DOOR STEP SCHOOL

IMPACT REPORT 2018-21





Purpose of the Report

This report intends to communicate the impact of Wipro Cares' engagement with Door Step School (DSS). It captures the context of DSS's work, its engagement with Wipro Cares and impact of the program Wipro Cares has supported during 2018-2021. The impact assessment has been completed by Higher At Work, an independent research and strategy organization.

Contents

SUMMARY			
BACKGROUND	08		
ABOUT DOOR STEP SCHOOL	10		
ENGAGEMENT WITH WIPRO CARES	14		
IMPACT	18		
ENABLING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES	2		
Providing doorstep access to education	2		
Ensuring functional literacy of children	22		
Providing access to learning during Covid-19	23		
Facilitating local government schools to enrol and support children	23		
EMPOWERING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS	2		
Establishing the importance of education amongst parents	2		
Enabling educators' personal and professional growth	2		
Building capacities of other organizations	2		
WAY FORWARD	32		
CONCLUSION	37		
APPENDIX	37		
METHODOLOGY	37		
	BACKGROUND ABOUT DOOR STEP SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT WITH WIPRO CARES IMPACT ENABLING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES Providing doorstep access to education Ensuring functional literacy of children Providing access to learning during Covid-19 Facilitating local government schools to enrol and support children EMPOWERING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS Establishing the importance of education amongst parents Enabling educators' personal and professional growth Building capacities of other organizations WAY FORWARD CONCLUSION APPENDIX		

Summary

Over the last few decades, significant progress has been made in providing access to education for children across the country. However, there are several marginalized communities that still struggle with access to education. Children of migrant workers, street children, or those impacted by eviction drives in big cities are most vulnerable to dropping out of education. Over the last two decades, Wipro Cares (WC) has worked with many Civil Society Organizations to improve children's access to school education. Door Step School (DSS) has been a significant partner providing learning opportunities for children at risk. Wipro Cares has engaged with DSS through volunteering employee time and contributing critical financial resources, for its programs.

Wipro Cares has been supporting the annual survey of DSS, ECC (Every Child Counts), since 2014. A programme PPCE (Parents' Participation in Children's Education) was launched by DSS to help migrant parents overcome their challenges in accessing formal education for their children - unawareness of Right to Education, language barriers in negotiating with local government schools and their own lack of formal education and more. The focus was to strengthen parents' ownership and increase their involvement in the children's education. Although DSS has been a long-term partner with Wipro Cares, this report will draw upon the work for the reporting period 2018-2021 during which Wipro Cares supported both ECC and PPCE programs across different sites. The impact of DSS's work can be understood in two key areas:

ENABLED ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

DSS has been providing door step access to education- at municipal schools, construction sites, streets and pavements, slums and new settlement colonies and suited to times when the children are available. It has provided additional classes and home study kits to supplement children's learning. DSS focuses on specific learning outcomes for children in achieving functional literacy and numeracy, for instance children being able to read the local language newspaper with comprehension. During the Covid-19 outbreak, it created a blended approach to learning, very quickly training its staff to use technology in their day-to-day work, reaching out to children online with sessions and providing learning material directly to parents without access to technology (such as smart phones). Additionally, it facilitated local government schools to enrol and support children by making school authorities aware of the 'no denial' clause and facilitating enrolments and transfers of migrant children. DSS conducted sessions with the school officials to ensure children receive adequate education without discrimination.

EMPOWERED MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Empowering multiple stakeholders is a critical outcome of the DSS approach. It recognizes the role of each of the stakeholders-parents, educators, community members, school officials, in ensuring that the child enrols and remains in school. DSS has established an aspiration for education in communities it works with. This has had intergenerational impact as parents, in subsequent generations, consider education to be essential and don't negotiate with the idea of sending their children to schools. The volunteer parents, the biggest champions of the program, undertook regular meetings and home visits. Children have learnt to be treated with respect and dignity. They have gained confidence to participate in their surroundings and are better prepared for life. DSS has developed a cadre of committed and well-trained educators over the years who come from low to middle income families and are usually secondary school pass outs. They have become financially independent, furthered their formal education, and accessed capacity building programs to further their professional growth. DSS, consistently working on access to education over the last 33 years, has developed a repository of knowledge which it shares with several grassroots organizations in and around Maharashtra. It has built their capacities and nurtured them, encouraging teaching learning methods such as child centricity and functional literacy.

Insights into current challenges and opportunities for DSS provide key themes to deliberate on the way forward. While DSS has built a robust on ground organization, it now needs to find the next leader who can take forward the work with similar

commitment and vision for change. It also needs to recruit skilled and experienced people in senior positions. DSS seeks help in developing its support functions such as HR, Finance, Communications, Media and Fundraising. It feels, developing leadership and building organizational capacities are critical to take the organization to the next level. It also needs support to use technology for organizations and progam data handling as well as to explore meaningful use of technology in education. The changing nature of CSR funds and their expectations have left DSS uncertain with the responsibility of large people intensive programs on the ground. It needs sustainable funding, assured long-term support to continue its work at the desired scale. DSS receives multiple requests from other CSOs for training and building their capacities and believes it can nurture younger initiatives. Curating these collaborations require funds and enhancing its own internal capacities.

This reflection and impact report provides the context and opportunity for DSS and Wipro Cares to identify future strategies that will help enhance its transformative work on the ground.

Background

Over the last few decades, significant progress has been made in providing access to education for children across the country. Government has worked concertedly to ensure that most communities have access to primary schools in their vicinity. Policies such as Right to Education Act, 2009 (RTE) have made elementary education free and compulsory for children between ages 6 to 14.

However, there are several marginalized communities that still struggle with access to education. While RTE mandates education for every child, its implementation on ground often leaves many marginalized children out of formal education system. Children of migrant workers, street children, or those impacted by eviction drives in big cities are most vulnerable to dropping out of education. The lack of stability in their family life and income are big barriers to their access to education. They often have no permanent address and attending school on a regular basis becomes a challenge.

Wipro Cares has worked with many Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to improve children's access to school education. These organizations work to bridge a critical gap in the system, ensuring that a sizeable cohort of children from underserved communities receive access to formal education. Traditionally supported by Wipro Cares initiatives, Wipro employees have connected with and contributed to these partner organizations. Their engagement has included volunteering as well as contributing financially to the initiatives. Today, Wipro Cares works with 22 CSOs that focus on improving access to education for marginalized children. Door Step School (DSS) is one such key partner working to provide access to learning opportunities for vulnerable children, essentially children at risk who are not able to access mainstream schools.



About Door Step School

DSS was started as a community project of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, Mumbai. It was registered in 1989 as a nonprofit and expanded to Pune in 1993. At that time, there was an urgent need to address the issue of children dropping out of municipal schools. With time it became apparent that if the children could not come to the schools, then schools would need to go to their 'doorstep'. Today, DSS runs 100+ street schools and has reached more than 1 million children through community based educational services and its partnerships with corporation run schools in Mumbai and Pune.

DSS works towards universal elementary education by reaching out to and enrolling some of the most vulnerable, out of school children in government schools. The children largely belong to families that seasonally migrate, have low incomes, and live in temporary settlements. The children also bear responsibilities for care of younger siblings, home security, and for supplementing family income. They live on construction sites, temporary and permanent slums. DSS runs learning centres in these localities to support children after school and facilitates their enrolment to government schools. Its goal is to ensure that children access primary education and that every child achieves functional literacy.

DSS works with multiple stakeholders - parents and community to raise awareness and increase their participation in their children's education as well as with the government to improve the quality of education. It undertakes both community intervention programs and school intervention programs to bring quality education to marginalized children.

COMMUNITY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

The Community Intervention Programs aim to bring education to the doorstep of children from migrant underprivileged communities. These include a range of services catering to vulnerable children at every life stage, in different contexts and locations.

- Project Foundation provides children access to foundational classes through activity centres at construction sites with creches (0-2 years), balwadis (4-6 years) and support classes (6-14 years).
- Community Learning Centers in permanent slum settlements provide the children a quiet place to study and access learning resources (books, science labs, computers).
- School on Wheels are mobile classrooms and reading rooms in re-modelled buses for locations that lack infrastructure for a functional classroom.
- Every Child Counts (ECC) is a yearly exercise to identify and enroll out of school children undertaken by DSS staff and volunteers in specific areas around the city.
- Parents' Participation in Children's Education (PPCE) is an outreach program to prepare parents to take ownership of education of their children.

SCHOOL INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

The School Intervention Programs aim to improve reading capabilities of school going children.

- Grow with Books is a library program run in municipal and zila parishad schools to encourage reading in children from 1st to 7th grade.
- Teach Them Young is a nutrition, health & hygiene program for children in government schools. It also works to ensure availability and usability of infrastructural facilities in government schools.
- Project Chetana runs in collaboration with 3 CSOs and to train balwadi (kindergarten) staff of municipal corporation schools.

DSS also runs the Networking and Nurturing program, to build organizational capacities of other similar CSOs in child centric teaching learning practices.

Project Foundation: Classes at Construction Sites

Community Learning Centers : After-school Program for Middle & Secondary School Children

School on Wheels: Mobile Classrooms

Every Child Counts: Annual Survey to Identify and Enroll Out-of-school Children

Parents' Participation in Children's Education: Outreach Program for Parent

Grow with Books: Library Program Run in Municipal and Zila Parishad Schools

Teach Them Young: Nutrition, Health & Hygiene Program for Children in Government Schools

Project Chetana: Collaboration with CSOs and to Train
Staff of Government Schools

Networking and Nurturing: Developing Organizational Capacities of other CSOs

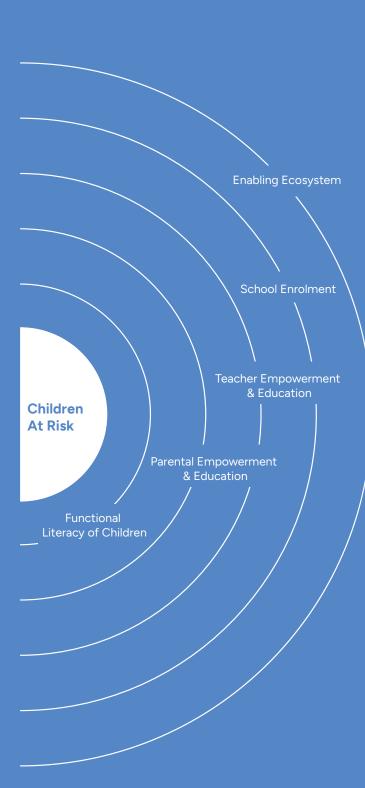


Figure 1: DSS's focus areas and current programs

PROGRAMS	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Direct - Community reach (Children)	25,366	26,052	26,597
Municipal schools	71,184	78,505	9157
Online			46,345
Total	96,550	1,04,557	82,099

Table 1: DSS Overall Outreach for the last 3 years



Engagementwith Wipro Cares

Wipro Cares and DSS have had a successful partnership over many years, with Wipro Cares supporting multiple programs of DSS. The partnership began with Wipro Cares supporting the setting up of Parivartan Training Centre for training of educators from within and outside DSS. The support for the training centre continued from 2007 to 2017. Wipro Cares continued to support DSS for other programs - Every Child Counts (ECC) and Parental Participation in Children's Education (PPCE).

PARENTS PARTICIPATION IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION (PPCE)

DSS's research showed that migrant children constituted a large population of out of school children in Pune. They were either not enrolled by their parents or discontinued their education because of migration from construction sites. Parents were unaware about the Right to Education (RTE) and nearest municipal schools. Most parents had limited access to education themselves. As migrants, they also faced language barriers, restricting their abilities to negotiate with local government schools. Through Every Child Counts (ECC) program DSS

2018 to 2021

PPCE
WF FUNDING - RS 1.32 CRORES

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conducts annual surveys to identify out of school children and enroll them in local government schools. Wipro Cares has been supporting ECC since 2014.

The understanding from ECC revealed that parents' lack of awareness and involvement in their children's education was a key reason for children being out of school. DSS launched Parents' Participation in Children's Education (PPCE) program in February 2013 to work in areas densely populated by migrant workers. A three-year pilot of the program was completed successfully showing the effectiveness of the approach. In the years 2018-2021 Wipro supported both ECC and PPCE programs across different sites. PPCE, an extension of the ECC program, grew to become a key programmatic intervention.

PPCE focused on educational inclusion of marginalized children under the Right to Education (RTE) Act by strengthening parents' ownership and increasing their involvement in their children's education. The key objectives of the program were

- Enrolling children in mainstream schools and engaging with parents at Bhosari, Moshi and Narhe villages in the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra.
- Creating awareness amongst parents, teachers and community members on RTE Act, 2009.
- Directly engaging with children during Covid through blended approach and connecting them to schools to avoid dropouts.

ENGAGEMENT WITH WIPRO CARES

PPCE CONCEPT AND MODEL OF WORK

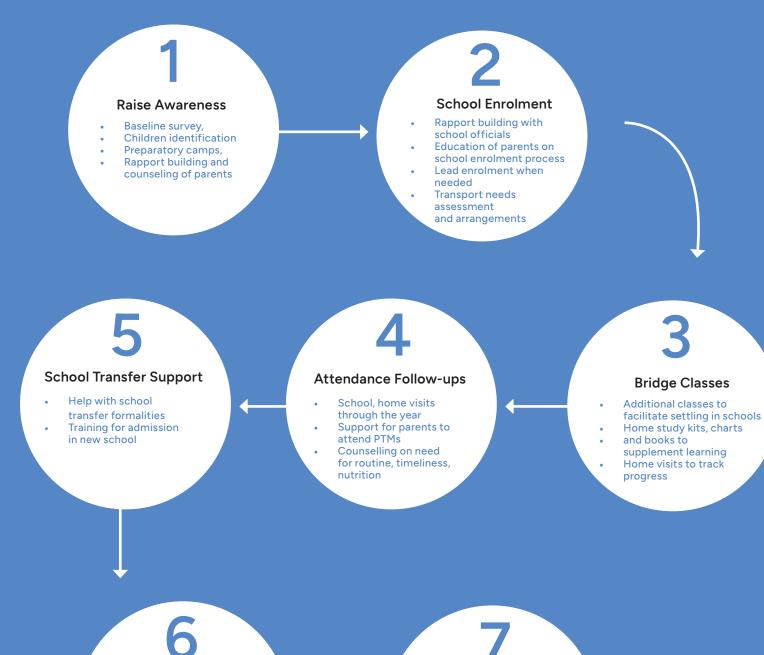
PPCE is a three-year program with yearly milestones of the intervention to be achieved with parents.

Year 1 focuses on creating awareness among parents and community members about the importance of education through creative and easily understood mediums.

Year 2 focuses on increasing involvement of parents in the school enrolment process, improving children's attendance, promoting parents' attendance in Parent Teacher Meetings in schools, sharing transport responsibilities with DSS and completing migration related school formalities. DSS staff are supported by Shikshanamitras, trained volunteers (often parents of children at DSS) from the community who hold and manage parent relationships. DSS also helps form groups of parents called Palak Gat who are motivated and guided to take more responsibility of their

children's academic progress. Through dialogue, they are informed about children's learning levels and how to monitor their studies. Balasamuh, groups of children between ages 9 and 14 years, are formed to increase their awareness of their duties, right and responsibilities.

Year 3 focuses on transferring complete ownership of children's school experience (logistics, academics, school relationships) to parents. They are encouraged to attend PTMs independently, track their children's progress and take complete responsibility for school commute and migration process as and when they move.



Exit Planning

- Families supported for over 2 years
- Staggered withdrawal of support services like transportation, bridge classes, nutritional supplement

Formal Exit Meetings

- Kautuk meetings with parents at schools and community sites Transfer of children's
- education responsibilities to parents



1 Impact

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ENABLING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

DSS facilitates access to education for children who are at the highest risk of dropping out of schools and provides facilities for education that are suited to living conditions of the children.

Providing doorstep access to education

DSS reaches children who are at the highest risk of dropping out of schools due to the nature of their parents' work as seasonal migrants, construction laborers, brick kiln workers, waste pickers etc. Some children belong to other marginalized groups such as pavement dwellers and temporary/permanent slum dwellers. DSS facilitates access to education for these vulnerable children and provides facilities for education that are suited to living conditions of the children. It reaches children at municipal schools, construction sites, streets and pavements, slums and new settlement colonies and at times when the children are available. Appropriate support is provided in the form of additional classes to each child based on their assessment. Home study kits are provided so that the parents can teach the children at home and supplement the children's learning.

ENABLING ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Ensuring functional literacy of children

PROGRAMS	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Parents Outreach	453	582	402
Children Outreach	575	780	1160
Children Enrolled	391	440	184

Table 3: DSS reach supported by Wipro Cares during grant period under review

DSS has a well-defined approach, rooted in their own practice and experience based on basic tenets of education. Its content and processes are simple and easy to implement. It focuses on very specific learning outcomes for children achieving functional literacy and numeracy, for instance children being able to read the local language newspaper with comprehension. DSS has developed a 120-day language literacy program that enables all children to read Marathi fluently within 4 months. DSS focuses on reading, writing and basic arithmetic. For the migrant children especially, language proficiency helps them integrate in local schools and communities.

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Providing access to learning during Covid-19

After the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a learning crisis as schools shut down. The children of vulnerable communities were severely impacted as their schools were not prepared to immediately move classes online. Their parents were unequipped and lacked the resources to aid their children's learning at home. DSS created a blended approach to meet the new emergent needs in the communities it serves.

The DSS staff were trained to use technology in their day-to-day work via online platforms like Zoom, WPS and Google Meet. They were trained to use online teaching tools and audio-visual learning material. They shared worksheets, activity links with parents with access to smart phones. Online sessions and activities were held with children and worksheets were sent on WhatsApp. For parents without smartphone access, the field staff handed over study and reading material in person on a weekly basis.

Facilitating local government schools to enrol and support children

DSS works very closely with schools to emphasize the importance of RTE and schools' role and accountability within it. Several school authorities are also not aware of the 'no denial' clause to admission under the RTE and the fact that children can be admitted throughout the year. Once they are made aware of this, they become more amenable and over time become more accepting and open to children from migrant communities.

It also helps facilitate enrolments and transfers of migrant children. This lightens the burden of administrative work on school teachers. DSS also helps them by following up and reporting on children who are absent for long periods. DSS conducts facilitative sessions with teachers and administrators to ensure children receive adequate education without discrimination.



EMPOWERING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Recognizing the roles and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders in the education of a child, DSS has developed a multi-stakeholder approach. It has established strong relationships and works with parents, community members, and school officials to overcome many existing barriers to education of children. It has recruited and trained educators who are responsible for teaching children and reaching out to parents, municipal school officials, teachers, and the construction companies.

Establishing the importance of education amongst parents

Through its work with PPCE and other programs, DSS has planted the seed of education in disadvantaged families. Its work has established an aspiration for education in these families. This has intergenerational impact and shifts parental mindsets about education. In subsequent generations, parents consider education to be essential and don't negotiate with the idea of sending their children to schools. Many children, that DSS works with, do not complete formal education. However, when they become parents, themselves, they ensure that their children complete formal education.

DSS has encouraged parents to ensure that their children continue to attend school. Instead of migrating with the entire family to the next site, they explore other solutions, like leaving the children with extended families in their villages. They make several efforts to provide environment conducive to learning. They attempt to provide school

essentials, nutritious snacks, attend PTMs, plan travel in order to avoid absence from school and even take up residence close to school. DSS's open communication channels with parents and communities enable regular discussions about children's progress and barriers to accessing education.

Some parents become Shikshanamitras and help other parents with enrolments. Shikshanamitras are volunteers, who have experienced DSS as parents and are now the biggest champions of the program. In some sites, security personnel become Shikshanamitras and are well informed on the 'out of school' children in the community. DSS trains Shikshanamitras in RTE, school enrolment, migration process etc. They keep in touch with the parents through regular meetings and home visits. They hand hold other parents and support them in obtaining documents from the school when migrating to new sites.

Parents start believing that regular schooling helps them with basic education and helps them build confidence. Children learn to be treated with respect and dignity. They gain confidence to participate in their surroundings and are better prepared for life. They can read street names, signs, bus boards etc and can even help their parents, if needed. The older children start helping the younger siblings as well as other children new to construction sites.

EMPOWERING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

Mr. Pawane from Yawatmal, Maharashtra is a brick kiln worker who migrates every year for 6 months to Punawale, a growing suburb of Pune. The DSS team met him through the ECC campaign and enrolled his 2 daughters in nearby schools. A drop-out himself, Mr Pawane was convinced about the importance of education for his children. So, when the family returned to Yavatmal in June 2019, he saw to it that the girls continued to attend the village school. On their 6 monthly return to Punawale, they continued to attend school on a regular basis. Soon he joined the DSS team as a Shikshanamitra for his settlement colony. Since then, Mr Pawane has been actively following up with the school and teachers on 5 children from his area.

Bharati has worked as a labourer on construction sites all her life. She also works as a Shikshanamitra in the community for the last 4 years. Bharati has 2 children, who have both been associated with DSS for the last 4-5 years. She and her husband recently moved to a new construction site but she has ensured that her elder son taking his secondary school exam this year stays on at the old site with relatives. His school is close by and he wants to focus on his studies in this critical year. Bharati enjoys her work in the community even though it doesn't bring any financial returns. "I like meeting new people and going for meetings with parents and the DSS team. I have to do begari (labour) as it pays money but my work as a Shikshanamitra brings me respect. My husband supports me in this and now seeks my opinion in decision-making at home", she says with pride.

Enabling educators' personal and professional growth

Over the years, DSS has supported many educators in transforming their lives. It has helped them become financially independent, further their formal education and access capacity building programs to further their professional growth. The educators, mostly women from low to middle income families, come from the local communities and are secondary or higher secondary pass outs. They have faced challenges of disadvantage which they overcome successfully as they grow in their professions. At work, they start gaining confidence and take pride in the work they do and their life journeys. DSS has successfully nurtured the educators' passion towards children's education.

Wipro Cares' focus on capacity building has proved very useful for the educators at DSS. They access well curated, high-quality training delivered by experts in the country. As DSS has established structures, and teams available with specific training needs, it makes good use of the large pool of trainings that Wipro Cares offers. Educators find the range of trainings on pedagogy highly relevant and applicable on the ground, as they extensively work directly with children. The trainings have provided exposure to formalized and structured ways of thinking about their work and input into DSS's work. This raises their awareness of new thinking and work in the sector. DSS has been able to assimilate these new learnings into their programs. The trainings are attended by senior members who are then able to change program and organizational practices and train other members of DSS. Educators in DSS have successfully created new teaching learning material (TLM), curriculum and assessment methods after being influenced by capacity building sessions conducted by Wipro Cares.

Building capacities of other organizations

DSS has networked with over 40 grassroots organization in and around the state of Maharashtra to build their capacities as educators. It nurtures these organizations over a significant period of time. In the first 7-8 months, it trains them on DSS's method of teaching learning, child centricity and functional literacy. It then follows up with the educators for effective application of learnings.

Nanda works as a Supervisor in DSS. Before she joined DSS in 2008, she used to work as daily wage labourer and lived on a construction site. Her children joined DSS and she came in touch with the team. Because she had studied till 12th standard, they offered her the job of working with the study class. After some time, she became a teacher. Her first salary was INR 1500. Even though she earned less than she would as a daily wage labourer, working as a teacher brought her respect. When she worked as a labourer, she would take her children with her to the site and would always worry that they shouldn't think this is their future too. Today her daughter is doing her B Pharma and her son is in 12th grade. She is happy. This job gives her respect, and she has learnt so much through her work.





Way Forward



Wipro Cares' grant to DSS has allowed it to provide learning opportunities to vulnerable children, essentially children at risk who are not able to access mainstream schools. This is largely due to the dire livelihood situations of the families from the local communities. They have been working with a long-term vision, believing that education unlocks opportunities to achieve better quality of life for families. Looking ahead, the partnership has potential to create more meaningful impact by reflecting on new opportunities. There are a few specific opportunities for growth and enhancement within DSS and its programs.

Leadership Development

DSS has built a strong organization over the last three decades with well-defined programs. DSS team functions in a highly efficient manner with every individual across levels taking ownership of their work. It has a strong, seasoned, charismatic leader who is passionate and able to inspire large number of people. It now needs to find the next leader who can take forward the work with similar commitment and vision for change. It has become crucial to identify a new leader who can bring together and collaborate with various stakeholders and partners. This leader needs to build on existing strategies, devise strategic action plans and roll out work for the next 7 to 10 years. DSS also needs to recruit skilled and experienced people in senior positions.

Organizational Capacities Development

DSS seeks help in developing its support functions such as HR, Finance, Communications, Media and Fundraising. This, it feels, is critical to take the organization to the next level. DSS values research and is data driven, primarily because of its founding team's interest and capabilities. Detailed records are diligently maintained by the field staff and decision making is driven by data and analysis. As it has grown, DSS needs technology to manage and handle large amount of data especially in areas such as tracking outcomes, impact, and traceability of migrant children. DSS also wants to explore meaningful use of technology in education, especially after its experiences during Covid-19.

Sustainable Funding

DSS has grown its work year on year and yet successfully managed to raise funds, often through consistent and long-term funding partnerships. However, it is now facing challenges with the changing donor landscape. With increased role of CSRs in the donor ecosystem, expectations from CSOs are changing. Education of migrant children is not attractive to CSRs as the impact is difficult to demonstrate with children moving frequently with their families. DSS has not had a dedicated fundraising teams that actively looks out for funding opportunities.

In recent years some significant donors have tended to reprioritize their funding commitments without prior intimation. The threat of big funders leaving looms large as DSS has people intensive programs. When large funders withdraw suddenly, it takes time for it to recover. This has been a noticeable occurrence over the last few years. It needs assured long-term support to continue its work at the desired scale.

Curation of Collaborations

Having worked for a significant period, DSS is recognized as a credible organization in education of at-risk children. It gets multiple requests from other CSOs for training and guidance for their work. DSS has the knowledge and experience to function as a resource organization and expand its work with other organizations. It believes it can effectively help young grassroots organizations in their journey. This collaboration needs to be nurtured with funds and capacity development to fuel initiatives in handholding other organizations.

05. Conclusion

Wipro Cares has been an important partner for DSS over many years. It has provided important funding to enable DSS to provide access to education to vulnerable and at-risk children. It has further strengthened its work by building domain perspectives, requisite skills, and team capacities. Wipro Cares has created a learning environment for DSS with multiple trainings.

DSS plays a critical role in filling an existing gap in the mainstream system. Without DSS's work, large cohorts of children would go without any access to meaningful education. It has demonstrated staying power against all odds and has a wealth of knowledge through practice. It has strong relationships with multiple stakeholders- the parents, the community members, donors, corporates, NGOs and others. With its strong leadership, teams and multi-stakeholder approach to education, DSS serves as an inspiration to other such initiatives.

06. Annexure

Methodology

PRIMARY RESEARCH

To arrives at insights on DSS's model of work and it's on ground impact, we conducted in depth interviews with the DSS Leadership, Function heads, and Field staff. All these were conducted in-person and on site in Pune. We also conducted in-depth interviews with 6 beneficiaries – parents and volunteers from the migrant community in Pune. We spoke with children (unstructured conversations) and observed project sites in action. We conducted 2 project site visits (1 classroom, 1 teacher training centre) and 4 home (of volunteers and parents of children enrolled in DSS programs) visits.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

We conducted a desk review of reports shared by DSS and Wipro Cares in addition to other organization collaterals, website and program impact studies conducted by DSS in the recent years. We also referred to external articles and reports.

Note: We have relied on DSS for access to beneficiaries and this could result in a small degree of bias in choice of sample.

wipro: foundation

