

ALL ABOUT

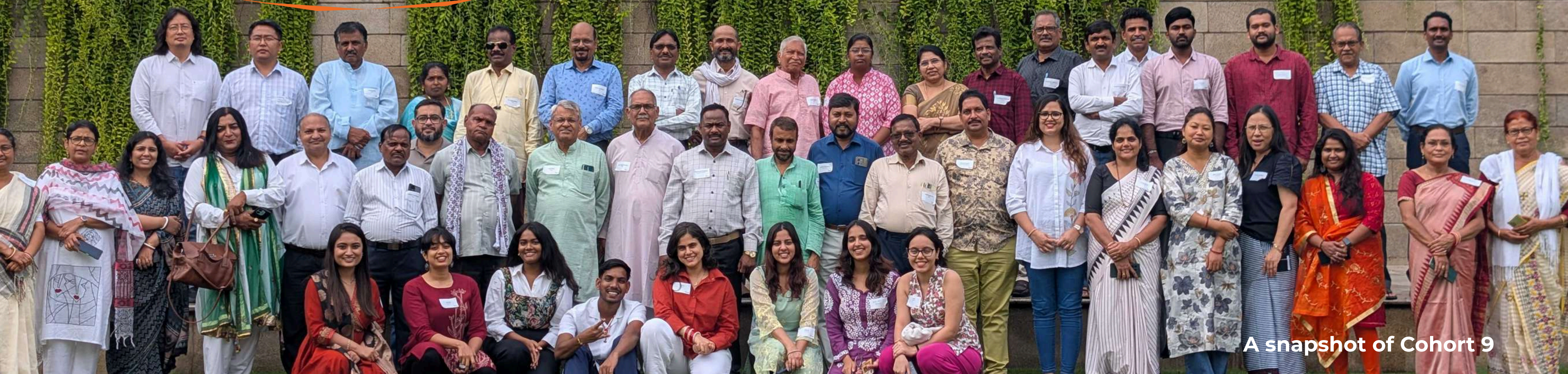
COHORT 9

PARTNER WORKSHOP

17-18 September, 2025

New Delhi

A Rebuild India Fund workshop that welcomed 33 NGOs to meaningfully engage and explore synergies.



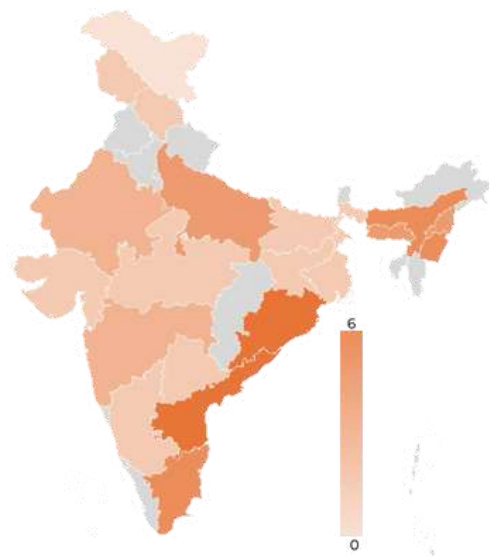
A snapshot of Cohort 9

"We commit to rethink, relearn, and reframe through the Rebuild India Fund. What we learn here, we will take back to build not just stronger organizations, but a stronger, more resilient India."
 – Barnali Chakraborty, Youth Unity For Voluntary Action (YUVA)



On 17th and 18th September 2025, 37 of us representing 33 organizations across India gathered in New Delhi for the introductory workshop. For all, it was the start of a 5-year journey with the Rebuild India Fund and stepping into a space where language, geography, and issue areas didn't divide us but brought us closer - shaping institutional strength, deeper collaboration, and lasting impact across India's social sector.

Cohort 9 Key Insights



33 Organizations

17 States

85* Districts

18 Aspirational Districts

*The total number of districts mentioned include the number of aspirational districts



Of these organizations, **97% are led by proximate leaders**



Core Thematic Focus



Education and Child Development

- Access to education
- Remedial and after-school learning
- Residential and hostel facilities
- Early childhood care and development
- Child rights and leadership development



Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment

- Agriculture based livelihoods
- Livestock-based livelihoods
- Skilling and entrepreneurship
- Market linkages & value chain development
- Building alternate livelihood pathways



Gender and Women's Empowerment

- Prevention & rehabilitation of GBV survivors
- Women's leadership & political participation
- Economic empowerment

The session offered a powerful grounding in Rebuild's philosophy – emphasizing trust-based funding, institutional strengthening, and leader-centered support. It helped participants move beyond traditional notions of project funding and towards a deeper understanding of how flexible, long-term support can transform organizations from within.

What Emerged from the Discussion

The conversation brought out a shared realization – that sustainable change begins when leaders are trusted and supported to lead boldly.



Key Takeaways

- Trust-based funding means Rebuild places confidence in leaders to decide where support is most needed.
- Flexible and unrestricted funds provide organizations with the freedom to adjust their priorities annually as contexts evolve.
- Strengthening institutions – including systems, processes, and leadership – is as important as supporting programs.
- Real impact takes time; patience and partnership are key to lasting transformation.

“Magic happens when there is a relationship, and relationships exist only between individuals. Lasting outcomes are not built on projects or outputs. They are built on trust, connection, and co-created action.”
– Deep Jyoti Sonu Brahma, Rebuild's Investment Committee, Farm2Food

The session guided us through structured reflection using visual tools and group exercises. Through identifying achievements, strengths, and challenges, organizations analyzed what enables or hinders their growth and visualized these insights as a “tree” – with roots (strengths), fertilizers (support systems), and pesticides (disablers). Through visioning exercise, we connected our internal realities to how flexible funds could be strategically used to address barriers and strengthen their foundations.



A critical reflection shared by participants was the inherent difficulty of stepping back to reflect deeply. As a leader noted, "We are always running, we never get a chance to stop and think" ("हम आज तक हमेशा भागते ही रहते हैं। कभी रुक कर सोचने का मौका नहीं मिलता।"). The session provided the necessary structure to engage in this often neglected, introspection.

“Before pitching, understand your stakeholder. Research thoroughly, tailor your message, and highlight what matters most.”

– Suveera Malhotra, Team Lead, Rebuild India Fund



A recurring theme through the day was how flexible funding gave us freedom, hope, and room to innovate. Flexible funding enables organizations to move beyond service delivery into strategic influence. It unlocks peer networks, learning spaces that turns individual efforts into collective power.

“Flexible funding has enabled my organization to go for networking events at the national and international level. Project-based grants do not give us this freedom”

— Tajuddin Khan, Senior Director, Deepshikha Samiti



“There’s a difference between spending and investing. Spending makes life easier today, while investing takes us to the next orbit.”

— Nidhi Gupta, Co-Founder, Dhriiti

INSTITUTIONAL INVESTMENT is not an expense, it’s an investment in the future.

The discussion revealed how flexible funding becomes a mirror for organizations to introspect and define their long-term identity.

Leaders shared that this kind of support pushes them to pause routine work, align boards and teams, and make intentional choices about growth.

It highlighted a cultural shift—from reacting to funder priorities to proactively shaping institutional vision. Many also noted that the flexibility builds confidence and accountability, helping organizations take calculated risks, experiment, and innovate. Beyond finance, it fosters leadership maturity and strengthens the organization’s voice in the ecosystem.



The session focused on helping grassroots leaders define, document, and communicate their organization's impact clearly and effectively. Through guided reflection and a case study, we learned to translate long-term work into concise, evidence-based "impact narratives" rooted in organization's theory of change. The session aimed to strengthen both external communication with funders and internal recognition of achievements.



Key Takeaways

- ▶ **Impact storytelling** helps organizations move from listing activities to showing transformation.
- ▶ Many struggle to express their impact succinctly—**clarity and structure make communication stronger.**
- ▶ An **impact narrative** links the problem, actions, changes, and long-term outcomes.
- ▶ Data and verification (photos, records, baseline information) **build credibility and trust.**
- ▶ The **"theory of change"** is a tool to aid in strategic thinking and clarity.
- ▶ **Communicating impact** also motivates teams by reminding them of their progress and purpose.

"Impact storytelling is both a reflection and a strategy—it strengthens external communication while reaffirming internal purpose. With structure and evidence - we can communicate complex work simply, ensuring your stories inspire credibility, connection, and pride across stakeholders."

— Shiboni Sundar, Team Lead, Rebuild India Fund



“The session built on the previous day’s reflections on flexible funding, guiding us to shift from a spending mindset to an investment mindset. Facilitators emphasized that flexible funding should not only meet immediate needs but also strategically build the organization’s future. Using visualization and group work, we envisioned our organization’s journey five years ahead, identifying what change we want to see in our communities and what internal capacities we must strengthen to achieve it. We then translated all insights into a baseline form to capture everything.

The exercise centered on the metaphor of a “Tree of the Future,” where participants visualized their organizational journey – the roots representing their foundations, the branches their goals, and the fruits symbolizing the change they aspire to create. Through discussion and reflection, they mapped out where investments should be made to ensure sustainability and long-term growth.



Reflections from leaders

“We work so much, but we don’t pause to look at how we present ourselves. We don’t analyze our own work.”

“When we started 30 or 40 years ago, we began with a dream. Now we must intentionally — what is our dream for the next five years?”



Leaders are immersed in a gallery walk, where we exchange organization pitches and aspirations for constructive feedback, also with the intent to understand stakeholders' interests and motivations, establishing connections, and incorporating feedback and suggestions from peers to enhance our work, viewing it as a learning experience.

Presentation Content (The Pitch)

Participants were prepared to share their elevator pitch about their organizations, focusing on four key energies/points

- 1) Problem Statement
- 2) Solution
- 3) Impact
- 4) Ask



The Demystifying Compliance session served as an interactive fireside chat focused on unpacking the complex landscape of financial compliance, FCRA regulations, and registration requirements that govern NGOs in India. Ninad Ankleshwaria, Dasra's finance director, a compliance expert, provided a grounded, example-based explanation of legal and financial norms while encouraging us to raise our practical challenges and doubts. The discussion aimed to enhance our awareness of regulatory expectations, clarify misconceptions about flexible (unrestricted) grants, and strengthen NGOs' capacity to remain compliant while sustaining operational freedom.

“Flexible funds give us freedom, but that freedom still operates within a clear legal frame.”

“We realized we needed to invest in systems and not wait for a crisis to understand our compliance gaps.”

— *Rebuild Leaders*

Key Takeaways for organizations

1. Review their current compliance and documentation systems.
2. Build internal capacity in financial management and legal literacy.
3. Participate in upcoming virtual capacity-building workshops on compliance and related areas.
4. Stay in touch with their portfolio managers for ongoing guidance and support.



“Compliance is not just paperwork; it's what gives our work legitimacy and trust.”

— *Ninad Ankleshwaria, Finance Director, Dasra*

Across sessions, a few strong threads tied us together:

What does Resilience mean to us?

Resilience is the ability to adapt, recover, and sustain impact. It involves adaptability, sustainability, recovery, strategic planning, capacity growth, and community focus. Local terms include Sahanshilata (Hindi) and equivalents in other languages. Key practices include strengthening systems, leadership pipelines,

Immediate Use of Rebuild Funds (Year 1)

Rebuild funds will stabilize teams, systems, and programs: staff costs (40%), capacity building (25%), program implementation/pilots (20%), capital/infrastructure (10%), and administrative costs (5%). Funds are seen as flexible support for sustainable impact.

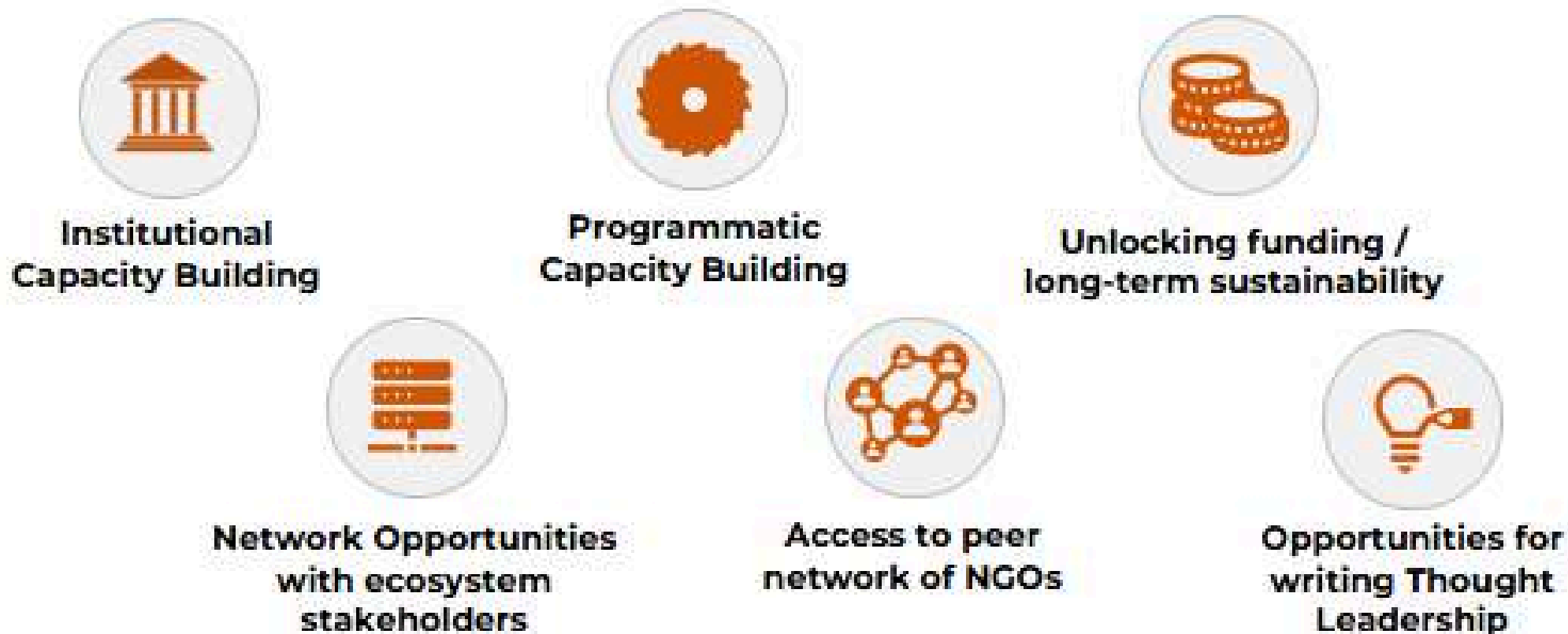


REBUILD AND YOU : WAY FORWARD

Facilitator : Suveera Malhotra, Team Lead, Rebuild India Fund

The gathering ended not with closure but with commitments to keep walking together:

Expectations from Rebuild's Non-financial support



To support your capacity building needs, Rebuild organizes a range of in-person and virtual workshops, sessions and gatherings covering a range of topics such as:

- **Communications & Social Media**
- **Finance & Compliance**
- **Fundraising**
- **MLE**
- **POSH** and many more!

Additionally, there's a dedicated resource, **Your Rebuild Partner** who will provide customized support based on your specific needs and asks!



FEEDBACK FROM THE DAY

“The facilitation style was excellent - inclusive and participatory. I felt that my voice mattered.”

“The workshop was informative and power packed, providing valuable insights and practical learnings that will support our work going forward.”

4.8/5

On logistics

4.5/5

Quality of sessions

4.5/5

Facilitation of sessions

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

As the session came to a close, we expressed gratitude for the rare opportunity to pause, reflect, and engage deeply with peers facing similar challenges. Many shared that the conversations helped us reconnect with their purpose, articulate their organization's direction more clearly, and identify concrete ways to strengthen their internal systems and leadership practices.

There was a strong sense of renewal – of returning to our teams with greater clarity, conviction, and motivation to act on what they had reflected upon. The space was not just for learning, but for being heard and validated as leaders navigating complex realities.

What bound everyone together was a feeling of solidarity – that everyone's struggles and successes are interlinked, and that collective strength lies in shared learning and trust.

"This is just the beginning, a gamut of things to learn. In such a short time, so much has been shared and so much has been learnt."

— Rashmi Mohanty, Unnayan

"For the past 5–6 years, I had lost hope and felt rusted. In two days, I found new energy. Now I see light where there was none."

— Amar Singh Koundal, Society for Rural Development and Action (SRDA)



Access more pictures and videos from the gathering
[HERE](#)

Learn more about leaders & organizations
[HERE](#)

Access the contact details of our leaders
[HERE](#)

For more updates on the Rebuild India Fund, follow us on
[LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)



COHORT 9

Where grassroots lead, change follows

