

Developing a Strategic Plan for Wadhvani Foundation (Outcomes Framework, Benchmarking Study & Impact Models)

Wadhvani Foundation (WF), a philanthropic organization, was set up in 2000 with the primary mission of accelerating economic development in emerging economies by driving large-scale job creation through entrepreneurship, innovation, and skill development. The three primary vehicles for this are – advantage, entrepreneur, and opportunity portfolios. The Foundation works in 20+ countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

WF initiated its work in India in 2003 and focused on job creation through college programs to create future entrepreneurs. Over time, the foundation revised its goals and targets through iterative theories of change and logic models to arrive at a portfolio within an integrated and holistic paradigm. However, an external agency was needed to provide strategic inputs on the outcomes framework and target for its portfolios and overall WF mandate. The current focus of the study was limited to three programs in India – Wadhvani Advantage, Entrepreneur, and Opportunity.

The assignment's objectives were to

1. help the Foundation (re)orient overall vision, mission, strategic focus, and direction; and align initiatives to the overall mandate,
2. strengthen program design and deployment by rationalizing program indicators, and
3. devise scale and sustainability strategies through organization and governance design, collaborations partnerships, technology usage, knowledge management, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL)

The following tasks were facilitated to help achieve these objectives:

1. Develop an Outcomes Framework
2. Identify goals, geographies, and programs/initiatives to maximize the impact
3. Undertake a benchmarking study with similar private, government, and civil society initiatives
4. Develop models to ascertain differential impacts across geographies, programs, and initiatives

Sambodhi's team facilitated discussions with

- a) the WF Impact team, Program team, support team, initiative heads, regional heads, and senior management, and
- b) beneficiaries of Wadhvani portfolios (e.g., students, faculty, channel partners, alums, entrepreneurs of high-growth potential companies and start-ups) through In-Depth-Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

Given the current COVID situation, all these discussions were held virtually. The findings culminated in the following outputs–

- Benchmarking Study: A master list of all philanthropic foundations was created with similar interventions (i.e., job creation through entrepreneurship, skill development, and innovation) based on specific criteria and KPIs. Five such philanthropic foundations were shortlisted based on deliberations with the WF team.
- 2-3 day workshop with the WF team: The learnings from the data collection phase were shared with the WF team during a seminar (2-3 days). These learnings helped in the goal-setting and outcomes framework exercise.
- Revised TOC for each portfolio and the macro level: Based on the consultations, a revised theory of change was developed with the WF team.
- Operating models with terms of reference: A protocol document was prepared, which entailed the MEL framework and specific terms of reference for engaging measurement partner/s.