Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA): Instituting an Ideal

Abstract

This case study traces the journey of Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), an NGO which was co-founded in Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay) in 1984 by a young graduate Minar Pimple along with a group of his lecturers and peers from the Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, together looking to evolve an indigenous model of social work practice. To say that times have changed in India since YUVA's inception 38 years ago would be an understatement. Despite this, the organisation's spirit continues to echo its founding purpose and values, and provide a space in which the most marginalised of young and like-minded people can come together, understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and work together towards shared ideals. Even today, the majority of the people who work with YUVA (meaning "youth") come from marginalised backgrounds. Such talent composition is not the norm, even in civil society.

Seeded with feminist ideals—in particular that of nurturing a careful and life-long sensitivity for the socio-politically marginalised, and standing by them in their strive for social justice—YUVA's historical record is a statement of how a steadfast commitment to principles can eventually find home in a settled and satisfying practice. This case study lays out both what that historical record speaks and what it speaks between the lines. What the record directly speaks of is the radical milieu in which YUVA came into being, how it became a significant civil society presence in its own right, how it multiplied new initiatives, and how it underwent a difficult leadership transition and financial stresses, yet strived hard to remain relevant. Between the lines, the record hints at how an alert, attuned and active academic milieu constitutes a real treasure—a reminder that perhaps seems appropriate for the times; and narrates the story of how a feminist organisation deeply committed to social justice operates from the inside, of the people who make it and how they make and remake it.

Organisations of this nature have an important place in the annals of Indian civil society but have not received a proportionate space within the documented field of organisational development and talent management. This case study provides an opportunity for learners to explore the idea, relevance and practices of a feminist organisation, through the travails and triumphs of one of the oldest ones in India.

Author(s): Shantanu Menon,[1] Kushagra Merchant,[2] Devika Menon,[3] Aruna Pandey[4]

About the Authors:

[1]Shantanu Menon is Consultant at the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM), Noida 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

[2]Kushagra Merchant is Consultant at the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM), Noida 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

[3]Devika Menon is a former Associate at the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM), Noida 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

[4]Aruna Pandey is former Director, Knowledge and Research Centre (KRC), Noida 201301, Uttar Pradesh, India

Origins

When India woke up to Emergency in 1975, some grudgingly accepted, some looked aside, and some rebelled. And then, some wore an indifferent look. Emergency was but an event; the political events leading up to the Emergency as well as those following it had infused a new spirit into civil society and the multitude of civic spaces which make for a civil society. This spirit had galvanised an entire generation of youth. In particular, literature and historical records document the catalytic role this period played for the contemporary women's movement in India, which picked pace shortly after the end of Emergency in 1977 (PDHRE, n.d.). Minar Pimple, a 16-year-old from Bombay,[1] was very much part of the rising young demographic that saw Emergency play out in front of their eyes during their formative and most impressionable years. He could identify with those who chose not to remain indifferent during that period of 1975-77. But there was more to that attraction than a young mind seeking a moment of adventure.

Picking up at the end of Emergency, at the cusp of his transition out of boyhood, the young man started to explore and craft his own brand of activism, which would grow into a lifelong passion for social justice. As a youth activist in the post-Emergency period, he was a member of several groups and campaigns, for instance, the Democratic Students' Movement, among others. Thus, feminist thinking, encompassing ideas of shared power, freedom of expression, creativity and collective leadership, and ideals of social justice—seeking to place firmly the wide array of voices of the silent and ignored on the agenda of nation-building—came to be embedded in Minar even before his college days. YUVA, the organisation of which he was a co-founder and into which he later poured and coalesced his energy and ideas, itself became a powerful carrier of these ideals. Walking down memory lane in 2022, 45 years after the lifting of Emergency, Minar reflects on that period:

---

[1] To remain authentic to the various periods of time the case study covers, Mumbai is referred to as Bombay until the timeline within the case reaches 1995, when the city's name was formally changed.

Centre for
Social Impact
and Philanthropy

ISDM
INDIAN SCHOOL OF
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Let me just take you back a little bit historically. I joined Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work for my Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) in 1979. Before I joined, I had already had exposure to radical student movements very early in my life in all the post-Emergency activism; I was very much part of it as a young student. For example, the takeover of Bombay University by students.[2] There was a committee called the Students' Anti-Fee Rise Action Committee which did that. In the aftermath of the takeover a commission was set up which decided that several students should be suspended from the university for their participation, and I was part of the campaigns and struggles against that commission. This was all post-Emergency and, as we know, post-Emergency there was a huge sense of hope; a lot of creative energy was unleashed and there were many inspirational individuals, like JP—Jai Prakash Narayan—who was like the icon who fought the Emergency. Adult education that was more along the Paulo Freirian line—in terms of empowering the poor—was being launched in different parts of the country. All that was a big shift: from the dark times of Emergency to the hopeful and aspirational times of post-Emergency. At that time, I must have been 16 or 17 years old. So, that background, that context, is important.

It was a very regenerative context, a context of basically trying to rebuild the democracy, of empowering people and moving away from "my *baap* (father) *Sarkar* (government)"—Sarkar which gave people the services they require rather than their rights. Also, in the post-Emergency period, there were a plethora of small independent organisations which came up, largely on the left. Then, you had people like Rajni Kothari theorising, where for the first time the world got introduced to concepts like "non-party political formations," that is, how we look at political formations beyond political parties. So, in Maharashtra you had people like Pradip Prabhu, launching Kashtakari Sanghatana which was basically coming from that kind of background: a non-party political formation based on the politics of people power, but not aligned to a particular party. Rather, many times they were in direct conflict with the institutionalised parties, whether it was the left variety or the right variety or the centrist parties.

I was also exposed to feminism very early in my life even before YUVA started, because of my engagement in the radical movement. Some of the really famous feminist activists, feminist writers, feminist researchers in India were (and are) the closest friends of mine.

These influences veered him towards the need to remain anchored in the field of practice even as a student, and Minar joined[3] the BSW programme of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work,[4] which provided for continuous contact with field work and practice.

---

[2] On 8th August 1978, the Student's Anti-Fee Rise Action Committee, which represented several bodies of students, took over the university for a day in protest against an upcoming 33% rise in fees. Following the takeover, they named their leader—Saroj Tripathi—Vice Chancellor for the day (Singh, 2021).

[3] Upon guidance of Prof. Rane (at the time, Head of Sociology, Bombay University) that it would provide more opportunities for field work than his first choice of degree – sociology.

[4] Referred to interchangeably as the College of Social Work and as Nirmala Niketan.

There, he proved a handful for the faculty. Joining, in his words, "with a lot of scepticism" on the conventional model of social work education, Minar challenged and questioned his professors at every turn. However, encouragingly, the faculty and the college, a prominent academic institution in its own right, remained supportive throughout.

As his studies progressed, he sought ways to expand his avenues for direct work with communities and Nirmala Niketan provided a fertile ground to spur his thinking further. During the second year of BSW, he joined a project at the College of Social Work called the "Youth Project." Led by one of Minar's lecturers—Nafisa D'Souza—who taught "Non-Formal Education" at the College, the Youth Project sought to "harness the potential of underprivileged youth so that they were capacitated to be a part of the problem solving process." (Ramnath, 2005)

In Nafisa, her husband Dominic D'Souza (also a lecturer, teaching "Issues in Development") and a small group of other lecturers already working on the Youth Project, Minar found an "ideological connect and an alignment of perspectives" on the questions that had been bothering him. He recounts:

> What was common was that all of us were really trying to challenge social work education and practice dogma, and we all felt that we needed to indigenise social work educations and practice in India, and that that process of indigenisation needed to be looked at within the particular Indian reality: it could not be a replica of the models which predominantly at that time came from the US, the UK, and Australia. The reason for that was, doing social work in a post-industrialised society (like the Western countries) was a very different ball-game compared to a society like India which was still struggling with its feudal past, where things like land reforms and other major structural reforms hadn't taken place. And this thinking was not only "Minar Pimple's thinking," it was the thinking of this group of my lecturers: people like Nafisa D'Souza, her husband Dominic and others.

> So, I really liked the philosophy of the Youth Project, which was basically that the people who are facing the issues should be the ones leading the solution. Rather than social workers going in and helping to solve the issues, the project was instead trying to build young people from those communities as leaders who could work on their own issues.

It was thus that, along with a group of lecturers and students from the College of Social Work, Minar ventured into the *bastis*[5] of Jogeshwari, a suburb in the western part of the city. Located on the outskirts of Bombay, Jogeshwari's eastern side was a sprawling informal settlement covering nearly six square kilometres. At the time, it was the second largest *basti* in the city, second only to Dharavi (YUVA, 1999).

In Jogeshwari, they saw a populace the young Minar could identify with: young people filled with the same energy and desire for betterment as his group of peers, but frustrated and struggling to escape cycles of poverty, neglect, and exploitation. Jogeshwari was also divided along religious lines, and for many amongst the youth, religious association further compounded their economic condition. What struck him was the predicament of youngsters just like himself, who lacked access to many of the same privileges and opportunities that he had had, and which had shaped his formative years: a safe upbringing, quality education, and spaces for reflection where he could understand and pursue his ideals, and fully exercise his

---

[5] YUVA prefers to use the term *basti* - a colloquial term for an informal settlement having its roots in the Urdu language - for its non-derogatory connotation compared to the word slum, lending dignity to the reference to the homes of India's vast marginalised populations.

rights as a citizen of the country. It drew him in to get deeply involved to understand what could be done to address this.

Soon, this motley group of lecturers and students drew up a full-fledged programme called the "Ten Sundays Leadership Training Programme." The programme was to help youth respond to their situation through a rights-based approach. It rested on the idea that if a space could be created for the youth to become better aware of their own reality, realise and believe in their capabilities as individuals and as a collective, and realise their rights as citizens of India, they would themselves come together to address issues in their communities. Thus, the programme looked to develop youth leadership from a struggling but burgeoning section of society, giving life to and nurturing a movement of social change entirely steered by the youth themselves.

Although he returned to Nirmala Niketan to continue his journey, as he would later come to describe it, of "self-exploration and evolution" at the college, the communities of Jogeshwari, and the experience of intervening in their lives had left a deep imprint on Minar. Thus, alongside his studies, he maintained an ongoing, continuous involvement with the Youth Project as a youth coordinator. In his third year of BSW, Minar took up once more the "Ten Sundays" programme, and, under the guidance of his lecturers, helped to shape it into an 11-month paraprofessional training programme, a programme whose significance is not lost on Minar even after all these years:

> A lot of the community workers now you see in a city like Mumbai are community workers who were trained as part of the paraprofessional training programme that we coordinated as part of the College of Social Work. We conceptualised the whole programme: tools, methods, social analysis, enlisting of community members, and mapping communities and community resources.

Embarking on a resolve

As he neared the completion of his graduation, Minar had more or less made up his mind to continue the strain of work and energy he had imbibed in the three-year BSW course. For him, activism seemed a natural expression to sustain this course of action, and he decided to leave his family home and find a small place on rent, so that his choice of work would not impact his family. Unwilling to take money from them to fund his education and living costs, he approached the College of Social Work for help. Farida Lambay,[6] who had interviewed him, connected him to the student welfare scheme of the college, which funded his course fees.

Meanwhile, the college also set him up with a part-time job so that he could have some running income. The job involved helping the children of the large number of migrant workers located around the Nariman Point area in Bombay. They, along with members of their families, worked mainly as construction labourers, leaving their children with little or no access to schooling. Each morning from 7 am to 9 am before college, Minar would spend a few hours with the construction workers' children, supporting their learning and recreational activities. In the evening, after college, he would visit the *bastis* to work with youth as part of his involvement in the Youth Project. To further supplement his income, each night after dinner, he would do a four-hour shift as a *"kaali-peeli"* (black-and-yellow) taxi driver, finishing at around 1 am in the morning. With time, the young man, having left his familiar daily comforts, forged his own daily routine: of studies, of social work and of earning a livelihood.

---

[6] Farida Lambay later became the co-founder of the organisation Pratham.

Minar wanted to study further after his graduation, but, with limited income, had to take a two-year break to save up for a Master of Social Work (MSW) programme. He therefore sought additional assignments linked to his field of study and landed his first professional assignment at the College of Social Work itself, where he made a "seminal contribution to the concept and methodology of training for transformation." (Tan, 2019)

1984 would prove pivotal in the timeline of the future YUVA. It was also the year that would permanently cement the relevance of the College of Social Work in the birth of YUVA. And it was sheer serendipity that also brought in Terre Des Hommes (TDH)—a German child rights organisation and funders of the Youth Project who were privy to Minars work in building and mobilising networks of communities and young people from the *bastis*—whose presence helped tie the threads together. As Minar recalls:

> So, the Youth Project was a part of the College of Social Work: Nafisa was Director and I was Coordinator. But in 1984, Nafisa and Dominic decided to give up their lectureship at the college, and we initially thought that the Youth project would close down. Thanks to the support of Adi Patel, who was then the Coordinator of Terre Des Hommes India, the funder of the Youth Project, it worked out differently!

> We, Nafisa, Dominic and myself, had been invited by Adi Patel to do a workshop on community participation at KEM hospital in Pune for their outreach workers. We were travelling on the Deccan Queen to Pune and were all a bit depressed on the train as the future of the Youth Project was unclear. We decided to check with Adi at dinner that night if he would be willing to support us (in the Youth Project) if we became independent of the College of Social Work and he agreed. That's why, when I speak to people about YUVA's early days, I always tell them that YUVA was born on a moving train. YUVA owes its founding to both the College of Social Work and Terre Des Hommes India and we are always grateful for their support!

In 1984, at the age of 23, with support from Nafisa and Dominic D'Souza and a Rs. 5,000 loan from Farida Lambay, he brought together a group of like-minded students, all between 23 and 26 years of age, intending to give full attention to the programme they had started in 1979. They registered a voluntary development organisation: Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, which would come to be known simply as YUVA.

Nafisa, the director of the Youth Project, and the inspiration for much of Minar's thinking, was the Founder-President of YUVA, and Minar its Founder-Secretary. The Youth Project was absorbed as YUVA's first and primary programme and running YUVA became Minar's primary placement during his Master's programme at the College of Social Work. As he recounts, it became the medium through which his academic learning and practice of social work joined hands:

> YUVA was my field placement in MSW. The College of Social Work gave me a table and chair in the department where I could sit and work on YUVA. They gave me the cupboard which was there from the donation of TDH for the Youth Project. They supported me till the time we (YUVA) got our registration and sorted out all the legal and compliance issues. Within the first year, I learnt a lot. The head of the accounting department of the college taught me the basics of running an organisation. So, for those two years, I had a place in the College of Social Work with a table and chair to go

after class and sit to run the Youth Project, which at that time had been formed as YUVA.

A new model of social work practice?

While working with youth was YUVA's very first programme, signalled through the name of the organisation itself, Minar stresses that "as a fundamental concept, YUVA had nothing to do with the youth." Rather, it was founded to address the dissonance between the paradigms of social work education and practice emerging from colleges of the West, and what was truly relevant to the realities of India. He reflects:

We [at the College of Social Work] were questioning that whole paradigm, and so it basically became a case of: what could be an alternative way of social work practice?

The other people (besides Nafisa and Dominic) that influenced a lot of my thinking during that period were Armaity Desai, the Vice Principal of the College of Social Work, and Professor Sugata Dasgupta, a "Gandhian," who was one of the first to try to locate social work education and practice within Gandhian philosophy. He was the one, who, at one level, really articulated what a relevant form of social work education and practice could be in India. So, a lot of the thinking came from these stalwarts of the time. It was a very collective thinking process, of which I was certainly a part, but I was not *the* motivator of all this thinking.

What was my contribution though, was that I took that thinking through to particular logical ends. When it came to translating some of those challenges to the dogma of social work education and practice, along with my early colleagues at YUVA, I pursued that to create a particular organisational form and an organisational strategy which would demonstrate a different set of social work interventions; interventions driven by social change and social transformation rather than a "remedial" approach where you basically treat individuals as problems and society as good, and then you try to fit these "deviant individuals" into a "good society." Instead, we basically started with: there are problems in society, and individuals are a product of that society, so how do we try and transform society while working with individuals? How do we create ways for individuals to enjoy freedom and where they can explore all the opportunities they need to thrive and participate in an active civil, social and political life?

That's why the first foundation of YUVA, its entire membership (other than our community organisers) and its first board, was restricted to social work professionals who had a Masters in Social Work (MSW). None of them were from any other humanities background and that is absolutely important because we wanted to establish that social work practice could be done differently, by which I mean, social work education at a lower level, because of course we were not interested in building BSW or MSW programmes with YUVA. I mean programmes for young people that we used to run as a paraprofessional programme in the College of Social Work, which in YUVA

then grew into a youth animator programme, and then specialised into urban and rural animator programmes as its next chapter. So, if we look at the earliest history of YUVA, that part about really challenging the orthodoxy of social work education and social work practice by creating a demonstrable model run by social workers, is very important. YUVA was formed to challenge and theorise and demonstrate that social work education and social work practice in India needed to be different and it could be different.

In 1984, its journey was just beginning, and under the umbrella of this fervour and inspiration, Minar and the newly formed team of YUVA returned to Jogeshwari, armed with a one-line mandate: "We will intervene in any issue of social justice." (Ramnath, 2005)

The heady early years

The involvement of the early YUVA team in further expanding the paraprofessional training programme had solidified the foundations for a more lasting relationship with the community in Jogeshwari, as well as with its informal or semi-formal groups, such as *Mahila* (womens) and *Yuvak* (youth) *Mandals (*associations*)*. Halfway through 1985, less than a year after the founding of YUVA, 110 individuals had come together, from around 25 youth groups in the region. A resident of one of the communities in Jogeshwari recalls YUVA's early efforts in the region:

> He (Minar) would come from his college in the evenings and would just stand somewhere in the slum, waiting for people. YUVA was the only NGO in Jogeshwari at the time and there was absolutely no dearth of issues to address—from water to communal tensions to electricity and ration cards to *goondaism* [hooliganism or other rough, violent behaviour]. Before YUVA came on the scene, we were not without solutions…We had formed into *Mandals* and even tackled issues such as water and electricity by soliciting the help of, say, a local politician like an MLA[7] or a corporator. But with YUVA, we got to know one another, overcame our fears, and learnt a range of other collective strategies to help address our concerns. (Ramnath, 2005)

Later that year, all these youngsters that YUVA had connected with were brought into a single space for the first time as part of its first formal event with the community: A youth *shibir* (camp). The *shibir* was the first such formal space in which youth from different communities of Jogeshwari met each other, shared their own experiences, and gave their own inputs into how they could work together with YUVA towards bettering the conditions in their areas. Based on learnings from this first *shibir*, the fledgling YUVA's first programme—"Intervention with Youth in Jogeshwari"—was formalised. YUVA's own records of the period say:

> Our very first project, the training of youth from underprivileged sectors in Jogeshwari, a large and neglected *basti* area, consisted of finding a creative and local solution to the many problems faced by the community. In the earliest days the genesis of many of our projects lay in our immediate and

---

[7] Member of Legislative Assembly

often emotional responses to visible acts of injustice. In the first six years of our existence (1984–1990) we used the collective, mass-based approach and direct action to launch a series of interventions with the disadvantaged who included women, street children and pavement dwellers. (Ramnath, 2005)

"Training" as an instrument to collectivise

Since this first systematic attempt, in-depth training to enhance the capacity of the communities of youth has remained a constant. Starting with the 11-month paraprofessional training programme that it took up in its early days, through to the present day (2022), YUVA has implemented a large number of training programmes to suit the needs of the diverse groups of young people it works with.

The centrality of "training" emerged from YUVA's belief that "people are a productive force who themselves could tackle issues affecting them. Through a training process, they could be equipped to handle their own problems." (Ramnath, 2005) This belief pushed YUVA to see its primary role as not that of a project implementer, but a facilitator, able to, through training, equip youth with the tools to identify and resolve issues for themselves. Indeed, training was not just meant for those outside, but became a prerequisite to fully contribute to YUVA's work. As Minar highlights, a trained volunteer was a must:

> It was based on a belief that we did not require only those holding a bachelor's and master's degree in social work to contribute to YUVA's work. Even the 11-month paraprofessional training programme developed by us, or other animators and leadership courses specially designed to cater to community requirements, would be a good starting point to begin work at YUVA, and help develop leadership from among the communities. (yuvaonline, 2018)

Soon, the young YUVA took this belief and approach beyond Jogeshwari to pavement dwellers in Cross Maidan, Colaba, Bombay, who lived in makeshift housing situated on public pavements, and were some of the poorest people in the city. Two students from Minar's alma mater, as part of volunteering with YUVA, set up an informal school for children of pavement dwellers. Barely a few months into its work with pavement dwellers the Supreme Court of India handed down a landmark ruling in July 1985 in the case of Olga Tellis vs. Bombay Municipal Corporation (Ramnath, 2005).

This ruling served to invigorate YUVA and catapult it into an area which Minar feels became one of YUVA's biggest strengths: bringing together and facilitating the activities of collectives and coalitions of NGOs (yuvaonline, 2018). In effect, the judgement enabled YUVA to take its training apparatus to a wider platform. YUVA's response to the ruling symbolised its ability to seize upon the moment, an innate instinct which very much paved YUVA's steep early organisational trajectory.

Olga Tellis: a moment of reckoning

In 1981, the State of Maharashtra and the Bombay Municipal Corporation decided that pavement dwellers in Bombay city would be evicted and deported back to their respective places of origin outside Bombay (the majority of pavement dwellers were economic migrants to the city). Several demolitions were carried out in various impoverished areas of the city before the case was eventually brought to the Supreme Court by the journalist Olga Tellis, where it was debated for nearly four years.

Centre for
Social Impact
and Philanthropy

ISDM
INDIAN SCHOOL OF
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

In its 1985 judgement, the Supreme Court acknowledged that poor economic migrants like the pavement dwellers, who were residing in unsanitary conditions and marshy areas, were doing so not by choice but due to helplessness. However, they agreed with the Bombay Municipal Corporation that these settlements were unauthorised. The judgement further specified that the pavement dwellers could not be removed before one month after that year's monsoon, that unreasonable force could not be used in any action against them, that they had to be given prior notice of any demolition, and that if their dwellings were being demolished, the State would have to find alternate arrangements for those people (Tellis, 2015). However, despite the Supreme Court ruling, pavement evictions continued unabated, often brutally, and with no attempt to resettle displaced populations.

In July 1985, as a response to the Olga Tellis judgement, YUVA formed the Committee for the Right to Housing (CRH) to resist eviction of pavement dwellers. At the time of the verdict, Minar was just returning from a trip to the Netherlands. He recalls:

> I returned to India on the 16th of July 1985 with the plan that the time was ripe for another experiment: a collective of NGOs. Seva Niketan, Vikas Samiti, Terres des Hommes—we called for a meeting on 23rd July and we decided to form a collective at the Bombay level. Sixty organisations came. Committee for the Right to Housing (CRH) was formed as a network of NGOs working on housing issues. Our agenda very clearly was to resist demolitions, to monitor demolitions, and create alternatives for demolitions. Alternatives to demolitions needed to be looked at! (Ramnath, 2005)

YUVA became busy with creating awareness regarding the right to housing for informal settlements, pavement dwellers and homeless groups, ensuring that the relevant government facilities and provisions reached them, finding and suggesting alternatives to demolitions, and enhancing collective leadership and advocacy amongst the populations through training.

The year 1987 was recognised as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless; and YUVA, during the year, associated itself with an emerging movement in India: the National Campaign for Housing Rights (NCHR). NCHR brought YUVA close to a larger section of the society that was experiencing similar injustices related to housing rights. Underlying this decision to associate with NCHR, its records state, was the belief that "the role of the government was not one of providing 'welfare' or mere 'facilitation', but as a guarantor of rights. For YUVA, NCHR became a platform for the articulation of all its experiences on evictions and basic amenities."(YUVA, 2019) With time, YUVA would become more and more involved in housing and settlements and would eventually come to be widely associated with it.

Finding an organisational "form"

In a short time, YUVA had covered a lot of ground. From channelling the energy of volunteers in a *basti* in Jogeshwari to participating in a national-level advocacy movement based on something as fundamental and large as housing, there was much that was experienced and absorbed. Involvement in housing had altered the course of YUVA's work and added several new threads. This span and momentum of work, now covering a wider range of issues and much larger constituencies, to not break apart, also had to eventually find shelter in a common frame or way of thinking.

In the unconventional and bold manner typical of YUVA by now, it went ahead and developed its own ambitious and integrated model which would bring together seemingly disparate threads of

work—human rights, women's rights, youth and children's rights, not to mention the notions of volunteerism, training and collectivisation. This integration expanded the canvas: it helped YUVA work with larger populations and across more locations. To lend further thrust to its work at the level of advocacy, it also set up a Legal Resource Centre related to women and law, labour rights and tenant rights (YUVA, 2019).

During this attempt at integration came also the recognition that research, documentation and media advocacy were core to its work. This recognition came to prove to be highly resourceful. YUVA's efforts towards detailed documentation, compilation and making public a body of knowledge of its work became an important organisational facet. It was ensuring those outside had equal access to information in its possession, long before the idea of right to information was formally codified in Indian legislation.

Today, this multi-decadal body of knowledge (which is physically housed as Urban Resource Centre in YUVA Centre, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai) supplies communities with real examples and insights on community-led rights work. It has been used by other organisations as well as by successive generations of team members within YUVA to guide practice; and furthermore, as evidence to inform policy work. It constitutes a highly valuable repository of knowledge on the experiences of marginalised and poor sections of society in India, a veritable organisational asset.

Living "adult learning": theorising from practice

Minar dwells at length on YUVA's innate need to seek integration in action:

> Something I realised very early on was that in the for-profit sector, you have companies which have been there for more than 100 years. But if you look at the not-for-profit sector, you probably couldn't give me the name of even a single, functioning not-for-profit in India which is more than 100 years old. There are some very old organisations—Red Cross, for example. In India, we have organisations like Prarthana Samaj, which is more than 100 years old, and they are still doing some small activities here and there, but they are no longer vibrant contributors to civil society as we understand it today.

> So this became one of my obsessions: why can't a not-for-profit organisation be a centurion organisation? And at a very early stage I started talking about this, saying that my obsession was to build a centurion organisation, one which survives 100-plus years, and that what we (in YUVA) really needed to look at was what it takes to really build a centurion organisation.

> I was a very avid and eclectic reader, from philosophy to autobiographies to fiction, everything. I read a lot of essays and notes and philosophical writings on how theory should inform practice and how practice should inform theory. So, theorising became a very important part of YUVA; that is, whatever we do, how do we theorise from that?

Minar continues, emphasising how constant reflections could lead to identifying and joining together different parts that make for an integrated social work practice:

> So, we started building various frameworks. On the organisation side, we built a framework basically saying that the "programme" is your core; that is what you want to achieve; that's what defines your presence in the world

out there. But for that to happen, you need an organisation which supports that programming: it needs systems, processes and structures; and then it needs people. I used to say PD, OD and HR were the keys to institution-building: programme development, organisational development and human resource development, and understanding how all those three work in tandem.

If you look at the triangle, PD is at the top, while OD and HR are two other corners. Basically, programme development must be supported by organisation development and human resource development simultaneously. Many times what happens even in present-day NGOs, they're so focused on programming that they forget the other elements. Therefore, their programming is from the new century but their organisation and their human resources are of the older century. I'm exaggerating a bit, but that's the reality. If you really do the gap analysis, you would find the gaps very, very strongly in those areas because all these three have to work in tandem for an organisation to remain sustainable.

That basically gave us the idea that, from the programming side, we needed to have a continuous scan of the changing external environment and have foresight on what trends were emerging. And not only look at the challenges of today, but keep an eye on the challenges likely to emerge tomorrow for. How do we track those challenges? How do we create those scenarios of the future? In all, that is the programme side.

To do that, you need good thinkers and good analysts who can think through those issues. And if you want to do that, then you need a particular type of a human resource pool. You need particular kinds of competencies and capabilities in your human resources. So then, how do you create the workforce of the future in that sense? Not only for today, but for the future, and that then should inform your talent management, your human resource development strategies, all of that. And that's where we recruited some of the best talent; we must have been quite convincing to actually get people to work with YUVA at lower salaries. We had people with MBA Finance, MBA Development Studies working at NGO salaries. So, that's the talent part; and then comes the organisational development.

If you really want to be cutting edge on your programming side, your organisation's systems, processes and structures should support that cutting-edge thinking, those cutting-edge interventions and cutting-edge processes; and that is when the whole process of looking at how we reform our Board came up. We may have been one of the first organisations who did a complete skill analysis of our Board membership. How many organisations did that in the 90s? Or even today? I don't know, are there that many organisations doing that kind of really proper skill analysis? And then we said, OK, if this is the skill set that our board has and this is our programme strategy, is this skill set appropriate for guiding and overseeing that strategy? If not, if there is a disconnect, then we need to reform the Board.

And that's when we started recruiting people from outside the social work profession as members of the board, for instance Arun Joshi who at the

time was a Senior Vice President within Goenka Group[8]. We started identifying the gaps and actually recruiting people so that we could get the highest level of competencies on the Board—people from human resources backgrounds, legal backgrounds—so that they would have the capacity and capability to oversee that cutting-edge programme strategy. Because otherwise you'd have a cutting-edge strategy led by a CEO or ED, but a Board which is completely in the last century, who don't even understand what the organisation is doing and they just become what you call a "compliance" Board, or which I call a "rubber stamp Board." So, how do we change that? That then brought about the changes in all our governance systems and the management systems.

All this that I'm explaining here is so that it is clear that multiple layers of thinking go into building or leading an organisation or an institution. You need to be looking at all these things together: building theory from practice, sharpening your practice on the basis of your theory, looking at the organisation, having a continuous process of organisational development, organisational renewal, organisational rejuvenation, and looking at your cadre of human resources and building them to take over.

I used to always say that the best leaders are those who dig their own graves, which means they make themselves replaceable. They dig their own graves because they create leaders to take over from them. That is how it should be and that is how it can be and that is what we tried to do in YUVA.

This act of reflection was not a solo show but was carried out through, by then, a well-established YUVA approach: create a collective and regenerative space, and bring everyone, from senior leadership to support staff, together in that space: an approach not far removed from the echoes of its early youth "*shibirs.*" Except the space this time was a culture-building, self-reflective one called "Staff School," a week-long retreat for every member of YUVA.

Staff School focussed on YUVA's values, scans of the external environment, whether YUVA remained relevant to its context, competency and skill-building, as well as open discussions of emerging controversial issues of the time, such as same-sex relationships[9]. Content and frameworks were created to allow four major "tracks" within YUVA: leadership, core operations, middle management, and community organisers to dive deep into their respective areas, along with "plenary" sessions that brought everyone together. The retreats themselves were often planned for locations where the entire team could observe and learn from regional institutions, such as local governance systems in Kerala. The entire, comprehensive programme was designed on principles of andragogy (adult learning).

Minar emphasises: "So, the PD-OD-HR framework was not just theoretical for us. So much was thought through to be an organisation with cutting-edge philosophy and organisational practices, and Staff School was one of the spaces where we brought all of this together." Underlining how comprehensive Staff School was, he adds, with a touch of amusement: "We used to say that once you've attended Staff School, you had no excuse to say that you're 'new' to YUVA. Once you attended, you were fully integrated and immersed in YUVA, even if you were just three months in."

---

[8] Today RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group.
[9] decades before landmark rulings on the subject (e.g 2009).

Towards the end of the 1980s, YUVA emerged as an invigorating product of the post-Emergency era, birthed in one of India's most iconic cities and in an attuned academic milieu that sponsored critical questioning. The "theorising from practice to build an organisation" credo that it had established indicated a self-awareness and a maturity of thinking much beyond its then 6-year lifespan. It held its central space for marginalised youth, but at the same time, it had also learnt to pay close attention to its external environment and to deeply study and calibrate itself to be as relevant as possible to its present moment and its future.

The timing of this need to be relevant could not have been any more fortuitous. Liberalisation of the country's economy was just a short way down the road in 1991, and would herald a shift in the urban development narrative, and also, as history would later come to tell the tale, the socio-political culture and the mindset of an entire polity at large. The term "change" does little service to describe what happened over this period: India, and an increasingly urbanising India, started to morph.

The PO-PI strategy: synthesis of rights and assets

The New Economic Policy, 1991, included a set of reforms that liberalised the Indian economy and its finances significantly, leading to expansion in the role of private and foreign investment, introduction of market-led systems of resource allocation, enhanced role of notions of private property, and increased competitiveness of several domestic high-tech and professional services sectors in the global economy (such as software, pharmaceuticals and consulting services, amongst many others). Restrictions were relaxed for private companies to enter several core industries which were previously reserved for the public sector.

According to YUVA, the announcement of the New Economic Policy triggered a major re-evaluation of the organisation's thinking because "we realised that it would result in a total qualitative shift in how civil society organisations engaged with the State and we also expected it to have adverse impacts on the populations we worked with" (YUVA, 2019).

Following a period of intense research into the economic and social implications of liberalisation, where the organisation analysed multiple emerging scenarios as well as the experiences of similarly developing countries that had introduced economic policies geared towards liberalisation, it realised that for the most marginalised, such reforms often led to the loss of existing rights as well as their assets (such as land and shelter).

What YUVA understood was that securing rights from the State was one thing, but in an environment of market liberalisation, there was a need to focus more strongly on the community-level infrastructure and institutions that could sustain those hard-fought rights and bring communities tangible benefits in terms of improved health and nutrition, resources, livelihoods and assets. Minar uses the example of damming projects on the Narmada river to illustrate YUVA's new strategy in the wake of the New Economic Policy:

> So, one of the struggles with the Narmada (river) was the fishing rights on some of the dams. Who gets the fishing rights? The key demand was that the fishing rights should be given to people whose lands are getting submerged under the water bodies created as a result of damming: that was the rights-based struggle. OK, fantastic. When you win that battle, then the next thing is: how do you sustain that right? If you want to sustain that right, then you need completely different economic institutions to manage a formation of a cooperative of fisherfolk: manage marketing, manage accountancy, manage understanding of the markets, where to send the fish,

which season we'll get better value in, which markets to sell in. All of that cannot be done by activists who are only trained to fight for rights.

That is why we came up with "people's organisations (POs)" which fight for rights and whose business is to defend rights, to create new rights and to promote rights. But then, you need a parallel process called "people's institutions (PI)" whose business is to translate rights into assets and to ensure those assets actually consolidate and grow so that people can actually get the benefit of the rights that they have earned with hard struggle.

Thus, rights secured through the struggles of community groups (POs)—the same groups that YUVA had convened and facilitated as its core work since inception—would now be sustained through the development of people's institutions (PIs): community-led-and-based micro-institutions, which would provide alternatives through which communities could manage and control their own resources without needing to rely on free market institutions (e.g. credit cooperatives, housing cooperatives and community resource centres as alternatives to mainstream banking and finance) (YUVA, 2019). This approach of strengthening POs and supporting them with PI infrastructure came to be known as the "PO-PI strategy." The PO-PI strategy was a significant addition to YUVA's theorising corpus, conceptually binding together its many different threads of work.

Within this strategy, YUVA's role would be to support and facilitate the development and capacity building of these community-based organisations and institutions, as well as helping them to think through plans for sustainability and longevity very much as it was also doing for its own self. More critically, the PO-PI strategy was a way for YUVA to remain rooted in the needs of its communities as the economic paradigm shifted in India. As YUVA would later succinctly put it: "The danger of becoming only an ideologically driven organisation could lead to an alienation from the day-to-day survival struggles of people. People's Institutions (PIs) were an attempt to sustain our work with people's organisations (POs)." (YUVA, 2019)

In hindsight, the need for these adaptations seem obvious, but at the cusp of a major change about to encompass Indian society, they were also perhaps bold decisions for a young non-profit, especially one that traced its own heritage and inspiration to the idea of social justice enveloped within feminist thinking: ideas that not only seemed quaint, but out-of-date and at odds with the marching drums of liberalisation and privatisation, and the soon-to-be-fashioned idols of this new age: "GDP growth" and a rush to consume. Remarkably, trends that YUVA saw coming, as its records state: "In a country that was still largely rural, the impacts [of the New Economic Policy] on rural development were also foreboding. It would promote an extractive policy of the rural natural resource base for an industrialisation that could be globally competitive." (YUVA, 2019)

The onset of liberalisation also marked YUVA's spread into rural India, as the boundaries between the spaces started to become economically, socially and environmentally less distinct. The focus on rural contexts started in earnest with the 1993 Killari-Latur earthquake, one of the worst earthquakes of the 20th century in India, resulting in the loss of around 10,000 lives (Somasekar, 2019). YUVA supported relief efforts as well as participated in the rebuilding in the aftermath of the disaster. Its role there, and in other rural areas to which its work spread, was focussed around livelihood development and natural resource management: helping people live off and stay on their land. YUVA also worked to alleviate the difficulties faced by urban migrants and to create supportive conditions that could facilitate their smooth return to life in their rural homelands.

In realising the true significance of the 1991 policy early on, YUVA's conscious act of thinking through and looking beyond made it possible for its past work to meet the future, a future whose implications suddenly seemed to cloud the very idea of civil society in thick fog. It was an act that demanded the collective energies of the entire organisation: "to analyse the emerging scenarios" in detail and hold "extensive reflections through a series of study circles" to understand in as much depth as possible the impacts of the new paradigm on the most marginalised.

Thus, while liberalisation reset the clock for India it was a marker of settlement for YUVA, and its growing maturity was starting to impart to its thinking an "institutional" character. It was nearing a decade since it had been a part of civil society. There was much that had been thought, defined and expressed, not least of which was its own clear sense of where it stood, what it wanted to do in society and how it would achieve it. This sense found firm expression as a set of core values: social justice; gender justice; secularism and democracy; honesty and integrity; and environmental sustainability. Along with these, the organisation had also articulated a set of 11 levels of intervention which would provide direction to its work (refer to Exhibit 1).

What enabled this maturity of thinking to take hold was YUVA's incessant efforts to integrate in thought and practise what it was gathering while constantly pushing its organisational frontiers. Despite its seemingly wild ride, the first decade was not one of moving from one agenda to another but of layering.

The significance of what YUVA had created, put in motion and crystallised over this period is perhaps testified best by the sheer longevity of the organisation. Back in the mid-1980s though, it was not a given that it would stand the test of time as it had done, as Minar recalls: "When YUVA was formed, there were also people who were opposed to me, who basically felt that 'Minar is not an institution builder, he is not going to build an organisation, he is going to be a very individualistic person…'".Thirty-eight years later, this facilitative platform and spirit of volunteerism remains alive and the "I" stands firmly reversed: an institution and not an individual.

The founder moves on

According to Roshni Nuggehalli, the current (2022) Executive Director of YUVA, as the organisation's work started to expand, it continued to maintain a strong community connection and a human rights-centric approach to all of its work; but it also consciously started to develop the linkages between what it was observing on the ground to what was driving these circumstances at the policy level. This curiosity and inquiry to put its own work in the larger context marked the spread of its work to new thematic sectors, locations outside Mumbai, as well as associations with international bodies (such as the Habitat International Coalition).

YUVA had come to matter when it came to issues it was involved in. It was no longer solely an organisation helmed by driven youngsters. What it did held significance beyond the four walls of YUVA itself and cast greater responsibility upon it. As an organisation, it was a delicate but heavy balancing act and it also called for looking inside with the same perspectives it brought to its work. Minar reminisces on where the organisation found itself as it turned 10, and traces how this balancing really played out over a span of nearly 10 more years after that:

> When YUVA became 10 years old, we did this thing called the People's Review. It was a large gathering of all the communities that we were working with: women, youth, community activists, and we were managing the large gathering with very participatory methodologies. We had seminars with intellectuals, seminars with the community leaders of our large

gathering, with the community leaders of various types and segments. Community leaders would review each strand of YUVA's work along with an independent panel. And around that time, I started feeling that now it is time for me to leave. Because again, don't forget that obsession of building a centurion organisation. And one element of building a centurion organisation is that the founders should not come in the way of the organisation or the organisation should not come in the way of the founders. Two things can happen when institutions get built. One is where the founder becomes an obstacle for the institution because they have not built capacities to be appropriately in tune with what is required. Or, the founder's ambitions are much bigger and beyond what the organisation's mandate is. In such cases, the founder will drag the organisation behind them, or they will drag the organisation down because they are no longer capable of really taking the organisation to the next step. This is just a very broad stroke analysis I'm providing here; and I didn't want any of this to happen.

By that time I was very much internationally engaged with various things. I was already strongly engaged with UN Advocacy. In 1992, I was one of the chief negotiators at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit and was engaged on housing rights with the UN. So, I felt that it was time for me to move on. By that time, YUVA was in three states: Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. We had proven our capacities in our crisis interventions, like the Mumbai riots in 1992 and the Killari-Latur earthquake (1993). We had worked on humanitarian crises, human rights issues, anti-eviction struggles, sustainable agriculture processes in Vidarbha, technology initiatives, consulting work with World Bank, with the Asian Development Bank, the whole range. Our portfolio was quite large. And so, it was important for me to then insist on leaving. But for 10 further years, the board refused. They said, "No way you are going away anywhere, because we are now at a place where we need to build to the next stage." Somehow, I fell for their convincing.

Then, when YUVA became 15 years old, we had a similar review process and I could see YUVA going from strength to strength: our community processes were really strong, our recognition both nationally and globally was quite strong. I was a convener appointed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development on the Habitat II process, so we were in the key government processes. During the Janata Dal government (1996) we were in three working groups of the Planning Commission. YUVA was in all the spaces and places that it needed to be, and I felt now was the time for me to move out so that other people could then really take over. And this time I was absolutely adamant. I said no way I'm going to give in to your [the Board's] request to continue. Gagan [Sethi] was the president of YUVA at that time. He said Minar, OK, we agree that you should now depart, but we are not going to be able to get a replacement for you. So, he gave me the challenge to reorganise YUVA in such a way that it would be manageable for whoever came in as the new leadership.

Over the next five-year period—YUVA's 15th to its 20th years—YUVA was reorganised around its core competencies. It was restructured as: YUVA Rural (natural resource management interventions) and YUVA Urban

(migration and urbanisation interventions) as programming entities; YUVA Consulting as a non-profit consultancy; and YUVA Central which would support all YUVA's activities. So, it took five years to build each of those institutions, getting them registered independently, getting their Boards in place, getting their mandates and protocols sorted. We did a lot of thinking, because financial reorganisation, legal reorganisation, human resource reorganisation of the institution was all quite complex. When you split the organisation from one entity to four different entities, all these layers need to be looked at.

Finally, in June or July of 2004, when I completed exactly 20 years, I left YUVA. And since then I've been very clear, I would not be a member of the Board. I will just continue to be a member of the General Body. I'm available for any advice, but only on a request basis. I'm not going to myself come in and intervene in anything, and I followed those principles. I would go for the yearly general body meeting, meet everybody, say hello, and that was it. That's my role, as far as YUVA is concerned, and I'm extremely happy about it because that's the way it should be; that's the way the institutions move away from founders.

Scripting a new chapter

The five-year transition could not be a day too long: with the turn of the millennium, YUVA's work expanded at a steady clip. It grew beyond Maharashtra to Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. Its reorganisation into multiple entities added its own complexity in the beginning. Subsequently, during this transition, the central office was finding itself stretched thin and struggling to reach the depth of intervention and relationship-building in communities which had always characterised YUVA.

Much as the first phase of YUVA was marked by coalescing disparate threads into one organisational form, post 2004, YUVA worked hard to integrate the many newly-minted entities. Thus, succession was not only of leadership but also of devising systems to unify and streamline governance and operations across these entities. For this, there had to be a unifying foundation: the common legacy and core values of YUVA and free sharing of intervention frameworks and other knowledge between entities. Each was free to craft its own vision and mission but drawing from this "common." Overseeing this "common" was a centralised YUVA Governing Board, as well as a Chairs forum and Directors forum, comprising the Chairpersons and the Directors of each decentralised entity respectively.

At the same time, Minar's departure also set a precedent for the notion of executive leadership within YUVA and its role going forward. The message was abundantly clear: the organisation had to be more than its founder. Current Executive Director Roshni, speaking in late 2021, reflects on this period for YUVA:

> I think, when he [Minar] completed 15 years, he had already announced to the Board that he was leaving. That was very clear. The Board knew it. And they took five years to do things like decentralisation of the organisation. Some parts of the organisation branched off as separate entities altogether. I'm happy that we were able to get over that blip. Often we see that when a founder leaves there's a dip, and then five to six years later the founder sort of waits on the sidelines and realises "Oh, I have to get back, otherwise, this organisation is going to collapse," and they come back either as chair of the Board or an advisor or something. I think we have been able to get over that

blip. And you know, move on to a new approach to leadership where it is less reliant on a single leader.

Leadership of a feminist hue

Leadership, at least, was nothing new to YUVA. It was what it started with: developing leadership amongst youth from marginalised communities, and through its first phase of 20 years, it tried its best to set up a similar milieu inside. It had deliberately made an effort to be a place where young people could come in, contribute to meaningful work on the ground, and then move on when it no longer suited their circumstances. It had also always looked to ensure that it was open to young people from a diverse set of backgrounds, including "not only those from formal academic streams, but also those enriched by life experiences who could contribute to the work in significantly different ways and help the organisation strengthen its competencies." (YUVA, 2019)

This made sure that the cultural legacy the founder left behind was heavy, not to speak of YUVA's ideals, the variety and nature of its work, its repute, and its spread. Even though Minar gave five years to transition out, it was no easy adjustment to come to terms with. It was no surprise that the first decade immediately after Minar's exit was a period of upheaval for YUVA internally as it adjusted to the transition. The organisation went through a sequence of Executive Directors over this period who did not stay in the post for more than three to four years at a time.

According to Roshni, this period saw YUVA transition in a "very interesting way, from being driven by a very strong, very charismatic and very visible founder to the now professionally driven organisation with people (executive leaders) coming in, spending some time and leaving." However, she emphasises that this characterisation—from founder-driven to professionally driven, while accurate in the conventional understanding of management, would miss the essence of what YUVA was trying to achieve. There was a deliberate thought in the periodic rotation of the Directors, as the organisation looked to carve its own leadership philosophy that separated the importance of a single leader from the importance of YUVA's work. Its organisational strategic thrust—first stamped on its succession plan—was to unfold with greater intentionality, the underlying feminist principles that have been a cornerstone of its approach since inception. Roshni elaborates, saying:

> An important focus has been on trying to build more of a collective sort of leadership style and structure with very core feminist principles, which has meant moving beyond very strict hierarchies and trying to be a little more open in that space, looking at collectives and at what we call "everyone is a leader." So, having independent nodes of strengthened leadership as opposed to a one charismatic-leader model. That has influenced the way we go about work with our people, the sort of people we hire, and the people we feel we know will stay with us for a while. The orientation to more of a collective feminist style of leadership has had an impact on those areas… There are many people in the organisation who drive. So it's not like, if I leave, everything's going to fall apart, but maybe it will also change.

Through Minar's exit and the tumultuous transition YUVA was indeed trying to define its own language of executive leadership. At its core lay a simple intention: that people shouldn't come to YUVA to work for the leader. Instead, its democratic and collective cultural fabric is intended to allow its work to be driven forward by the passion of youth to better their own society. This strong cultural scaffolding, that no

single individual can overpower, aspires to authentically lead the organisation despite any number of changes to executive leadership. Roshni summarises the change, saying:

> For example, now I've been here for seven years, I'm perhaps going to be here for another few years, and then I will leave and then somebody else will come in. I hope we'll be able to take it [this form of leadership] forward.
>
> So, I think the intention was very clear in the 90s. This was the way we were going to go. It was just about pushing through and making sure that it happened, which I'm very happy that we were able to do… So now, the sort of people who do come into YUVA are those who know YUVA as an organisation, not necessarily those who know members of the senior leadership.

This cultural scaffolding is of course made of the people who make up YUVA. In true feminist fashion, it was not that the work grew and people followed, rather a certain manner of people convened and the work grew out of it. Indeed, the work itself self-selects the type of people YUVA attracts, as Marina (Associate Director, YUVA) highlights:

> I think people who come to YUVA come because they are attracted to this sort of work. They come with that sort of drive and passion and real commitment to work on people's issues, to work in communities. We recruit freshers from colleges, we recruit from within communities that we work with, and I think those who stay are those who want to do this sort of work.

The motto that YUVA set out with in 1984 was: "We will intervene in any issue of social justice," which continues to enliven its work and reinforce its ideals. Its experience since the turn of the millennium likewise gave YUVA one more motto: "Everyone is a leader," established as a guide to help the organisation through the uncertainty of transition. As the period since Minar's exit highlights, this evolved idea of leadership is what has ensured YUVA's completion of nearly four decades of work based on adherence to ideals, external forces notwithstanding. And YUVA did take the motto "Everyone is a leader" truly to heart. It encapsulated what feminist leadership meant to YUVA: a culture that enabled each to lead in one's own context.

"Everyone is a leader": a matter of faith

Today, many nonprofits that work on leadership amongst youth look increasingly to hire experienced or highly qualified talent: for whom there is great competition. YUVA is amongst those diminishing group of prominent civil society organisations that, over its entire lifespan, chose to work both in communities and within the organisation with the most marginalised sections of youth: often semi-literate (by conventional norms of schooling), and belonging to the most underprivileged sections of society.

The organisation has a deep respect for the populations that it works with. This reflects not only in terms of its work in communities, but the opportunities provided within YUVA for those same people. Roshni categorically emphasises this about the type of organisation YUVA has always been:

> In our organisation, more than 70% are from historically marginalised social groups (such as Scheduled Castes, Nomadic Tribes, and Other Backward Classes). And this is not like a diversity strategy that we have done. It's just

the way this organisation has always been, the way people get attracted to working in YUVA, and the people that get attracted to working in YUVA. So I think a very important thing for us is respecting where everybody's from, and trying to share that respect.

This composition of people is very much in keeping with YUVA's feminist core, but building the organisation around these principles has been a steep learning curve, for while "Everyone is a leader" is seemingly simple and easy to mouth, it is exceedingly difficult to make into an organisational way of life. Roshni stresses:

> One is the basic principle of everyone being a leader in one's own life. It doesn't matter really—your identity, your education, even your ability—actually doesn't matter. What matters is who you are, and whether you're able to believe in yourself, and do what you want to do in this space. For us, that's a very, very big principle. The other principle has been one of trust, and maybe more than trust, of faith, actually; not in the religious sense, but knowing that people will make mistakes and things will go pretty badly wrong and that can have implications. But if we have faith in the person, then we work around it, and we move beyond those things. I think that is another important reason why the people who stay, do stay. They sense that this is a space where they can grow without having external benchmarks like "we have to do this and reach that;" grow at their own pace and acknowledge that it's not linear. Growth is not linear. You go up and then fall back down. Again, trust and faith can also backfire. And it causes us to also have months of challenging situations when maybe there's a misuse of that trust. But that doesn't mean that we step away from that principle. We realise that this principle or this way of working will come with its gaps and challenges.

"Navigating these very choppy waters"

As this understanding of collective leadership evolved, the transition tested YUVA on other fronts too. According to Roshni, "The transition had worked, but there had been some challenges." The most critical of these was financial.

The period up until 2014 marked the end of the "institutional funding era," as the Companies Act, 2013, came into force, permanently altering the funding landscape for Indian civil society, as well as shaping the way programmes and interventions were designed and implemented. Increasing proportions of YUVA's funding started coming from CSR sources, the demands of which were at times at odds with YUVA's approach in communities.

The organisation has been careful in navigating this new funding landscape: trying to meet its costs without allowing the character and compulsions of short-term target-driven projects from interfering too much with its approach to work. Roshni highlights the nature of the shift, saying:

> We seek meaningful partnerships. If it is more about meeting targets than seeing if some change is actually happening or not, then we need to reassess what we're getting into. We are clear that we work for people in marginalised communities, to help them access their rights, not just to implement programmes. Sometimes this focus means we are not able to

grow year-on-year. We are stable, but we are still at the Rs 5-6 crore turnover size. There are some things we have to give up to continue in this way. But I think just being rooted is important. Sometimes we need to take some steps to balance the donors' and our expectations. But we do not change the intrinsic nature of our work or who we want to be, driven by their priorities.

We are responsive, and we keep ensuring that we front people's demands. If it means that we need to move a little slower but with more intentionality, we are okay to do that.

In 2014, close on the heels of the introduction of the Companies Act, one of YUVA's major donors parted ways. With the finances not in the best of health, for Roshni—who had just stepped in that same year—and the senior leadership team, the biggest priority was ensuring that YUVA's people got paid at the end of the month, and that work could continue unimpeded. It took a slow and painstaking process of strengthening its conversations with donors and partners before, eventually, new sources of funding were located and a measure of stability achieved.

Handling financial strain during founder transition is one of the most challenging events a civil society organisation can confront. Founders put in place and shape its building blocks. Its networks of peers and funders are often a result of the founders' personalities; and the overall level of commitment to the organisation, be it emotional, intellectual or material, is difficult to exceed by those who succeed. And if it is an organisation, like YUVA, raised on certain ideals, the challenge is amplified: succeeding a personality is perhaps easier than succeeding a system of values, beliefs and principles.

There was no surer mark of the magnitude of the challenge that it had grappled with then that it took nearly 10 years of patient work for YUVA following the transition to separate it from its founder and start to find its own rhythm. Having just about done so, leaving its "tenuous" and uncertain founder-less position, the financial strain in a rapidly changing funding (and political) context ensured that YUVA could hardly breathe easy. It found itself in the position of having to constantly watch over its own legacy. As Roshni reflects, all through this period, a reminder of its legacy was its most potent weapon:

Then, it was really moving towards: how do we go back to what we are here to do? Moving from that survival mode to: can we breathe normally and do what we set out to do? Which primarily is working with the marginalised, helping them build their collectives, and supporting them to access human rights through both ground work as well as policy-level work. So I would say, programmatically, our overall focus and strategies continue to remain the same. I think what keeps changing is the external environment. Since 2014, externally, things have changed, in terms of, discrimination, inequality, as well as economically, socially and culturally. And so that challenge we have faced as an organisation, in terms of how we redirect our programming to start addressing some of those issues beyond just core developmental questions.

But at the same time, these seven years (since 2014) have also been about huge changes in the statutory regime. Although we had stabilised in the first two years, it's never been a smooth flow, because every year something or the other comes up, and over the last two years, of course, so much has

changed, not just due to COVID, but also due to the whole regulatory regime [FCRA Amendment, 2020].

> So, the core work and our mission and vision stay the same. It's really about how we continue to navigate these external environment shifts, which have just kept coming in different ways: politically, financially, socially, developmentally. For instance, in addition to our work on ground, how do we work to front alternative narratives of justice, dignity, peace, and make it more appealing for the middle class to participate? That's really what we have had to do. Those are the changes we've had to keep making; not so much in our core human rights focus. And that's maybe something that the Board helps to hold together: that core focus. We will work with people. We are originally an activist organisation. So, while we might change our ways of work, we won't lose that thing of always being with people and pushing their agenda forward, not so much the organisational agenda. Those things have stayed the same. And the Board supports us in making sure that that stays steady while the operations keep navigating these very choppy waters.

Ironically, it was precisely such shifts that further elevated the relevance of organisations like YUVA, with their emphasis on collectivisation and facilitating the community leaders themselves. Indeed, if there was ever a time that India was in need of a commitment to social justice, it would perhaps be this period.

An independent vocabulary of "talent"

Alongside and in tandem with these ideals, YUVA has always taken vanguard action when it came to its own organisational development. It was one of the first formal civil society organisations to put in place an internal committee to address any issues of workplace harassment or discrimination, develop a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) policy and a paternity leave policy long before it became legally obligatory to do so, and one of the first to develop staff policy manuals and to conduct formal performance appraisals. This set of early practices continue to form the backbone of YUVA's people practices.

In recent times, however, the civil society ecosystem around YUVA has mushroomed into entities and organisations that embrace and integrate the language and practices of scale, digitisation, and highly evolved talent management strategies and models into their programmatic and HR practices: notions that are in many ways in uncomfortable and perhaps stark contrast to the nature of community work that YUVA is entwined with and with whom it works. YUVA continues to steadfastly hold onto the basic tenet that any change in its internal policies and practices must be relevant in the organisation's own context, notwithstanding what other organisations may follow or practice. Change simply as a way to keep up with the times is alien to the organisation's temper.

This independence of thinking about its own people begins foremost with being particular about finding the right language to think through these aspects. YUVA, for instance, is a touch uncomfortable with phrases like "talent management strategy," or even "talent," for they are simply not in its vocabulary of the way it relates to its people. According to Roshni, the organisation has never drawn a clear distinction between the people it works with in communities and those that work within its walls as employees. It is intended to be the space where people from various sections of society are able to come together and collectivise to achieve something that is of importance to them.

Evolving a personnel management function appropriate to such a context has been a huge challenge for YUVA. On the one hand, there is a strong need to have in place the structures, processes and dedicated people management personnel to be able to support its people across the full spectrum of learning and development and individual needs. On the other hand, YUVA's team composition—many of whom are from the communities it works in and who come from marginalised backgrounds—demands personnel in this role who are able to understand the context of, empathise with, and authentically connect to its people. While it has personnel who handle the administrative component of people management, the organisation has as yet not built a dedicated personnel function that fulfils these deeper cultural requirements, and has chosen to wait until the right match is found—wary of the effect on its people of a typical HR function disconnected from the essence of the organisation, its people and its culture. Marina explains the difficulty of locating the type of personnel manager YUVA needs:

> They would have to be able to understand the whole culture, like how our field teams work. That cultural gap is very real. There are residents from the community working in the organisation whose way of working is very different. The way they approach things is different. You need to understand them. Otherwise, you're not able to build that connection and see how this person from the community can maybe grow into a leadership-level position; how they can maybe blossom into doing other work within the organisation. In terms of bridging that gap, there have been efforts, but it remains a challenge, also because there is simultaneously a functional demand on the HR role that requires a high-level skill set.

> The majority of those who work at YUVA come here having gone through a lot of struggle themselves; and maybe an HR manager with caste and class privilege, or someone in that position might not fully understand why some people are not able to fill out forms a certain way, why they are not able to write reports a certain way, why things might get delayed. They might not fully understand the very challenging family and home circumstances some of our people come from. Someone who has not had exposure to their social realities will not understand why it is that this person is not able to meet certain organisational requirements on a regular basis, not understanding that maybe they live in a very small house with a lot of people. It's a bit of an immediate requirement for [an HR manager at YUVA] to empathise with people who have come from certain backgrounds and who are trying to make a life, make a career in this sector.

Living its character: the compensation conundrum

The dilemma Marina expresses is a dilemma of an organisation that is unwilling to make trade-offs if those trade-offs went to the heart of what defined the organisation's character. A particularly difficult testing ground, especially for an organisation anchored in feminist principles, is its approach to compensation: how much and in what ways it chooses to spend on itself.

Roshni is candid that compensation is a "stark" challenge that YUVA faces, and that pay scales at YUVA are on the lower end of the spectrum of civil society organisations, and especially low for an urban space like Mumbai, where living costs are higher than average. The organisation has also put in place a further self-imposed restriction, where maximum wages at YUVA are restricted to no more than seven times the minimum. She notes that these constraints make it difficult to retain talent for long periods of time, and that the primary cause of attrition is not a cultural or a work-related issue. People stay with YUVA until such a

time that the compensation level starts to restrict their ability to live complete lives, at which point they move on, as Roshni shares:

> They will not stay because of the money; it is only because of what they get from working with YUVA. So then, automatically, your pool of available people reduces massively. This is also why "talent" is a word that we shy away from a little bit because we are not only attracting "talented" people, we also want people who can come into this space and work in the way in which we want to work.
>
> In terms of compensation it is very challenging. Not just for hiring a graduate (from an established institution) who nowadays expects Rs. 60,000 rupees at starting, but also for our other people, because we don't pay enough to meet living wages. People need to also survive. Not that we are below minimum wages, but it's not enough in a city like Mumbai, particularly, because most of our staff are also here. So, it is absolutely a challenge for one to even hire fresh people, both graduates out of college or even those without an education. And then in terms of retention it's a formula. People who like YUVA, and who think this organisation makes a difference to them, will stick it out as long as they can financially manage to stick it out. For some young people, it's three years. For some people, it's five years or ten years. So, it's not that attrition is very high like that. But often people do leave because they've just reached the limit in terms of how long they can survive on these meagre salaries; or not just survive, I mean, very, very fair to them, they feel that "Now I want to go and get paid for what is my true market value," which is just very fair.

Notwithstanding any of the above, YUVA continues to attract fresher students from premier development colleges around the country (though they constitute a small proportion compared to youth they take on from more socially underprivileged backgrounds). It continues to be staffed predominantly by young people and today has around 55 permanent staff and over 100 associated with the organisation on a contractual basis. According to Roshni, around 60% of the organisation is below the age of 35. Thus, despite this compensation conundrum, what is it about YUVA that continues to attract young people, and what motivates them to stay?

An authentic and rich space

Evidently, YUVA provides a particularly attractive space for youngsters looking to develop experience. The organisation's work is multi-layered, cuts across thematics, and has strong emphasis on both field-level and institutional work. Its sheer experience as a stalwart of the urban development context like Mumbai for nearly 40 years provides valuable exposure for young people in the early phases of their careers. Marina elaborates on the factors that, from her experience, attract and motivate young people at YUVA:

> Many, especially freshers from good colleges that join, join for maybe one or two years, and then they see this as sort of a stepping stone to maybe doing something like public policy or their Ph.D, because it gives them really good field experience that a lot of people need in their careers. So that is one level of what motivates people to join YUVA.

Centre for
Social Impact
and Philanthropy

ISDM
INDIAN SCHOOL OF
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

YUVA provides a mix of not just community-level work, but also, you're able to understand policy, you're able to work on law and to understand how law gets translated into the community. So, it's not just community work, there is that space for practice and reflection on the work. So, I think that is what motivates many to join. What motivates people to stay? Again, it's just this belief in the work that they're doing, that this work is meaningful to them, that they feel that the values they hold and the values of the organisation match. We've seen people who've left corporate jobs and joined YUVA. I often look at them and wonder what it is that retains them within the organisation, and I think it is just the fact that they can see the impact of their work very directly. Maybe they are not going to the *basti* every day and doing sessions with young people, but just the fact that they can bring in a skill set that no one else in the organisation has, they're able to showcase that work in such a way gives them that sense of meaningfulness.

Roshni further points to the fact that there are staff at YUVA who are below the age of 30, but are trusted with managing entire donor portfolios. A trusting culture which gives its people a high degree of responsibility, along with the space for things to go "badly wrong" at times nurtures the growth and development of staff right from the start of their journeys with YUVA. Alicia Tauro (Project Lead for Child Rights and Youth Rights at YUVA) highlights that such a culture encourages staff to take up challenges that are outside their immediate area of expertise or comfort zone, in the knowledge that the organisation will provide the necessary support and the encouraging, collaborative environment to help them succeed. Alicia says:

I think the culture of trust pushes you to be more responsible and accountable and pick up skills, even if you don't have them. So you're constantly on your toes. You're thinking as you're going and you're not afraid to take up something even though it may not be a core expertise of yours, and there are also people to support you. Everyone has certain skills and thematic expertise, and then we reach out and build it collaboratively. I wouldn't do it alone. For example, with proposal writing, if I didn't have those very core skills, there would be one or two more people with me who would also be good at writing, making pitches. So while I would give the conceptual and knowledge understanding, they would help frame it together in a good fundraising language.

YUVA balances the culture of trust, the freedom given to staff to take initiative and make mistakes, with an emphasis on responsibility, accountability and ownership. These form non-codified elements of performance in staff, which are assessed when YUVA looks at the long-term leadership potential of its people within the organisation. A formal appraisal framework, meanwhile, provides an overall indicator of individual contributions along certain fixed parameters.

From "performing" to "contributing"

People at YUVA are appraised through two formal processes each year—a half-yearly and a final appraisal. The appraisal process is clearly articulated with descriptors for each level of performance, along parameters such as professional conduct, communication and achievement orientation. Feedback from peers and managers are also taken into account, on aspects such as: the ability to meet targets; cohesion

Centre for
Social Impact
and Philanthropy
ASHOKA UNIVERSITY

ISDM
INDIAN SCHOOL OF
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

with team members; and understanding and effectively implementing the organisation's vision, amongst others. A high score on appraisal is a formal indicator of good performance at YUVA, and is used to determine yearly salary increments.

However, the senior leadership at YUVA emphasises that this is only the formal side of performance. There are several other aspects that are considered in building up an overall picture of contribution, and the long-term role of an individual within YUVA. Roshni shares:

> For us, an effective leader would be somebody who understands the organisation and doesn't try to necessarily impose themselves before understanding how this organisation works. We think that's very, very important. Another person who would be very effective in YUVA is somebody who realises that convening people and resources is a huge part of leadership, as opposed to only themselves. I think that's another very, very important thing to continue to maintain the culture that we have in the organisation of really bringing people together. And we always say also to our teams: "when does your role become irrelevant or unnecessary?" That's the true test. I think another important point which we talk about is this whole idea of ownership, responsibility and accountability, and how all the three are interlinked, and how just being responsible, being skilled and doing good stuff, and making sure everything is on time is not enough for YUVA. You have to start making the organisation your own and seeing what gaps exist and go on to fill them because we are an organisation where you will find gaps, either in the hiring process or something on the ground. Just taking initiative and ownership to fill those gaps, and not making a big deal about it is important; one has to see it as part of life in YUVA. You see an issue, you fix it; unless, of course, it's a major one that needs to be addressed. Such ownership and accountability are very important to us.
>
> So, being focused on improving yourself while looking at whatever we are doing as a collective effort underlies YUVA culture, and this is linked to the significant meaning of "people and resources" and not only about the self. That's why, in the performance appraisals, for instance, we have conversations saying, "This person is amazing. They're really good on the field. They're great workers there. But maybe the self is too big for them to have a long-term leadership future in YUVA."

Preserving the poise

YUVA was started in a tumultuous time by individuals of intensity and ideals. From its efforts in a Bombay *basti* it has been witness to a profound change in the political economy of India. YUVA itself too has been no stranger to shifts: it has grown, spread, morphed and transitioned. But time can wear out the best of intensity and ideals. The storied history of civil society has many such reminders.

Through its trials, errors and endurance, YUVA has learnt to shape its intensity and house its ideals inside a practice. It is a practice which aims to preserve the spirit of authenticity and volunteerism it was founded upon. Chance may have played its role, but YUVA is not an accident of history. It has gritted its way through changes in leadership and governance and expansion of its areas of work. It has built a distinctive culture to harness those best suited to its temperament, and developed a method and system to its way of working. YUVA's is therefore a steady and measured accomplishment: one of instituting a spirit.

Centre for
Social Impact
and Philanthropy

ISDM
INDIAN SCHOOL OF
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

ASHOKA
UNIVERSITY

But there is something symbolic which lies underneath this spirit: ideals that are inconvenient and in contradiction to established social norms, do not lend themselves easily to crafting organisations, especially, if they happen to be feminist ideals that bring out the starkness of social injustice. Feminist thought, literature, personalities and practices made their mark back in the heyday of post-independence churning within a young republic. In a twist of irony, these ideals seem strongly appropriate for today's age, but today they are also as easily and readily dismissed; perhaps because these ideals call into question notions taken for granted—power, authority, hierarchy—the very building blocks of modern organisations. Emphasising rights while also laying stress on duty and responsibility; taking pains to remind their listeners of empathy and compassion; bringing to the surface what is ignored; lending dignified ear to muted voices; questioning indifference, apathy and unfairness are some of the precepts a feminist committed to social justice will wear on their sleeve.

Yet, it is no easy task to build a formal, functioning, authentic and long-standing organisation upon and around such ideals. Against such a societal backdrop, YUVA is a constant work-in-progress. But it has not been carried out under the banner of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. It has been, as befits the language of feminism, constructed on the meaning which lies hidden inside the word relationship: the relationship between a citizen and the State, the relationship amongst citizens, the relationship between an organisation and constituency it has committed to, the relationships between its members or their own relation to their work.

This strikes at the heart of what civil society is really about. To the extent a civil society organisation chooses to keep it in the spotlight—by some measure, a sober and serious endeavour—it moves closer to being an institution. As YUVA has persisted in engaging with these questions, it has over time developed an authentic poise. It is certainly not an exception in this regard, but it does put YUVA as one amongst a few and places on it an obligation to skilfully continue its difficult engagement with these inconvenient and frustrating questions if it has to avoid becoming part of the many at all costs.

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: YUVA's levels of intervention

Fig. 1: YUVA's 11 levels of intervention

Action Organization: To build organisations of people for direct action

Popular Education: To conduct popular education to build awareness

Training and Conscientisation: To promote conscientisation through training

Fulfil Basic Rights and Needs: To provide access for the fulfilment of basic rights and needs

Experiments Towards Alternatives: To experiment in sustainable and people-centred alternatives

Research and Policy: To conduct research aimed at formulating and influencing policy

Advocacy and Lobbying: To engage in advocacy and lobbying activities for participatory governance

Networks and Alliances: To participate in initiating and building networks and alliances for social transformation

Documentation and Information Dissemination: To engage in documentation and information dissemination to promote right to information

Support and Consultancy: To undertake support and consultancy work aimed at capacity building of people's and grassroots groups

Solidarity Action: To engage in solidarity action, nationally and internationally to highlight people's causes

Source: YUVA Annual Report 2015-16

***Exhibit 2: A brief sample of YUVA's work with youth***

Fig. 2: YUVA's work with youth in Malvani

YUVA's contribution

YUVA has been strengthening its activities in this area to address the problem of young inequality and to promote the positive, disruptive potential of youth through methods that are led by and focused on the youth. Their activities are based on fundamental democratic principles, governmental accountability, and youth involvement in youth development. Their goal is to assist young people to realise their potential, equip them with the tools they need to participate in problem-solving and help them take ownership of the movement so that they can someday lead it on their own and carry it forward.

What were the changes seen in the youth?

In response to the growing interest in the empowerment efforts as well as the growing demand for skill training, a number of courses were created in the community throughout time. Girls (even those who had never left their families previously) were drawn to tailoring, beauty and mehendi workshops while boys were drawn to computer and mobile repair classes. Because it was simpler for the parents to let their daughters leave the safety of their house, it was deliberate in introducing courses for females that adhered to established gender ideals and expectations. These were viewers as 'safe' professions for women, even if they weren't able to seek jobs after the training, they would be able to start their own businesses.

Location & Context

West of Malad Creek and next to the corporate park, MindSpace, is the Mumbai neighbourhood of Malvani. The Navy-owned grounds are located to the west along the beach. Malad, the closest railway station, is 3.6 kilometres from the entrance (about 3.6 km from the main entry into this community). Malad covers 2.82 square kilometres, which has a high population—an estimated 3,95,000 people— live in 27 various neighbourhoods.

Youth of Malvani

The youth are among the most vulnerable sections in diverse societies, and this is also true in Malvani. They are discriminated against by their own people in addition to being economically, socially and religiously isolated from mainstream society. Without proper access to education and employment possibilities, people are stuck in their current situation and unable to grow into responsible and empowered citizens, which results in an endless circle of deprivation.

Acts of self-reliance in the community, post YUVA's support

New batches of youngsters are now being trained by YUVA-trained youth through orientation sessions and refresher camps. Other youths have approached the organisation with suggestions about how the challenges they are facing could be similarly addressed by the collective to which they belong or one that they desire to create inspired by the efforts of YUVA in actively taking up their causes. Girls in Malvani, for instance, frequently brought up the subject of male dominance in private areas. This ultimately resulted in the creation of another youth organisation called Nakshatra, which was solely concerned with the issues affecting women and girls. On the occasion of the birth of Savitribai Phule, a champion of women's rights, the group developed straightforward but powerful activities like the ration-card campaign.
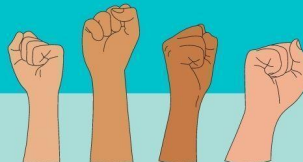
Source: Jaikishen, 2020

Exhibit 3 : YUVA financial summary

Fig. 3: YUVA total income trends 2012-2022
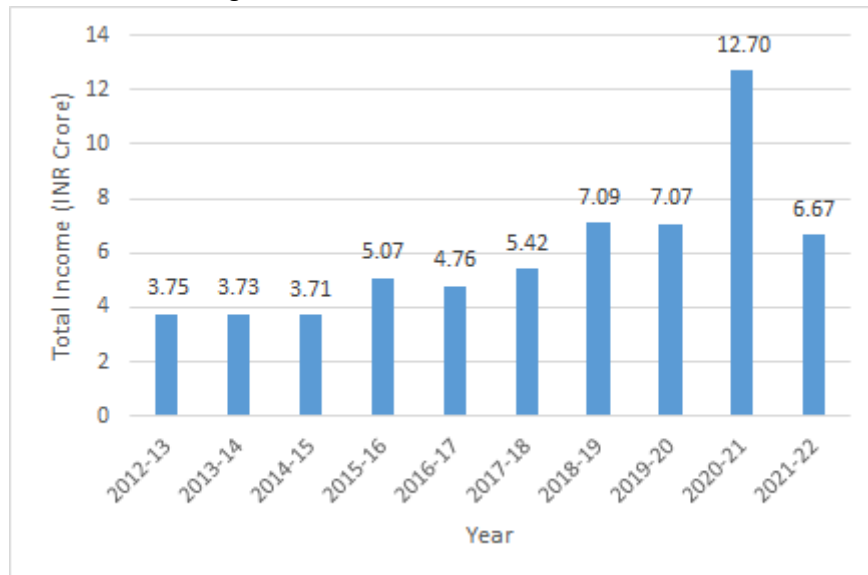
Source: YUVA Internal, 2023

References

Jaikishen, D. (2020). When Youth Lead Change: Tracing the journey of a promising Mumbai youth collective. Stories of Change: Case Study Challenge. Azim Premji University. Retrieved from https://cdn.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/apuc3/media/publications/Stories-of-Change-Compendium-2020.pdf

PDHRE (n.d). New Executive Director Minar Pimple assuming his position. The People's Movement for Human Rights Learning. Retrieved from http://www.pdhre.org/minar.html

Ramnath, R. (2005). From Conflict to Collaboration: Nongovernmental Organizations and their Negotiations for Local Control of Slum and Squatter Housing in Mumbai, India. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Retrieved from https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/28167/RamyaRamanathDissertation.pdf

Singh, N. (2021). When students took over Mumbai University for a day. Indian Express. Retrieved from https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/when-students-took-over-mumbai-university-for-a-day-7326173/

Somasekar, M. (2019). 26 years on, the Latur quake has taught us many lessons. The Hindu Business Line. Retrieved from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/26-years-on-the-latur-quake-has-taught-us-many-lessons/article29559392.ece

Tan, N.T. (2019). Transforming Society. Strategies for Social Development from Singapore, Asia and Around the World. Routledge. ISBN 9780367141950. Retrieved from https://www.routledge.com/Transforming-Society-Strategies-for-Social-Development-from-Singapore/Tan/p/book/9780367141950

Tellis, O.(2015). Thirty years after a landmark Supreme Court verdict, slum dwellers' rights are still ignored. Scroll. Retrieved from https://scroll.in/article/776655/thirty-years-after-a-landmark-supreme-court-verdict-slum-dwellers-rights-are-still-ignored

YUVA (1999). Our Home is a Slum: An Exploration of a Community and Local Government Collaboration in a Tenants' Struggle to Establish Legal Residency. Discussion Paper No.107. YUVA. Retrieved from https://archidev.org/IMG/pdf/Our_Home_is_a_Slum.pdf

YUVA (2017). Commit. Change. Social Transformation and You. YUVA. Retrieved from http://yuvaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Change-doesnt-begin-with-one.pdf

YUVA (2019). YUVA's Journey Over the Years. YUVA. Retrieved from https://yuvaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/YUVAs-JOURNEY.pdf

yuvaonline (2018). In Conversation with Minar Pimple. Medium. Retrieved from https://medium.com/@yuvaonline/in-conversation-with-minar-pimple-5f62ab87bb9a

yuvaonline (2019). How a people's movement in Nagpur worked tirelessly towards tenure security of slums. YUVA. Retrieved from

https://medium.com/@yuvaonline/how-a-peoples-movement-in-nagpur-worked-tirelessly-towards-tenure-security-of-slums-341412e29da7

YUVA Annual Report (2015-16). YUVA. Retrieved from
https://yuvaindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/YUVA-Annual-Report-2015-16.pdf