

PHILANTHROPY

FLASHCARDS

dasra

Indian Non- Profit Solutions Going Places

VOLUME 2
PART B

Flashcard Summary

India's vibrant non-profit sector is a powerhouse of innovation. Homegrown solutions have scaled beyond Indian shores and are driving systemic change in vastly different settings across the world. Philanthropy has a huge opportunity to create impact at scale by supporting Made in India solutions. Based on an analysis of 26 such non-profit organizations (NPOs), we identify key patterns and trends.

OUR FINDINGS ARE NOTED BELOW

ALL IN THE MIX

While education and health were top priorities of NPOs, most covered themes across multiple focus areas, with only three having a singular sectoral focus

EYES ON THE PRIZE

70% had a steadfast focus on a streamlined program narrative; capacity building for government and development organizations was the dominant program archetype

RISING STARS

NPOS FOUNDED IN THE LAST 15 YEARS SCALED FASTER (i.e. 4 years compared to 15 years for the older ones) to diversify their presence across global geographies

REAPING THE DIVIDEND

Geographic exposure and resources available directly impact NPO scaling journeys

The average budget size

USD6.5M

64%

began operations in metro / Tier-1 cities

TRAILBLAZERS ALL ALONG

50% NPOs that have scaled are women-led

52% work with women and children

90% are focusing on direct community engagement

The movement of solidarity across Majority Worldⁱ, is growing. India's innovative solutions are already transforming lives in 32 countries across Asia and Africa. Philanthropy can further expand the impact of these breakthroughs to achieve global development goals.

ⁱ The Majority World denotes those countries combined which hold most of the world's population; see more here: <https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/7/6/e009704.full.pdf>

India's vibrant non-profit sector is a powerhouse of innovation, tackling critical issues with homegrown solutions.

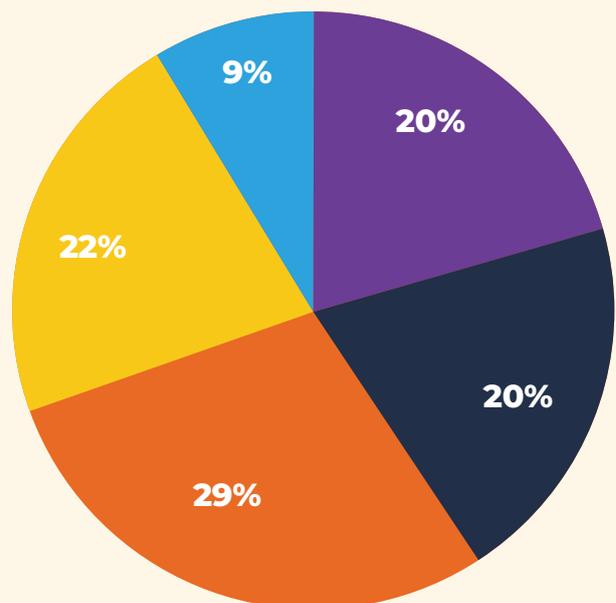
Today, some of these solutions have scaled beyond Indian shores and are driving systemic change in vastly different settings. The term 'scaling' here specifically refers to the international diversification of operations and the replication of a model originally incubated in India. We spotlight such initiatives and identify key patterns across NPOs that have been able to expand their operations, covering sectoral focus areas, program archetypes, and target communities. These insights are based on data compiled from publicly available data on 26 NPOs.

PRESENCE IN MULTIPLE SECTORS INDICATES A VIBRANT ECOSYSTEM AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACHES

NPOs that have diversified to other geographies are primarily focused on historical causes like education and health. Given the concentration of funding in education and health – it is likely correlated to these sectors having a greater number of organizations that have achieved scale. Most NPOs covered work across multiple focus areas, with only three having a singular sectoral focus. Other sectoral priorities for these organizations include livelihood enhancement and skill development, gender, equity, diversity and inclusion (GEDI), and climate action. The diverse thematic focus indicates that effective practices are being nurtured across various development priorities within India's dynamic civil society. This also reflects an awareness among organizations that the journey towards development is complex and interconnected, rather than a straightforward, linear path.

THE DIVERSE SECTORS COVERED BY INDIAN NPOs WHICH HAVE SCALED ACROSS GEOGRAPHIES

- + LIVELIHOOD ENHANCEMENT & SKILL DEVELOPMENT
- + OTHER
- + GEDI
- + CLIMATE ACTION
- + HISTORICAL CAUSES



SOURCE | Dasra analysis from publicly available data (the data set is non-exhaustive and indicative); 'Others' includes arts, culture & heritage, sports for development, etc.

ORGANIZATIONS ARE STEADFAST IN PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS, WITH CAPACITY BUILDING BEING A RECURRING ARCHETYPE

Through our analysis, we identified five archetypes in the programs of the NPOs. Organizations are focusing on capacity building for the government and local development organizations, evidence generation and communications, community engagement at the grassroots, undertaking direct service delivery, and running incubators and resource centers to nurture social impact innovations. These initiatives are helping communities thrive, and build resilience, through lasting positive change.

PROGRAM ARCHETYPES ACROSS NPOs



Capacity building for the public sector + development organizations to improve program and talent management



Evidence generation and communications to influence stakeholder engagement and for undertaking documentation



Community engagement with the grassroots to build awareness on critical issues and strengthening agency



Service delivery towards providing for fundamental needs to improve last mile access and quality of implementation



Incubators and resource centers to generate the means for social impact innovations and enterprises to thrive

However, capacity building through public-private partnerships, enhancing program and talent management, was the most dominant program archetype, underscoring its greater amenability to scaling vis-a-vis other archetypes. Awareness and evidence generation + communications was the second most recurrent archetype.

70% of the NPOs we examined specialize in a **single programmatic archetype**



30% manage multiple archetypes

This suggests that NPOs concentrating on a specific program area, by honing their expertise through rigorous practice and experience, may be better positioned to achieve greater scale and impact.

A GLANCE AT THE KEY PROGRAM ARCHETYPES BY INDIAN NPOS WHO HAVE SCALED ACROSS GEOGRAPHIES



SOURCE | Dasra analysis from publicly available data (the data set is non-exhaustive and indicative); 'Others' includes arts, culture & heritage, sports for development, etc.

'FOR AND BY THE WOMEN' IS VISIBLE AND PERSISTENT IN THE IMPACT AND LEADERSHIP OF THE NPOs

50% of the organizations studied are women-led, including founders and co-founders. This is slightly higher than women's representation in leadership, within the larger not-for-profit ecosystem, at 43%.¹ This significant representation highlights the pivotal role women play in driving organizational leadership.

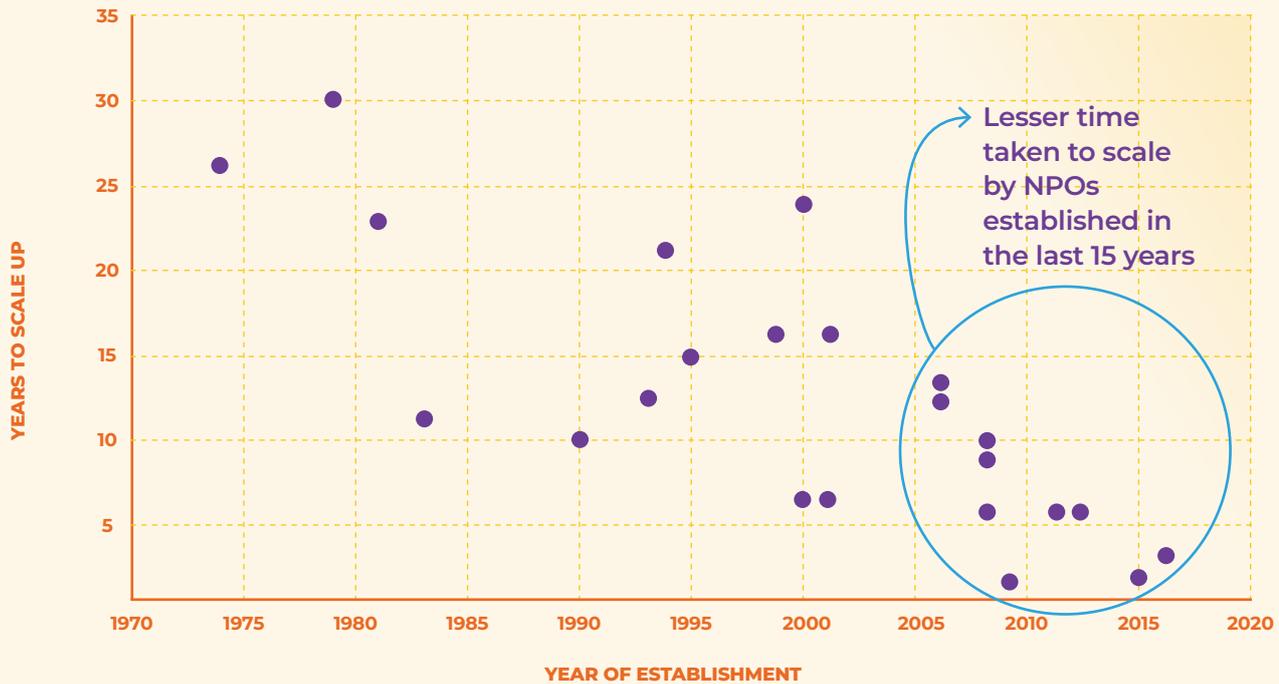
In terms of targeted communities for programs, **52% of the organizations serve women and children.** This emphasis stems from the historical inequalities faced by these demographics.

Nearly 90% of the initiatives directly engage with communities, reflecting their extensive last-mile focus. The remaining initiatives work in partnership with government bodies, other civil society organizations, industry stakeholders, and philanthropists, to further their missions, demonstrating a collaborative approach.

NPOs ESTABLISHED IN THE LAST 15 YEARS HAVE SCALED FASTER THAN OLDER ESTABLISHED ONES

Organizations founded over the last 15 years were found to have taken a relatively lesser number of years to scale up. Those founded since 2008 scaled up in an average of 3.7 years, compared to 15.3 years for older organizations. The median time taken for the organizations to scale up to other geographies was ~11 years, with wide variation ranging from 1 - 30 years.

SCALING JOURNEYS OF NPOs



SOURCE | DASRA ANALYSIS FROM PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA (THE DATA SET IS NON-EXHAUSTIVE AND INDICATIVE)

THE AVAILABILITY OF EXPOSURE AND RESOURCES IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSIFICATION

The majority of the NPOs included in this list are typically well-funded and belong to the top one percentile of NPOs in India in terms of budget size. The average budget size was USD 6.5 million, ranging from USD 0.6 million to USD 12 million.

A significant majority of organizations, about 64%, have established their initial operations in Metro or Tier 1 cities in India, highlighting a strong correlation between metro-city locations and geographical diversification. Organizations that begin their operations in India's Metro and Tier 1 cities are more likely to pursue geographical outreach. There is a notable trend of South-South exchange, with solutions developed in India primarily extending to countries in Asia and Africa. These solutions are currently implemented in 32 countries in these regions.ⁱⁱ



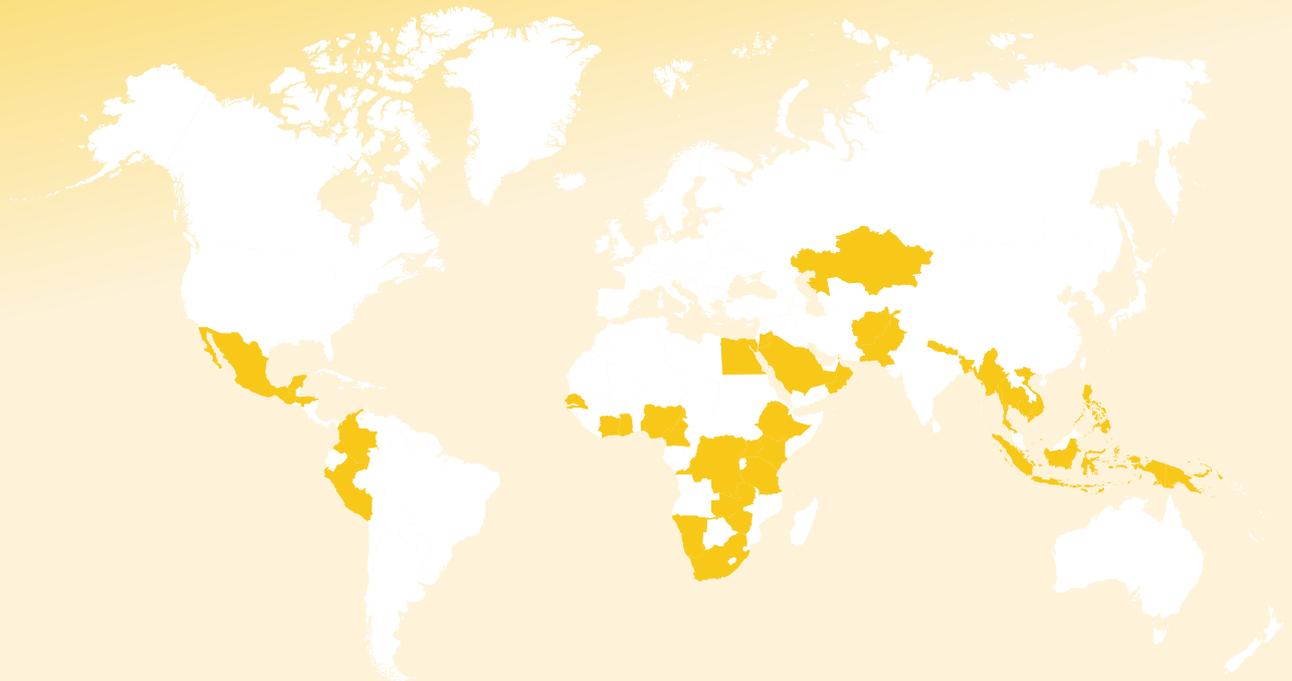
ⁱⁱ These countries include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji Islands, Gambia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Malawi, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

WHERE WERE OPERATIONS FIRST SET UP IN INDIA?



Please note that the size of the bubble indicates the number of NPOs present.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL REACH OF SOLUTIONS HOMEGROWN IN INDIA?



SOURCE | DASRA ANALYSIS FROM PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA (THE DATA SET IS NON-EXHAUSTIVE AND INDICATIVE)

PHILANTHROPY HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE IMPACT AT SCALE BY SUPPORTING MADE IN INDIA SOLUTIONS

Over the past decade, India has been showing a strong commitment to uphold the aspirations of the Global South and is on the path to shifting power dynamics. This was evident during India's hosting of the G20 summit for 2022-23, where it promoted the interests of Africa, sustainable development, mainstreaming of gender equity, and unconditional development cooperation.

Philanthropy can play a critical role in furthering these aspirations by supporting Indian non-profit organizations that have distinguished themselves by effectively scaling their impact across diverse geographies. By leveraging adaptive strategies, strategic partnerships, and innovative platforms – these organizations illustrate how targeted approaches can drive significant change.

India's robust presence as a scaling lab for critical solutions to the world's most complex issues is a harbinger for a future where the Majority World is empowered to solve for itself. This imminent trend must be strengthened with philanthropic capital. The ongoing diversification journeys of NPOs highlight India's significant role in global development and celebrate its transformative potential in addressing complex issues on a worldwide scale.

ANNEXURES | CASELETS – NPO JOURNEYS

This section highlights three exemplary models as caselets: Pratham International, Noora Health, and Creative Million, demonstrating how these non-profits have successfully expanded their reach and influence in different contexts. Through tailored solutions, collaborative efforts, and creative initiatives, these organizations provide valuable insights into achieving scale and fostering meaningful impact in varied settings.

Pratham International: Scaling impact through adaptive solutions

Pratham Education Foundation has successfully expanded solutions such as the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) beyond India through partnerships with organizations such as the People's Action for Learning Network (PAL Network) and TaRL Africa. By offering tailored end-to-end support that adapts to partner needs and operating contexts, Pratham International has demonstrated effective multi-stakeholder collaboration with local NPOs, government, and other key stakeholders. For instance, in Morocco, Pratham has played a crucial role in adapting the TaRL approach for the Ministry of Education since April 2022. In Nepal, Pratham's technical assistance has been instrumental in launching a TaRL pilot with local partner Street Child of Nepal, building local capacity through extensive training and mentorship. Similarly, in Egypt and the Philippines, Pratham's support has empowered local organizations like Educate Me and AHA! Learning Center by offering guidance on program design and delivery. Pratham International is well-positioned to build on this success and drive transformative change across diverse global regions.

Noora Health: Expanding global footprint through strategic partnerships

Noora Health's exponential growth since 2014 exemplifies the power of strategic partnerships in scaling impact globally. Focused on training and supporting family caregivers, Noora Health and implementing partners of Noora Health's 'Care Companion Program' build effective collaborations with state governments in India (growing from four to nine in the past four years), which has paved the way for its expansion to Bangladesh, Indonesia, and most recently Nepal. By cultivating local partnerships, co-designing contextually rooted programs, and working through existing public health systems, Noora Health has compassionately trained more than 14 million caregivers and patients to date and plans to reach 70 million caregivers by the end of 2027. They also aim to accelerate efforts to establish family caregiver training and support as the global standard of care.

Creative Million: Amplifying reach through innovative platforms

In 2018, Industree Foundation leveraged its expertise in incubating producer-owned companies to launch Mission Creative Million – a movement centered around access to market, capacity development, and building economic opportunities to support one million people from underrepresented communities, over the next ten years. What sets Creative Million apart is its ability to replicate and adapt this model which has been tested, has evolved, and continues to evolve. In both India and Africa, implementation has been proven as a solution that is well-suited across value chains, and additional markets are being explored including Southeast Asia and Latin America. Today, Creative Million supports Industree Foundation in its mission to create an enabling ecosystem that empowers vulnerable communities using nature-based solutions that are collectively owned and offer the potential to supply global market players.

Note on Methodology

The data exercise undertaken is non-exhaustive and indicative. The total sample studied was a list of 26 NPOs. The analysis is restricted to non-profit entities that have operations outside India and excludes those that have set up offices solely for fundraising.

References

1. <https://childfundindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Womens-Leadership-in-the-Development-Sector-Report.pdf>
2. <https://www.mea.gov.in/Images/CPV/G20-New-Delhi-Leaders-Declaration.pdf>

About the Philanthropy Flashcard Series

Philanthropy and non-profit practice are playing a critical role in addressing India's most pressing challenges and advancing its boldest ambitions. If you want to know the big picture, it helps to start with the small details. This series aims to provide a strategic vantage point into the ever-changing landscape of development in India. Presented as flashcards, we capture insights on shifting trends, barriers, and opportunities.

This, the second volume, covers two themes: global giving to India covering collaboratives, foundations, and the Indian diaspora in the US, and homegrown non-profit solutions that have scaled practice across diverse geographies. The Philanthropy Flashcard series provides succinct insights based on secondary data and our ongoing conversations with key stakeholders.

SEE THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE FLASHCARDS HERE

[*Corporate Social Responsibility*](#) | [*Family Foundations*](#) | [*Collaboratives*](#)