

## EDGE 2019

Greetings from EdelGive Foundation!

As this edition of EDGE 2019 comes to a close we feel enriched, inspired and humbled by the conversations surrounding **‘The Power of One’**. It was a day of thought, of reflection and of seeding a piece of inspiration to all participants in a small way. Like every year, EDGE has been designed as a collaborative platform to connect the funding fraternity with exceptional grassroots organisations.

Revisiting these stories, below is a synopsis of the three-day conference and some key learnings that we took away from the deliberations.

### Day 1 – The Power of One

**Date: Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Venue: The St Regis Hotel, Mumbai**

Beginning the day with **The Power of Voice**, was our CEO, **Vidya Shah**. *"Voice is an incredibly powerful tool in social change. Poets, authors, artists, even stand-up comedians have used it as a tool against injustice"*, she said, as she took the audience through **the role that ‘voice’ has played in shaping identity, defying social stigmas and creating powerful movements**. Weaving together her favourite couplets, ghazals and poetry from legendary artists such as Ghulam Ali, Sahir Ludhianvi and Naseer Turabi, each verse symbolised a reaction to a moment in time, to an injustice and to a deep realisation of reality.



***Vidya Shah, CEO, EdelGive Foundation on ‘The Power of Voice’***

The day was structured into five broad areas of discussion, Entrepreneurship – A Driver for Change, Vision – The Main Catalyst, Audacity in Belief, Representing the Unrepresented and Emotions Driving Change. Each packed with inspirational stories of individuals, organisations and movements.

# The Power of **ONE**

Collaborating towards a common vision

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### Entrepreneurship – A Driver for Change

While challenging and full of risks, entrepreneurship has enabled incredible inventions of products and services to mankind. EDGE 2019 featured lessons from two different journeys of incredible leaders representing different forms of entrepreneurship. **Rashesh Shah, Chairman & CEO, Edelweiss Group and Venkatchalam Ramaswamy, Executive Director, Edelweiss Financial Services Limited** narrated their journey to creating Edelweiss as an organisation built on the pillars of Ideas and Values. Under the mentorship of their guide, Narayana Murthy, the first step in the creation of Edelweiss was crafting a set of guiding principles. These principles have anchored the organisation through difficult times.



***Venkatchalam Ramaswamy,  
Executive Director, Edelweiss Financial  
Services Limited***



***Rashesh Shah,  
Chairman & CEO, Edelweiss Group***

Entrepreneurship is not just limited to setting up large companies and conglomerates. Entrepreneurship can also be using one's skills and talent to produce products and services of value. **Ruma Devi, President of the Gramin Vikas evam Chetna Sansthan (GVCS)** is an example of the same. Being a school dropout, the only skill she had bequeathed was applique embroidery. In her EDGE Talk, **she recalled her initial practice of the craft, preparing her own trousseau step by step, before it became a means of livelihood for her and subsequently several other women in Barmer.**



***EDGE Talks: Ruma Devi, President, GVCS on 'One Stitch at a Time'***

Ruma ji now provides training to over 22,000 local women in applique embroidery, patchwork, and mirror work. Her powerful lines from her address should be a lesson to all of us, "अपने हक की लड़ाई खुद लड़े। अगर खुद पर विश्वास है तो अडे रहे, खडे रहे।" (*"The fight for your rights, is yours alone. If you believe in yourself, stay firm and stay focused."*)

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### Vision – The Main Catalyst

This segment featured **Safeena Husain, Founder and Executive Director, Educate Girls**. She gave us an insight into the **vision behind her impactful project in Rajasthan** that has sent 1.5 million girls back to school. The winner of this year's Audacious Project, she underlined the power of vision and collaboration. Listing down the impact of educating a girl child, she commented, *"It has been a proven fact now that education of girls accelerates growth across the societies of the world. It also fulfills 9 out of the 17 listed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."* She reiterated how having a concrete vision has enabled her to execute the programme in a very systemic way.



***Safeena Husain, Founder and Executive Director, Educate Girls on the 'Role of a Vision in building an Organisation'***

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### Audacity in Belief

As a young student travelling in Japan, **Guneeta Singh Bhalla** heard first-hand accounts of the heartfelt stories from survivors of Hiroshima. Guneeta soon realised that these stories have in a way documented a large piece of history. Going back to her heritage and coming from a family that has witnessed the partition of India closely, Guneeta saw merit in using the same story-telling format to document one of the world's largest forced migrations. She soon began archiving these stories and founded **The 1947 Partition Archives** and are available in New Delhi. The Archives seek to build empathy and opportunities for displaced communities and ultimately foster peace within different communities.



***Guneeta Singh Bhalla, Founder, The 1947 Partition Archives on 'Documenting Lessons from History'***

**Aparna Uppaluri** explored the impact philanthropy has had in supporting large movements in history. She helped to question the process of social change, and how it often starts with a single belief or person and is taken ahead by the support of other actors. Philanthropy needs to take a nuanced and thoughtful approach to support the growth of movements that support equality and justice.



***Aparna Uppaluri, Ford Foundation***

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### Representing the Unrepresented

**Ashif Shaikh, Founder, Jan Sahas** shared his **inspiring story of protecting the rights of the marginalised**. For the first time in the history of India, over 25,000 survivors of rape and sexual violence came out on the streets to fight for their rights at the Garima Yatra - *Dignity March*. The aim of the march was to enable the empowerment of the survivors *"We felt, the most pressing need was to CHANGE the narrative - to shift the blame from the victim to the perpetrator of violence"*, he shared. Acknowledging that over 98 crore people in the country have faced sexual violence in different forms, Ashif shared the story of one such survivor from Indore who faced further trauma when the community showed no encouragement to the victim for speaking up, rather defamed her further.



***EDGE Talks – Ashif Shaikh, Founder, Jan Sahas on ‘One Rescue at a Time’***

Another community-based organisation is **Samaritan Help Mission founded by Mamoon Akhtar**. Reiterating the need for unrepresented voices to be brought to the forefront, **Mamoon Bhai spoke to our COO, Naghma Mulla, on his mission to transform Tikiapara (West Bengal) and the entire community**. He has worked tirelessly to enable a grassroots movement towards ensuring every child in his community has access to quality education. He started a school with six children which has now grown to 6000 children. Through his remarkable organisation, he is changing the outlook for an entire area in West Bengal, bringing overall development to all the children, especially girls, living in the slums. Mamoon Bhai's story is a brilliant testimony to the fact that one strong resolve is enough to open-up a world of opportunities for people bereft of them.



***Naghma Mulla in Conversation with Mamoon Akhtar, Founder, Samaritan Help Mission on ‘Where a Community leads its own Destiny’***

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### Emotions Driving Change

Beginning this segment was **Chief National Coach** of the **Indian Badminton Team**, **Pullela Gopichand** who shared how after witnessing several highs and lows during his illustrious career as a badminton player, he felt that there was a need to build badminton into a widely recognised sport in India. He thus decided to further his mission by helping others develop successful careers in the sport.



***Pullela Gopichand, Chief National Coach, Indian Badminton Team on 'From One to Many'***

Coming from a humble background, he was well versed with the struggles of performing a sport which at the time no one in India watched or respected. He also understood the importance of mentoring and coaching, which he laid most influence on. Having built the Gopichand Badminton Academy, he is today coach to two of India's Olympian Badminton players, Saina Nehwal and P V Sindhu.

Can we heal through forgiveness? Is this one emotion enough to pave way for social changes to happen? In her extremely moving talk, **Svati Chakravarty, Director, Rubaru Roshni and Co-creator, Satyamev Jayate**, took us through a **beautiful tale of emotion, loss and forgiveness**. She emphasised on the power that forgiveness and introspection can have in our lives.



***Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal, Director, Rubaru Roshni and Co-creator, Satyamev Jayate***

The documentary shows three sets of incidences and provides perspectives from both sides. On one hand is the murderer's fate while on the other hand is the family of the deceased. The documentary shows the outcome of what happens when the two sides meet. It is available for viewing on the Netflix streaming app.

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English is the medium of instruction at institutions of higher learning in India, much to the discomfort of students who complete their schooling in regional languages. In his EDGE Talk **Pranil Naik** shared how he **founded LeapForWord with the aim to make the English language better understood by all children.**



***EDGE Talks - Pranil Naik, Founder, LeapForWord on 'One Word at a Time'***

He developed an English Literacy Programme which is built on top of a translation algorithm, a set of linguistic rules that translate English into any Indian regional language, and vice versa. Because of this, English is no longer treated as a language but rather as a subject, which means it can be taught in any language that is common between the teacher and the student.

### **Special Address**

Day 1 of EDGE closed with a special address by **Magsaysay Award winning journalist and Founder, Peoples' Archive of Rural India (PARI), P. Sainath, on the Deep Relationship between Water and Inequality.** Mr. Sainath began his speech by affirming that India has been a subject of an unprecedented water crisis since the past 20 years. With the cloud of climate change looming large and an absence of public discourse about the same, the country is standing at the threshold of undoable damage from the consequences of this crisis. Water scarcity is on the rise as per capita availability reduced drastically from 1951 to 2011. Describing India as a 'thirst economy', Sainath shared that there has been limited data collection since 2013. He added that there have been over 17,000 malnourishment related deaths in the year 2015-16 alone.

The unequal urban to rural transfer within agriculture is baffling as farmers receive only 2% of the total available water for irrigation. The average income of an agricultural household is sharply different between the different states. For Kerala and Punjab, it is approximately INR 15,000 a month, whereas in Chhattisgarh and Odisha it is around INR 3,000 a month.

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***P. Sainath, Magsaysay Award winning journalist and Founder, Peoples' Archive of Rural India (PARI) on 'The Deep Relationship between Water and Inequality'***

The national average stands at INR 6,426 that is less than a hundred dollars a month. His address was a stark reminder that we need strict action towards ensuring we are being sustainable with our water consumption, at not just a government and policy level, but also at an individual level.

*The inaugural day of EDGE, with the incredible stories that were shared, left us all very inspired; triggering thoughts of pushing the needle, taking a stand, persevering through hardships and aiming for excellence in one's life.*

## EDGE 2019

### Day 2 – Change Management as an Enabler for Scale

**Date: Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Venue: Fountainhead Leadership Centre, Alibag**

The second and third day of EDGE was for learning and sharing between our NGOs and select funding organisations. It was a day committed to building deeper understanding and peer learning from each other on nuances of running and growing organisations.

Day 2 began with an engaging panel on **Change management as a key enabler of growth and scale of organisations**. Insights generated from the conversation included: NGOs that are growing, need to reflect on how the culture of the organisation is changing and also be open to asking for help and learning from peers who have been able to scale optimally.

Donors on the other hand should be willing to fund processes that will enable capacity building of organisations. Be it technology, HR, communications or partnering with the Government, each of these processes require time, understanding, learning and review across all stakeholders.



On our panel was **Adithya Narayanan** from DRK Foundation, **Susanne Grossman** from Dalyan Foundation; **Siddhesh Wadkar** from the Government of Maharashtra and **Donald Lobo** from Chintu Gudiya Foundation. The session was moderated by **Atul Gandhi**, Head of Investments at EdelGive Foundation.

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This was followed by a dialogue between our NGO partners and the funding fraternity on fund-raising. Designed as an open house, our NGOs raised a lot of intriguing questions on gap funding, funding for capacity building and how to communicate a pitch with most efficiency.



Answering their questions were **Alifya Loharcharwala** from **EMpower**, **Adithya Narayanan** from the **DRK Foundation**, **Bernard Imhasly** from **Dalyan Foundation**, **Dhvani Doshi** from **Global Fund for Children**, **Shloka Nath** from **Tata Trusts** and **Unnikrishnan T S** from **The Great Eastern Shipping Company**. The session was moderated by **Aiswarya Ananthapadmanabhan**, Senior Manager - Partnerships at EdelGive Foundation.

The next session was conducted by **Shagun Sabarwal**, Associate Director of Policy and Training at **Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab**. She took our NGO partners through the importance of applying a gender lens while evaluating outcomes across programmes for women and girls. Understanding that empowerment can mean different things for different women, she urged that monitoring and evaluation be further nuanced to measure intangible and abstract indicators of empowerment such as confidence and decision-making ability.



She touched upon the women's freedom of movement, gender gap and its various aspects, agency, empowerment and where it stands at today. She used the example of the 'Taaron Ki Toli' programme initiated by Breakthrough India, that evaluated if children studying from classes 7-9 were growing up believing norms for gender equality.

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**Pushpa Aman Singh** from **GuideStar India** and **Giving Tuesday India** facilitated an engaging session on the **nuances of retail fundraising**. She shared critical tips on how retail fundraising can be done by all organisations on their own platforms and other aggregator platforms. She reiterated that this will ensure transparency and credibility of organisations and also reduce the dependence on donors.



Consecutively, **Vijaya Balaji**, MD of **Toolbox India Foundation** organised a session for our funding partners present, on **opportunities to invest in organisational development of NGOs**.



***Vijaya Balaji, MD of Toolbox India Foundation***



***Pallavi Sobti Rajpal, Deputy CEO, Utthan***

Peer learning is always encouraged at EDGE. Sessions for Day 2 of EDGE 2019 concluded with a presentation by **Pallavi Sobti Rajpal, Deputy CEO of Utthan Ahmedabad**, taking other organisations through her journey of growth and her learnings. Utthan originated from a very hostile region of Gujarat back in 1981. Four women took the conscious decision of how “small” can be powerful when the emphasis is on quality and not quantity. Sustained monitoring, scope of internal leadership and thinking about the box has been some of their key learnings on their journey.

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### Day 3 – Change Management as an Enabler for Scale

**Date: Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Venue: Fountainhead Leadership Centre, Alibag**

Day 3 of EDGE 2019 began with an engaging session on the need for **incorporating beneficiary feedback into the programme design and delivery process**. Monitoring and evaluation processes mostly involve a review of utilisation and an impact assessment. Adding a third layer of feedback to this process, ensures that the programme continues to be relevant to the beneficiaries. The session was led by **Vidya Shah and Naghma Mulla** and was moderated by **Suleman Safdar**, who leads our **Capacity Building vertical at EdelGive**.



Another example of peer learning at EDGE was **Manisha Katte** from **Mann Deshi Foundation** who shared the **feedback process for growing the Weekly Market Cash Credit Programme for women in Maharashtra**. Even though the programme was being executed successfully, there were gaps in the design that excluded several women from the credit service provided. Through periodic feedback sessions Mann Deshi was able to increase the reach and impact of the programme. **Ankita Luharia**, **Senior Portfolio Manager - Women Empowerment** at EdelGive Foundation led the discussion with Manisha ji.

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In this fast paced and increasingly digitised world, social media can be a very powerful tool to support organisations in their growth journey. Apart from the visibility, it can also decide the course of conversations and decisions of an organisation. **Ami Savla Hemani from Socialize Store - Social Media Training Hub** brilliantly captured the essence of social media marketing for NGOs. Her simple demonstrations displayed multiple tools for enhancing digital presence across different social media platforms.



In continuation to the session above, **Richa Singh, Senior Coordinator - Digital Engagement at Breakthrough India** went through the importance of storytelling. She guided our NGO partners on targeting and connecting with the right audience, sensitising them and telling powerful stories in a compelling way.



We look forward to hearing your thoughts and feedback and to hosting you again at **EDGE 2020!**

For any further information on EDGE please visit us at:  
[www.edelgive.org/edge-2019](http://www.edelgive.org/edge-2019)