

Abstract

In India, the estimated number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can fall anywhere between 300,000 to 8 million, the best educated guess being around 800,000. With over \$3 billion flowing into the voluntary sector every year, the development *business* (as it has become a business) has shifted to evaluation methods, solely focusing on quantitative measures, and almost entirely eliminating qualitative approaches to the development sector, ranging from small scale grassroots NGOs to large foundations.

Indicorps (<http://www.indicorps.org>), a US based non-profit which seeks to reconnect Indian youth with India through social service, has found the lack of a qualitative approach to be problematic in its efforts to partner with, and add value to, local NGOs. After studying the Indian NGO sector, and examining how to effectively work with volunteers, local organizations, and placement programs, this paper focuses on developing methods and other tools to assess whether an organization is doing *good work*, and whether or not they meet the criteria of Indicorps as a potential partner.

The final recommendation is usage of a developed survey (using primarily qualitative and some quantitative measures), evaluator guidelines (with respect to reports and observations), an evaluator bias survey, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to effectively manage expectations of all concerned parties: Indicorps, the Local Partner Organizations, the volunteers (Fellows), and any other vested parties.