) and community demands. The management team had an interesting perspective on this: no-one felt Seva Mandir should automatically stay in all sectors; over half agreed that there should be exits when government can fill the gap; but just under half felt Seva Mandir should stay in some sectors, such as work on the commons, that are core to its values. We see this as a very reasonable mix of views, that can be worked through in the coming years, but does not require immediate action, given the current state of government provisioning and the often weak support for managing of collective resources.

Figure 16 The management group's views on sectors of operation



Education as an example: How to dance with a flailing state

One of the key strategic questions Seva Mandir faces is whether to reform its education programme to partner more directly with the State, and, if so, how. The organization's current role in education can be characterized as that of a service provider, filling in for a weak or dysfunctional State. This is quite different from the organization's relationship with the State in other programmatic areas, such as natural resource management and early childcare, where Seva Mandir has partially embraced the role of project implementer for the state (as discussed above). We explored four potential models for closer Seva Mandir-State collaboration on education during our review, and discuss below why each of these poses its own set of challenges. We are pessimistic, at least in the near future, that Seva Mandir can shift sizable resources from running its own schools to partnering with government schools in a way that will maintain the current effectiveness on student learning.

Work inside government schools: This is something the organization has already experimented with through the five Activity Centers running in government schools over the past 5 years.

However, this experiment appears to have largely failed in its goals to change the pedagogy of government school teachers or offer an “island of excellence” through an extra Seva Mandir class period during the school day. This is due to the fact that the government schools are so understaffed, with student-teacher ratios approaching 100:1, that Seva Mandir staff have essentially become extra government teachers running separate classes that necessarily focus on the government curriculum. Attempts to change the school culture, such as introducing camera monitoring of teachers’ attendance, have been fiercely resisted by the school bureaucracy, although there has been some progress in curbing corporal punishment. The scholarship program, which offers incentives for learning camp graduates to stay in school, was an alternative kind of partnership inside government schools. It, too, is changing direction after Seva Mandir’s monitoring found low learning levels among scholarship students in government schools. It is now pursuing an alternative strategy of seeking to enroll students in a private school in Udaipur.

Current attempts to reform government schools from the inside out are not working. Rethinking these programmes, and continuing to engage with focused aspects of the government schools, is the most promising option we see.

Manage government schools: This is the model Seva Mandir embarked on for government anganwadis in April 2016 with its adoption of government anganwadis (which will eventually number over 1000). A similar MOU for Seva Mandir management of government primary schools would require Seva Mandir to gain expertise in the government school curriculum, which it currently lacks. If Seva Mandir invests in this expertise, perhaps by running a certified private/social enterprise school (as discussed below), this could become a medium term possibility. The Education Unit team is watching the example of the anganwadi partnership, and feels that the scale of potential impact means that it should agree to manage government schools if presented with the opportunity to do so. However, the team stressed the need to continue running Seva Mandir’s own schools as a laboratory for experimenting and learning, which might not be possible within the straightjacketed rules around government schools. The terms of any contractual relationship would be crucial: just taking over existing schools, with existing teachers and all the same rules could make the task of change hard to impossible, with a significant reputational risk.

Mobilize around the Right to Education: This option would enlist Seva Mandir’s community groups (especially GVCs) in an effort to improve government schools through advocacy at the local level. While there are deep flaws in the RTE, as noted above, it does at least formally support institutions of local community involvement. There are isolated stories of this happening in some communities, and we heard about a few community groups, through repeated appeals and protests, successfully putting pressure on the education bureaucracy to upgrade a local school or send an extra teacher. However these are exceptions to the rule: there is little Seva Mandir can do to improve the functioning of government schools through advocacy to local government. This is for two reasons. First, there is extreme mobilization fatigue around slow-moving issues like school reform. Second, and related, at the level of the Panchayat, which is where Seva Mandir’s GVCs have most potential influence, there is virtually

no power over educational decisions in Rajasthan. Key problems, like an enormous undersupply of government teachers, lie far beyond the Panchayat's scope of influence. This means that advocacy is unlikely to have any positive, much less timely, effect. Unless the broader context changes, putting more effort into the Right to Education on the ground looks like an ineffective strategy.

Run Seva Mandir schools as fee-paying social enterprises: As an alternative (or complement) to engaging with government schools, Seva Mandir could conclude that it should instead scale-up its efforts to provide an alternative education through opening certified fee-paying schools. The fact that many Shiksha Kendra families are paying over and above the requested dues signals an untapped willingness to pay for quality education, and the Education Unit believes a fee-paying school run under the Seva Mandir brand could attract hundreds of students, especially in areas like Jhadol and Kotra. Initial capital investments like land and infrastructure would pose a challenge, while attracting and training teachers with the capacity to teach the government curriculum is the largest hurdle. These would be social enterprises—with dual goals of educational attainment for the disadvantaged and revenue generation. They could in principle be for-profit or not-for-profit. A less ambitious course, and not mutually exclusive, is to transition Seva Mandir's current Shiksha Kendras to being more like nonprofit private schools by charging higher fees—subject to ensuring that this doesn't exclude the poorest.

Document and share Seva Mandir's experience in running schools. As already noted, Seva Mandir has deep experience in how to tackle the tough, India-wide, problem of achieving educational learning gains in basic education—with low levels of resources. This constitutes a further area of collaboration in both state and non-state fora.

Section 6: Managing Seva Mandir as an organization through the transition

In Section 3 we discussed Seva Mandir's current organizational functioning in relation to the Flame model. We argued that there is a real and impressive balance between the key elements of identity, tone, structure and practices. We here summarize our recommendations in these areas, and then turn to the question of transition.

Identity and values: While Seva Mandir's values are clear, they are not systematically presented. Having these values explicitly stated in the Annual report and presented in public spaces—such as meeting rooms—could be easily done. This is a low hanging fruit that would bring inspiration and clarity to staff when they first join or when teams face difficult decisions. Seva Mandir's participatory process could be used to ratify or enhance these common values.

Tone and Structure: We argued above that there is an important alignment between organizational functioning and core values, with an unusually good balance between “feminine” (collective, consensus-forming etc.) practices and “masculine” (target-based, data-driven etc.) practices. The one recommendation is to have some shift in balance between inside and outside: we suggested that this could be effected by hiring one or two directors from outside to currently open positions. Hiring at the higher and mid-level management levels could bring

bring fresh ideas, different experience and innovation from outside. However, it would be important to ensure Seva Mandir's values are fully embraced by the new staff being hired, with and support for them to succeed in an organization with such a strong internal culture, including via systematic mentoring.

Structure: human resource management: A particular issue concerns how to manage turnover. This could be helped by setting clear career paths for younger staff coming in and reviewing the long time-in-grade required to be promoted to the next level. It would also be useful to have exit interviews with good performing staff who left Seva Mandir to understand what were the reasons to leave and what would have made the difference for them to stay. Salaries are likely to continue to present a challenge. We recommend continuing with the current system, maintaining strong staff benefits and support, to try and motivate and maintain staff with high levels of commitment and intrinsic motivation. If this fails to attract or keep the staff needed, it would be appropriate for Seva Mandir to review its salary structure, conditional on resources. This would require putting *more*, not less, emphasis on core values, in organizational practices and processes.

We now make some observations on organizational dimensions of the transition process that Seva Mandir is facing.

This starts from two observations concerning the management team, based on our interactions in the week, as well as the survey results.

- First, this team—most of whom have been with Seva Mandir for many years—clearly collectively sees the need to change, and is ready to engage with change.
- Second, we witnessed, in the microcosm of group meetings that we were in, an impressive capacity to work collectively in small groups, that achieved consensus remarkably quickly, often developing quite extensive recommendations on specific designs in a short space of time.

These two characteristics are important sources of organizational capital for any change process. We recommend that Seva Mandir uses the strategic review process as a *mirror*—for the management group (and more broadly to staff) to see these capacities in the context of the changed environment. This can practically mean setting aside space and time, for structure, reflective processes—by the management team, and by groups of Seva Mandir staff. This can then tapped into to mobilize resources to practically engage with the strategic tensions Seva Mandir faces, building on the momentum that was vividly present in the meetings. It could also involve small working groups with a requirement to assess and report back on a set of questions. Senior management should specify the question—an illustrative list was developed in our wrapup session on the basis of the issues that had emerged in the discussion—see Figure 17.

Figure 17 Illustrative questions explored by working groups around strategic tension

Questions

- What could a new business model look like for the new donor landscape?
- What are the implications for SM's activities of more proactive engagement in the formal political space?
- What would be needed to get revenues from social enterprises?
- Should SM have a more intensive gender strategy?
- What criteria should be used to define a more proactive exit strategy?
- What are the practical implications of a more intensive communications strategy?

In designing the questions, groups and process, particular attention should be given to how to engage with potential change whilst maintaining core values, and what practices need to be instituted during the change and beyond. For example, spaces for reflection are important and productive, but also easy to lose in any organization so committed to the world of action. Succession planning is another issue.

There should also be practical attention to the more technical aspects of the change: for example on areas of monitoring, data analytics, evaluation, IT and reporting needs for communicating with donors and government, as discussed in the previous section. It is important not to separate these from the work on organizational practices, but to view them as an integral part of the overall process with the goal of maintaining the existing balance in Seva Mandir.

While we recommend that the process should be strongly participative, and anticipate that this will be practical and creative, decisions will have to be taken by the senior management in consultation with the Board of Trustees, and should be done reasonably quickly.

Building collective activity is the essence of Seva Mandir's success, inside and outside. It should be part of every programme and it should be part of the internal practices during the transition and beyond.

References

To come

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for an External Evaluation of Seva Mandir

Seva Mandir intends to conduct its programmatic and organizational evaluation in the month of July 2016. The last external evaluation of Seva Mandir was done in 2009.

The following sections detail the possible terms of reference for this evaluation.

The Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess Seva Mandir's performance in the period since 2009 and its impact on the communities with which it works. The evaluation should also comment on whether and how Seva Mandir's approach is leading to a development paradigm of just and sustainable development. The evaluation is intended to be forward-looking so that it can enable Seva Mandir to strategize and prepare for the future.

Scope of the evaluation- Background and context

Seva Mandir has worked with tribal and other communities in Southern Rajasthan since 1968. In this region, it is difficult to sustain community well-being and livelihoods given challenges from diminished resource endowments (land, forests, water) and poor public service delivery (health and education). Vulnerabilities are exacerbated due to structural inequalities and disempowerment through dependence on patrons (including the state) as well as the challenges of collective action over individual self-interest. These trends are reflected both in the villages and the small towns of the region.

In over four 4 decades of continuous work, Seva Mandir has been able to make an impact on all these counts:

- There are visible improvements in people's lives, for instance in their capabilities vis-à-vis health, education, and sanitation.
- The natural resource base has been strengthened through the rejuvenation of common property resources (pastures, forests, wastelands, and water bodies) as well as private lands for agriculture. As a result, there is greater food, water and fodder security.
- Most importantly, social cooperation and collective action has increased and empowered communities, also signalling a shift towards greater equality in gender and social relations.
- This reordering of social relations and norms is reflected in more and more people working towards a paradigm of development that is just and sustainable.

- Over the years, Seva Mandir has been a seat of learning for outsiders as well as itself. Many interesting research studies have been carried out here. Seva Mandir has been able to introduce several innovative ideas like that of sanitation through ecosan toilets and it has also responded to challenges in small townships where people were previously denied civic amenities because of poor collective action for governance and inability to resist abuse of power.
- Seva Mandir has also promoted new organizations such as SADHNA & Udaipur Urja initiatives, which promote social objectives while taking advantage of market-based opportunities.

Details of Seva Mandir's organizational structure are enclosed.

Reason for Evaluation

Seva Mandir will like to know the effectiveness and relevance of its interventions. It would also like the evaluation to help Seva Mandir plan its future charter. The details of the same are fleshed out in the next section.

Components to be evaluated

The standards against which performance is to be assessed or analyses are to be conducted are mentioned herewith.

1. **Assess Seva Mandir's performance quantitatively and qualitatively** against the project outcomes committed in the comprehensive plans 2009-12 and 2012-2015 (attached herewith). This assessment should not only estimate the gaps between performance and projected outcomes (if any), but also seek to explain how and why such gaps come about.
2. **A special focus on Seva Mandir's education programme.** While there is near consensus on the need of the programme and its high quality, there are doubts about its future sustainability stemming from two different perspectives. One is its high value in creating and sustaining capabilities within communities. The second perspective is that rather than focus on this investment-driven model, Seva Mandir should instead focus on improving government delivery in the era of RtE, SSA, and the slew of state government programmes. The evaluation should help Seva Mandir in navigating these perspectives regarding future sustainability of its education programme.
3. **Assess Seva Mandir's work in transforming beneficiary aid to community-led development.**

Seva Mandir's distinctive feature is that it is not merely a delivery instrument for development aid, but rather that it approaches each development project as an

instrument to build stronger communities through strengthening village forums that co-manage development projects –the vision is that citizens are empowered as they take on the responsibility for their village, thereby creating a just and sustainable development paradigm. The evaluation should help Seva Mandir assess its progress in the goal of so transforming beneficiary aid into community-led development,

The review should comment on whether Seva Mandir is building an adequate evidence base to support its development philosophy, and the possible ways in which the organization can better advocate externally on behalf of its development philosophy.

4. **Communities vis-à-vis the changing external context.**

While village communities have always been influenced by external contexts, this appears to have substantially increased in recent times. These factors deeply influence aspirations and norms of individuals, families, and groups within the communities that SevaMandir works with.

The new external factors include- consumerism, marketization, migration, identity politics, and changing (albeit highly pervasive) role of the state.

One of the chief changes in the external environment has been the introduction of a mix of populist public schemes, often legislated within the rights-based approach to development and service delivery. The review should assess whether the rights-based movement and associated government schemes have changed the internal dynamics of the communities. SevaMandir works with, and the extent to which SevaMandir has evolved – or needs to further evolve -its strategy to account for this changed social and political environment.

5. Gender as a cross-cutting issue. The evaluation should focus on gender dimensions from an intersectional perspective. Has Seva Mandir’s work lowered gender disparity and improved gender relations both in the community and within Seva Mandir itself? What are the underlying dynamics/processes at work, and how can challenges be effectively addressed?

6. Internal systems. The evaluation should assess Seva Mandir’s internal systems, culture, and values. Are they built to strengthen its programme delivery as well as engender ownership of ideas and commitment within the staff? At present, the funding focus is mostly on delivery of development, in the pressure to deliver, is Seva Mandir becoming a top down organization? Is there a better way of retaining the democratic ethos of Seva Mandir, while coping with this new pressure of programme delivery.

Seva Mandir privileges diversity amongst staff, and it is important to assess the extent of success and impact of this, and whether and how this leads to a better organizational model. Further, since an organization’s stated values are typically differentially distributed across its staff, what are the specific convergences and

divergences of values, how do they impact Seva Mandir's performance, and how can they be navigated?

7. Stakeholders- Staff, Board, donors, government and communities

Methodology

Instruments and Approach to evaluation

The evaluation should start with a desk review of materials sent by Seva Mandir in advance. A list of such material is enclosed and this can be updated.

The next stage of the review would include a field visit to Seva Mandir. We envisage a field visit of approximately 7 days. The field visit will start with a briefing at Seva Mandir's head office, where the evaluation team will have the opportunity to meet several senior staff members, following which the evaluation team will be taken to field sites to get a feel for different interventions of Seva Mandir as well as different contexts. The criteria for choosing the field sites will be further refined in consultation with the evaluation team.

There will also be time for the evaluators to clarify any questions during the visit.

Reporting Requirements- Inception Report

- After the field visit, the evaluation team should prepare an inception report and make a presentation of it at Seva Mandir; the final report should be written only after the presentation and related discussion.
- The inception report will be followed by the final report. Once the final report is ready, the evaluation team should give Seva Mandir the opportunity to read the document and be willing to incorporate any pending comments.

Seva Mandir may also request the evaluation team to make a final presentation in Udaipur.

Annex 2. Plans versus outcomes in Seva Mandir's programmes

Annex 2 Table 1. Plans and outcomes in the Village Institutions Programme

INDICATOR		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	3 Yr Avg
Statistics in Comprehensive Plan and Annual Reports					
# of Members	Target	55000	57000	59000	
	Outcome	57834	60859	63048	
	Difference*	105%	107%	107%	106%
# of GVKs	Target	630	640	650	
	Outcome	626	632	638	
	Difference	99%	99%	98%	99%
# of GVCs	Target	546	563	583	
	Outcome	532	547	557	
	Difference	97%	97%	96%	97%
# of GVC Reelections	Target	70	70	70	
	Outcome	76	103		
	Difference	109%	147%		128%
# GVC Training Programs	Target	59	57	60	
	Outcome	142 "training sessions"	70	63	
	Difference		123%	105%	114%
# Support to People Initiative Trainings	Target	33	33	33	
	Outcome	350 GVCs participated	148 GVCs / 23 trainings	190 GVCs / 18 trainings	
	Difference		70%	55%	63%
# of GVCs Using GVK to Protect Common Resource	Target	12	24	36	
	Outcome	18		87 % of funds used	
	Difference	150%			Different Statistics Reported
# Audits /	Target	150	145	150	

Accountant Trainings	Outcome	350 audits / 35 accountants trained	90% of records / 48 accountants	80% of records / 34 accountants	Different Statistics Reported
	Difference				
Key Statistics Reported in Each Annual Report, but Not in the Comprehensive Plan					
# New GVCs		13	15	10	
% GVC Members Women		45	42	2459 women members (total members?)	
% GVC Officers Women		25	38	41	
GVK fund size (Rs)		42,000,000	46,000,000	50,000,000	
GVK fund use (Rs)		812,000	1,176,000	1,021,000	
GVK fund use as % of funds held		1.9%	2.6%	2.0%	
Gov Scheme Applications by GVCs Sanctioned		2550	3473	524	1100 (for 2015/16)
Key Statistics Reported in some ARs, but Not in the Comprehensive Plan					
GVK Fund Planning Trainings					
# Gov Scheme Beneficiaries					
Value of Gov Schemes					
Set As Goals in the Comprehensive Plan, But Not Reported in the Annual Reports					
# GVC Trainings for Women					
# Awareness Camps (with exception of AR15/16)					

Gov Scheme Trainings

GVCs Meeting Village Volunteer Payments and Admin Expenses From GVK Interest (with exception of AR13/14)

Grants made to make GVKs financially autonomous

Grading of accountants based on efficiency

of Samuhs (with the exception of AR14/15)

Annex 2 Table 1. Plans and outcomes in the Gender Programmes

INDICATOR		2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	3 Yr Avg
Statistics in Comprehensive Plan and Annual Reports					
# Balwadis	Target	200	200	200	
	Outcome	187	198	192	
	Difference*	94%	99%	96%	96%
# Children Enrolled in Balwadis	Target	4400	4400	4400	
	Outcome	4627	4785	4632	
	Difference	105%	109%	105%	106%
# TBAs trained	Target	448	481	481	
	Outcome	323	309	307	
	Difference	72%	64%	64%	67%
# TBA-facilitated Deliveries	Target	6700	7200	7200	
	Outcome	5136	5615	6711	
	Difference	77%	78%	93%	83%
# Balsakhis Trained	Target	151	188	188	
	Outcome	99	94	85	
	Difference	66%	50%	45%	54%
# Infants Reached by Balsakhis	Target	1800	2200	2200	
	Outcome	2117	1800	2815	
	Difference	118%	82%	128%	109%
# Women's Cluster Associations	Target	30	35	35	
	Outcome		39	42	
	Difference		111%	120%	116%
# Women's Resource Centers	Target	13	14	14	
	Outcome	9	10	9	
	Difference	69%	71%	64%	68%

	Reason	Closure due to internal conflict, and focus on strengthening existing SHGs			
# Cluster and WRC Leaders Trained	Target	460	500	365	
	Outcome		910	895	
	Difference		182%	245%	214%
# Cases Addressed by Cluster Organizations and WRCs	Target	65	70	70	
	Outcome	110	190	314	
	Difference		271%	449%	360%
# SHGs	Target	650	700	700	
	Outcome	573	579	612	
	Difference		83%	87%	85%
	Reason	Closure due to internal conflict, and focus on strengthening existing SHGs			
# Women Linked with External Finance	Target	100	100	150	
	Outcome		26 SHGs link with RRLP worth 2.9 million	26 SHGs link with RRLP worth 28.6 million	
	Difference				
# Caste Panchayat Members and Youth Involved in Gender Sensitization Activities	Target	1000	1100	1100	
	Outcome	836	983	1010	
	Difference	84%	89%	92%	88%
Key Statistics Reported in Each AR, but Not in the Comprehensive Plan					
SHG Funds		36129039	45300736	52665284	44698353
% SHG Funds		100.00%	88.00%	100.00%	96%

Loaned					
			0.00	0.00	
SHG loans from GVCs		Not reported	55 women, Rs. 1,050,000	39 women, Rs.740,000	
# Women in SM Institutions Elected to PRI				34	
Set As Goals in the Comprehensive Plan, But Not Reported in the Annual Reports					
Households Provided With Support for Income Generation Activities					
# Staff Involved in Gender Workshops (with exception of AR2012-13)					
# SHG Accountants Trained					
# Women Trained on Utilization of SHG Funds (with exception of AR2014-15)					
# Women Receiving 3 Ante-Natal and Post-Natal Care Visits from TBAs (with exception of AR 2012-13)					