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STATE OF THE SECTOR REPORT:

# Outcomes Readiness among Indian Nonprofits

August 2025





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# Abbreviations

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- **BAU:** Business as usual
- **CEO:** Chief Executive Officer
- **CFO:** Chief Finance Officer
- **COO:** Chief Operating Officer
- **DIB:** Development Impact Bond
- **HR:** Human Resources
- **INR:** Indian Rupee
- **KII:** Key Informant Interview
- **KPI:** Key Performance Indicator
- **MEL:** Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
- **NSDC:** National Skill Development Corporation
- **OBF:** Outcomes-Based Financing
- **OR:** Outcomes Readiness
- **QP-NOS:** Qualification Pack-National Operating Standards
- **RCT:** Randomised Controlled Trials
- **SOP:** Standard Operating Procedure
- **TOC:** Theory of Change

# Glossary

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## **ADAPTIVE LEARNING**

Adaptation involves deliberately modifying interventions, approaches, or organisational processes based on new insights, data or changing conditions. Adaptive learning is a process where organisations use ongoing data and feedback to continuously adjust and improve program strategies and operations to better achieve outcomes.

## **BUSINESS AS USUAL**

The established, dominant organisational practices and systems currently prevalent in the sector, typically focused on input-based or grant funding models.

## **CORE CAPABILITIES**

The essential organisational and programmatic functions required for a nonprofit to operate effectively and deliver results. These include areas such as governance, leadership, financial management, program design, implementation, and monitoring. While necessary for all nonprofits, core capabilities form the foundational layer for outcomes readiness, upon which further 'plus-plus' competencies are built to meet the demands of outcomes-based approaches.

## **INNOVATION**

This refers to the use of new ideas, tools, or processes to improve program effectiveness and outcomes. In this context, innovation does not mean launching entirely new programs; rather, it involves adapting or enhancing existing interventions to respond better to changing needs, close performance gaps, or achieve outcomes more efficiently. It reflects a mindset of continual

improvement and problem-solving.

### **OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING**

A funding approach where disbursements are linked to verified achievement of outcomes rather than inputs or activities.

### **OUTCOMES CULTURE**

Organisational mindset and values that prioritise accountability, data-driven decision-making, and continuous learning, focused on outcomes.

### **OUTCOMES READINESS**

The state of preparedness of an organisation to effectively manage and deliver programs focused on achieving measurable outcomes.

### **OUTCOMES READINESS FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual structure developed to assess and guide organisations in building the necessary culture, capabilities, and systems to achieve outcomes.

### **OUTCOMES READINESS TOOL**

A self-assessment instrument designed to help organisations evaluate their level of outcomes readiness across various domains such as culture, systems, and program maturity.

### **PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES**

These are enhanced versions of core organisational and program level functions that go beyond business as usual. While capabilities like governance, financial management, program delivery, and MEL are essential in all contexts, outcomes readiness requires them to be more strategic, data-driven, integrated, and outcomes-focused. These “plus-plus” capabilities reflect the additional rigour, responsiveness, and

alignment needed to deliver, measure, and adapt for outcomes in dynamic and high-accountability environments.

### **REAL-TIME DATA USE**

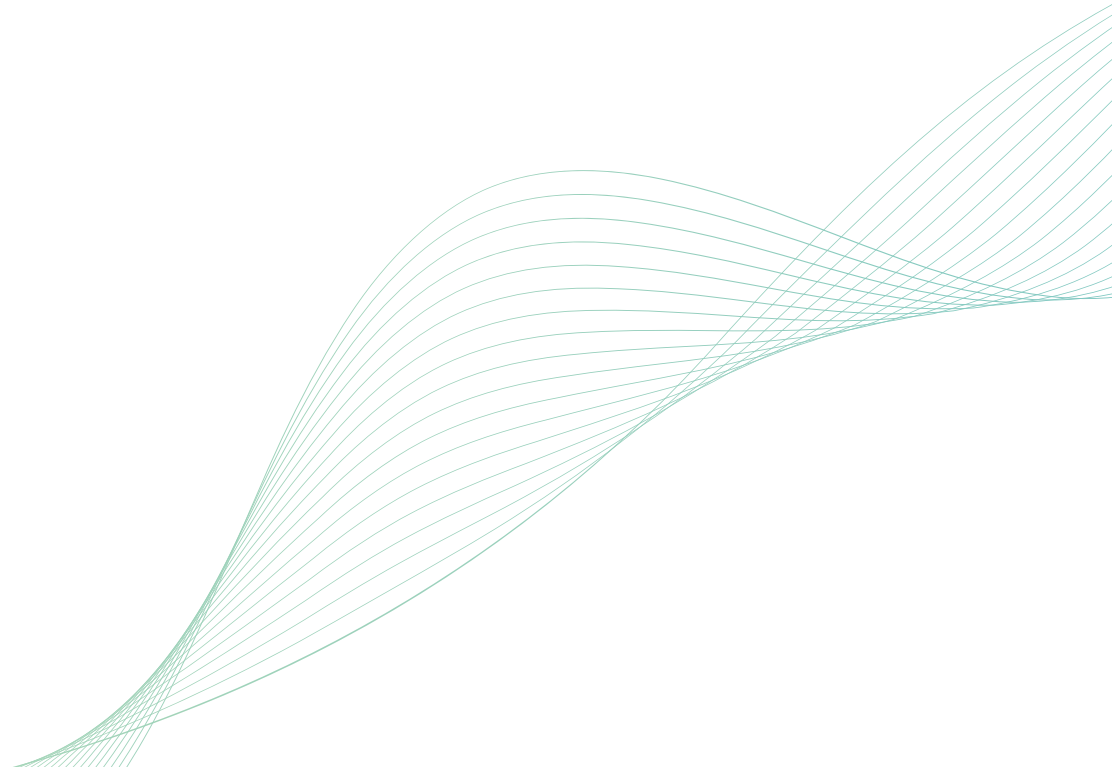
The continuous collection and application of data during program implementation to inform immediate decisions and improvements for course correction and adaptive learning.

### **THEORY OF CHANGE**

A detailed explanation or illustration of how and why a program is expected to achieve its desired outcomes through a chain of cause and effect.

### **VERIFICATION**

Independent confirmation of reported outcomes to ensure accuracy and credibility, often required under OBF models.



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# Executive Summary

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

India has emerged as a leader in outcomes-based financing (OBF) in South Asia, with a growing number of initiatives in education, health, and skilling. This shift reflects a broader paradigm change in the social sector where accountability to end outcomes is gaining primacy over traditional input-driven funding models. In this scenario, a critical question arises: *how prepared are Indian nonprofits to deliver and demonstrate the outcomes of their interventions and participate in OBF?*

This report seeks to answer that question by presenting an assessment of outcomes readiness among Indian nonprofits. It offers an understanding of where the sector stands today, where the capability gaps lie, and what needs to be done to strengthen nonprofit preparedness to achieve outcomes.

## OUTCOMES READINESS FRAMEWORK AND TOOL

The Outcomes Readiness Framework recognises that nonprofits require both organisational and program level capabilities to function effectively. These capabilities are essential in any scenario, but readiness to participate in OBF introduces additional plus-plus competencies on some of these core functions, bringing together its tangible and intangible components:

- a On the intangible side, outcomes culture, a mindset and way of working that emphasises performance, continuous learning and innovation, serves as the foundation that underpins all activities.
- b On the tangible side, the focus is on outcomes-oriented systems and processes at the organisational level, and outcomes-focused program capabilities at the program level.

This framework informed the development of a self-diagnostic tool for nonprofits. Data collected from this tool was analysed to create this report.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a What is the current state of nonprofit capabilities for outcomes readiness at the overall organisational level as well as program level (analysed separately for nonprofits in skilling and education sectors and for nonprofits in any other sector)?
- b How does outcomes readiness vary by organisational annual spending size?
- c What does outcomes readiness look like for the skilling and education sectors?



## PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

82 nonprofit organisations participated in the self-assessment by March 2025. Participants were senior leaders—founders, CEOs, or senior functional heads—ensuring that responses reflected a strategic and organisation-wide perspective.

FIG 1: NONPROFITS BY PROGRAM FOCUS

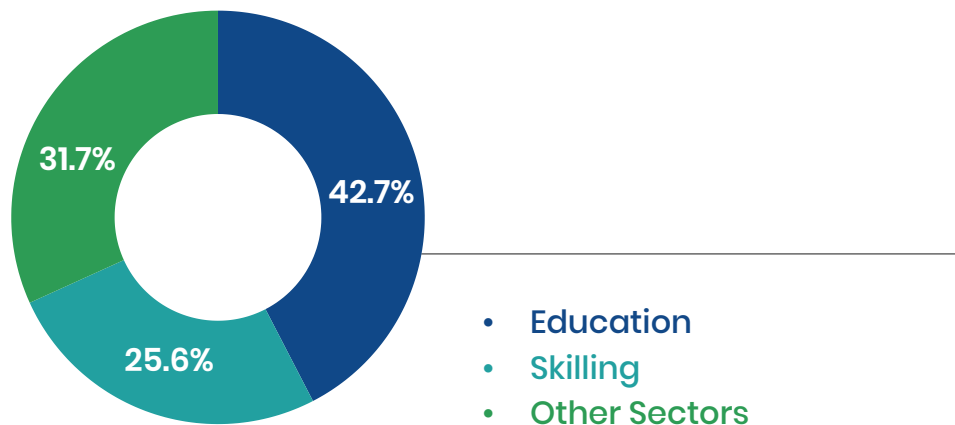
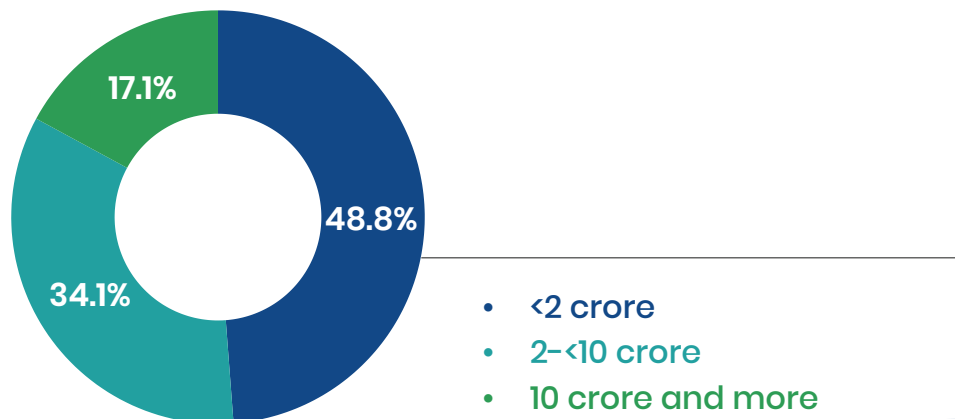


FIG 2: NONPROFITS BY ANNUAL SPENDING (INR)



## KEY INSIGHTS

### > Organisational Level Outcomes Readiness

- a Nonprofits display mature leadership and board structures, with clear roles, strategic expertise, and regular engagement. However, many critical systems that underpin outcomes readiness such as monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), risk management, financial planning, and fundraising remain underdeveloped.
- b While most of the organisations report having strategic plans with long-term priorities, only a minority convert these into measurable goals, concrete targets, or financial plans.
- c Critical capabilities such as MEL, risk management, financial management, and fundraising, are structurally underdeveloped and heavily reliant on leadership. MEL is often seen through a compliance lens, with limited use for organisational learning or strategy. Risk management is mostly confined to leadership, with limited staff engagement. Financial planning tends to be centralised and rigid, with limited efforts towards understanding cost per outcome and flexibility in resource allocation.
- d Organisations with larger annual spending demonstrate better outcomes readiness. Interestingly, organisations with annual budgets between INR 10-50 crores tend to exhibit stronger outcomes-aligned practices across several capabilities. While outcomes readiness appears to strengthen with size up to this point, this trend does not necessarily continue among organisations with budgets above INR 50 crore.

## > Program Level Outcomes Readiness for Nonprofits in the Skilling Sector

- a** Skilling nonprofits exhibit a promising orientation towards outcomes readiness, with many foundational elements in place—such as updated TOCs, strong MEL, standardisation in delivery, and alignment with employment related KPIs.
- b** However, there are gaps in the strategic use and institutional support for these capabilities that limit their effectiveness in driving employment linked outcomes. For instance, while most organisations track training completion and initial placements, fewer systematically track job retention and still fewer are linking these to payments (donor payment milestones remain mostly linked to enrolment and training completion).
- c** Similarly, while documents like SOPs and work plans are used routinely, their inconsistent updating suggests weaker loops between evolving changes and operational guidance which is critical for adaptive, outcomes-oriented program implementation.
- d** Budgeting practices reveal an emphasis on inputs and outputs like cost per beneficiary, and cost per beneficiary in job, with relatively less focus on cost for retention in jobs.
- e** The strong inclination toward adaptive responses is encouraging, yet without formal risk management systems (only one-third have formal, regularly reviewed risk assessments), this responsiveness remains rather reactive than strategic.

## > Program Level Outcomes Readiness for Nonprofits in the Education Sector

- a** Education nonprofits show strong orientation toward outcomes, with visible progress in areas like TOC, tracking of learning outcomes, data collection, and leadership engagement.
- b** However, many capabilities appear established but are not yet institutionalised with outcomes focus. For instance, while a majority track outcomes and engage in data analysis, fewer translate into structured target setting or formal course corrections.
- c** Similarly, leadership is actively engaged, but the systems that enable adaptive management like SOPs, quality standards, or risk frameworks are consistently present or underdeveloped.
- d** The gap between outcomes alignment and embedded outcomes practice signals a need for the plus-plus capabilities—shifting from data collection to active data use, formalising feedback loops, and investing in cost-effectiveness and outcomes-budgeting.
- e** Education nonprofits widely track costs per child and participant, but few assess cost per outcome or link budgets to results.
- f** Risk management is also largely informal, with only 27% having formal risk frameworks.

## > Program Level Outcomes Readiness for Nonprofits in Other Sectors

- a Core program management and delivery systems are in place but staffing and quality assurance remain weak spots. Most organisations have well-documented TOCs, SOPs, and annual workplans, regularly updated and used in practice. However, fewer than half report having sufficient staff with the right skill set to implement programs effectively. Use of quality standards in program delivery is limited and inconsistent.
- b MEL systems are operational but not deeply embedded in decision-making. While organisations are actively collecting data and feedback, only around half conduct regular, structured analysis to inform program improvement.
- c All organisations track input costs and many link budgets to outputs, but few use metrics like cost per outcome.
- d Risk management for a program remains underdeveloped—only a third have formal, regularly updated risk frameworks.

## PATHWAYS FOR FUTURE

- a **Strengthen outcomes culture across the ecosystem:** An outcomes culture is key to building outcomes readiness, embedding a mindset where achieving outcomes shapes organisational systems, program design, and evaluation. This culture must extend beyond individual organisations to include donors, nonprofits, intermediaries, and

regulators. It requires tangible shifts from all stakeholders, such as flexible funding, blended capital frameworks, enabling regulations, etc. It is also essential for nonprofits to treat outcomes readiness as a long-term value, not a short-term imposition. Ultimately, outcomes culture must translate into systems and practices that enable sustained focus on meaningful results.

- b **Build nonprofit capabilities in four critical areas:** The study finds that while many nonprofits have foundational capabilities like a Theory of Change and basic MEL systems, most are early in embedding plus-plus practices needed for outcomes readiness. Four key areas need attention: risk management, MEL integration, financial systems, and fundraising. This means shifting from compliance-oriented practices to proactive, integrated systems that support continuous learning and strategic resource use to achieve outcomes.
- c **Donors must actively enable outcomes readiness:** Donors play a pivotal role in advancing an outcomes-oriented ecosystem. To drive meaningful change, donors must foster collaborative, learning-focused partnerships. This includes jointly setting realistic, data-driven targets with grantees and treating low performance as an opportunity for course correction. Financial support should cover essential enablers like MEL systems and learning processes, while non-financial support can include technical assistance and peer learning. Additionally, donors should invest in shared infrastructure—such as data tools and collaborative platforms—to strengthen sector-wide capacity and promote equity among nonprofits.

# About the Report

India has been pioneering the use of outcomes-based financing (OBF) among South Asian countries and has seen a surge of funding directed to OBF instruments in recent years. OBF as a development financing and delivery approach ties the disbursement of funding to the achievement of measurable outcomes, rather than just inputs or activities.

Since the launch of the first DIB by Educate Girls in 2015, India has seen four more DIBs in education, health, and skills development; two social success notes, and many other OBF projects, collectively mobilising at least USD 55 million of funding.<sup>1</sup>

The increasing interest in OBF models in India's social sector has underscored the importance of understanding what it takes for nonprofits to engage meaningfully with such approaches. As conversations around accountability to and achievement of outcomes increase within the sector, there is a growing recognition that organisations may require a distinct set of capabilities to deliver and report on outcomes effectively.

While the ecosystem for OBF in India is gradually evolving with funders showing interest, new tools emerging, and intermediaries supporting design and management, there is limited understanding of how prepared nonprofits are to participate in this model. Existing knowledge on outcomes readiness is fragmented, often drawn from specific projects or individual experiences, and most of the existing work focuses on general organisational development, without distinguishing the specific

capabilities for nonprofits to be outcomes-ready.

This report<sup>2</sup> addresses these gaps by providing a structured diagnostic view of outcomes readiness across the nonprofit sector and highlights the organisational and programmatic capabilities required that allow nonprofits to deliver on outcomes.

The report seeks to inform the ecosystem in identifying where investments in capacity building may be most useful, assist nonprofits in understanding their own readiness and areas for improvement, and enable intermediaries to design more tailored support mechanisms. In doing so, the report aims to guide ecosystem actors—such as funders, nonprofits, networks, etc. in shaping strategies to strengthen the overall pipeline of organisations that can participate in emerging outcomes-oriented funding opportunities.

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1. BAT analysis

2. With anchor funding and support from 360 ONE Foundation, this report is part of a broader initiative by the British Asian Trust, Indian School of Development Management (supported by Citi India), and Atma. As part of this initiative, an Outcomes Readiness Framework and a self-assessment diagnostic tool have been developed to facilitate a large-scale self-assessment of nonprofits, helping build a stronger pipeline of organisations prepared to engage with outcomes-based financing.



## FIG 3: WHY SHOULD NONPROFITS BE OUTCOMES-READY?<sup>3</sup>



### A. ACCOUNTABILITY TO OUTCOMES

OBF shifts the focus from inputs to achieving results, promoting shared accountability between donors and nonprofits. For e.g., a skilling initiative might offer financial incentives tied to job retention encouraging nonprofits to go beyond past performance benchmarks. Missed targets are not penalised but serve as opportunities for reflection and course correction.



### C. DRIVING INNOVATION AND ADAPTIVE LEARNING

Linking funding to performance incentivises nonprofits to continuously evaluate and improve their programs, fostering experimentation and iterative design to solve complex social problems.



### B. PRIORITISING USER-CENTRED DESIGN

In outcomes-linked programs, funding depends on demonstrating real-world improvements in the lives of end users. This necessitates strong feedback loops and a culture of continuous listening. For example, in the Skill Impact Bond, data on women's drop out rates supported reshaping interventions across cohorts, ensuring interventions remained responsive and evidence based.



### D. SIGNALLING CAPABILITY AND CREDIBILITY

Outcomes readiness signals operational maturity, data-driven decision-making, and learning orientation. It enhances funder confidence and can also unlock access to more strategic, long-term funding opportunities.

3. Source: Lashkari, S.; Parekh, A. & Miranda, R. (2025). Why is it worth for Nonprofits to Invest in Becoming 'Outcomes Ready?'. AVPN.



# 1 ■

## An Overview of the Outcomes Readiness Framework

Unlike grant funding tied to activities, OBF links a ‘meaningful’ proportion of funding to pre-agreed, measurable, and verifiable outcome targets, thus using financial incentives to ensure accountability to outcomes. For instance, instead of merely counting how many teachers are trained (‘output’), OBF ties funding to whether that training improved student learning (‘outcome’).

The outcomes readiness framework<sup>4</sup> recognises that nonprofits require both organisational and program level capabilities to function effectively. These capabilities are essential in any scenario, but readiness to participate in OBF introduces additional demands on some of these core functions (referred to as plus-plus competencies).

At the organisational level, capabilities such as governance, financial management, strategy, compliance, and leadership form the foundation necessary for an organisation’s growth and sustainability. Program level capabilities, including planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholder management, are essential for effective program implementation. Outcomes readiness, however, necessitates a few plus-plus elements. These are visualised as a relationship between tangible and intangible elements of an organisation, structured as a puzzle where different pieces interlock to form an outcomes-ready organisation (Figure 4).

On the intangible side, outcomes culture, a mindset and way of working that emphasises accountability, learning, and continuous improvement serves as the foundation that underpins all activities. This outcomes culture influences how decisions are made and how programs are designed and executed.

On the tangible side, outcomes readiness is supported by

outcomes-oriented systems and processes at the organisational level, and outcomes-focused program capabilities at the program level. These systems, processes, and capabilities go beyond business as usual (BAU) requirements, ensuring that both organisational structures and programmatic interventions are aligned with and driven by desired outcomes. Details of the distinction between BAU and plus-plus capabilities are given in [Annexure 1](#).

## METHODOLOGY TO DESIGN THE OUTCOMES READINESS FRAMEWORK

The framework was developed through a research process grounded both in conceptual exploration and validation with practitioners. It builds on an extensive review of global and Indian literature on OBF and outcomes readiness, helping to identify gaps and inform the primary research. Following this, key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with a mix of stakeholders (funders, nonprofit leaders, and intermediaries), all of whom had experience participating in OBF in India.

Insights from the qualitative work shaped both the structure and content of the framework. Thematic analysis of the KIIs informed the articulation of “plus-plus” capabilities—those beyond core business as usual functions.

This framework served as the foundation for the diagnostic tool used in the present report. By categorising readiness elements into core capabilities and plus-plus capabilities, the framework enabled us to identify areas where nonprofits are well-positioned to operate under an outcomes-based funding (OBF) model, and where improvements are required. Details of the qualitative research process are available in [Annexure 2](#).

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4. For more details, refer to the full Outcomes Readiness Framework [here](#).

# FIG 4: OUTCOMES READINESS FRAMEWORK

With highlighted 'plus-plus' competencies/attributes needed for outcomes readiness

## ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITIES

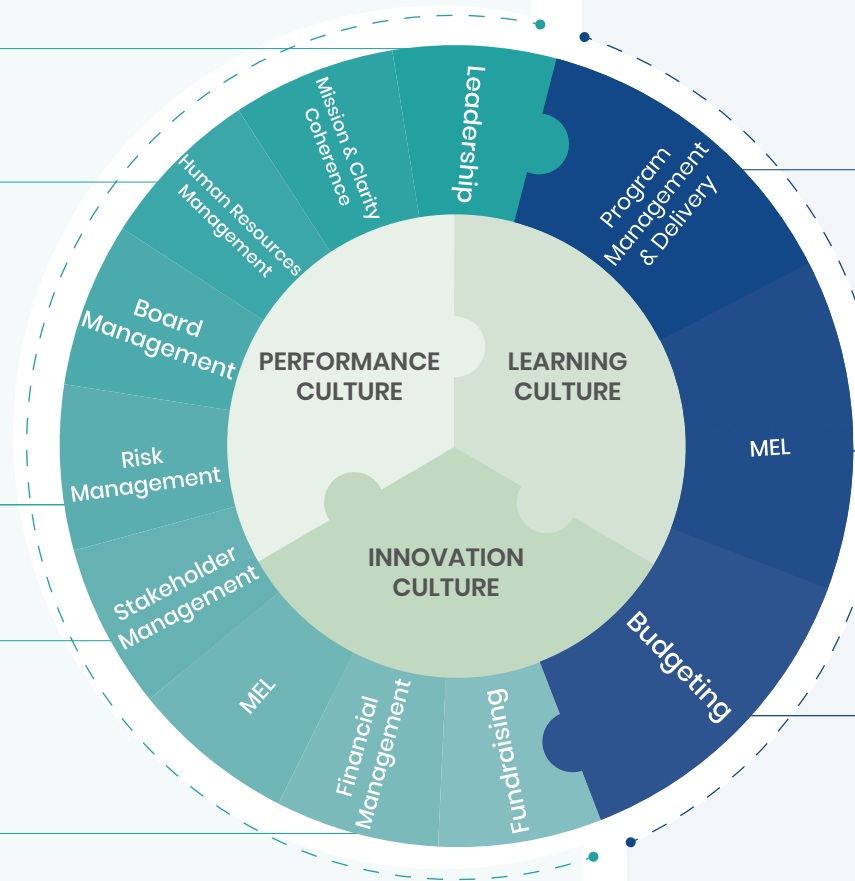
**LEADERSHIP** which encourages adaptive planning, devolved decision making and iterative implementation

**HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT** which focuses on aligning staff roles, skills, and development with outcomes and supporting performance culture

**RISK MANAGEMENT** which ensures identification, monitoring, and mitigation of risks

**STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT** which requires alignment on common goals, targets, measurement, joint governance & transparent communication

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT,** financial flexibility and cash flow management, which supports adapt ability



## PROGRAM MATURITY

**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY:** A demonstrated track record of delivering outcomes, operational excellence in delivering the intervention with high quality standards, consistency, and the agility to adapt

**MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING:** Data-driven performance management, involving monitoring, collection, analysis, and use of data to guide implementation and achieve outcomes

**BUDGETING:** An understanding of the relationship between costs and outcomes

## OUTCOMES CULTURE

- Performance Culture which emphasises accountability for outcomes by setting clear goals and targets and continuously tracking progress
- Innovation culture which promotes informed risk taking, agility and flexibility in decision-making
- Knowledge and learning culture which drives continuous improvement through evidence-based, data-driven decision-making





# 2



## Research Objectives and Profile of Participating Nonprofits

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This report explores the following research questions:

- a** **What is the current state of nonprofit capabilities for outcomes readiness?**  
This includes both foundational and advanced capabilities at the organisational and program levels, as defined in the Outcomes Readiness framework.
- b** **How does outcomes readiness vary by organisational annual spending size?**  
The report assesses if organisational capabilities to engage with outcomes-based approaches improve with size. It explores if larger organisations are better positioned to engage in OBF.
- c** **What does outcomes readiness look like for the skilling and education sectors?**  
It examines how outcomes readiness plays out within skilling and education programs, recognising that readiness may be shaped by the nature of delivery, outcomes pathways, and measurement challenges that are specific to each programmatic area.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL DESIGN

The report is grounded in data collected through a freely available self-administered diagnostic tool<sup>5</sup> to assess Outcomes Readiness among nonprofits. The insights from the Framework informed both the structure and content of the tool, ensuring it

reflected sector realities and expectations around outcomes readiness.

The tool captures self-reported data across three dimensions of outcomes readiness—outcomes culture, the strength of internal systems and processes that support outcomes readiness, and the maturity of program level capabilities. Together, these provide a holistic view of an organisation’s readiness to engage meaningfully with OBF models. While self-assessment inherently involves some subjectivity in interpreting the questions and reporting, the tool was designed to mitigate this by providing clear rubrics with distinct response options, questions to triangulate some of the responses provided and information boxes to ensure consistent interpretation of key terms.

The tool examined readiness at two levels — **organisational level capabilities and program level capabilities**. At the organisational level, the tool assesses capabilities across the following areas: clarity and coherence of the organisation’s mission, board management, leadership and decision-making, MEL, human resources management, risk management, financial management, fundraising, and stakeholder management and partnerships. At the program level, the focus is on program management and delivery, MEL, and budgeting and risk management. The tool included a set of program level questions that were sector-agnostic, applicable across all focus areas. In addition, two sector-specific modules—one for education, and one for skilling programs were developed.

The tool was designed to go beyond the business as usual (BAU) and core capabilities, also assessing “plus-plus” competencies that are critical for operating within an outcomes-oriented environment. It used a mix of multiple-choice questions and

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5. To access the OR tool, visit [here](#).

situational vignettes to capture the nuance of organisational and programmatic practices. Recognising that different sections of the tool would require different expertise, it also enabled collaborative responses, allowing up to three individuals within each organisation to contribute to the responses.

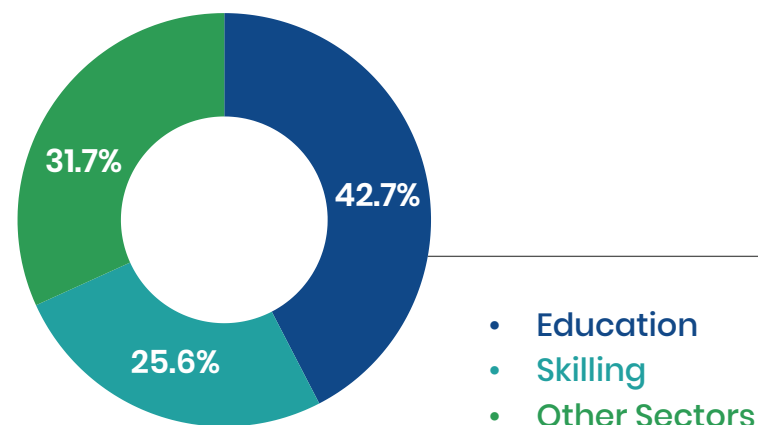
## SNAPSHOT OF PARTICIPANTS

The report analyses data from **82 nonprofits** that undertook the self-assessment until 31 March 2025, with the unit of analysis being the organisation itself.<sup>6</sup> Participants were senior leadership—founders, CEOs, or senior functional heads—ensuring that responses reflected a strategic and organisation-wide perspective.

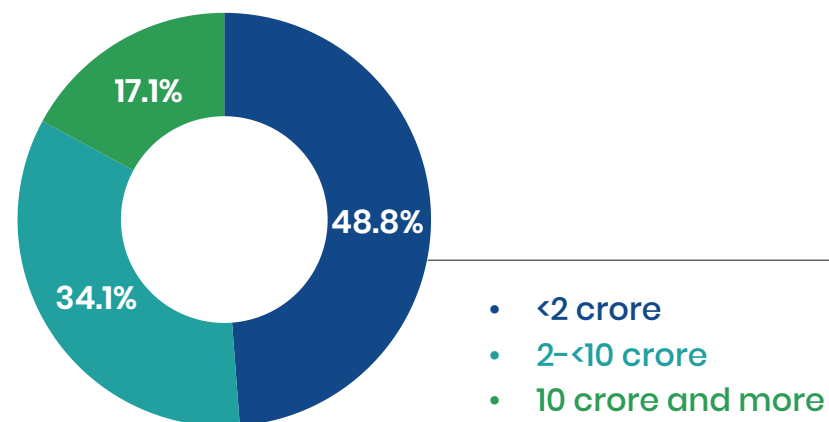
The participating organisations represent a mix of sectoral focus areas: 42.7% work primarily in education, 25.6% in skilling, and 31.7% in other sectors including health, agriculture, WASH, among others (Figure 5). In terms of size, the participants again showed a good diversity, with 48.8% of organisations falling under the INR 2 crore annual spending category, 34.1% falling in the INR 2-<10 crore range, and 17.1% report annual spending above INR 10 crores (Figure 6).

Participation in the self-assessment was shaped by targeted outreach through partner networks, which, while selective, was not guided by an intention to over- or under-represent any category.

**FIG 5: NONPROFITS BY PROGRAM FOCUS**



**FIG 6: NONPROFITS BY ANNUAL SPENDING (INR)**



6. Although this approach facilitated participation from a diverse set of nonprofits across sectors and budget sizes, it was not intended to be representative. As a result, while the findings offer valuable insights into outcomes readiness within the sector, they should be interpreted with consideration of the sample's composition and the potential limits to its representativeness.



# 3



Key Insights and  
Trends on Outcomes  
Readiness at the  
Organisational Level



The analysis shows where organisations currently stand on outcomes readiness across the nine organisational level capability areas as shown in Figure 7.

Organisations demonstrate relatively strong performance in leadership, board management, and stakeholder management, but face significant gaps in systems and processes essential for outcomes readiness – particularly in risk management, MEL, financial management, and fundraising.

The graph shows the mean score<sup>7</sup> for each organisational capability area. Higher mean scores indicate stronger outcomes readiness in that capability.

## AREAS SHOWING HIGH LEVEL OF OUTCOMES READINESS

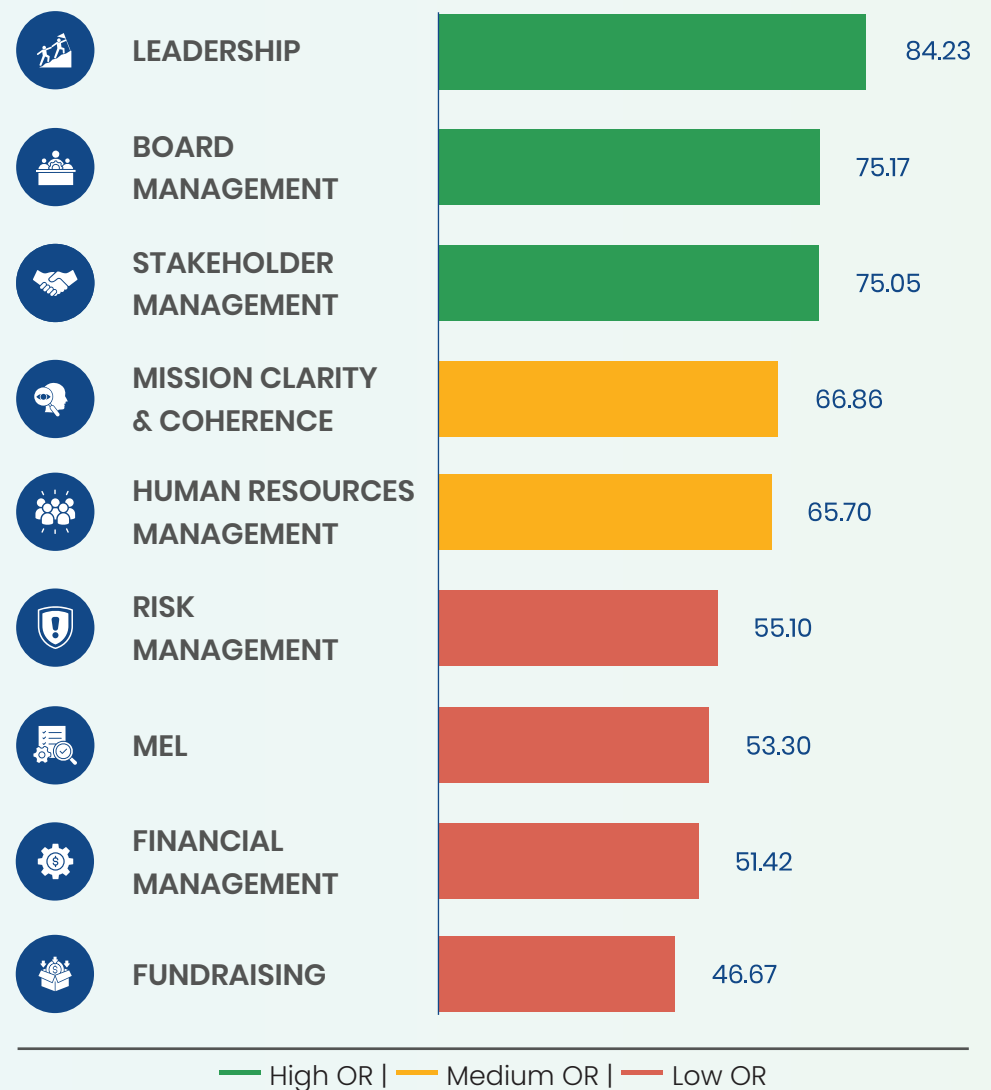
### 3.1. LEADERSHIP

Leadership teams are well established, with collaborative decision-making, though it tends to remain concentrated at the top for some functions like fundraising and risk



management. While leadership is open to feedback, relatively less are committed to adapting to the feedback.

**FIG 7:** Mean scores of organisational level outcome readiness capabilities



7. The scores are derived from participants' responses to the self-assessment. Each option within every question was assigned an absolute score to calculate question level score and summed up to calculate the section level scores, which were then harmonised to arrive at overall capability scores. The graph depicts the average of these scores for 82 nonprofits across each capability.

- a Over 80% organisations have adequately staffed and skilled leadership at both senior and mid-management levels.
- b For 57% organisations, major decisions are taken jointly by founder/CEO and senior management consisting of functional heads with ways to consult critical team members.
- c 56% collect and discuss feedback, but only 47% will quickly adapt in response to the feedback.
- d Fundraising remains highly leadership-driven, with nearly 50% of organisations relying on the founder/CEO for resource mobilisation either alone or with the support of some team members. Only 35% have a dedicated fundraising team.
- e Risk management processes are similarly top-heavy, with 92% of leadership engaged in risk reviews, but only 36% of program staff involved.

### 3.2. BOARD MANAGEMENT

Boards are largely independent and bring strong strategic and sectoral expertise, supported by institutionalised



processes and regular engagement. However, there is scope to strengthen diversity in Board composition and clarity on roles.

- a 60% of organisations have mostly independent Boards; 18% have equal independent and non-independent members, 22% have mostly non-independent Boards.

- b Most Boards bring strong capabilities in strategy (88%), sector knowledge (85%), and network building (84%), though financial (62%) and legal (44%) expertise are less common.
- c Board practices are well-institutionalised with around 70% meeting quarterly, 68% receiving pre-reads, and 82% reporting sharing of minutes with action points.
- d Board roles and responsibilities are defined in many organisations, though there is room for greater strategic alignment. While 35% have clearly defined, strategically aligned roles for their Board members, 43% have only basic documentation, and 22% operate with informal role expectations.

### 3.3. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

While organisations demonstrate strong communication and engagement practices with their stakeholders, structured stakeholder management remains inconsistent. Many organisations actively share learnings and involve



stakeholders in decision-making. While some have dedicated communications teams and plans, many rely on ad-hoc arrangements.

- a Most organisations demonstrate strong stakeholder management practices, particularly in areas of communication and transparency: 76% always engage stakeholders to understand needs and expectations, 74% always raise challenges in a timely way, and 67% always share project outcomes and learnings. In contrast, only 50% always involve stakeholders in decision-making, and 39% do so sometimes. Only 44% consistently use a formal

system to map, prioritise, and engage stakeholders; the rest either rely on informal understanding and need based engagement with them (31%), or have systems used mainly by leadership (26%).

- b** Structured communications is a gap: only 18% have a detailed, organisation-wide plan updated at least biannually, and just 38% have a dedicated communications team. Nearly 60% lack a consistently implemented communications plan.

## AREAS SHOWING MEDIUM LEVEL OF OUTCOMES READINESS

### 3.4. MISSION CLARITY AND COHERENCE

Most organisations have a clear strategic direction but their ability to track progress and align financial planning with strategy remains underdeveloped. While long-term priorities are well articulated, fewer than half establish measurable indicators, and even fewer set concrete



targets for those indicators. Furthermore, strategic planning is primarily used by the leadership and is not effectively integrated into decision-making.

- a** 77% of organisations report having a clear, regularly updated vision and mission, another 21% have not updated theirs in the last five years.
- b** 65% of organisations have a written strategic plan, while 24% have a strategic plan that is not formally documented. Among these, all outline 3-5 year priorities, and 67% include concrete action plans. However, only 49%

define indicators to measure progress, 43% set quantified targets, and just 41% integrate fundraising or financial planning into the strategic plan.

- c** Only 33% convert the strategy into annual action plans used across levels for decision-making. For 64%, the plan is primarily used by leadership.
- d** There is a disconnect between organisational strategy and program level outcomes, with 44% organisations not linking organisational TOC to program TOC.

### 3.5. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Human resource systems demonstrate strengths in role clarity and performance-based promotions. Gaps remain in aligning HR strategy with organisational goals, linking KPIs to organisational outcomes and ensuring consistent learning and development opportunities. Staff



performance assessments and training programs are in place, yet nearly half of the organisations may lack structured learning mechanisms.

- a** 80% have clear, regularly updated job descriptions, though staff often take on additional responsibilities as needed. However, adequate staffing is reported by over 80% at senior and mid-management levels, but only 52% at field level.
- b** 71% use performance-based criteria for promotions and rewards. Only 54% have a well-defined appraisal system that links KPIs to organisational outcomes.
- c** Only 53% have structured learning and development programs.

## AREAS SHOWING LOW LEVEL OF OUTCOMES READINESS

### 3.6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management processes show strong leadership and board engagement but lack engagement across other staff. The reliance on leadership for risk reviews ensures strategic oversight, but lack of staff perspectives can lead to missing operational risks. While most organisations acknowledge risks, only a small proportion have a comprehensive framework to assess and mitigate risks, calling for a more structured approach to risk mitigation planning. Organisations also indicated a relatively high orientation to use risk-reward analysis when responding to new or unexpected situations.



- a Only 18% have a comprehensive risk framework aligned with decision-making. Participants highlighted a range of risks, including funding instability, financial sustainability challenges, dependence on a few key individuals, project delays, regulatory changes, and community resistance.
- b 43% acknowledge risks but lack formal assessment processes.
- c 75% organisations state that they would conduct risk-reward analyses for funding opportunities.

### 3.7. MEL

While most organisations report having some form of dedicated MEL capacity at the organisational level, structures vary significantly. MEL is primarily used for donor reporting and operational improvements rather than strategic learning and decision-making. Leadership drives



MEL strategy and data use, but frontline staff, though heavily involved in data collection, have limited involvement in analysis and use of data.

- a About 25.6% have a comprehensive MEL setup with teams at both organisational and program levels, 29.3% have organisational level MEL teams only, 23% rely on project managers without dedicated MEL staff, and 22% lack a MEL team entirely.
- b Few organisations use MEL for problem-solving (60%), capacity building (63%), or fundraising (74%).
- c Leadership primarily drives MEL strategy design (90%) and data use (70%), while frontline staff are mainly responsible for data collection (94%) but are minimally involved in strategy design (7%), tool creation (15%), and data analysis (33%). Program leadership also actively uses MEL data (71%), whereas MEL teams (59%) and field staff (51%) participate less in data utilisation.

### 3.8. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Findings on financial management and budgeting practices show a mixed picture—only 32% organisations have detailed organisational level and program budgets that are based on actuals from multiple years, and are linked to strategic priorities of the organisation. Leadership and program heads are typically involved in planning and monitoring, but financial management remains largely centralised under CFOs or equivalents, with limited decentralisation at the program level.



Cash flow monitoring is robust, with most organisations (54%) reviewing income and expenditures regularly. However, flexibility in financial planning varies, with many finding adjustments challenging. While accounting systems effectively track donor-specific income and expenditures, assessing the financial efficiency of programs remains an area for improvement, as a significant proportion of organisations do not directly link costs to outcomes.

- 
- a 32% have detailed organisational level and program level budgets linked to strategic priorities. Only 42% assess program costs in relation to outcomes.
  - b Only 31% have mechanisms to reallocate resources dynamically, others struggle with it. Unrestricted funding, a key enabler of flexibility, remains low: 23% have less than 5% of their budget as unrestricted funding, 38% between 5-15%, 7% between 15-20%, and 32% have 20% or more.

c

Reserve levels are low. 60% have less than six months of reserves, including 26% with less than three months; only 23% have 6-12 months, and 17% have over a year.

### 3.9. FUNDRAISING

Fundraising remains largely leadership driven. Many organisations operate without a structured fundraising strategy, relying on ad-hoc or program-specific approaches, which may limit long-term sustainability.



a

Among those with some form of fundraising strategy, 29% rely on informal strategies, while 28% develop fundraising strategies on a need basis for individual programs. Only 18% have a comprehensive fundraising strategy at the organisational level for different programs, and just 25% have a well-defined, organisation-wide strategy aligned with strategic priorities, incorporating clear targets, timelines, best practices, and financial needs.



# TABLE 1: SNAPSHOT OF ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES READINESS CAPABILITIES

The table below synthesises findings from the 82 participating organisations using the Outcomes Readiness Framework. Each organisational area is assessed in terms of its BAU capabilities as well as the more advanced plus-plus capabilities that reflect outcomes readiness. Colour coding is used to indicate the proportion of organisations reporting each capability. As can be seen, except for leadership and decision-making, even when core capabilities across many of the organisational areas are strong, plus-plus capabilities show much room for improvement.

Note: Colour coding reflects the **proportion of organisations** reporting the capability

- More than 70%
- 35-70%
- Less than 35%
- Not applicable

CORE CAPABILITIES	PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Senior and mid-level leadership roles are filled and adequately skilled</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Clear delegation of roles, timelines, and deliverables</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Leaders set expectations and ensure follow-through</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFA500; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Decisions made jointly with structured team consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Teams trusted with autonomy in task execution</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFA500; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Leadership balances accountability with adaptive learning</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFA500; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Feedback loops exist with formal structures in place</li> </ul>
<b>BOARD MANAGEMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Independent-to-dependent board member ratio is balanced or higher</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Board members' expertise is effectively leveraged</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #008000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Strong governance practices (quarterly meetings, pre-reads, MoMs, follow-ups)</li> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FF0000; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Roles are not consistently documented or strategically defined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="margin-bottom: 5px;"><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #A9A9A9; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Not Applicable</li> </ul>



## STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

- Regular, proactive engagement with stakeholders (communities, donors, partners) on outcomes, decisions, and challenges
- Systematic stakeholder mapping, prioritisation, and engagement involving all teams
- Dedicated communications team in place
- Documented communication plan with tailored strategies for different stakeholders

- Partnership goals and roles co-developed; joint planning and review processes in place, but not consistently strong



## MISSION CLARITY & COHERENCE

- TOC exists and is regularly updated
- Strategic plan is in place
- Priorities for the next 3–5 years are defined, with action plans to achieve them

- Indicators to track progress on strategic priorities are defined
- Targets for indicators are quantified and specific
- Strategic plan is translated into action plans and used by staff across all levels for decision-making



## HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

- Clear, regularly updated job descriptions
- Senior and mid-level roles are adequately staffed
- HR planning systems are in place
- Appraisal systems exist

- Promotions and rewards based on performance across all levels
- HR planning linked to organisational outcomes with regular workforce assessments
- Field roles adequately staffed
- Appraisal systems tied to outcomes
- Learning and development opportunities across staff



## RISK MANAGEMENT

- Risks reviewed at least once a year
- Leadership involved in risk discussions
- New opportunities approached with phased, risk-informed planning
- Formal risk mitigation plan exists

- Adaptive risk response in crisis is partially in place but not systematised
- Risk discussions done quarterly
- Risk discussions with program heads and staff
- Comprehensive risk identification and prioritisation and mitigation process



## MEL

- ToC in place at program level
- MEL used for donor reporting, improving program design and effectiveness, strengthening internal processes, sharing insights with stakeholders
- Dedicated MEL team exists

- Program-specific TOCs align with organisational mission
- MEL used for problem-solving in real time and internal capacity building
- MEL roles adequately staffed across programs



## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Finance driven by CFO/COO, central team, and program-level staff
- Income/expenditure monitored against projections, with periodic cash-flow reviews
- Detailed, strategy-linked budgeting process with board approval & team involvement

- Cost/outcome analysis to drive financial efficiency
- Flexibility in financial reallocation



## FUNDRAISING

- Presence of a dedicated fundraising team
- Existence of organisational-level fundraising strategy

- Comprehensive, program-aligned fundraising strategy with clear targets and timelines

## KEY INSIGHTS ON OUTCOMES READINESS AT THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

The findings reveal a sector with solid foundations in leadership and governance, which are crucial enablers of outcomes readiness. Many organisations demonstrate strategic intent and robust governance through strong leadership decision-making, active boards, and stakeholder engagement practices. However, these strengths often remain confined to the senior leadership and governance layers, limiting their translation into deeper organisational capabilities essential for sustained outcomes focus.

What emerges as particularly interesting is the persistent disconnect between intent and implementation—organisations appear equipped with strategic clarity and leadership commitment but struggle to develop the systemic and operational maturity required to embed outcomes thinking at all levels.

Critical functions such as risk management, MEL, financial management, and fundraising remain underdeveloped or overly centralised, restricting adaptive decision-making and constraining organisations' ability to respond to emerging challenges effectively.

This imbalance highlights that while the sector is poised with potential, the path to outcomes readiness requires shifting from leadership-driven processes to more distributed, integrated systems. Strengthening MEL beyond donor compliance, decentralising risk and financial management responsibilities, and formalising fundraising strategies aligned with organisational goals are essential steps. Moreover, embedding learning, adaptive management, and strategic alignment across teams, not just leadership, will be key to transforming strategic intent into measurable and sustained social impact.

“*The Outcomes Readiness Tool provided a valuable and comprehensive evaluation of our organisation across key parameters such as leadership, impact measurement, risk, finance, program design, HR, and monitoring & evaluation. It helped us reflect on our current standing and identify critical areas for improvement.*”

**Vibha Sharma (CA, CFA), Lead – Impact Financing, Villgro**



# 4 ■

Trends in Program  
Level Outcomes  
Readiness for  
Nonprofits in the  
Skilling Sector

This section examines outcomes readiness for the program level capabilities for skilling programs. While the overall capability areas—program management and delivery, MEL, and budgeting and risk management remain the same across sectors, they are contextualised for the skilling ecosystem.

The analysis that follows is based on a sample of 21 nonprofits and highlights key trends in program level capabilities where the nonprofits currently stand in their outcomes readiness journey.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY READINESS

**4.1.** While most organisations have a Theory of Change (TOC), over a third continue to operate without one. Among those with a TOC, a majority (77%) have updated it in the past two years and include components like outcomes and impact. However, limited attention to assumptions and risks reduces the strategic utility of many TOCs in an outcomes-oriented context.

- a 62% have a TOC for skilling programs.
- b Among those with a TOC, 92.3% include activities, 69.2% define outputs, 76.9% define outcomes, 76.9% define impact, 61% include assumptions and risks.
- c 77% have updated the TOC in the past 2 years, 16.7% haven't updated it in over 3 years.

**4.2.** While employment is a stated goal, it may not be sufficiently prioritised, resourced, budgeted for or incentivised within intervention models.

- a Only 23.8% of organisations report full alignment of their training curricula with the QP-NOS<sup>8</sup> developed by Sector Skill Councils of NSDC; a further 33.3% say most of their training is aligned. Nearly 20% do not align any of their trainings with QP-NOS.
- b On certification, just 9.5% offer third-party certification for all training, while 52.4% do so only for some. A significant 23.8% do not offer any certification.
- c 71.4% of organisations say their model always facilitates apprenticeships, jobs, or self-employment, while the remaining 28.6% do so sometimes.
- d Project management (71.4%), mobilisation (66.7%) and trainers (61.9%) are generally well-staffed with the right skill sets. However, significant gaps exist in:
  - **Certification/assessment teams:** Only 28.6% report having sufficient, skilled staff; 42.9% need additional support.
  - **Placement teams:** Just 38.1% are well-resourced; another 38.1% require support, and 14.3% are understaffed.

**4.3.** Project management and reporting systems appear institutionalised, with 76.2% of organisations following them consistently across all projects and reviewing them

8. QP (Qualification Pack) -NOS (National Occupational Standards) are crucial components of the skill training and qualification framework. A qualification pack is a set of National Occupational Standards (NOS) aligned to a specific job role, defining the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competency in that role. These QPs are used to create training programs, curricula, and assessments for various industries. For more details, refer to the NSDC [website](#).



regularly. A majority of organisations have documented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), quality standards, and annual work plans that are consistently used by staff. Among the three documents, annual work plans are better documented, more regularly used, and more frequently updated than SOPs and quality standards. However, while usage is strong, regular updating of these documents is less robust, only about half of the organisations update them consistently, suggesting a gap in keeping operational guidance aligned with evolving program needs.

- 
- a Approximately, 66% of organisations have documented SOPs, quality standards, and annual work plans that are consistently used by staff.
  - b Among organisations that have SOPs, quality standards, and annual work plans, 71%, 50%, and 57% respectively say these documents are comprehensively detailed.
  - c These documents are regularly used by staff in 78% of organisations for SOPs, 71% for quality standards, and 85% for annual work plans.
  - d While 80% of organisations update work plans regularly, at 50%, a lower proportion update their SOPs and quality standards regularly.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) READINESS

**4.4.** Organisations demonstrate strong capabilities in tracking inputs and early outputs, such as enrolment, training completion, and initial placements. However, there is a notable gap in tracking sustained outcomes, like employment retention. While a strong foundation exists, the underdevelopment of long-term outcome tracking and the limited alignment of funding milestones with outcomes point to critical areas for improvement.

- 
- a Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) reported as being tracked and measured for skilling programs include:
    - No. of people enrolled by 90.5% organisations.
    - No. of people completing training by 90.5% organisations.
    - No. of people joining apprenticeship/jobs/self-employment by 76.2% organisations.
    - No. of people staying in apprenticeship/jobs/self-employment for at least 3 months after joining by 52.4% organisations.
    - No. of people staying in apprenticeship/jobs/self-employment for at least 6 months after joining by 47.6% organisations.
    - Average monthly salary by 76.2%.
    - Improvement in life and soft skills by 76.2%.

- b** A majority of skilling organisations report setting quantified and time-bound targets for key operational metrics: 90.5% do so for enrolment, and 85.7% for the number of people completing training, and 68.4% for those joining jobs/apprenticeships. However, only 28.6% of organisations set targets for the number of people staying in jobs/apprenticeships for at least 3 months.
- c** In several cases, these same KPIs are also linked to donor payment milestones. Specifically, 57% of organisations report that donor payments are linked to the number of people enrolled, and 67% to the number of people completing training. Among those tracking job/apprenticeship-related KPIs, 65% link donor payments to the number of people joining jobs/apprenticeships, but only 40% do so for those staying in jobs/apprenticeships for at least three months. 24% organisations indicate that donor payments are not tied to performance of any KPIs.

**4.5.** Organisations delivering skilling programs show encouraging maturity in MEL practice, with strong practice of routine analysis, outcome verification, and adaptive decision-making. There is a preference for simpler evaluation methods like baseline-endline surveys as compared to complex & expensive Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs). Overall, there is an orientation towards making data informed decisions for program delivery.

- 
- a** 76% organisations conduct data analysis as a planned and regular activity rather than a donor-driven task.
  - b** The use of mixed-method approaches (76.2%) and multiple data sources—such as offer letters (81%),

The use of mixed-method approaches (76.2%) and multiple data sources—such as offer letters (81%), employer feedback (61.9%), and trainee surveys (66.7%)—highlights a strong foundation for outcomes verification.

- c** 71.4% of organisations report a structured process to make course corrections and 66.7% maintain formal feedback loops with participants and staff.
- d** Mixed-methods approaches and use of tools like baseline-endline surveys dominate (76.2% each), complex evaluation designs like quasi-experiments or RCTs remain limited (9.5%).
- e** Over 90% opt for diagnostic analysis over reactive or assumption-based approaches in case of a program not meeting its intended objectives.

## BUDGETING AND RISK MANAGEMENT READINESS

**4.6.** Program budgets largely prioritise direct delivery costs but tend to under-resource capabilities such as evaluation. Additionally, many organisations struggle to estimate foreseeable costs accurately. Most skilling organisations are beginning to track cost-effectiveness, but the focus is skewed toward inputs or outputs rather than outcomes.

- 
- a** 100% participants include direct program staff in their program budget; 90% include material and travel costs, 81% include project-specific tech and learning/

capacity-building costs. Only 47% include costs for external evaluations, only 52% include central staff and tech costs.

- b** More than 60% of participants sometimes fail to anticipate foreseeable expenses.
- c** 66.7% track cost per beneficiary placed in jobs/self-employment, 61.9% track cost per enrolment, 47.6% track cost per certified beneficiary. Only 33.3% track cost per beneficiary retained in jobs. 9.5% do not track any cost-efficiency indicators.

**4.7.** While the majority of organisations demonstrate adaptive practices in the face of disruption, formal risk management systems remain underdeveloped. Without structured documentation, regular reviews, or clear mitigation strategies, organisations may struggle to

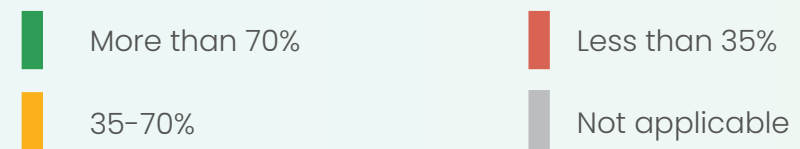
anticipate and respond to risks. However, the organisations demonstrate an orientation towards adaptation in the face of a crisis despite limited formal preparedness for risk assessment and management.

- 
- a** Only 33% have comprehensive risk assessments at program level that are regularly reviewed.
  - b** 28.6% document risks, but these are not updated regularly. Another 38% rely on informal understanding with no documentation.
  - c** In a simulated disruption scenario, 70% would expand their employer base and 50% would balance migratory and non-migratory placements, suggesting adaptive intent despite limited formal preparedness. Only 15% would continue with the current approach, assuming the issue will self-resolve.

## TABLE 2: SNAPSHOT OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES READINESS CAPABILITIES FOR SKILLING NONPROFITS

The table below presents a summary of Outcomes Readiness at the program level for 21 nonprofits in the skilling sector, highlighting both core and advanced (plus-plus) capabilities across key program areas. Colour coding reflects the proportion of programs demonstrating each capability.

Note: Colour coding reflects the **proportion of organisations** reporting the capability



## CORE CAPABILITIES

## PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES



### PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

- Institutionalised project management and delivery systems
- TOC exists

- TOC updated regularly (for those with a TOC)
- Project management and delivery systems institutionalised, used across all programs, and reviewed and updated
- Updating and use of documents like SOP, quality standards



### MEL READINESS

- Tracking of input related KPIs like number of people enrolled, completing training with quantified and time-bound targets
- Data analysis as a regular and planned activity
- Feedback collected

- Monthly, quarterly review of data
- Use of data for improving program delivery
- Setting quantified and time bound targets on outcomes like no. of people joining or staying in jobs
- Tracking of measurable indicators and targets for outcomes like no. of people joining or staying in jobs



### BUDGETING AND RISK MANAGEMENT READINESS

- Understanding of cost per beneficiary
- Documentation of risk for program

- Use of data for risk analysis and mitigation for ad hoc situations
- Understanding of cost per beneficiary joining/staying jobs
- Formal and regularly reviewed risk frameworks

## KEY INSIGHTS ON OUTCOMES READINESS AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL FOR NONPROFITS IN THE SKILLING SECTOR

Skilling nonprofits exhibit a promising orientation towards outcomes readiness, with many foundational elements in place such as updated TOCs, strong MEL, standardisation in delivery, and alignment with employment related KPIs. However, there are gaps in the strategic use and institutional support for these capabilities that limit their effectiveness in driving employment linked outcomes. For instance, while most organisations track training completion and initial placements, fewer systematically track job retention and still fewer are linking these to payments. Similarly, while documents like SOPs and work plans are used

routinely, their inconsistent updating suggests weaker loops between evolving changes and operational guidance which is critical for adaptive, outcomes-oriented program implementation.

Budgeting practices reveal an emphasis on inputs and outputs like cost per beneficiary in jobs with relatively less focus on cost for retention in jobs. The strong inclination toward adaptive responses is encouraging, yet without formal risk management systems, this responsiveness remains rather reactive than strategic.

“*The Outcomes Readiness self-assessment tool has been a real eye-opener for us. It is not just the assessment that is valuable, but the accompanying resources on the portal are equally valuable. The assessment helped us identify key areas of improvement, such as Theory of Change and risk assessment. Please continue sharing such resources—your efforts are contributing to improving the sectoral landscape*”

**Vipul Gupta, Founder and CEO, Earth Focus**

## CASE STUDY

# How Magic Bus is Building its Outcomes Capabilities

Magic Bus India Foundation consistently ranks among India's top NGOs in the education and skilling sector. Founded in 1999, the organisation has equipped youth from underserved communities with life skills and employability training, using a holistic ecosystem model that engages parents, peers, and local institutions to create a strong support network.

A pivotal moment in their outcomes journey was their involvement in the Skill Impact Bond (SIB) in 2021. SIB is India's first and largest development impact bond for employment. Under SIB, Magic Bus provides employability training to urban youth, enables job placements and ensures retention in jobs for at least three months after joining, embracing a model where payments are tied directly to placement and retention. This way of working required a deep commitment to data backed decision-making, performance management, and adaptive learning.

SIB's outcomes-focused approach spurred tangible innovations within Magic Bus across a few specific 'plus-plus' competencies, as explained below:

- a Leadership:** Magic Bus pivoted to an industry-aligned, demand-driven model, integrating employers at every step of the value chain, almost doubling the share of employer-led placements over a year. The organisation also strengthened its alumni network, which now drives 45-50% of new enrolments—a testament to a sustainable, community-driven process.
- b MEL, HR management and performance culture:** To ensure accountability, the organisation invested heavily in its data

systems, creating a rigorous internal verification process set up using multiple methods including a dedicated Fraud Prevention and Detection Team to identify early risks and eliminate them. Furthermore, there are standard systems and processes created for tracking progress and employment outcomes and embedding ambitious targets into staff KPIs. This has directly led to stronger employment outcomes, particularly for women, with improved transitions from training to placement and better long-term job retention. Additionally, the launch of our strategic Monitoring & Evaluation tool 'Metal Score Card' ensure every centre is equipped, supported, and accountable in delivering high-impact outcomes for the young people we serve.

- c Knowledge and learning culture:** Crucially, the value of this approach extends far beyond the SIB itself. Magic Bus now treats the SIB as a 'gold standard' for learning, actively institutionalising its successes at the organisational level. Insights on data management and program delivery are documented into standard operating procedures, while staff are rotated from SIB centres to other programs to embed this expertise organisation-wide. This strategic dissemination of knowledge demonstrates a true organisational transformation, moving from a single successful project to a deeply ingrained, outcomes-ready culture.

Magic Bus's experience with the SIB showcases how a data-driven, outcomes-focused approach can drive profound organisational transformation and sustainable impact.





# 5



Trends in Program  
Level Outcomes  
Readiness for  
Nonprofits in the  
Education Sector

**T** This section examines outcomes readiness for program level capabilities within education-focused interventions. While the overarching capability areas—program management and delivery, MEL, and budgeting and risk management remain consistent across sectors, they are contextualised here based on the experience of DIBs in the education sector. For instance, questions on cost metrics are focused on parameters like cost per child or cost per learning gain. Risk management practices are similarly contextualised.

The following analysis is based on a sample of 35 nonprofits and highlights key trends in program level outcomes readiness for the education sector.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY READINESS

**5.1.** Most education nonprofits today have articulated a TOC that maps activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact. However, a notable 31% still operate without a TOC. Among those that do have one, fewer organisations explicitly consider underlying assumptions and risks or update their TOC on a regular basis.

- a** 69% of participants have a TOC for education programs.
- b** Among those with a TOC, 83.3% include activities, 79.2% define outputs, 87.5% define outcomes, 100% define impact, 66.5% include assumptions and risks.
- c** 66% have updated the TOC in the past 2 years, 16.7% haven't updated it in over 3 years.

**5.2.** Project management systems are in place across many organisations but are not yet universally institutionalised. As with other sectors, annual work plans are more widely established than SOPs or quality standards. However, the limited comprehensiveness and usage of quality standards, and the absence of any formalised systems in at least 30% of organisations indicate that internal systems need to mature.

- a** 57% of organisations have formal project management and reporting systems that are consistently followed and regularly reviewed. The remaining 43% either rely on donor systems or report weak systems (23%), follow processes inconsistently or only partially (17%), or operate with informal/ad hoc systems (3%).
- b** 63% have documented SOPs. Among these, 59% are comprehensive, covering all steps in a way staff can use, 64% report consistent (always) usage by staff, 50% always update SOPs, while 41% update them sometimes.
- c** Only 54% have documented quality standards. Of these, just 37% are comprehensive, 68% report always using these standards, 53% always update them, 42% update them sometimes.
- d** 71% of organisations have a documented annual work plan. Of these, 64% are comprehensive, 72% report always using the plan, 60% always update the plan, 32% update sometimes.

**5.3.** Leadership is strongly engaged in program delivery—most organisations report a structured cadence for project reviews, problem-solving, and feedback. Leadership also plays a central role in guiding donor engagement, especially in cases of delays or unmet deliverables. This proactive involvement is a key enabler for adaptive management, timely course correction, and strategic alignment.

- 
- a** A large majority (83%) of organisations report that their central leadership team is actively engaged in program delivery with a structured cadence of reviews, problem-solving, feedback loops, and site visits.
  - b** An overwhelming 91% of organisations indicate that leadership proactively engages with program teams to adjust strategies and communicate with donors when deliverables are delayed or not achieved.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) READINESS

**5.4.** A large majority of education nonprofits report tracking student learning outcomes (94%) and using or adapting standardised assessment frameworks (82%). These practices reflect a strong sector-wide intent to align with outcomes-oriented principles and improve accountability for learning. However, as we move from broad intent to specific implementation practices, a noticeable drop-off emerges. While 66% have measurable

indicators for most or all outcomes, nearly one-third have defined indicators for only some outcomes. Similarly, only 63% report having quantified outcome targets for most or all indicators, with 11% not having included targets at all. This suggests that although outcomes are being tracked, not all organisations have embedded measurement frameworks and indicators to support this. Target-setting approaches also reflect this gap. While 63% rely on past performance, 51% base their targets on what they believe is achievable—an approach that may lack grounding in evidence and reduce the strategic value of outcome tracking.

- 
- a** Widespread tracking and alignment with standard frameworks, with 94% tracking student learning outcomes, 82% using or adapting standardised assessment frameworks.
  - b** 66% have measurable indicators for most or all outcomes, 31% have them for only some.
  - c** 63% have quantified targets for most or all outcomes, 11% have not defined targets at all.
  - d** For target setting, 63% rely on past performance, 51% set targets based on what they think is achievable.

**5.5.** Education nonprofits demonstrate strong practices in monitoring and data analysis. A large majority report collecting data across input, output, and outcome levels, reflecting a comprehensive approach to capturing program performance. Furthermore, data analysis is a

regular and planned activity for nearly 71% of organisations, suggesting that monitoring processes are integrated into organisational routines rather than being driven solely by external requirements. The widespread use of mixed-method research (85%), along with a high prevalence of robust baseline–endline surveys (93%), further underscores a commitment to systematic and credible outcome measurement.

However, the frequency of data review is an area of concern. While quarterly or monthly reviews are reported by a majority (68%), a significant minority (31%) continue to review data either annually or on an ad hoc basis, limiting opportunities for timely course correction and adaptive learning may be underutilised in some organisations.

- 
- a Most organisations collect data across inputs, outputs, and outcomes (77% or higher), and a majority (74%) engage in regular, planned data analysis.

**5.6.** Education nonprofits have made significant progress in establishing data systems and collecting feedback from students, teachers, and field teams. Over half the organisations (57%) report having a structured process to analyse program level data and apply the insights to make timely adjustments. However, 40% still rely on occasional data review, with changes in program delivery not being systematically guided by that data, limiting the potential for proactive course correction and continuous improvement. Similarly, feedback mechanisms from staff

and participants are reasonably well-established. However, for more than a third, feedback is either not consistently gathered or not systematically integrated into decision-making processes. Finally, while data is increasingly used to guide adaptations, fully tailoring programs based on the local context is not yet standard practice.

- 
- a 75% regularly analyse program data and is a planned activity for the organisation, and 60% use feedback to refine delivery—both crucial for quality control of the program.
  - b Yet only 48.5% would significantly adapt their program for a new socio-cultural context based on past data. This signals that the data is being used to fine-tune pedagogy, not rethink models for contextual equity or structural changes.

## BUDGETING AND RISK MANAGEMENT READINESS

**5.7.** While most education nonprofits include a comprehensive range of cost components in their program budgets and demonstrate a strong understanding of direct program expenditures, capabilities related to cost-effectiveness and outcomes-based budgeting remain limited.

- 
- a Nearly 90% track spending on direct inputs, but only a third understand and monitor relationship between budget and outcomes.

**b** While 63.2% track cost per participant and 78.9% track cost per child, only 26.3% use cost per outcome metrics.

**5.8.** Risk management remains largely informal, with few organisations having structured systems that are regularly reviewed. Most education nonprofits demonstrate responsiveness and adaptability when faced with disruptions. However, only a limited number systematically integrate these experiences as programmatic learning for

future initiatives. This suggests that while a culture of flexibility and adaptation exists, it is not yet fully supported by formal processes and systems.

**a** While 94% would adapt their delivery in response to crises, only 27% have formal, reviewed risk frameworks. Majority of organisations (57%) do risk assessments informally without any documentation.

### TABLE 3: SNAPSHOT OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES READINESS CAPABILITIES FOR EDUCATION NONPROFITS

The table below presents a summary of Outcomes Readiness for 35 education programs, highlighting both core and plus-plus capabilities across key program areas. Colour coding reflects the proportion of programs demonstrating each capability.

Note: Colour coding reflects the **proportion of organisations** reporting the capability

- More than 70%
- 35-70%
- Less than 35%
- Not applicable

CORE CAPABILITIES	PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES
<b>PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY READINESS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2e8b57; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Project management and delivery systems institutionalised</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #2e8b57; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Existence of annual work plan</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff9900; margin-right: 5px;"></span> TOC exists</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9534f; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Staff with the right skillset</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff9900; margin-right: 5px;"></span> TOC updated regularly</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff9900; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Project management and delivery systems institutionalised, used across all programs, and reviewed and updated</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ff9900; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Updating and use of documents like SOP, quality standards</li> </ul>



## MEL READINESS

- Data collected on input and output
- Data analysis as a regular and planned activity
- Feedback collected
- Measurable indicators for outcomes

- Data collected on outcomes
- Measurable quantified targets for all/most outcomes  
Monthly, quarterly review of data
- Structured process to use data for improving program delivery
- Data-driven feedback loops to improve program delivery



## BUDGETING AND RISK MANAGEMENT READINESS

- Understanding of cost per child
- Documentation of risk for program

- Use of data for risk analysis and mitigation for ad hoc situations
- Understanding of cost per outcome
- Formal and regularly reviewed risk frameworks
- Use of data for risk analysis and mitigation for ad hoc situations and incorporating those as program learning

— More than 70% | — 35-70% | — Less than 35% | — Not Applicable

# KEY INSIGHTS ON OUTCOMES READINESS AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL FOR NONPROFITS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Education nonprofits show strong orientation toward outcomes, with visible progress in areas like TOC, tracking of learning outcomes, data collection, and leadership engagement. However, many capabilities appear established but are not yet institutionalised with outcomes focus. For instance, while a majority track outcomes and engage in data analysis, fewer translate into structured target setting or formal course corrections.

Similarly, leadership is actively engaged, but the systems that enable adaptive management like SOPs, quality standards, or risk frameworks are inconsistently present or underdeveloped. The gap between outcomes alignment and embedded outcomes practice signals a need for the plus-plus capabilities—shifting from data collection to active data use, formalising feedback loops, and investing in cost-effectiveness and outcomes-budgeting.



## CASE STUDY

# How Language & Learning Foundation is Building its Outcomes Capabilities

Founded in 2015, Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) is dedicated to improving foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) outcomes at scale. By partnering with national and state governments, LLF strengthens India's public education system from within, rather than creating parallel structures. Their technical support to state governments includes curriculum design, teacher professional development, and capacity building of academic staff. At block and district levels, LLF supports the NIPUN Bharat Mission through deep systemic engagement and demonstration programs.

As a results-oriented organisation, LLF's commitment to systemic impact was tested through its role as the education partner in two innovative outcomes-based financing initiatives:

- **The Haryana Early Literacy Development Impact Bond (DIB) (2019–2022)** focused on strengthening teacher capacity to improve literacy outcomes.
- **The LiftEd DIB (2022–2027)** aimed at building the capacity of government officials and teachers in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to improve FLN in alignment with the NIPUN Bharat Mission.

LLF's success in these high-stake environments is built on key 'plus-plus' competencies, as explained below:

**a** **Risk management and innovation culture:** Under the Haryana DIB, LLF showed agility during the COVID-19 school closures. With only 40–50% of children having smartphone access, LLF launched the 'Har Ghar School' initiative. This community-based model trained volunteers for home-based learning, supported by printed materials for all children and WhatsApp content for those with devices. This adaptive approach ensured continuity and by the project's end, students averaged

42.4 words per minute in Oral Reading Fluency, surpassing the Global Minimum Proficiency standard, compared to 30.3 words in control schools.

**b** **Program delivery and stakeholder management:** Within the LiftEd DIB, success is defined by improvements in student learning outcomes and by systemic shifts that ensure sustainable impact, like stronger block-level governance, change in teacher and mentor mindsets, and adoption of effective FLN practices. LLF works closely with mid-tier officials across districts and blocks. Through co-created training, data-driven review meetings, and structured support including field visits, teacher guides, and accelerated learning plans, they build government capacity and continuously improve classroom practices. This collaborative approach empowers local leaders to own the FLN mission, reinforcing accountability and strengthening government monitoring systems for sustainable impact.

**c** **MEL and performance culture:** LLF's outcomes readiness is rooted in data-driven decision-making and robust MEL systems. Building on the Haryana DIB, LLF institutionalised structured data collection for LiftEd DIB using digital tools, aligning internal and government data. This enabled real-time tracking, actionable feedback for mid-tier officials, and timely course corrections. Rigorous training, validation, and dashboard reporting have strengthened accountability, while regular data reviews at all levels drive program improvements and increase government ownership of data.

LLF remains deeply committed to delivering measurable learning gains and lasting systemic reforms, advancing equitable and scalable foundational education for every child in India.



# 6



Trends in Program  
Level Outcomes  
Readiness for  
Nonprofits in Other  
Sectors

This section explores program level outcomes readiness for nonprofits across various sectors, other than education and skilling. The analysis examines three key competencies that are essential for effective program delivery:

- a** **Program management and delivery:** Nonprofits in diverse sectors must demonstrate operational excellence and the ability to deliver outcomes. This includes maintaining consistency in results, ensuring interventions meet high standards, and demonstrating agility to adapt to changing needs and contexts.
- b** **MEL:** A robust MEL system is essential for tracking performance and program goals and improving program design across all sectors. Data-driven performance management helps organisations refine their interventions and achieve their intended outcomes.
- c** **Budgeting and risk management:** The relationship between costs and outcomes must be understood to allocate resources efficiently. Effective budgeting and risk management practices ensure that nonprofits can make informed decisions about resource use to achieve outcomes.

Based on a sample of 26 nonprofits in sectors other than education and skilling, the trends discussed in this section provide insights into where nonprofits currently stand in terms of their core and plus-plus competencies at the program level.

## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY READINESS

**6.1.** A major proportion of organisations have a TOC, and among those most include core components such as

outcomes, outputs, activities, inputs, and assumptions. These frameworks are often updated and revised regularly. However, one-third of organisations still operate without a TOC.

- 
- a** 68% of organisations reported having a TOC. Among those with a TOC: 100% define their long-term impact, 94% define activities, 88% focus on outputs, 94% focus on outcomes, and 70% outline assumptions and risks.
  - b** 94% organisations updated their TOCs within the last 2 years.

**6.2.** Project management and reporting systems are well-documented to regularly monitor project progress, consistently followed across all projects, and monitored regularly. A high majority of organisations report having annual work plans and standard operating procedures (SOPs) that outline steps in implementing an intervention, serving as a guide for program staff. However, the use of quality standards that set benchmarks to ensure processes and outputs meet desired levels of excellence is relatively low.

- 
- a** 72% of organisations have formal project management and reporting systems that are consistently followed and regularly reviewed.
  - b** 68% have documented SOPs for program delivery. Among these, 53% are comprehensive, covering all steps in a way staff can use, 65% report consistent usage by staff, 59% always update SOPs.

- c** Only 56% have documented quality standards. Of these, just 42% are comprehensive, 57% report always using these standards, 57% always update them.
- d** 84% of organisations have a documented annual work plan. Of these, 66% are comprehensive, 71% report always using the plan, 71% always update the plan.

**6.3.** Staffing and lack of adequate skillsets in the staff remain a challenge, with around half the organisations indicating a need for additional capacity to implement programs effectively.

- 
- a** Fewer than half (48%) organisations report having sufficient staff with the right skillsets.
  - b** A significant proportion (44%) acknowledge partial staffing, while a smaller proportion (8%) report being understaffed.

**6.4.** Leadership is active and responsive in program implementation. They frequently engage with program teams and take the lead in donor communication in case of program delivery challenges.

- 
- a** 88% of organisations report that the leadership team has a set cadence and process to engage with project teams for frequent reviews, problem solving, and feedback cycles, and visits project sites often.
  - b** For 88% of organisations, leadership sets direction and works with program teams to adjust strategies and provide updates to donors.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL) READINESS

**6.5.** MEL systems are developed in terms of defining measurable outcomes, collecting data, and maintaining feedback loops. Encouragingly, most organisations have embedded feedback mechanisms and report using data to make adaptive decisions. While data is being used strategically in several instances, regular and planned data analysis remains an area for strengthening, with just over half of the organisations reporting that it is a routine, intentional practice.

- 
- a** 84% of organisations have measurable indicators and quantified targets for most/all outcomes.
  - b** 92% collect input-level data, 96% collect output level data, 76% collect data on outcomes.
  - c** 88% of organisations say that they regularly collect feedback from staff and participants and use it to refine and improve the program continuously.
  - d** Majority organisations (64%) have a structured process to analyse data to make timely adjustments to improve program outcomes.
  - e** 76% of organisations conduct a thorough analysis of past data to identify successful strategies and tailor the program model significantly to meet the unique needs of the new community.

- f** 56% of organisations conduct data analysis regularly as a planned activity for the organisation, 32% of organisations do this for donor reporting purposes only.

**6.6.** For most organisations, the evidence base is largely built through internal assessments, with relatively limited use of third-party evaluations. There is a preference for simpler evaluation tools and methods like baseline-endline surveys and mixed methods research as compared to complex and expensive RCTs.

- a** 60% of organisations rely solely on internal impact assessments/evaluations, followed by 36% of organisations that have evidence from internal as well third-party evaluations. Only 4% of organisations state that they do not have evidence from the program area, but there is strong external evidence that similar programs can deliver outcomes.
- b** 92% of organisations use both quantitative and qualitative tools, 8% use only quantitative tools, and none report a lack of tools for program MEL.
- c** 80% of organisations use baseline-endline surveys with statistically robust samples, about 44% of organisations use dipstick surveys.

## BUDGETING AND RISK MANAGEMENT READINESS

**6.7.** Budgeting practices are comprehensive for direct programmatic expenses and operational costs. While most

organisations understand cost to output relationships, the link between budgeting and outcomes remains under-explored. Cost-effectiveness metrics such as cost per outcome are used by limited organisations only.

- a** Budget allocations reflect a holistic view of program needs: 96-100% of organisations include core delivery expenses such as project staff, travel, and materials, 80-84% account for indirect staff, central office costs, legal/compliance expenses, and project-specific technology, 68% include learning and capacity-building costs, as well as contingency funds, 56% include costs for external evaluation partners in their budgets.
- b** 100% track direct input costs, 68% understand and monitor relationship between budget and outputs, and 60% for budget and outcomes.
- c** Only 24% use cost per outcome metrics, 60% use cost per beneficiary metrics.

**6.8.** Risk management is one of the least developed program level outcomes readiness capabilities, mirroring the finding at the organisational level. Only one-third have formal and regularly reviewed risk frameworks. Of those limited organisations that formally document risks, many use past data to anticipate risks.

- a** 32% have formal risk management strategies, 24% document risks but don't update regularly, 44% rely on informal methods.
- b** Of the organisations that document risks, 71% analyse past data to anticipate and mitigate risks.

## TABLE 4: SNAPSHOT OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES READINESS CAPABILITIES OTHER THAN EDUCATION AND SKILLING

The table below presents a summary of Outcomes Readiness at the program level for 26 nonprofits in sectors outside of education and skilling, highlighting both core and advanced (plus-plus) capabilities across key program areas. Colour coding reflects the proportion of programs demonstrating each capability.

Note: Colour coding reflects the **proportion of organisations** reporting the capability



CORE CAPABILITIES	PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES
<b>PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY READINESS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Institutionalised project management and reporting systems</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Documents like annual work plan exist</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Leadership engagement in program delivery</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Existence of a TOC with key components</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Sufficient staff with the right skillset</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> TOC regularly updated (for those that have a TOC)</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Frequent and proactive reporting of program deliverables, in case of delay/achievement</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Comprehensive, updated and regularly used SOPs, quality standards</li> </ul>
<b>MEL READINESS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Data collection for activity, input, output</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Defined measurable indicators</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Data analysis as a regular and planned activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Defined targets for outcomes</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Data collected on outcomes</li> <li><span style="color: green;">■</span> Data-driven feedback loops to improve program delivery</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> Use of data for program delivery</li> </ul>





## BUDGETING AND RISK MANAGEMENT READINESS

- Understanding of costs/spending on direct program inputs such as staff, material, travel, etc.
- Understanding of linkage between program budget and outputs
- Documentation of risk for program

- Understanding of linkage between program budget and outcomes
- Use of data for risk analysis and mitigation
- Use of cost per outcome
- Formal and regularly reviewed risk frameworks

— More than 70% | — 35-70% | — Less than 35% | — Not Applicable

## KEY INSIGHTS ON OUTCOMES READINESS AT THE PROGRAM LEVEL

Most nonprofits demonstrate a firm understanding of program management fundamentals, with a significant majority employing TOCs for programs that articulate long-term impact and map the causal pathway between inputs, outputs, and outcomes. These frameworks are regularly revisited and revised, signalling a strategic commitment to adaptive programs. However, the fact that a sizable minority still operates without a TOC highlights the uneven adoption of these foundational tools across the sector. Even where operational systems like project management, SOPs, and annual work plans are widely in place and actively used, the relative scarcity of formalised quality

standards indicates a nascent stage in embedding consistent benchmarks for excellence. Staffing inadequacy and skill gaps further constrain many organisations' capacity to implement programs.

Leadership is highly engaged, driving strategic alignment and adaptive management, which supports program responsiveness. MEL practices are broadly established, with data collection and feedback mechanisms in place. Yet, regular, deliberate data analysis is not fully institutionalised across the board, limiting the degree to which insights drive continuous refinement and learning.

Budgeting practices reflect a comprehensive understanding of program costs and the relationships between inputs and outputs. However, the sector's relatively limited use of cost-effectiveness and cost per outcome metrics suggests an early stage in financially articulating outcomes, which is a critical dimension for outcomes-based funding and resource optimisation. Risk management remains weak, with only a minority of organisations maintaining formal and regularly reviewed risk frameworks at the

program level. The widespread use of informal risk practices underscores a pressing need for strengthening systematic risk anticipation and mitigation to safeguard program resilience.

In sum, while the sector shows foundational strengths in frameworks and leadership, advancing quality assurance, robust MEL, and systematic financial and risk management is essential to fully realise outcomes readiness and sustain impact.

“

*The Outcomes Readiness Framework helped us look at our work with a sharper, more practical lens. It showed us our program fault lines especially around clear goals, community data, and frontline systems and areas where we need to improve. We believe this kind of discipline will help nonprofits like ours become more effective, transparent, and ready to work with outcome-linked funding in a serious way.*

**Pankaj Singh Thakur, Chief Executive Officer, Head Held High Foundation**



# 7



Trends in Outcomes  
Readiness by Size of  
the Nonprofit

Using annual spending as a proxy for the size of the nonprofit, the data showed that organisations with larger annual spending consistently demonstrate stronger readiness across nearly all organisational level capabilities. Interestingly, organisations with annual budgets between INR 10-50 crores tend to exhibit stronger outcomes-aligned practices across several capabilities. These include clearer strategic plans, leadership and decision-making, established HR and fundraising systems, and stakeholder management and partnerships. While outcomes readiness appears to strengthen with size up to this point, this trend does not necessarily continue among organisations with budgets above INR 50 crore.

These findings echo insights from an earlier perception study on

outcomes-based funding, where nonprofits in the INR 10-50 crores budget range expressed both greater interest in outcomes-linked approaches with organisational development support.<sup>9</sup> Together, these findings suggest that growing organisations may be especially well-positioned and motivated to participate in OBF.

However, it is important to note that the number of organisations in the INR 50 crores and above category is very limited (n=3). To enable more robust comparisons and draw meaningful conclusions, we have combined this with the INR 10-50 crores category (n=11) for the purposes of further analysis. All subsequent references to “INR 10 crores and above” should therefore be understood as inclusive of both budget categories.

**TABLE 5: AVERAGE SCORES OF ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL OF OUTCOMES READINESS BASED ON ANNUAL SPENDING (INR)**

	ALL (N=82)	<2 CRORE	2-<10 CRORES	≥10 CRORES
<b>ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL</b>				
Clarity and coherence about organisation's mission	66.86	59.4	67.3	87.5
Board management	75.17	69.1	79.5	83.7
Leadership and decision-making	84.23	83.5	85.3	84.1

9. ISDM (2024). Navigating Outcomes Based Financing in India: Perceptions of the Not-for-Profits. ISDM, Parinaam, Desai & Associates, Asha Impact, ImpactVerse.

MEL systems	53.3	48.7	56.5	60.3
Human Resources management	65.7	60.7	67.7	76.5
Risk management	55.1	54.2	54.7	58.5
Financial management	51.42	47.3	52.9	60.2
Fundraising	46.67	41.8	47.4	59.1
Stakeholder management and partnerships	75.05	72.1	72.4	88.6



## PROGRAM LEVEL

Program management and delivery	63.16	52.1	70.5	79.92
MEL	55.6	52.4	54.1	67.74
Budgeting and risk management	54.8	51.8	56.08	60.9

> **A few key highlights observed when unpacking the overall categories include:**

- The steepest improvements (of  $\geq 15$  percentage points) from smallest to larger budget groups at the organisational level are seen in clarity and coherence in organisation's mission, fundraising, stakeholder management and partnerships, and HR practices. At the program level, program management and delivery show the sharpest improvement from smallest to the largest budget group.
  - Organisations with higher annual spending show a significant improvement in strategic clarity and coherence, marked by more formalised, detailed and outcomes-aligned strategic plans that are regularly used across teams, not just leadership. While most organisations have defined their Theory of Change, its comprehensiveness and institutionalisation of strategic planning increase sharply with budget size.
  - Leadership and decision-making is strong across all categories and shows only minor fluctuations.
  - MEL capabilities show signs of institutionalisation with increase in annual spending, but strategic use of data remains a challenge across groups. As would be expected, larger nonprofits tend to have dedicated MEL teams, formal systems, and clearer processes for data collection and analysis.
  - Organisations with higher annual spending generally demonstrate stronger alignment between HR planning and organisational goals.
  - Risk management remains low and relatively flat across all sizes.
- Financial planning and management capabilities strengthen with organisational size. While many small organisations (under INR 2 crores) prepare budgets primarily for grant proposals, the larger organisations (INR 10 crores and above) develop multi-year, strategically aligned budgets that are regularly monitored and approved at the Board level.
  - Financial management roles also become more decentralised with increase in annual spending. Just over a quarter of smaller organisations have dedicated finance staff across central and program levels, compared to nearly two-thirds of large organisations.
  - Cash flow management practices and resource flexibility improve with size. While 40% of smaller organisations adjust budgets based on regular financial reviews, this rises to 85.7% among the largest tier. Larger nonprofits are also more likely to reallocate resources during disruptions, supported by formal processes.
  - Fundraising capabilities and strategies improve with annual spending, shifting from founder-led efforts to structured, institutionalised systems.
  - Stakeholder engagement capabilities reflect a steady shift from informal to structured approaches as annual spending increases. Smaller nonprofits often approach engagement informally, driven by need or opportunity rather than structured intent. While many organisations consult stakeholders, larger nonprofits are more likely to embed this engagement within program planning and implementation.



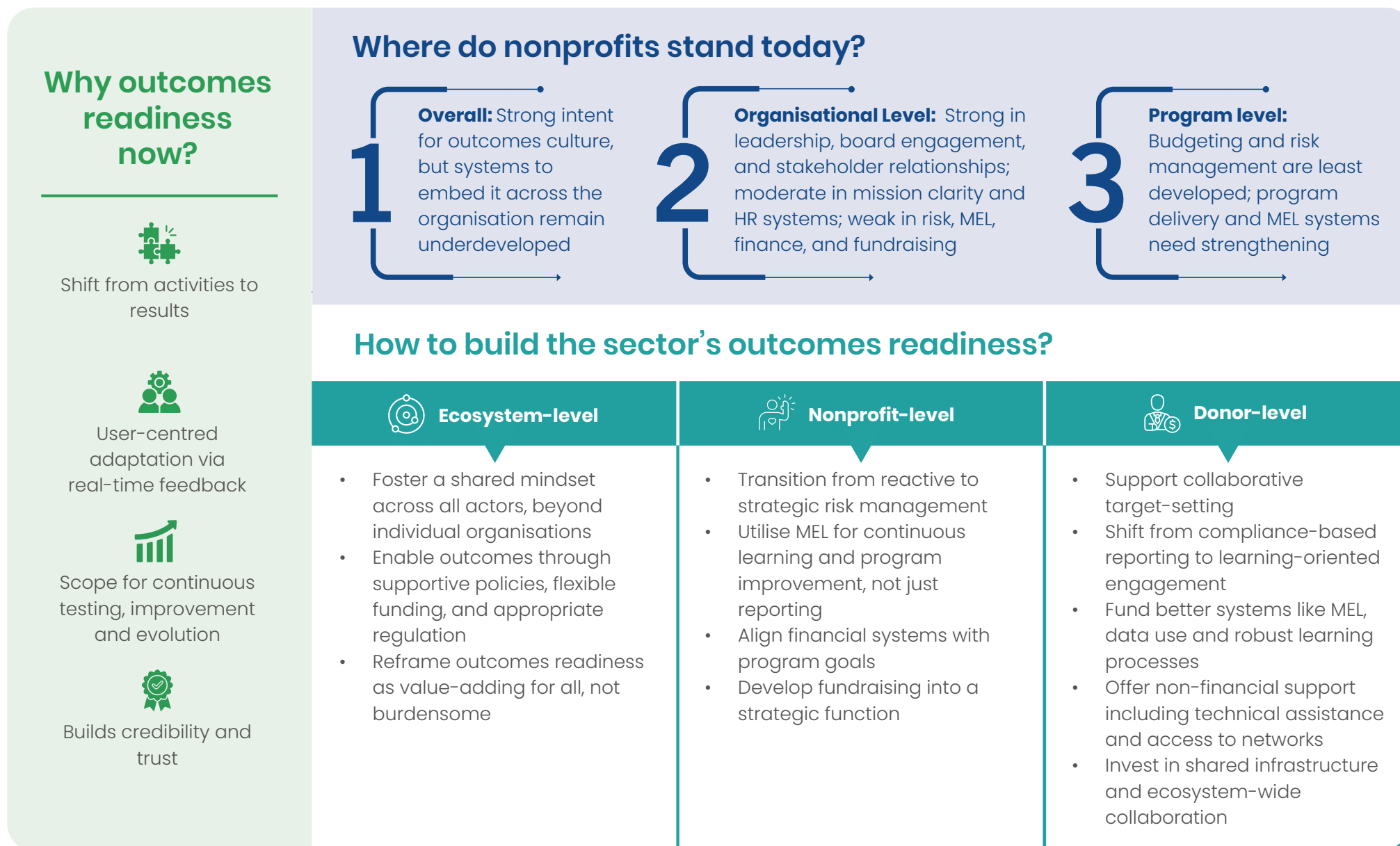


8



Building the Sector's  
Outcomes  
Readiness

**FIG 8: A ROADMAP FOR THE ECOSYSTEM, NONPROFITS AND DONORS**



This report represents an initial step towards building an understanding of OR among Indian nonprofits and provides directional insights into how nonprofits are positioned to engage with outcomes-driven approaches, highlighting existing capabilities, key challenges, and areas requiring further capacity-building. While the assessment focused on organisational and program level capabilities of nonprofits, outcomes readiness is also influenced by the broader environment—one that includes regulators, donors and intermediaries, along with the nonprofits. This section provides a way forward, with recommendations grouped into three interlinked areas: first, strengthening outcomes culture as a foundational driver across the ecosystem; second, identifying and addressing capability gaps within nonprofits; and third, enabling donor strategies that support this shift. Together, these shifts can lay the groundwork for a more outcomes-focused, and learning-driven social sector.

## OUTCOMES CULTURE AS FOUNDATIONAL TO OUTCOMES READINESS

An outcomes culture is the cornerstone of outcomes readiness. It reflects a shared organisational mindset where the achievement of outcomes becomes central to how organisational systems are built, and how programs are designed, delivered and evaluated. This culture must prioritise performance culture, knowledge and learning culture, and innovation culture, that are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, collectively shaping an outcomes culture.

Importantly, outcomes culture is not confined to a single organisation. It must be embedded across the entire ecosystem. Donors, nonprofits, intermediaries and enablers all influence the sector's orientation towards outcomes. Without a

collective shift in mindset and practice, efforts to advance outcomes readiness will remain fragmented and limited in effect.

This shift is not just philosophical—it requires tangible, demonstrable changes in how organisations work. For instance, donors need to be supported to gradually allow for multi-year funding as outcomes take time to materialise. Similarly, they need mechanisms to factor in uncertainties in their spending as the level of actual spending may vary with the level of outcomes achieved and allow for small levels of unrestricted funding.

Regulators must also create these enabling conditions for nonprofits and donor practices to shift and encourage more outcomes-based approaches. India has already seen some enablers such as emphasis on independent impact assessments under CSR and social stock exchange rules. Other examples of regulatory enablers could include a framework that permits blending of different types of capitals (philanthropic, commercial etc.) along with corresponding mechanisms for payouts to different types of entities, flexibility in time provided for utilisation of CSR funds, better guidance and clarifications in corpus building for nonprofits etc.

Additionally, there is a need for greater awareness of the long-term value of being outcomes-ready. Many nonprofits still associate this with short-term pressure or burdensome measurement demands. There is a need for ecosystem-level dialogue and knowledge-building to shift these perceptions and help organisations see OR as a means to improve program quality and build credibility in the sector.

At a systemic level, outcomes-focused models can also help generate higher-quality data and evidence that informs government decision-making. Future research could explore

how data from outcomes-focused programs might contribute to policy design or scaling strategies.

Finally, outcomes culture must be translated into supportive systems, structures, and practices that enable programs to focus on outcomes. In that sense, culture is not just an internal disposition, it is the foundation upon which systems and processes are built.

## AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT FOR NONPROFITS

Findings from this study suggest that while many nonprofits have established the foundational capabilities, most are still in the early stages of embedding outcomes-oriented systems and processes. For a majority, core capabilities such as having a clearly defined TOC or basic MEL systems do exist. However, the more advanced or 'plus-plus' capabilities like real-time data use or iterative program design remain limited.

In particular, four critical areas of outcomes readiness require focused attention: (a) risk mitigation, (b) MEL systems, (c) financial management, (d) fundraising. To move forward, the nonprofits can build on the following action points:

- a** **Strengthen risk management as a strategic capability.** Risk planning processes exist in many nonprofits, and leadership is often engaged in risk discussions. However, most systems remain compliance-oriented and reactive. Regular, participatory, and proactive risk practices are limited. Nonprofits need to move toward structured, data-informed risk management that supports proactive decision-making and program delivery.

- b** **Deepen MEL integration for continuous improvement.** MEL systems are relatively more developed, with many organisations using data to inform program improvement and reporting. However, staffing remains thin, and real-time data use for problem-solving or internal learning is still limited. To move forward, nonprofits must deepen MEL integration into program cycles, enabling feedback, iteration, and greater accountability for outcomes. This requires five key shifts in how MEL is approached: (a) from retrospective reporting to real-time learning, (b) measuring outcomes along with outputs and inputs, (c) from MEL being a stand-alone function to one embedded in decision-making across teams, (d) from internal data tracking to active engagement with third-party verification, and (e) from a compliance mindset to a culture of performance, learning and adaptability.<sup>10</sup>

- c** **Financial systems in many organisations are not yet aligned with strategic goals or outcome targets.** Budgeting processes are often siloed and inflexible, with limited room for reallocation or cost-outcome analysis. Strengthening outcomes readiness requires building financial systems that are integrated, adaptive, and responsive to program needs anchored in long-term strategy.

- d** **Build fundraising as a strategic capability to drive long-term outcomes.** The study reveals weak fundraising capabilities across much of the sector. Few organisations have dedicated teams or a clear, program-aligned fundraising strategy. Strengthening this function is essential to mobilise the resources required to achieve long-term outcomes.

10. Parekh, A.; Chauhan, P. & Lashkari, S. (2025). Measure twice, pay once. India Development Review: <https://idronline.org/article/fundraising-and-communications/rethinking-monitoring-and-evaluation-for-obf/>

Finally, nonprofits are encouraged to use tools like the [Outcomes Readiness self-assessment](#) periodically to track progress. The [compendium](#) of capacity-building resources developed as part of this initiative can support organisations in strengthening both culture and capabilities over time. These resources include templates, guides, toolkits, and sample frameworks across all OR capability areas. The full list of resources is provided in [Annexure 3](#).

## THE ROLE OF DONORS IN ENABLING OUTCOMES READINESS

Donors have a critical role to play in shaping the sector's shift towards outcomes. This influence extends beyond grant disbursement—it includes how outcomes are defined, what is measured, and which practices are incentivised. To build a genuinely outcomes-oriented ecosystem, donors must go beyond expectations of reporting and embed support for outcomes culture in how they partner with grantees.

- a** **Support collaborative target-setting and learning**  
Donors should collaborate with nonprofits to set realistic, context-sensitive targets grounded in past performance data. Joint reviews of progress and challenges should be used to course correct and improve delivery. Low performance data should be seen as an opportunity to re-engineer program design and sharpen outcomes, not as a failure.
- b** **Encouraging transparency and learning**  
Shift the focus from compliance-based reporting to learning-oriented engagement that values iteration and evidence-informed decision-making.

- c** **Provide financial and non-financial support**  
The report finds that organisations with more financial resources, have better outcomes-ready systems. Donors can play a role in providing these financial resources and should actively consider funding program enablers such as monitoring and evaluation systems, data use, and learning processes. This support can be integrated into program budgets. In addition, donors can provide non-financial support such as technical assistance, access to corporate and ecosystem partners who can help nonprofits build tools like risk frameworks or data systems, and peer-learning platforms that facilitate exchange and capability-building.
- d** **Foster shared infrastructure and sector-level collaboration**  
Donors also have a critical role to play in reducing duplication and strengthening ecosystem capacity. By investing in shared infrastructure such as common data tools, collaborative learning platforms etc. they can lower entry barriers for smaller nonprofits and promote a more level playing field.

# Additional Readings

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## ANNEXURE 1

# Distinction Between Core and Plus-Plus Capabilities in the Outcomes Readiness Framework

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of each OR attribute explaining its unique characteristics and how it elevates an organisation's readiness for outcomes beyond conventional practices.

**TABLE 6: DISTINCTION OF CORE AND PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES**

	CORE CAPABILITIES	PLUS-PLUS CAPABILITIES
 <b>OUTCOMES-ORIENTED CULTURE</b>		
PERFORMANCE CULTURE	Involves general accountability and goal-setting with standard performance reviews and incentives	Emphasises accountability, clear goal-setting, and tracking progress towards specific outcomes. Includes components of performance tracking both at org level (e.g. third party evaluation) or individual level (e.g. reviews wrt achievement of outcomes, performance based incentives, among others). Involves comfort and willingness to work in a target-driven environment
KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING CULTURE	Encourages general knowledge sharing and occasional training sessions based on	Continuous, data-driven learning embedded into daily operations with regular updates and

organisational needs

sharing of best practices. Learning is proactive, systematically integrated into decision-making processes, driving continuous improvement and adaptability

#### INNOVATION CULTURE

Innovation typically focuses on incremental improvements with a slower response to changes and limited experimentation

Emphasises rapid adaptation, real-time feedback, and a proactive approach to experimentation, enabling quick pivots and continuous improvement in response to evolving needs and unpredictable contexts



### STRATEGIC CLARITY AND COHERENCE

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING / TOC

It involves setting broad organisational goals and objectives, often with a focus on operational efficiency, resource allocation, and long-term growth. Theories of Change (TOCs) may be used but are not consistently integrated across all levels

It is deeply integrated with TOCs at both the organisational and program levels, ensuring that every activity is explicitly linked to desired outcomes. This also includes regular reviews and adaptations of prog TOCs to remain aligned with evolving needs and external changes, ensuring a clear pathway from inputs to outcomes across all functions



### MEL

#### MEL STRATEGY

It is primarily focused on fulfilling donor reporting requirements and compliance. Evaluations are periodic, often conducted at the end of a project cycle, with limited integration into everyday operations

It is integral to organisational and program decision-making. It includes continuous data collection, real-time feedback loops, and iterative learning processes. The strategy is closely aligned with the Theory of Change (TOC), ensuring that outcomes drive MLE activities and that the organisation adapts based on evidence and evolving circumstances

<p>DATA COLLECTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>This is typically done at specific intervals. The focus is on gathering information for reporting rather than for continuous improvement. Infrastructure may lack integration across programs</p>	<p>It is systematic, continuous, and supported by robust, integrated infrastructure. The infrastructure allows for real-time data capture and analysis, ensuring that the data is timely, accurate, and directly informs strategic decisions. This infrastructure is built to support adaptive learning and rapid responses to emerging challenges, aligning closely with desired outcomes</p>
<p>DATA ANALYSIS AND DISSEMINATION (INFLUENCE PROGRAM DESIGN)</p>	<p>It is often limited to generating reports for donors and stakeholders, with minimal impact on program design. Dissemination is usually confined to internal teams or external reporting requirements</p>	<p>Data analysis is deeply integrated into program design and implementation, with a strong focus on achieving outcomes. Data is analysed in real-time to identify trends, insights, and areas for improvement. Dissemination processes are designed to ensure that insights are shared across teams, influencing program adaptations and strategic pivots as needed</p>
<p>MEL METRICS</p>	<p>MLE metrics are often limited to basic output and activity tracking, with a primary focus on quantitative measures that satisfy donor requirements. The emphasis is on counting activities or beneficiaries</p>	<p>MLE metrics are comprehensive and aligned with the prog TOC. These metrics are designed to provide a holistic view of progress towards achieving desired outcomes, enabling the organisation to course-correct and optimise strategies in real-time</p>

 **HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

<p>PEOPLE MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>People management typically focuses on basic functions such as filling positions and ensuring staff are adequately supported to perform their roles. However, BAU does not necessarily emphasise developing an orientation towards</p>	<p>People management is outcomes-oriented, with a strong emphasis on aligning staff roles, skills, and development with the organisation's outcomes goals. Continuous learning and development, including leadership and data</p>
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achieving outcomes or fostering a culture that supports such achievements, which are crucial in an outcomes-based program

management training, are integral to the HR strategy. Performance incentives are directly linked to outcomes, and regular feedback loops are established to ensure that staff are empowered to contribute effectively to achieving the organisation's goals



## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### UNDERSTANDING TRUE COST OF DELIVERING OUTCOMES

The focus is primarily on tracking expenses and managing budgets for activities without explicitly linking cost to program outcomes. Financial planning is centred around securing funds for inputs and activities

Emphasis is on understanding cost of outcomes to make data-driven decisions for resource allocation and assess cost-effectiveness for scaling potential

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial sustainability is managed by maintaining a balanced budget and ensuring that there are sufficient reserves to cover ongoing operational costs

This goes beyond compliance to build efficiency, allow flexibility and long-term sustainability



## RISK MANAGEMENT

### RISK AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

It involves identifying potential risks and implementing standard procedures to mitigate them, focusing on maintaining compliance and operational stability

For OR, an additional layer of risk management is required focusing on uncertainties in prog delivery over and above the BAU. It involves a dynamic approach to identifying, assessing, and adapting to emerging risks which could impact outcomes. This includes continuous monitoring of risk factors, evolving mitigation strategies based on data and feedback, and integrating risk management into strategic decision-making to ensure outcomes are consistently achieved even in changing conditions



## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

### PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY

Partnerships and collaborations are managed through established agreements and routine communication channels, primarily focusing on maintaining operational relationships and ensuring that collaborative efforts align with general organisational goals

In outcomes readiness, partnerships and collaborations are strategically designed to leverage each partner's strengths for specific outcomes. This includes aligning goals and clarifying roles and responsibilities, building strong relationships with local stakeholders, and creating opportunities for ecosystem-level learning. Additionally, partnerships are flexible, allowing for mutually agreed adjustments to adapt to evolving needs and circumstances

### STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT

It typically involves maintaining good relationships with a limited number of stakeholders, focusing on meeting their expectations and ensuring smooth project implementation

It is focused on engaging and aligning stakeholders to achieve specific outcomes. This includes proactively identifying and addressing stakeholder needs, integrating feedback into program design, and maintaining transparent and continuous communication. Additionally, it involves building robust relationships with key stakeholders, ensuring their active involvement and support throughout the project lifecycle



## LEADERSHIP

### MANAGEMENT STYLE

It typically involves general oversight and administrative practices that ensure organisational operations are running smoothly. This includes establishing basic management protocols, setting broad organisational goals, and maintaining standard procedures

In an outcomes readiness context, leadership and management style are embedded within systems to drive and sustain outcomes-focused practices. This includes adopting adaptive leadership, strategic visioning, and data-driven decision-making, while aligning management practices with achieving specific outcomes



## PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM PLANNING	Focuses on immediate objectives and outputs, often driven by a top-down approach. Plans are generally static and updated infrequently. Success is measured primarily by the completion of activities, adherence to budgets, and timelines, with limited emphasis on the linkage between planned activities and desired outcomes	It involves clearly defined and finite outcomes that are achievable within a set timeframe. It is backed by the program's track record evidence demonstrating its past success in delivering outcomes, and its potential to replicate or scale outcomes in new contexts. Plans are regularly updated based on data and feedback, aligning with the overall TOC
PROGRAM DELIVERY AND OPERATIONS	Program delivery and operations typically follow a predefined plan with minimal adjustments once implementation begins	It includes the program's capacity to undergo iterative feedback and refinement cycles. It ensures that the program is implemented over multiple cycles, allowing for data-based adjustments and validations. Regular data-driven adjustments are integral to program delivery, with a strong emphasis on understanding the cost per outcome. This approach facilitates continuous improvement and ensures that operational practices align with the desired outcomes
PROGRAM GROWTH AND REPLICATION	Program growth and replication are often limited to scaling within the same context or expanding incrementally based on existing successes	Program growth and replication involve the ability to scale successful interventions and replicate effective strategies in new contexts. Mature programs leverage insights from previous cycles to confidently expand and adapt, ensuring the program maintains effectiveness and relevance across settings. This approach includes a systematic process for assessing scalability & adapting interventions to different contexts

## ANNEXURE 2

# Design and Methodology of the Outcomes Readiness Framework

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The research methodology commenced with an extensive literature review. This initial phase provided us with an understanding of gaps in the existing literature and helped us delineate the specific queries that need to be addressed in the primary research.

### QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Following the literature review, we proceeded with qualitative data collection through key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders in the OBF ecosystem in India. The findings from the literature review guided the development of the interview guide, ensuring that the questions were well-aligned with the gaps and issues identified in the initial phase.

- a Selection Criteria for Participants**

The selection of participants for the KIIs was guided by a set of criteria designed to ensure a diverse and representative sample. We identified organisations that are experienced in OBF, including funders, nonprofit leaders, intermediaries among others. Participants were chosen based on their demonstrated expertise and their prior experience in the OBF programs in India.
- b Interview Process**

Shift the focus from compliance-based reporting to learning-oriented engagement that values iteration and evidence-informed decision-making. The interview

process involved conducting 19 semi-structured KIIs to allow for in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and insights. Interviews were conducted virtually to accommodate participants' availability and geographical constraints. Each interview was recorded with the consent of the participants, and these recordings were subsequently transcribed for analysis. To maintain confidentiality and data security, all recorded conversations were destroyed after the transcription process was completed. This approach ensured that our analysis was based solely on the anonymised and transcribed data.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The transcribed interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This method enabled us to identify common themes and patterns related to the components of outcomes readiness and sector-specific requirements. The analysis focused on extracting key indicators and sub-indicators that could be incorporated into the framework.

### FINAL VALIDATION

To ensure the robustness of the refined framework, a final validation workshop was conducted. This workshop involved a broader group of stakeholders who provided feedback on the framework's applicability and utility. Their input helped finalise the framework and ensured it met the needs of the nonprofit sector.



**TABLE 7: LIST OF KII PARTICIPANTS**

<b>#</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Type</b>
01.	Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF)	Donor/ investor
02.	Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF)	Donor/ investor
03.	360 ONE Foundation	Donor/ investor
04.	HSBC	Donor/ investor
05.	UBS Optimus Foundation	Donor/ investor
06.	Bridges Outcomes Partnerships	Donor/ investor
07.	Peepul	Implementation partner
08.	Language and Learning Foundation (LLF)	Implementation partner
09.	Education Initiatives (EI)	Implementation partner
10.	Educate Girls	Implementation partner
11.	Pratham	Implementation partner
12.	PanIIT Alumni Foundation	Implementation partner
13.	Magic Bus	Implementation partner
14.	Society for All Round Development (SARD)	Implementation partner
15.	Gynashala	Implementation partner
16.	Kaivalya Education Foundation (KEF)	Implementation partner
17.	Central Square Foundation	Enabler
18.	Dalberg	Enabler
19.	The Blended Finance Company	Enabler

## ANNEXURE 3

# Compendium of Resources

### > Clarity and Coherence about an Organisation's Mission

- [Creating a Strategic Roadmap](#) by IPN
- [Strategic Planning for Non-profits](#) by IPN
- [Strategic Planning Guidebook](#) by NGO Connect
- [How to Develop Your Intended Impact and Theory of Change](#) by Bridgespan
- [Strategic Planning: A Toolkit for Small NGOs](#) by INTRAC
- [How Nonprofits Can Map Their Programs to Strategy](#) by Bridgespan
- [Design for Impact at Scale](#) by Mulago Foundation

### > Board Management

- [Nonprofit Boards: Three Practices to Ensure Good Governance](#) by IDR
- [The Effective Not-for-profit Board](#) by Deloitte
- [Not-for-profit Board Guidebook](#) by Grant Thornton
- [Compliance Checklist](#) by IPN
- [Samuhik Pahal: Governance in CSOs](#) by Wipro
- [Governance of Non-profits in India](#) by Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy
- [How to Get Your Board to Do Better](#) by Atma
- [Nonprofit Board Resource Center](#) by Bridgespan

### > Leadership and Decision-Making

- [Succession Planning in an Organisation](#) by IPN
- [Recommended Reading for Non-profit Leaders](#) by Bridgespan
- [Five Traits to Drive Impact as an NGO Leader](#) by Egon Zehnder
- [Building Internal Leadership is the Founder's Job](#) by IDR
- [Competency Bank for NPO Leadership](#) by Bridgespan
- [Want to Develop Leaders?](#) by IDR
- [Nonprofit Leadership Development: What's Your "Plan A"?](#) by Bridgespan
- [Building the Bench at Indian NGOs](#) by Bridgespan

### > MEL

- [Actionable Impact Measurement Framework](#) by Sopact
- [Designing Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Systems](#) by IPN
- [Strengthening Data in M&E Systems](#) by IPN
- [Outcome Mapping Workshop Guide](#) by Better Evaluation
- [Utilization-Focused Evaluation](#) by Better Evaluation
- [Four Types of Data Necessary for Outcome-Based Financing](#) by Brookings
- [Creating a Data Culture](#) by SSIR
- [Designing Effective Outcome Metrics and Measurement Systems](#) by Social Finance
- [Theory of Change Workbook](#) by USAID
- [Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning: A Toolkit for Small NGOs](#) by INTRAC
- [Setting and Measuring Outcomes](#) by GOLAB

## > Human Resources Management

- [Performance Assessment: Setting the Stage for an Effective Process](#) by Bridgespan
- [Six “Power Practices” to Retain Non-profit Talent](#) by McKinsey
- [Investing in Future Leaders](#) by Bridgespan
- [Case Study: The Importance of Investing in People and Culture](#) by IDR
- [Waking Up to the Talent You Already Have](#) by IDR
- [Talent Management in the Indian Social Sector](#) by CSIP & ISDM
- [Uncovering the Productivity Challenges of India’s Fieldworkers](#) by IDR
- [Samuhik Pahal: People Practices in CSOs](#) by Wipro

## > Risk Management

- [Enterprise Risk Management Toolkit for Charities and Institutions of Public Character](#) by KPMG
- [Internal Control Toolkit for Small NGOs](#) by EY
- [Advance Techniques for Outcome-Based Planning: Beyond the Roadmap](#) by Economic Times
- [Making Sense of Uncertainty: Nonprofit Scenario Planning](#) by Bridgespan

## > Financial Management

- [Understanding CSR Donor Due Diligence](#) by IPN
- [Corpus Building for Non-profits](#) by IPN
- [Financial Management Handbook for NGOs](#) by Mango
- [Financial Management Webinars](#) by Nonprofit Finance Fund
- [Financial Compliance](#) by ARIA CFO Services
- [FMSF Knowledge Corner](#) by FMSF
- [Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy Blog](#) by CAP

## > Fundraising

- [Fundraising Guide for Nonprofits](#) by Nonprofit Finance Fund
- [Key Guidelines & Best Practices Towards Donor Retention](#) by IPN
- [A Guide for Effective Results-Based Financing Strategies](#) by World Bank
- [Fundraising Webinars Playlist](#) by Atma
- [Masterclass: Fundraising for Grassroot NGOs \(in Hindi\)](#) by Arthan
- [Fundraising: An Art, A Science or A Sport?](#) by Arthan
- [Fundraising: An Art, A Science or A Sport?](#) by Atma
- [Case Study: Everything You Need to Know to Fundraise Successfully](#) by IDR
- [A Fundraising Guide for Nonprofits](#) by IDR
- [NGOBox Whatsapp Community](#) by NGOBox
- [Tamuku Alert](#) by Tamuku

## > Stakeholder Management and Partnerships

- [Stakeholder Management: A Summary and Our Approach](#) by Tanck
- [Using a Stakeholder Analysis to Identify Key Local Actors](#) by The Grassroots Collective
- [Engaging Stakeholders in Strategic Planning](#) by Bridgespan
- [Outcomes-Based Funding and Stakeholder Engagement](#) by Lumina Foundation
- [The Types of Nonprofit Partnerships: Models and Approaches](#) by Instrumentl
- [Succeeding in Partnerships](#) by IPN
- [A Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a Nonprofit Communications Strategy](#) by Medium

- [Understanding Nonprofit Communications: Definitions, Strategies, Comparisons and Best Practices](#) by Prosper Strategies
- [Need for a Communication Strategy](#) by IPN
- [Communications Webinars Playlist](#) by Atma

## › Program Design and Delivery

- [How Nonprofits Can Map Their Programs to Strategy](#) by Bridgespan
- [Design for Impact at Scale](#) by Mulago Foundation
- [Program Development](#) by National Minority Aids Foundation
- [A Guide to Developing an Outcome Logic Model and Measurement Plan](#) by United Way

## › Program Budgeting

- [Annual Budgeting for Nonprofits](#) by IPN
- [Budgeting Template for Nonprofits](#) by IPN
- [Best Practices Compendium on Outcome Budgeting \(2023\)](#) by DMEQ, NITI Aayog & CLEAR/J-PAL South Asia
- [Pricing Outcomes](#) by Government Outcomes Lab
- [Budgeting Basics](#) by Nonprofit Finance Fund
- [How Outcome-Based Budgeting Links Resources and Results](#) by Development Asia (ADB)
- [True Cost Communication and Computation Guidelines](#) by ARIA CFO Services

## › Education Sector Resources

- [Firki Courses](#) by Firki | Teach For India
- [ASER Assessments](#) by ASER
- [Early Childhood Education Formative Assessment](#) by UNICEF
- [Life Skills Collaborative Assessments Toolkit](#) by Life Skills Collaborative

- [Life Skills Assessment Scale](#) by Dream A Dream
- [Quality Education India Development Impact Bond: Case Study](#) by GOLAB
- [From Evidence to Scale: Lessons from the QEI-DIB](#) by Brookings
- [Outcomes-Based Finance & Early Childhood Care and Education](#) by Education Outcomes Fund

## › Skilling Sector Resources

- [Enhancing Capabilities, Empowering Lives](#) by Samhita
- [Existing and Emerging Models for Skilling in India](#) by NSDC
- [Skill Impact Bond](#) by NSDC
- [Columbia Workforce Development Social Impact Bond](#) by GoLAB
- [National Occupational Standards and Curriculum](#) by NSDC
- [Become NSDC Training Partner](#) by NSDC
- [Protocols for Affiliating Vocational Training Providers](#) by National Qualification Register
- [Resources in Hindi](#) by IPN



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