

Mentor Together

Registered as: Trust | **Founded:** 2011

Head Office Location: Bangalore

Region of Impact: Bangalore, Mysore & Pune

Annual Budget (2012-13): INR 10 Lakhs (\$ 17,000)

Adolescent Girls Budget (2012-13): INR 5 Lakhs (\$ 8,000)

Staff Strength: 4 full time



Overview

176 million youth and children in India are deemed to be in need of care and protection. For children born into disadvantage, the 'Lottery of Birth' unfairly controls their life. A single factor like parental education can impact future wage inequality by up to 17%. Mentor Together (MT) is India's first community-based youth-mentoring organization. Since 2009, MT has delivered over 30,000 hours of one-to-one mentoring to 450 children facing risk and adversity, through a network of committed volunteer mentors. MT was founded by Arundhuti Gupta and Dr. Rajeev Gowda, a Professor at IIM-B.

Adolescent Girls Program

Mentor Together provides adolescent girls facing risk and adversity, one-to-one mentoring relationships, with committed volunteer professionals, to empower and help them achieve their goals and dreams. Mentees are in the age group of 14-19 years and are identified through partnerships with Government or NGO-run homes and schools.

The objectives of the mentoring are as follows:

- To help mentees overcome past negative emotional experiences
- To help them build critical life skills
- To help them understand their own skills and aptitudes
- To help plan for future career and academic choices
- To improve their English and Computer skills

Model

After a 4-stage selection process, selected mentors and mentees are matched 1-1 and given upto 10 hours of pre-match training. Pairs commit for a minimum of 1-year. The program comprises some or all of the following:

- In-person 1-1 meetings: 60 hours (Atleast twice a month)
- Online mentoring: 12 hours (Atleast twice a month)
- Group workshops 32 hours (Once every quarter)
- Career internship: 20 hours (over 2 months)

The topics covered in the mentoring sessions include academic and career planning, English competency and Life Skills namely decision-making, communication, passiveness, assertiveness, etc. Mentor-mentee pairs also get unstructured time for recreational activities of their choice. The focus of the mentoring is to build a nurturing relationship, and then look at the skills that can develop through the bond. At the end of the 1st year, pairs choose to continue formally or informally, or can be rematched.



Milestones

- 2009: Mentor Together founded
- 2010: Received Action Research Grant from IIM-Bangalore
- 2011: Recipient of IBM's Catalyst Community Impact Grant
- 2012: Grant winner and finalist at Mahindra Spark the Rise Competition

Impact to Date

- **264** adolescent girls have been paired with committed mentors till date.
- Program evaluation found that through the mentoring, mentees built **identity** for themselves, **challenged societal pressures** of early marriage, and gained **emotional support** to face their fears.

Theory of Change

If we provide disadvantaged youth a nurturing relationship with an experienced adult, then they can build critical life skills and access a range of opportunities and resources. If they are able to build these life skills and access a range of opportunities and resources, then they will have better emotional & social well-being and improved economic prospects.

Growth Plans

Mentor Together presently works with 150 mentor and mentee pairs targeting adolescent girls across Bangalore, Mysore and Pune. The organization aims to expand its direct reach to 1500 pairs by 2016 with a presence across 5 cities. To ensure quality mentoring at scale, MT will leverage corporate partnerships and community partnerships to ensure its screening process for mentors and mentees is followed carefully. An in-house technology platform will be used to closely monitor the frequency & duration of meetings, and the health of the relationships. MT also aims to grow its reach through a partnership model, with other youth-focused NGOs. Over the next three years, Mentor Together shall divest some its delivery of the mentoring program to strategically chosen partners, retaining control over operating standards, trainings and evaluations. By 2016-2017, Mentor Together aims at having 20 partners who will provide mentoring to 10,000 mentees.

| | 2012-13 (a) | 2013-14 (e) | 2014-15 (e) | 2015-16 (e) |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Org Budget (INR Lakhs) | 10 | 24 | 42 | 100 |
| Total Adolescent Girls Budget | 5 | 12 | 21 | 50 |
| No. of Adolescent Girls | 54 | 150 | 300 | 700 |

Leadership & Management

Mentor Together's team is lead by Arundhuti Gupta, who founded the organization in 2009 after returning from Manchester Business School (UK), where she studied as a Commonwealth Scholar. Arundhuti is a World Economic Forum Global Shaper, a YouthActionNet Global Fellow and a Starting Bloc Fellow. While she was a researcher at the Center for Public Policy, IIM – Bangalore, she built MT's core framework and operating model.

Partnerships

In selecting mentees, Mentor Together has partnered with a host of organizations including Government Homes, High Schools & Colleges, and other non-profit organizations across Bangalore, Mysore and Pune. Mentor Together has also built key partnerships to build components of its programs over the years – e.g. a strategic planning partnership with IBM India, a technology partnership with Thoughtworks.

Funders

Mentor Together received its incubation fund from the Centre for Public Policy – IIM-Bangalore in 2010.. Over the past 2 years, MT has received funding from large multinational organizations including IBM India and Amdocs. Additionally, they have also received grants from the International Youth Foundation and the Mahindra Spark the Rise competition, where Mentor Together emerged as a finalist.