

Transforming Social Purpose Organisations

A YEAR AT SOCIAL LENS
(2022)

SOCIAL LENS
OPTIMISE IMPACT



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FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK



In the last couple of years, the work of Social Lens has really leapfrogged with a heightened understanding through our work across diverse programs in recent years. Our mission has been to enable organisations to optimise their impact that lays emphasis more on the quality of delivery at the last mile to program participants.

Capacity-building which has taken centre stage today, now offers multiple emerging tools, techniques, and solution designs that have allowed us to sharpen our capacity-building initiatives. Social Lens has stayed agile and delved further to see how this discipline or our adopted methodologies can be enhanced, improved, and more pertinent to the organisations we continue to serve.

Moving away from a prescriptive diagnostic lens, we are now embracing a more dialogic approach with organisations to have a better holistic understanding of those organisations. This entails delving into how the vision is disseminated throughout the workforce, encompassing the cultural aspects and the practical implementation through systems, processes, and the foundational structure of the organisations, which has been exciting and insightful for us to learn and apply.

The support of our clients at the forefront, who have continued to place so much faith in what we do, has opened new vistas of research-backed understanding and experiential learning. Noteworthy mention has been our engagement as the central capacity-building partner at the GROW Fund with Edelgive Foundation. Being part of an audacious, first of its kind programme has brought exponential learnings and agility for us. In contrast, the work of the toolbox Value Circle or the Forbes Fellowship, serving a very different kind and typology of organisations, has allowed for tailoring a program for small sized organisations whose solutions require higher degrees of simplicity.

Our impact consulting practice continues to offer our team the opportunity to assess social projects as we apply metrics that are not always easy to measure, such as behaviour change and community transference. It has been exciting to observe how program sustainability is achieved through mechanisms that empower communities and other institutions to embrace the fundamental elements of these program activities. With the growing discourse around climate and intersectionality, we need to be able to join the dots and look at how one programme is delivering more than a single outcome. There is an interconnectivity of several outcomes with health, livelihood, nutrition, climate, which places intersectionality at the centre of what we're trying to measure.

I believe there are a lot of exciting times to look forward to. As an organisation, we are driven by what data does and can tell us. It is our endeavour to enable organisations to develop a data mindset. I think it's less about the tools but more about developing a data mindset. That excites and inspires us, and we look forward to continuing our mission of supporting change making organisations drive their missions to fulfilment.

- Vijaya Balaji

June 2023

OUR MISSION

At Social Lens, we believe that creating social impact is about more than just delivering services or programs. It's about building strong relationships, trust, and a shared sense of purpose with the communities that our clients serve.



That's why our mission is to work collaboratively with our clients to build lasting partnerships and networks that support their work over the long term.

Our goal is to empower change-making organisations with the skills and knowledge they need to improve their capacities and achieve better social impact outcomes for the communities they serve.

We believe that by working together, we can build sustainable solutions that address the most pressing social challenges of our time.

CHANGE THESIS



The problem we're trying to solve

Social purpose organisations today face critical challenges that significantly impact their capacity and outcomes. Operating on tight budgets with limited staff and resources makes it challenging for them to implement effective programs and scale their impact. Additionally, the lack of knowledge and skills required to build capacity and sustain impact hinders their ability to achieve their goals and make a meaningful difference. The social impact landscape is also dynamic, with ever-evolving technologies, trends, and funding models, requiring organisations to be adaptable and capable of navigating these changes to stay relevant and valuable.

At Social Lens, our commitment is to provide unique and collaborative solutions that stabilise, strengthen, and scale organisations by building their capacities and optimising their impact. We understand the challenges that social purpose organisations face, and we're here to help them overcome these obstacles and achieve their goals. Through our programs, we've helped our partners navigate the ever-changing social impact landscape, build their capacities, and optimise their impact to make a meaningful difference in the communities they serve.

SOCIAL LENS METHODOLOGY

At Social Lens, we offer a range of services that help our clients and partners understand social issues, assess program impact, and use data-driven insights to plan future interventions.

We use a unique approach called 'persona' to help them better understand themselves and design effective capacity-building solutions.

Our employee engagement and skilled volunteering programs make sustainable impact simple and accessible.

Our experienced team works closely with clients to understand complex social issues and anticipate the needs of the communities they serve. We use data and analytics to optimise impact, identify growth opportunities, and create sustainable solutions that make a lasting difference.

We believe that real change is possible and fuel this mission with active participation, data-led decision-making, integrity, commitment, and human-centric solutions.



OUR VERTICALS

Social Lens envisions bringing together talent, expertise, and innovative processes to solve critical organisational challenges and strengthen the social impact ecosystem. We are driven by a desire to magnify the transformative power of Social Impact Organisations and their programs. By harnessing a unique blend of Capacity Building, Impact Design, and institutional learning, we want to unlock the full potential of the Social Impact handprint, leaving an indelible mark on the lives we touch.

Through three robust verticals, **Capacity Strengthening**, **Impact Consulting**, and **Skills for Impact**, we tackle challenges that hinder desired impact delivery. We begin by understanding social issues and anticipating community needs. Then, by examining the positive and negative, intended and unintended effects of delivered programs, we use data-driven insights to chart a course for future interventions and impact optimisation.

Our methodology revolves around identifying operational and strategic gaps within social purpose organisations. Through comprehensive assessments and tailored initiatives, our Capacity Strengthening vertical equips organisations with the tools they need to ensure delivery mechanisms at the last mile. Philanthropic and non-profit organisations require a rigorous system to design, track, and measure impact to achieve their planned development goals. The Impact Consulting vertical facilitates the delivery of more relevant, effective, and impactful social interventions. At the heart of our approach lies the desire to initiate profound shifts in behaviour. Our interventions, carefully crafted to inspire behaviour change, are guided by an all-encompassing framework meticulously designed to assess the extent of this shift. Amplifying meaningful, measurable, and sustainable impact through a simple and accessible approach are the carefully curated employee engagement and skilled volunteering programs devised by the Skills for Impact vertical. We partner with global purpose brands to drive employee volunteering and power change in communities across India. The belief that volunteering makes a difference in the lives of individuals and institutions and is a triple win for social purpose organisations, skilled individuals, and companies steers our skilled volunteering approach.

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

Social Lens passionately believes that the key to driving sustainable social impact lies in building the capacity of social purpose organisations. Our capacity-building vertical serves as a catalyst for transformative change, offering tailor-made solutions to address operational and strategic gaps faced by our clients. Collaborating closely with these organisations, we delve deep into their DNA, institutionalising solutions that empower them to fulfil their mission independently and effectively.

Through our capacity-building vertical, we guide our clients in resource allocation, helping them tackle complex social challenges and create lasting change. Our approach is bespoke, designed to meet every client's unique needs. We provide invaluable advisory and consultancy services to philanthropies, grantmakers, and nonprofit organisations, guiding them from strategy formulation to successful implementation.

Our Social Impact Optimisation Program (SIOP) is a cohort-based capacity-building program that strengthens people, processes, and systems to meet institutional competencies. We manage a program's capacity-building components from start to finish, including organisational support, training design, and execution, to ensure optimal program objective attainment and delivery.

30+

Organisations
strengthened



12+

Donor
partnerships



At Social Lens, we are committed to catalysing philanthropy management to drive social impact. We firmly believe that our capacity-building vertical plays a pivotal role in achieving this mission. We are proud to work with our clients, strengthening their capabilities and propelling them towards a future of sustainable social impact.

1050+
Team members trained



Anushka Bhilwar, Senior Analyst, on their reflection of the Capacity Strengthening Vertical -

Organisations are made up of people, processes, and ideas, not its programs.

Building capacities for an organisation is misunderstood as a concept. Non-profit organisations are more focused on their program, target beneficiaries, timelines and funds. But even before these programs, there is a need to build an organisation. Investment in strategic planning, leadership, talent development and fundraising are critical to growth.



And this is what drives us at Social Lens, being a catalyst for change in this organisation's journey. The Capacity Building vertical supports identifying strategic gaps and providing actionable solutions. With EdelGive GROW100 Fund, Forbes Marshall we empower grassroots organisations. With these investments we create platforms for long-term change, promote a culture of learning and adaptability.

Together, we ensure the organisation's effectiveness and enable grassroots organisations to become active agents of change within their own communities.



IMPACT

Our Impact Consulting services help organisations design effective frameworks for impact measurement, enabling data-driven decision-making by regularly tracking metrics. We conduct independent evaluations to assess both micro and macro-level effects of each program on participants and the community, using digital data collection tools and reports using new media. We also ensure alignment with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by mapping each program to individual and grouped SDG targets.

As a post-impact assessment service, we provide phased-out pilots that enable organisations to refine and optimise their impact over time. Our comprehensive and tailored approach enables organisations to make informed decisions, achieve their goals, and create meaningful change.

18+

Program
states visited



7000+

Beneficiaries interviewed

We employ the OECD DAC Framework, which offers six critical parameters of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability for evaluation. At Social Lens, we have developed a behaviour change framework that assesses the extent to which an intervention has successfully instilled desired habits, actions, and mindsets among the intended beneficiaries. By analysing the extent to which multiple stakeholders have been included in solving core social issues, we provide a multi-stakeholder view of our impact.

5



Community needs
assessment +
program design

50+

Programs
assessed



Uzma Shakra, Senior Analyst, on the work done by the Impact Consulting Vertical -

The Impact Vertical at Social Lens works at the cusp of designing impact measurement frameworks and conducting comprehensive independent studies such as impact assessments, needs assessments and M&E of programs. Our work in the impact vertical is evidence-informed, guided by empathy and sensitivity and a relentless commitment to bring to light the outcomes and impact of various development projects.



The work done by the impact vertical adds value to various development programs across diverse sectors such as education, health, gender, and WaSH by assessing its various components through in-depth interactions with the target beneficiaries. Through extensive analysis, the Impact Vertical at Social Lens delivers meaningful insights on a program's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, replicability, and scalability - enabling the empowerment of communities and contributing to larger national and global goals, such as the SDGs.



SKILLS FOR IMPACT

At Skills for Impact, we believe that skilled volunteering is a powerful tool for creating meaningful impact in communities while also providing professional development opportunities for volunteers. Our programs empower philanthropic and non-profit organisations to achieve their development goals with efficiency, leveraging the skills and expertise of volunteers.

We work closely with companies to create customised employee volunteering programs that align with their CSR objectives and business strategy. Our team conducts thorough due diligence on relevant stakeholders and collaborates with partner organisations to launch and oversee programs, ensuring effective problem-solving along the way.

60+ NGOs impacted



350+
Volunteers committed

We provide immersive training and knowledge support to volunteers, resulting in a transformative experience. Additionally, we measure the outcomes of the program for the employee, the company, and the community to assess the program's success.

Through our approach, we facilitate a triple-win situation for individuals, institutions, and communities. Our dedicated support team, vast network of partner non-profits across India, and diverse range of volunteering projects ensure that we can create sustainable impact in the communities we serve.



1500+

Pro bono
consulting
hours

Shefali Mhatre, Senior Analyst, on their journey of working at the Skills for Impact Vertical -

I've been involved in the volunteering space for about a year and 10 months now. The biggest reason I believe my work is important is the sheer diversity of impact and all stakeholders on whom this impact is created. To give an example, let's say we have four key stakeholders. The corporate, our volunteers, our nonprofit organisations, and the project management team because everything we do impacts us, too.



And then, of course, the community, which is an indirect impact. The sort of impact happening for nonprofit organisations is tangible, a solution volunteers give them. It's the sheer experience. It's the feel-good factor of contributing their time and skills to doing something better for society. They also get a chance to interact and work with other people.

It is an incredible culture-setting mechanism. Volunteering is a cultural thing. Volunteering programs succeed if corporates have a culture which is centred around giving. It is a huge motivating factor for most employees. And as project managers, the impact is high on us also. We get to interact with a diverse pool of volunteers and nonprofit organisations.

It's an absolute privilege to go to work every day and hear about the incredible work different organisations are doing in the sector.

And the different ways that they are contributing to societal development and global goals. It's very humbling to witness that and be able to support this change and their progress in some way or the other.



OUR PROGRAMS

The Social Lens Mentorship Program

Over the past year, Social Lens designed and implemented a Mentorship Program which resulted in resounding success. Mentors and mentees collaborated to develop specific functional, behavioural, and wellness competencies. Mentees reported applying their learning to explore various opportunities and navigate the evolving employment market, leading to an improvement in their productivity levels and communication skills.

The Mentorship Program created a positive momentum among the participants, resulting in mutual benefits for mentees, mentors, and partner organisations. The program has expanded its commitment to career readiness and access, ensuring the development of essential abilities prior to mentees' professional journeys. The success of this program has helped Social Lens achieve its envisioned objectives and strengthened its commitment to fostering social change.

The Social Acceleration Marathon

Over the last few months, we have been closely working with an organisation from Latin America to create and execute a program in India that aims to harness the skills of corporate employees in order to tackle pressing management challenges faced by NGOs. Our program was meticulously crafted using a design thinking methodology and we placed a strong emphasis on empathy as a core approach throughout the program.

The impact of our program was truly remarkable. NGOs benefited immensely from the expertise and experience of corporate professionals who were able to bring fresh perspectives to age-old problems. Through collaborative problem-solving, our program was able to provide NGOs with tailor-made solutions that were practical, efficient, and effective. This resulted in improved management practices, streamlined operations, and ultimately, better outcomes for the communities they serve.

Forbes Foundation Fellowship Program



Social Lens has conceptualised, advised, and implemented a sustainable hybrid Advisory and Training Support Model with the Forbes Marshall Foundation through a fellowship Program. The program aims to provide selected non-profit organisations with enhanced organisation capabilities through capacity-building programs and systems and process efficiency enhancement. The program's primary objective is to support organisations through a capacity-building cycle, from awareness to adoption to behavioural change, which finally leads to advocacy and institutionalisation of skills and practices.

The Forbes Fellowship program has benefited 17 organisations working at the grassroots level in peri-urban regions across India. The participating cohorts reported that the program helped them understand the technical difficulties behind tasks like proposal writing and become more confident when writing for fundraising initiatives. Our program, designed diligently with the intent to support, employs an engagement model that handholds organisations right from diagnosis to monitoring and review.

GROW Fund Program



Social Lens currently manages the Capacity Building program component of the GROW Fund. As the Capacity Building partner, Social Lens has conceptualised and designed the organisation diagnostics assessment tool, capacity building support areas and curriculum, training delivery partners identification and onboarding, management of the delivery, advisory support on all elements of the program, and monitoring and evaluation of the capacity building program.

We have designed and developed the M&E framework to capture the periodicity, frequency, and data management process around which to measure the outcome indicators. We have built the framework as an extension of the results matrix, conceptualised around the three pillars of GROW: sustainability, resilience, and future readiness.

OUR GEOGRAPHICAL FOOTPRINT



At Social Lens, we are dedicated to driving social impact on a global scale. We provide comprehensive philanthropy management services to clients worldwide, helping them optimise and scale their impact. Our clients come from a diverse range of backgrounds, including corporations, foundations, individual philanthropists, and non-profit organisations.

In India, we collaborate with a range of NGOs across urban, rural, remote, and grassroots areas to address pressing social issues. Our services extend beyond India, and we work with NGOs across Asia to drive positive change in the region.

We are proud of our footprint and the positive impact we have made in the communities we serve. Our commitment to social impact and sustainable development is reflected in our work with clients and partner organisations worldwide. Through our tailored and data-driven approach, we are working towards building a more just and equitable world.

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