Changing the Game

Magic Bus: Giving Young People a Sporting Chance in Life

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With thousands of volunteer mentors across India and a unique organizational model designed to help maximize its impact, Magic Bus uses sports and other activities to help children and teenagers live, learn and grow well.

A television audience of several million was tuned in, but that did not seem to unnerve the four young people sitting on the stage, answering questions from Aamir Khan, one of the most famous actors and TV stars in India. They were confident, articulate, and quick on their feet during their appearance on Khan's talk show, Satyamev Jayate, or, in English, "Truth Alone Prevails."

It was the morning of October 5, 2014, the opening episode of the show's third season. Its aim is to help Indians understand the dramatic dimensions of the nation's social problems, including in education, poverty, health, and discrimination, and call attention to those who overcome them or try to solve them. That day's guests had overcome, or were on their way.

The four guests sat in tan leather chairs in front of a large, sky-blue video billboard

Children scurry across a wall of play at the Magic Bus Centre in Mumbai.

Girls and boys playing together: a Magic Bus lesson in gender equity.

with cumulus clouds. The oldest was 24-year-old Parvati Pujari of Mumbai, who said that her childhood education consisted of sitting under a tree, listening to lessons given by volunteers. A 14-year-old named Ritu Pawa, also of Delhi, did not go to school either and was not even allowed outside her home. Vijay Gupta, a boy a couple years younger than Ritu, also did not go to school. All he did in Delhi was play football, day after day. The fourth guest, Gulafsha Khan, was another child from Delhi who did not attend school. Like the others, she came from a poor family. And, like Ritu, she rarely left home. "I had no friends," she said, "and I found everything really strange."

The four were Aamir Khan's guests because all had benefited in multiple ways from a NGO whose roots were planted 16 years ago, when its founder and current chairman, Matthew Spacie, began teaching teenagers from the wrong side of the Mumbai tracks how to play rugby. It grew to an organization that today helps about 300,000 children and teens find a better path in life by playing games with meaning beyond the immediate reward of the winning kick, bat or dash.

Spacie's rookie rugby players formed a team they called the Magicians. The more they played the more they found a new sense of purpose and identity. In them, Spacie, then chief operating officer of a large international travel agency, began to see the transformative power of sport and it wasn't long before he was organizing camps for the some of the swarms of ragtag children who played in the slums and dumps of Mumbai. Some of the Magicians volunteered to help and the camps soon grew into countryside excursions on buses Spacie rented.

Parvati Pujari, then 9, was one of the first to hop aboard. "No one had ever treated us that way before," she told Khan, as a studio audience and viewers in India and many surrounding nations looked on. "We didn't want to go home."

In 2001, Spacie's ad hoc efforts led to the formal creation of a non-profit organization. With the involvement of the Magicians and the rental of buses, the name of the new organization was a natural: Magic Bus. It began developing a curriculum for using sports as a way to impart lessons about the importance of education, personal and community healthcare, gender-equality and ending discrimination based on faith or social status.

The idea of using sports as a teaching tool caught on, and on, and on, as over the years Magic Bus kept getting recognized by national and international foundations, funders and governments at all levels. It now operates in 22 of 29 Indian states, serving its one quarter-million clients through a network of 8,000 mentors, known as Community Youth Leaders, who volunteer their time and follow the same Activity Based Curriculum, known as the ABC, which evolved over time in consultation with educators, healthcare professionals, social workers and behavioral psychologists.

About 19% of Indian children aged 6 to 10 enrolled in schools drop out; the dropout rate for

those enrolled aged 11 to 13 is almost three times higher – at nearly 58%. But Magic Bus volunteers, working with parents and school systems, got Aamir Khan's four guests on Satyamev Jayate – Parvati, Ritu, Vijay and Gulafsha – back into school with new attitudes, aspirations and confidence

The title of Khan's show that day was, "A Ball Can Change the World." Ritu Pawa sweetly told Khan to let her describe her life before Magic Bus – "I wasn't so confident then" – before giving the details of Magic Bus programs. Khan responded with look of mock shock– a little teen-age girl telling the big star to hold on a minute, she had other things to say first – as people in the audience laughed and clapped away.

"Ritu, you talk so confidently now," Khan said. "That's amazing."

MAN ON A MISSION

You land in Bombay and you see this incredible visual dichotomy of wealth and immense poverty.

—Matthew Spacie

Mumbai was called Bombay when Matthew Spacie came to India from England, in 1986, as a 17-year-old volunteer for Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity. In those days, the road from the airport to the business district and to the middle and upper class pockets of the city ran through Dharavi, Asia's biggest slum, where hundreds of thousands of the utterly destitute lived and died with no access to electricity or clean water and sanitation, or reliable sources of food.

After a year, Spacie went home for university and the start of a business career. At age 29, in 1998, business took him back to India, to a city now called Mumbai, where he became the chief operating officer of Cox & Kings, then India's largest travel agency. Over the years and until today, the dichotomy he saw has grown starker. Dharavi is not Asia's biggest slum anymore, or even Mumbai's; small slums have grown into contiguous slums three times the size of Dharavi because more countryside migrants keep pouring into Mumbai, searching for work, and, failing that, a way to survive. But Mumbai is also India's commercial capital, and many at the throttle of the country's economic transformation are very wealthy. They work in gleaming towers, patronize chic shops and live in striking homes.

Outside their heavily secured homes, however, the wealthy can't escape evidence of the poverty all around: People sleeping on streets. Beggars seeking coins. Con-artist kids selling suspect snacks. But these are not just the ways of Mumbai, but in big and small cities across the country – and the sum of them is the very uphill climb that NGOs such as Magic Bus, its partners and the Indian government confront every day. Data from the Indian Planning Commission, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other sources paint a disturbing picture of India today, despite the success of its elite class:

- About 37% of India's 1.3 billion people live below the internationally recognized poverty line – daily income of US$1.25 per day.
- The percentage of the workforce over 15 years old is about 55%, but the percentage of wage and salaried workers is about 18; the rest are low-paid laborers, subject to seasonal whim and thus catastrophe.
- India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country by 2025; 50% of its people will be below age 25.
- About 700,000 Indians die each year because of poor sanitation.
- Compared to the majority Hindus, Muslims and other minorities have lower levels of income, education, and political representation or government jobs.
- Men are more than twice as likely as women to hold salaried jobs in large and medium-size cities at the center of the nation's economy. Women earn 62% of a man's salary for the same work.

That sorry snapshot grows more poignant when Magic Bus's intended recipients are considered:

- About 43% of India's 400 million children suffer from malnutrition. About half are not fully immunized.

- India has about 10 million child laborers, aged 5 to 14.
- India has the highest rate of child marriage in the world; many girls are shoved into early marriage by parents who can't afford to support them. Many end up as servants or prostitutes.
- Children and teenagers under aged 15 account for about 3.5% of those living in India with HIV/AIDS. About 39% are women.
- Child murders increased by 25% from 2000 to 2011.
- Seven million children in Mumbai, where Magic Bus began and which today has a metro population of about 21 million, live in slums.

In addition to being a top young executive, Matthew Spacie was a very good rugby player. In 1998, after returning to India, he was playing rugby one afternoon at the Bombay Gymkhana, a members-only sports club and playing field built by British colonialists in South Mumbai about 150 years ago. Spacie noticed some young men watching through a mesh fence. Much more often, they could be seen on Fashion Street, hawking used clothes and second-and-third-hand wares at a highly unfashionable Mumbai outdoor market. Some were the same type of teenagers Spacie had seen living on the streets near his office.

Magic Bus began with trips to the countryside for kids who have never been there.

Spacie asked Gymkhana members, who now included many successful Indians, to let him use the arena to teach rugby to the onlookers on the other side of the fence and some of their friends. The club members agreed, and word was spread that some gora, a white man, was inviting young men to learn a new sport, something he called rugby, but which they thought of as "hand-football" because players used hands rather than feet to move a ball up and down the field, as in football, or, aka, soccer.

The hawkers' friends included Abdul Rehman, whose sport was cricket, which he played every Sunday on fields close to Marine Drive, the longest slice of land in Mumbai facing the sea. His father was a driver for the Kuwaiti embassy and his older brother was a driver for a Mumbai corporation. Compared to many, many other young men in Mumbai, he had a better leg up on life, but he too was a dropout and had recently quit an electrician-training course. He had nothing else in view, and so he decided to try and learn hand-football.

The would-be rugby players played all day. For many, it was a rare day – no smoking, no cheap highs on glue and paper whiteout, no shaky deal-cutting on Fashion Street. "Spacie told us that this hand-football was called rugby and we kept coming back," Rehman recalled, and not long afterward he and the others formed a team, the Magicians. Soon, they were taking to the pitch at a tournament in Kolkata, formerly known as Calcutta.

As he grew to know the Magicians and their backgrounds, Spacie began using his contacts to help them find jobs. Rehman got a job at Cox & Kings, Spacie's travel agency. Over the next two years, some others found work, but the results were not good. "It was an absolute failure," Spacie said. "Within two months, almost every single boy left, ran away, because they had no work ethic."

The failure contained a lesson. If Spacie wanted to change lives, he had a better chance by working earlier with younger children and instilling values

before life on Fashion Street dimmed their chances for success. With the support of a local NGO also trying to help poor children, Spacie hired buses to take kids out of the slums and give them a weekend away of rock climbing, hiking in the mountains or swimming.

Spacie enlisted some of the Magicians, including Rehman, to come along on the trips to help kids develop sporting skills and become their "big brothers," their mentors – a concept that would become a fundamental tenet of the Magic Bus curriculum. Rehman called the weekends "memorable and heart-warming," but when the kids were dropped back in the slums on Sunday night, Spacie said, it was "devastating because they knew this had been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We had to change that."

FIRST INVESTOR, FIRST PARTNER

As Spacie focused on how to change the "once-in-a-lifetime" model, Deval Sanghavi, who had left an investment banking career to develop a philanthropic model for India, learned of Spacie and Magic Bus. Sanghavi and the foundation he founded, Dasra, had been searching for groups trying to help children. Sanghavi had volunteered for children's organizations in the past and wanted to raise money and support similar organizations with potential to grow.

"One of my frustrations was that no one was looking to build up the children's life skills… with a focus on leadership and how to have their voices come out, which is something these kids never had the opportunity to do," Sanghavi said.

Spacie's leadership of Cox & Kings at such a young age showed Sanghavi he had management skills. He also was impressed by his initiative and creativity – training and recruiting the Magicians to volunteer, hiring buses for weekend sports-and-learning getaways, coining a catchy name, Magic Bus, and giving the kids T-shirts with those words to give them an identity apart from slum dweller. Spacie's efforts exceeded the norm for an informal organization; he had not waited for a grant or formal NGO status to start making things happen.

When he met Sanghavi, Spacie had no business plan for how to finance a new model for serving more children more regularly. He wanted to ensure Magic Bus could demonstrate impact before trying to replicate it into something larger. For his part, Sanghavi saw in Magic Bus the philanthropic model he wanted to develop – one based on partnership and management support, not just funding.

In 2000, Dasra made its first philanthropic investment – in Magic Bus, for US$20,000. Spacie then set in motion the legal details for establishing an NGO. He and Sanghavi became the first board members, joining Dasra and Magic Bus in a partnership. The grant enabled Magic Bus to hire two employees and to begin implementing an age-and-need-based program for expanding its services.

The Dasra-Magic Bus partnership was the first step toward a theory of change Sanghavi and Dasra began to promote for India – if charities as well as social entrepreneurs were equipped with skilled people, knowledge and funding to make their efforts more focused and strategic, then the nation's social sector could achieve more sorely needed impact across a range of issues. In 2002, Spacie demonstrated his commitment to the mission by resigning as chief operating officer of Cox & Kings and becoming, thanks to Dasra's support, the driver in charge of Magic Bus.

Sanghavi contacted children's organizations to learn whether Magic Bus could offer its programs to their recipients. Over the next two years, Magic Bus built partnerships with 15 small groups. The partnerships involved programs offered only once or twice a year – clearly not the impact Spacie envisioned. He looked for organizations with more resources. That transition would mean the loss of some partners because they could not afford more frequent programs.

In time, however, Magic Bus and Dasra would become leaders in their sectors – Magic Bus as a youth-development provider and Dasra as an incubator of NGOs and social enterprises. "We realized in those initial days how much could be accomplished if two organizations with a common

mission decided to collaborate," Sanghavi said. "It's a lesson that has stayed with us ever since."

In 2002, a $208,000 grant from the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation and other donations enabled Magic Bus to expand its programs and begin laying plans for building a Magic Bus Centre, a 20-acre sports complex in Mumbai. Its programs also became more structured – the service recipients were divided into groups: Explorers (age 7-9), Challengers (age 10-14), and Voyagers (age 15-16). The structure enabled activities and lessons according to a child's physical and emotional development.

By the end of 2003, with more funding from Dasra and a fund-raising event at Christie's Auction House in London, Magic Bus was serving about 1,000 young people with a staff of 10. It also was able to buy, rather than rent, its first bus. With advice from experts in child-development, it continued to refine its curriculum, using sports-based activities to stress the importance of education, community and personal health care, gender equality and non-discrimination. For many, the lessons were unavailable anywhere else and ran contrary to what they saw in their own families, and not just the slums where they lived. The Magic Bus way of delivering its lessons began attracting attention in the NGO and philanthropic universes because they were innovative and seemed to work.

Over the next four years, under the leadership of a creative, experienced founder and manager, Magic Bus moved ahead on several fronts. It incorporated Magic Bus UK as a separate charity headquartered in London for the purposes of receiving donations and building partnerships with international organizations and funders. It added prominent professionals to its boards in India and the UK, and opened an office in Germany for the same purposes as the London branch. It made presentations about sports-for-development programs before United Nations panels in Switzerland and New York. It completed construction of its Magic Bus Centre, a Bombay Gymkhana for the poor, with its fields, playground equipment, activity centers and residential dorms. It conducted its first

A training session gets underway for future Community Youth Leaders of Magic Bus.

programs for corporate and private clients and developed a mentor-training program in Vietnam. It formed partnerships with domestic foundations and corporations, such as the NIIT Foundation, the Reliance Foundation and Asian Paints. It also formed partnerships with several international foundations and corporations with major operations in India, such as Mondelez International Foundation, HSBC, Asia Paints, BMW and Bloomberg. It started a Youth Livelihood program to offer classes in English-speaking and computer skills.

By 2007, it employed 120 people serving 4,500 young people from different backgrounds. "We had slum children, street children, rural and institutionalized children," Spacie recalled, meaning, with the last category, group homes for juvenile delinquents.

NEW SECTOR, NEW MODEL

With Magic Bus's reputation for success established, Spacie decided to try and establish partnerships in the public sector. "The first conversations we had with the government were very difficult because we learned very quickly that you can't speak to the government unless you have some quantum of scale," Spacie said. "We withdrew

from conversations until we felt we had some firepower to have influence."

In 2007, Magic began achieving firepower when UNICEF awarded it a US$120,000 grant to expand its programs to serve 150,000 young people – a more-than-dramatic leap for an organization serving just 4,500 at the time. For the Indian government, the UNICEF grant was a clear signal of Magic Bus's credibility as a potential partner. In 2008, as Magic Bus was devising an expansion plan enabled by the UNICEF grant, the central Indian Government launched a program called Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA – Village Youth Sport and Play Initiative). It was India's first rural sports initiative, and was introduced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to promote social and physical development.

PYKKA provided funds for the development and maintenance of sports grounds in villages and block panchayats. It planned to introduce such facilities throughout India over 10 years. Each village panchayat got a one-time grant of US$2,000 and each block panchayat was given US$10,000. Annual grants from US$200 to US$400 to buy sports equipment were awarded for each village and block panchayats. An annual maintenance grant of US$240 also was provided.

By its funding, the government was demonstrating that it now also saw sports as a way to help children on a national scale, and by 2010 Magic Bus was in a position to help. The national government selected Magic Bus to partner with it and create and implement PYKKA Centres in two districts, Sangli in the state of Maharashtra and Medak in the state of Andhra Pradesh. This was the start of a very major partnership, the opportunity for Magic Bus to establish trust between itself and public officials in order to begin entering districts in states across India.

In addition to private partnerships, any group that wants to have widespread impact, or help create systemic change, must consider working with the government at a substantial level at some stage. Spacie well understood that this was especially true in the case of India, with its large population and scale of problems. "It has to be multiple stakeholders coming in and working with the community," he said, adding that whether in education, health, gender, or discrimination or any other issue, NGOs cannot work in isolation.

After the UNICEF grant and government partnership, it was obvious that in order to serve 150,000 young people, Magic Bus needed a new model. Spacie also decided it needed new leadership. In 2009, he coaxed Pratik Kumar, who had worked for social-service groups, the UN and, for 14 years, the Indian civil service, to lead Magic Bus down the much wider road ahead of it.

Kumar's university degree was in engineering, and he brought an engineer's instincts to the task of reconfiguring Magic Bus and replicating its success nationwide. He assembled the Magic Bus management team and asked its members to think of every form of impact their programs had. After they listed everything on a black board, it came to 58 "impact points". Kumar told them a model based on 58 impact points was not going to work, or impress funders and the government.

"I turned around and said that if you mention to anyone in the world, 'We work in 58 impact areas, then they'll laugh at you,' "Kumar recalled. "This is not the way NGOs position themselves."

The 58 points needed to be boiled down to key points, and after a few more meetings they were: education, life skills, physical development. "During those discussions," Kumar said, "there were battles at times because people in the social realm can get very charged up." Of course, Kumar understood one other element also was at play: "Who was this upstart engineer trying to tell them to do things better or different?"

Kumar told the team to focus on possible answers to the question: So what? If Magic Bus took kids on a hiking trip, so what? The more important points were: What did they learn? And how? Could impact points be huddled under basic principles? In time, Kumar saw that they could, using a formula devised and adapted over the years by

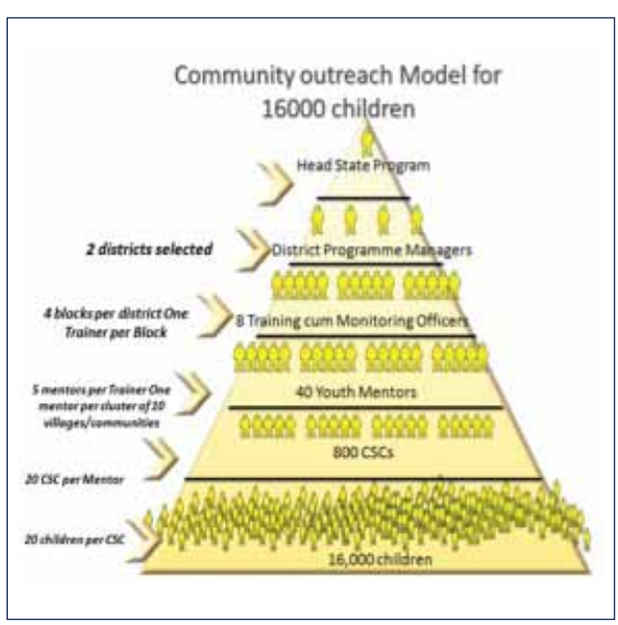
educational psychologists and known as the Laws of Learning. Six were applicable to Magic Bus and each had key requirements.

The Law of Readiness applied because children are motivated to play, because play is intrinsically joyful, and the Law of Exercise applied because children learn through practice and feedback. The Law of Effect applied because play eliminated stress, a negative emotion, while the Law of Intensity applied because the harder children play, the more they perceive and concentrate. The Law of Primacy? Children learn faster when younger, such as those children in Magic Bus's Explorers group, for children aged 7 to 9. The Law of Recency? Re-visiting lessons from recent sessions helps cement the learning.

With a strategy rooted in education and psychology, Magic Bus began searching for a way to implement it on a national scale – an impossible task if it had to rely on its current salaried staff. Kumar and others began looking at how to use young community-based volunteers as mentors and teachers, and how much training would be needed to prepare them for those roles.

Early in 2010, the pieces fell into place for implementing the nationwide program. The Community Youth Leader idea was its centerpiece. Volunteers in their late teens or early 20s in communities within districts of states would be trained to implement the sports-and-activity curriculum for children during 40 sessions per year – far past the once-in-a-lifetime model of early Magic Bus. If Magic Bus could recruit and train hundreds of Community Youth Leaders, the goal of serving 150,000 children could be achievable.

Identifying, recruiting, and training the volunteers would be essential, and would require monitoring and supervision. Magic Bus devised a basic model for carrying out those tasks within a particular district. The model could be and would be replicated to different degrees as Magic Bus grew. Under the basic model, 800 volunteers would be recruited to serve 20 children each, for a total of 16,000. Each district would require 40 trainers for the 800 volunteers. The trainers themselves would be monitored by supervisors, who would report to program managers, who would report to the person in charge of the district. The system was engineered to make sure, as much as possible, that the Magic Bus DNA was implanted from the top down in a triangle whose last section contained the 16,000 children receiving service in each district. From the second-level up, increasing knowledge of the Magic Bus learning lessons was required. At the district program manager level, expertise in child development was required. The person at the very top would also have to have management credentials and be responsible for all external partnerships – the government, funders and other NGOs.



For it to work, the model required dedicated and responsible volunteers who care about their communities, volunteers such as Mohd. Saqib Shaikh, who lives in Govandi, a neighborhood in Mumbai. He joined Magic Bus at the urging of another volunteer. "I was very curious about how sports and learning could go hand in hand," said Shaikh, a 20-year-old football player when he joined Magic Bus. "And I wanted to do something for my community."

Shaikh said the most challenging part of his job is getting young girls to join Magic Bus programs and that he has to visit their parents to persuade them it's okay. He was talking about the type of young girls who appeared on Aamir Khan's show

– Ritu Pawa and Gulafsha Khan, neither of whom attended school and rarely left their homes.

Most of the young people Shaikh works with are in the Challenger category, 10 to 14 years old. Some are Explorers, 7 to 10. "It's such a good opportunity to give them a good message at a young age," he said. "The kids are accepting the message. They are doing it and learning it."

By the end of 2010, less than a year after the model was embedded, Magic Bus, as planned, was serving 150,000 children, thanks to the construction of new triangles in districts beyond Mumbai, including the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The rapid growth required Magic Bus to rapidly hire new supervisory staff – from 120 before the national program to 330 after its implementation. It also developed versions of its curriculum to suit districts where particular lessons, such as, for instance, sexual and reproductive health, appeared to need extra attention.

Mangesh Kamble is one of the supervisors for one of the Mumbai districts where the new Magic Bus model is in place. Kamble, who had previously worked for NGOs focused largely on rights-based advocacy at the national level, said the life skills Magic Bus provides children empowers them to become advocates for themselves someday, after they've left the program and begin to encounter the consequences of India's economic and social problems.

Parents must have a sense of what their children are learning, Kamble said, so Magic Bus holds seminars for parents so that they can help reinforce lessons and give the same messages at home. Parents may also participate in the same activities as well, to learn what their children may forget to tell them.

Kamble is a good symbol for what parents and young people can achieve. He was born in a neighborhood known as Byculla, one of the largest and most dense Mumbai slums. His father was a Class IV worker, at the very bottom rung of labor work in the government sector. His mother worked as a domestic helper to bring home a few rupees more for the family, which included two other children, a boy older than Kamble and a girl who was younger. He saw firsthand how hard it is for young slum dwellers to shun behavior such as drug use and petty crime that kept them where they were and the regret they express as they grow older and see someone who managed to escape.

"When we meet up now, they look at me, wearing my Magic Bus shirt, and they say that they should have listened, they should have left it behind when they could have," Kamble said.

In addition to recognizing the different cultural, social or religious contexts that exist for children and teens in the slums, Sanghavi said Magic Bus must also be sensitive to the contradiction between one theme of its lessons – that kids must show respect for others and for themselves – and the failure sometimes for parents to show respect for children at home. He said some parents have told him their children get more respect from the Community Youth Leaders – who they call either bhaiyya, for elder brother, or didi, for older sister – than they do at home. One reason for this is the constant stress that exists in poor communities; adults who daily contend with basics such as food and shelter can overlook the needs of their children.

The size of the Magic Bus program required close measurement and evaluation by Magic Bus's top executives. Those tools were established parts of the Magic Bus DNA. A few years before the new model was adopted, after Magic Bus won the World Bank Development Marketplace Prize and received a US$70,000 grant, Spacie spent all of it on measurement and evaluation of the programs that existed then; if Magic Bus had impact, great; otherwise, so what?

"That was a bold move," said Sanghavi. "Most organizations would have used that as running capital, but he said, 'No, I'm going to use this to measure our impact'."

The donor portfolio is diverse enough that no single donor contributes more than 9% of Magic Bus's working capital, giving its leaders flexibility and ownership of decision-making. In 2014, its operating budget was about US$4 million. It

hopes new donations will soon lead to a budget of US$6 million. In addition to its foundation and corporate funders and partners, Magic Bus has partnerships with Indian and international sport-related organizations, such as the Aircel Chennai Open tennis tournament, the Premier League, Barclays Spaces for Sports and Laureus Sport for Good Foundation.

Magic Bus's leaders hope that additional donations and partnerships will help them achieve another goal, which is to persuade all state governments to adapt its model as a part of their education or PYKKA programs. They want to make Magic Bus part of a systemic solution rather than just its own entity. Partnerships with government at that level, or with other non-profits, require collaborative leadership, Spacie said.

"The collaborative leadership approach you need when you're looking at partnership – it's very complex, much more complex than doing something by yourself," Spacie said.

With its donations and partnerships enabling additional recruiting and training of its volunteers, and by tinkering with its model as required in different districts, Magic Bus dramatically exceeded the original dramatic goal of serving 150,000 children and teenagers. By 2014, it had 8,000 Community Youth Volunteers serving 250,000. The average volunteer worked with about 30 youths, 10 more than in the original model.

At the start of 2015, Magic Bus was set to expand in another way that also will require collaborative leadership – new programs in Singapore and Sri Lanka. Spacie will oversee the hiring of leaders and staff for the international expansion while Kumar leads the India operations. Spacie said expansion across borders is linked to the wishes of donors and partners, and why not if its model has worked well in India? He also said it would be adapted to local needs and cultures.

The expansion takes Magic Bus much farther down a road that began when Spacie saw the boys on the other side of the fence and some became the Magicians. One of original Magicians, Abdul Rehman, now leads a large Magic Bus team at its sports complex. "Rehman is an example of someone who has lived up to his potential," Spacie said.

The unfairness of poverty, he added, is that "you have these wonderful young people with so much potential that are clever, smart and useful, and they are not able to do what they should. He epitomizes somebody who wanted to change his own life and destiny, and we perhaps in some way guided it."

LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

The rapid growth of Magic Bus over 15 years contains several lessons. One is illustrated by Matthew Spacie's decision to use a major and early grant to measure and evaluate Magic Bus's impact, rather than for operating expenses. Early impact-assessment helps NGO leaders know whether their models and strategies are working while helping donors and partners feel confident about their support and cooperation.

Another lesson is that confidence in impact encourages NGOs to be bold, and to expand service that is contributing and that is needed. This is especially true in developing countries, where social problems are difficult and systemic. After demonstrating their effectiveness at smaller scales, NGOs in such nations as India should seek growth, as Magic Bus did – by steadily increasing services, by continually forming new partnerships and by, simply, thinking big.

In large developing nations, NGOs can achieve far more impact by seeking partnerships with governments at all levels. Rather than build programs that mirror government programs, organizations should work with governments to increase the impact of both. Once it was ready, once it demonstrated it had "firepower," as Spacie said, Magic Bus partnered with government and dramatically increased the number of children and teens it could help.

Working with governments can be a tricky road to navigate, however, and that is one of the challenges Magic Bus faces. Indian leaders are very much in the middle of matching resources to problems. Which is a bigger problem – poverty,

education, health? But those are merely social – what about pollution, which is at perilous levels in many cities? Energy? India doesn't have enough reliable power to run the pumps that provide water. The search for solutions for problems occurs in a volatile political context, and that can mean new leaders, new agendas and endangered partnerships. Magic Bus will have to keep its knack for collaborative leadership finely tuned.

It also will have to keep closely monitoring and supervising its army of Community Youth Leaders, particularly if it continues to expand in India and takes its service model to other countries in a major way. The model relies on young people, volunteers mainly aged 16 to 20, to hew to the curriculum, but also adapt it sometimes to different circumstances within a district.

Adjusting to changes in the nature and degree of problems on India's social horizon also will be challenging. The projection is that India will have about 1.4 billion people by 2025, making it the world's most populous; about 50% of them will be under age 25. Young people will be scrambling for work harder than they do now. How can they best be prepared to compete? What happens to those who can't? Who helps them and how? NGOs? Government? With what kind of partnerships?

Eventually, Magic Bus leaders will have to sort out the answers to one fundamental question: how long can we keep thinking big, and going big, without sacrificing quality?

The name of that episode on Aamir Khan's TV show that featured Magic Bus was, "A Ball Can Change the World." It's a good title, a good headline, but a bit of a reach. The biggest challenge is to just keep the ball rolling in the right direction to help the most kids you can.

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QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

Financial

Planned budget versus actual expenditure for fiscal year 2013-2014	Budget: approximate INR 228 million (or USD 3.7 million); expenditure: approximate INR 226 million (or USD 3.7 million) exchange rate of INR 61.32 = 1 USD)
Income composition by source: individuals, corporations, events, trusts, other (please specify)	Individuals: 2% Corporations: 51% Events: 30%; Trusts: 7%; Other: 9%
Income composition: domestic versus international	Domestic: 35% International: 65%
Did you achieve cost recovery? Yes/No	Yes

Quantitative Indicators Continued

Personnel

Staff retention rate (number of employees who remained during the year, divided by the total number of employees, multiplied by 100)	84%
Turnover rate (number of employees who left during the year, divided by the total number of employees, multiplied by 100)	16%
What is the board composition? Board member occuptional sectors?	Men, 15; women, 6 Financial services, 6; legal services, 5; private equity/venture capital, 4; non-profit, 2; entrepreneur, marketing and other, 4
How many meetings does the board hold per year?	At least 2 x year in India, as required by law Varies with boards outside India; meetings of those require quorum of at least 1/3 of directors or two people (whichever includes a higher percentage of board members)
How many employed staff? How many staff members have attended some non-profit or management training course? What topics were covered? Provider of training – internal department or outside vendor? If outside vendor, please name	77 In-house Training of Trainers and refresher training for all staff in domain areas (health, education, gender, livelihood, leadership, right to play and socio-emotional skills) Additional domain training from visiting experts across world for staff and managers External training by academicians or orgaganizations such as: TISS, DASRA, Public Health Foundation of India, SP Jain

Organizational

Do you publish annual report? Yes/No	Yes
How many sites/locations do you operate in?	20 states in India with international fundraising offices in UK, USA, Singapore; programmes also in Singapore, UK and Nepal
Do you measure results? Yes/No	Yes; results are measured by category: education, right to play, health, hygiene and sanitation, nutrition and anaemia, socio-emotional skills, leadership
Do you measure impacts? Yes/No	Yes, in same categories as above
What types of outreach do you use (e.g., radio, print, postal, social and others)?	Print, social media and others
Did you regularly meet with government representatives? If yes, on a scale of 1 - 3, how close is the relationship with government? 1 = not close; 2 = somewhat close; 3 = very close;	Yes Closeness of relationship = 3