

Rebuild's Karnataka Regional Gathering

Designed for and by grassroots NGOs from across Karnataka to build collective knowledge and collaboration through discussion, debate and song in Kannada.

13 NGOs
24 Participants
38 Sector Partners

working across cross-cutting themes of:



Disability



Gender

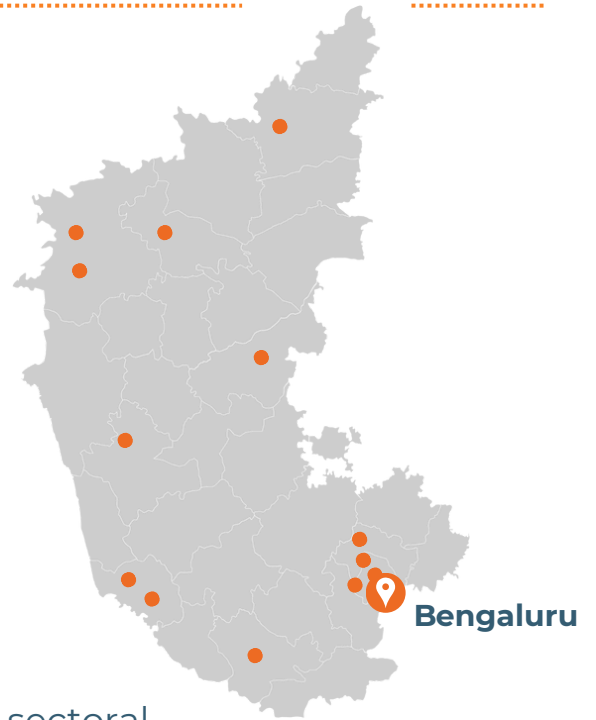


Livelihood



Health

& more



Together, they created a space of trust and exchange, role-playing real dilemmas, unpacking sectoral challenges, and sharing community-led solutions.

Funders joined as co-learners, listening to stories of resilience and innovation rooted in Karnataka's realities. What emerged was not just dialogue, but a collective reaffirmation that strength lies in collaboration, and resilience is built in people, policies, and partnerships.

“We are all one family, working towards the same welfare. This has given us a chance to meet our family members and know that we are working together” — M. Bhagyalaxmi, [Sakhi Trust](#)





Welcome Address

Facilitators: Anandraj Tavadar (Margadarshi Society).

The gathering started with a bustling room full of NGO leaders, Social Venture Partners (SVP), Bangalore members, and other sector stakeholders. Beginning with introductions, the room was full of the names, organizations, and communities. It wasn't just an icebreaker — it set the tone for the day and reminded us this was a space for real dialogue and exchange.

Anandraj spoke about why gatherings like this matter, the importance of having a Kannada-first space and the need for sharing challenges and community needs. Sashi, Chapter Chair of SVP Bangalore, built on this, reinforcing SVP's vision to "reach the unreached" and highlighting the role corporates and donors can play in supporting this work together.



Gallery Walk

Facilitators: Anand Lobo (Society for Empowerment through Voluntary Action in Karnataka - SEVAK).

Anand set the tone for this session which was aimed at cross-learning and networking with each NGO setting up a table and collaterals. He also encouraged participants to use this as a space to refine communication & elevator pitches.

As participants set up their booths, the room turned into a lively showcase of work and ideas. This dedicated time to learn about each others' work was a highlight of the day. Participants were able to learn something new about each organization in a short time span. Discussions were sparked on best practices and collaboration, particularly for organizations working on livelihoods.

"It felt like a school exhibition in the best way — such a great way to get introduced to different kinds of work." — Papamma, Grameen Mahila Okkuta



Bridging Perspectives: Funder & Grassroots in Dialogue

In these guided discussions, NGO participants and SVP Bangalore members came together in thematic groups — spanning gender, livelihoods, disability, child rights, and more. The conversations opened up rich insights into the landscape of these sectors, especially in rural Karnataka. For NGOs, it was a chance to spotlight their work and communities; for SVP members, an entry point into unique contexts and challenges across the region.

Health & Livelihoods

NGOs: [Sahaja Samrudha](#), [Karnataka Hemophilia Society](#), and [Sevabharathi](#)

Discussions highlighted how gaps in healthcare infrastructure leave families without affordable or accessible support. Hemophilia patients face limited and costly diagnostic options, while those with spinal cord injuries lack rehabilitation facilities that can restore dignity and independence. Community-based care that combines treatment with counseling, livelihoods, and awareness was seen as critical. On livelihoods, the revival of indigenous crops emerged as both a cultural and economic necessity.

“Reviving traditional crops is not just about food—it is about livelihoods, diversity, and dignity for farmers.” – Krishna Prasad, [Sahaja Samrudha](#)

Funders were urged to invest in essential infrastructure such as diagnostic labs, rehabilitation centers, and farmer-friendly supply chains.



Disability

NGOs: [Ashadeepa Angavikalara](#), [Sarva Abhiwruddhi Seva Samsthe](#), [Sama Foundation](#), [Voice of Needy Foundation \(VNF\)](#)

The discussion at this table highlighted recurring challenges in the disability sector: outdated schemes, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, exclusion from private insurance, and limited livelihood options. While NGOs are partnering with the government on early intervention and rehabilitation, employment remains the most critical gap. Leaders stressed the importance of early education for long-term opportunities and locally rooted livelihoods like agriculture, but noted that companies rarely employ PWDs unless mandated.

The call to funders and corporates was clear: move beyond compliance. Support research and evidence-building with NGOs, create pathways for meaningful employment, and push for stronger implementation of government schemes.

“Organizations have to wear 3 hats — one of a NGO, beneficiary & government liason” — Arunkumar, [Voice of Needy Foundation \(VNF\)](#)

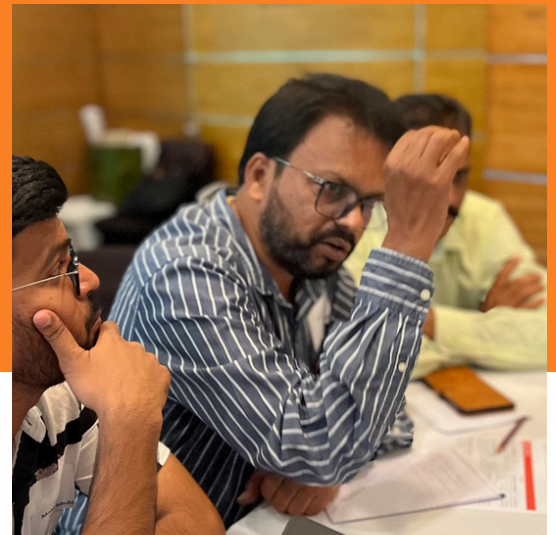
Education & Child Rights

NGOs: [Society for Empowerment through Voluntary Action in Karnataka \(SEVAK\)](#), [Sakhi Trust](#), and [Margadarshi Society](#).

The conversations pointed to how poverty, malnutrition, and cultural practices like early marriage continue to push children—especially girls—out of school. Lack of basic facilities, poor transport, and inadequate infrastructure further limit their access to education, shaping both health and futures.

At the same time, leaders shared how communities are finding ways forward, from early identification and prevention to skill training, awareness, and close collaboration with government and law enforcement. These efforts are helping children stay in school, while also giving them greater voice and agency.

What also emerged was how broader change is possible when education is paired with dignity and livelihoods. From running learning centers to creating new income opportunities, these initiatives are opening pathways that connect protection, empowerment, and long-term resilience.



Gender & Advocacy

NGOs: [Development Education Service \(DEEDS\)](#), [Grameena Mahila Okkuta](#), [Vimukthi Aids Tadegattuva Mahila Sangha](#), and [Mahila Abhivruddhi Mattu Samrakshna Samsthe \(MASS\)](#).

The discussion underscored recurring challenges: lack of awareness of rights, weak systems for implementation, and limited livelihood options, which leave women vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and exclusion. Persistent issues such as domestic abuse, child marriage, trafficking, and the struggles of women exiting Devadasi practice or sex work remain pressing.

NGOs are responding by raising awareness, improving access to schemes, and organizing communities for collective strength, helping shift mindsets and build long-term agency.

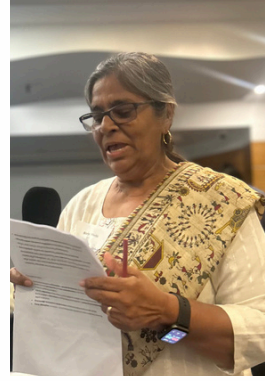
They called on funders and corporates to invest in sustained rights-based awareness, support grassroots advocacy to improve scheme implementation, and create dignified livelihood opportunities for women transitioning out of exploitative systems.

Case Study: Tackling Organizational Resilience

“We all start our NGOs with passion, dedication, commitment, and love. Along the journey, we have faced both difficulties and happiness. This is a chance to explore our challenges, dreams & experiences and make sense of them together” — M. Bhagyalaxmi, [Sakhi Trust](#)

Facilitators: M. Bhagyalaxmi ([Sakhi Trust](#)), Merlyn Martis ([DEEDS](#)), Sitawa Jodatti & Sabera Shaikh ([MASS](#))

Participants role-played real-life dilemmas faced by grassroots NGOs, brainstorming solutions together. Each case drew on collective wisdom and showed how resilience is built not only in programs, but also in people, policies, and partnerships. Bhagyalaxmi closed the session with a powerful reminder that resilience means acting with courage and love in the face of uncertainty — serving communities when they need it, not just when funding timelines allow. Strategies & insights identified in each case are outlined below:



Employee Retention Strategy

Fair salaries, staff benefits, transparent policies, and recognition build trust and culture.



Second-in-line Identification

Succession needs intentional OD support and leaders skilled in fundraising and management.



Shifting Community Needs

Innovation balanced with sustainability, guided by impact & needs assessments, ensures relevance and stability.



Managing Funder Pressure

Strong governance aligns donor priorities with vision, treating funders as partners not controllers.

Highlight of the day:

“Keke or lakes are the lifeblood for all of us. Water isn’t magic but it is magical - we don’t have endless amounts and we need to respect, save, and sustain it.”

Throughout the day Papamma ([Grameen Mahila Okkuta](#)) performed 3 original songs written by her about the resilience of women, the importance of preserving natural resources & the spirit of solidarity. Her voice was powerful, captivating the room with her message & passion.

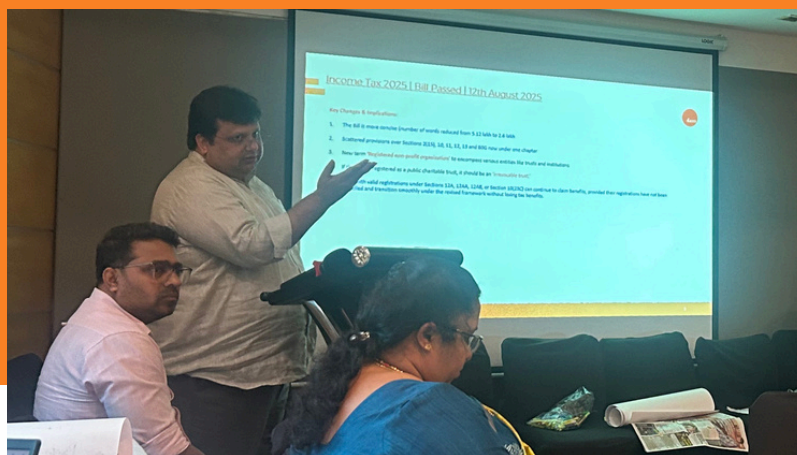


Building Compliant Organizations

Compliance doesn't have to be intimidating—when understood well, it becomes a tool to build trust with donors and communities.

Facilitators: Kumar Vikash (Associate Director, Dasra), Sujit Dhumal (Dasra)

In this session, Kumar and Sujit guided participants through the fast-changing landscape of finance and regulation. What could have been overwhelming was broken down into clear, actionable updates - covering Income Tax, 12A and 80G renewals, new Data Protection rules, and recent FCRA amendments. Concrete reminders gave participants a practical checklist to take home. The emphasis was not just on meeting deadlines, but on how compliance strengthens credibility with donors and communities alike.



Networking & Relationship-Building 101

“Donors, governments, communities—relationships may differ, but the principle remains the same: respect first.” — Arunkumar, [VNE](#)

Facilitators: Arunkumar ([Voice of Needy Foundation - VNE](#)), Raghu N. Hubballi ([Ashadeepa](#))

In the final session, Arunkumar and Raghu took participants on a storytelling journey through their 20-year long collaboration. From building self-help groups to sustaining donor relationships and engaging government stakeholders, their lived experiences showed how complementary strengths can multiply impact.

“In 2015, I didn't know how to write a proposal. At that time, (Arunkumar) helped and drafted a proposal for me, and that proposal was sanctioned. The partner we got that day is still our partner today” — Raghu, [Ashadeepa](#)

They highlighted practical principles: trust is built through transparency, representation strengthens solidarity, and genuine appreciation sustains relationships. The session blended inspiration with actionable wisdom, leaving participants with a clear takeaway: networking is not about transactional connections, but about consistent collaboration rooted in respect and trust.

Closing & Way Forward

Facilitator: Paul G. Ramanathan ([Sama Foundation](#))

The gathering closed with reflections facilitated by Paul, where leaders expressed gratitude for the regional space and the connections it fostered.

Looking ahead, leaders envisioned keeping the momentum alive through:

- **Cross-learning and exposure visits** to learn from each other's models.
- **Regional collaborations** built on shared objectives, trust, and knowledge exchange.
- **Collective advocacy** through campaigns and rallies on common issues.
- **Regular touchpoints** — online meetings, rotating regional hostings, and ongoing dialogue.

The program ended on a warm and unifying note with a song led by Papamma ([Grameen Mahila Okkuta](#)), symbolizing the spirit of togetherness and solidarity that defined the day. As the day closed, everyone was left with the reminder that collaboration is our greatest resource — weaving together voices, knowledge, and care to build a stronger future.



“Rebuild is not a partner, it’s the Rebuild family”
— Krishna Prasad, [Sahaja Samrudha](#)