

## MANAGEMENT BEYOND BUSINESS

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**ALMOST 33 YEARS AGO** A whole batch of freshly anointed, starry-eyed MBA graduates, heard the revered Chief Guest, Mr Verghese Kurien, deliver the convocation speech at the prestigious IIM Ahmedabad, for the class of 1988, on the manicured lawns of Louis Khan Plaza. We had jobs in hand and looked forward to careers in business and making comfortable salaries. Never had we imagined that Mr Kurien's speech would resonate so closely with our journey ahead or towards the goals we (the authors) set ourselves to achieve. In retrospect, the powerful words of Mr Kurien and his emphasis on looking beyond the prisms of business growth, profit and revenue stayed in our subconscious. It is only in the last six years or so that our collective quest has found a space to be implemented. Mr Kurien's words and the inspiration drawn from Operation Flood have kept the spark of enquiry in us to explore a dimension of management that does impact social welfare, community building and humanitarian causes. This has led to the founding of the Indian School of Development Management (ISDM).

### THE EXPLORATORY JOURNEY AND BEGINNING OF ISDM

Having spent more than a few decades in the business world, both Sharad and I began to engage with the domain of education in different capacities and roles. Sharad was a leader and strategist at PSBB Millennium Schools and Shriram Millennium Schools, while I worked at the Azim Premji Foundation as the Head of Education Leadership and Management. During this period, the two of us and a couple of passionate colleagues from Azim Premji University; Gaurav Shah (IIM-C 2003) and Suparna Diwakar, who had been working in the social impact and education sector for more than three decades began an exploratory journey, to look for programmes that help the social impact sector professionalise and aptly apply management tenets to their work with communities and causes. Our search took us to hundreds of management gurus, corporate leaders and influencers, entrepreneurs and leaders from the social impact space. We sadly concluded that there was little or no scope for junior or mid-level development professionals to immerse themselves in 'Development Management' programmes. Leadership in this sector was the crying need of the hour; was the conclusion from that year of deep conversations.

**WE ESTABLISHED ISDM IN 2016** with a group of passionate and experienced founders, who came from Development and Business backgrounds and shared a vision of establishing a domain, from the ground up, where both would converge seamlessly. The thinking behind establishing ISDM has been similar to the vision that great minds like Dr Vikram Sarabhai and others had in establishing the Indian Institutes of Management. A dream to create, enable and empower the professionals and young people who work within the social impact sector, to be able to optimise the use of billions of dollars spent and the countless man-hours of human resources deployed, to find solutions at scale, for India's developmental challenges.

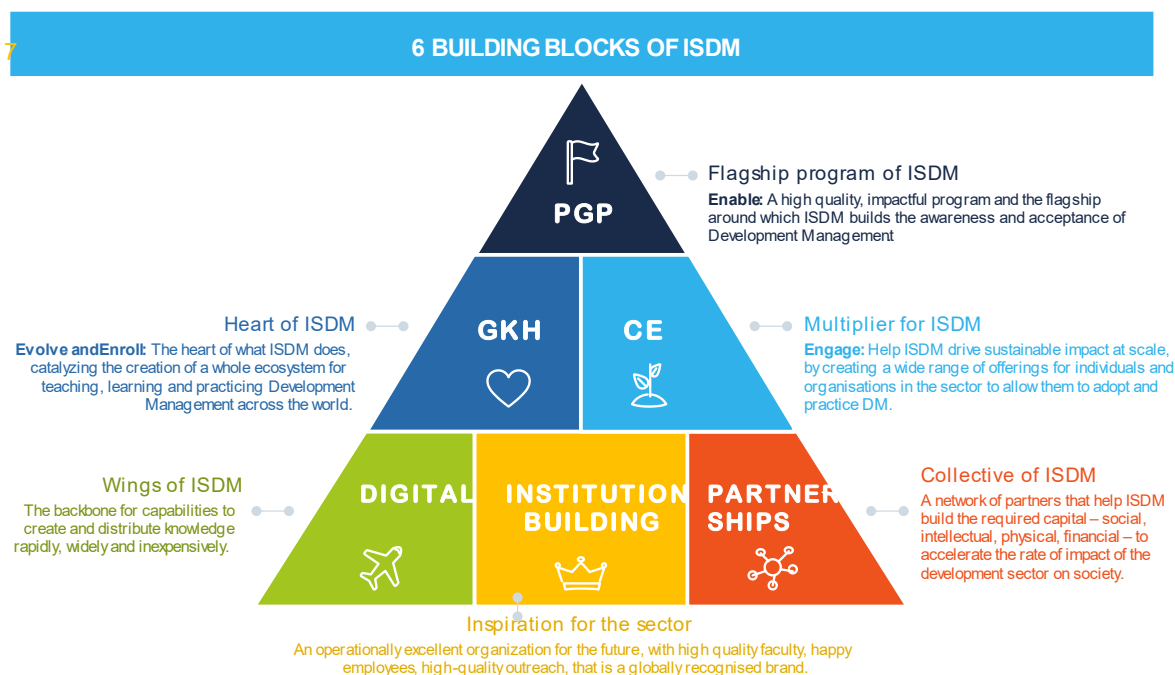
**THE VISION OF FOUNDERS AND TEAM AT ISDM** Our country has one of the largest and most dynamic social impact sectors in the world. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation shares that there are more than 3.3 million organisations within this sector as per data from 2009. These include non-profit hospitals, faith-based

institutions, schools, and higher educational institutes, among others. The significance of this growing sector has been emphasised by the role that it has played during the coronavirus pandemic and the humanitarian crisis we have witnessed in the last two years. Never before has the need for professionally equipped and humanely sensitised people been more recognised in this sector by governments, social purpose organisations, citizens and donors alike.

The founders and team at ISDM have a vision to bring to play, a balance between the *Samaaj*, *Sarkar* and *Bazaar*, where each institution contributes to the growth and expansion of the other. With *Sarkaar* or the Government ensuring structured community living based on certain Law and Order; *Bazaar* or Markets fostering innovation, growth and rise in standards of living; and the *Samaaj* or Civil Society ensuring checks and balances on the Sarkaar and Bazaar to bring back the focus on our people, country and the planet.

**WHY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT?** Over the years, we have witnessed Business Management act as a force multiplier for business that has led towards Indians leading multi-billion and largescale, multi-country businesses. We wish for “Development Management” to do this for the social sector. We believe that Development Management can help shape, chisel and immerse in the understanding of social change and development, to create a new management that can be a force multiplier for good.

**ISDM’S SIGNATURE PROGRAM** The Post Graduate Program in Development Management, is a culmination of carefully crafted and curated pedagogy and curricula innovations to enable young professionals to understand, innovate and apply management principles based on values, democratic framework and an inclusive paradigm. The 47-week program now has more than 230 alumni who are working in various profiles in social purpose organisations, ecosystem enablers and social enterprises. We have also slowly built a Body of Knowledge as part of the ISDM Knowledge and Research Centre that undertakes seminal research and case writing for teaching and learning of Development Management. ISDM has a thriving record of placements and executive education for mid to senior level professionals from the sector, thereby validating the proof of concept for Development Management.



**OUR FIVE YEARS SO FAR** This year, 2021, marks the fifth year since we established ISDM and our achievements and crossing of milestones along with the support of a wide number of experts, academics, donors and faculty members has strengthened our resolve to nourish and build the domain of Development Management as a realm and body of knowledge that fuels, fosters and flourishes the social impact sector in India and the world.

In the last five years, ISDM has established strategic partnerships with several leading ecosystem organisations, philanthropies and donor organisations who have been supporting our work and vision. ISDM was recognised as part of the Marico Innovations for 2021 and has secured grants from the Natwest Group, ONI, Ford Foundation among others as recognition for the importance of Development Management during the present episteme. Along the way, we have

had many stalwarts like Prof A K Shiva Kumar (also an IIM alumnus), Mr Arun Maira and others guide and shape the work and research at ISDM.

**WAY FORWARD, WE HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO** As alumni of IIMs and as people who have been supporters of our friends and peers from the institution, we see how alumni of this prestigious institution have played a huge role in building global businesses. This business success and hundreds of achievements open the potential of the same alumni to make tangible changes and ameliorate the lives of those in the margins and those who are often overlooked. The intellectual, social and economic capital that resides in the IIM alumni community is very powerful and embodies the possibility for social good at enormous scales. We invite you to reach out to us and partner with us in any way relevant, to lead and manage programs and initiatives in the social impact sector.

The initial indications seem to suggest that 230 million citizens of our country have slipped below the poverty line during the Covid-19 pandemic. It took over 50 years since independence, to get 200 million people over that poverty line! This has further strengthened our resolve that we need to address these developmental challenges with great speed, at population scale and in sustained and empowering ways.