

DANCING

on the edge



spring strategies

CREA

DANCING ON THE EDGE

Review Findings and Recommendations

By Ellen Sprenger, Spring Strategies

July 2011



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2000, CREA is an organisation based in the global South and led by women, which works locally, regionally, and internationally. CREA promotes and advances women's human rights and sexual rights of all people by strengthening feminist leadership, organisations, and movements; influencing global and national advocacy; creating information, knowledge, and scholarship; changing public attitudes and practices; and addressing exclusion. CREA focuses on the intersections between gender, sexuality, and rights, and links theory and practice, reaching diverse audiences of service providers, advocates, academics, researchers, policymakers, and donors. CREA aims to advance an array of sexual rights for all people, addressing sexual violence and sexual identities, as well as exploring links between sexuality and development issues, reducing stigma and discrimination, and highlighting the importance of choice, consent, and pleasure. Today, CREA is recognised as a pioneer and leader in the field of gender, sexuality, and rights, known for its cutting-edge work in each of these fields as well as at their intersections.

CREA continues to work in a world where the rights of women and marginalised groups are violated and curtailed by community traditions and structures, nation states, and bilateral and multilateral arrangements. Patriarchy is reconstituting the old binary sexual identities and gender roles, responsibilities, and stereotypes, while simultaneously constructing new ones. Media and information and communication technologies (ICTs) are being used by both progressive and reactionary forces, in increasingly sophisticated ways, to spread their messages, communicate information, and mobilise with unprecedented speed and reach. But, the rise of new civil society movements—and the increasing visibility, voice, and space for previously silenced, invisible, and marginal constituencies—offers new opportunities and hope for progressive resistance. Within the context of these changes and the critical choices that they represent, staying relevant and effective means adopting a clear vision and path forward.

In its 10th year, CREA is at a critical juncture. Due to its strong track record and natural pull towards “the edge” of what is new, emergent, and vibrant, CREA is raising important questions about its focus. The primary purpose of this review process and report is, therefore, to create opportunities for deep reflection, creativity, and further alignment among the Board and staff members, and external resource persons as CREA moves forward. In addition, this report seeks to define CREA's core and uniqueness—the space to build from, as it looks ahead to its next 10-year journey.

The review highlights CREA's important achievements in its first 10 years, as well as the incredible potential for CREA, as a community, to take its role in the world to a new level. The report ends with a set of key recommendations to support CREA's ongoing journey of “dancing on the edge”, while also maintaining a strong centre of gravity.

All the findings in this report were generated from an internal review process. This started in October 2010, with an initial conversation with Geetanjali Misra (Executive Director, CREA), and was followed by 26 interviews with the Board and staff members, and a select number of external stakeholders and resource persons. The consultations culminated in two facilitated meetings in January 2011, where interview findings were shared and discussed with 22 participants. In addition, a review of CREA documents was conducted.

This document outlines the key findings from this process, in terms of CREA's past, current momentum, and key themes and recommendations for going forward. The report identifies four themes, which reflect the areas where more clarity is needed in order for CREA to enter into its next decennium with a strong core and focus. Among the interviewees and the wide range of perspectives that they bring forward, there is sufficient congruence to support informed and inspired decision-making regarding the future strategic directions of CREA. This congruence, which is detailed in the pages that follow, surrounds the following four themes, each supported with specific recommendations.

- Communicating Focus, Embracing Complexity
- Institute Methodology and Technology
- Impact and Communications
- Further Growth and Sustainability

REVIEW PROCESS, DATA SOURCES, AND INTERVIEWS

Review Process

The review started in October 2010, with an initial conversation with the Executive Director of CREA, followed by interviews with the Board and staff members, as well as external stakeholders and resource persons. A document review was conducted during December 2010 and January 2011. The initial findings were presented and discussed with the Board and staff members, and external resource persons during two half-day-long facilitated meetings in Delhi. The following table outlines the key events in this review process.

October 2010	Introductory conversation with Geetanjali Misra, Executive Director
December 2010–January 2011	Interviews with Board and staff members, and external stakeholders and resource persons
December 2010–January 2011	Document review (<i>see Annex 4 for a list of resource documents</i>)
24–26 January 2011	Three-hour and six-hour facilitated meetings with Board and staff members and external resource persons, sharing and discussing the interim interview findings

Data Sources

The data that informs this report has primarily been collected from key informant conversations and interviews. In addition, a review of CREA documents was conducted. Primary data sources for this review were members of CREA's Board and staff teams, as well as external stakeholders, mostly resource persons and donors.

The complete list of interviewees and participants of the review meetings is provided at the end of this document.

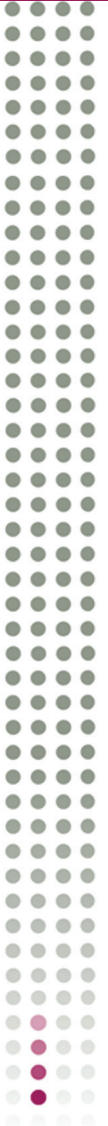
Interviews

CREA developed a list of interviewees, and a total of 26 interviews were conducted with the members of the Board (4), members of staff (7), and external stakeholders and resource persons (15). All participants were given the option of confidentiality. With the exception of one

written response, all interviews were conducted in person, over the phone, or on Skype, and lasted approximately one hour. While most interviews were conducted by Ellen Sprenger of Spring Strategies, some were conducted by Sarah Joseph Kurien, a new staff member of CREA.

The interviewees were asked the following questions.

- What is your history of involvement with CREA?
- What three adjectives come to mind when you think of CREA?
- What are the primary goals of CREA, as you understand them?
- Reflecting on CREA's past, what are two or three key successes and milestones?
- What is unique about CREA? What sets it apart from other organisations?
- Do you have any thoughts on how the field of sexual rights and/or women's rights would be different if CREA did not exist?
- Have there been times when you would have expected to see CREA represented, but it was not? Where was this?
- What are two or three stumbling blocks that CREA experienced? What lessons were learned as a result?
- What is your sense of CREA's current organisational strengths?
- Similarly, what is your sense of CREA's current organisational weaknesses?
- What regional or global trends are relevant and will have the greatest impact on CREA going forward?
 - What are the key opportunities that CREA might address?
 - What are the key threats that CREA should try to avert?
- If limited resources were available, what should CREA prioritise?
- If unlimited resources were available, what should CREA's goals be?
- What big questions should CREA be asking itself when thinking about the future?
- If you could share one piece of advice with CREA, what would it be?
- Anything else you would like to share?



All quotes in this report are from the interviews, unless otherwise indicated. The data was analysed and summarised by Ellen Sprenger. The four themes in the 'Way Ahead' section of this paper were extracted using a qualitative coding method, and were shared and discussed further during the review meetings held on 24–26 January 2011. The points raised during these discussions have been incorporated into the analysis. The four identified themes address significant and common ideas.



CREA'S PAST AND CURRENT MOMENTUM

Attributes: Innovative, Vibrant, Relevant, and Connected

The interviewees were asked to share three adjectives that come to mind when thinking about CREA. Perceptions about CREA's unique attributes converge around the four categories of innovative, vibrant, relevant, and connected.

- The largest category of responses reflects CREA's ability to innovate—including creative, cutting-edge, courageous, thinking big, refreshing, and taking risks—mentioned 22 times.
- The second category of adjectives relates to CREA's vibrancy—including being inspiring, celebratory, dancing, energetic, growing, being sexy, sassy, provocative, stimulating, adventurous, being young, fearless, and having character and great aesthetics—mentioned 16 times.
- A third category reflects CREA's determination to be relevant and make a difference—including persistence, confidence, decisiveness, adaptability and responsiveness, effectiveness, smart, feminist, activist, and aggressiveness—mentioned 10 times.
- A final category emphasised how CREA is connected both horizontally and vertically—including collaborative, “glocal” (referring to working at global and local levels simultaneously), upwardly mobile, bringing great depth (in terms of personal transformation, theory, and learning), and being “occasionally light” (referring to CREA staff members being in many spaces and being part of many processes).



GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

“CREA’s work is not about training in the sense of skills and technique absorption. It is about critical thinking and where that takes you.”

“CREA creates much-needed opportunities for inter-movement dialogue, especially women’s rights, sexual rights, disability rights.”

“Many donors are more educated because of CREA’s process of engagement (around ‘glocal’, sexuality, and intersectionality).”

“CREA brings an intersectional approach to sexuality, human rights, women’s human rights, exclusion, disability. Without CREA, these links would be weaker.”

“[What attracted me was] the sense of how they were exploring issues around sexuality, because these had concerned me over the years, and to see them dealt with in a framework where feminism was a key part... [I wanted] the possibility to explore issues around disability and its context in India, and how sexuality fed into that. It was a chance to do some exciting teaching that both offered opportunity to explore ideas and concepts as well as practicalities on the ground.”

“A lot of organisations that have good leaders build goodwill—that is not unique. What is unique about CREA is the diversity of people amongst whom goodwill has been built, and who are willing to lend support.”

“CREA is a very good partner and ally. It does not try to take over the process or over attribute. It tries to place its role as best as it can. That is very CREA.”

“Organisations like CREA create spaces where there are no boundaries, where one can expand thinking—this should be highly valued because it really does not exist so much for activists and practitioners.”

“Everybody has learnt something from this Institute. I thought I knew more than I actually did!”





“When CREA organises an event, people show up.”

“CREA has helped democratise access to good knowledge.”

“CREA's advocacy (national and global levels) is about growing spaces and making them more inclusive and strategic.”

“In our society, a woman who expresses desire, especially for sex, is viewed with great suspicion. Most often, women submit to sex with their partners, even though they may have no desire, because they do not think their expression of their own wishes in this matter would be considered “right”. The workshop opened our eyes to the world of sexuality, of sexual desire and preferences, of expressing one's own desires about love and romance.”

“We think sexuality is really at the frontier of women's rights. It is a huge area through which control is wielded over our bodies. It is about all of us, every woman—how I see who I see, whether I marry, how I spend my money, can I be who I really am, can I make choices, do these choices mean that I face discrimination, stigma, and inequality? And, how am I less equal because of who I decide to love or have sex with? Or what I wear or how I look? Or my job?” (CREA's 10-year anniversary video, 2011)



Achievement 1: The tenacity and determination to focus on sexual rights, and persist

CREA firmly believes that sexuality is central to women's rights. It is through the lens of sexuality, sexual rights, gender identity, and expression that CREA seeks to advance a world safe and free from violence, and where women have full agency on their bodies, sexuality, and reproduction.

Achievement 2: Building capacity and community through Institutes at national, regional and international levels

CREA runs the following six Institutes.

The Sexuality, Gender, and Rights Institute (India–Hindi and English–and Global) is a week-long residential course, offering a conceptual study of sexuality to participants from around the world. It examines the links between sexuality, rights, gender, and health, and their interface with socio-cultural and legal issues. The participants critically analyse policy, research, and programme interventions using a rights-based approach. This Institute, conducted jointly by CREA and TARSHI, took place annually from 2002 to 2009.

The South Asia Movement Building and Human Rights Institute (South Asia) began as an annual five-day residential training programme, designed by CREA for the women working in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in South Asia, in mid-level leadership positions. It is designed to build the conceptual clarity of participants on gender, feminism, and movement building, and their links to human rights in the South Asian context. This Institute, based on the Institute for Rights, Activism, and Development that CREA conducted for five years from 2004–2008, was conducted twice in 2010.

The Feminist Leadership and Movement Building Institute (East Africa) is a week-long course designed to strengthen feminist leadership, strategies, and collective power for social transformation in Africa. Using a movement-building lens, the process allows the participants to build their knowledge on the theoretical underpinnings of movement building, synthesised from analyses of global movements.

In addition, the participants identify the different intersections, interactions, common spaces, and challenges that social movements encounter when collaborating on issues of women's human rights. The first Feminist Leadership and Movement Building Institute was conducted in 2008.

“CREA was the first in the Indian context. Their concept of ‘Institutes’ breaks the instrumental approach to capacity building for activists and advocates that we tend to see here in India.”

“The Institutes are extraordinary; the quality is world class. They are rigorous theoretically, involve excellent external resource people, and combine knowledge and practice.”

“CREA has a sustained commitment to a variety of marginalised communities.”

“Without CREA, less space for South–South and South–North dialogues would exist.”

The Disability, Sexuality, and Rights Online Training (Global) provides a study of theory and practice for people working in fields such as development, health, and/or rights, including disability and sexuality. The aim of the training is to develop awareness about issues of disability and sexuality, and a political perspective on disabled people's sexual rights. The training is conducted online in order to facilitate participation from diverse groups and individuals. The participants develop their ability to work with inclusive and holistic approaches that further health and rights. The first Disability, Sexuality, and Rights Online Training was conducted in 2010.

Adhikar, Vikas, aur Sangharsh—Ek Adhyayan (India—Hindi) is a week-long Institute, which attempts to address the paucity of resources, debates, and scholarship on rights and development in the Hindi language. This Institute creates opportunities for women working in development and/or community-based organisations in India's Hindi-belt states to: engage with the rights-based approach; critically analyse the various themes within development from a rights perspective; and question the relevance of using a human rights framework when engaging with these issues. During this Institute, the participants build a deeper understanding of international human rights treaties, analyse local movements and contexts, and, at each step, question what this approach would mean for the environments in which they work. CREA has held this Institute annually since 2006.

Yaunikta, Gender aur Adhikar—Ek Adhyayan (India—Hindi) is an annual week-long Institute in Hindi on sexuality, gender, and rights. This Institute aims to enable women development workers from community-based whuman rights. The Institute also makes available resource materials in Hindi on sexuality, gender, and rights.

Achievement 3: A deep conviction and ability to question and challenge

Questioning assumptions and creating spaces for deep reflection and interrogation lie at the heart of CREA. The organisation was founded by a group of professionals working in the fields of reproductive rights, sexuality, violence against women, media, and women's human rights. The group decided to focus on women's sexuality—a largely neglected area—and work through an intersectional approach, acknowledging that gender, sexuality, violence, and rights are deeply connected issues and should be treated as such. Ever since, CREA has been known for its ability to create spaces for questioning of self, others, norms,

“The Sexuality and Rights Institute is the first programme in India to address the complex, bias-ridden, and contentious issues of sexuality”

“Without them, links between women's rights movements and movements of sexual minorities/sex workers/disabled women would be much weaker.”

“We are not just employing young people, it is CREA's guiding force. We do not just ‘include’ young people; we know that it is with young people that the vibrancy and energy is.”



policies, and just about anything else, using the motto “assume nothing and suspend judgement”. This includes questioning CREA's own assumptions and practices, as reflected in its organisational culture. CREA has a strong pull towards doing things that have not been done before and encouraging others to do the same. One of CREA's internal strengths is that it invests in room for reflection, in the form of staff retreats and other spaces for brainstorming, which, in turn, encourages out-of-the-box thinking and creativity.

Achievement 4: Bringing different movements together, linking networks of actors

CREA is embedded in women's rights movements and is a critical part of movements for sexual rights, including rights for people identifying as LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or intersex), living with HIV/AIDS, engaged in sex work, and, more recently, living with a disability. It genuinely seeks “intersectionality”, and as such, crosses movements and creates spaces for different people to communicate, build relationships, and strategise collaboratively.

This approach means that for some, including funders, CREA is not always easy to label. For example, while it does not self identify as an LGBTI or a disability organisation, it pushes for the inclusion of LGBTI rights and for the sexual rights of women with disabilities wherever it goes. Another way it crosses traditional boundaries is through its use of Hindi. Through its work on sexuality and gender issues in Hindi, CREA builds access to knowledge and scholarship for a very large and otherwise excluded audience.

Achievement 5: One of the first organisations based in the global South, working globally

CREA is a women's human rights organisation based in the global South, led by South-based feminists, which works at local, regional, and international levels. It became a global organisation at a time when most, if not all, NGOs working globally were based in the global North. CREA shifted the paradigm and challenged the donors who did not have a “box” or budget line that CREA could fit in. Being an organisation based in India, with a global reach and identity, including an office in New York, was groundbreaking in itself.

“CREA was a platform for my provocative ideas. It allowed me the space to develop them, and provided an enabling environment. Since then, I have written them down and they have got published.”

“Without CREA, not as many young people would be involved in the same way in the sexual rights field.”

“CREA works in collaboration, and is a very good ally and partner. It is hard to locate whether CREA is a ‘catalyst’ or not. It does not try to take over the process, does not try to over-attribute, but instead, tries to always place its role with humility and balance.”

Achievement 6: Use of artistic and cultural expression

CREA is committed to exploring the intersection of art and activism to engage with the politics of representation and explore how images both empower and debilitate the marginalised. While celebrating different artistic medium as cultural expressions, CREA also looks to promote art as an advocacy and organising tool, which can be used to advance women’s human rights and the sexual rights of all people.

Achievement 7: Collaborative policy-level work: Voices Against 377

CREA was an active part of Voices Against 377, a coalition of organisations and progressive groups articulating a united voice against Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalised adult consensual sexual acts, deemed to be against the order of nature. On 22 November 2006, Voices Against 377 filed an intervention in the court, in support of the Naz Foundation’s stand to decriminalise consensual same-sex sexual acts. Section 377 was read down to decriminalise same-sex adult consensual sex on 2 July 2009.

Achievement 8: Community-based women’s leadership development

CREA’s Community Based Leadership Programme focuses on working with community-based organisations, rather than with communities. CREA sees its “training and capacity building initiatives (...) as a bridge between formal human rights treaties and the realisation of human rights at the organisational and individual levels”. Focusing on women-led organisations, CREA aims to strengthen leadership skills and build strong networks of women working at the community level on issues of women’s rights, sexuality, and feminist leadership. After their involvement in the CREA programme, women report beginning to see more connections between power, violence, sexuality, gender, desire, and so on, and to work actively towards gender equity in both their personal and professional lives.

Achievement 9: Walking the talk

Throughout its first 10 years, CREA has been committed to walking the talk, as it relates to being multi-generational, respecting the agency and leadership of young women, and experimenting with different organisational models and structures, which accommodate fluidity, innovation, high performance, and participation. Looking back, two different leadership models can be distinguished. During the first couple

“In the beginning of CREA’s existence, there was this bias that international, as well as analytical work was the sole space of US-based international and white women-led organisations. What the world needed was groups like CREA to keep them accountable. But, the US-based groups working globally were the preferred partner of most US-based funders. It was ironic how obvious this bias was. Many donors asked CREA, “How can you be international if you are based in India?”



of years, CREA was a small informal team, working and making decisions together. A few years later, when staff members and programmes started to grow, a clear division of roles and responsibilities became increasingly important. CREA, then, moved from a largely flat leadership model to a model built around managers responsible for functional teams.

This evolved further in 2008, when one of the founders, Pramada Menon, left the organisation. A senior management team was established, with more younger staff members. Around this time, CREA also moved from organising around projects to being guided by organisation-level strategising and budgeting, including a detailed fundraising plan and set of goals.

Today, CREA's staff team and Board are keen on building a leadership model and team that is sustainable, with or without its strong, charismatic, and visionary Executive Director, Geetanjali Misra. Still, an ongoing challenge in CREA's current leadership model is that, in practice, many of the decisions still go through the Executive Director—the last remaining founder of CREA. During this review, the management team explored the possibilities of a third leadership model for CREA, called “starfish model”. In this model, the emphasis is on further strengthening of functional teams and senior management, so that each leg of the starfish can be self-managing. The Executive Director, together with the senior management, represents the connective tissue of the organisation, looking at organisational alignment, focus, and prioritisation, as well as external representation.

Achievement 10: Financial sustainability

Throughout its first 10 years, CREA has created a healthy financial base. The key elements of this are a diversified donor base, a healthy balance between core funding and project funding, excellent cash flow management, and the building of an impressive reserve. In the last five years, CREA's budget has fluctuated between \$1.1 million and \$1.7 million, and it has been able to build up a reserve valued at roughly \$1.3 million. In terms of financial sustainability, CREA has clearly done very well. This has allowed CREA to run high-quality programmes while making the necessary investments in staffing, learning and innovation, technology, and other office infrastructure needs. In order to ensure further financial sustainability and growth, CREA considers making additional investments in areas of fundraising, as well as its ability to measure its impact and strengthen its senior-level staff.

“Their approach is about openness, about building bridges between communities, instead of just middle-class people engaging in activism.”

“CREA is one of the few organisations that do not infantilise young people.”

“They focus on providing young women activists with spaces and voices in activism, debates, and knowledge building.”

“CREA is always inclusive, always cognizant of other communities.”

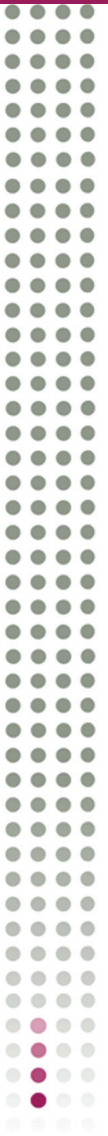
“They are about growing policy space, making it more inclusive, including younger people.”

WHAT MAKES CREA UNIQUE?

The stakeholders were asked what sets CREA apart. The answers paint a picture of how CREA is unique, which is based not only on what it does but also on how it does it. It is not only about CREA's work to promote, protect, and advance sexual rights, but also about the cutting-edge way it approaches this work.

The key elements of what makes CREA unique and cutting edge are as follows.

- A sexual rights focus, with multiple bridges and paths
- Working with young women as a guiding force
- Being collaborative and connected, with lots of goodwill and convening power
- Being a global South-based organisation working globally, as well as regionally and nationally
- Creating world-class Institutes, both in terms of methodology and materials
- The belief that questioning, suspending judgement, creativity, and creative expression are critical parts of human and societal transformation



WAY AHEAD: THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Theme 1: Communicating Focus While Embracing Complexity

This review process created spaces and opportunities for members of the Board and staff, and several external resource persons to talk about CREA's compass, or "centre of gravity". The review made evident that part of the challenge of working with an intersectional lens is communicating CREA's focus to external actors. Unlike other organisations, which tend to focus on one particular issue or a core set of concerns, CREA's centre and energy lies in staying relevant and beneficial to its beneficiaries—women, including those who are lesbian, disabled, trans, or involved in sex work; adolescent girls, especially those who live in India's Hindi-belt states; non-profit practitioners, activists, academicians, researchers, and journalists; and the larger public. CREA's perceived lack of focus is, in fact, intentional. While the organisation's big goal is to realise women's human rights and the sexual rights of all people, the path that CREA adopts towards realising this goal shifts according to changing contexts and new challenges. When, for example, Uganda looked to adopt homophobic legislation, CREA worked to address this new development in its Institutes and with its broader network of cohorts. More recently, as India's Supreme Court debated the decriminalisation of adult same-sex consensual relations, CREA was at the forefront, working through the Voices Against 377 coalition, to ensure equal rights and privileges to people with same-sex desires. CREA is, thus, able to remain abreast with current trends and, in many cases, to work cognizant of developing social realities, due to its focus on its beneficiaries and the practices that might best impact their lives.

However, the challenge for organisations like CREA lies in finding moments for reflection and prioritisation, as well as articulation and communication of its unique approach and focus to various stakeholder groups. While a critical part of CREA's uniqueness is its ability to embrace complexity and be responsive to new opportunities, the organisation must strive for more clarity in determining priorities and delineation of its unique contribution. This will also help CREA manage external expectations, especially around its role in policy advocacy, where it is experiencing considerable external pull.

Recommendations

- Review and rearticulate the strategic plan, allowing it to clearly communicate CREA's compass for navigating the way ahead.



"It is a classic trap of success. You grow in the first 10 years, doing a subset of things in a domain you are doing really well. But then, you start to think let us do everything else in that domain, like advocacy, research, media, and campaigning."

"CREA's impact is hard to measure? It is everywhere!"

"It is hard to find a focussed and reflective moment when you are so successful, and in such high demand"

"Every organisation should ask itself 'What is my version 2.0'? 'How will CREA capitalise on the rise of digital technologies?'"

"CREA dances on the edge, is ahead of the curve, in what it works on as well as how it does it."

- Based on the revised strategic plan, reevaluate programme priorities, staffing and organisational structures, and staff responsibilities.
- Manage external expectations more explicitly, especially around advocacy. The following criteria start to clarify when and where to engage in advocacy.
 - Is sexuality the inroad?
 - Does it require CREA's involvement in order to succeed?
 - Will it put new issues on the table?
 - Is it an opportunity to work with partners and/or leaders in the field?
 - Is it an opportunity for connecting community-level work with policy change?
 - Does CREA have the organisational capacity to sustain the effort and feel passionate and excited about the work?
 - Is CREA's role clear? For example, is CREA leading the initiative, supporting others, sharing information, or connecting and networking?

Theme 2: Institute Methodology and Technology

CREA is known for and has carved a clear niche with its national, regional, and global Institutes. CREA's diverse Institutes are both high quality and unique, and reflect the organisation's commitment to combining theory and practice, and providing a much-needed space for activists and practitioners to continue to learn, as well as constantly critique and improve their ways of engaging in the field. Precisely due to the extreme paucity of opportunities for further learning, CREA continues to be overwhelmed by applications to the Institutes. The Sexuality, Gender, and Rights Institute, for example, saw 350 committed social change leaders apply for 30 spaces. Thus, there is a need to expand the Institutes, so that they can better cater to this demonstrated need, and to increase access to some of its more popular Institutes, through ways such as classroom platforms.

The disability online course has been CREA's first experience with using ICT for the purpose of learning. Several interviewees want CREA to invest more in this area, either through a standalone online course or by integrating ICT more deliberately into the existing Institutes, for example, by using video conferencing. The issue of alumni engagement and networking also came up during the interviews. As of now, CREA maintains mailing lists for every class, but it could consider using ICT in a more proactive way in this, for example, by creating online workspaces and developing a searchable database across the different Institutes.

Also, a few respondents mentioned the need to balance knowledge transfer and use of visual arts with greater acknowledgement for “body” and “spirit” in order to allow for deeper absorption of knowledge and transformation.



Recommendations

- Assess state-of-the-art online learning tools and experiences globally, and decide on a more proactive use of ICT for the Institutes.
- Reflect on the Institutes' current circle of resource persons, and further strengthen the practice of widening this circle.

Theme 3: Impact and Communications

Similar to most social justice organisations, CREA is struggling to measure its impact. When this was discussed, the group developed a map that CREA can use and expand upon going forward. A circle was drawn, identifying the different groups that CREA directly works with or touches. These were activists, researchers, policymakers, donors, journalists, and the media, and larger movements, such as the women's rights and sexual rights movements. Next, the group drew a second and larger circle identifying the kinds of shifts that it would like to see per stakeholder group. These were identified as shifts in:

- definition or the way individuals or communities define women's sexuality, identities, and violence against women;
- individual behaviour that impedes women's rights, a life free from violence, and choice in the area of identity and sexuality;
- relationships and engagement or the extent to which people engage in condemning, preventing, or proudly expressing and celebrating women's rights, sexual rights, choices, and identities; and
- policy and the role of formal institutions

A third and even larger circle was then created, indicating CREA's small or large contributions to the shifts that have been created in each area. While it was strongly felt that CREA does not want to overreach in terms of self-attribution of success, it was also agreed that acknowledging its contributions is critical to evaluating its impact. The development of the above-mentioned "CREA map" is based on a methodology called Outcome Mapping (see *Annex 2*). The process left the staff and Board members feeling encouraged that CREA can indeed measure how and to what extent it is making a difference in the world.

Recommendations

- Identify innovation and edge in evaluation by developing a comprehensive evaluation framework, which aligns with CREA's theory of change, possibly including elements of Outcome Mapping.
- Integrate CREA's internal learning and monitoring processes within the evaluation framework.
- Develop a compelling external communications strategy, which amplifies how CREA makes a difference in the world.

Theme 4: Further Growth and Sustainability

CREA has displayed impressive financial growth, and has overall excelled in financial sustainability. In terms of leadership and internal management, CREA is known for “walking the talk” on young women’s leadership as well as participatory leadership, more generally. CREA staff and Board members are aware that organisational growth does not come without its challenges.

During the course of the review, CREA identified two key growth challenges in going forward. The first is financial growth. While CREA’s growth has been impressive, it has more or less levelled in the last five years. Going forward, CREA wants to be guided by more ambitious multi-year growth projections. CREA is well positioned to mobilise growing levels of funding and is ready for further scaling up of its programmes, even more so once the strategic plan is finalised and a clear focus is established.

CREA’s second growth challenge relates to leadership. During the review, the management team explored a model based on the principles of a starfish—decentralised with every major organ replicated in each arm and, therefore, able to sustain multiple centres. For CREA, the starfish model is about working towards self-managing teams, each with a strong centre in the form of a senior manager and team. The unifying part of the starfish is where the Executive Director is located, a space where alignment is created, focus is ensured, and priorities are set in line with the strategic plan. In this model, the Executive Director, together with a team of managers, explores the external environment and discusses issues related to the overall strategic direction of CREA. Currently, CREA is in the process of defining the different teams of the organisation, further strengthening of these teams, and redefining the role of the Senior Management Team and the Executive Director.

Recommendations

- To establish best, worst, and base case financial projections that support the implementation of the strategic plan.
- To further explore and create CREA’s next senior leadership model, with decision making around the different functional areas and investment in the creation of strong, self-managing teams.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The final section summarises the key recommendations that have emerged from this review process.

- Review and rearticulate the strategic plan, allowing it to clearly communicate CREA's compass for navigating the way ahead.
- Based on the revised strategic plan, reevaluate programme priorities, staffing and organisational structures, and staff responsibilities.
- Manage external expectations more explicitly, especially around advocacy. The following criteria start to clarify when and where to engage in advocacy.
 - Is sexuality the inroad?
 - Does it require CREA's involvement in order to succeed?
 - Will it put new issues on the table?
 - Is it an opportunity to work with partners and/or leaders in the field?
 - Is it an opportunity for connecting community-level work with policy change?
 - Does CREA have the organisational capacity to sustain the effort and feel passionate and excited about the work?
 - Is CREA's role clear? Is CREA leading the initiative, supporting others, sharing information, or connecting and networking?
- Assess state-of-the-art online learning tools and experiences globally, and decide on a more proactive use of ICT for the Institutes.
- Reflect on the Institutes' current circle of resource persons, and further strengthen the practice of widening this circle.
- Identify innovation and edge in evaluation by developing a comprehensive evaluation framework, which aligns with CREA's theory of change, possibly including elements of Outcome Mapping.
- Integrate CREA's internal learning and monitoring processes within the evaluation framework.
- Develop a compelling external communications strategy, which amplifies how CREA makes a difference in the world.
- To establish best, worst, and base case financial projections that support the implementation of the strategic plan.
- To further explore and create CREA's next leadership model, with decision making around the different functional areas and investment in the creation of strong, self-managing teams.

ANNEX: EVALUATIVE FINDINGS

Monitoring and evaluation of CREA's organisational functioning and its programmes remain important aspects of CREA's commitment to quality and betterment. Programme areas have overall goals, specific objectives, and indicators for monitoring. Monitoring and evaluation is built into each of CREA's programmes. This assessment is for reflecting on what has already been done, as well as for determining the path of programmes as they are in progress and the future of programmes. For Institutes and trainings, CREA uses evaluation forms, observation, interviews, and participant representatives, who report to the resource people at the end of each day. These methods of evaluation are used by the resource people to adjust the programme as it happens and by CREA in shaping the design and content of future Institutes and trainings. CREA also uses methodologies within the curriculum, such as case studies, to assess the increase in understanding and analytical skills of the participants.

CREA also commissions periodic external evaluations of its programmes, such as the 2008 reviews of the Community Based Leadership Programme (comprising Ibtida and Institutes and trainings in Hindi) and of the Sexuality and Rights Institute. Two external consultants evaluated the Community Based Leadership Programme by conducting a series of workshops and interviews with the members of the grassroots leaders' network and participants of CREA's Hindi Institutes. The study found that CREA has built leadership capacities and enhanced understanding on sexuality, gender, and rights of grassroots organisations and activists. For example, this capacity building has led to policies and practices in community-based organisations that are more inclusive of marginalised women and sexual minorities, such as an organisation that now includes transgender people and their needs in women's health services. CREA completed a two-year evaluation of the Sexuality and Rights Institute in March 2008, which showed that the Institute has made an impact in shifting perceptions and attitudes to sexuality, gender, and rights among people working in development, rights, and health sectors in India. Srilatha Batliwala conducted the evaluation, and the methodology for the study included questionnaires, interviews, observation of the Institute for two years, and review of documents.

In addition to doing effective monitoring and evaluation of its own work, CREA aims to find and disseminate better methods of monitoring and evaluating leadership development and movement building work. Extensive quantitative evaluations may not be appropriate for capacity building work, which aims to shift paradigms and change power structures. The money, time, and human resources required to do some monitoring and evaluation can drain the resources of a small organisation like CREA, and take away from its programmatic work. CREA works to recommend monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which can creatively measure how leadership is built at the local, national, and trans-national levels.



ANNEX: NOTES ON OUTCOME MAPPING

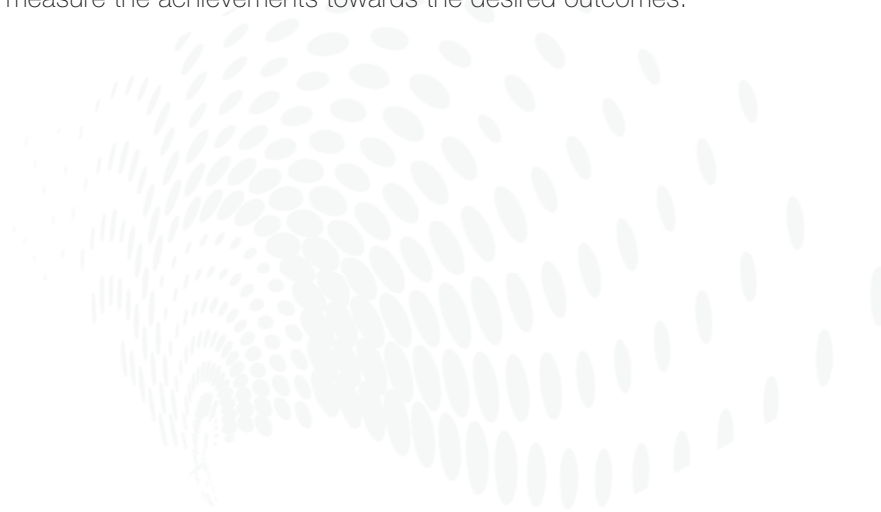
Outcome Mapping was introduced during the 26 January 2011 session with CREA's Board and staff members. Outcome Mapping recognises that the promotion of social justice is essentially about changing how people relate to each other and their environment. It, therefore, focuses on changes in framing individual behaviour, relationships, and actions in the people, groups, and organisations that CREA works with directly—its so-called boundary partners.

Outcome Mapping is a shift away from the more conventional approaches to evaluation, which assume a causal relationship between an intervention and significant and lasting changes in the wellbeing and lives of intended beneficiaries. Because of this assumption of linear change and causality, these approaches tend to measure impact far beyond the reach of their programmes. Outcome Mapping, on the other hand, believes that such “impacts” are the result of a confluence of actors and circumstances and for which no single organisation can claim full credit. As such, Outcome Mapping tries to stay away from “claiming credit” or “attribution” of success, and prefers to talk about “critical contributions” or “probability of attribution”, thereby acknowledging the importance of collaboration, the work of other actors, as well as expected and unexpected circumstances.

Outcome Mapping is grounded in the following theory of change.

- Change is non linear, the result of many different actions and circumstances, and both intentional and unintentional.
- Change aimed at empowerment and social justice is political, implies changes in power relations and, therefore, involves tensions, struggles, and conflicts.
- Power is complex and has different dimensions:
 - Visible power is about rules, structures, and policies that serve certain people over others, or processes that exclude certain groups from decision-making.
 - Hidden power is about processes where a wide range of people are represented, but only few have influence and set agendas.
 - Invisible power is about how meaning is being shaped and how situations and circumstances are framed, and establishes what is considered “normal” or acceptable.
- Success is the result of many different actors and influences and, therefore, the ability of individuals and groups to contribute to each other's successes.

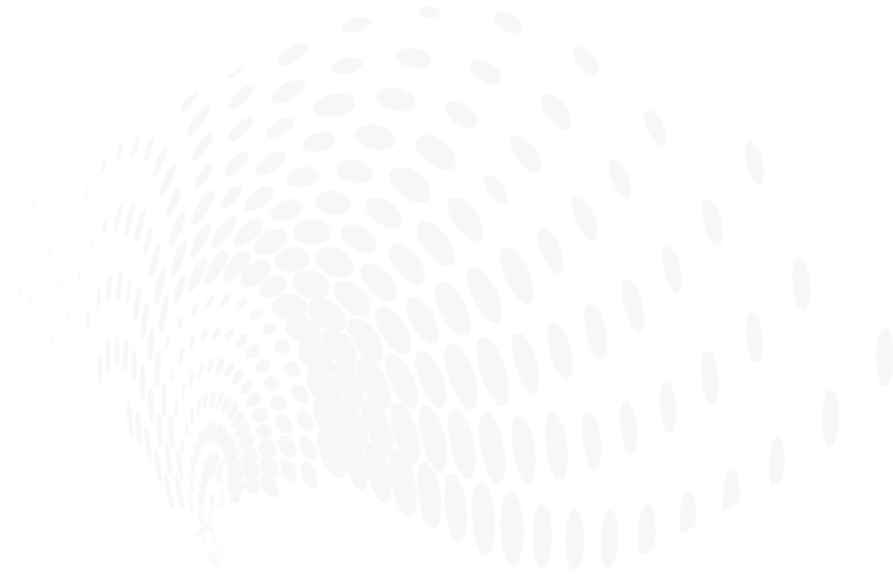
Outcome Mapping uses three core concepts: outcomes, boundary partners, and progress markers. Outcomes are changes in the framing, behaviour, relationships, actions, and activities in the people, groups, and organisations that an organisation works with directly. Boundary partners are the individuals, groups, or organisations with whom an organisation interacts directly, and anticipates and creates opportunities for influence and change. They are selected on the basis of an understanding that their behaviour and actions are key to realising the organisation's goals, as well as the assumption that the organisation has the ability to influence them. Progress markers are identified per outcome area and for each of the boundary partners, and present the information that the organisation gathers in order to measure the achievements towards the desired outcomes.



ANNEX: LIST OF RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

- Shifting Paradigms: An Evaluation Report on CREA's Sexual Rights Institutes (2002–07)
- An Evaluation of CREA's Community Based Leadership Program (2008)
- Notes from CREA staff and resource persons' retreat at Ranthambore, India (2008)
- CREA's New Strategic Plan (2009)
- CREA's Annual Report Booklet (2006)
- Brochures from different CREA Institutes
- Reports from CREA's South–South Exchange Programmes
- Facing biases and challenging belief: Adhikar, Vikas aur Sangharsh—Ek Adhyayan Report (November 2006)
- Reports from the Feminist Leadership and Movement Building Institute (2008 and 2010)
- Integrating Sexuality into Program Interventions: Exploring Theory and Practice (proposal submitted to the Ford Foundation for the Sexual Rights Institute)
- Narrative Report submitted to the Sigrid Rausing Trust (2008)
- Institute participants' testimonials (2002–10)
- Disability, Sexuality, and Rights Training Narrative Report (2010)
- Catalogue from Films of Desire: Sexuality and the Cinematic Imagination (2007)
- Brochure of CREA publications
- Learning from Each Other: Pushing Forward the Field of Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in India and Nigeria through a Cross Learning Program (2004)
- Ain't I a Woman? A Global Dialogue between the Sex Workers' Rights Movement and the Stop Violence against Women Movement, Bangkok, Thailand, 12–14 March 2009 (2011)
- Organisational Flowchart (2010)
- CREA's Master Proposal (2009)

- Creating and Strengthening Links for Community Development and Advocacy for Youth: the India, Palestine, Kenya, and Egypt Exchange Programme's Final Report to the Ford Foundation (December 2007)
- Rights for All: Ending Discrimination Against Queer Desire Under Section 377 (2004/05)
- Video documentation of interviews with the participants of CREA Institutes (2008–10)
- All documents relating to and resulting from CREA's Count Me In! Conference (2011)



ANNEX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES AND REVIEW MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Interviewees

Board Members (4)

Bishakha Datta	:	Executive Director, Point of View, India
Shohini Ghosh	:	Dr Zakir Hussain Professor, AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India
Geetanjali Misra	:	Co-Founder and Executive Director, CREA, India/US
Manal Saleh	:	Senior Program Specialist, Center for Development Services, Egypt

Staff Members (7)

Chaitali Bhatia	:	Programme Coordinator, Information and Communications
Diksha Dubey	:	Director, Finance and Operations
Caroline Earle Cotter	:	Programme Coordinator, Global Programmes
Kalpana Khare	:	Programme Coordinator, Grassroots Feminist Leadership Programme
Sunita Kujur	:	Manager, Global Programmes
Vinita Sahasranaman	:	Manager, National Programmes
Shalini Singh	:	Programme Manager, Grassroots Feminist Leadership Programme

External Stakeholders and Resource Persons (15)

Srilatha Batliwala	:	Associate Scholar, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), India
Radhika Chandiramani	:	Founder and Executive Director, TARSHI, India
Ishita Chaudhry	:	Founder and CEO, The YP Foundation, India
Aseem Chhabra	:	Independent journalist and TV personality, India/US

Adrienne Germain	:	President, International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC), US
Manisha Gupte	:	Co-Founder, Masum, India
Jessica Horn	:	Founder, Akiiki Consulting, Sierra Leone
Pramada Menon	:	Queer feminist activist and Co-Founder, CREA, India
Alice Miller	:	Associate research scholar-in-law and Robina Foundation Human Rights fellow, Yale Law School, US
Anara Moldosheva	:	Independent gender consultant for Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan
Barbara Phillips	:	Social justice activist and former Ford Foundation Program Officer for Women's Rights and Gender Equity, US
Janet Price	:	Feminist and disabled activist who advocates for crip queer politics, UK
Cynthia Rothschild	:	Independent consultant and former Senior Policy Advisor, Center for Women's Global Leadership, US
Meena Seshu	:	General Secretary, SANGRAM, India
Neha Sood	:	Former staff person, CREA, India

Review meeting participants (24 and 26 January 2011)

Staff Members (13), both 24 and 26 January 2011

Chaitali Bhatia	:	Programme Coordinator, Information and Communications
Diksha Dubey	:	Director, Finance and Operations
Debolina Dutta	:	Programme Coordinator, Advocacy and Research
Sanjana Gaiind	:	Programme Coordinator, Campaigns and Events
Sarah Joseph Kurien	:	Programme Assistant
Sunita Kujur	:	Manager, Global Programmes
Ayesha Mago	:	Director, Information, Education, and Communications
Meenu Pandey	:	Programme Coordinator, Knowledge and Scholarship
Vinita Sahasranaman	:	Manager, National Programmes

Rambishnu Sasmal	:	Manager, Finance and Operations
Shalini Singh	:	Programme Manager, Grassroots Feminist Leadership Programme
Boichong Telien	:	Programme Coordinator, Human Resources and Operations
Shuchi Tripathi	:	Conference Coordinator, Count Me In!

Board Members (6), 26 January 2011

Sashwati Banerjee	:	Executive Director, Sesame Workshop India, India
Sohini Bhattacharya	:	Consultant, Breakthrough, India
Bishakha Datta	:	Executive director, Point of View, India
Sabeena Gadihok	:	Associate Professor, Video and TV Production, AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India
Shohini Ghosh	:	Dr Zakir Hussain Professor, AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India
Geetanjali Misra	:	Co-Founder and Executive Director, CREA, India/US

External Resource Persons (3), 26 January 2011

Srilatha Batliwala	:	Associate Scholar, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), India
Pramada Menon	:	Queer feminist activist and Co-Founder, CREA, India
Neha Sood	:	Former staff person, CREA, India

CREA INDIA

7 Mathura Road, Jangpura B, New Delhi 110014, India

Tel: +91-11-24377707, 24378700

Fax: +91-11-24377708

E-mail: crea@creaworld.org



CREA NEW YORK

116 East, 16th Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10003, U.S.A.

Tel: +1-212-599-1071

Fax: +1-212-599-1075

E-mail: mailcrea@verizon.net

Website: www.creaworld.org



SPRING STRATEGIES

349 Wilmont Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2A OB2, Canada

Tel: + 1-613-866-4504

E-mail: contact@springstrategies.org

Website: www.springstrategies.org



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