

The Heller School of Social Policy and Management

Brandeis University

Developing a Qualitative Evaluation Survey
of Community Based NGOs in India

Submitted by

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Executive Summary

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.

Statement of Sustainable Development Problem

“Not one Indian will give one Rupee from their wallet or one minute of their time if they are not absolutely certain that it will be utilized without corruption and efficiently in the social service sector.” – Devesh Kapur.¹ Defining giving not just in the traditional sense of money, but also inclusive of in-kind resources, time and caring developed through human connection, there are two hypotheses: 1) people, particularly the diaspora made of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and People of Indian Origin (PIOs), do not want to or are unable to give to India, or 2) they do want to and are able to give to India; they simply do not have any faith that anything given will be used efficiently, in a reasonable time frame or in the manner in which it was represented for the donation.

The first theory is refuted by the fact that of the \$3.3 billion plus given to the voluntary sector, a significant portion is given by Indians living abroad.² Indicorps, my host organization, has identified one potential solution to help combat the problem outlined in the second hypothesis: a rating system, established by a credible third-party, who can be minimally biased by the NGOs. This third-party would give an honest assessment as to whether the NGO is doing *good work* (including transparency, accountability, and passion). The third-party would also assure that donations, whether in the form of time or money, will be used honestly and with the intention of the giver in a productive, effective manner. As of now, this type of evaluation, encompassing mostly qualitative and some quantitative measures, does not exist in India in a practical and executable manner. It should also reflect genuine concerns of the donor while assuring credibility with particular regard to this sector, as the donor may not be aware of certain pitfalls.

In addition to the lack of purity in this sector in general, perhaps the greatest problem that the NGO sector in India faces is the perception that it is corrupt. For these NGOs, perception, unfortunately as reflected above, is reality unless proven otherwise. The problem, which repeatedly has been encountered by Indicorps,³ is the lack of a credible third-party evaluation system of organizations working at the grassroots level in the non-profit sector in India, focusing on a legitimate qualitative metric, in addition to a quantitative one. During my Fellowship, the organizational requirement and goal was to create a valuable systematic survey, which uses various conventional and non-conventional inputs, and would be able to determine whether a local organization has synergetic qualities that allow it to be a suitable partner for Indicorps while ideally using a standard that other organizations and/or individuals around the world would find valuable.

In order to understand what the survey will determine, it is important to understand the core values of the primary beneficiary, Indicorps, and its mission. Indicorps has two main objectives.⁴ The first objective is to provide capable human capital to service-oriented grassroots organizations in India. Indicorps seeks to partner with an NGO and help transform that organization's vision into action, providing diverse resources of information and skills. Many NGOs are at sustenance or survival level; they spend their time focusing on the “immediate crises” that inevitably arise, and suffer from poor management structures, which provide greater help in the long term.

¹ Joint Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and Harvard University. October, 2002. In a meeting discussing credibility and evaluation of NGOs in India as well as the lack of giving.

² Prayas Institute of Juvenile Justice. Kanth, Amod K. “Voluntary Sector and Social Development Role of Indian Diaspora” 10 January 2003.

³ Interview with Anand Shah, September 2002 regarding operational year 2001-2002, Rhambau Malgi Prabhodini, Bhayander, Thane District, Mumbai, India.

⁴ Taken from <http://www.indicorps.org> and an Email from Director, Anand Shah on October 19th, 2002

Secondly, Indicorps simultaneously seeks to provide an opportunity for ten to fifteen Non-Resident Indians (NRIs – people who migrated from India) and/or People of Indian Origin (PIOs - second or more generations removed from India) a chance to learn about themselves, their heritage and India by engaging in social service through a Fellowship program. This serves to connect / reconnect the Indian diaspora living abroad with India, and makes them aware of the problems that face India and developing countries in general. All too often, the atmosphere that the Indian diaspora experiences is not the reality of India, but rather one that associates with people in the economic top one percent of the country. In the process, Indicorps hopes to add value to the local partner organization, the fellow, and in some way, help reverse the brain drain, a process that occurs when the most educated people often migrate to developed countries, usually for economic benefit. At the very least, Indicorps seeks to reconnect the Indians living abroad with the challenges that face India, and to foster a deeper understanding of the majority of the population which resides in villages and rural areas.

The survey, taking into account these two components of Indicorps' vision, must be certain that the local partner organization is benefiting, as well as a reconnection / transformational experience occurs for the Fellows. Essentially the survey must answer two distinct questions to determine compatibility:

- 1) Is the organization doing *good work*?
- 2) Is Indicorps compatible with this local organization for a project that adds positive and needed value?

While the second question is Indicorps specific (meaning, the metrics used will apply to the standards that Indicorps has for an individual organization), the first question is the core question that any donors, whether giving time, money or any other medium, would want answered. To find out if an organization was doing *good work*, it was necessary to research other attempts at broad NGO evaluation in India, to see what measures and reasons were employed to create and implement a process for determining its definition of *good work*.

Good work, according to the standards of Indicorps, consists of many different characteristics. The first priority that Indicorps seeks is to determine if the organization is practicing sustainable development. To determine this, we want to know if the local community is involved and to what degree. Is the NGO working to address the root causes of the problem, or are they temporarily fixing it? Is it feasible given the nature of the problem that the local organization can address the root causes? Are they empowering the affected community in the process? All of these questions are difficult to answer; however, Indicorps is insistent on partnering with organizations that consider these factors.

Another component according to Indicorps is understanding the vision of an organization, and whether or not it is holding to that vision. Does the organization also have a broader understanding of development issues at large, such as gender issues? Are they practicing a holistic view, or are they willing to practice a holistic view to sustainable overall development?

After the process of doing *good work* is analyzed, the next major component is understanding whether the desired results are occurring or not. How does this organization define success (or if it has even thought about it) and are they meeting that success? Who are the intended direct beneficiaries? Who are the indirect beneficiaries? How do the beneficiaries view the host organization? Is the quality of life improving for them?

Perhaps the criterion most difficult to qualify is whether or not the organization, or rather the founders or current directors have passion. I have found that this element is essential to the definition of Indicorps in determining *good work*, and should definitely be considered in any sort of evaluation of an NGO in India. By understanding what is the motivating factor in the creation of this NGO on a personal level, it disallows for the dehumanization of the people, and viewing development work simply as a job. Intention and motivation can signify the level of commitment, the likelihood of abandonment in the face of adversity, and the dedication to fight for the benefit of the community.

The research thus far⁵ reveals that there are only four major programs focused on systematically rating NGOs in India. They are IndianNGOs.com, the Credibility Alliance, Give Foundation (funded by ICICI Bank and Prudential), and Charities Aid Foundation India (CAF).⁶ A publication in 1998 by the Development Action Network attempted to rate NGOs all across India, but turned out to be a detailed listing service. Despite the contribution that each organization provides to the infrastructure of the NGO sector in India, all four procedures, outlined in further detail in the literature review, lack a qualitative approach that encompasses small and large organizations doing *good work* in India.

With this mind, I hope to do more than just create an NGO listing, like the fifteen-volume Development Initiatives Network publication in 1998, which was simply done by the oldest or most reputable local NGO in the area. (Incidentally, there was no verification or rating of the NGO in this survey.) My desire is to include a strong qualitative component to the survey. Ideally this information would have uses beyond the means by which Indicorps establishes future projects, but could also help address larger scale issues relating to NGO credibility. The Fellowship program was created by Indicorps because of the great difficulties it had in finding high-quality projects and organizations with whom they could partner in a practical, sustainable way. I hope that in this process of research and understanding, I can design a survey that simultaneously determines if the NGO is truly doing *good work* and if it meets the needs and expectations of both Indicorps and the experience they wish to provide to future Fellows. In addition, I hope that by documenting all my reasoning, the information, which will be made freely available, can help other organizations and individuals who feel this approach has merit. They can then determine whether or not some organizations in India meet certain or all of their requirements for partnership.

My second year project consists of doing research on the NGO sector in India and attempts to create a third-party evaluation for Indicorps in India. In order to successfully carry out research, the following factors will be considered:

- 1) The ideals and principles of Indicorps in two areas:
 - a. The experience and potential benefit for the local partner NGO.
 - b. The experience and potential benefit for the international fellow.
- 2) The workings of NGOs, focusing on a few, and what their needs and capacities are.
- 3) The practical limitations and biases of the evaluator.
- 4) The ability of NGOs to provide reliable information.
- 5) Methods by which that information can be obtained to gain accurate insight into the organization.
- 6) The creation of a survey that take into account:

⁵ I have met with over fifteen organizations that work in and out of the NGO sector.

⁶ Propoor.com is an organization based out of Singapore that does similar work.

- a. The components of an NGOs' functioning.
- b. The impact on the beneficiary community.

Literature Review

In India and much of the world, the term NGO has taken on a negative connotation.⁷ It is affiliated with corruption, bribery, cheating, embezzlement, a self-serving nature, moral bankruptcy and even criminality. While certainly it is not the rule and many organizations are creating positive change, the actions of a few, as often reflected in the media, have tainted the reputation of the entire NGO sector. This is particularly so with the absolute lack of accountability and enforcement whereupon organizations have been known to be corrupt and little or no action had been taken.

Ultimately, one of the greatest hindrances to the NGO sector in India is the massive amount of information that exists in such a disorganized fashion.⁸ Not only is the information disorganized, the credibility of the organizations, as well as the credibility of the agencies that gather information about these organizations, are questionable. The current need for Indicorps as well as many other community service organizations is a transparent, open-source system that can be used to evaluate and rate smaller-scale community service based NGOs, not solely on financial analysis, but additionally utilizing qualitative analysis.

Evaluation, according to Weiss, is defined as “systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as a means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy.” (1998: 4,5) It is imperative to understand the motivations and roles of the three key participants: myself, as the evaluator, my host organization, Indicorps, as the organization commissioning evaluations, and the potential Local Partner Organization, as the entity being evaluated. Ideally, my motivations and Indicorps' motivations should be unified, aside from the inherent biases that I will carry with me as an individual. To evaluate properly, I must first understand in depth the Indicorps Fellowship program and what it is trying to achieve. (1998: 51)

For this program, I have decided to take on a primarily qualitative approach, despite the advantages of a quantitative approach, such as the numerical value which allows comparison across a wide variety of areas and evaluations. Benefits of qualitative evaluation best meet the needs of Indicorps and include greater responsiveness to the program participant interests, the awareness of time and history, the ability to enter the program scene without preconceptions to learn what is happening, and flexibility to adapt to unplanned events. (1998: 253) Essentially this type of measure can help the evaluator gauge if the NGO has passion, and more importantly will help foster an environment to create the transformational experience for the Fellow.

This is further supported by Ian F. Shaw in Qualitative Evaluation, where he maintains that qualitative evaluation is justified when “evaluation issues are not clear in advance.” (1999: 14) The goal, the determination that must be made for Indicorps, beyond mundane criteria is one of *good work*, and how we can determine when *good work* will create the desired impact on the Fellow. For this reason, we are interested in the “observational data,” that qualitative approaches provide instead of the “analyzing outcomes,” as quantitative tends to provide. (1999: 180-181)

⁷ Kumar, Dinesh. “Is NGO a Dirty Word?” *Rashtriya Sahara*. (pp 62-64). Jul 1999.

⁸ <http://164.100.97.14/ngo/default.asp>

To understand the area in which I am working, I next had to understand the NGO sector⁹ in India. The terms non-profit, voluntary organization, and social service organizations (herein referred to as “NGO”) all have different meanings to different people, ranging from the legal definitions to personal preference and stigmas¹⁰ attached to the work that some do. In India, organizations that take on developmental work for the marginalized sectors of society are registered under several governmental provisions: The Societies Registration Act, the Indian Trust Act, and the Bombay Public Trust Act or Section 25 of the Companies Act.¹¹ Registrations in these areas vary a great deal in terms of procedures, time, tax-exempt status and cost; in addition, they are the only registrations that are recognized by the central government. Legitimacy from these registrations is more a function of technical non-profit status and one’s ability to sift through paperwork, rather than a measurement of the quality of work being done.

Religious organizations¹² are practically exempt from this registration, and many organizations operate outside of official registration procedures. In fact, the registration process has become so extensive, expensive and tedious that it actually deters organizations from registering in India. It takes between four and six months to complete registration, and a great deal of follow-up. So the result of this procedure¹¹ is that the actual statistics that the Indian government reports is nowhere near the actual number of NGOs in India. The official registered number of companies, as of March 21st, 1999 is 510,954. Of those, 17,942 were classified as ‘Community Social Services.’ An exact number of those that were exempted under Section 25 are unknown.¹³ The best estimate of NGOs, including political, in India is somewhere between 800,000 and 3,000,000, given by development workers.¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, in India, there have been a few relevant attempts to rate NGOs in India, and of the four major efforts, only one is actively conducting evaluations on a regular basis with a staff. There are a few others involved in this sector such as ProPoor.com, Dianet Initiatives, and even the Indian Government, however the latter two have been nothing more than an informational listing, often reporting data that is either outdated or completely inaccurate. I was able to visit a few organizations and verify the inconsistencies of the information compiled (as it has not been updated).¹⁵

IndianNGOs.com has catalogued several thousand NGOs thus far. Its criteria were quite extensive and well thought out. While the structure is extremely comprehensive, IndianNGOs.com is seeking to eliminate the corruption of organizations during the giving process. Its survey is quite extensive and lengthy; it seems primarily focused on the legal framework, organizational mission and structure, governance, programs and services, with the bulk focused on financial aspects as an indicator, rather than on the actual benefit to the poor.¹⁶ While any step in this direction is needed by the voluntary sector, the methods of IndianNGOs.com do not suit the needs of Indicorps. The for-profit

⁹ Defined as “those organizations that engender a corporatist identity among their members, that work within the existing political forms of the state, and do not facilitate a reinterpretation of the material basis for collective identity.” – Kamat, Sangeeta. 2002. *Development Hegemony*. New Delhi, India. Oxford University Press.

¹⁰ One organization, Kanavu, in Kerala refused to be called an NGO, they felt that it was a dirty word that demeaned the value of the service they did.

¹¹ “Draft Norms for Enhancing Credibility in the Voluntary Sector.” Credibility Alliance Members, British High Commission, USAID. Jenaz Printers. September 2002.

¹² Such as *mandirs* (temples), mosques, *gurudrawas*, churches, etc.

¹³ <http://www.indianngos.com/faqs.html> and Interviews with Sanjay Bapat, Director of IndianNGOs.com on September 4th, 2002.

¹⁴ Ibid and Meeting on October 24th, 2002 with Dr. Venkat Krishnan.

¹⁵ ProPoor.com is an organization based out of Singapore that does similar work.

¹⁶ <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a082.htm> - “By What Authority? The Legitimacy and Accountability of Non-governmental Organisations.” Hugo Slim. 10 March 2002

model it has developed hoped that philanthropists and corporations would actively seek out a credible rating system for which they were willing to pay in order to ensure that the donations were being used properly. For-profit motives do not immediately signify an insincere attempt; there are many advantages to them, such as fiscal sustainability. However, their credibility is more easily challenged as to whether the motivation stems from the need for a comprehensive system for the sector, or rather simply for-profit and corporate sustenance. In addition, as IndianNGOs.com is a for-profit company, it has abandoned actively seeking out organizations doing *good work* to create a rating system, and only continue evaluations when and if called upon by an organization or corporation.

Perhaps the greatest barrier is the process of gathering information and the requirement that the NGO must request the evaluation. Often, the NGOs doing the best work do not have the time to fill out lengthy surveys or the manpower or the resources to research the Internet for rating systems in which they can participate. This tends to veer away from the qualitative evaluation perspective and the determination if the NGO is doing *good work*. Finally it ignores a qualitative approach to determine if the local NGOs are effectively working with their communities.

The Give Foundation is the only organization I could find that was actively doing evaluations¹⁷ of NGOs in India. It is by far one of the better organized and seems to have the best overall process. However, upon meeting with them, I felt that the process which it is using is far too time consuming and impractical¹⁸ for the needs of Indicorps. As with IndianNGOs.com, The Give Foundation must also be contacted by an organization for an evaluation. It will then send out, by mail, a four page preliminary survey. After that is completed, the Foundation will then mail out the full survey, consisting of 16 pages of information, needed for assessment. While organizational visits are desired, it is often not possible. It provides assistance through a phone bank, and if possible a visit from one of three people who help them fill out their survey. I met the Director of the Foundation, the head of their research team, and the field workers. They said that the expected turn-around-time is about 2-3 months. In two years they have reached approximately 50 NGOs.¹⁹ While I think that the Foundation's methods are very well thought out, and perhaps suitable for them, the process does not actually determine anything more than what the organizations are willing to reveal about themselves. In addition, the Foundation requires that the organizations to be evaluated have internet access, full knowledge of English, a telephone as well as a great deal of free time to complete this process. These requirements act as hindrances to many organizations, especially those that are doing grassroots and rural work, as many lack an Internet connection. I feel that the Foundation did set practical requirements to avoid the bottleneck²⁰ that stops learning, also given its constraints, but I know that inaccurate information can easily pass into the survey process, and without visits by the evaluator, there is no possible way to obtain an accurate picture other than that given to you by the brochures which may have been developed by external marketing companies.

Another group, Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), directed by Matthew Cherian, uses a model developed internally, called the DIGI model of assessment. This evaluates an NGO based on four areas: **D**ocuments, **I**ncome profile, **G**overnance and **I**mpact. CAF randomly sampled 7500²¹ NGOs in

¹⁷ They will not evaluate an organization without consent; however, they strongly encourage organizations to apply for recognition by the Give Foundation.

¹⁸ Like the requirements of English fluency, as well as email access.

¹⁹ According to Dr. Krishnan, the founder, the best estimate he could find was an NGO sector of over 800,000 registered institutions, excluding religious NGOs.

²⁰ Roche, Chris. *Impact Assessment for Development Agencies: Learning to Value Change*. P. 255-259.

²¹ They initially surveyed approximately 5000 NGOs; however, as the response rate was low, they sent out another 2500 surveys to obtain a viable sample.

India out of a database of 25,000 NGOs. This was a listing of organizations derived from published sources, partner organizations lists as well as internal listings. Of the 7,500 surveyed, just over 1,300 returned responses. The survey looks at the key areas mentioned above, and evaluates organizations by giving an assigned weight to sub-categories in each of the areas. While extremely detailed, this survey is looking primarily at the structural sustainability of the organization, mainly in terms of income profile (for potential monetary donors), governance, professionalism of staff, and finally documentation (in decreasing order of weighting). I found that the published results were in fact devoid of true impact assessment in terms of the local beneficiaries and community.²² While quantitative measures are of great value, I feel that this process is not suitable for Indicorps for several reasons: 1) verification of data - human interaction is minimal to none, there is no visit to the organization – only a paper survey is being mailed to an organization with a physical address and 2) no strong qualitative component – there is no direct interaction with the beneficiaries of that NGO. There is also no understanding or documentation of the reasons the organization was founded, its motivations and its non-economic benefits in this survey.

The final group doing research on credibility ratings of NGOs is called the Credibility Alliance. It is actually a collaboration of over 500 NGOs who have met twice in the past two years in order to determine criteria established by local organizations as to what they deem as *good work* in the NGO sector. I applaud this participatory practice, lending itself to a higher degree of acceptance and potential sustainability. Who better to develop a system of credibility than the organizations being judged? However, in examining the draft guide that they produced last year, it amounted to a high volume of information, about ten pages of questions, inquiring into every aspect, regardless of relevance, of an NGO's operations. In addition, there will undoubtedly be a bias inherent in defining by what standards one should be judged by others. While any third party evaluation will consist of an assessment of another, this standard is set by organizations that have reached a certain higher benchmark in the development sector of India. While the nature of effective development work takes time, this organization, which in itself is a self-selecting process, naturally targets those NGOs who have the ability and internal strength already to help organize and attend a conference on best practices. Those NGOs which are doing work in some of the poorest areas of India are essentially at sustenance level, operating on a hand-to mouth basis, and cannot justify train fare to these meetings, let alone contributions to help sustain it.

Credibility Alliance established about a ten-page survey, the bare minimum requirement of information from an NGO.²³ However, it was purely seeking structural, financial, and governance information, and ignored the question as to whether or not they are doing *good work*. Are NGOs surveyed positively impacting the beneficiary community? The qualitative component was completely removed from the survey. In addition, the enormous body has not even agreed upon criteria to be used, subsequently resolving in a two year timetable from 2002 whereby they might agree and establish criteria from which they can give information on their recommended techniques. There is no plan to engage in an active evaluation process or to rate NGOs for public common good and the survey does not give any analysis nor does it give the reader any sense of the organization, if it is credible and doing *good work*.

²² CAF – Final Report on Validation – As submitted to Planning Commission, Government of India, Yojana Bhavan, New Delhi.

²³ Ideal gathering of information was close to 20 pages.

Credibility is derived from a combination of transparency and accountability.²⁴ However, in order to assess the needs for designing a survey, we must look beyond that. Credibility is also derived from an NGO's ability to fulfill its stated mission, which represents a need of that local community, in conjunction with practical limitations of its environment and the stakeholders with whom it works and partners. Therefore, to increase credibility, we must strive to reduce corruption through transparency²⁵ and accountability.

It is important to understand through the Indian development community how this perception of a lack of credibility developed and why it persists. Perhaps one of the greatest reasons that people are so skeptical of the Indian development scene is the fact that corruption takes place daily from the highest levels of government (Ex-Prime Minister Rao and arms deals) down to the lowest.²⁶ Another propagating factor is the thin line between accusatory politics and anti-corruption. Being such a hot topic these days, oftentimes politicians are quick to accuse in order to damage reputations. These are a few of many factors that contribute to the continuance of corruption in India. Political instability, underpaid civil servants, inequity caused by globalization, unresponsive state institutions, bureaucracy, poverty, unemployment, political violence and massive debt²⁷ all accumulate day after day in the psyche of people, and an unhealthy image stereotype is set. People would never even give one Rupee²⁸ if they felt it would not be used in a manner consistent with what they were promised, however, they would give lakhs²⁹ if they knew it was being used well and in an honest fashion. So these stereotypes can and must be countered with the organizations that are doing *good work* and helping people. Through the establishment of a credibility system, where the process is very clear, and methods available to all, overall transparency of the sector can be increased and the channels of partnering can be widened.

Learning Objective

General Objective:

My overall learning objective is to help Indicorps develop effective criteria by which they can judge a successful grassroots community-based NGO and subsequently apply this to potential future partners. Next, I seek to understand what criteria generally constitute a successful NGO of this magnitude and, in addition, to assess the suitability and feasibility given a variety of constraints for partnering up with Indicorps. Indicorps is providing support directly as well as indirectly through partners, other evaluation organizations and researchers.

Specific Objectives:

- To define what factors and elements create a successful community based NGO (in the Indian context).

²⁴ <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a082.htm> - "By What Authority? The Legitimacy and Accountability of Non-governmental Organisations." Hugo Slim. 10 March 2002

²⁵ "India Unfazed over IMF Corruption Index Move." Indrani Bagshi. *Economic Times*. August 26, 2000.

²⁶ India Abroad News Service, 14 May 2001.

²⁷ <http://www.globalcorruptionreport.org> "Global Corruption Report 2001 – Regional Report: South Asia." Aquil Shah. Pages 39-52.

²⁸ Joint Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and Harvard University. October, 2002. In a meeting discussing credibility and evaluation of NGOs in India as well as the lack of giving.

²⁹ 1 lakh is equal to 100,000

- To define what elements (beyond being a successful community based NGO) are required to be a potential partner organization for Indicorps.
- To identify and systemize criteria that can be used to assess whether organizations are suitable to partner with Indicorps for future development collaborations.
- To identify current attempts (private or public) to systematically rate development NGOs of this scale in India.
- To understand current quantitative and qualitative metrics being used to evaluate NGOs in India.
- To identify the relevant actors both inside and outside these NGOs.
- To create a credible dynamic list of potential development NGOs which can act as an open source resource for Indicorps or any other interested party as well as techniques used to create that list.
- To determine the present situation of small-scale community based NGOs.
- To analyze one or more successful NGOs that meet Indicorps' standards and attempt to derive what elements make it suitable for partnership, and in the process create a system by which future organizations can be evaluated.

In pursuit of these objectives, I seek to create a concise yet effective survey that primarily takes into account a qualitative as well as quantitative measure. My main goal is to create a systematic survey that can essentially define for Indicorps what is important in organizations as per their principles and standards, as well as in seeking out a suitable partner. In pursuit of defining what *good work* is to Indicorps, I hope that the metrics used provide value in the assessment of NGOs in India in general, and this system, when all methodologies, the background of the evaluator, and any other relevant factors are disclosed. The determination of *good work* should be applicable outside the confines of Indicorps' needs; it should be beneficial to any organization and/or individual seeking to give to NGOs in India (money, time, or any other medium). The survey should eliminate concerns of doubt stemming from corruption, accountability, or transparency, as well as the quality of their work, and the impact upon the beneficiary community.

As Indicorps uses these standards to determine the *good work* of an organization, many parties can utilize these standards. The second component, international volunteer suitability and compatibility, while specific to Indicorps, can be of value to organizations that attempt to place international volunteers, both in India and outside of India. While this measure is specifically tailored to Indicorps, it can at the very least serve as a base from which organizations can begin to understand the complexities of volunteer placement, and how to address them.

Due to the lack of a system, designed for finding *good work* in particular, this survey can, at a minimum, help Indicorps standardize a process that can find future partners and at most, can serve as a valuable benchmark for contributors of social service in India. By employing a qualitative as well as a quantitative measure, the survey can potentially re-humanize development in India, beyond the number crunching that many monetary donors request. By doing development as if people mattered, beyond the value of capacity building or reconstruction, a bridge can be formed between the donor (of time or money) and the recipient during the process of development; ultimately, by true giving, the term beneficiary is redefined: a definition that includes both the giver and the receiver.

Methods

Host: Indicorps, a registered non-profit under Indify, has agreed to host my second year work.

Field Advisor: Anand Shah, Founder and Executive Director of Indicorps.

Indicorps (<http://www.indicorps.org>), beginning field operations in 2001, is a new, US-based non-profit organization that offers one-year Fellowships to people of Indian origin to work on specific developmental projects in India. Indicorps' fellowships are designed to be unique transformational experiences, emphasizing both personal growth and international development. Fellows must have a college degree and apply specifically to projects of their interests. Selected Fellows are given the individual responsibility to execute and complete projects that are created/defined by local grassroots development experts.

Fellows are accountable to Indicorps as well as the Indian service organizations that are participating. Indicorps visits all projects on a regular basis to measure progress and assist Fellows with logistical, practical, and moral support. In addition, fellows participate in a one-month orientation program and connect throughout the year through bi-monthly retreats.

Indicorps projects are unique in nature and change from year to year based on the needs of local partner organizations. Past and current projects include but are not limited to helping local organizations with administrative processes, collecting data to catalog program progress and build transparency, piloting small-scale agricultural experiments, training local artisans with business acumen, implementing sanitation initiatives, educating children with basic computer skills, and designing public health education programs.

According to Indicorps and the NGO community, the ability to discern credible legitimate development NGOs in India is extremely difficult and time intensive. Consequently, every effort is made by Indicorps to keep the level of quality high. The ultimate desire is to employ methods that would allow Indicorps to systemize or at least partially systemize the means by which it can rate NGOs for potential future partnership, examining a multitude of factors. The means by which Indicorps attained its initial Fellowship projects required time intensive methods and repeated visits to the potential sites. While this method certainly assures the highest level of quality, ultimately, it is impractical and unsustainable to carry out such intense levels of research, despite the need for quality control.

Given the mission of Indicorps, it is imperative that a systematic metric be designed to help expedite the process of NGO partner selection without sacrificing quality. Every year at least ten to fifteen projects must be identified and evaluated in terms of quality of service, credibility and project potential with Indicorps. This process must be completed each year by the end of January or mid-February so applicants for the following year can apply within the application timetable (notification by April).

My role is to help create and build Indicorps. Specifically, I help the organization search for projects by systematically evaluating organizations across various sections of India's development spectrum through a primarily qualitative process. India lacks a high quality rating system for non-profits that is able to equally identify small and large organizations – most are self-selective for organizations that already have world-class financial and management systems. I have researched organizations and methods across India to develop a credible third-party evaluation system that provides useful information about the NGO sector as well as future project opportunities for Indicorps.

My preparation for this role was rather intensive. Firstly, Indicorps' training program helps by not only giving content but also contextualizing the work that I will be doing. The training program is a rigorous month of local language training, followed by daily three-hour lectures given by relevant development practitioners and two-hour daily academic discussions based on thought-provoking articles. There is a nine hundred page reader, which is mandatory. It contains articles gathered from both sides of an issue from: An Overview of Development; The History of India before 1947; the History after 1947; Current Tensions in India; Social Development; Rural Development; Women and Society; and Democracy and Globalization. Each of these areas has over 100 pages of articles from opposing viewpoints in an attempt to help us contextualize the issues that we will be facing, and in an attempt to understand the communities with which we will be working.

After the orientation, I spent several weeks with Manav Sadhna, considered an ideal NGO partner organization for Indicorps.³⁰ I studied its means of operation, its goals, how it meets them, its standard of success and other criteria as well. I observed Manav Sadhna in an attempt to understand what elements make this NGO successful. I was able to extract certain characteristics which indicate *good work* case specific to Indicorps, being sure to incorporate more than goal-accomplishing as the determinant of success, and in addition include concepts such as fulfilling the role of a community-based grassroots organization as well as other criteria.

I had the opportunity to work with Devesh Kapur, a joint professor from Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and Harvard University, Boston who was doing research on NGO credibility and employing some evaluation techniques. After meeting with him, however, I learned that his area of focus is the Indian diaspora, and he is conducting a large study, one component of which is given by the diaspora at large back to India. While the meetings with him were fruitful in many ways, in terms of insight into the evaluation field, unfortunately, my interactions with Devesh Kapur did not yield an insight into the evaluation side of NGOs in India. This however was easily remedied, as I was able to gain this perspective from people such as Venkat Krishnan of the Give Foundation, Mathew Cherian of Charities Aid Focus India and Sanjay Bapat of IndianNGOs.com.

I then traveled to many places in India and visited organizations in an attempt to better understand alternative methods and practical techniques that can be used in truly dissecting an organization. By meeting with these organizations face-to-face, I gained a strong understanding of how they treat evaluators and first-hand knowledge of what to expect in my attempt to practically rate NGOs in the field. I found that many NGOs were quite receptive; however, there was a fair share that saw us as an international organization, whose only potential value was in the dollars we could provide.

Another component, for which I did not originally plan, was the role of troubleshooting present Indicorps projects. This experience led me to learn about the dynamics between international volunteers and local organizations and the complexities that can arise. It was necessary for me to experience this component first-hand, and I was able to extract useful criteria to help prepare the organization and the fellow to symbiotically work in development. I spent time talking to the local NGO head as well as the fellow on the project, and was able to learn a great deal about the necessity for expectations management. On some level, there was a miscommunication initially, and the result was dissatisfaction on both sides. My role was to negotiate and help rectify the situation, as it is the

³⁰ This year (2002-2003), Indicorps has placed five of nine Fellows with Manav Sadhna in various projects from Ahmedabad, Gujarat to Ludiya, Kachchh Region, Gujarat. On this fact and in discussions with Indicorps staff, it is safe to derive certain criteria from Manav Sadhna to be used by Indicorps in our systemization of the process.

mission of Indicorps to provide continuous support throughout the year, and make sure that progress is being achieved in a manner that is suitable to both the fellow and the organizations. After some time, I was able to learn a great deal, as well as derive information useful to the creation of the survey and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The above component was integral in the formation of the second part of the survey – determining whether or not the organization was a suitable partner for Indicorps. After the initial assessment as to whether the organization is doing *good work*, we must then consider factors such as if Indicorps can actually add value to this organization through the placement of an international fellow. To do this, we must understand the goals of the organization, both long and short term, as well as what role we can play in helping them achieve these goals. Because we will always ask the organizations if they need a volunteer, many times they will say “yes,” knowing that having someone familiar with computers and English skills can be an enormous help in grant writing, or general marketing of their NGO. For this reason, it is necessary to include both a needs and value assessment approach in designing a project.³¹

Indicorps must also ensure that as much as possible, an atmosphere is provided that can induce a transformational experience for the fellow. While this can never be guaranteed, as it is dependent on many factors ranging from the expectation and attitude of the fellow to the mentality of the local people, Indicorps wants as much as possible to ensure the success of the experience.

Another necessity for Indicorps’ compatibility includes several components delineated in a Memorandum of Understanding. This is vital to any fellowship, as it outlines the expectation of the local partner organization by both Indicorps and the fellow. The MoU requires commitment from the local organization to ensure true partnership in this process, ranging from basic food and lodging, to granting leave for bimonthly retreats. It ensures that all parties (the fellow, the local partner organization and Indicorps) have an understanding beforehand of what exactly the expectations are. Included in the MoU is constant communication on the part of the fellow and the local organization, so if needed, Indicorps can intervene to prevent the escalation and build up of any problems. Acceptance of these terms is necessary for partnership with Indicorps, and takes the form of the separate MoU document. It is not included in the survey.

The final requirement of Indicorps is to understand the nature of both political and religious affiliations of the organizations in India. Most organizations in India have some sort of religious or political affiliation; the questions that Indicorps seeks to discover are:

- 1) Do they have a distinctive religious or political overtone?
- 2) If any religious or political affiliation exists, to what degree is the affiliation and how does it influence their work?
- 3) Do they preach religion or politics in their work with the beneficiary community, or propagate conversion?

From this point, presently and until August 2003, I will be conducting further analysis of potential partners for Indicorps, while solidifying my systemization to analyze organizations in India. I

³¹ For example, the organization *Life*, based in Rajkot Gujarat, was adamant on an Indicorps fellow. However, after analysis and evaluation, it was obvious that the transformational experience would be lacking for the fellow, thus not fulfilling a key requirement of Indicorps. In addition, the NGO was amazingly well-run, and an Indicorps fellow would serve as nothing more than as a marketing administrator.

am confident that with this information, which will be an open source to anyone who requests it, Indicorps will be useful in evaluating local organizations from a third-party perspective.

- I will collect information about potential organizations with which Indicorps has established formal relationships. In addition, many organizations have approached Indicorps about potential future partnerships.
- I will conduct an in-depth study of at least one organization through interviews, observations and research as to what makes this organization successful by the Indicorps standard.
- I will make observations as it relates to my future analysis of NGOs. I hope to learn much of the *local language* and mannerisms of NGOs during this time. I feel it is a unique opportunity to gain exposure to the NGO sector in an unofficial capacity, while simultaneously making contacts and seeing first hand potential future partner organizations.
- I will then make formal criteria by which I can judge potential partner organizations for Indicorps.
- Using these criteria, I will then travel and meet organizations; and, either in written form or orally, I will begin to implement my evaluation and assess their suitability to potentially work with Indicorps. I hope to establish my criteria in a clear and concise manner so that others can use it and understand how it was developed.

There were many stages through which this paper evolved, below is a schedule of those stages:

- Stage 1: Adjusting through orientation in India (through Indicorps), language training, historical context, etc.
- Stage 2: Researching the development sector in India in a general sense
- Stage 3: Studying Manav Sadhna, what characteristics can be extracted for this survey (for part one of qualitative)
- Stage 4: Interacting and contacting organizations in India doing evaluation, specific research in this area
- Stage 5: Developing initial survey
- Stage 6: Traveling through various parts of India (Kerala, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu) and experiencing the development sector in India. Also reworking the survey based on practicality of questions, and need for information as well as ability to get information from organizations. Presenting Indicorps to organizations, understanding openness to concept of human capital model of Indicorps.
- Stage 7: Understanding international volunteer components, troubleshooting existing projects, problem solving with local NGOs and Fellows in India.
- Stage 8: Reworking of survey. Adding international volunteer compatibility and Indicorps requirements to survey.
- Stage 9: Creating MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with organizations, clarifying role of Indicorps, and expectations of Indicorps with local partner organizations in a formalized process.
- Stage 10: Evaluating NGOs and designing projects (through reference) in Pune, Maharashtra and Rajkot, Gujarat.
- Stage 12: Reworking and finalization of survey.

During the assembly of my work, through research and interaction, there were many factors that created or served as obstacles or limitations. The greatest difficulty that I encountered was during the collection of legitimate research. People in all of the organizations that I met with were very quick

to throw numbers around in terms of the NGO sector in India, as well as percentages that virtually seemed concocted; however, upon probing, almost none of the information was verifiable. Initially, simply understanding the NGO environment in India was a challenge; between the various registrations and differing local procedures, there was no simple definition. From religious organizations to animal rights, there is very little documentation in India done by any official source. Government-gathered figures are atrociously inaccurate, and the only other attempts are all independently undertaken by various groups in the NGO sector itself.

Another limitation was time itself. Ideally, I would have been able to more comprehensively test the survey designed, however a great deal of time was spent in understanding the sector and the requirements of Indicorps in order to effectively create and implement a survey. At the time of writing this paper, there will be further testing, as this survey will only serve as a base that will constantly change to adapt to the needs of Indicorps, which will undoubtedly change as the organization grows. Essentially this compilation of work is only the beginning, and stages 12 through 14 will be forever looped in a cycle, which will allow the organization to grow and adapt to the sector, and to continue to meet the ever-changing needs of this sector. Given this time constraint, it is impossible geographically to test this survey in all areas of India; however, I feel that it can be used as is with minimum changes for accurate results.

Presentation

Having visited over thirty-five organizations³² across India as a fellow with Indicorps, I have learned a great deal as to the types of information that organizations are willing to give, as well as the types of information needed to determine whether or not the organization is doing *good work* and is a suitable partner for Indicorps. The determination of *good work* is obviously subjective, however there are certain questions that can be asked which can help outline some fundamental approaches and philosophies. As with any relationship, ultimately the visions of partner organizations must be similar in approach, and the overall objectives must be the same in order to maximize efficiency and manage expectations.

In NGO assessment and evaluation specific to India and Indicorps, I have found that by including certain components, the survey can have value for Indicorps as well as other organizations and individuals who are involved in this sector. Below are the four main components to the survey: one quantitative, two qualitative and one general. The quantitative component is meant to give a basis for comparison to other organizations regardless of the evaluator, and examine primarily financial data. The two qualitative components attempt to measure Indicorps specific requirements as mentioned earlier. The first qualitative component is a determination of whether or not the organization is doing *good work*, and the second is how compatible the organization is with Indicorps in terms of placement of a fellow. The final component is comprised of general information about the NGO, mostly for internal tracking and documentation purposes. Despite the separation of these questions into various components, it is important to note that there is some overlap, and certain parts of the survey can indeed serve as indicators for other parts.

The Quantitative Component:³³

³² See Appendix 1. I spent anywhere from a day to a month with these organizations.

³³ See Appendix 2.

The quantitative component of the survey asks for inputs in three main areas: structure, finance and quantified impact. The first area, organizational structure, is an attempt to understand the bureaucracy that may or may not exist in the organization, and the organizational structure of the NGO. It is also included to assess how many people are involved in the administration, operations, and other areas of the NGO. It asks for how many administrators, board members, NGO workers, volunteers and female staff members there are in the NGO. The last indicator also gives insight into the progressive nature of the NGO, as India is a patriarchal-structured society. However, it is important to consider many factors such as the nature of the work and the acceptance by the local community with respect to gender.

For example while visiting RASTA, an NGO in Kerala, and AMBA, an NGO in Gujarat, they preferred to employ women over men to help form the self-help groups, as gender dynamics warranted in that situation. The local women would not be as forthcoming in the presence of a man as they would with a woman, and progress would be hampered. Similarly in a reverse dynamic, an NGO working with voluntary sterilization programs may require that male social workers conduct informational sessions and other activities. Development work must maintain a fine balance between adapting to the customs and traditions with the local community working towards the advancement of the entire community, factors which clash from time to time.

The second area, finance, is included to compile comparable indicators across organizations about the finances and ratios that can give an understanding of certain aspects of the organization. This component of the survey considers how much the staff is paid (in full and as a percentage of income and expenditure), the high and low salaries, total income, total expenditure, and the total money spent on beneficiaries. These numbers can help the evaluator gain an understanding into the complexities of finance in the NGO sector, and diffuse some of the gray areas of expenditure. It helps determine the overhead cost at which the NGO operates and how much money is directly applied to the beneficiaries, how much to salaries, and what overall percentage of money coming in never goes out to its intent. For Indicorps, this has a great deal of value in working with an organization that values capital, and seeks to help people more than to function as a self-sustaining mechanism. Indicorps is looking for organizations whose main focus is the beneficiary, and not its own staff. With that priority, however, it is important to understand that a particularly high inflow to the organization followed by a low outflow to the beneficiary may not be a sign of corruption, but rather expansion or one-time expenses. The largest expense usually is payroll for an organization, and this is not necessarily an indication that they are unfit for partnering with Indicorps. However, it is important to have an in-depth understanding the nature of the work and labor requirements; all too often I have seen NGOs which generate jobs for local community members more out of compassion than necessity. Examining the high and low salaries, it also gives insight into how the NGO treats its staff and the potential power dynamics that may play out due to disparity of income.

The final area under the quantitative section is a mild assessment of quantified impact. It takes into account the total number of beneficiaries, the total number of programs, and total number of success cases, as defined by the organization. It is very difficult to measure impact by numbers alone, however, a relative measure such as self-defined success can help in creating a metric. Even this is difficult to gauge, though, as exemplified by two schools that I visited, Eklavya Foundation and Sister Nivedita Trust. These organizations have no formal tracking systems, and the impact of education for these small scale educational institutions is quite difficult to measure; however, by allowing them to define their success cases, they can give some sort relative assessment of their work. Realistically, most NGOs will probably only be able to estimate the approximate number of success stories coming

out of their work. Looking at the ratio of success stories to total beneficiaries can provide a measure of success which can be compared.

Qualitative Component:

The aspect of the survey is the qualitative metric, a perspective which is lacking from every relevant evaluation system that I could find in India.³⁴ This part of the survey has about twenty general questions, and is divided into two parts. The first component looks to find out if the organization is doing *good work*, the second part is directed at whether or not they are suitable partners for Indicorps.

Good Work:³⁵

The first two questions ask about the history of the organization and who founded it. Often, this provides insight as to the organization's original intent, and gives the evaluator a sense of whether certain ideologies guide the organization, and if they are staying true to the original intent. These questions lead up to the most important question of the qualitative survey: "*What motivates [the head of the organization],*" and "*Why [is that person] doing this work?*" The answer will reveal a great deal about the intentions of the organization, and in a sense, rationalize work that society considers as second-rate. It is meant to explore the character and potential of the founder or executive officer in the organization. This has value for many reasons. Firstly, it helps Indicorps understand the vision of the individuals that comprise the organization, thus the guiding vision of the organization. Next, it allows for a deeper understanding of the transformational experience that Indicorps seeks for the fellow to experience. The attitude and motivations of the founder or executive director can serve as inspiration or disincentive for the fellow. It can reflect an attitude willing to overcome adversity, or one that will succumb to a system of corruption. It will undoubtedly trickle down to different levels of the NGO. This has been most evident at Manav Sadhna, an NGO in Ahmedabad with whom I spent significant time. In an interview with Mr. Viren Joshi,³⁶ the main benefit of the NGO was finding the balance between *sewa*³⁷ and *sadhna*.³⁸ With this faith in the work they are doing, Manav Sadhna has achieved a philosophy and mentality that trickles down to its first tier of 44 volunteers. The founders of the organization treat the work at Manav Sadhna as personal growth work, not service. This generates a great deal of inspiration among the community, and provides for truly transformational work.

In India, this can be the difference between a successful NGO and one that is failing. Clarity of vision is important, but in difficult times and in the face of adversity, motivational and inspirational leadership can sustain an NGO. The NGO sector in India is considered to be the work of people who cannot get real jobs. In many segments of the population, it is not seen as service to man, but rather as disservice to self and family. In a world where worth is measured by the size of the paycheck, development work is almost worthless. The volunteer sector, which is created strictly from the lack of government effectiveness, is looked down upon by many as selfless begging. This adds additional pressures to very taxing work; the lack of general respect can make every day a battle and it is imperative to understand why this person has chosen this daily struggle.

³⁴ An organization, The Share and Care Foundation, USA, is using only a qualitative approach to evaluate NGOs; however, there is no formal process. In fact, upon interviewing Mr. Harid Patel, one of the founders of Share and Care, it was revealed that each evaluator uses his own judgment, and nothing consistent or formal is used, or written up after the fact.

³⁵ See Appendix 3.

³⁶ Ahmedabad, Gujarat. April 7th, 2003. Mr. Joshi is co-director / founder of Manav Sadhna.

³⁷ *Sewa* loosely translates to service. Harding, Elizabeth U. 1998. Kali: The Black Goddess of Dakshineswar. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidaas Publishers Private.

³⁸ *Sadhna* is defined as worship, meditation, spiritual discipline. Ibid.

As mentioned earlier, the vision of the organization, and the clarity of that vision are also essential. It is important to understand from the organization how they define success, how they measure it, and if they have reached that point. The value of this is derived in several areas. Most importantly, it reveals the efficiency with which devoted resources to this organization will be used and speaks to sustainability. By understanding the organization's goals, we can see if it successfully executes them, and determine their sense of focus. It provides comfort that the organization will try to be as efficient as possible, and have a specific objectives and uses for both human and monetary capital. This is revealed by the questions, "*How do you define success?*" and "*Who does your organization work with and why is your focus this problem?*" Success is defined at Manav Sadhna by the local community. Manav Sadhna serves as an instrument to help the community address their needs. While Manav Sadhna certainly tries to guide the community to act in its best interest, Mr. Joshi feels that they are successful with room for improvement, primarily because most of the projects are self run, and the capacity of the local community has been developed as much as possible to make this so. Manav Sadhna is successful because it has the ability to adapt to whatever the current needs of the community are. This flexibility makes the work sustainable.

The next survey question, "*What are your sources of funding?*" is aimed at understanding those that have a vested interest in the organization and affiliations, through funding. This question addresses fiscal sustainability of the organization and ability to accommodate a fellow. Also, oftentimes donors attempt to influence and even control and guide the organization through funding. It is important to know other vested parties with the organization, and how that will potentially play a role in a placed fellow's experience. In addition, strong affiliations may be political or religious in nature, which is in direct conflict with Indicorps' policy.

Questions eight and nine, "*What is the structure of your organization?*" and "*Who works for you?*" are focused on understanding the structure of the organization and how decisions are made. They seek to understand the dynamics or relationships and the decision-making bodies of the organization. The questions look for who is on staff at the organization: Are they former beneficiaries who have been empowered? Or are they the same people since inception of the organization? Is there sustainability after the founder or current executive trustee leaves? Is the vision discussed earlier evident in other potential successors?

This leads up to the last question about the organization and if they are doing *good work*: "*What is the root cause of the problem you are dealing with? Are you addressing this?*" Essentially, this question is asking if they understand sustainable development, and how they are attempting to incorporate this into their work. It also gives perspective as to the self-critical nature of the organization. Are they aware of shortcomings in their ability to address problems in the local community? In addition, it can give insight into how they prioritize their problems. There is a large spectrum of organizations in India dealing with a wide variety of problems; however, while it may not always be possible to practice sustainable development, such as in times of crisis, the awareness is a huge step in this sector. At Manav Sadhna, the root cause is to change the attitude of society, both in themselves as people and the communities in need of capacity building. He sees Manav Sadhna primarily as an instrument for self-growth and long-term sustainable change in all parts of society.

Indicorps Compatible:³⁹

The next series of questions, which are part of the qualitative component of the survey, are Indicorps specific, meaning they are directed at compatibility with the guidelines and principles of Indicorps. The expectations of Indicorps are outlined in a well-defined Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)⁴⁰; however, there are certain elements about the organization which must be clarified through the processes of evaluation and assessment.

One of the two main principles of Indicorps is to add value to the organization while helping them achieve their long-term goals. Indicorps seeks to do this effectively by engaging the fellow in activities that the partner organization has expressed interest in pursuing. Oftentimes, organizations are so focused on survival, that long-term thinking is almost impossible. In an attempt to generate a needs-assessment of sorts, the first question of the survey asks, “*Where would you like to be in one, five and ten years?*” This will help Indicorps determine if there are tangible ways in which a fellow can help them achieve these goals, as stated in question number two. Indicorps will not necessarily send a fellow solely based on the fact that it has been deemed a good organization; it is also of the utmost importance that the fellow can add value to the organization in a constructive and efficient manner.

The next two questions, “*How can an Indicorps Fellow help you get there [to your goals]?*” and “*What do you think the fellow will gain from this experience?*” seek to determine how the organization understands the second component of the Indicorps philosophy: the transformational experience of the fellow. It is important for the NGOs to understand this, as they will create the environment that can best foster this piece of the program. If the NGOs are only focused on what they will get out the relationship, it is no longer a partnership, and it has become a donor-beneficiary relationship, which is unhealthy for all parties involved.

The next three questions are an attempt to understand one key element of the NGO: “*Do you have religious/political/other affiliations?*” I attempt to determine this information by directly asking, as well as understanding with which other NGOs they affiliate. It is common for NGOs in India to have some sort of affiliation, usually religious; however, it is the degree to which it influences their work that is the concern of Indicorps. Are they actively conducting conversions? Are they propagating a certain political party or a certain specific religion to their beneficiaries? If so, Indicorps is not ready or willing to partner with these organizations. These criteria are very difficult to assess because this area is so unclearly defined. When I first started, my initial thinking was simple: no religious or political affiliations, in line with Indicorps’ own philosophies. However, practically speaking, it is virtually impossible to avoid in development work in India. In addition, affiliations help Indicorps understand the network that the NGO has formed, and how well it is integrated into its sector. Are they learning and spreading best practices for the good of the community and country?

In addition we ask, “*Can you provide the fellow with simple housing and food?*” This question is not meant to alleviate pressure off of Indicorps, or to squeeze money out of the NGO. Rather, it is meant to make the NGO a partner in the process. The same way that Indicorps asks its fellows to pay their airfare, health costs, and incidentals, Indicorps seeks to make stakeholders out of all three parties: the local NGO, the fellow and Indicorps. This will help foster a healthy relationship. The NGO must be willing to commit resources of some sort to the fellow, and that commitment must be sincere. This is essential to gauging the level of commitment and the sincerity of the NGO. In addition, they are

³⁹ See Appendix 4.

⁴⁰ See Appendix 9.

asked to be a part of the orientation process, and help with the application process as well. Indicorps asks that the NGO make an investment of time and money (in the form of resources). This question has served as a good indicator: negative responses are an indication that the NGO is not serious, or perhaps they do not see a fellow bringing any added value. In rare circumstances it is a direct result of financial inability; however, it is mentioned to the organization that Indicorps will assist if necessary in obtaining project related funds.

The last questions, “*Have you ever had international volunteers? In what capacity? What did you (dis)like?*” attempt to learn more about the role of the international volunteers sector in India, as it is one of three primary variables that defines the Indicorps equation. Another reason behind this question is to assess how much preparation will be needed for both the volunteer and the local partner organization in the placement of a fellow. Stereotypes on both sides are rampant, and it is important to effectively manage expectations on both sides to prevent frustration and miscommunication. For example, some NGOs visited had volunteer coordination centers while others had never had a volunteer before, be they domestic or international. It is important that the local partner organization knows its responsibilities and has clear expectations of the fellow, and vice versa. While this is not reason to accept or reject the organization, it is very useful to know in preparation for the project design.

General Information Component:⁴¹

The final component of the survey is general information. It asks for the organization’s name and contact information. This can be obtained from literature given by the organization and is done for internal tracking purposes. There are two important questions here: “*How did we find out about this organization?*” and “*Do they have registrations?*” While it is not an Indicorps requirement that the organization have filed a registration, it is helpful to know if it has, or the reasons that it has not, as it is the commonly accepted practice and one of few means of formal recognition in India. If an organization has not registered, it is important to investigate the likelihood of fraud. The former question gives insight into a person who consistently has good or bad recommendations in terms of Indicorps standards, and can help in tracking good organizations. Other information ranges from functional language spoken to name to areas of concentration of work, as mentioned earlier, primarily for internal documentation.

Other Relevant Evaluation Tools:

Observations / Necessary Interactions Component:⁴²

Included in the main survey, this section is not necessarily meant to be filled out by the evaluator, but rather to serve as a guide, which he or she can use, and it will ultimately help in the formation of a recommendation. The first guideline is to “*interact with beneficiaries*” as much as possible. Next, significant observations should be noted. In addition, observations and investigation into the “*quality of life before NGO intervention*” and “*quality of life after NGO intervention*” can provide valuable insight in to the functioning of the NGO, and can also serve as an informal assessment of their impact. The final inquiry is directed at observing, “*How do they treat their staff/volunteers/beneficiaries?*” This observation must be taken in the local and Indian contact, as it

⁴¹ See Appendix 5.

⁴² See Appendix 6.

may differ from Western perceptions of treating people; however, this may be one of the best ways to determine how they will treat an international volunteer and their respect for humanity in general.

By interacting with beneficiaries at the Pune Blind Men's Association, AMBA, Sister Nivedita Trust, and many other organizations, it was obvious that the dedication and spirit of social work trickled down in the organization, and in fact, many of the participants acted like partners with these organizations rather than beneficiaries.

The value in attempting these practices and observations has made itself apparent in practice. For example, in Kerala, several of the organization preached the lessons of dignity and human value, yet the director was ordering the children beneficiaries around to do menial tasks around the school. While there are differences to be acknowledged in the Indian context of expectations of beneficiaries, it was indeed excessive, and there was no reason to believe that volunteer treatment would be any different.

Structured Report:⁴³

In addition to the survey, it is important that the evaluator include a report. This contributes to overall sustainability, particularly if the evaluator is a temporary staff member of Indicorps, or, as I am, a fellow whose term ends after one year. Included in the main survey are broad guidelines or the structured report. It also includes some logistical information.

The report should be as detailed as possible, outlining every place visited, who was present, and the interactions and with the NGO. These details can help another Indicorps staff member relive the experience and truly get a sense of the NGO. Whether or not Indicorps partners with the organization, a detailed report will contribute to the sustainability and documentation that will be made available to relevant parties. It should include a summary and observations about the people and places. In addition the report should contain a section on potential areas for collaboration between the NGO and Indicorps, regardless of whether or not it results in a Fellowship. For example, when visiting the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) in Ahmedabad, it became clear that while a fellowship would not be suitable (in terms of the transformational experience) the resource sharing of CEE and their network could be of enormous benefit to Indicorps. This should be documented and noted properly.

A final component of the structured report is the recommendations section. The evaluator should be taking into account all the requirements of Indicorps and using the survey information for this report. It should be looking for potential fellow opportunities, information exchanges, networking, benefit to the local organization, transformational experiences and the ever-important *good work*. The recommendations section should be a defined course of action with proper reasoning, so that someone with no background on the organization should understand the inherent advantages and disadvantages in pursuing the course of action recommended in this report. For example, while visiting the organization LIFE in Rajkot, Gujarat, it became clear that the organization was not suited for a fellow (in terms of transformational experience and structure) however, it also became clear that LIFE could serve as a resource for many other NGOs and also potentially work with other programs of Indicorps, such as SeniorCorps and the volunteer linkage program.

⁴³ See Appendix 7.

Evaluator Bias Survey:⁴⁴

Perhaps one of the most important factors in giving value to a qualitative survey is a proper understanding of the person who is conducting the survey. Since qualitative evaluations encompass a judgment, one that is inherently biased by personal views and opinions, it is imperative that the process be transparent, to make clear, as much as possible all that is relevant regarding the evaluator.

As a result, I have designed a survey that Indicorps should administer to each of the evaluators conducting surveys for it. The Evaluator Bias Survey consists of approximately 10 questions. The first few are concerned with the name, age and gender of the evaluator. The next two ask about background, intending to learn about the evaluator's educational background, and relevant experience with this type of work. While I do not feel that prior evaluation experience is necessary, it can be helpful and is important to be aware of when reading evaluations. This environment and history which each evaluator has experienced undoubtedly will influence their opinion, and credibility among the general public.

In addition, components examining religious and political involvement and affiliation are necessary. With most NGOs in India having some sort of affiliation, these questions may serve as a key indicator in revealing deep-rooted biases, which can obviously influence a report and recommendation. The next question asks about any experience with community development in any form. This will help an outside party understand what the evaluator holds as important mechanisms in development. This question, coupled with the last, "*Describe your perceptions of the NGO community in India*" are very useful in understanding the mentality that the evaluator has and that will play a role in the evaluations. Both of these questions should be asked before evaluation work commences (or soon after) and again at the completion of the term. It is important to understand the changing attitude and perception of the evaluator.

Memorandum of Understanding:⁴⁵

The final component in successfully choosing and working with Local Partner Organizations is a **Memorandum of Understanding**. Indicorps at first felt that an MoU was not necessary, and the personal relationships that it develops with other NGOs is a unique characteristic. However, after some present project difficulties and miscommunications, it became apparent that on several main key points, that it can serve as a means to partner the NGO with Indicorps, as well as help all parties understand expectations of each other.

The MoU essentially addressed several key areas such as allowances for retreats for the fellows, participation in Orientation of the local NGO, Indicorps' role as a support institution and NOT a funding agency, and rights to termination of both organizations. The MoU is focused on delineating the relationship between the Local Partner Organization and Indicorps. While these were verbally and sometimes informally written or delineated in the past for documentation and sustainability, Indicorps felt that it was a better process to develop a formal MoU, outlining several key points that will remain consistent from year to year.

Ultimately, the MoU serves as another tool to help ensure project success, and it can also help the Local Partner Organization understand the commitment that Indicorps is asking for. It helps

⁴⁴ See Appendix 8.

⁴⁵ See Appendix 9.

cement the three-way partnership, and while it serves as a tool for outlining expectations, it also is a tool of evaluation, as I have seen organizational interest decline when they are asked for a commitment of any sort.

Conclusions / Recommendations:

There are several intentions behind all these components, the survey (mostly qualitative with some quantitative), the observations / necessary interactions, the report guidelines, the evaluator bias survey and the memorandum of understanding. Each was developed for Indicorps as necessity dictated and merely one component of many to help identify and successfully develop projects that have benefit to the Local Partner Organization, the Indicorps Fellow and the development community at large.

The survey is meant to give a proper preliminary understanding of an organization. It should be completed entirely by the surveyor and rarely if ever directly filled out by the local partner organization. It is essentially meant to guide inquiry and exploration by the evaluator. The information should be gathered through several methods: primarily through conversations and experiences of the evaluator; next, through published or non-published material, such as reports and an informational website; and, third through secondhand information, i.e. through other organizations in the area as well as people not directly connected with the organization. This last method has limited uses in terms of credibility, but can be quite revealing in terms of a community perception of the NGO.

Hopefully this marks the beginning for Indicorps, a process that will be constantly changing and adapting to meet the needs of the community and other vested parties. I recommend that the survey is kept short (under two pages) as most organizations and effective evaluators do not have the time to fill out enormous amounts of paperwork, which will most probably go unread. The survey should be practically executable as well as valuable.

The observations / necessary interactions and report guidelines are meant to initially direct the evaluator. Only a handful of indicators that I have noticed can give a fair and quick sense of an organization. They should be constantly kept in the back of the mind of the evaluator, and each item should be viewed with an open mind. I would recommend that the report be done as soon as possible after a visit, or at least taking notes during a visit to supplement the report.

The value of this evaluation to other organizations and individuals is derived from the inherent credibility that Indicorps, being a minimally biased third-party, will have. The motivation for Indicorps, to find suitable partners for future projects, has certain characteristics in its identification of *good work* which has value to the community at large. It is the nature of third-party evaluation that the organization is not evaluating itself, and any third-party evaluation should not even have the appearance of impropriety. Further credibility is derived by fostering transparency in the process of information gathering, as well as through sharing the biases of the evaluator and examining other reports done by the evaluator.

The evaluator bias survey will help outside parties and Indicorps understand some factors that can influence the evaluator. It can serve as a relative benchmark for all evaluated organizations. In twenty years, a potential donor who is accessing Indicorps resources might feel that their opinions are synchronized in some way with Evaluator Thatte, and may use Thatte's established credibility in his mind to search for new organizations. In addition, Indicorps can apply the same technique in their

assessment of the evaluator. These questions are mostly trying to understand evaluator ideology which can help Indicorps understand how they will judge. It is important that this survey, namely the last two questions, be asked before starting evaluations and upon completion of the evaluation process. I would also recommend perhaps asking the evaluator those questions every few months, to track changes.

Full disclosure must be given to the organization in advance: the intention of Indicorps to gather information about the organization in an internal evaluation process as well as the willingness of Indicorps to share this information to relevant parties that request it. In addition, Indicorps, to encourage best practices, should share this evaluation and the accompanying report with the NGO if desired, as it can serve as a means to improve.

The estimated time to complete the survey ranges from one to five days, depending on the amount of time the organization can spare, and the need to experience various projects before filling out the survey. It is recommended that the evaluator visit every project that the organization is administering, as well as learning and questioning as many beneficiaries and staff as possible in the short amount of time. Time and budget permitting, the evaluator should conduct at least two visits, the first to make initial contact, and the second to spend time learning and probing the potential for a project. This gives some time for the evaluator to reflect and also minimizes the chance that the NGO will control variables to put its best foot forward during the initial visit. The second visit should occur with minimal notice with an explicit attempt to candidly view the operations of the NGO.

Perhaps the most important recommendation that I can make to Indicorps is regarding expectations management. It is of utmost importance for all expectations to be clear and agreed upon by all parties. This term, particularly in development, is extraordinarily powerful, especially when managing Indicorps expectations, international volunteers' (fellows') expectations, and local partner organizational expectations. All of the above components are meant solely for the purpose of effectively managing the expectations of all parties in this partnership. The survey was developed because the Fellow expects Indicorps to carefully choose and design a project that will reconnect them to India through transformational service; in return, Indicorps expects the Fellow to invest monetarily, mentally and spiritually in the work for one year. The MoU was developed to safeguard the interest of the local partner organization, and make clear Indicorps expectations and commitments with respect to the volunteer. The evaluator bias survey is meant to eliminate as many potential doubts of outside parties and Indicorps in the evaluation process, giving both value and credibility to the evaluator and his/her work. Each component has its role, and each role carefully addresses one aspect of expectations management. Ideally over time, these processes will all be refined and changed, however, it is important to understand that they will always be connected to the management of expectations of various parties in their evolution.

Tables and Appendices**Table 1**

Organization	Extensive Quantitative Metric	Extensive Qualitative Metric	Actively Seeking NGOs	Evaluation System	Listing Service	3 rd Party Evaluation
IndianNGOs.com	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Give Foundation	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Credibility Alliance	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Development Initiatives	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Charities Aid Foundation, India	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No

Appendix 1 – Non-Governmental Organization Visited or Interacted

Name	City	State	District
Akanksha	Mumbai	Maharashtra	Mumbai
AMBA	Rajkot	Gujarat	Saurashtra
Ashoka	Mumbai	Maharashtra	Mumbai
Centre for Environmental Education	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Ekal Vidyalay	Delhi	New Delhi	
Eklavya Foundation	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Environmental Sanitation Institute	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Indicorps	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
JJ's Nursing Home	Malad	Maharashtra	Thane
Kanavu	Nadavayal	Kerala	Wayanad
Life	Rajkot	Gujarat	Saurashtra
Magic Bus	Mumbai	Maharashtra	Mumbai
Manav Sadhna	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
NAB, Sabarkantha District Branch	Idar	Gujarat	Sabarkantha District
NARDEP	Kanyakumari	Tamil Nadu	
Pratham	Mumbai	Maharashtra	Mumbai
Pratham	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Pune Blind Men's Association	Pune	Maharashtra	Pune
Rasta	Kambalakhad	Kerala	Wayanad
Rhambau Prabodini Malgi	Bhayandar	Maharashtra	Thane
Rural Innovations Network	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
SETU	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
SEWA	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Share and Care Foundation	Mumbai	Maharashtra	Mumbai
Shreyus Social Service Centre	Meenangudi	Kerala	Wayanad
Shrujan	Bhuj	Gujarat	Kacchch
Sister Nivedita Trust	Rajkot	Gujarat	Saurashtra
Srusti	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Sugar Schools	Pune	Maharashtra	Pune
Uravu	Wayanad	Kerala	Wayanad
Veriathan	Bhuj	Gujarat	Kacchch
Vinoba Niketan	Trivandrum	Kerala	Trivandrum
Visamo (Calarex Foundation)	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
Vivekananda Kendra	Kanyakumari	Tamil Nadu	
VS Hospital (Dardionu Rahat Fund)	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad

Appendix 2 – Quantitative Component of Survey

<u>Question</u>	<u>Want to Understand</u>	<u>Example</u>
Quantitative Indicators:		
Staff Organizational Structure:		
Current Number of Board Members	Structure of Staff	
Current Number of Administrators	Board Members	5
Current Number of NGO Workers	Administrators	3
Current Number of Volunteers	NGO Workers	44
Current Number of Other Workers	Volunteers	5
Current Number of Female Staff*	Other Workers	0
Percentage of Organization that is Female	Role of Gender with NGO	22
	Practicing Upliftment	50
Finances:		
	Financial Structure	
Total Staff Remuneration (in Rupees)	How much is paid to staff	300,000
Percentage of Highest Paid to Total	Distribution of salary	16.67%
Percentage of Lowest Paid to Total	Distribution of salary	8.00%
Total Income (all monetary, in-kind inflows i.e. grants, corpus, donations)	Inflow of monetary wealth	500,000
Total Expenditure (all monetary, in-kind outflows)	Outflow of monetary wealth	600,000
Percentage of Total Staff Remuneration to Total Income	What percent of money coming in is for labor	60.00%
Percentage of Total Staff Remuneration to Total Expenditure	What percent of money spent is for labor	50.00%
Percentage of Total Money Spent Directly on Beneficiaries to Total Income	Of Total Income, what percentage is spent directly on beneficiaries	40.00%
Quantified Impact:		
	Numerically what have they done with their resources	
Total Number of Beneficiaries	How many beneficiaries the NGO works with	4500
Total Number of Programs	How many programs the NGOs has	22
Total Number of Success Cases+	How many success cases	1000
* Staff includes Board Members, Administrators, NGO Workers, Volunteers, and Other Workers		
+ Determined by the NGO		

Appendix 3 – Qualitative Component of Survey (Doing *Good Work*?)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Want to Understand</u>	<u>Example</u>
<u>Doing Good Work??</u>		
Who founded the organization?	Influences on individuals	Founded by followers of Swami Vivekananda . . .
What is the history of your organization?	History of organization	Founded in 1952 to work with the visually challenged . . .
What motivates you? Why do you do the work that you do?	Passion of founder, why they are doing this work (looking for a personal story). Sewa (service) mentality.	I am visually challenged, and my mother gave me every opportunity in life. So many others never have had such an opportunity, I wanted to help them . . .
What does your organization strive to do?	Vision of organization	Want to empower the visually challenged through skill training . . . Want to improve the quality of life of visually challenged people in India . . .
How do you define success?	Their definition of success	We help place 25 visually challenged people in jobs every year . . .
Who does your organization work with and why is your focus this problem?	Beneficiary community and motivation to work in this area	Primarily with the visually challenged because India has the largest visually challenged population in the world, and the fastest growing visually challenged population . . .
What are your sources of funding?	Affiliations, potential conditions imposed on organization, sources	We have a corpus (endowment fund), receive government grants, and have generous donors from all over the world . . .
What is the structure of your organization?	Board, staff, volunteer, gender Define terms	I am executive trustee . . . There is a staff under me which manages various projects and under them are volunteers . . .
Who works for you? How did they find out about you?	Volunteers, staff	We try to employ as many visually challenged people as possible in our institute . . . Respected pillars of the community . . . Ex-military optical surgeons . . .
What are the root causes of the problems you are dealing with? Are you addressing them?	Sustainable development model	Lack of regular eyecare and awareness of subsidized medical costs . . . We are working to educate and empower people . . .
What other organizations doing <i>good work</i> would you recommend?	{ for potential evaluations, also who they affiliate with }	We recommend National Association of the Blind, India, as they have given us much guidance in the work we do. We also recommend the research division of the socialist party here in Maharashtra . . .
Who is paid in the organization?	Salary Structure	Executive trustee, board, staff, volunteers, etc . . .

Appendix 4 – Qualitative Component of Survey (Indicorps Compatible)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Want to Understand</u>	<u>Example</u>
Indicorps Compatible??		
Where would you like to be in one, five and ten years?	Goals	We would like to develop an institutional research center that publishes academic research in areas that affect the visually challenged such as psychological effects of the home atmosphere . . .
How can an Indicorps Fellow help you get there?	Role of Indicorps	We could use someone to help us devise a program to explore alternative self-employment schemes for the visually challenged graduates of our training institute . . .
What do you think the Fellow will gain out of this experience?	Transformational experience	I think that the fellow will learn about themselves . . .
Do you have religious affiliations? What are they?	Degree of religious affiliation	We practice Hindu philosophy as told by Swami Vivekananda . . .
Do you have political affiliations? What are they?	Degree of political affiliation	We encourage our beneficiaries to vote for the BJP because they fund us . . .
Do you have partner organizations? Who are they?	Other affiliations	We work with National Association of the Blind, the local University, the Give Foundation for trainings, collaborations and funding
Can you provide the fellow with simple housing and food? (ref: MoU)	Willingness to partner, commitment	No . . . Unless they are willing to try to raise funds . . .
Have you ever had international volunteers? In what capacity? What did you (dis)like?	Experience with international volunteers	A woman from Italy came to volunteer, but language was too much of a barrier, so she left . . .

Appendix 5 – General Component of Survey

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Want to Understand:</u>	<u>Example</u>
General Information:		
Organization Name	Name	PBMA (Pune Blind Man's Association)
Functional Languages (in order of preference)	Language compatibility	Marathi, English, Hindi
How We Found Out About This Organization	References (if any)	Mr. Gaurardia (friend of Shah family)
Date Founded	How long in operation	1952
Contact Person/People	Who we dealt with	Mr. N.P. Pandya, Mr. Dutta, etc . . .
Address	Address	42 Rasta Peth, Pune, Maharashtra . . .
Phone Numbers	Phone Numbers for Contact	020-2999-9999
Email	Email for Contact	pbma52@vsnl.com
Website	For more information	www.pbma.org
Main Office Location	Base of operation, ties to main branches	Pune
Branch Locations	Where else in India they operate	Pune is the Main Office, they operate in rural eye camps as well
Non-Profit (Yes / No)	Do they operate as a non-profit?	Yes
Registrations (where and with whom)	Are they registered and in what capacity?	Society Act 52, Bombay Registration Act . . .
Areas of Concentration	Where they focus in their work	Health Care, specifically eye care and treatment (and surgery)

Appendix 6 – Observations / Necessary Interactions Component of Survey

<u>Question</u>	<u>Want to Understand</u>	<u>Example</u>
<u>Observations / Necessary Interactions:</u>		
Interact with beneficiaries. Any significant observations?	Interaction with the community. Are they liked / disliked / loved / feared?	A beneficiary could not stop talking about how much the NGO has helped her, her level of confidence was extremely high . . .
What was the quality of their life before?	Value added by NGO	Before, they were living day-to-day, if they earned money they ate.
What is it now?	Value added by NGO	Now, thanks to microcredit, they have enough money for food, and can borrow against the savings if necessary . . .
Has it improved?	Impact	Yes, they can now focus on income generation beyond survival
How do they treat their staff/volunteers/beneficiaries?	Value on humanity, how they would treat a volunteer	They order them around, and treat them poorly. Resentment is building up in the organization.

Appendix 7 – Structured Report Guideline

<u>Question</u>	<u>Want to Understand</u>	<u>Example</u>
<u>Structured Report:</u>		
Directions (if available)	Can help in revisits	Take Surya Travels from Paldi (approx. cost RS 50) . . . Get down at Hanuman Chowk . . .
Summary / Observations of Visit	Detail of events that took place	Met Mr. Mathur at the main office . . . We traveled to the field office where I interacted with Ms. Kithi, a beneficiary turned staff member . . .
Areas Identified for Potential Help	Potential volunteer experiences, ideally defined by them	We could use someone with counseling experience to talk to parents of the beneficiaries . . . Also, documentation . . .
Recommendations	Perspective of evaluator	I think that they would be suitable for fellow placement because of . . .

Appendix 8 – Evaluator Bias Survey

<u>Question:</u>	<u>Want to Understand:</u>	<u>Example</u>
Name:	Name of Evaluator	Milind Thatte
Age:	Age of Evaluator	25
Gender:	Gender of Evaluator	Male
Background:	Educational Background	MA Journalism
Relevant Experience:	Experience	Worked for Three Years with NGO in tribal areas
Religious Background:	Religious Affiliations if Any	Hindu
Degree of Religious Background:	Degree of Affiliation (low, medium, high)	High
Political Background:	Political Affiliations if Any	None
Degree of Political Background:	Degree of Affiliation (low, medium, high)	N/A
Have you ever participated in community development activities before? If so, how? †	Exposure to community development or not.	Yes, I have worked on tribal literacy for several years in India and have worked with other social service organizations.
Briefly describe your perception of the NGO community in India: †	Perception of NGO Community	I think that good work is being done, however, the media in India has focused on the negative side of NGO work, which has given both the domestic and international community an incorrect perception of NGOs in India. I do acknowledge, that, like any country, India does have NGOs that are engaged in questionable activities; however, this is not the bulk of organizations and a stereotype has been established which I find on the whole to be untrue.
<p>† These questions should be filed out before commencement of the survey period, and again at the end of the period. This will help give the reader an idea of how the work has altered the perceptions of the evaluator.</p>		

Appendix 9 – Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Memorandum of Understanding Between Indicorps and the Local Partner Organization

This document clarifies the general roles and responsibilities between Indicorps and the Local Partner Organizations, to ensure a mutually beneficial working relationship during the duration of an Indicorps project(s).

Partnership/Project Development

Indicorps aims to work with dedicated grassroots non-governmental organizations (“NGOs”) by providing human capital to meet host organizational needs for current and future projects. As a general practice, Indicorps develops project partnerships with local partner organizations (NGOs who meet Indicorps criteria) after observing and meeting with them to develop potential projects.

In conjunction with the Local Partner Organization and in line with its stated mission and objectives, Indicorps will help define project parameters and objectives for year-long projects to be implemented by Indicorps fellow(s). As part of the project definition, both Indicorps and the Local Partner Organization will agree on the selection criteria for the fellow. The project parameters and selection criteria for the fellow will be posted on the Indicorps website for the Indicorps application process to attract qualified applicants. The Local Partner Organization will be consulted and required to participate in the selection of the Indicorps fellow.

Financial Assistance

Indicorps does not provide financial assistance to Local Partner Organizations. Indicorps is not a funding agency. In some circumstances and given the right opportunities, Indicorps may work with Local Partner Organizations to help raise funds for projects as needed, especially if organizations have FCRA clearance. However, Indicorps’ fundraising assistance is only project-based; Indicorps will not assist Local Partner Organizations raise core funding.

On the financial side, Indicorps aims to develop a three-way partnership between Indicorps, the Local Partner Organization and the Indicorps Fellow(s). The Indicorps Fellows are responsible for their own travel to and from India and for their own health insurance; Indicorps provides travel, orientation and training, upkeep, and management costs related to the Indicorps Fellowship within India; the Local Partner Organization is responsible for covering the costs of project materials/governance and basic food and housing for the Indicorps Fellow(s) assigned to work with the Local Partner Organization.

Expectations of Local Partner Organizations:

- a) **Housing and Food.** The Local Partner Organization will provide simple food (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and meager accommodations. Placement of an Indicorps Fellow with a host family is more than sufficient to meet these needs.
- b) **Retreats.** Local Partner Organizations must allow Indicorps Fellows to attend a one-month orientation and retreats every six weeks. Indicorps will organize, provide the travel arrangements, and pay all costs associated with the orientation and retreats. The Fellow is accountable to the host organization to finish any work requirement prior to the retreats. The purpose of these retreats is to share experiences and provide a support structure whereby the Fellows can recharge themselves and learn from the experiences of the other Indicorps Fellows.
- c) **Orientation.** In order to best prepare the Indicorps Fellows, Indicorps provides a mandatory one-month orientation program at the beginning of the Fellowship year (typically late August – early September). Orientation includes: language training (based on project location), academic readings (about India), speakers from relevant development work, and practical development field exercises to properly prepare the Fellows for living in India and their projects. The Local Partner Organization may provide input for potential speakers and field exercises, and shall participate in the orientation session for one-two days.
- d) **Communication/Supervision/Evaluation.** The Local Partner Organization shall treat the Indicorps Fellows as members of their organizational staff and is accordingly responsible for day-to-day supervision, and any additional manpower/materials required for completion of the project. Indicorps encourages Local Partner Organizations to meet with the Indicorps Fellow(s) on a regular basis to ensure proper project implementation and to meet goal deadlines. If the project goals change, Indicorps expects both the Local Partner Organization and the Indicorps Fellow to discuss the changes, and modify a project plan in conjunction with Indicorps, as Indicorps will measure the Fellow’s success on the accomplishment of the stated project.

{Continued on page 34}

{Continued from page 33}

Indicorps will maintain weekly contact with the Local Partner Organization to work together to ensure a smooth working relationship and to assist with potential hurdles. In addition, Indicorps reserves the right to intervene on behalf of the Fellow and/or the Local Partner Organization where necessary. The goal is to keep the communication lines between Indicorps, the Fellows, and the Local Partner Organization open and to have the work flow in a positive, constructive manner.

Indicorps' Relationship with Fellows

Indicorps will follow up with the Fellows on a regular basis to ensure their progress on and timeliness of their projects. Indicorps will track the progress of the fellow and the project on a weekly basis by telephone, e-mail, or postal mail. An Indicorps representative will visit the Fellow and Local Partner Organization every six weeks to increase quality and manage expectations.

During site visits, Indicorps and the Local Partner Organization will jointly evaluate the fellow, the progress of the project, and creatively work together to solve any issues or problems that may have arisen. Indicorps also encourages the Local Partner Organization to share successes, failures and frustrations with both Indicorps and the fellow as well as to offer suggestions for improvements.

Termination

Indicorps reserves the right to withdraw the Indicorps Fellow from the project and to terminate the working partnership with the Local Partner Organization at any time. Indicorps may terminate a fellow for violation of Indicorps rules and/or policies and is not responsible for additional Local Partner Organization costs to complete the project. The Local Partnership Organization may also terminate its working relationship with Indicorps and/or a particular Fellow under reasonable circumstances and with due notice.

Summary

Once the fellow arrives at their project, Indicorps aims to support the work of the Local Partner Organization to our fullest capacity. However, in order for the Fellow and the partnership investment to produce the desired returns, all three groups, the fellow, Indicorps and the host organization, must work together in a committed and productive manner.

We look forward to working with and learning from you.
Let us know if you have any questions, suggestions, or clarifications.

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Relevant Organizations Doing Credibility Research in India:

- Charities Aid Foundation – <http://www.caf.org>
 Credibility Alliance – <http://www/credibilityalliance.org>
 IndianNGOs.com – <http://www.indianngos.com>
 The Give Foundation - <http://www.givefoundation.org>
 ProPoor - <http://www.propoor.org>