



ENABLERS FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

24 AUGUST 2022
ONLINE CONSULTATION SUMMARY



unicef 
for every child

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1

BACKGROUND

The facilitation of social protection measures by grassroots organisations has emerged as a crucial intervention to plug the systemic gaps in access to schemes and programmes, which aim to mitigate adverse shocks, vulnerability and exclusion. The expansion of social protection measures during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore both new challenges as well as the need for greater role of grassroots facilitation. For example, the recently published study (YUVA & UNICEF, 2021) commissioned to YUVA, emerging from the UNICEF Maharashtra engagement with the Department of Planning, Government of Maharashtra, shows that despite high levels of awareness about the one-time cash transfer of INR 1,500 being offered by the Maharashtra Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (BOCW-WB), delivery was low in some districts and interventions by non-profits and unions were crucial to enable registration (59% took such support).

In the process of responding to the unprecedented shocks to the lives of the vulnerable during the pandemic, various grassroots organisations evolved their own unique processes and models. Now that the pressures of the pandemic have eased and the interventions made during the pandemic period have stabilised, this is an appropriate juncture to learn from each other's experiences, compare the pros and cons of various models deployed in their varied contexts and achieve some form of convergence between these various approaches and models, so that the best in each model can be institutionalised. By juxtaposing these models—their functioning, challenges and learnings—a comprehensive understanding of context-based last mile access to social protection can be developed, which may further help in the ongoing

efforts of localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), apart from achieving some level of convergence between various approaches to social protection facilitation.

A beginning was made in this direction during the February 2022 'Consultation on Convergence for Social Protection in Maharashtra', where the following three broad areas for convergence were highlighted (YUVA and UNICEF, 2022):-

1. Between civil society and state actors for problem identification and participatory social protection policy formulation
2. Between state actors of various levels and departments for effective scheme implementation
3. Among civil society representatives to articulate the needs of vulnerable populations, and advocate for systems that ensure last mile connectivity.

Realising the need for sustained collaboration between various grassroots organisations engaged in social protection facilitation, seeds were sown for a forum called Maharashtra Social Protection Consortium, and a core group was formed to give the process a concrete shape. The present consultation aims to take this process further, with the following specific objectives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION

The consultation was organised with the aim to:

1. Understand various approaches to facilitating last mile access and the role of diverse stakeholders in these processes.
2. Understand how processes of enabling access can be streamlined with the support of the local administration in urban, rural as well as tribal areas.
3. Collectively develop advocacy strategies for institutionalising last mile delivery.

2

INTRODUCTION:

**ENABLING
SOCIAL
PROTECTION
IN INDIA**

Social protection comprises a range of policies and programmes which address poverty and exclusion. Through provisions such as healthcare, quality education and nutrition against adverse shocks, a minimum quality of life is ensured to the citizens in general, but especially to the vulnerable, irrespective of their class, caste and gender. Even while recognising the need for universalization of social protection measures, a special focus on the vulnerable sections of the society is needed while designing and implementing these measures. The vulnerable sections include, but are not limited to, residents of hard to reach areas, victims of conflicts, those living in coastal areas and affected by natural disasters, migrants, the urban poor living in the informal settlements and persons with disability. Adequate and effective social protection can also be an important means of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the context of the social protection framework by forcing a greater realisation of both the importance of the social protection systems and the challenges in the last mile delivery of such measures. It has further underlined the fact that policies, laws and schemes are not adequate in themselves in the absence of robust implementation, in which civil society organisations play a crucial role. The pandemic also revealed new vulnerabilities like loss of learning for children, as well as new vulnerable groups like children orphaned by COVID. This was addressed by both the expansion of existing measures as well as the introduction of new interventions. In the process of addressing the various challenges at the implementation level, we need to move towards a universal, child and gender-sensitive,

shock-responsive social protection system. A lifecycle approach needs to be adopted and various schemes need to be mapped to various stages of the lifecycle and we need to move towards universalization across the lifecycle.

Several studies which evaluated the schemes introduced by both the Union and state governments to assist people in overcoming the impact of the pandemic, have shown that the most vulnerable sections faced exclusion. These studies have highlighted the need to address several challenges at various levels in the social protection system:

- Lack of information flow and awareness among those for whom the schemes are meant—about the schemes, the documents required and the application process.
- Lack of adequate level of budgetary allocations for the interventions.
- Lack of coordination and convergence between multiple departments with clear demarcation of responsibilities and accountability.
- Lack of grievance redressal, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the implementation of the schemes.

There is an urgent need to look at these systemic gaps and various recommendations have been made in this direction by these studies. But for successful implementation of these recommendations, enabling conditions should be met for the following stakeholders:

- 1. Civil Society:** The first precondition is to clearly define the **role of all civil society organisations**. Given the crucial role that civil society plays in the implementation of the schemes, generating evidence about the effectiveness of the measures and providing crucial feedback to the government, there is a need to formally recognize this role and institutionalise mechanisms to facilitate dialogue between non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government.
- 2. Citizen: Awareness and clarity among the entitlement-seekers** regarding the **nature of entitlement, eligibility criteria and application process**, to ensure that the applicants don't end up running from pillar to post to avail these schemes and lose time and wages in the process.
- 3. Government:** There needs to be better coordination and convergence at the block and aggregation at the district level, so that the scheme reaches its intended group.

Different organisations working in their specific sectoral and geographical areas have struggled with these challenges and have attained varied degrees of success in overcoming them. The present consultation aimed at assessing these different approaches and frameworks and deciding on the direction of the activities of the Consortium and the approach towards collective advocacy with the government.

3

SOCIAL PROTECTION FACILITATION:

MODELS, LEARNINGS AND CHALLENGES

The diversity of approaches and strategies in the models adopted by various organisations reflect the specificity of the geographical locations they are working in, the problems and challenges of facilitation that they are addressing and the communities they are working with. The specific interventions of six organisations which participated in the consultation are described in some detail here and the next section draws general inferences and challenges from individual models and experiences to drive convergence on broad principles. This can then become the basis for collective action by the Consortium.

1. AROEHAN - FACILITATION THROUGH COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

Aroehan works in two tribal-dominated blocks (Mukhada and Jawar blocks) of Palghar district in Maharashtra. Their work began by addressing malnutrition deaths among the tribal communities in the region, but soon expanded to sectors like education, health and nutrition, water conservation and livelihoods and, most importantly, governance. They have identified three stakeholders within their framework of intervention: citizens as right-holders, government functionaries as duty-bearers and communities in which these processes are embedded.

To ensure delivery of social protection schemes, Aroehan works with all these three stakeholders. In their work with the rights-holders (citizens), they provide awareness about schemes, build capacities and provide support wherever needed. They undertake capacity building exercises with duty-bearers who work at the field levels— *gram sevaks*, *rozgar sevaks*, *talati*, Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers—along with evidence-based advocacy with higher officials in the government. At the level of the community, Aroehan works towards strengthening the statutory community-level monitoring bodies like Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), Mothers' Communities (Anganwaadis) and School Management Committees (SMCs).

Additionally, another significant intervention by Aroehan has been to form *pada samitis* at the hamlet level. Each *pada samiti* is provided training for a period of 1–2 years on various issues, including awareness about schemes and legislations. The issues that need to be addressed by the *samiti* are identified by the *samiti* itself. The members of the *samiti* meet and dialogue with *taluka* officials to build initial rapport. A charter of demands is drawn by the *samitis* and submitted to the *gram panchayat*

and concerned officials. If the demands remain unfulfilled, *taluka*-level review meetings are held with officials to demand implementation of the demands.

There are several challenges involved, the toughest one being retaining the confidence of the community in the process, in the face of inadequate response from the government system. For example, several applications for accessing documents like Aadhaar Cards, Caste Certificate and Income Certificate filed by residents of the villages under the state government's 'Government at your doorstep' initiative had remained pending for 2–3 years, because of which people had lost interest in accessing government entitlements. When Aroehan organised document facilitation camps with the help of government officials and the involvement of *pada samitis*, the positive results obtained inspired the confidence of the community. Across 7 such camps, 222 caste certificates, 156 income certificates and 160 Aadhaar cards were issued.

Additionally, the facilitation and advocacy efforts can sometimes work at cross-purposes, because while the former is based on non-confrontational stance towards the government, the latter can sometimes lead to confrontation with the system. For example, as part of the health and nutrition work, when the organisation presented the malnutrition figures they had collected while doing their own growth monitoring at *anganwadis* (which were much higher than the official figures), the government reacted by disallowing growth monitoring by civil society groups, affecting the efforts adversely. The organisation has sought to strike a balance between these opposing tendencies by allowing the communities to decide the course of the processes through decision making via the *pada samitis*.

2. PRAGATI ABHIYAN - COLLECTIVISING THROUGH COALITION-BUILDING

Pragati Abhiyan is part of the National NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) Consortium which comprises 72 partners across 11 states. The consortium was envisioned as a coalition of grassroots organisations working on implementation of NREGA programme, so that the grassroots level experiences can be collated, documented, analysed and then converted into evidence-based inputs for advocacy at various levels (district, state and national).

The experience of the National NREGA consortium is very instructive in terms of coalition building for collective advocacy efforts. The consortium came into existence after the NREG Act was passed. The NREGA programme itself has gone through several changes and adaptations since it was initiated. The NREGA Consortium has monitored the impact of these changes, and their implementation at the grassroots levels, and then engaged in advocacy to bring about changes favourable to those availing of work under the programme.

The Consortium has organised regular consultations at district and state levels. The critical issues that have emerged through these consultations have been extremely varied because of the specific context of each state. For example, while the Bihar government was interested in using the programme for flood mitigation, the Odisha government wanted to deploy NREGA for mitigating distress migration. Similarly, while Madhya Pradesh wanted to bring in convergence of the programme with schemes of agriculture and forest department, Jharkhand was promoting watershed projects through the scheme. State-level solutions emerged through these consultations, and learnings were culled out from these consultations for inclusion in national level guidelines. Extensive documentation of challenges and learnings was conveyed at block, *taluka* and district levels as well.

The understanding and the evidence that was built through this process became the basis for revision of the NREGA guidelines undertaken by the Union government in 2011–13, with several members of the Consortium playing crucial roles in the revision process. Because of the efforts of the Consortium, greater attention was paid to the human resource aspect of the implementation of the programme, especially at the *gram panchayat* level. The permitted list of works that could be undertaken under the programme was expanded to include context-specific asset creation options developed based on the grassroots experience of the consortium members. A significant idea that emerged through the Consortium process was the institution of cluster facilitation teams comprising 3 members chosen from the local area itself, which was responsible for assisting the administration plan the works to be undertaken in advance. From the experience of the NREGA Consortium, the following lessons can be drawn with respect to institutionalisation of the learnings of grassroots experiences:-

1. The need to create formal spaces where CSOs can have dialogue with authorities and act as a bridge between the citizens and government. The example of NREGA in Maharashtra, where NGOs can enter into non-financial arrangements with the government, and where regular review meetings are organised to monitor the implementation is pertinent here.
2. To sustain the institutionalisation process, the CSOs need to create their own database, identify specific problems, create a strong evidence base and come up with possible solutions.

But off late, the scuttling for MNREGA because of inadequate budgetary allocations has affected the space available for the Consortium to work with state governments as well as the Union government.

3. AAJEEVIKA BUREAU - GOING THE LAST MILE

Aajeevika Bureau is working with the vulnerable migrant population in three states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, which includes both source and destination states. Most of the workers that Aajeevika works with engage in seasonal, circular and temporary migration; involving unskilled work, largely low-end, hard and risky labour; with long chains of sub-contracting and labour agents. Most of the workers do not have aspirations of settling down in the city, and often keep moving from one work site to another. This poses specific challenges in terms of accessing social protection measures: lack of proof of residence in the city, absence of formal work contracts or documentation establishing employer-employee relationship; existence of multiple layers of contractors between the worker and the principal employer; and difficulty in organising because of the mobile nature of their residence in the city. These specific challenges lead to the exclusion of workers from existing social protection frameworks, and makes them vulnerable to exploitative practices like non-payment of wages, non-payment of compensation for workplace injuries or death, etc. With the objective of improving the work conditions of the migrant workers, creating safe spaces for workers to raise issues and making the employers and the administration responsive towards the needs of the migrant communities, Aajeevika has deployed three pathways of social protection facilitation:

1. Worker facilitation centres (20 centres in both source [blocks] and destination [city] settings): The location of these centres are strategically chosen for the highest level of accessibility—near worker nakas, market places, railway stations, bus stands, labour colonies, large worksites, etc. These centres provide counselling on issues related to work rights, link workers to entitlements

and the centres become the hub for organising workers into unions. Outreach and facilitation activities are carried in languages understandable to the migrants and during timings that are suitable for them, at both the source and destination locations. A unique element here is the legal aid service provided to the workers, which is usually not considered as a social protection measure.

2. Labour helpline: Since accessing physical centres can be difficult and expensive for some workers, the labour helpline run by Aajeevika provides a second and a much more convenient pathway to seek assistance for issues like recovery of unpaid wage, harassment at workplace, seeking compensation, etc. Aajeevika has also collaborated with government bodies like the labour department and the Building and other Construction Workers Board (BOCW) and has received official recognition for its helpline. The helpline receives 300–350 calls every day and has facilitated compensation of over INR 38 crores till date.

3. Unionisation of the workers: Since the migrant workers don't have voting rights at the destination areas, they have little or no political leverage to get their demands met. Hence, collectivisation through formation of unions to advocate with both employers and urban local bodies has been adopted as the third pathway. Aajeevika has formed 7 unions and 20 labour collectives with a membership of 20,000 migrant workers across various areas of work.

The experience of Aajeevika Bureau highlights the need to understand the specific context in which the target group faces lack of access and exclusion

from the social protection system, and then building effective solutions around the specific needs and contextual situations of the excluded group. With its model, Aajeevika has also been able to mobilise workers to successfully demand access to public services (water, sanitation and early childcare services, nutrition and ration) but political rights as well (paid leave during elections to go back and vote).

4. SNEHA - BUILDING SYSTEMS THAT WORK FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

SNEHA has been engaged in health system advocacy for over two decades now. SNEHA has been working with urban vulnerable communities in 7 cities within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. They take a continuum of care approach which involves working with women and children from birth to adulthood to break the intergenerational cycle of poor health. Their focus is not limited to only the curative aspects of the health system but also extends to the preventive and promotive elements as well. Therefore, special attention is paid to social determinants of health, including poverty, social identities and dispossession.

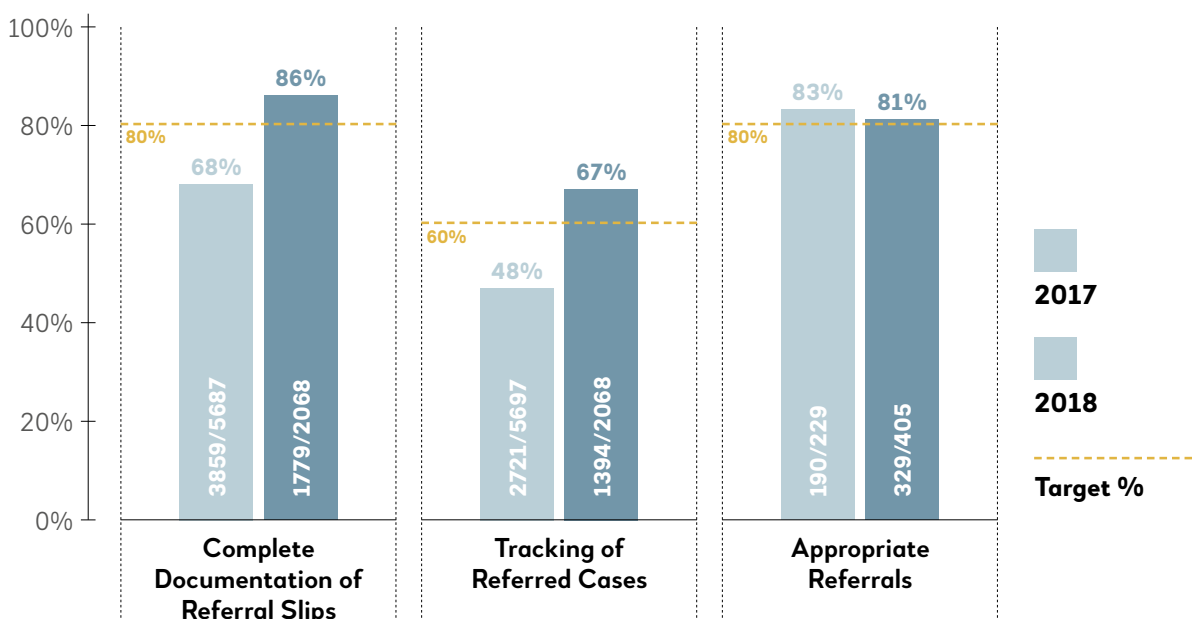
SNEHA intervenes at two fronts—strengthening of existing services (primary healthcare and ICDS) and social protection facilitation. As part of this two-pronged intervention, it has deployed the following two working models:

1. Public System Partnerships in Health:

To address system-level changes, SNEHA has partnered with the government to create a robust maternal health referral

system. They have adopted an appreciative approach towards the system, recognising that the functionaries work within extremely demanding circumstances and overhaul of the system would involve not just capacity-building in terms of skills but also getting buy-in from the service providers. Necessary processes involving standardisation of services and customisation of clinical protocols to streamline the referral system and ensure that all required information passes from one level to the next during the referral process to ensure appropriate referrals and tracking of referred cases. Data is generated at each step in the process and evidence from this documentation is then used to provide feedback to the system. Advocacy efforts are undertaken to convert these learnings to higher officials to effect system-level changes. To sustain demands for health services, SNEHA facilitates formation and strengthening of Mahila Arogya Samitis (MASs), an institutional intervention under the National Urban Health Mission, ensuring

Graph 1. Maternal referral indicators



the inclusion of women residing in informal settlements in these committees. These MASs act as bridges between the communities and the system, holding the latter accountable towards delivery of community-level services. Through these system-level interventions, SNEHA has been able to achieve significant improvements between 2017–2022 in terms of documentation of **referral slips (from 68% to 86%)**, **tracking of referred cases (from 48% to 67%)** and **appropriate referrals (81%)** as shown below.

2. Setting up of Social Protection Helpdesks:

Adopting the life-course social protection model of UNICEF, SNEHA has set-up social protection helpdesks where information and awareness regarding entitlements is provided along with support in getting the necessary documents and applying for schemes including those related to pregnancy (JSY, PMMVY), childcare (ICDS, Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana, RBSY), adolescents (Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram), labour entitlements, family support (PDS) and old age (Pensions). Between the period of January–June 2022, SNEHA was able to reach out to an average of **5,302 persons** to create awareness about existing schemes. Through this process, over **35,416 people applied for various schemes, out of which 27,247 persons availed of these schemes, with a sanction rate of 76.9%**.

5302

Average no. of
community members
reached per month

35416

No. of community
members referred

27247

No. of community
members availed
different schemes

5. HAQDARSHAK - SOLVING THE LAST MILE ACCESS PROBLEM

Haqdarshak is a private limited company which focuses exclusively on the last mile access problems—lack of awareness about schemes, determining eligibility, documents needed, application processes, etc. To overcome these hurdles in accessing social protection schemes and entitlements, Haqdarshak has come up with a hybrid model which involves the use of technology (app based solution) along with community workers (called community champions or Haqdarshaks) who provide facilitation services.

Haqdarshak has developed an app which provides information about various schemes and entitlements that one is eligible for based on a set of parameters provided by the user. The information is available in regional languages in a very simple and easy-to-understand format.

Apart from this free app, they have developed an advanced app which is used by Community Champions or Haqdarshaks, who are drawn from among the members of the communities. Haqdarshaks provide assistance in discovering the right schemes, explaining why one should apply for those schemes, getting eligibility documents made, filing applications for the relevant schemes, follow-up after the application process, grievance redressal, etc. These services are provided

by Haqdarshaks on a pay-for-service basis.

Haqdarshak also interfaces with the *gram sevaks* and the functionaries under State Rural Livelihood Missions, and undertakes capacity building for them.

The advanced app that the Haqdarshaks use has end-to-end integration with various government portals and online application processes. In case of schemes which are not online, the Haqdarshaks help the applicants apply for the required documents, prepare a file and then go and submit those applications to the relevant government offices. Haqdarshak also partners with other organisations and trains their staff or volunteers in using the app. Haqdarshaks function as a parallel community-based cadre, apart from the existing government functionaries, who make the process of accessing the schemes simpler, with a revenue model which aims at making these activities financially sustainable.

While an app-based facilitation model can transfer agency to the citizens, and payment-based provisioning can provide sustained access to facilitation services, it also raises critical questions about privacy of data shared by the citizens with the app and the policies of the app providers regarding monetisation of data for profit purposes.

6. YUVA - OVERCOMING EXCLUSION THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE FACILITATION

Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) has been working towards improving access to social protection facilitation in Maharashtra since the last ten months through its Social Protection Facilitation Centres (SPFCs), which have been designed based on the experience of YUVA's existing centres - Habitat Facilitation Centres (HFC), Labour Facilitation Centres (LFC) and Migrant Resource Centre (MRC). The SPFC model comprises the following essential elements:

- Addressing individual documentation needs, collectivising around common concerns and advocating for systemic changes.
- Building critical partnerships with various levels of governance towards ownership and sustainability.
- Individuals are given attention and supported through the process.

Evidence and advocacy through social protection score and policy briefs based on ground-level experience towards improving holistic scheme design and delivery of social protection schemes.

Currently, YUVA runs three SPFCs located in three different settings—Panvel (Raigad, urban/peri-urban); Chikhaldhara (Amravati, tribal) and Kagal (Kolhapur, rural). The SPFCs provide support in obtaining government documentation required for applying for schemes related to a range of themes pertaining to women and children (PMMVY, JSY, MKBY, etc.), food (PDS), workers (BOCWWB, NREGA, E-Shram registrations etc.), housing (PMAY-Rural), Pensions (Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Anudan Yojna).

To overcome the challenges involved in social protection facilitation, YUVA has deployed a range of strategies. To deal with lack of awareness on social protection schemes, village/settlement-level awareness meetings are organised where the attendees are informed about the available schemes, their eligibility criteria and the documentation required. YUVA has also developed easily understandable materials on these schemes which is used to create awareness about the schemes and entitlements. At the next level of facilitation, the SPFCs provide a conducive and welcoming environment to the citizens where their social protection needs are understood in a holistic manner and various schemes that they are eligible for are stacked together, based on the multiple vulnerabilities that they face. YUVA's experience highlights the need for providing a hassle-free facilitation process, to ensure that citizens are not discouraged from applying because of the cumbersome nature of the process itself. For example, several instances of workers getting discouraged from availing E-shram cards due to the problem-ridden application process was brought up during the consultation. Mobile SPFCs help in taking the facilitation process even closer to the excluded citizens.

In 10 months
**INR
 85,54,431**
 has been received through
 social protection schemes
 across three locations

To ensure approval of the applications filed, YUVA undertakes advocacy at the block and *taluka* level. Because of the volume of applications filed by YUVA, special nodal officers have been appointed by the administration to handle these applications, which makes the process more sustainable. Through policy briefs which document on-ground experiences and present research-based evidence, YUVA also engages in policy level advocacy to bring about favourable changes in the social protection system. Deploying the above set of strategies, YUVA's SPFCs have been able to ensure a sanction rate of 80% for all the applications filed in the last 10 months, which has translated to assistance of over INR 85 lakh for the applicants.



**80% of applications are
being sanctioned**

4

THE PATH TO INSTITUTIONALISATION

If we look at the experience of various grassroots organisations working on enabling access to social protection, before and during the pandemic, we realise the vast scale of the work being done on the ground. From the point of view of building a coalition on social protection facilitation, it is noteworthy that there are no overlaps in the geographical areas where the organisations who participated in the consultations are working. Each also worked on diverse target groups and had a specific sectoral focus—emphasising the need for broad outreach in any social protection programming. Hence, there is a scope for the Consortium to build on the synergies that emerge out of the work of individual organisations. If one steps back from the particularities and details of each of the models, the experience of every organisation highlights certain common elements: documents, documentation, dialogue and interface. It would be very useful to carry out a comparative analysis of each of the models and derive learnings from each of the models. A formal space is also required where these experiences and practices can be documented and shared so that others can learn from these, without having to reinvent the wheel. While it may be difficult for individual organisations to engage in research and reflection, the Consortium can undertake this effort, and then the outcomes emerging from these processes can be institutionalised at the level of policy and governance framework through collective advocacy by the Consortium. The National NREGA Consortium can be a useful model in leveraging the collective strength of the organisations in advocating more effectively for better social protection systems.

There are several challenges that the Consortium will have to contend with in this process. When it comes to social protection, the ILO, UNICEF, and various organisations working on facilitation have different frameworks which may require some level of reconciliation. Additionally, there is a need to develop more clarity on the nature and extent of convergence that is possible across different departments and levels of governance.

In terms of scope of work, apart from advocating with the line departments, the advocacy effort will have to involve planning and finance departments as well, because of the cross-cutting role that these departments play. The Consortium should also explore various avenues where there is scope for public participation. In the constitutional schema, poverty alleviation and welfare of vulnerable sections fall within the purview of local bodies—*gram panchayats* in rural areas and municipal institutions in urban areas. The required structures and systems are more streamlined in the rural areas with the *gram panchayats* and the *gram sabhas*, but in the urban areas there are lack of efforts towards strengthening the mohalla sabhas. If strengthened through public participation and capacity-building, the ward offices and the mohalla sabhas can emerge as crucial linkages in social protection delivery in urban areas.

The Consortium will also have to tackle the challenges posed by the targeted approach chosen by the government as opposed to universalisation of social protection and the trends towards privatisation in sectors like health where the introduction of public insurance schemes is taking us away from rights-based framework.

The Consortium should synthesise the learnings from the varied experience of its members, draw out policy insights and engage with institutions like NITI Aayog so that these learnings can be institutionalised. Traditionally, the social protection framework has been oriented more towards the needs of adults and family and not enough attention has been paid to child protection. Hence, the Consortium can bring greater focus on child protection in addition to looking at social protection systems from a gender lens.

5

THE WAY FORWARD

From the discussions during the consultation, it is clear that given the complexity of the challenges and contexts, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problems of social protection facilitation. At the same time, there are common concerns which emerge out of engagement with the social protection system as well. An instructive example is that of the uneven implementation of PDS portability (One Nation, One Ration) scheme. The general experience has been that intra-state portability is working better than inter-state portability, and often the access is contingent on facilitation by civil society organisations. Better implementation of the programme can benefit from mutual sharing of experiences and strategies and collective advocacy. Similarly, learnings should also be derived from previous successful interventions like National Literacy Mission, where civil society organisations were given well-defined and specific roles within a clearly laid down institutional structure.

Recognising the need to deliberate on these challenges and to define the scope of the activities of the Consortium, the core group would continue to meet on a regular basis and an effort would be made to organise an in-person meeting of the group. To further the objectives of the Consortium which include initiating a dialogue between various organisations and with the government, following future steps were identified:

- 1. Distilling of individual experiences** to identify possible areas of convergence. As a follow-up activity, a policy brief on various models of social protection facilitation would be prepared which could be shared with various departments including the planning department.
- 2. Creating a space for continuous dialogue** between the Consortium and different government stakeholders across Maharashtra.
- 3. Developing the Consortium as a collective** which can advocate with and influence the government for institutional changes in the social protection system based on grassroots experiences and learnings.
- 4. Continue to expand the outreach efforts** of the Consortium to bring in more such grassroots organisations interested in working together on improving the social protection mechanism in Maharashtra.

6

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ABOUT YUVA

Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) is a non-profit development organisation committed to enabling vulnerable groups to access their rights. YUVA encourages the formation of people's collectives that engage in the discourse on development, thereby ensuring self-determined and sustained collective action in communities. This work is complemented with advocacy and policy recommendations. Founded in Mumbai in 1984, currently YUVA operates in the states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Assam and New Delhi.

At the community-level, through an integrated 360-degree approach, YUVA delivers solutions on issues of housing, livelihood, environment and governance. Through research, YUVA creates knowledge that enhances capacity building. Through partnerships in campaigns, YUVA provides solidarity and builds strong alliances to drive change.

ABOUT UNICEF

UNICEF India is committed in its continued support to the Government in this extraordinary journey of development to reach every child everywhere in India. Our goal is to enable every child born in India to have the best start in life, to thrive and to develop to her or his full potential. To achieve this we use our technical expertise together with partners to tackle the root of several, deeply entrenched structural challenges. We have been present in India for 70 years. UNICEF's key strength lies in our evidencebased technical expertise that informs policy action and implementation, while at the same time building the capacity of partners.

