



Practices That Power CSR Talent and Governance in India

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Executive Summary

It's a brisk morning in Mumbai, and the office of a leading corporate social responsibility (CSR) organisation is warming up for the day. At one desk, a program manager drafts plans for a rural health care initiative that could alleviate a long-standing public health challenge. In another corner, a team debates how best to measure the impact of a new education programme for underserved communities. Down the hallway, the CSR leader sits in quiet concentration, rehearsing a presentation for the board. Today's meeting is pivotal – an opportunity to showcase the progress of a long-running skilling initiative, but it is also a moment to answer tough questions about scalability and long-term outcomes.

This scene is emblematic of a sector at a turning point – charged with tackling some of India's most pressing social challenges while juggling the immense expectations of corporate backers and the communities they serve.

In the years since CSR regulations came into force in 2014, the CSR sector has grown to comprise 24,000 companies spending about INR 30,000 crores (approximately \$3.5 billion) on a multitude of issues, geographies, and communities. And the stakes will only grow in the coming years, especially as middle-market and large CSR players – which account for 60 percent of CSR spend – increase their giving, set more aspirational goals, and consider bolder approaches for impact. Some are collaborating more with other funders, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), while others are investing in innovation on the back of technology breakthroughs or filling gaps in a dynamically evolving ecosystem oriented toward improving lives and communities.

These organizations face a critical question:

Can they build the governance, leadership, and talent infrastructure to match the size of their giving and impact aspirations?

The groundwork has been laid, with most organizations dedicating governance structures and teams to CSR. And CSR leaders care about talent – almost two-thirds of CSR leaders ranked “best-in-class talent” as one of the three most important ingredients for CSR success in a survey that we conducted as part of this research.

Still, 82 percent of CSR leaders believe they need to hire and/or upskill talent to enhance effectiveness, according to a 2024 study by [Give Grants](#) (for which The Bridgespan Group was the research partner). And in Bridgespan's survey for this research, a significant portion of CSR leaders highlighted that their CSR governance members can deepen their understanding of the social sector, 40 percent of the CSR leaders have responsibilities that take their attention away from CSR work, and 35 percent struggle to hire at junior levels.

Some key talent barriers



N=26
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

In part, the challenges stem from how CSR roles straddle the social and corporate sectors in ways that stand apart from other functions. “[CSR leaders] need to determine how to maximise social returns on finite resources,” says Govind Iyer, chair of the CSR Committee at Infosys. That focus on social returns – impact – makes the calculus for investing in governance and talent development different from other functions.

“[CSR leaders] need to determine how to maximise social returns on finite resources.”

GOVIND IYER, CHAIR OF THE CSR COMMITTEE, INFOSYS

This report shines a spotlight on effective talent and governance practices and surfaces common challenges and opportunities in the CSR ecosystem. We interviewed 52 stakeholders in the CSR ecosystem (including CSR heads, business leaders, NGO partners, and other ecosystem actors) and surveyed 26 CSR heads, in addition to conducting secondary research.

The good news is that there is significant opportunity for CSR organisations to learn from their peers. We elevate 11 practices across CSR governance, leadership, and teams that can help CSR organisations live into their full potential and bring them to life with real-world examples.



- **Activating CSR governance members' skills and experience.** Governance members can apply their functional and domain expertise to hone CSR strategies, open up their networks to forge partnerships, and use their voices to elevate issues externally.
- **Establishing supplementary structures.** Supplemental governance bodies such as advisory boards bring in external subject matter expertise, aid decision-making, and create corporate champions for CSR projects.
- **Orienting CSR governance members on the nuances of the social sector.** Field immersions and engagement with NGOs and sector leaders help governance members lean into impact.



- **Positioning CSR heads strategically within the organisation.** Proximity to the C-suite elevates the strategic importance of CSR in the organisation.
- **Letting CSR leaders lead.** CSR heads are more motivated and make decisions more efficiently when they enjoy operational autonomy.
- **Making space for professional development.** Engaging deeply with stakeholders and peers helps on-the-ground learning and cross-pollination of ideas.
- **Developing the next line of leadership.** Building a pipeline of leaders can ensure succession plans succeed and empower teams (and leaders) along the way.



- **Crafting a compelling value proposition to attract and retain talent.** Exposure to on-the-ground work can inspire potential recruits and development programmes that demonstrate an exciting career path can motivate team members.
- **Offering professional development beyond training.** Developing talent means more than formal training; it also involves engaging directly with social sector experts and corporate leaders for on-the-job learning and real-time coaching.
- **Leveraging corporate capabilities to complement the CSR team.** Corporates' domain and functional expertise, networks, and geographic presence can be immensely valuable.
- **Building a culture of empathy and collaboration.** Working with NGOs as equal partners can help teams navigate relationships and build trust in the field.

Bear in mind that these practices make different asks of different leaders. Some speak to practices that corporate leaders should consider to structure governance bodies and lines of reporting, while others suggest how governing body members might support CSR leaders or how CSR leaders might support their team members. While some of these practices may seem intuitive, they require attention and investment. We offer sets of reflection questions to help leaders consider how they might adapt the practices.

We also offer a development agenda for the sector writ large. Corporates, ecosystem actors (e.g. education and training institutions), and policymakers all stand to benefit from systematically investing in the people who make up the sector, equipping boards, leaders, and teams to fulfill their impact aspirations.

The development agenda includes:

- **Development programmes for CSR committees and corporate foundation boards.** Greater opportunity for CSR governance members to interact with communities, social-sector leaders, and CSR governance peers, as well as to participate in formal professional education programmes.
- **Coaching and peer engagement for senior CSR professionals and leaders.** Opportunities for CSR leaders to get on-demand guidance from seasoned practitioners and engage with peer leaders through well-curated networks and forums.
- **Practical and flexible professional development programmes for junior and mid-level CSR professionals.** Co-developed programmes by sector leaders and CSR practitioners on topics such as stakeholder engagement; measurement, evaluation, and learning; and communications.
- **Public narratives positioning CSR as an aspirational career.** Positioning CSR as an aspirational career by amplifying public narratives around CSR's impact in India, providing potential recruits with first-hand exposure to CSR roles (e.g. internships, shadowing) and showcasing stories of successful CSR careers.

CSR is increasingly seen as a distinct function within organisations, one that requires thoughtful governance, strategic leadership, and unique skills. We hope this report will spur conversation, reflection, and action – individually, organisationally, and as an ecosystem – to truly supercharge talent and governance for impact.

Introduction

The introduction of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) mandate in April 2014 marked a groundbreaking step, requiring large companies to allocate at least 2 percent of their average net profits from the previous three years towards CSR activities.¹ By all measures, the sector is growing. Ten years in, it is a prominent segment of philanthropy in India – annual CSR expenditure has nearly tripled, from approximately INR 10,000 crores to INR 30,000 crores (approximately \$1.2 billion to \$3.5 billion), and it now accounts for 30 percent of the country's total philanthropic contributions.²

Of the 24,000 companies that comprise the sector, a critical subset drives the bulk of CSR spend. The top-200 spenders, each with CSR budgets exceeding INR 15 crores (approximately \$1.7 million), collectively account for around 60 percent of the total CSR spend.³ Operating across thematic areas, their initiatives are addressing critical social issues, shaping the sector's progress, and advancing India's development agenda.

Do CSR organisations have the capacity to raise their impact?

The top spenders are approaching CSR with a strategic focus and adopting bolder approaches with the social-change needs of India in mind. According to a 2024 Give study (building on research from The Bridgespan Group),⁴ over 50 percent of CSR leaders expressed interest in funding innovative projects, joining philanthropic collaboratives, and contributing to ecosystem strengthening.

Yet CSR leaders emphasise the need to either hire additional talent or upskill existing teams to build further momentum: 82 percent of CSR leaders cited that talent development needs greater investment across the CSR ecosystem, according to the Give study. So, these organisations face a critical question: Can they build the governance, leadership, and talent infrastructure to match the size of their giving and the complexity of their goals?

About the report

To respond to that question, we set out to spotlight effective talent and governance practices within mid- to large-sized CSR organisations (budgets greater than INR 15 crores, or approximately \$1.7 million) and corporate foundations, and make recommendations for CSR organisations and the wider development ecosystem. (See Research Methodology on the next page.)

This report takes you inside the world of some of India's largest CSR organisations, offering a behind-the-scenes look at the people, practices, and pressures that animate this work. It is organised into three sections – governance, leadership, and teams – with

1 [CSR Expenditure Summary](#), National CSR Portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

2 Arpan Sheth, Radhika Sridharan, Neera Nundy, Ami Misra, and Prachi Pal, [India Philanthropy Report 2024](#), Bain & Company, February 2024.

3 The Bridgespan Group analysis, using data from the [CSR Portal](#).

4 [India CSR: reflections from the last decade, visioning for the next](#), Give Grants, April 2024.

each section providing a snapshot of CSR practices and a set of questions that CSR leaders and other actors can reflect on for their organisations. We conclude by summarizing a development agenda for CSR which includes steps that other actors in the social-sector ecosystem, such as education and training providers, can take to advance talent and development in the sector.

Research methodology

The findings in this report are based on a mixed-methods approach, including primary data collection and secondary research. Primary data collection centred on structured interviews with 52 corporate social responsibility (CSR)/corporate foundation heads and business leaders, as well as leaders of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), institutional philanthropies, and ecosystem intermediaries who engage deeply with CSR. (See appendix A on page 24 for a list of interviewees.)

Additionally, we surveyed 26 CSR heads from organisations with budgets exceeding INR 15 crores (or approximately \$1.7 million). (See appendix B on page 27 for demographic details.) Secondary research involved a review of literature on talent and governance in the social sector and CSR, along with an analysis of the profiles of CSR heads and committees from 50 organisations using company websites and LinkedIn. The 50 organisations included both corporate foundations and CSR functions and spanned a range of sectors and budgets.

While the report offers a snapshot of the current trends and future opportunities in CSR talent and governance, The Bridgespan Group acknowledges that this is a vast topic, and there is much more to learn. We focused on areas of talent management that CSR leaders highlighted for us, and thus, did not cover topics such as compensation benchmarking or recruiting processes. In addition, the set of CSR heads we were able to reach may not be representative of all CSR heads and the aspirations of their corporate leaders for impact in the world. Still, we hope this report can serve as a starting point for further discussion on this critical subject. Other actors can build on this research to explore CSR talent management and learning and development needs more deeply, uncovering additional opportunities to advance the field.

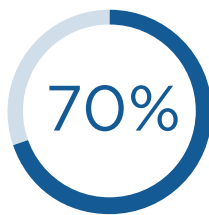


Governance

Setting the tone from the top

With companies increasing their CSR spend – and raising their expectations for impact – the way they govern their CSR organisations can determine whether projects flourish or falter. At its best, meaningful engagement from governance structures can shape outcomes down to the last mile.

Figure 1. Composition of CSR governance bodies



of CSR organisations have founders/promoters, CEOs, or managing directors involved in CSR governance bodies

Note: n=50

Source: Secondary research by The Bridgespan Group on a sample of profiles of CSR heads in India.

By law, every organisation for which CSR provisions apply needs to establish a CSR committee comprising at least three directors, including one or more independent director. This committee is responsible for making recommendations to the corporate board on CSR policy, budget, and annual action plans.⁵ Similarly, at corporate foundations, a board of trustees or governing council oversees strategy and programmes. These types of boards are now well-established across the sector.

CSR is also firmly on the radar of corporate leadership. Our research of 50 CSR organisations found that 70 percent have founders/promoters, CEOs, or managing directors directly involved in CSR governance bodies. And that's a good thing, because, according to 92 percent of our survey respondents, CSR committees add value to CSR by bringing a deep understanding of corporate values, strategies, and capabilities to the table, aligning CSR initiatives with the business.

Three governance practices stood out:

- **Activating CSR governance members' skills and experience.** CSR governance members have multidisciplinary expertise and networks which can be powerful assets.
- **Establishing supplementary structures.** One board or CSR committee can't do everything, so additional structures (e.g. advisory boards) can help to streamline decision-making, secure agreement, and incorporate diverse perspectives.
- **Orienting CSR governance members on the nuances of the social sector.** Bringing CSR governance members to the field to learn about and experience on-the-ground realities can aid decision-making.

⁵ [CSR Expenditure Summary](#), National CSR Portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

Activating CSR governance members' skills and experience

With their extensive exposure and management experience, CSR governance members apply diverse perspectives to challenge their teams' thinking. Building on their specific domain or functional expertise, whether it is finance, marketing, or supply chain, they ask thoughtful questions to dig into impact potential and scalability, for example, or programme sustainability and regulatory implications for the organisation.

Take Bosch India Foundation. Its CSR activities focus on multiple areas, including skill development, sustainable mobility, and integrated community development (including environmental sustainability, water conservation, access to basic healthcare, and education) in rural locations near the company's operations. According to Sakina Baker, head of CSR at Bosch Limited and Bosch India Foundation, "The CSR Steering Committee promotes good governance and encourages the team to look beyond the short-term impact. [CSR governance members] also utilise their business experience to make CSR a more professionally driven vertical which focuses on scalability, replicability, and long-term sustainability of [CSR] efforts."

Terminology

Note that we refer to CSR committees and corporate foundation boards as "**CSR governance bodies**" throughout the report to distinguish them from corporate boards. We also refer to both CSR functions within companies and corporate foundations as "**CSR organisations**." And we refer to both CSR function heads and corporate foundation heads as "**CSR leaders (or heads)**."

Senior governance members also represent CSR work at external events and forums. We heard how CSR governance members get involved in high-profile policy and advocacy forums, such as those hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry, discussing the importance of aligning corporate objectives with societal needs. The CSR heads appreciate the engagement. One notes, "Our ability to engage externally is ideal because every single member of the leadership team is well aware of the impact our CSR creates and can talk to our work without the need for talking points." That level of engagement can even catalyse strategic partnerships.

Establishing supplementary structures

Governance bodies such as CSR committees or corporate foundation boards have limited time to dedicate to CSR (our survey shows they meet two to four times a year) (See figure B.5 on page 29.). Thus, some organisations have established supplementary structures, such as steering committees and advisory boards, to aid decision-making, secure organisation-wide agreement, and integrate diverse perspectives.

For example, Capgemini has a CSR Core Committee comprising the heads of various business units who vet CSR proposals. Once the CSR team identifies potential projects, a business "sponsor" from the CSR Core Committee visits the project site, evaluates its feasibility, and provides a report. "One full day is invested by a CSR Core Committee member on the project proposal, and they are the ones who finally endorse and present the proposal to the board or CSR committee," shares Kumar Anurag Pratap, vice president and leader of CSR initiatives at Capgemini in India.

Supplementary structures can also bring in specialist expertise. Wipro, for example, has multiple advisory groups within its CSR focus areas including specialists in primary healthcare, education, urban ecology, and urban WASH. Each advisory group reviews projects quarterly, providing perspectives and critical feedback to ensure the initiatives are aligned with Wipro's values, larger developmental priorities, and emerging trends in the social sector.

Supplementary structures do, however, require careful consideration. If not carefully designed and managed, they could slow down decision-making, create redundancies, or dilute accountability.

Orienting CSR governance bodies on the nuances of the social sector

Some CSR leaders point out that when business leaders lack perspective on the social sector, committee discussions often focus too heavily on metrics rather than meaningful impact. Our survey reveals that 92 percent of CSR leaders feel CSR governance members bring a strong understanding of corporate strengths to their CSR work yet only 54 percent feel that CSR governance members bring a deep understanding of the issue areas and target communities to the table. (See figure B.6 on page 29.) When we studied a sample of 50 CSR organisations, we found that only 40 percent of the CSR committees and 30 percent of corporate foundation boards

Figure 2. CSR committee members

Of 50 CSR organisations, only...



Note: n=50
Source: Secondary research by The Bridgespan Group on a sample of profiles of CSR heads in India.

included non-corporate members. Even when present, most of these members were from the government sector; few were from NGOs or social-sector experts.

To address this challenge, organisations are engaging their CSR governance bodies and leadership by encouraging active involvement in the field. Field immersions are organised to understand the programme or project on the ground and to gauge the perspectives of community members. They have helped CSR committee members gain a deeper understanding of how social change happens.

For example, at Bosch, the CSR committee and Bosch India Foundation trustees visit project sites and interact with different stakeholders in the community. The visits build trust between CSR governance bodies, implementing teams, and partners; sharpen the understanding of community realities; strengthen the commitment to impact; and lead to more practical, informed decisions.

Some corporates also invite nonprofit representatives or community members into CSR governance body discussions. Upmanyu Patil, director of programmes at Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP India), an NGO which promotes inclusive, sustainable community development by empowering

women in low-income climate-vulnerable communities, stresses the value of having SSP India's CSR partners engage directly with community members. "We have presented to many CSR committees and heads, and what worked for us was going along with a community leader or member. They can speak directly to the work being done on the ground and provide a deeper sense of ground reality and impact to the committee members."

Our takeaway is that field visits should truly engage the community, lest they become token gestures, and shouldn't drain NGOs' time and resources. Tata Steel Foundation was conscious of these risks when it designed field visits to include one-on-one discussions with on-the-ground partners and community members. Sourav Roy, CEO of the Tata Steel Foundation, says the effect of those visits was noticeable at Samvaad, Tata Steel Foundation's flagship multiday event held to facilitate meaningful conversations among tribal leaders, scholars, and community members. "When Samvaad comes around, board members are sitting with the constituents as one," Roy says. This exposure has helped shift thinking within the board, empowering it to hold CSR teams accountable with questions rooted in real-world insights.

Reflection Questions

Is our CSR governance body and CSR leadership equipped to think through how our governance structures and practices might support our CSR vision? Follow the prompts below to engage your team in a discussion.

- To what extent are we harnessing our CSR governance members' experience, expertise, relationships, and influence to advance CSR objectives, strengthen CSR leadership, and build team capacity?
- Is there an opportunity to modify our CSR governance composition to include experts from the communities or population segments we serve, and the issue areas we focus on, to ground our strategy in community and sectoral realities?
- If we established supplementary structures (e.g. advisory boards or working groups), would it accelerate organisational agreement and better harness corporate synergies?
- What mechanisms (e.g. formal board orientation programmes, field immersions, or NGO partner engagement) would help our CSR governance members fully embrace and excel in their roles?
- How can we enhance accountability of our governance bodies and leadership to the communities we work with? How do we ensure that the communities we work with have a voice in our governance?



Leadership

Advancing CSR leadership

If there is one thing all our interviewees agree on, it is that the job of a CSR head is complex. These leaders must navigate a web of moving parts, balancing the intricacies of the business world with the nuances of the social sector.

With a wide range of budgets and operational areas, there is no single template to follow. Within the scope of our study, CSR leaders manage organisations with annual budgets ranging from INR 15 crores to INR 1,500 crores (approximately \$1.7 million to \$170 million). Often, these leaders oversee a diverse portfolio of programmes across multiple, overlapping issue areas and themes, typically implemented in collaboration with partners such as NGOs or government agencies.

Through our interviews, three capabilities emerged as critical for CSR leaders to thrive in their roles.

- 1 Think strategically and prioritise decisively.** A CSR leader's job centres on making critical choices – selecting amongst numerous options and navigating multiple points of view. Gayatri Divecha, former head of sustainability and CSR at the Godrej Industries Group, further underscores the value of keeping strategic goals in mind to prioritise and avoid being overwhelmed by the myriad demands placed on finite budgets. Equally important, she adds, is “the ability to say ‘no’ when necessary, stay committed to the charted path, and embrace failures when they arise.”
- 2 Engage a range of stakeholders in meaningful ways.** CSR leaders operate at the intersection of multiple worlds: interacting with CSR governance members, corporate leaders, and their teams on one side, and implementation partners, government officials, media, service providers, and other external agencies on the other. They often act as translators, bridging the gap between the grassroots and the boardroom. In Divecha's view, CSR leaders can craft compelling narratives about grassroots work to engage board members while translating board expectations for NGOs, opening the way for equal partnership.
- 3 Become conversant in focus areas, themes, and communities.** With most CSR organisations operating across several issue areas and themes, leaders are expected to quickly understand the key aspects of the issues they aim to address and the communities they serve to design and implement effective programmes.

To tap into these capabilities, over half of the organisations in our research sample appoint dedicated CSR heads with significant professional experience. (See Figure 3 on next page.)

Our research highlights four key practices companies are adopting to support CSR leaders:

- **Positioning CSR heads strategically within organisations.** Proximity to the C-suite helps align CSR objectives with corporate values and strengths.
- **Letting CSR leaders lead.** CSR heads with freedom to operate are motivated and drive operational efficiency.
- **Making space for professional development.** CSR leaders need ways to stay updated on sectoral trends, regulatory changes, and practices.
- **Developing the next line of leadership.** Succession planning ensures continuity and sustains growth.

Positioning CSR heads strategically within the organisation

According to our survey, 57 percent of CSR heads report directly to the promoter of the company, CEO, chair of the CSR committee, or the board of the company. (See figure B.8 on page 30.) On one hand, this proximity to the C-suite helps them align CSR objectives with corporate values and strengths, benefit from the mentorship and guidance of senior business leaders, build influence within governance structures, and reduce the perception that the CSR organisation is a peripheral cost centre.

“CSR leadership must be positioned appropriately – at a seniority level comparable to other corporate heads,” says Pearl Tiwari, CEO at the Ambuja Foundation.

This positioning has allowed her to gain valuable first-hand exposure and insight into the business priorities and organisational strengths to inform better programme design. She has also been able to cultivate relationships with senior corporate leaders and board members and build “champions” for the CSR work.

Figure 3. Split of CSR heads by roles and responsibilities



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: Secondary research by The Bridgespan Group on a sample of CSR heads.



Note: n=50
Source: Secondary research on a sample of profiles of CSR heads by The Bridgespan Group.

On the other hand, reporting to the C-suite also helps CSR heads add strategic value to the commercial business. Their proximity to communities provides a valuable vantage point to weigh in on potential opportunities and challenges for the business. Tiwari, for example, was able to engage with key community stakeholders to garner early local support for a new Ambuja site.

Letting CSR leaders lead

While boards must approve CSR policies and budgets (per regulation), CSR leaders benefit from autonomy at the operational (e.g. hiring) and programmatic (e.g. budget allocation) levels. Autonomy enables them to step into their roles effectively – and motivates them to succeed.

Kurush Irani, president and group head of CSR at Bajaj Finserv, has a similar level of operational autonomy. “We don’t mix business and philanthropy. We have ... priorities which are signed off [by the board] and then we have autonomy on what we want to focus on,” he says. “Our engagement with the corporate leaders is at an issue-area level, and not at a project or programmatic level. This allows us the right degree of flexibility and autonomy, while still being aligned with [the company’s] overall strategic vision.” For Bajaj, after the strategic objectives and key areas have been set, the CSR team works out the types of interventions, programmes, models, and partners for final approval by the board.

We heard this level of autonomy is often earned over time. It takes time to build trust and credibility with boards and corporate leadership, particularly given the relative nascency of the CSR function. Capgemini’s Pratap speaks about his own journey: “It really comes down to how much value you bring to the table – how authentic you are and how credible your work is. Once you establish this, things become much easier.”

“Our engagement with the corporate leaders is at an issue-area level, and not at a project or programmatic level. This allows us the right degree of flexibility and autonomy while still being aligned with [the company’s] overall strategic vision.”

KURUSH IRANI, PRESIDENT AND GROUP
HEAD OF CSR, BAJAJ FINSERV

Making space for professional development

CSR leaders operate in a dynamic field – regulations are shifting, sectors are evolving, and CSR initiatives have increasingly ambitious goals. In that environment, it is natural to get caught up in implementation. But CSR leaders note how valuable it has been for them to hit “pause” on day-to-day programme priorities to take advantage of professional development opportunities. While they appreciate formal mentorship and coaching by corporate leaders, CSR leaders particularly highlight the importance of getting outside the organisation to immerse themselves in the field and to share experiences with peers.

For example, Bajaj Finserv’s Irani, who transitioned to CSR leader at the organisation after 27 years in financial services, finds it especially valuable to have one-on-one

conversations with field leaders and spend time with leaders and organisations executing programmes in communities. It has helped him approach the work with a solid understanding of the realities of programme implementation.

Rati Forbes, director at Forbes Marshall and a CSR committee member, emphasises there is more to gain from field visits than learning alone. “To build awareness and to really understand community circumstances, our CSR leadership along with our teams make repeated visits [to] listen to what is being said, rather than foisting our views and approaches.” That learning orientation in the field has given Forbes and her team new understandings of how NGO partners work – and thus, how to support them better.

“To build awareness and to really understand community circumstances, our CSR leadership along with our teams make repeated visits [to] listen to what is being said, rather than foisting our views and approaches.”

RATI FORBES, DIRECTOR AT FORBES MARSHALL AND CSR COMMITTEE MEMBER, FORBES MARSHALL

“Being out in the field is pivotal for grasping the subtle yet critical aspects of our partnerships and community dynamics,” says Forbes. “For instance, we support an organisation which works with victims of violence through socio-legal volunteers in rural areas. Our visit to villages where they work gave us an insight into the actual engagement that the organisation had with the state machinery and the communities themselves. It also allowed us to understand the need to support the mental health of these socio-legal volunteers themselves – a nuance we perhaps would have overlooked without significant time spent on the ground.”

CSR leaders can also immerse themselves further in the CSR “field.” Garima Garg, head of Max India Foundation, has sought opportunities to engage with peers to exchange ideas and learnings. “I have especially benefitted from well-crafted events which focus on CSR and allow me the opportunity to learn from other leaders in the space,” she says.

Developing the next line of leadership

It is healthy to assume that many new leaders will be stepping into CSR head roles in the coming years, given that many current leaders have served in their roles for over a decade. Accordingly, CSR organisations are investing in the development of the next generation of CSR leadership to help prepare their organisations for smooth leadership transitions and to offer career advancement opportunities for emerging leaders – addressing a key barrier to talent retention.

At Amazon India CSR, senior leaders are required to integrate succession planning into human resources discussions, ensuring it is systematically developing the next line of leaders. The CSR head of a different organisation shares that the “leadership philosophy is to make oneself redundant” – a mindset that ultimately enhances a leader’s value within the organisation. For instance, general managers accompany that CSR head to every board meeting, taking part in critical discussions and gradually assuming more responsibility.

Other organisations could follow suit, confident that by stepping back and empowering others to make decisions, CSR leaders encourage greater ownership and deeper commitment within their teams.

Reflection Questions

Is our CSR governance body and CSR leadership ready to think through how our CSR leader has the influence, resources, and training they need to drive CSR efforts – and how well prepared they are to build future leaders? Follow the prompts below to engage your team in a discussion.

- If our CSR head has additional corporate responsibilities, do they have sufficient bandwidth to do justice to their CSR role?
- Where is the CSR head positioned in our organisation relative to other business/functional heads? Do they have access to corporate leadership and the corporate board?
- Does our CSR head have the authority to take important programmatic and operational decisions?
- What kind of professional development support would best help our CSR head grow in their role (e.g. coaching and mentorship, access to peer networks for learning/sharing, advanced leadership programmes)?
- Are we actively planning for the development of the next line of leadership within our CSR team? What investments do we need to make today to build a strong pipeline of future CSR leaders?



Teams

Strengthening CSR teams

CSR teams bring CSR strategies to life. They are the ones who connect high-level direction with on-the-ground execution. All things being equal, how well a team is structured, staffed, and equipped will ultimately determine how effectively ideas translate into measurable social and environmental outcomes.

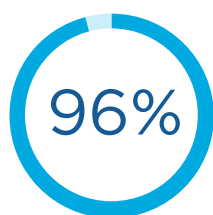
CSR organisations take various approaches to achieve their objectives – designing and implementing programmes, funding and building the capacity of NGOs, conducting research, convening stakeholders, advocating for policies, and building fields in other ways. (See figure B.4 on page 28.)

Eighty-five percent of the organisations we engaged with design and manage their own programmes, in collaboration with implementation partners or NGOs. They highlighted some capabilities as essential including strategy and programme design; measurement, evaluation, and learning (MEL); and regulatory compliance. (See figure B.15 on page 34.)

Yet not all CSR heads believe their teams' strengths match the capabilities required, particularly when it comes to MEL. One of Irani's early realisations as CSR leader at Bajaj Finserv was that, unlike in the business world where objectives and pathways are clearly defined, success in the social sector is far harder to measure.

Additionally, some leaders emphasised the importance of fluency in the corporate lexicon. "They work closely with multiple corporate teams as well as with the business leadership. They should be able to speak the business language while also helping them understand the language of the social sector," Divecha, formerly of the Godrej Group, elaborates.

Figure 4. Organisations with CSR teams



of all mid- to large-sized organisations have dedicated CSR teams

Note: n=26

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Acknowledging the specialised nature of CSR roles, virtually all mid-to-large sized organisations have dedicated CSR teams, with team size varying based on budget and scope of work. (See figure B.14 on page 34.) Organisations with a deep on-the-ground presence, such as the Lupin Foundation (working at district and village levels), Tech Mahindra Foundation (running its own skilling centres), and Bharti Foundation (operating its own schools), have teams exceeding 500 members, the majority being field or programme staff.

Yet not all work is conducted internally. Organisations often bring in service providers and subject-matter experts for additional support or to complement in-house capabilities. In fact,

80 percent of surveyed organisations reported bringing in external expertise to support critical functions such as programme design and management, MEL, and communications.

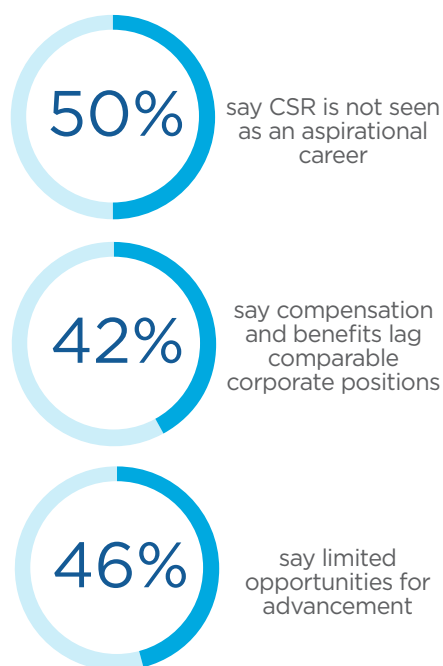
Building and nurturing high-performing CSR teams demands a focused approach that embraces the uniqueness of CSR work.

Our research uncovered four key practices CSR organisations have adopted:

- **Crafting a compelling value proposition to attract and retain talent.** Building a great team starts with having access to top talent – and finding ways for them to follow their passions.
- **Offering professional development beyond training.** Formal training is table stakes; professional development fully manifests through a variety of other channels.
- **Harnessing corporate capabilities to complement the CSR team.** Organisations can apply core business strengths to amplify CSR efforts.
- **Building a culture of empathy and collaboration.** The CSR team bridges the worlds of the business and development sectors.

Crafting a compelling value proposition to attract and retain talent

Figure 5. Barriers to hiring and attracting young professionals to CSR teams, according to CSR leaders



Note: n=26
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Building a great team starts with having access to top talent. Some organisations find it somewhat or extremely difficult to attract and retain talent at the junior and middle levels (35 percent and 27 percent, respectively, according to our survey). (See figure B.19 on page 36.)

The barriers stem from both perception issues and structural limitations. First, CSR is not widely perceived as an aspirational career by young professionals, with 50 percent of leaders citing this as a concern. Second, compensation levels and benefits in CSR roles often lag comparable corporate positions, according to 42 percent of leaders surveyed. Limited opportunities for advancement are another hurdle, according to 46 percent of surveyed leaders. (See figure 5 on left.) This especially happens as small teams (the median team size of our survey sample is 16) have limited internal career advancement paths.

Some leaders advocate for a more inspirational approach: selling the mission. Many employees are personally driven to make a positive difference in the world, and CSR programmes can tap into that intrinsic motivation. Shraman Jha, CEO of the Hindustan Unilever Foundation, tells us that for potential recruits, connecting with the organisation's purpose is the first step to developing a personal commitment. "Bringing them

to the field is often the turning point. When they see the work first-hand, they become invested and want to be part of it.”

“Bringing [employees] to the field is often the turning point. When they see the work first-hand, they become invested and want to be part of it.”

SHRAMAN JHA, CEO, HINDUSTAN UNILEVER FOUNDATION

For team members to follow their passions, they also need stimulating development opportunities, such as on-the-job learning, training on thematic areas, and exposure to a wide range of stakeholders, to engage in their roles and contribute effectively. Prabhakar Lingareddy, executive vice president and head of social investments at ITC Limited, describes ITC’s approach: “We’ve invested in our team members, providing them with opportunities to oversee a range of interventions and engage with diverse stakeholders, including implementation partners, government officials, business leaders, and sustainability experts.” As well as shaping team members’ growth, ITC has prepared them to step into leadership roles. The organisation also nurtures young talent by entrusting them with new and challenging responsibilities during the early stages of their careers. “For example, within a few months of orientation and induction, a team member gets responsibility for multiple interventions and ... very often for multiple districts. We also [help] individuals to build knowledge, perspective, and skills in a specific thematic area, such as education, skilling, nutrition, climate-smart agriculture, etc., which also includes engaging in innovative prototypes and pilots.”

Setting realistic expectations is also important. Many individuals join CSR roles hoping to achieve the “best of both worlds”– making a positive impact on the ground while receiving corporate-like compensation. As Dhruvi Shah, executive trustee and CEO of Axis Bank Foundation, points out, “Purpose-driven individuals underestimate the importance of the administrative aspect of this role, while other, more aspirational individuals may overestimate the potential for rapid career advancement.” Managing expectations assumes importance in this context, helping align aspirations with the realities of the role.

Offering professional development beyond training

To help teams keep up with sector trends and opportunities, CSR organisations often get them out in the field and to conferences and offer them on-the-job training.

Some organisations don’t stop at these foundational measures. ITC, for example, creates opportunities for its CSR team to learn from and work beside a variety of others. This includes connecting CSR team members with specialists from the corporate team such as sustainability experts or domain experts in areas like agriculture or nutrition, as well as with partners from outside the organisation such as academic or research institutions. It also includes pairing new hires with more experienced team members when working on pilots and other projects, so they can learn from one another’s experiences and expand their social connections at the same time.

In addition, ITC encourages its state and regional managers to think beyond routine tasks; managers are encouraged to identify and pitch innovative ideas during annual

planning meetings. It allows them to have an “outside-in” perspective, think more creatively, and get outside of their day-to-day activities. They often connect with external stakeholders, including other corporate leaders; leaders at foundations, think tanks, and start-ups; and policymakers to refine their pitches. They receive mentorship from corporate leaders along the way.

Harnessing corporate capabilities to complement the CSR team

With small teams, CSR organisations frequently tap into corporate resources for functional support, like human resources, finance, and legal. However, some organisations are starting to think bigger: Can core business strengths amplify CSR efforts? Parts of the sector have put this into action, with CSR organisations drawing on business capabilities such as domain expertise (e.g. marketing), presence on the ground and supply chain connectivity, knowledge resources (e.g. technical and intellectual capital), and technology infrastructure.

For instance, the CSR team at Lupin uses the healthcare company’s robust supply chain to deliver essential medicine to underserved regions in Maharashtra and Rajasthan. In rural areas, its mobile medical vans have diagnostic technology not readily available to those communities, and training materials developed by the business team help teach healthcare workers about chronic diseases. Lupin also channels the expertise of its technical teams to train healthcare workers in the improvement of patient care as part of its CSR initiatives.

One financial institution’s CSR team tapped into its corporate finance expertise to help structure development impact bonds. Investors are repaid using a pay-for-success structure that ties repayments to measurable outcomes on foundational literacy amongst young students. The CSR team also made use of the corporate’s branch network and staff across multiple states to gain a wider understanding of community needs, using these insights to inform programme design.

Building a culture of empathy and collaboration

CSR organisations frequently collaborate with the many NGOs already present in communities. Yet bridging between the different worlds of the business and development sectors can be challenging. CSR teams often feel that NGOs lack an understanding of how boards and corporate processes work, for example, while NGOs often point out that CSR teams treat them more as vendors than as equal partners. When CSR teams adopt cultural values of collaboration and mutual respect, they are more likely to successfully navigate partnerships and build trust with NGOs.

The Great Eastern Shipping Company Ltd., for example, nurtures long-term partnerships by studying its NGO partners’ values and approaches to work. In addition to organising field visits to communities and conversations with field personnel, it hosts an annual event which honours and celebrates their collaboration in the field. During the event, NGO leaders meet with senior executives to discuss future strategies and potential collaborations. It also includes informal gatherings for NGOs and CSR teams to interact and get to know one another better.

Capgemini, for its part, involves NGOs from the initial stages of programme conceptualisation and design. “A majority of our CSR mandate in India is shaped by our NGO partners. They are the ones who designed the programmes and convinced us of their value. We have a collaborative approach. It is about seeking a true partnership, not simply a sub-contractor relationship,” Capgemini’s Pratap explains.

Reflection Questions

Is our CSR leadership team ready to assess whether its team’s structure, capabilities, and resources can be improved? Follow the prompts below to engage your team in a discussion.

- Does our CSR team have the staff capacity to effectively deliver on our goals for social impact?
- Does the capability mix of our team match the demands of our CSR efforts? What are the most significant gaps and what additional support would the team benefit from (e.g. bespoke training, mentorship)?
- Are we recruiting diverse talent, particularly with lived experience in the communities we serve?
- Should we tap into more corporate and third-party expertise to complement team capabilities?
- Is there an opportunity to craft a more compelling value proposition to attract and retain top talent? If so, which levers (e.g. exposure to senior leadership, role expansion, rewards and recognition) might have the strongest pull?

A Development Agenda for the CSR Ecosystem

Taken together, the 11 practices for governance, leadership, and teams described above constitute an agenda to ensure that CSR professionals at all levels continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and experiences. It is an agenda that can be taken up by corporate boards and leadership, as well as by CSR governance bodies and CSR leaders. It is also an agenda for development-sector actors who provide training or otherwise serve the social sector, and those who influence public narratives about what a career in CSR looks like. The agenda can be described as follows.



Development programmes for CSR committees and corporate foundation boards

There is growing recognition within the sector that more systematic investment is needed to orient and educate CSR committees and corporate foundation boards on the evolving dynamics of CSR and the social sector. To start with, CSR governance members can more deeply engage with NGOs, communities, and domain experts. Simple initiatives like inviting NGOs to speak at CSR committee meetings or hosting brown-bag sessions with experts can help them develop more grounded perspectives. Interacting with CSR governance members from other organisations can also be a way to pick up valuable insights and learnings. While networks for CSR leaders exist, there are limited platforms for engagement amongst CSR governance members.

More broadly, we heard that the sector could benefit from formal CSR governance member education programmes. While the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs offers certification courses for corporate board members, which can also be helpful for CSR governance members (see appendix C on page 39), more customised offerings tailored for CSR governance members could cater to their unique roles and needs.



Coaching and peer engagement for senior CSR professionals and leaders

In our survey, CSR leaders expressed a desire to advance their personal capabilities on aspects such as leadership and team management (38 percent), sector-specific knowledge (35 percent), and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (31 percent). (See figure B.10 on page 32.) When asked what kind of formats would be most helpful, leaders emphasised the value of mentorship and coaching over classroom-style learning. (See figure B.12 on page 33.) Given their seniority, they prefer on-demand, situation-specific guidance from seasoned practitioners who can bring real-world insights and expertise.

CSR professionals also are hungry to engage with peer practitioners through networks and sharing platforms. While there are informal forums for CSR leaders to engage and interact (e.g. on WhatsApp and LinkedIn), they see value in well-structured and moderated peer learning networks for sharing ideas and learnings and mutual support.



Practical and flexible professional development programmes for junior and mid-level CSR professionals

CSR leaders are looking to build their teams' capabilities in communications, engagement with partners and government, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning capabilities. (See figure B.17 on page 35.)

While capacity-building options for CSR professionals (and the broader development sector) have emerged in recent years – ranging from short-term workshops and self-paced online modules to longer-term professional courses (see appendix C on page 39) – more relevant, flexible, and affordable learning programmes would be helpful.

Over half of CSR leaders identified time constraints as a key barrier to learning and development. (See figure B.23. on page 38.) Most programmes require a significant time commitment, some programmes taking as long as six months, which might not be feasible for participants juggling multiple responsibilities. And cost is holding some organisations back. “Many capacity development programmes and networking opportunities exist for CSR professionals, but they are often too expensive. ... [So,] it's important that they are made more affordable and accessible for CSR professionals,” says Neelima Dalvi, CSR lead at Mahindra Finance.

The solution? Practical and flexible offerings that are co-developed and delivered by sector leaders or CSR practitioners emerged as a common recommendation.



Public narratives positioning CSR as an aspirational career

As mentioned earlier in the report, CSR leaders stated the lack of aspirational appeal as a key barrier to recruiting quality talent. That perception could shift if CSR was elevated as a critical driver for development and nation-building.

If CSR were positioned as “something people feel proud to be a part of,” Surabhi Goel from Koita Foundation suggests, “it [would] inspire younger professionals to join earlier in their careers, not just as a transition late into their careers. By bringing equal recognition and encouraging innovative thinking, we can attract passionate talent who see this space as a place to grow, lead, and create meaningful impact.”

The old principle of showing rather than telling could also prove useful. Disseminating compelling narratives around CSR's capacity to drive social change in India is one way to change how talent views the sector. Providing potential recruits with first-hand exposure to CSR roles – think shadowing leaders or interning, for example – and showcasing stories of what a career in CSR could look like can be effective. Together, these efforts can help position CSR as a strategic and aspirational career choice.

* * *

Social-sector stakeholders inside and outside of CSR organisations have an opportunity to push this development agenda forward to truly capitalise on the opportunities for developing CSR talent and governance. As with other aspects of this field, collaboration will be crucial to equipping boards, leaders, and teams for the challenges ahead. Corporates, NGOs, education and training institutions, and policymakers all stand to benefit from investing in the people who make up the sector.

Keshav Kanoria is a partner in The Bridgespan Group's India office, where **Shashank Rastogi** is also a partner, **Umang Manchanda** is a senior manager, and **Tanuj Gupta** and **Gunjan Saini** are consultants. **Snigdha Poonam** is a journalist and writer; she splits her time between the UK and India.

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Appendix A. Individuals Interviewed

#	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANISATION
CSR Leaders			
1	Aloka Majumdar	Managing Director, Global Head of Philanthropy & Head of Sustainability, India	HSBC
2	Amit Kumar Singh	Associate Vice President & Group Head Corporate Affairs & CSR	Asian Paints
3	Anita Kumar	Former Head, Amazon Community Impact APAC	Amazon
4	Balaji Ganapathy	Former Chief Social Responsibility Officer, Global Head, CSR	Tata Consultancy Services
5	Jos Mathew	Head, Strategy & Governance, Global CSR	Tata Consultancy Services
6	Reeja George	Head, Culture, People & Growth	Tata Consultancy Services
7	Chetan Kapoor	CEO	Tech Mahindra Foundation
8	Deepak Prabhu Matti	CEO	Cognizant Foundation India
9	Dhruvi Shah	Executive Trustee & CEO	Axis Bank Foundation
10	Garima Garg	Head	Max India Foundation
11	Gayatri Divecha	Former Head, Sustainability & CSR	Godrej Industries Group
12	Kumar Anurag Pratap	VP & CSR leader	Capgemini
13	Kurian Parambi	Former Executive Director, Human Resources	Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
14	Kurush Irani	President & Group Head, CSR	Bajaj Finserv
15	(Name withheld upon request)	Senior Vice President & Head, CSR	Large domestic bank
16	Narayan P.S.	Global Head, Sustainability & Societal Initiatives; Managing Trustee	Wipro Limited; Wipro Foundation
17	Neelima D'silva-Dalvi	Deputy Vice President – Lead, CSR & Sustainability	Mahindra Finance
18	Pearl Tiwari	CEO	Ambuja Foundation

#	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANISATION
19	Prabhakar Lingareddy	Executive Vice President & Head, Social Investments	ITC Limited
20	Priti Kibe	Head, Corporate Sustainability	Forbes Marshall
21	Niharika Nautiyal	Operations Manager	Forbes Marshall
22	Sakina Baker	Head, CSR, Bosch Limited & Head, Bosch India Foundation	Bosch Limited & Bosch India Foundation
23	Shraman Jha	CEO	Hindustan Unilever Foundation
24	Sourav Roy	Chief (CSR), CEO	Tata Steel Limited; Tata Steel Foundation
25	Tushara Shankar	Senior General Manager/Head, CSR	Lupin Limited
26	Unnikrishnan TS	Head, CSR	The Great Eastern Shipping Company Ltd.
27	Sana Damania	Deputy Manager, CSR & Sustainability	Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited

Business Heads & Board Members

1	Govind Iyer	Independent Director	Infosys
2	Rati Forbes	Director	Forbes Marshall
3	S. Ramadorai	Former CEO & Managing Director, and Former Chairman	Tata Consultancy Services, National Skill Development Agency (NSDA)
4	Vidya Shah	Executive Chairperson	EdelGive Foundation

NGO Leaders

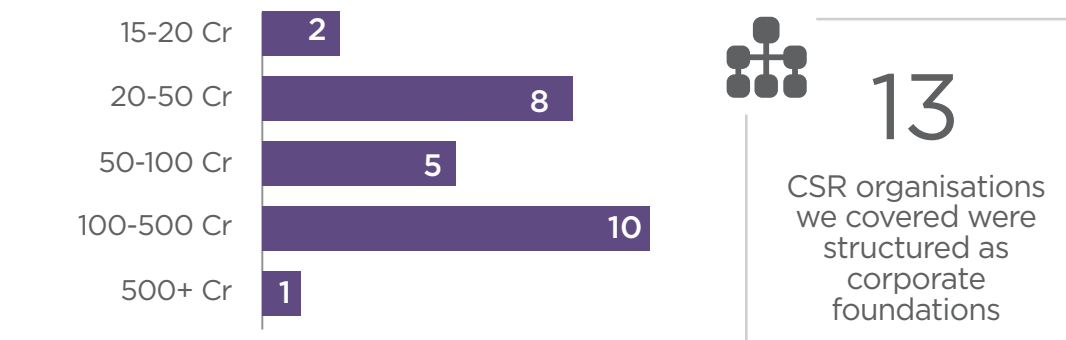
1	Amitav Virmani	Founder & CEO	The Education Alliance
2	Byomkesh Mishra	Co-Founder	Medha
3	Dhananjay Ganjoo	Chief Resource Mobilisation & Marketing Officer	The Akshay Patra Foundation
4	Kruti Bharucha	Founder & CEO	Peepul
5	Mangesh Wange	CEO & Director	Swades Foundation
6	Siddhartha Dutta	Lead, Resource Mobilisation & Partnership	Goonj
7	Upmanyu Patil	Director – Programs	Swayam Shikshan Prayog

#	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANISATION
Philanthropic Leaders			
1	Gayatri Nair Lobo	CEO	A.T.E. Chandra Foundation
2	Reshma Anand	Regional Director	Ford Foundation India
3	Surabhi Goel	COO	Koita Foundation
Intermediaries' Leaders			
1	Anu Prasad	Founder & CEO	Indian Leaders for Social Sector (ILSS)
2	Archana Suresh	Director	Telangana Social Impact Group
3	Bhomik Shah	Founder & CEO	CSRBOX
4	Gaurav Shah	Co-Founder & Director	Indian School of Development Management (ISDM)
5	Janakiraman Ramasubramaniam	Senior Director	PKF Sridhar & Santhanam LLP
6	Payal Mulchandani	Co-Founder, Head of Business Development & Data Analytics	4th Wheel Social Impact
7	Priya Naik	Founder & CEO	Samhita
8	CA Ravi Bagaria	Founding Partner	Aria CFO Services
9	CA Ritu Jain	Founding Partner	Aria CFO Services
10	Sharon Weir	Co-Founder, Strategy & Research Lead	4th Wheel Social Impact
11	Sukraat Dang	Programme Manager	SP Jain Institute of Management & Research

Appendix B. Survey Snapshot

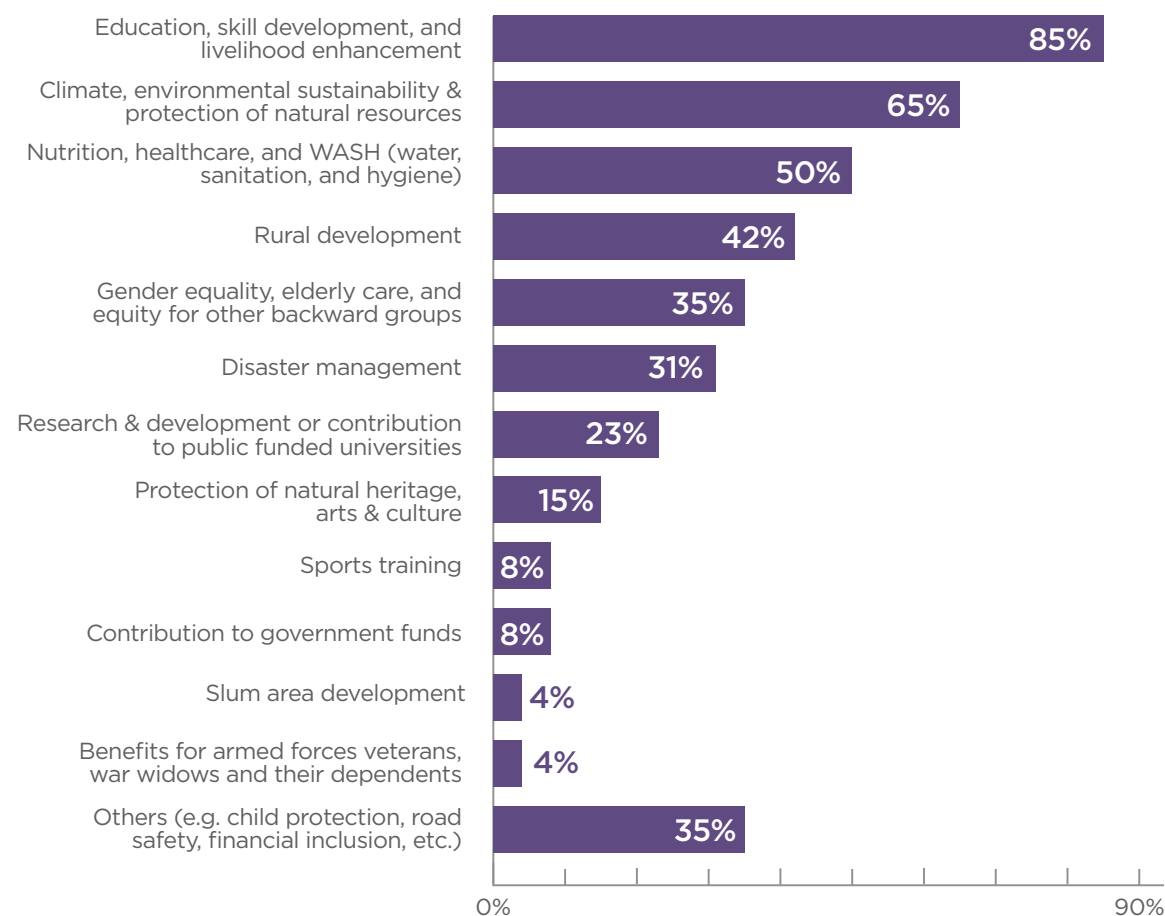
DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure B.1. Distribution of survey respondents by average annual budget (INR Cr)



Note: n=26
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

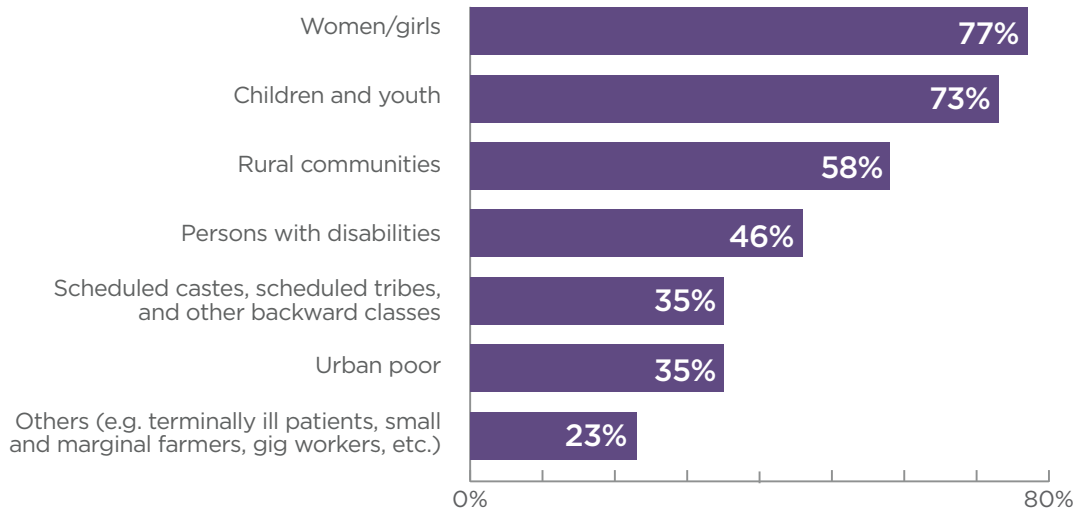
Figure B.2. Primary focus areas of organisations' CSR initiatives



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)

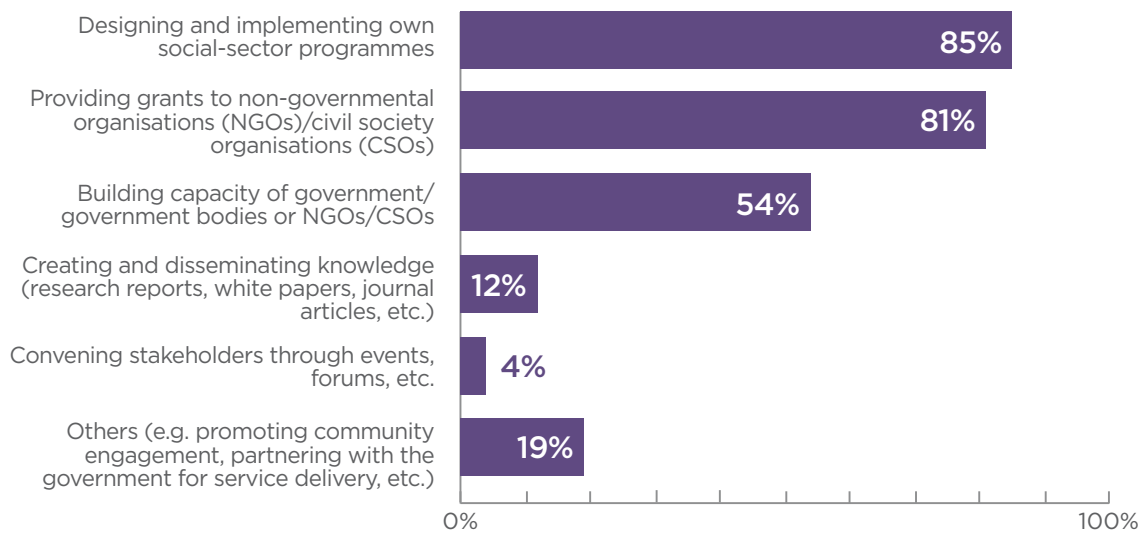
Figure B.3. Population groups organisations prioritize through their CSR policies/initiatives



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Figure B.4. Primary roles of CSR organisations

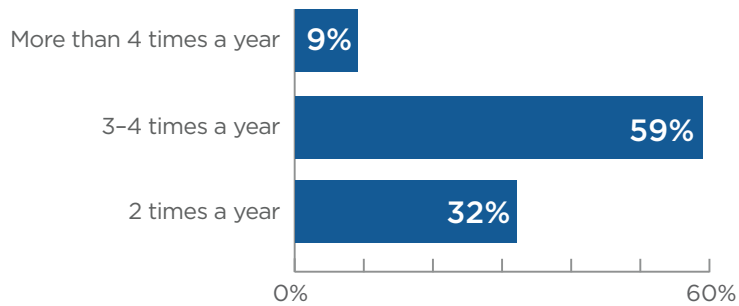


Note: n=26; respondents asked to rank up to three in order of prominence (one being most prominent).

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

GOVERNANCE

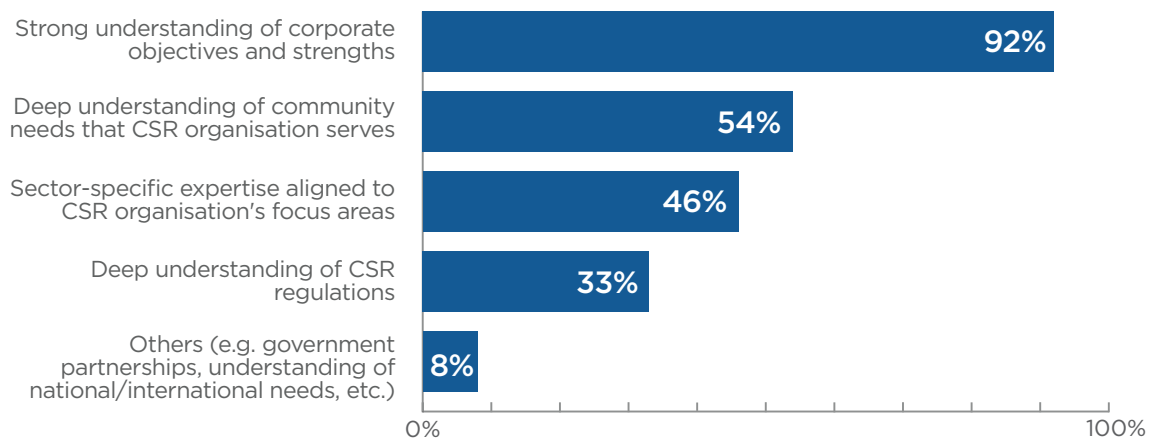
Figure B.5. Frequency of CSR committee meetings



Note: n=22

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Figure B.6. Value-added contributions of CSR committees

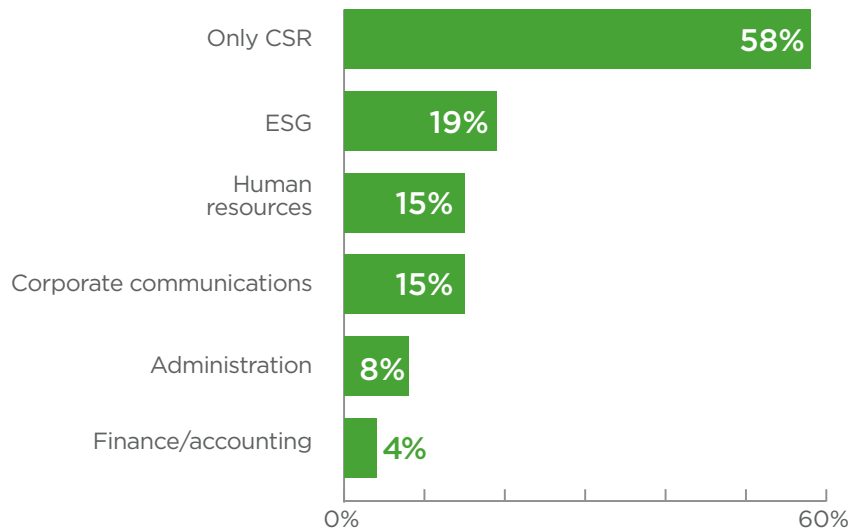


Note: n=26

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

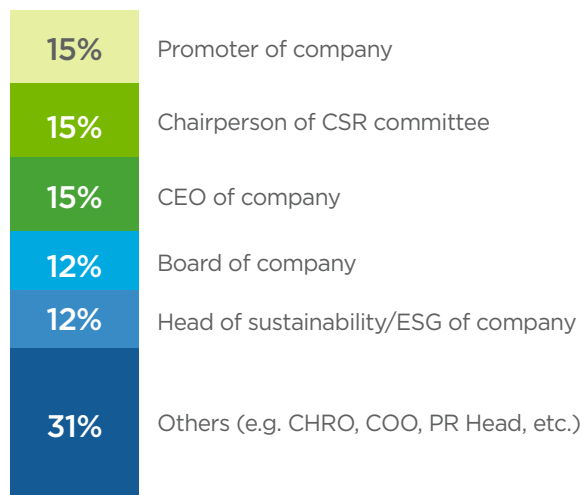
LEADERSHIP

Figure B.7. Roles and responsibilities of CSR heads



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

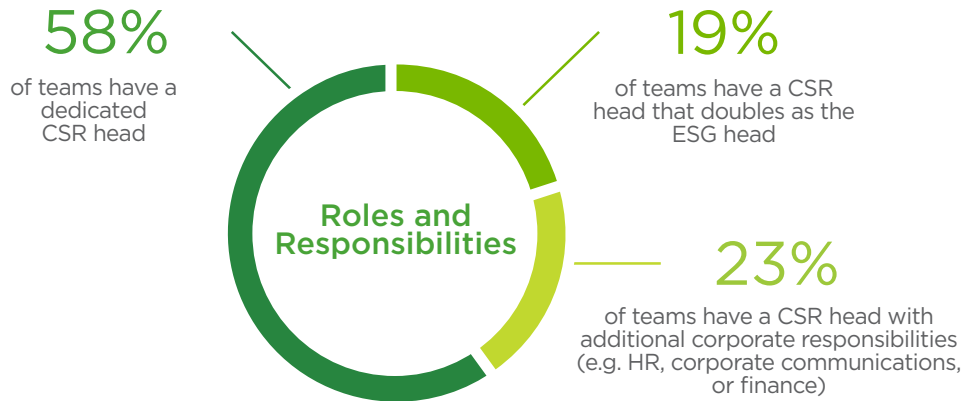
Figure B.8. Who CSR heads report to



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

LEADERSHIP (CONTINUED)

Figure B.9. Split of CSR heads by roles and responsibilities



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.

Source: Secondary research by The Bridgespan Group on a sample of CSR heads.

CSR heads have significant professional experience...

avg
25
years of
professional
experience

avg
9
years in
CSR roles

...with most having past corporate experience.



60%
only corporate
experience

23%
only development
sector experience

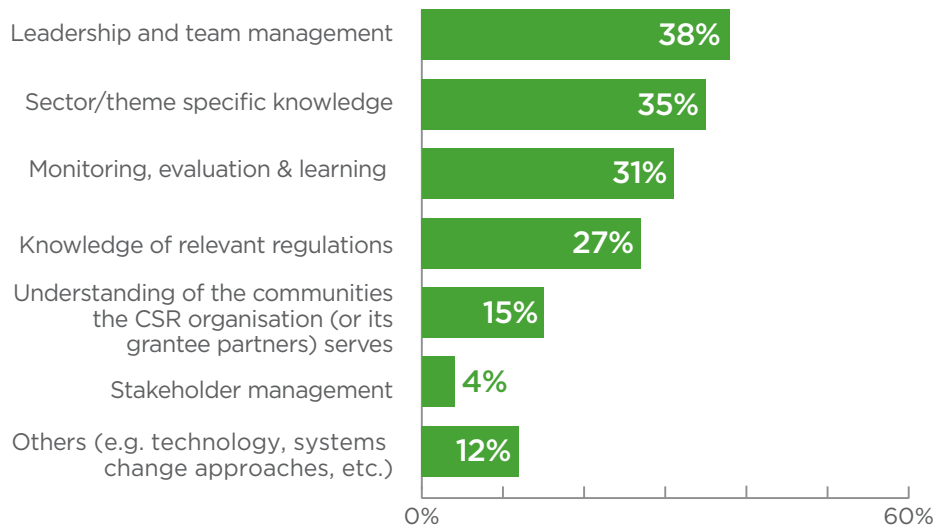
17%
blend of business
and development
sectors experience

Note: n=50

Source: Secondary research on a sample of profiles of CSR heads by The Bridgespan Group.

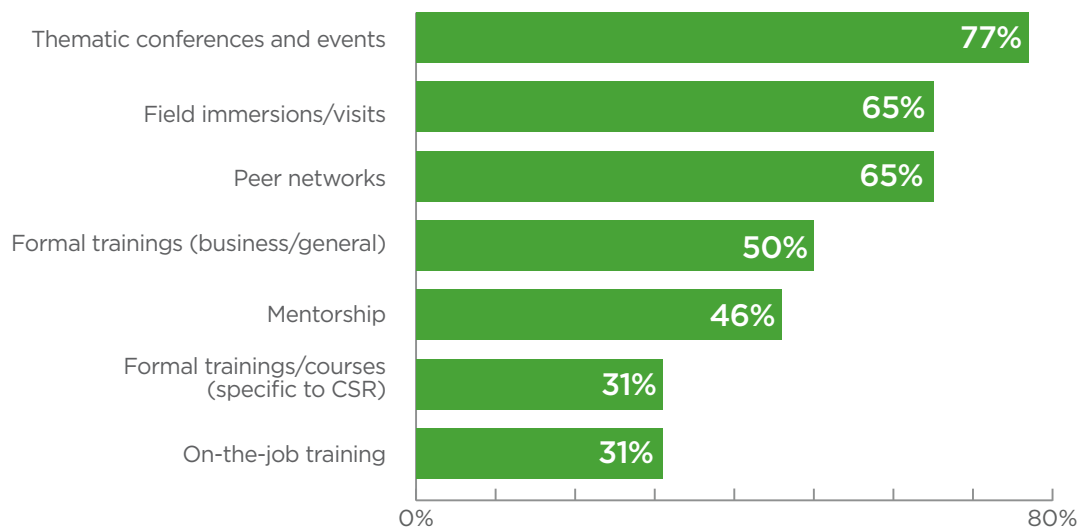
LEADERSHIP (CONTINUED)

Figure B.10. Capabilities CSR heads aim to build or strengthen



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

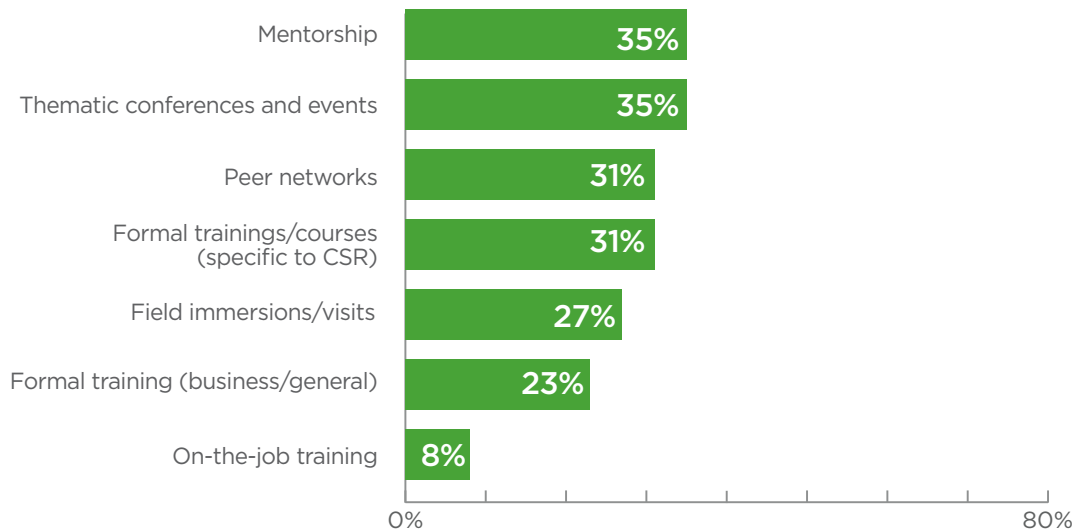
Figure B.11. Learning and development opportunities available to CSR heads



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

LEADERSHIP (CONTINUED)

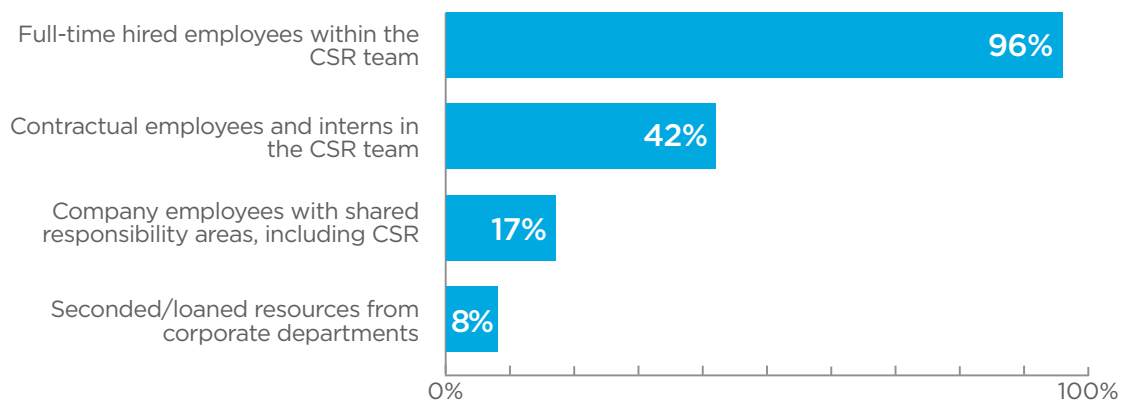
Figure B.12. Learning and development opportunities CSR heads would like more access to



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

TEAMS

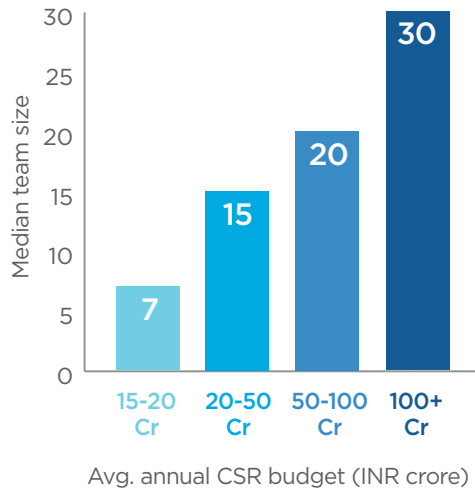
Figure B.13. Types of employees on CSR teams



Note: n=26 respondents asked to select all that apply.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

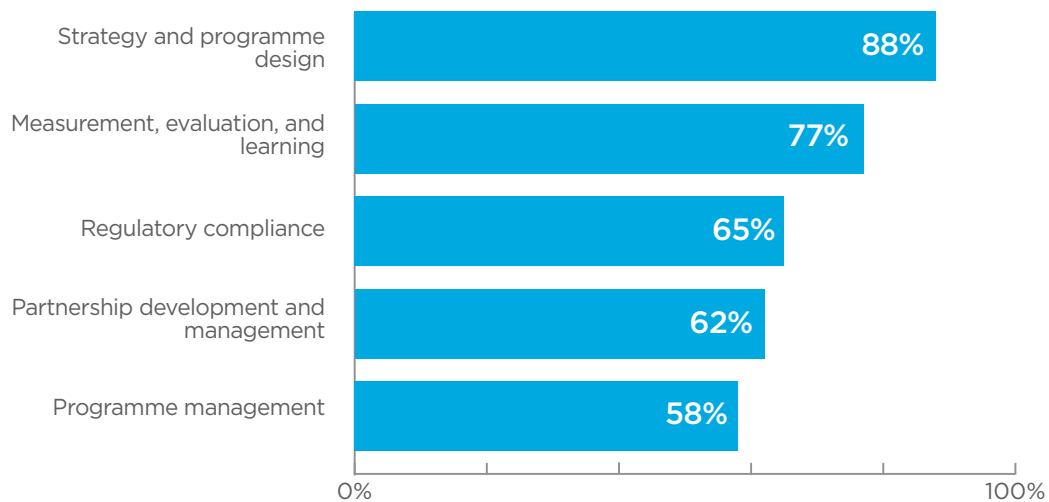
TEAMS (CONTINUED)

Figure B.14. Median size of CSR teams



Note: n=24; respondents asked to only include employees on payroll or contract.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Figure B.15. Capabilities most critical for CSR teams

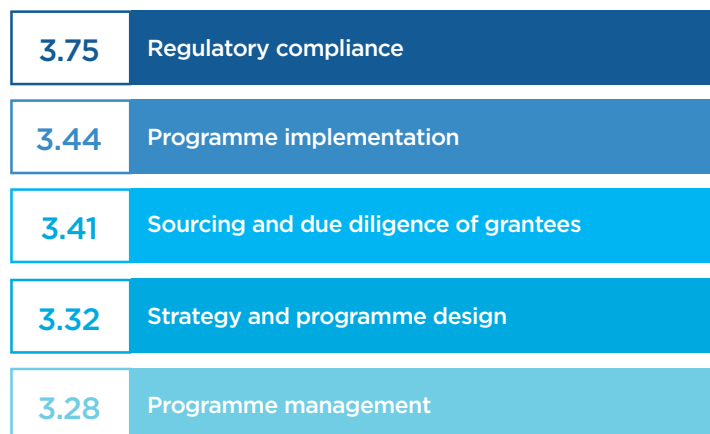


Note: n=26; respondents were asked to select up to three options from amongst multiple options.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

TEAMS (CONTINUED)

Figure B.16. Capabilities CSR organisations are strongest in

Respondents were asked to rank capabilities on a scale of 1 (very weak) to 4 (very strong).



Note: n=26

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Figure B.17. Capabilities which need to be further developed in CSR teams

Respondents were asked to rank capabilities on a scale of 1 (very weak) to 4 (very strong).

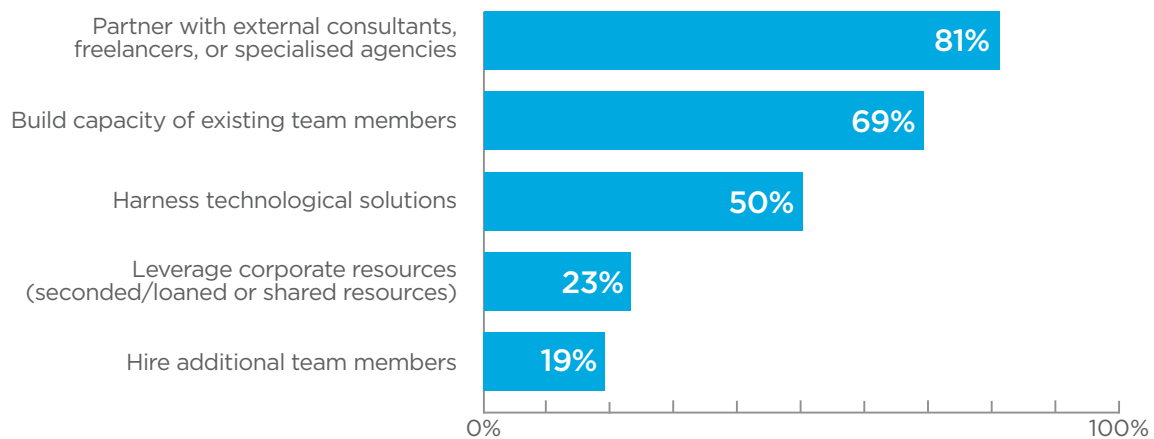


Note: n=26

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

TEAMS (CONTINUED)

Figure B.18. Ways organizations would like to address capability gaps in CSR



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select top three options.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

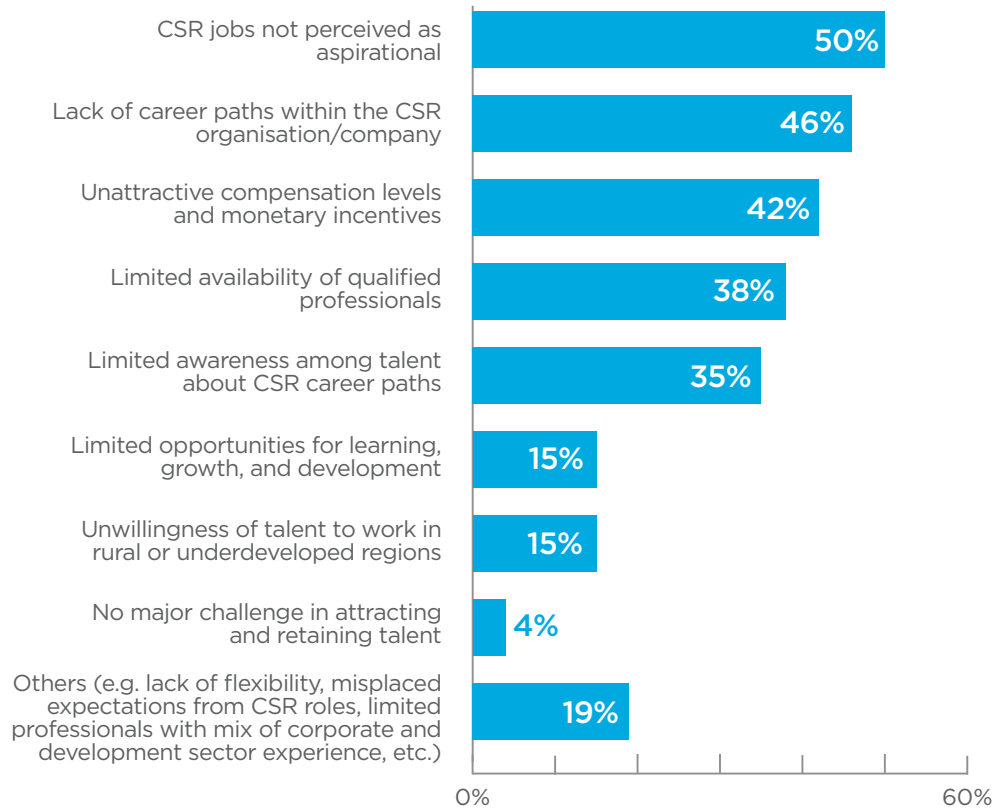
Figure B.19. Percent of organisations facing challenges in hiring different levels of employees on CSR teams



Note: n=26; for each level, respondents were asked to choose their response on a scale between 1 (extremely difficult) to 5 (extremely easy). The figure represents the share of respondents who chose 'extremely difficult' or 'somewhat difficult'.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

TEAMS (CONTINUED)

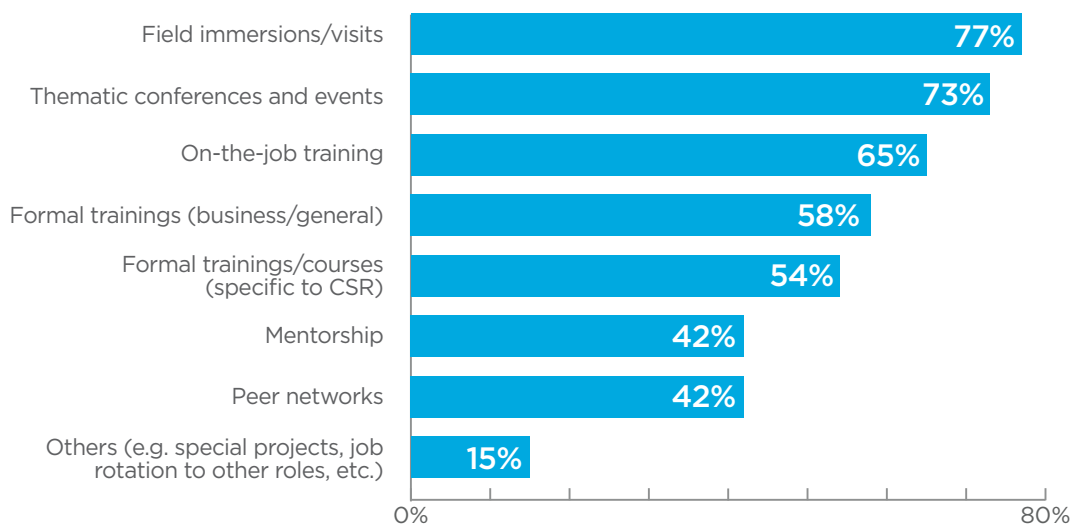
Figure B.20. Key challenges in hiring and retaining talent for CSR teams



Note: n=26; respondents asked to choose top three options.

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Figure B.21. Learning and development opportunities available to CSR teams

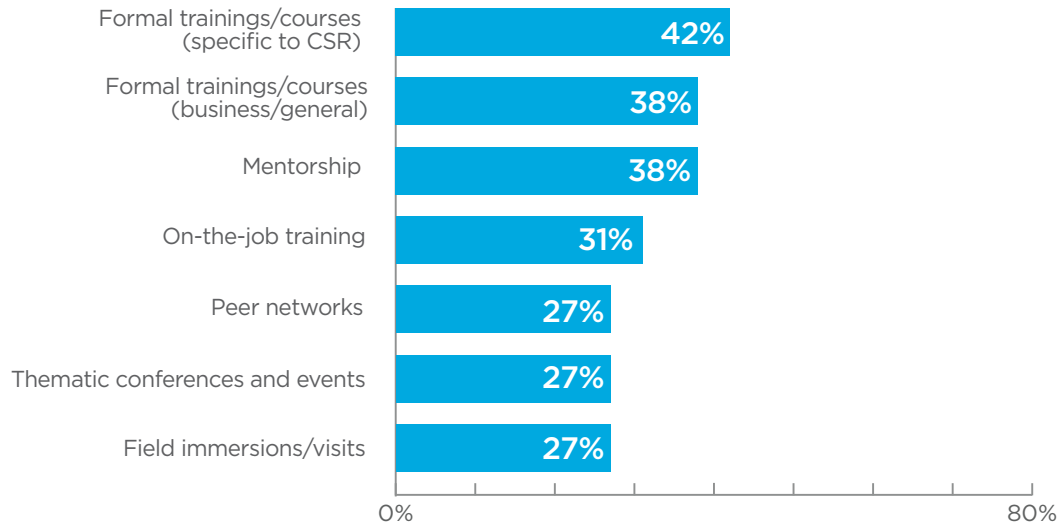


Note: n=26; respondents asked to select all that apply.

Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

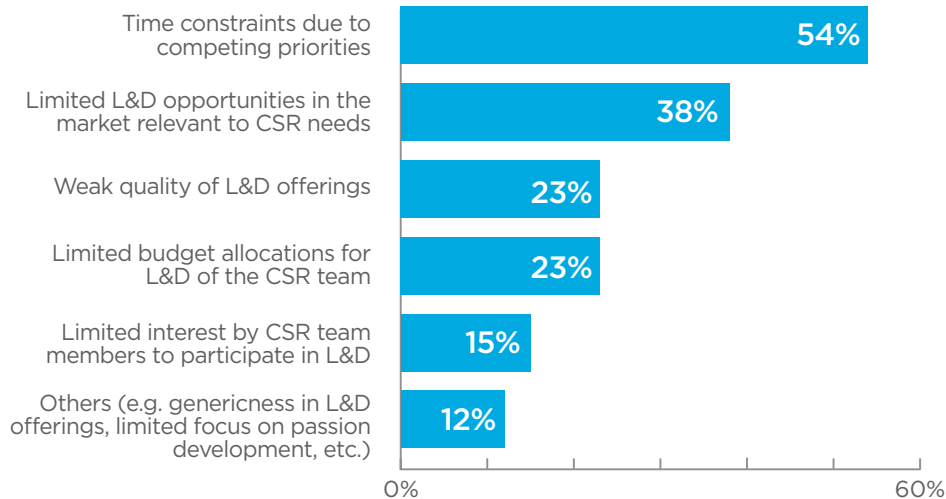
TEAMS (CONTINUED)

Figure B.22. Learning and development opportunities organisations would like to invest in



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select top three options.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Figure B.23. Challenges faced with current learning and development (L&D) opportunities



Note: n=26; respondents asked to select top three options.
Source: The Bridgespan Group 2024 survey of CSR organisations in India.

Appendix C. Learning and Development Programmes for the CSR Ecosystem

The table in this annex has been developed using interviews and secondary research as of December 2024. The list includes generic programmes for social-sector professionals (which also cater to CSR professionals) as well as dedicated programmes for CSR professionals at all levels. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

#	PROGRAMME NAME	INSTITUTION	SPECIFIC TO CSR?	TARGET AUDIENCE	COURSE OBJECTIVE
1	Capacity building modules by Centre for Excellence in CSR (CECSR)	Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS)	Yes	CSR Teams – CSR professionals at all levels, including managers, team leaders, senior officers Others – professional consultants, policymakers, and entrepreneurs	Equip participants with interdisciplinary perspectives on sustainable development, build their capacity to design effective CSR programmes and apply the standards for sustainability assessment and reporting.
2	Certificate course on CSR	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)	Yes	CSR Teams – Senior CSR professionals, legal advisors and compliance officers, programme managers, programme coordinators, and sustainability practitioners	Equip professionals with understanding of Indian CSR law, gain foundational knowledge in development project management, and discover how to establish an effective ESG programme.
3	Executive Masters in CSR and Sustainability Certification	International Institute for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (IICSR)	Yes	CSR Leaders – Directors, Heads of CSR and Sustainability CSR Teams – CSR/ESG practitioners Others – consultants, entrepreneurs, chartered accountants	Develop dynamic professionals with a strong understanding of responsible business practices in CSR, ESG, business responsibility, and sustainability reporting.

#	PROGRAMME NAME	INSTITUTION	SPECIFIC TO CSR?	TARGET AUDIENCE	COURSE OBJECTIVE
4	IICA Certificate Programme in Strategic CSR	Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)	Yes	<p>CSR Governance – Board members/CSR committee members</p> <p>CSR Teams – Senior/ mid-level personnel involved in CSR strategy and operations</p> <p>Others – Professional consultants involved in CSR advisory and implementation, professionals who want to pursue their careers in the CSR domain</p>	Support CSR professionals in establishing comprehensive CSR programmes, keep them updated on latest CSR developments, and build expertise in understanding CSR regulations in India.
5	ICSI Certificate Course on Certified CSR Professionals	The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)	Yes	CSR Teams – CSR/ESG practitioners	Develop an understanding of fundamental CSR concepts to develop good quality CSR professionals. Also aims to sensitise them about the best CSR practices in India and abroad.
6	JNICSR Executive Certification in CSR	Jawahar Lal Nehru Institute of CSR (JNICSR)	Yes	Graduates from any recognised university	Train graduates to grow into successful CSR professionals who are well-equipped with basic knowledge of CSR policy, activities, and compliance.
7	PG Certificate Programme in Corporate Social Responsibility	IIM Nagpur	Yes	<p>CSR Governance – CSR committee members</p> <p>CSR Leaders and Teams – Heads and team members involved in CSR</p>	Develop a deep understanding of CSR function, enable robust CSR strategy development and efficient programme execution. Help CSR managers and teams navigate complex challenges faced by them.
8	Postgraduate Certificate Program in CSR Leadership	XLRI + Tata Steel Foundation	Yes	CSR Teams – Young professionals with 3-4 years of work experience	Develop conceptual knowledge, skillsets, and practical competencies for end-to-end CSR implementation and reporting.

#	PROGRAMME NAME	INSTITUTION	SPECIFIC TO CSR?	TARGET AUDIENCE	COURSE OBJECTIVE
9	Impact Academy	CSRBOX	No	CSR and/or communication heads, impact investors, donor agencies, government agencies and associations, philanthropists, NGOs, social enterprises, start-ups, and foundations	Address knowledge gaps in the latest trends and innovations, and develop social-sector professional capabilities in on-the-ground execution and enablement of innovative solutions.
10	Results-Based Program Management Certificate Program	Indian School of Development Management (ISDM)	No	Middle-level development sector professionals who want to pursue a career in or are already undertaking programme and project management in their current roles	Master project management skills and help professionals learn to design and implement programmes that create lasting social impact.
11	The ILSS Leadership Program	India Leaders for Social Sector (ILSS)	No	Mid/senior corporate professionals (15-plus years of experience) seeking development sector roles or professionals with up to 3 years of development sector experience, including those in CSR or Diversity & Inclusion departments	Empower leaders with knowledge, skills, and a cultural mindset to understand India's social, environmental, and economic challenges and engage effectively with the development sector.
12	The ILSS Young Leaders Program	India Leaders for Social Sector (ILSS)	No	Young professionals with 5+ years of experience in the corporate sector, who aspire to transition to the social sector	Sharpen leadership acumen for young social-sector leaders, deepen their understanding of the social sector, and facilitate successful career paths with personalised roadmaps, mentorship, and coaching.

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