

# Making a World of Difference in Tackling Wicked Problems & Creating Deliberate Leadership: A Case Study

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pfc is a nonprofit consultancy. We help people and organizations with money, time, and vision do good. Our clients are foundations, individuals, impact investors, corporations, governments, and intermediaries at the leading edge of social change. pfc was created by a team of colleagues who believe that the world's wicked problems are the problems most worth solving. They are the issues that keep everyone around the world up at night; poverty and income disparity, food and water scarcity, climate change and energy shortages. They are also the issues that are borne most heavily by the most vulnerable populations women, children, and their families. Whether Detroit or Delhi, LA or Lagos, Mexico City or Moscow we work with partners to take on-the-ground lessons and help find cutting edge solutions in these complex times. Our services: strategy development and planning; trendsetting research; learning and evaluation; and teaching and coaching. For more information: [www.pfcsocialimpact.org](http://www.pfcsocialimpact.org)

## Preface

This case is a part of a teaching series that examines the strategies global leaders use to tackle the world's most complex and "wickedly" difficult problems. According to the World Economic Forum's annual Global Risk Assessment, these are the kinds of threats that keep world leaders across sectors awake at night — poverty and the systemic and devastating consequences of income disparity; climate change and the volatility of energy supplies; food and water scarcity; and cyber attacks. The Wicked Problem framework, developed almost four decades ago, helps leaders be more effective in tackling these seemingly intractable challenges. Since then, much has been learned about what it takes for leaders to "find the win in wicked."

Because each complex problem is unique, it requires leaders to make choices. Should they command solutions as in a crisis? Should they manage the problem by applying the best practices that have worked on similar problems in the past? Should they become adaptive leaders who adjust and recalibrate their strategy based on open reflection of what is and isn't working? Can they put their egos aside, challenge themselves through collaborative decision-making, and seek solutions where one might least expect to find them?

We use the term "Deliberate Leaders" to describe those who are acting with intention and who accept not only the risk of the challenge ahead, but also the consequences of their actions. They know they will make mistakes--if wicked problems were easy, they would have been solved. The concept of Deliberate Leadership guides this new body of work. It is our goal to pull together examples of Deliberate Leaders in action to help guide 21st-century leaders as they seek out solutions to the biggest challenges of our time.

Each case study in this series offers a unique approach that is intended not to prescribe but to stimulate thinking and discussion among leaders facing similar challenges. This case study explores how Vodafone Foundation India interpreted the international Vodafone corporation's flagship corporate social responsibility program, World of Difference, in the context of India's social needs and gaps between the professional world of Vodafone employees and the lives of the very poor. It depicts a deep commitment to building the capacity of NGOs serving the poor, not just with gifts, but with the deployment of senior Vodafone employees to share their training and knowhow. It also shows the commitment of Vodafone Foundation India to iterative learning, to not just recognize the contributions of the employees who volunteer, but to learn from their experience and that of their NGO partners to make the program more effective. Finally, it poses thought-provoking questions for other social investors about the most effective way for corporations to meet their obligations to society.

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South Asian IT professional Sreekrishnan “Krishnan” Manjeri had read enough about the British-based multinational Vodafone Group Plc to be impressed by its approach to corporate social responsibility. When he heard that Vodafone was coming to India, he wondered whether the company would be bringing its flagship employee engagement program, World of Difference. “So I actually wrote to a global ID saying, ‘Now that you guys are coming to India, when is the World of Difference program coming?’ And I got an email back saying, ‘Hold on.’”

Three years later, as a senior supply chain manager for Vodafone India in Bangalore, Krishnan still wanted to know more about World of Difference. In 2012, with some trepidation but with the full support of his manager and his wife Priya, he applied for a place in the competitive program. If he were selected, Vodafone India would release him for eight weeks with full pay to bring his professional skills to an NGO. Soon, Krishnan was embarked on a life-changing journey with Magic Bus, an NGO that uses sports to impart life skills to disadvantaged children, 800 kilometers from his home in Bangalore.

He recalls, “I did not have running water, I did not have a newspaper in the morning, I did not have television. For the last thirty-five or forty years, these things had defined what life is when you get up in the morning. After three or four days you start thinking, Hey, what is this I’ve gotten into? But then when you hit the ground running, working with people in the communities, you realize that this is nothing, that there are challenges that are miles ahead of these small things.” For example, Krishnan was deeply affected as he watched children in the schools where Magic Bus worked participate in a midday meal program run by the government. “Kids come to school not to study but to eat. They get a bowl of rice, a boiled egg, and a thin sauce that makes the rice edible. ... That was all they got to eat for the entire day. When I think of those kids lining up for the food, everything goes blank. That was the defining moment of my entire experience.”

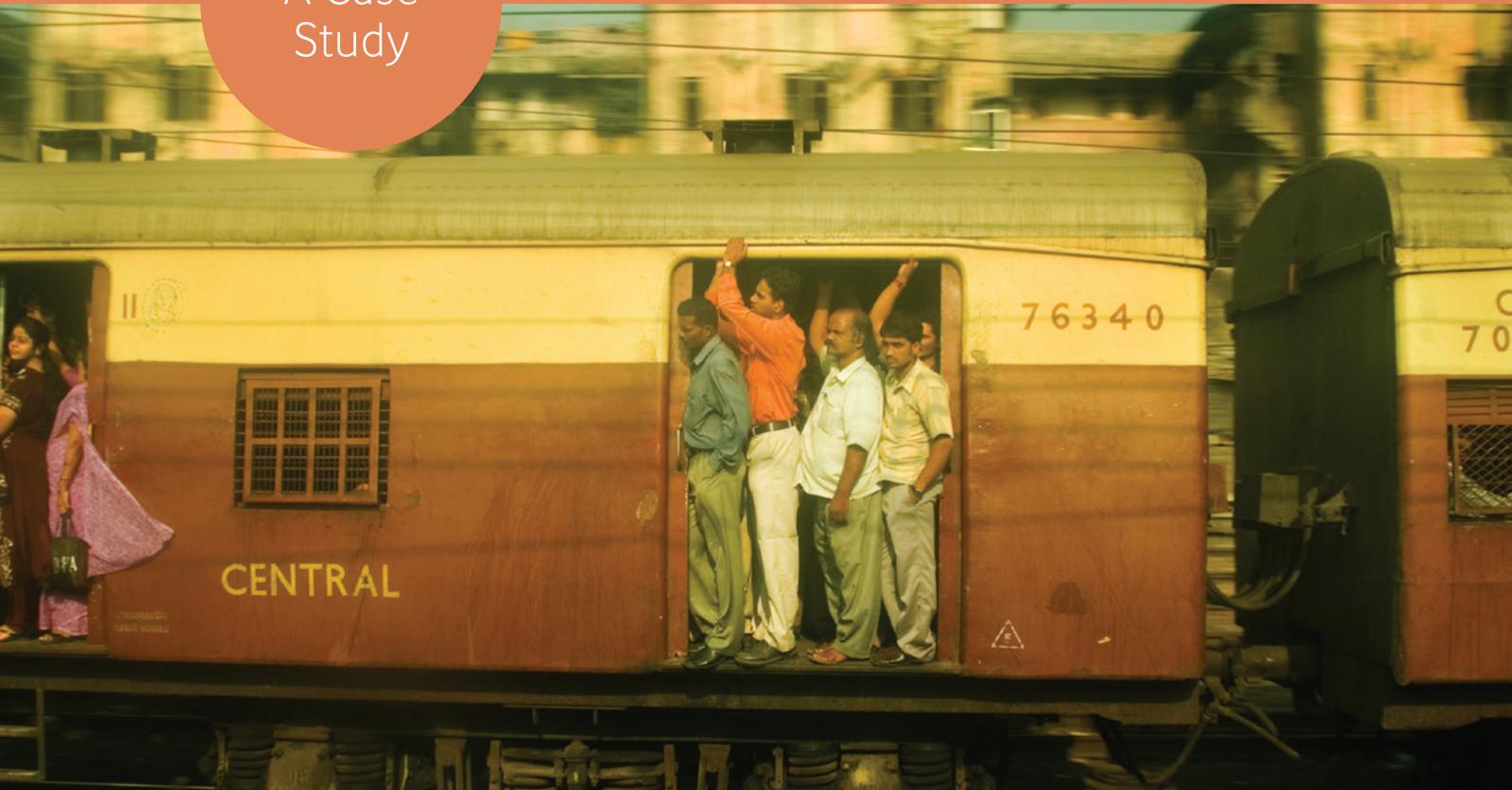
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As for adjusting to a very different work environment and figuring out how to maximize his contribution to the NGO, Krishnan continues, “You spend a couple of days trying to figure out what their goals are, and what your professional background can contribute. Then you start to find other ways you can contribute. One project leads to others.” When he arrived, the Magic Bus district office to which he was assigned was housed in a three-room building — a meeting room, a supply room, and a guest room where he slept. He discovered they had no idea how many footballs they had or who had used them last, so he organized the supply room and created a simple inventory tracking system for sports equipment. Then he helped his district manager develop employee and volunteer recognition programs to improve morale and retention. None of these interventions were expensive, but they were cost-effective and helped to professionalize the operations of Magic Bus: “I saw that it impacted them, and the district manager would talk to the state director, so it got implemented in some of the other districts as well.”

Now back at his Vodafone duties in Bangalore, Krishnan reflects that he gained as much from the experience as Magic Bus did. “I have discovered traits in me that I did not think I had. For example, I never knew I could write. I started making a few posts on Facebook... I combined my posts into a book, and Vodafone has published it and [through sales] it has raised [money] for Magic Bus.” As for Magic Bus, Krishnan brought them the benefits of his professional training: “We solved common problems that other NGOs probably face as well. There were three or four interventions that were not very cost-intensive but could be very cost-effective.” And, in addition to improved management systems, Magic Bus has gained an impassioned supporter. Krishnan continues to volunteer with kids and to raise money within Vodafone and in other circles to support the organization.

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### A Corporate Response to Wicked Problems

While the problems Krishnan helped Magic Bus solve may be common to many NGOs in India, the societal challenges those NGOs seek to address — poverty, lack of educational opportunity, hunger, inadequate health care — are examples of what scholars have called “Wicked Problems.”

The nature of Wicked Problems can be understood if one looks at the societal challenges facing India. For example, is the risk of sexual violence that women in India face when they use outdoor community toilets caused by lack of sanitation or by cultural attitudes that condone violence against women? Is childhood stunting in India caused by malnutrition, by poor sanitation that leads to disease, or by traditions regarding which family members get access to food first? There are NGOs in India whose mission is to take on each of those problems. There are no simple answers, though enormous progress can be made.

The purpose of this case study is to help you understand the leadership qualities that best enable agents of social change — be they corporations, social entrepreneurs, or philanthropists — to successfully tackle Wicked Problems. Among the questions to think about as you read through this case:

- What is the nature of corporate social responsibility, and what should its goals be?
- As the program moves toward more stringent assessment, how might Vodafone think about its impact? How should it weigh the “nuance” of individual stories against “numbers”?
- How might Vodafone more actively encourage other corporations to follow its example of investing in community? What barriers might stand in the way?
- How did Vodafone tailor its program to be highly local and culturally appropriate?
- Both Vodafone employees and NGOs say they benefit from the program. If Vodafone were going to invest more, should it focus on improving the experience for the employees or making as significant a contribution as possible to the operations of an NGO?

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### **A World of Difference: Corporate Social Responsibility and Vodafone India**

The British multinational corporation Vodafone entered Indian markets in 2000 and launched 3G mobile services in March 2011; it is now the second largest multinational and the second largest telecom company in India. Vodafone brought with it a commitment to giving back to society through the Vodafone Foundation and programs that strengthen civil society through telemobility. According to former Vodafone India managing director and CEO Marten Pieters,<sup>1</sup> “when I came in... and started looking at CSR [corporate social responsibility], there was no CSR.”<sup>2</sup> Pieters was determined to change that. He felt the corporation had to give back, partly because India was a country with many needs, but also because “you get your license to operate from the government, [but] you need to get your license to operate from society... It has something to do with creating enough sympathy for the company that people say this company is really part of our society.” CSR would be integral to the company, “finding those projects where our capability is, but then making it much broader and wider and giving it additional value for society.”<sup>3</sup> Under the broad umbrella of CSR, Vodafone India would focus on sustainability; empowering women and empowerment in general; and education.

Vodafone India Limited had developed a corporate giving initiative it called “World of Difference,” based on a model pioneered by Vodafone New Zealand in 2002 and adopted in other countries. By 2011, 19 Vodafone countries had their own version of World of Difference. Designed to “take corporate giving beyond the traditional ‘cheque book charity’ space and to tap into the energy, skills, and difference which people can make,”<sup>4</sup> the initiative supports employees to take paid leave and volunteer with an NGO of their choice. They bring their corporate skills and their familiarity with the capabilities of mobile technology to help third-sector organizations up their game.

The Vodafone Foundation in India “recognises the power of mobile technology to address some of India’s most pressing challenges relating to education, health, equality, and access.” Its mission is “to enable people and technology to drive innovation, disseminate knowledge, and create shared value to improve lives.” Though it has multiple programs, including responses to disaster; fundraising for community-based NGOs; and supporting work around women, nutrition, health, and education; it has emphasized the World of Difference and employee engagement in social change.

Vodafone India launched its version of World of Difference in 2011. While it is only one of many CSR initiatives — current Foundation head Madhu Sirohi estimates it constitutes less than 10 percent of Vodafone India’s CSR budget<sup>5</sup> — it is described as the Foundation’s “flagship initiative.”<sup>6</sup> Its high profile derives in part from how it engages employees’ skills and desire to give back. The concept was simple, according to a statement issued by Vodafone India in 2012: “‘World of Difference’ programme allows you to donate yourself ... [to a charity that can make good use of your business skills] and get paid for your time.”<sup>7</sup>

The inaugural World of Difference program was structured as a competition. Employees submitted applications that were evaluated and ranked from 1 to 5 by HR in their “circle,” or business unit. Dasra, a social enterprise that had been founded to build capacity in the NGO community and bridge the gulf of transparency and trust between donors and NGOs, would become an important partner in implementing the program. The employee rankings were passed on to Dasra, where they were shortlisted based on the recommendations and comments of the circle’s HR and on how their hard and soft skills matched with the needs of a set of NGOs that Dasra had vetted. Twenty Vodafone employees were selected to volunteer with NGOs for five weeks in that first year. Tushar Gogia, who managed the World of Difference project at Dasra, carefully distinguishes these “winners” from a typical volunteer. They are not volunteers, he says, because they are paid by Vodafone and Vodafone also covers the indirect costs of managing them. In effect, the program represents the secondment of a skilled work force to the social sector.<sup>8</sup>

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While World of Difference enables Vodafone India to pursue meaningful corporate social responsibility programs in its communities, as an employee engagement program it has produced measurable benefits for Vodafone India and its employees as well. The Vodafone Foundation in India has undertaken regular assessments of the World of Difference program, including annual reviews and a comprehensive study conducted in 2014 by CLIPS India Foundation, a social research organization that specializes in measuring the impact of social investment in India.<sup>9</sup> That study, which drew on annual surveys of participants, their colleagues, and NGOs, found overall high satisfaction and positive benefits for volunteers, NGOs, and the corporation as a whole.

- Among winners, 98 percent of volunteers in the first three years of the program expressed increased satisfaction in working for Vodafone. They felt their colleagues viewed them more positively — 85 percent felt they were more visible in the eyes of their colleagues — and 96 percent felt they were more effective in their jobs following their experience as volunteers with World of Difference. Seventy-eight percent felt increased commitment to Vodafone's CSR activities, and would be willing to participate without monetary compensation. Also, their colleagues and senior staff viewed these winners more positively: 100 percent of those surveyed said that on a scale of one to five, their returning volunteer co-workers were either "high" or "very high" in terms of increased efficiency at work.
- For NGOs, 82 percent felt their internal processes had improved as a result of participation in World of Difference; 71 percent had witnessed growth among their own employees as a result of working with a World of Difference volunteer; 73 percent believed the relationship had made them more effective through use of mobile technology and applications and training conducted by the volunteers; and 65 percent felt World of Difference had helped them save money.
- For Vodafone, the program increased employee satisfaction, led to increased retention (61 percent of WOD participants said it made them interested in working with Vodafone for longer), made employees enthusiastic ambassadors for the corporation (83 percent said they spoke more highly about Vodafone to clients and associates), and aided new employee recruitment (78 percent said they had encouraged friends to apply for jobs at Vodafone after their WOD experience). Qualitatively, supervisors and co-workers found overall improvement in the returning volunteers' patience, problem-solving skills, and enthusiasm for the corporation.

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### World of Difference Comes to India

Former managing director and CEO Marten Pieters had come to India from Africa, and he saw mobile telephony as a rapidly evolving industry that brought unique value to emerging economies. In a world where distance separated family members who had moved to cities for work, mobile phones allowed them to stay in touch. Services such as medical care and financial transactions were increasingly conducted through mobile phones. But Vodafone India needed a mission statement that articulated both the social and the economic goals of the business.

The process of crafting this mission statement, which Pieters calls “the constitution of the company,”<sup>10</sup> took two years and involved senior management, the next tier of management, and ultimately sought buy-in throughout the company. Pieters recalls that one clear message was, “We want to be a socially responsible company — meaning it is not just the business that we do, which in itself is developmental in nature, but we want to be more than that. We want to do something on top of that, so I think we have tried to glue that into the DNA of the organization, but it was not ... topdown, ... it was really coming from the bottom up. People were talking about it as this is really important, .... I need to make my living but beyond that, what gives me satisfaction in my job?”<sup>11</sup>

The World of Difference program existed in various forms in the countries where Vodafone operates, but it always involved supporting employee volunteerism in the social sector. This idea served as a template. For Vodafone India, World of Difference would become a platform for employees to participate directly in CSR. But Pieters wanted to make sure that whatever Vodafone India did would have impact — it would be more than a field experience for employees. There was both charity and philanthropy in India, and in some ways the needs were not as stark as they had been in Africa where he had previously worked. Thinking about what Vodafone India’s unique contribution might be, Pieters realized, “every organization has its own culture. And it’s very clear that companies like us, we have our own type of culture. Where the more you go into an NGO world and you want to do social work, typically there’s a different culture. So combining these two might actually be a great learning experience for both of them.”<sup>12</sup>

Vodafone India decided to team up with Dasra, an organization that supports strategic philanthropy in India through research and evaluation and builds the capacity of NGOs and social businesses to bring about social change. The corporation retained Dasra to identify potential partner organizations, to help them define projects, and to support the Vodafone Foundation in matching the projects with employees who applied to participate in the program.

Dasra co-founder Neera Nundy had an MBA from Harvard Business School and a background in finance before moving to India. Her organization ran a capacity-building project for nonprofit managers, which had been evolving over eight years. It involved teaching management skills such as writing a business plan, peer-to-peer learning, and at one time had a mentoring component that hadn’t been very successful. However, as part of that program Dasra had identified and vetted NGOs that could benefit from capacity building. According to Nundy, “when Vodafone came to us and said, ‘We’re thinking about doing this employee engagement thing, what do you guys think?’ We said, ‘We have an existing platform we can easily attach the winning volunteers to.’ So they said, ‘OK, let’s just try it out.’”<sup>13</sup>

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### Rolling Out World of Difference

Vodafone India rolled out year 1 of the program as a pilot. Twenty-five employees were seconded to twenty-five NGOs for a period of six weeks. Gogia recounts that “we have been collecting data ever since we began . . . [getting] regular feedback and collecting job satisfaction levels from both sides, from the NGOs and the employees; we have baseline data for every single year; we have front-end data, end-point data and use that to design the year’s program ahead.”<sup>14</sup>

After year 1, Vodafone listened to the experiences of the winners/employee volunteers and their NGO partners and concluded that six weeks was not enough time. The length of the secondment was extended. Other adjustments were introduced as well. In an interview in 2013, then-Vodafone Foundation India country director Laura Turkington reflected, “Two years back when we started the initiative [WOD], the focus was just on volunteering. This year, we thought how can we do more — we engage more people and get more people to contribute. So, this year we started the ‘Giving Championships’ which encouraged a wider level of participation... Whilst our 25 employees were solving real problems at the grassroots with their time and skills, the rest of the 10,000 employees were raising funds to support the partner NGOs. We also opened the opportunity to get our retail customers involved” with a portion of each sale of Vodafone product going to support the NGO Magic Bus.<sup>15</sup>

From the feedback of participants, a number of lessons emerged.

- **End projects sometimes differed from what was envisioned originally.** In some cases, once the Vodafone employee joined the designated NGO, their skill set seemed better adapted to a different project. For example, Gaurav Kulkarni, a Vodafone employee who worked with the NGO Educo in Mumbai, was recruited as a marketing and fundraising manager, but wasn’t comfortable in that role. His NGO mentor at Educo helped him shift to a more technical project, creating a website and developing social media outreach for Educo.<sup>16</sup> Sonali Khan, vice president and India country director of Breakthrough, which seeks to change the culture that supports violence against women, reports that working with Vodafone employees is an “organic process” in which they are “smart and experienced and create value fast,” but that she is “flexible around projects if it turns out that the winner is more suited to a different project.”<sup>17</sup> That kind of flexibility would become important to getting full value from the project.
- **The different cultures of Vodafone staff and NGOs needed to be better aligned.** A Vodafone winner recalls his initial meeting with his NGO: “They knew I was a senior guy...Eight people worked in a small little space, lunch happens there, the discussions happen there.... I was dressed as I would be for my own office until I realized I was making a mistake. So the next day I got into my jeans, I got into my t-shirt, I was trying to be as easygoing as possible. You drop away your fancy watch, you drop away your laptop, you carry your pencil and your notebook. I think your personality change is one of the biggest dimensions of ... people opening up to you and letting you be a part of what they do.” An NGO manager had a mirror-image experience: “[our first Vodafone winner] came in as a marketing guy.... At first he tried to understand what an NGO does and I think he found working with limited resources [a challenge], being used to huge budgets for marketing, like, ‘We want money, we want to do this.’ And here was an organization that had no money and wanted to do everything.”<sup>18</sup>

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- **Vodafone participants' contributions often went beyond the scope of the original project.** Often winners have been able to leverage the resources of Vodafone to strengthen the NGOs beyond their own contribution. For example, when the first Vodafone winner joined Breakthrough India, "we had just shifted our whole strategy to working on faster, shorter campaigns and we were going through an internal organizational restructuring to cope with that new strategy.... He helped us completely, from the human resource planning to restructuring, to thinking through what would be needed for a long-term campaign," recalled Khan.<sup>19</sup> When Bjas Murthy was assigned to AAWC, an organization that works with prostitutes and their children in Mumbai's red-light district, his role was to help them with strategic fundraising. But when he got on site, he discovered that their files on 10,000 clients were stored on pieces of paper. "A very senior IT professional with whom Vodafone partners in the IT domain was very eager to help. He had been to their premises on a fund collecting mission, and he was one of the first to offer his personal time to us. So we invited this individual to come to the NGO one day. He came, he spent the weekend going through their issues, and he said, 'We need to create a small application that will help ease the problems for this NGO and build a robust documentation system for the future. I shall create this and make sure that all these files become documented there.' He added that he had a small team of four or five individuals who were eager to work with an NGO on weekends. In the next ten days, the team came on their own and built up the entire process and systems. We brought digitalization into their documentation process so they will be far better secured in the future." In other cases, Vodafone winners were able to use their networks of contacts to bring on board vendors who were happy to help with specialized needs such as printing.
- **Projects needed to be structured to make the best use of Vodafone winners.** While the Vodafone employees valued experience in the field, the NGOs found a project had to be carefully defined to add strategic value, rather than just "another hand on deck," as one NGO executive director put it. It also helped for the Vodafone winner to have an NGO mentor and clear lines of responsibility and reporting. Ideally, the project could be completed in eight weeks but also, Sonali Khan summarizes, "There have to be clear deliverables, it has to be a learning exercise, and it is something that we can then take to the organization [as a whole]."<sup>20</sup>
- **Winners developed new skills and competencies, broadening their sense of themselves.** Dasra and the Vodafone Foundation encouraged the winners to keep track of their experiences and to make use of social media to share them. Krishnan Manjeri, the winner who was reluctant to use Facebook and did not see himself as a writer, became a more adept communicator. Another winner, Nimisha Gopal, was placed in an NGO that served women and children. As a side project, she used her hobby of jewelry making to teach women and girls to make and sell jewelry. "That small thing, teaching a group of people to make trinkets, changed their outlook on their ability to be contributing citizens," according to Gogia.<sup>21</sup> These kinds of outcomes, in which participants were able to experience a different side of themselves, enhanced employees' satisfaction with themselves and the company they worked for.
- **A more data-driven approach would be needed to better understand value.** Madhu Sirohi, the head of Vodafone Foundation India, says in that first year of the program it was difficult to measure impact because "there was limited understanding of what metrics we needed to put in place." The theory of change was that if you strengthen the capacity of NGOs they will be better able to achieve social change, but "that is an intangible effect."<sup>22</sup> To fully understand the return on Vodafone's social investment, a more rigorous approach would be needed.

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- **After they completed their secondment, Vodafone winners continued to advise NGOs on technology and especially cellular technology.** Says Sirohi, "When Vodafone enters the life of an NGO, mobility enters the life of that NGO. And we become the one-stop shop .... we learned that 80-85 percent of them kept in active touch with the NGOs. Some went back to contribute on a personal basis. Others gave personal computers or things like that.... But they also became an inadvertent consultant for mobility-related queries. So [the NGOs] are able to see the transformative effects of mobile technology, and then the uptake is there.... So we feel that a lot of them get back to our employees to ask about how they can use mobile for this or that, and I think that becomes the introduction of this fabulous technology which changes the way they function."<sup>23</sup>

Though some of these lessons led to annual adjustments to the program, the overall response was overwhelmingly positive. Employees, most of whom came from urban, educated backgrounds, welcomed the opportunity to learn more about the needs of their own country and to give back. The NGOs found lasting value in the assistance they received from the skilled Vodafone staff. And, in many cases, both parties felt they had found "a friend for life." Gayatri Ojha recalled that during her first days with Shelter, an NGO that builds toilets for slum dwellers, she was involved in an automobile accident. "The team was by my side in the hospital."<sup>24</sup> She recovered to help Shelter better define its audiences and design its marketing materials. Krishnan Manjeri has continued to volunteer for Magic Bus and support it through personal fundraising.

Also, though the program's purpose was primarily to make a social contribution, senior managers thought Vodafone benefited as well. Marten Pieters believes it better prepares the company to understand its markets: "... telecom companies have two faces, on the one hand we are a technology company because we do lots of complicated IT and telecom stuff, and at the same time we are dealing day after day with millions and millions of customers, meaning that you have to be very people-oriented and you need to understand what is happening in these markets. And especially in India the market is not one market, it is clear that there are many cultural and economic differences which we need to understand. ...I think by sending people out in these NGOs, it brings back people who have opened their eyes to stuff that they haven't seen before."<sup>25</sup> And internally, Vodafone employees self-report, and survey research supports, that they come back more compassionate, better listeners, and better colleagues.<sup>26</sup> Tushar Gogia of Dasra says that those who have participated in the program "understand what it means to be innovative from the ground up. ...they come back influencing and energized."<sup>27</sup>

Senior management has been visible in its support, and winners are announced and received back into the company with much fanfare. Managers are supportive, even when it means senior employees will be out of touch for eight weeks, and Pieters has always participated in launch events, according to Sirohi: "I don't think Marten Pieters [the former CEO] and Ashok Ramachandran [the then-director of human resources] have the time to do tons of things like this. Yet they would take the time to spend two days and a night to participate in a launch."<sup>28</sup> When Mr. P Balaji became the director of regulatory, external affairs, and corporate social responsibility for Vodafone India soon after the launch of the 2015 World of Difference program, the first thing he did was to participate in a field visit to the NGO Magic Bus. He spoke of the strong bonds between Vodafone winners and the NGOs: "It was incredible to me when I interacted with [them]: there was such a tight bond, and they were so happy about working through some of the challenges of communication."<sup>29</sup> Winners become "ambassadors," invited to report on their experience to senior management and serving as a resource to future applicants.

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### Fine-Tuning the Program

Vodafone Foundation in India and Dasra staff describe the World of Difference program as constantly evolving. Each year they have sought feedback both from their own staff and from the NGOs. After the first year, Vodafone and Dasra determined that six weeks was just too short a time and extended the program to eight weeks. Feedback from NGOs emphasized the value of more senior, experienced Vodafone winners, so the Foundation and Vodafone sought to encourage senior executives to participate. They created a special program, Connect, through which senior executives could advise an NGO on a special project one day a week for four weeks. More employees wanted to join the program, so Vodafone increased the number of participants from 25 to 50. Fundraising campaigns for selected NGOs were added so that staff who didn't apply to the program could engage in CSR.

In addition, in the third year of the program Vodafone retained CLIPS India Foundation to conduct an impact assessment. Based on self-reporting, that report found very high levels of satisfaction among both Vodafone winners and NGOs.

These findings were encouraging, but they lacked rigor. Rohit Adya, then director of external affairs and chairman of the Foundation at Vodafone India, thought the program was “fantastic,” but he wanted better data on the return on investment — in this case, how the program was bettering society.<sup>30</sup> When Madhu Sirohi, the current head of the Foundation, joined in 2013, Vodafone developed data-gathering programs to collect more concrete, real-time information: “We developed an app, and put it on the phone of each of the people participating, and this year we fortified it with geotagging and attendance and filling out tasks, completion, hours, etc. We also tried to get in qualitative parameters like, ‘Are you happy today?’ ‘How is the place you are working for?’ ‘What has been your most powerful experience?’ etc. And for the last two years we have had real-time applications with GPS, tracking WOD participants and their eight-week journey.”<sup>31</sup>

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- The World of Difference program was recast for the 2015 year, its fourth year of operation. The focus would be on depth of impact, scale of impact, and consistency of impact.<sup>32</sup> According to Neera Nundy of Dasra, more changes were made between years 3 and 4 than in any of the earlier years of the program. Among these changes:
- It would have a theme and a sectoral focus. Because mobile technology was a strong capacity of Vodafone and had proven to be a high value to the NGOs, the program would focus on that sector.
- To make the program more rigorous, Vodafone winners' work plans were more rigorously structured. Each winner was given a smart phone, loaded with the app Vodafone had developed, on which they were to record daily tasks and other data. As a small reward, they were allowed to keep the phone once their time with the program was over.
- Vodafone winners also had a formal check-in with the Foundation halfway through their program, not for performance evaluation but to "evaluate the effectiveness of the journey."<sup>33</sup>
- Because NGOs reported that more senior, experienced winners were more valuable to them, Vodafone and Dasra actively sought ways to encourage the participation of such employees.
- The Foundation and Dasra began to assign two Vodafone employees with different skill sets to the same NGO, to double up the amount of learning and change that could occur during the eight-week residency.
- NGOs and Vodafone winners met each other earlier in the process, and both received orientation in what to expect when they began working together. This was to make the learning curve for both parties more efficient and enable them to hit the ground running on the project.

To summarize, after only three years Vodafone India's World of Difference program was highly valued by all stakeholders. There were a few exceptions — one NGO with a very technical program admitted they would prefer to just get the cash — but the vast majority said Vodafone staff's time and skills were more valuable to them than money. Though Vodafone management said the purpose of the program was to have a social impact, not to benefit the company, they did observe benefits. These included improved employee loyalty and morale, an opportunity to disseminate their technology and understand emerging markets, and increased respect for their brand in the community. Furthermore, other corporations became interested and began trying to understand the program, according to Ashok Ramchandran, former director of human resources, and Surender Mehta, the executive vice president and head of human resources operations. Though none has yet adopted anything remotely similar, colleagues in the HR departments of other corporations are "amazed and interested" that Vodafone India is making this level of investment in social change. They also take notice that the program incorporates accountability, and that Vodafone has offered to share information and data. In the mind of Ramchandran, the impact could be substantially increased if other corporations were to jump in.<sup>34</sup> But for the moment, World of Difference India stands alone.

## A Case Study



### Questions for Discussion

- What is the nature of corporate social responsibility, and what should its goals be?
- As the program moves toward more stringent assessment, how might Vodafone think about its impact? How should it weigh the “nuance” of individual stories against “numbers”?
- How might Vodafone more actively encourage other corporations to follow its example of investing in community? What barriers might stand in the way?
- How did Vodafone tailor its program to be highly local and culturally appropriate?
- There have been several suggestions, such as more mentoring or other support for Vodafone winners, to improve their experience. How might Vodafone weigh the importance of an encounter with a different world — that is, an improved experience for the winners — against making as significant a contribution as possible to the operations of an NGO?

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Pieters, who was Vodafone India's Managing Director and first CEO since 2009, stepped down on April 1, 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> Personal interview, Marten Pieters, January 18, 2015.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.vodafone.com/content/index/about/foundation/wod.html>
- <sup>5</sup> Personal interview, Madhu Sirohi, June 9, 2015.
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.vodafone.in/about-us/vodafone-foundation>
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.indiablooms.com/LifestyleDetailsPage/2012/lifestyleDetails180112a>
- <sup>8</sup> Personal interview, Tushar Gogia, January 16, 2015.
- <sup>9</sup> CLIPS India Foundation is a not-for-profit social research organization that studies and measures the impacts of development investment in India. <http://clipsindia.org/>
- <sup>10</sup> Personal interview, Marten Pieters, January 18, 2015.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>13</sup> Personal interview, Neera Nundy, January 19, 2015.
- <sup>14</sup> Personal interview, Tushar Gogia, January 16, 2015.
- <sup>15</sup> "Giving Matters at Vodafone," GiveIndia (April 13, 2013), <http://blog.giveindia.org/2013/04/giving-matters-at-vodafone.html>
- <sup>16</sup> Personal interview, Guarav Kulkarni, January 19, 2015.
- <sup>17</sup> Personal interview, Sonali Khan, January 23, 2015.
- <sup>18</sup> Personal interview, Sonali Khan, January 23, 2015.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Personal interview, Sonali Khan, January 23, 2015.
- <sup>21</sup> Personal interview, Tushar Gogia, January 16, 2015.
- <sup>22</sup> Personal interview, Madhu Sirohi, January 20, 2015.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Personal interview, Gayatri Ojha, January 22, 2015.
- <sup>25</sup> Personal interview, Marten Pieters, January 18, 2015.
- <sup>26</sup> Personal interview, Ritesh Gupta, January 19, 2015; Impact Assessment Study, World of Difference, 2014.
- <sup>27</sup> Personal interview, Tushar Gogia, January 16, 2015.
- <sup>28</sup> Personal interview, Madhu Sirohi, January 20, 2015.
- <sup>29</sup> Personal interview, P Balaji, May 25, 2015.
- <sup>30</sup> Personal interview, Rohit Adya, January 18, 2015.
- <sup>31</sup> Personal interview, Madhu Sirohi, June 9, 2015.
- <sup>32</sup> Personal interview, Surender Mehta, January 18, 2015.
- <sup>33</sup> Personal interview, Ashok Ramchandran, January 18, 2015..
- <sup>34</sup> Personal interviews, Surender Mehta and Ashok Ramchandran, January 18, 2015.

# Appendix

## Interview Participants

Dr. Rohit Adya, Ph.D.	Vodafone India Limited	Former Director-External Affairs
Ritika Agrawal	Vodafone India Limited	Deputy Manager-Vodafone Foundation
Sanjana Ahuja	Vodafone India Limited	Head BCM at Vodafone India Services Pvt. Ltd.
Beenoxi Arora	Vice President	Axis Bank Foundation
Vikram Bains	Vodafone India Limited	Customer Service Head
P. Balaji	Vodafone India Limited	Director-External Affairs
Ashish Bansal	Vodafone India Limited	Assistant Brand Manager
Pallavi Bhurewar	Vodafone India Limited	Former Deputy Manager
Chhaya Budhwar	Vodafone India Limited	Deputy Manager – Customer Service
Geetanjali Jha Chakraborty	Armman	Executive Director
Ajanta Chatterjee	Vodafone India Limited	Former National Head-Learning & Capability Development & Employee Engagement
Bharati Chaturvedi	Chintan	Director
Jo Chopra	Latika Roy Foundation	Executive Director
Burgess Cooper	Vodafone India Limited	Former SVP & CISO
Gayatri Divecha	DASRA	Manager, Business Development and Partnerships
Andrew Dunnett	Vodafone Foundation and Group Sustainability	Director
Sharanya Gautam	Voice 4 Girls	Assistant Director
Tushar Gogia	DASRA	Social Impact Manager

# Appendix

## Interview Participants

Ritesh Gupta	Vodafone India Limited	Deputy Manager – Zonal Customer Service Operations
Gourav Jaiswal	Agrini	Secretary
Sonal Jaitley	Vodafone India Limited	Former Head Customer Service Vodafone India
Sonali Kahn	Breakthrough	VP and Country Director-India
Gaurav Kulkarni	Vodafone India Limited	Senior Executive at Vodafone Shared Services
Pratik Kumar	Magic Bus India Foundation	CEO
Sive Kumar Mahalingham	Sugha Vazhvu	Chief Technology Officer
Sreekrishnan Manjeri	Vodafone India Limited	Senior Supply Chain Manager
Surender Mehta	Vodafone India Limited	Executive Vice President and Head-Human Resources Operations
Satya Mekala	Vodafone Foundation	Senior Manager
Kshama Metre	Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development (CORD)	Director
BJAS Murthy	Vodafone India Limited	Operations Director-North
Neera Nundy	DASRA	Co-Founder
Gayatri Ojha	Vodafone India Limited	Senior Manager-Marcom Mpesa
Marten Pieters	Vodafone India Limited	Former Managing Director and CEO
Shital Puri	Vodafone India Limited	Former Senior Delivery Manager
Ashok Ramchandran	Vodafone India Limited	Former Director-HR
Nivedita Samanta	Vodafone Foundation	Communications and Projects Manager
Rajshri Sen	Breakthrough	Deputy Director-Resource Mobilisation
Kushal Shah	Vodafone India Limited	General Manager-Services Pvt Ltd.

# Appendix

## Interview Participants

Sushila Shastri	Save the Children	Project Head
Madhu Sirohi	Vodafone India Limited	Head-Vodafone Foundation
Parul Soni	Former Executive Director, Development Advisory	Former Executive Director, Development Advisory
Raman Sundararajan	Vodafone India Limited	BI Program Manager
Vanarajan Swamidoss	Manitham Charity Trust	Founder
Jaya Tiwari	Naz Foundation	Direct Implementation Manager
Akhilesh Tiwari	Sarathi Development Foundation	Director
Siddartha Trivedi	Vodafone India Limited	Manager
Arpita Tyagi	Vodafone India Limited	
Superna Verma	Vodafone India Limited	Senior Executive-Training Operations

## Appendix

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

As background, Partners for Change uses a “wicked problem” frame to analyze and understand social change. A “wicked” problem is one that doesn’t have an off-the-shelf, technical solution — for example, if the recurrence of polio is simply a matter of a lack of vaccine, a well-understood solution is to make more vaccine and get everyone vaccinated. But if there are other, more complex reasons people are not being vaccinated — for example, if vaccinations violate some people’s religious beliefs, raise complex issues of cross-cultural trust, or if because of lack of equipment (sterile syringes, refrigeration) and safe vaccine they introduce or transmit other diseases — the problem is “wickedly” complex. It requires the actor who is trying to solve the problem to take a more nuanced approach, be willing to take risks and try new things, listen carefully to the community on the ground to whom aid is being given to ensure the nature of the problem is fully understood, carefully monitor what is happening on the ground so that if necessary the approach can be recalibrated, and not be afraid to admit failure and start over when necessary. We call a leader who takes this approach a “Deliberate Leader.”

In developing our case study of Thomson Reuters Foundation’s work, particularly in organizing TrustLaw, we are using “wicked” problems as an analytical framework to explore how the foundation took risks, listened to stakeholders, monitored what was happening, recalibrated when necessary, possibly encountered failure, and learned from it.

# Appendix

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEE**

The specific questions we would like to ask you for the case study are:

1. What is the nature of your relationship and history with TrustLaw? How has it changed since you first joined the organization?
2. What is your understanding of the problem or problems TrustLaw seeks to address?
3. Are you aware of any particularly challenging “wicked” problems that have arisen in the course of your work with TrustLaw? What was the nature of those problems and how did TrustLaw approach them?
4. How do you, as a representative of TrustLaw, work with stakeholders? Can you give examples of how you may have learned from their on-the-ground experience and knowledge, and modified your approach or behavior based on that input? Are there examples of problems you have solved together?
5. Have you observed or experienced any instance where TrustLaw and/or its partners had to rethink its approach? Have there been “aha” moments when an important lesson was learned from something not going as anticipated, and it was necessary to recalibrate?
6. How do you think about measuring success, learning from failure, and feeding that information back into the operational approach of TrustLaw? How has your approach evolved based on outcomes, encountering unanticipated barriers, and /or possibly outright failure?

If there are other insights you have, I hope that you will bring them forward.

# Appendix

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CLIENT**

The specific questions we would like to ask you for the case study are:

1. What is the nature of your relationship and history with TrustLaw?
2. What is your understanding of the problem or problems TrustLaw seeks to address? How do they intersect with the problems that your organization works on?
3. Are you aware of any particularly challenging “wicked” problems that have arisen in the course of your relationship with TrustLaw? What was the nature of those problems and how did TrustLaw approach them?
4. How has TrustLaw worked with you as a stakeholder? Can you give examples of their learning from your on-the-ground experience and modifying their approach or behavior based on that input, or of problems you have solved together? Have you ever experienced your TrustLaw partners imposing their judgment on you?
5. Have you observed or experienced any instance where TrustLaw (or you and your TrustLaw partners) had to rethink its approach? Have there been “aha” moments when an important lesson was learned from something not going as anticipated, and it was necessary to recalibrate?
6. How do you, in your partnership with TrustLaw, track and measure outcomes, identify and address barriers, and assess success or failure?

If there are other insights you have, please feel free to bring them forward.

## Appendix

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTNER**

The specific questions we would like to ask you for the case study are:

1. What is the nature of your relationship and history with TrustLaw?
2. What is your understanding of the problem or problems TrustLaw seeks to address?
3. Are you aware of any particularly challenging “wicked” problems that have arisen in the course of TrustLaw’s history? What was the nature of those problems and how did TrustLaw approach them?
4. How do you think TrustLaw has worked with stakeholders? Can you give examples of their learning from stakeholders’ on-the-ground experience and modifying their approach or behavior based on that input, or of problems that have been solved jointly? Have you ever known Thomson Reuters Foundation or TrustLaw to impose top-down judgments on their stakeholders?
5. Can you think of examples where TrustLaw has pursued a high-risk strategy, understanding that it risked failure but believing the payoff would be great if the strategy succeeded?
6. Have you observed or experienced any instance where TrustLaw had to rethink its approach? Have there been “aha” moments when an important lesson was learned from something not going as anticipated, and it was necessary to recalibrate?
7. How do you think TrustLaw tracks and measures outcomes, identifies and addresses barriers, and assesses success or failure?

If there are other insights you have, please feel free to bring them forward.

## Appendix

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH PROJECT CLIENT**

The specific questions we would like to ask you for the case study are:

1. What is the nature of your relationship and history with TrustLaw?
2. What is your understanding of the problem or problems TrustLaw seeks to address?
3. Are you aware of any particularly challenging “wicked” problems that have arisen in the course of your relationship? What was the nature of those problems and how did TrustLaw approach them?
4. How has TrustLaw worked with you as a stakeholder? Can you give examples of their learning from your on-the-ground experience and modifying their approach or behavior based on that input, or of problems you have solved together? Have you ever experienced your TrustLaw partners imposing their judgment on you?
5. Have you observed or experienced any instance where TrustLaw (or you and your TrustLaw partners) had to rethink its approach? Have there been “aha” moments when an important lesson was learned from something not going as anticipated, and it was necessary to recalibrate?
6. How do you, in your partnership with TrustLaw, track and measure outcomes, identify and address barriers, and assess success or failure?

If there are other insights you have, please feel free to bring them forward.

## Appendix

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LAW FIRM PARTNER**

The specific questions we would like to ask you for the case study are:

1. What is the nature of your relationship and history with TrustLaw?
2. What is your understanding of the problem or problems TrustLaw seeks to address?
3. Are you aware of any particularly challenging “wicked” problems that have arisen in the course of your relationship? What was the nature of those problems and how did TrustLaw approach them?
4. How has TrustLaw worked with you as a stakeholder? Can you give examples of their learning from your on-the-ground experience and modifying their approach or behavior based on that input, or of problems you have solved together? Have you ever been aware of power imbalances becoming a concern in the relationship between TrustLaw’s legal partners and client organizations, and if so, how might those have been addressed?
5. Have you observed or experienced any instance where TrustLaw (or you and your TrustLaw partners) had to rethink its approach? Have there been “aha” moments when an important lesson was learned from something not going as anticipated, and it was necessary to recalibrate?
6. How do you, in your partnership with TrustLaw, track and measure outcomes, identify and address barriers, and assess success or failure? Has your definition of success or failure changed in any way in the course of that relationship, based on lessons learned?

If there are other insights you have, please feel free to bring them forward.

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