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3 year-old Manya is
Rang De's youngest volunteer

What is the measure of success?

Recently, at one of our catch up sessions with people in the microfinance industry, someone asked me what Rang De numbers looked like. Being naive to what numbers actually represent, I stated with pride that **Rang De has been able to reach out to 57 borrowers (now 88) in two states via 67 social investors (now 80).** The response I received was far from a pat on the back!

88 borrowers in a country of 1.2 billion is hardly a reach. I understand. However the fact that at each step, Rang De is trying to fine tune its processes and understand how best we can reach out to people, the 72 cannot be discounted. A for profit start up is expected to have hiccups, A non-profit like Rang De is expected to catapult into action.

Rang De is ambitious about how many households it will reach out to. However, we are well aware that becoming a trusted platform will take time as we are talking about getting mind shares. At this point Rang De's measure of success is in terms of the qualitative change that we have been able to bring about in the lives of people. And we hope we will not have to compromise on quality once we hit the numbers. After all scale at the cost of quality is no good is it?

Check out our all new website at www.rangde.org with success stories of borrowers, blogs, videos and much more.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) - From Poverty to Prosperity

by Nandan (Nandan is a volunteer of RangDe.Org)



Every visit to Mysore has always been exciting. After having some excellent dosas from Mylari restaurant (a small but must visit dosa joint in Mysore); team RangDe (with myself, Sowmya, Smita & 3 year old Manya) set out to meet SAIL (an NGO that operates in and around Mysore).

It was an enriching experience to meet children at Sneha Makkala Mane. Sneha Makkala Mane is one of the projects of SAIL. We then set out to meet Self Help Groups.

SHGs are a group of individuals (generally consisting of women) who get together and support each other to raise their socio-economic status. Number of members in an SHG can vary from a min of 12 to a max of 20. The SHG's collectively save money and raise small loans internally as well as through financial institutions. The loans are given to members of the SHG to meet their working capital requirements and expand their business. Each SHG operates in a dynamic manner. Default rates of loans borrowed by SGH's are very minimal due to peer pressure. They have regular meetings to share information and contribute in growing together.

Everyone supports one another although the nature of business varies i.e. tailoring, condiments, bag making, vegetables and fruit vendors, beauty parlor, pickles, papad, puliyogre and chutney powder makers.



Unity and trust among the members in the SHG is admirable; which is a missing link in most of the other sectors. One of the SHG we visited was in existence since 8 years; only 3 had dropped out for genuine reasons. This is a good indicator for team work and sustainability.

In Karnataka this is popularly known as Sthree Shakthi. Existence of few successful SHG's in the locality has inspired and encouraged other SHG's to be initiated. The attempt made by women needs appreciation for the fact that most of them do not have formal education or strong financial background. They are self driven and motivated to mould themselves into better individuals and create a great future for their family and society.

Technology is all about helping people

by *Shantanu Gupta* (Shantanu is a Social Investor & a Volunteer at RangDe.Org)



I think technology is all about helping people. Every segment of the social sector is a technology consumer. From planning the logistics of feeding thousands of refugees,

to delivering vaccines, to providing education, to creating job opportunities or to advocating for human rights, technology tools are used to improve the outcomes and often directly deliver the social benefit.

We should be bold enough to confess that technology has generated tremendous wealth and lots of opportunities for many of us. People are earning unheard salaries in IT and the related offshoots of technology. For those of us who have achieved financial success, there is frequently a need to give back. As a group, technology entrepreneurs are just beginning to explore their interests in the larger society. In the last decade, a formerly apolitical community has been exercising its increasing muscle. The great example that Indian IT companies Wipro Technologies, TCS, Satyam, Infosys etc. set with their philanthropic commitments sets the stage for increased

involvement by the high technology entrepreneurs in society's larger issues.

However I feel technology development is not driven to maximize all of society's goals. Applications that make money get built, while applications that don't make money don't get built. Bridging the gap between the possible and the profitable in socially beneficial applications of technology is critical, and it's an important effort that requires the attention of the technology community. The first is the decision to go after only consumers at the top of the economic pyramid. Intellectual property-based technology companies calculate their economic returns on the basis of pricing decisions, essentially on what prices they deem the market will bear. I believe that the model of social enterprise helps address the above said market failures. Social enterprises are hybrid organizations with two bottom lines: social and financial. By having a social bottom line, these businesses choose to serve the underserved, even when these communities may not offer a significant financial return. I believe that increased investment in technology that directly supports the social sector will offer strong results for society. The social sector lags the for-profit sector in adopting technology tools that could significantly enhance the effectiveness of the sector. With an incremental investment equal to one or two percent of the current funding flowing to the philanthropic sector, it seems clear that the sector could become five to ten percent more effective with the same amount of resources.

I am really impressed with one of the amazing initiative of social entrepreneurship using technology in the field of Micro Finance. Mohd Yonus gave the world the great mantra of micro finance in the form of Grameen Bank but Rangde.org used the concept of micro finance, mixed it with

technology to connect the India that is economically progressing rapidly and the India that has been ignored. Rang De is an initiative to make low cost microcredit a reality. By enabling individuals to become online Social Investors, Rang De hopes to bring microcredit and online lending to the forefront. Rang De is trying to create a sustainable alternative to charity by promoting online lending as a way of life.

We are at a critical intersection in the evolution of technology and social enterprise. Working together, the technology, nonprofit, philanthropic and prospective user communities can ensure far-reaching success in the long-term effort to fulfill the social potential of technology.

Now is the time to move together confidently toward that future.



Surekha borrowed a loan of Rs.5000 to buy a sewing machine. She lives in Kadaisikulam in Tamil Nadu and when Rang De visited her less than a week after she had got the loan, Surekha had already purchased the sewing machine and had started to use it as well. The fact that she had bought the sewing machine so soon was definitely a matter of surprise to the team. And to add to that, the social investor who had invested in Surekha's business was part of the evaluation too.

The social investor was amazed to see his money working so well in making a difference to someone's life.

There are many people out there like Surekha who have the potential to break the poverty cycle. They have not been able to due to lack of opportunity. You can become instrumental in making this impact. Log on to www.rangde.org to make a social investment!



Rang De at Great Lakes Institute of Management (GLIM)

Talking to students has always been my passion. What shall I say...it is almost as if I travel back in time to my own energetic and inspiring days of studenthood.

When you are a student, your looking glass is so different from what is and thats what I love the most.

The soon to be MBA's wanted a lecture on Microfinance and Rang De. Ram, myself and Gnan took it on ourselves to make it an interactive session rather than a lecture. We had fun would be an understatement as it was coupled with learning. The 60 odd students at GLIM were a great audience and the interaction had to be forcefully stopped at 6.00 pm. They say Time Flies, but here it just whizzed past and we never realised.

A group of students from GLIM came back to Rang De and did a project for us. Very inspiring to get fresh perspectives from youngsters. Today, everyone at Great Lakes knows us as the Rang De team. Not far from the dream when every Indian will be able to say 'My Rang De'.

Interaction with NetScout about RangDe

Corporate interactions are no doubt a great deal of learning. Every Organization looks at CSR initiatives from a different perspective. However in NetScout had the opportunity of meeting few individuals; to whom I spoke about RangDe and the difference that each one of us could make. This platform definitely helps connect with reality i.e. people take time to synch up and partner with CSR initiatives.

This newsletter is brought to you by RangDe team. More updates can be read on our blog at www.rangde.org/blog. If you have any queries, or would like to contact us, drop by an email to info@rangde.org.

It's all about - Worldspace Sparsha (Kannada Channel)

by Sowmya (Sowmya works as Senior Consultant for RangDe.Org)

With a couple of emails being exchanged with Chaitanya Hegde (celebrity RJ in Bangalore) and Shruthi Prakash; came the opportunity of being interviewed at the Kannada channel of Worldspace - Radio Sparsha. The ground work began with what questions can be posed and of course how would our answers in Kannada sound. Lot of preparation went by in making sure we drop out the tinge of nervousness we were carrying.

Lady with a pleasant voice welcomes us...who else...Shruthi Prakash. Within minutes from then onwards; zoom shot up our confidence level and comfort zone. Shruthi ensured that the entire interview was facilitated in a very conversational way. Although the mikes were glaring Smita, Ram and I did not bother about its not so subtle presence. During the entire phase; we spoke about how RangDe happened and shared a lot about how we function as an organization. We did dwell into the futuristic aspects too.

The entire experience came to a halt with one other interesting person Chaitanya Hegde. The time we walked out of Worldspace; we were all gleaming with glory and I must say some really whacky ideas...did creep in (we are yet to explore them).

RangDe will be featured by Worldspace very soon...will keep you posted.

Global Gooding while Exploring the World Wide Web

Rang De has given us an opportunity to contribute towards greater common good. Rang De has brought together people who are willing to share their wealth (of character, goodwill, knowledge, money, network, health etc.) for promoting the economic and social development of people. As Rang De ambassadors, you will be having an appreciation towards working for causes of global good.

Here is something which may interest you. Have you heard about internet search sites that contribute to your favourite US/ UK based charities/ schools, for every search we do through these search sites? Yes, for every search we do through these search sites, they donate money to the charities!

Here are three such websites:

GoodSearch (www.goodsearch.com)
Powered by Yahoo Search Engine

Everyclick (www.everyclick.com)
Powered by Ask Search Engine

SearchKindly (www.searchkindly.com)
Powered by Google Search Engine

As on August 27, 2008, Everyclick has contributed 503,438.68 pounds (Approx 4,05,44,694 Indian Rupees) to UK based charities, while SearchKindly has contributed 12,990.46 US dollars (Approx 5,68,499 Indian Rupees) to US based charities/ schools. Though GoodSearch does not provide us with a consolidated number, it provides us with details about the contribution made to individual charities.

A number of US/UK affiliates of India based charities and NGOs are part of the charities listed in these websites.

I invite you to have a look at these sites and be part of this do gooding. Thank you and Have a nice time.

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