Special Section: White Space in the Leadership Program Landscape

The 70-20-10 learning model (described in Section IV, on page 44) identifies formal training as a critical input for developing leaders. Although such coursework and training account for just 10 percent of a leader's development, it can have an outsized impact on the other 90 percent of learning. Leadership development programs, which focus on this "10 percent," can enhance the knowledge and competencies of an NGO's senior leaders, so they can build stronger organizations.

Our survey shows that NGO leaders highly value external leadership development programs. Even among NGO leaders who have never participated in one, 98 percent are interested in doing so. They believe external programs can complement internal efforts.

However, there are white spaces in the landscape of development programs for social sector leaders in India:[19]

- Just 15 programs focus on current social sector leaders. Those that do are either relatively new or are not widely known. As a result, few NGOs participate in the programs.

- Even fewer specifically target senior NGO leaders or meet their needs. Additionally, these programs underemphasize organizational leadership competencies and often lack practical and application-based learning, contextualized content, and post-program engagement.

We base our conclusions on publicly available information, interviews, and survey feedback. We have not independently assessed the impact or effectiveness of these programs.

Few programs target current social sector leaders

Of the programs available in the social sector, some target aspiring leaders, some social entrepreneurs, and others focus on current leaders. Figure S.1 on the following page presents these three program archetypes by audience, with some examples.

This section explores the 15 programs that target current social sector leaders.[20] (See Appendix C for a list of programs. A sample list of programs for aspiring leaders and social entrepreneurs is available in Appendix D.)

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19 See definition of "leadership development program" in Section I. For the purposes of this study, we focused on programs that are geared toward social sector leaders, including NGO leaders, in India. Programs targeting wider audiences were excluded.

20 This list is not intended to be comprehensive, but it can serve as a robust snapshot of available and referenced (by consultees) leadership programs.

Figure S.1: Target audience for leadership development programs

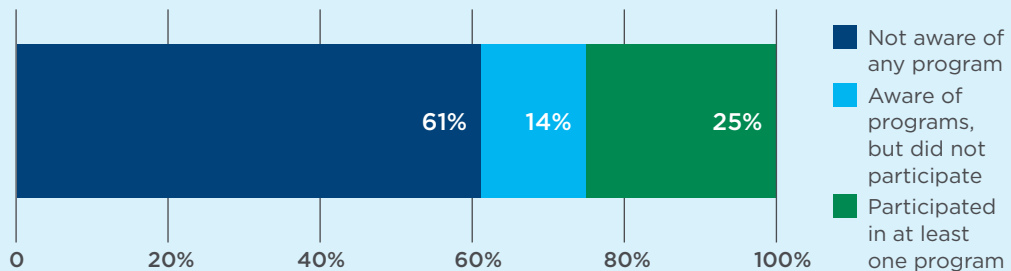| **Future/young social sector leaders**	**Social entrepreneurs**	**Current social sector leaders**
Fellowship programs that aim to create future leaders for the social sector	Incubation programs for entrepreneurs that provide support at the early stage of the organization	Range of programs that promote further development for current NGO leaders as well as others in the social sector
Examples • Teach for India Fellowship • Acumen Global Fellows Program	**Examples** • Echoing Green Fellowship • UnLtd India	**Examples** • Dasra Social Impact Leadership Program • Aspire Circle Fellowship

Fifteen programs is not an insignificant number. Yet the supply woefully fails to meet the needs of leaders across hundreds of thousands of Indian NGOs. Further, some programs just opened their doors this year, including Aritra at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and Strategic Nonprofit Management—India at Ashoka University.

Nor are the 15 programs well known. Approximately 60 percent of NGOs are unaware of *any* leadership development programs (see Figure S.2 below). Even among funders and intermediaries, most could name only one or two. It is therefore not surprising that just 51 out of 203 (approximately 25 percent) of NGO leaders have participated in at least one leadership program.

Figure S.2: Most NGOs are not aware of any leadership development programs for senior leaders

Leaders had to select whether they were aware of any programs for senior leaders, and if so, whether they have participated in them (*n= 203*)

- Not aware of any program — 61%
- Aware of programs, but did not participate — 14%
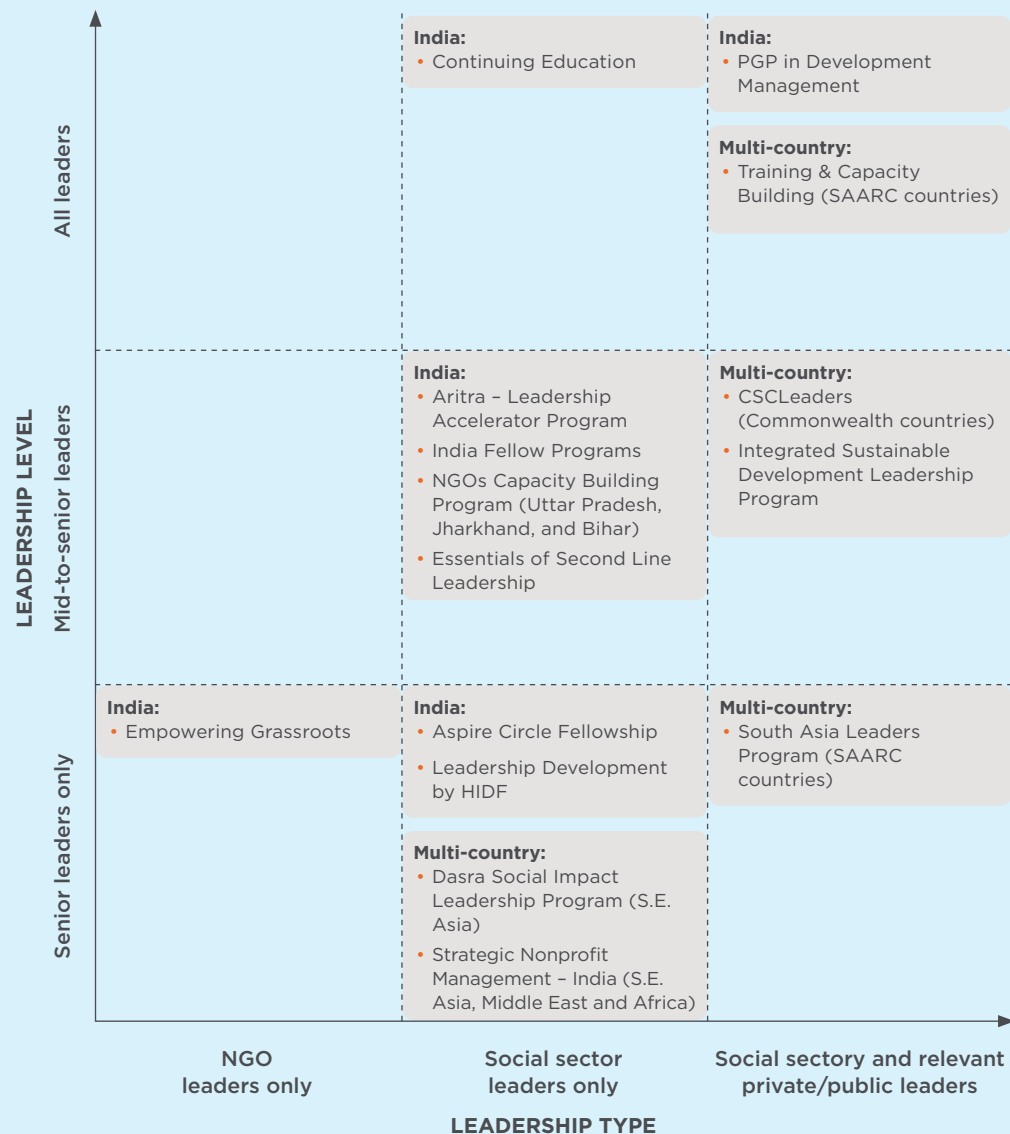- Participated in at least one program — 25%

Few leadership programs meet NGO-specific needs

Among those who participated, more than 80 percent reported that the program was "effective" at developing leadership skills. Yet qualitative feedback consistently pointed to the need for higher-quality programs. We sought to identify white spaces for improvement by considering four dimensions: target audience, content focus, design and format, and pricing.

1. NGO senior leaders in India are not the *target audience*

Figure S.3: There are few leadership development programs for current social sector leaders that specifically target NGOs

Target audience of leadership development programs, based on Bridgespan analysis

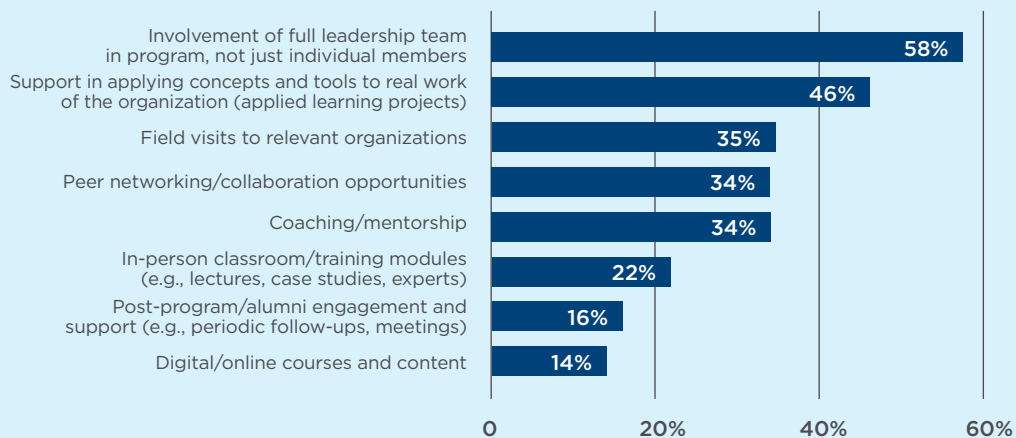| LEADERSHIP LEVEL	NGO leaders only	Social sector leaders only	Social sectory and relevant private/public leaders
All leaders		**India:** • Continuing Education	**India:** • PGP in Development Management **Multi-country:** • Training & Capacity Building (SAARC countries)
Mid-to-senior leaders		**India:** • Aritra – Leadership Accelerator Program • India Fellow Programs • NGOs Capacity Building Program (Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar) • Essentials of Second Line Leadership	**Multi-country:** • CSCLeaders (Commonwealth countries) • Integrated Sustainable Development Leadership Program
Senior leaders only	**India:** • Empowering Grassroots	**India:** • Aspire Circle Fellowship • Leadership Development by HIDF **Multi-country:** • Dasra Social Impact Leadership Program (S.E. Asia) • Strategic Nonprofit Management – India (S.E. Asia, Middle East and Africa)	**Multi-country:** • South Asia Leaders Program (SAARC countries)

LEADERSHIP TYPE

We found that while many programs are *available* to NGO senior leaders in India, they do not *target* them (see Figure S.4 below). Most programs seek broader audiences. This helps ensure a diversity of perspectives, but may limit applicability to Indian NGO leaders. The drawbacks include:

- **Limited relevance to senior leaders:** Most programs are open to individuals at any management level. Yet NGO senior leaders are interested in programs that focus exclusively on their unique needs, such as: strategy development, succession planning, fundraising, and founder transitions.

- **Lack of focus on NGO leaders**: Almost all programs welcome a variety of leaders, whether of social enterprises, foundations, CSR units, or government organizations. Just one program, Empowering Grassroots, serves NGO leaders exclusively. Yet such broadly targeted programs may not address topics that matter the most to NGO leaders, such as fundraising, designing programs, and working with volunteers.

- **Not India-specific:** Several programs target a global audience and lack content sufficiently specific to India. For example, omissions may include discussions on India's CSR law and its implementation; the challenges of operating within a federal, decentralized political system; or managing caste and other issues of equity, to name a few.

- **Insufficient group learning:** Most programs serve individual leaders. However, many NGO leaders seek programs that engage multiple leaders from their organizations. Group learning can promote team trust and collaboration, as well as foster collective decision making and a shared responsibility for championing change in the organization. In fact, 58 percent of NGO leaders say the involvement of their entire leadership teams is one program feature they would most desire (see Figure S.4 below).

Figure S.4: Leaders most desire involvement of the full leadership team in leadership development programs

Leaders could select up to three features that they would like most in leadership development programs (*n=149*)

Feature	Percent
Involvement of full leadership team in program, not just individual members	58%
Support in applying concepts and tools to real work of the organization (applied learning projects)	46%
Field visits to relevant organizations	35%
Peer networking/collaboration opportunities	34%
Coaching/mentorship	34%
In-person classroom/training modules (e.g., lectures, case studies, experts)	22%
Post-program/alumni engagement and support (e.g., periodic follow-ups, meetings)	16%
Digital/online courses and content	14%

Source: The Bridgespan Group, NGO Leadership Development in India Survey–December 2016 to January 2017

2. Program *content* often fails to hone organizational leadership competencies
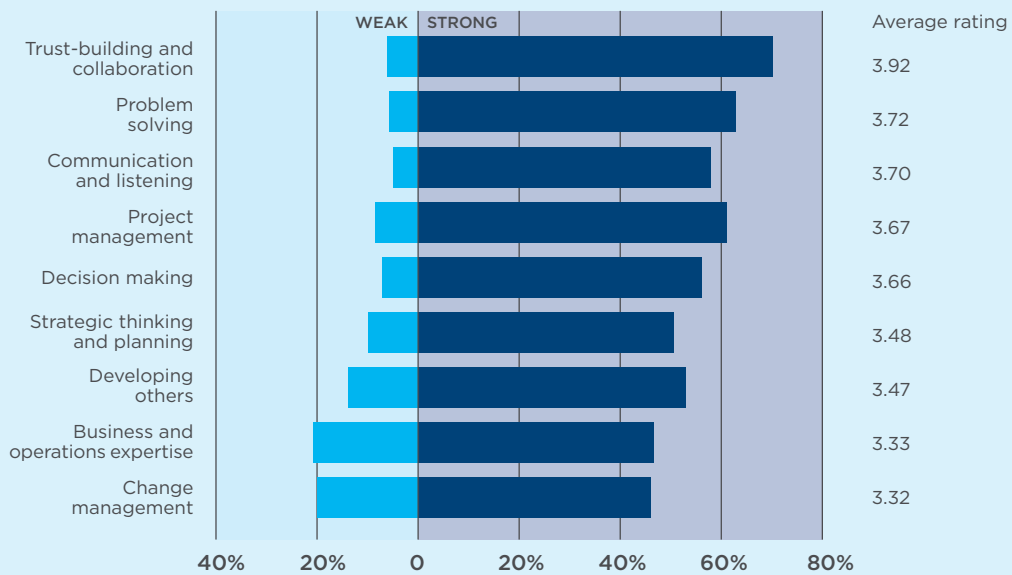
Programs typically cast a broad net. They are designed to address a variety of leadership needs. Also, most include case studies with a global or private sector focus.

- **Leadership competencies:** Many leadership programs emphasize individual leadership competencies (such as self-awareness, empathy, or self-motivation), or technical/functional competencies (such as finance, fundraising, or project management). Yet NGO leaders most wish to hone their organizational leadership competencies, particularly around change management, business/ management expertise, developing others, and strategic thinking and planning (see Figure S.5 below).

- **Case studies:** Programs often use examples and case studies from the for-profit and global NGO sectors. An outside perspective is often valuable, particularly when demonstrating ways in which Indian NGOs can learn from the rest of the world—as well as what the rest of the world can learn from India.

Yet Indian NGOs *do* encounter unique challenges, and a better balance of global and local cases is needed. Harvard Business School's "Strategic Nonprofit Management—India," a program launched in August 2017 in association with Ashoka University, aimed for roughly two-thirds of its case studies to be based on organizations in South and Southeast Asia. This effort comes closer to meeting NGO requirements, but there is still space to invest in more India-specific cases.

Figure S.5: Leadership teams are weakest in the competencies necessary to build sustainable organizations

Leaders had to rate the strength of their senior leaders on various organizational leadership competencies (*n=203*)

Competency	Average rating
Trust-building and collaboration	3.92
Problem solving	3.72
Communication and listening	3.70
Project management	3.67
Decision making	3.66
Strategic thinking and planning	3.48
Developing others	3.47
Business and operations expertise	3.33
Change management	3.32

Note: Ordered top-to-bottom by average rating, from highest to lowest; ratings of 4 and 5 have been combined as a "Strong" rating while ratings of 1 and 2 have been combined as a "Weak" rating; neutral ratings (3) have been excluded.

3. NGOs prefer *program elements* that are often unavailable

NGO leaders voiced clear program preferences, particularly for applied-learning methodologies, post-program engagement, and coaching and mentoring, which are not often met:

- **Duration and frequency**: Many programs, particularly the newer ones, are structured as multiday classroom sessions staggered over periods ranging from nine to 24 months. Time-pressed NGO leaders find this model valuable.

- **Practical and application-based learning**: Some 46 percent of survey respondents say they need support in applying the tools and concepts acquired through external programs to their organizations' day-to-day work (see Figure S.5 on the previous page). In fact, respondents value applied learning more than almost all other program features.

  SPJIMR's PGP in Development Management program combines classroom with real-world work. Every week-long session covers topics on NGO management and functional skills, and such sessions are staggered every two months. In the interim, participants apply what they have learned to their daily work and share their experiences at the next session.

  However, few other programs emphasize learning through projects or other applied-learning methods. Instead, most focus on classroom-based learning through workshops and modules. According to survey respondents, "limited practical and application-based learning" is the leading reason why programs are ineffective (see Figure S.6).
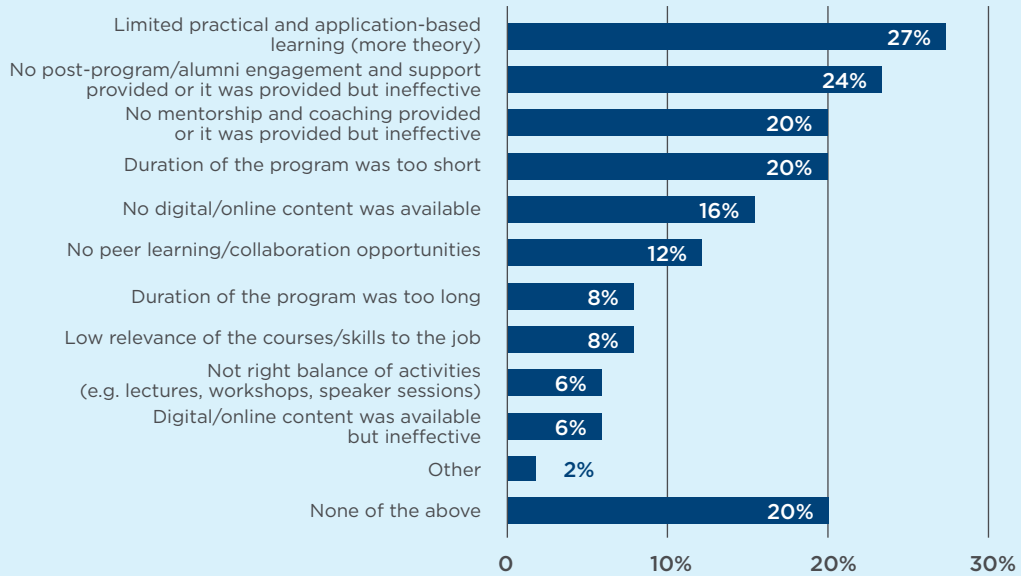
- **Post-program/alumni engagement**: We found that NGO leaders highly value follow up support—for example, through check-ins and convenings—after a program concludes (see Figure S.7). This can also help program providers improve their offerings, by eliciting feedback and understanding how participants apply what they have learned. But this practice is not widespread.

  One of the few examples of program follow up is the CommonPurpose 360 network, an online platform of more than 65,000 alumni across all of its global programs.

- **Coaching and mentoring**: According to the 70-20-10 model, 20 percent of learning happens through coaching and mentoring. NGO leaders confirm the importance of this activity. However, few programs provide explicit hands-on support, which NGO leaders say diminishes a program's effectiveness (see Figure S.7).

Figure S.6: Lack of practical learning or post-program engagement made leadership development programs less effective

Leaders could select up to three factors that made leadership development programs they attended less effective (*n=51*)

Factor	Percentage
Limited practical and application-based learning (more theory)	27%
No post-program/alumni engagement and support provided or it was provided but ineffective	24%
No mentorship and coaching provided or it was provided but ineffective	20%
Duration of the program was too short	20%
No digital/online content was available	16%
No peer learning/collaboration opportunities	12%
Duration of the program was too long	8%
Low relevance of the courses/skills to the job	8%
Not right balance of activities (e.g. lectures, workshops, speaker sessions)	6%
Digital/online content was available but ineffective	6%
Other	2%
None of the above	20%

Note: "Other" included 'Overloading'

Source: The Bridgespan Group, NGO Leadership Development in India Survey–December 2016 to January 2017

Figure S.7: Peer networking and the right balance of activities made leadership development programs more effective

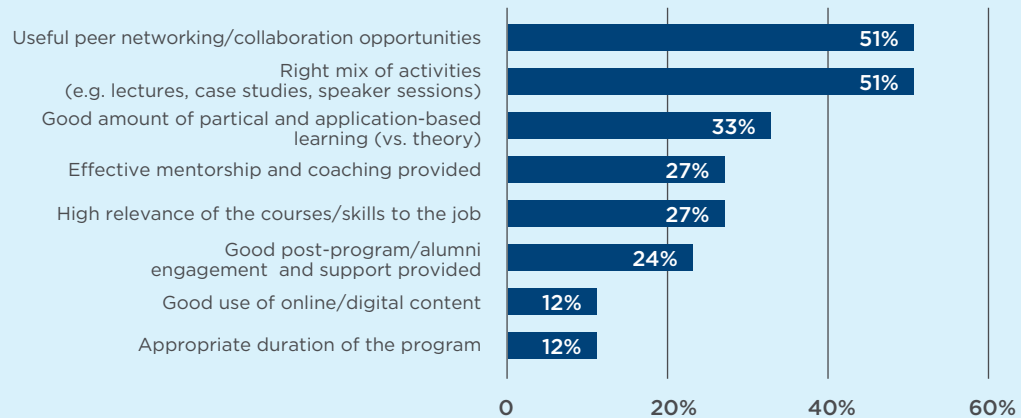Leaders could select up to three factors that made leadership development programs they attended more effective (*n=51*)

Factor	Percentage
Useful peer networking/collaboration opportunities	51%
Right mix of activities (e.g. lectures, case studies, speaker sessions)	51%
Good amount of partical and application-based learning (vs. theory)	33%
Effective mentorship and coaching provided	27%
High relevance of the courses/skills to the job	27%
Good post-program/alumni engagement and support provided	24%
Good use of online/digital content	12%
Appropriate duration of the program	12%

Source: The Bridgespan Group, NGO Leadership Development in India Survey–December 2016 to January 2017

4. Program *pricing* varies, but many NGOs believe they are unaffordable

Leadership development program prices range significantly. A single-session program is often under INR 1 lakh (or approximately $1,500), while multi-session programs range from INR 1 to 6 lakh per participant (or approximately $1,500 to $9,000).

Some programs offer subsidized rates for NGOs through need-based scholarships. This is true of Aritra (Phicus Social Solutions and IIM Bangalore), Strategic Nonprofit Management—India (Ashoka University and Harvard Business School), Dasra Social Impact Leadership Program, and PGP in Development Management (SPJIMR), to name a few. Many funders also finance their grantees' participation.

Without a subsidy, NGOs find it difficult to allocate portions of their limited unrestricted budgets to external leadership development activities. "Many programs are quite expensive for us," concedes Samir Chaudhuri, founder director of the Child in Need Institute, an NGO working for poor children and women. "[Programs] charge no less than 2 lakhs (or approximately $3,000), which is out of our range. Given the lack of funding, and the manner of funding, we are only able to provide these opportunities to two to three people, whereas several more may need these trainings."

Additional supports are sparse

The availability of additional supports for NGO leadership development, whether leadership materials (online courses, guides, toolkits, and questionnaires) or customized supports, is spotty in India.

Existing leadership material includes assessment tools like McKinsey's Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), online courses such as those offered by +Acumen, and guides like Bridgespan's Nonprofit Leadership Development Toolkit. (We list select resources for NGOs in Appendix E.) These and similar resources are often available online and do not require a significant investment of time or money. However, most are neither specifically designed for India's social sector leaders nor well known. Only a handful of NGO leaders are aware of any.

Customized support is also available from individual coaches and consultants, academic institutions, and consulting organizations. For example, Janaagraha's engagement with Aon Hewitt, a global professional services firm, helped it assess its leadership needs and identify pathways to become more of a learning organization. (See the Case Study on page 35 for detail.)

NGO leaders reported positive experiences with these providers, citing the value of their in-depth and often longer-term engagements, particularly in defining talent-development processes. However, few who provide customized support in India are experienced in working with NGOs. And NGOs believe that even those providers with such experience are often unaffordable.