

CASE STUDY

# Atma - Tapasya

A case study on Atma's 3 year Accelerator Partnership with Tapasya

MAY 2022



# About Tapasya

Tapasya Pratishthan (“Tapasya”) was founded in 2017 by two committed development sector professionals, Tapas Sutradhar and Mrinal Rao. Guided by their collective work experience, Tapas and Mrinal recognised that there were a lot of initiatives introduced by the Government to alleviate the problems being faced by the most marginalised people in India, but there was a breakdown in the delivery of these initiatives and there was an urgent need to bridge these policy and implementation issues. They founded Tapasya Pratishthan to help individuals and communities battle adversity and marginalisation by accessing resources and entitlements that are available to them.

## Problems identified

In 2018-2019, Tapasya was in the process of building a strong foundation for organisational growth and sustainability and putting in place key systems and processes. It was also actively looking at expanding the scope of its operations and programmes. In 2019 and 2020, Tapasya conducted small research studies and initiated pilots and realized that only providing access to the welfare policies will not help the beneficiaries attain the quality of life that they aspire to. In order to make their programmes more inclusive and holistic in nature, Tapasya decided to intervene in the area of parenting, early childhood development and maternal and child health. In the last 3 years, Tapasya was, therefore, navigating its journey on two fronts internally:

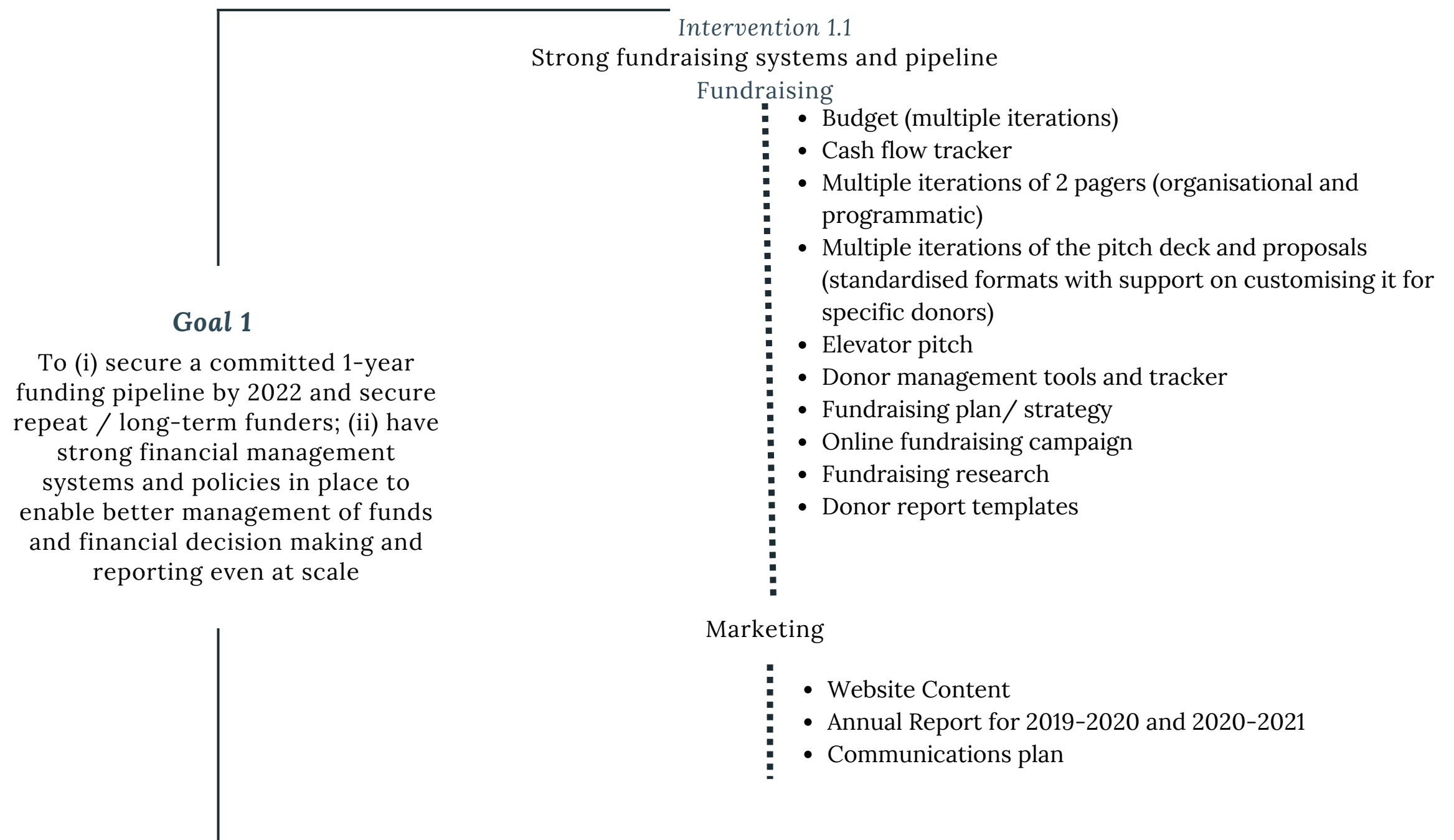
Building organisational capacity

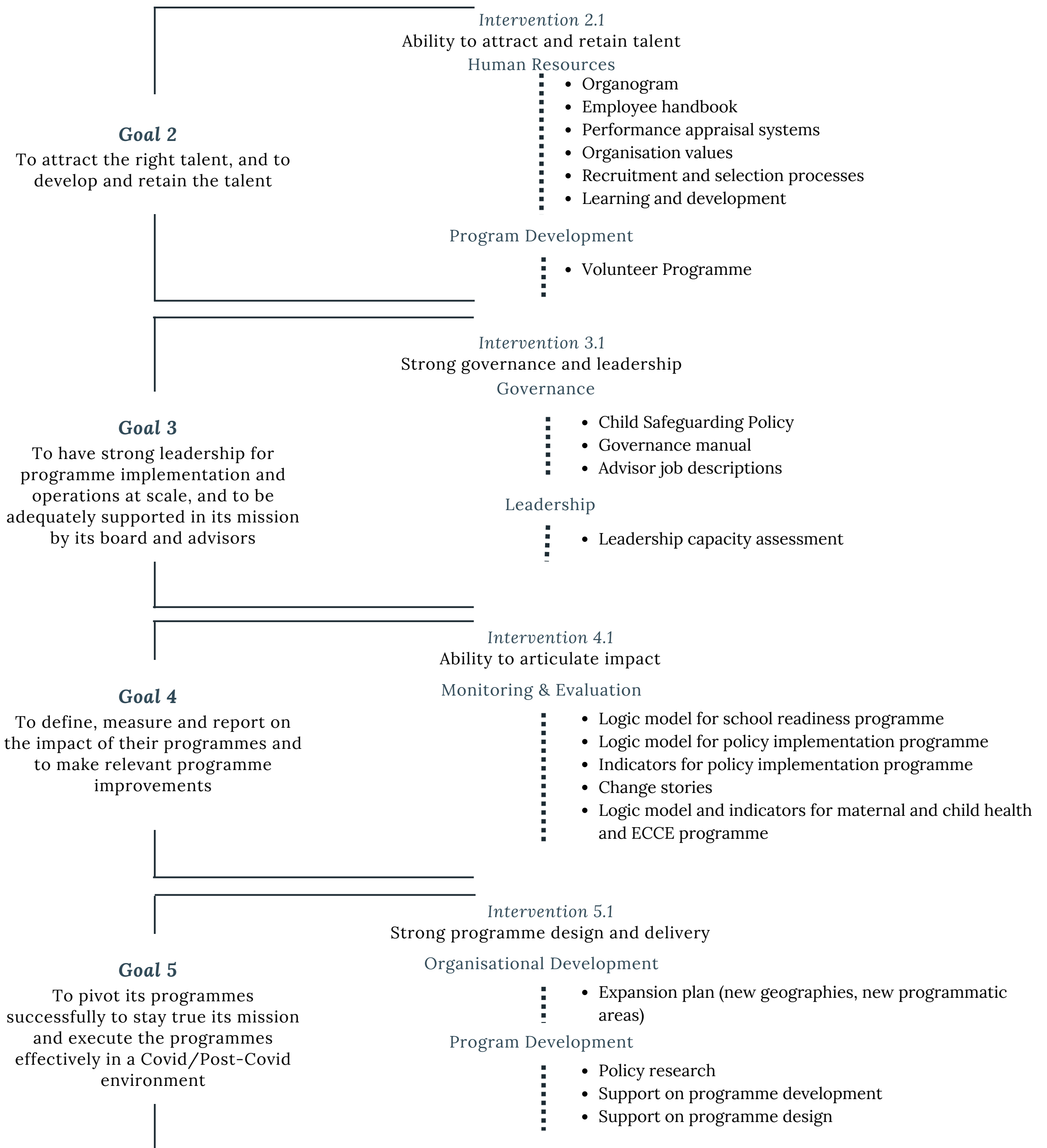
Refining and defining its programmatic focus, while being buffeted by externalities like COVID-19

## Atma's Approach

Through the use of Atma’s Life Stage Survey tool, Tapasya was able to assess its capacities across 9 different organisational development areas. Separately, Atma also helped Tapasya articulate its long-term goals. Using the assessment and the articulation of long-term goals, Atma helped Tapasya develop a blueprint of critical areas for capacity building for the 3 years of the partnership. Because the goal posts for Tapasya continued to evolve during the partnership, Atma infused a fair bit of flexibility into the partnership plan and also periodically revisited it to make sure the work taken up during the partnership is relevant to the needs of the organisation.

## Solutions

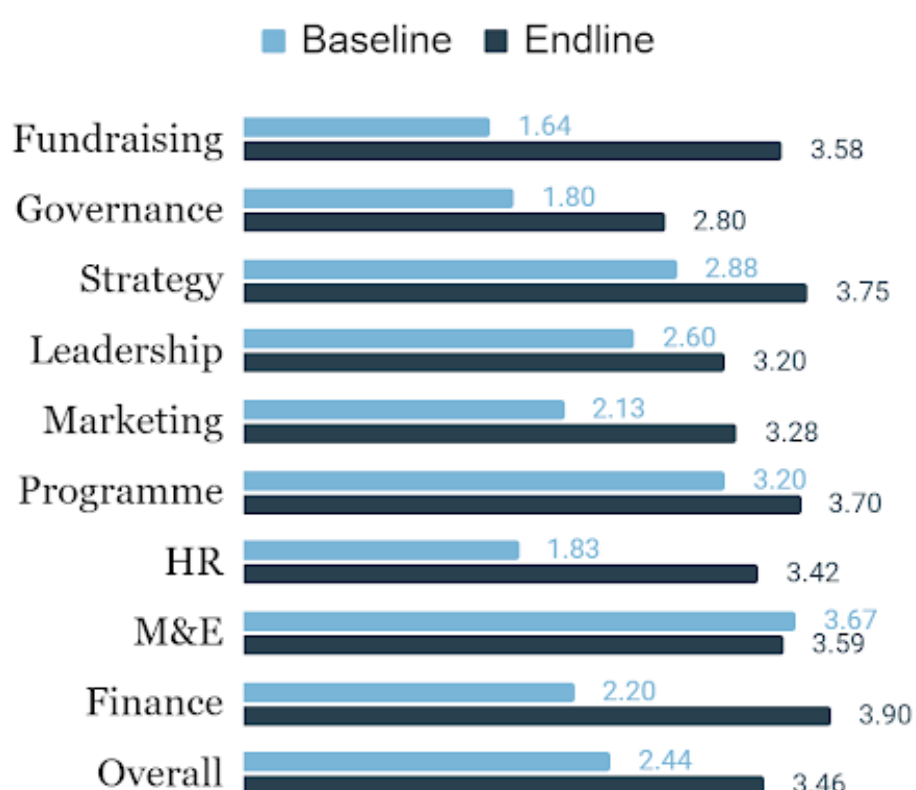




## Tapasya's Growth

### Life Stage Survey

The Life Stages framework defines the five board stages through which a nonprofit organisation typically progresses. An organisation in the final stage will have achieved self-sufficiency and sustainable while continuing to evolve.



### Stakeholders

2019-20 **1023 Families**

2020-21 **1271 Families**   
**4263 Senior citizens**  
**4500 Pregnant women**  
**8577 Students**

2021-22 **3900 Families**

### Budget

2019-20 **₹ 4,47,771** \*not including entrepreneur support grant.

2020-21 **₹ 35,95,590**

2021-22 **₹ 35,00,000 (unaudited)**

Tapasya showed an average growth of 1.03 on all the 9 Organisational Development areas of the Life Stage Survey.

# Outcomes Achieved

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## *Strong fundraising systems and pipeline*

Atma built an understanding of and appreciation for different approaches and best practices with respect to budget creation, fundraising research, collateral creation, strategic planning and pipeline management and developed the leaders' ability to build an organisational narrative and network/ prospect to generate leads.

- Tapasya managed to raise ~ **72 Lakhs** during the partnership period.
- Tapasya has a **funding pipeline (commitments and promising leads) that would cover most expenses for FY 2023**.
- From **1 funder in 2018-2019**, Tapasya had **3 key funders in 2021-2022, each constituting less than 30% of the income** (including their first CSR funder in 2020-2021, who has since renewed their support).
- Tapasya was able to tide over the constraints imposed by Covid-19 by instituting common sense measures and by diversifying fundraising sources.

## *Ability to attract and retain talent*

Atma built Tapasya's's erstwhile understanding of organisation structure, recruitment and selection processes, performance appraisal, organisational values and HR policies, and built their ability to design and administer appropriate HR systems. Atma has also been able to support Tapasya in developing a structured approach to leveraging volunteers.

- Tapasya has been **leveraging volunteers** for critical organisational tasks that require either additional manpower or specialised skills. This has allowed Tapasya to navigate funding constraints by keeping the core team lean.
- Tapasya has been able to develop an engaged team, that is skilled and value-aligned.

## *Ability to articulate impact*

With Atma's support, Tapasya has been able to **develop logic model frameworks, indicators, data collection tools** for its interventions. With the changes to the programme, some of this has evolved in an iterative manner and Tapasya is exploring tech enabled solutions that would help them to better capture, visualise and articulate their impact.

## *Strong governance and leadership*

Over the three years of the partnership, through projects, linkages, thought partnership, Atma helped Tapasya develop a greater understanding of NGO governance and oversight best practices, and develop the ability to pitch effectively to secure stakeholder buy-in, to drive results and to manage people more effectively.

- Tapasya has embarked on the process of **rethinking their governance structures** including the membership of their Board and advisory council to involve more members who can bring in subject matter expertise and help mobilise resources. Tapas has identified and inducted 3 advisors during the partnership duration.
- Tapasya has been able to **identify strategic partners** for programmes and monitoring and evaluation, thus leveraging the power of collaboration
- Tapasya was **selected for the Changeloom Fellowship** in 2021. Tapasya was among the top 19 out of 300 organisations screened for the **NSRCEL programme** in 2021, that received mentorship support through the programme. Tapasya was also a **finalist for the Acumen Fellowship** in 2021-2022.

## *Strong programme design and delivery*

During the partnership period, through our projects and thought partnership, Atma built Tapasya's capacity to design and deliver programmes on both tactical and strategic fronts. This includes helping Tapasya develop an understanding of what it takes to scale and how to evaluate the possibility of scale up, building on Tapasya's innate abilities to identify resources, networks and partners and mobilise them, to innovate and be agile and to iterate and improve programme design based on on-field experience.

- Tapasya **pivoted** from working solely on the implementation of the Right to Education Act, **to other policies** like the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana in 2020 and now works with multiple Government policies.
- **During Covid-19, Tapasya was able to leverage its model to provide essential services to affected families.**
- Tapasya has reflected on its long-term vision for the organisation and was able to **crystallise its focus on parenting, and maternal and child development**
- Tapasya **utilised the services of experts and partners to design the maternal and child interventions.** It leveraged existing resources rather than reinventing the wheel.
- Tapasya was able to **sustain a continuous physical presence in Nandurbar and Pune.** Earlier, they were present in more geographies, but sporadically and mostly through partners.
- Tapasya was able to **establish partnerships with Government departments and District and Municipal Administration** (the Health Department, Nandurbar Zilla Parishad and Pune Municipal Corporation) for its projects.

# Testimonials

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*"Atma has put a lot of effort into making Tapasya self-sufficient. By the end, we felt that we spent lesser time in partnership because we have already become more 'átma nirbhar' (self-sufficient) in terms of addressing our needs, and the credit goes to Atma's continued effort."*

- Tapas Sutradhar, Co-Founder & CEO  
Tapasya