One-Day Workshop on Team Building and Communication

Rationale

On 16 October 2024, The Koshish Trust organised a one-day workshop on team-building and communication, facilitated by Shri Altaf Shaikh, a life coach and an expert in group processes. This initiative was a step towards creating stronger relationships within the organisation, improving internal communication, and nurturing a positive and supportive organisational culture. The rationale for this workshop was rooted in the dynamic composition of the team and the specific challenges that arise from this diversity.

The workshop was held at Climb Media (India) Pvt. Ltd., Gharaonda, Bandra (West), Mumbai. This venue is owned by National Award-winning filmmaker Shri Kireet Khurana and his wife Ms. Tehzeeb Khurana, an animation director. Shri Kireet Khurana has previously directed a film titled *The Invisible Visible*, which highlights the contributions of the team at the Koshish Trust in addressing destitution and homelessness. As friends of The Koshish Trust, the Khuranas insisted that we host the workshop at their space. Their generosity and support created a welcoming and inspiring environment for the session.

Shri Altaf Shaikh was chosen as the facilitator for his deep connection with The Koshish Trust and its team members. As a long-time mentor to the organisation's founder and a trusted confidant of the team, Shri Shaikh was uniquely positioned to lead this workshop since he knows the team well and the team trusts him. His blend of expertise as a life coach and familiarity with the team dynamics made him an ideal choice for this role.

The Koshish Trust operates in a domain that demands empathy, resilience, and effective collaboration. Its mission to address complex social issues necessitates a cohesive team that can communicate effectively and work in harmony. However, the organisation's workforce is a mix of very experienced members and newer ones. While experienced members bring a wealth of knowledge and a nuanced understanding of the field, newer members often contribute fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and innovative ideas. This blend is undoubtedly an asset, but it also comes with challenges. Integrating these diverse experiences and aligning them towards common goals requires intentional effort.

One of the primary motivations for the workshop was to align the whole team. Moreover, the workshop recognised that team-building is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. It aimed to instil a mindset of continuous improvement among the participants. This workshop also had the purpose of self-assessment as an organisation and to understand where we stand as an organisation.

Activities

The workshop began with a round of introductions, after which Shri Shaikh asked each team member to reflect on and write down their expectations for the workshop and what they hoped

to gain from it. He gathered these reflections, using them to align the workshop's agenda with the team's expectations. This exercise helped clarify objectives and offered an opportunity to see common themes, creating a shared sense of purpose.

A key component of the session involved going beyond professional work. Shri Shaikh encouraged everyone to share personal details that typically do not reflect on the CV. This sharing allowed team members to open up about deeply personal details of their lives, revealing dimensions of themselves that were previously unknown to others. Through this exercise, participants gained a richer, more nuanced understanding of each other's personalities, bringing better appreciation among colleagues. This encouraged team members to see each other as individuals with unique personal traits, rather than merely co-workers. Following this, Shri Shaikh led a brainstorming session addressing several points that had surfaced in the initial reflections. Topics included strengthening individual resilience, improving accountability, effectively managing timelines, and enhancing intra-team communication.



Additional discussions explored ways to promote a supportive work environment, reduce workplace stress, and empower each individual to express their views confidently. This activity set a tone of openness and mutual respect, which are foundational for organisational growth.

The workshop also involved an in-depth exploration of personal accountability, self-improvement, and the impact of individual actions on the team. Shri Shaikh shared insights on conflict prevention and resolution, outlining strategies for maintaining harmony in a team where everyone's voice matters. He highlighted the importance of addressing conflicts with empathy, suggesting that problems should be approached from the organisation's perspective to achieve collective solutions. He encouraged each member to adopt a mindset that sees the organisation as a supportive whole, advocating that a positive environment contributes as

much to productivity as any policy or management structure. This led to a rich discussion on the need for a positive work atmosphere, where trust and open communication are prioritised, allowing each individual to contribute meaningfully. We also engaged in activities centred on self-awareness, stress management, and recognising emotional state, equipping us with strategies to better handle personal stress and improve communication. As a final reflection, Shri Shaikh asked team members to think deeply about why they chose to work at The Koshish Trust, and on the issue of destitution. This exercise was an opportunity for everyone to reconnect with the mission, sharing their sense of purpose and reaffirming their dedication to the cause. Each team member reflected on their experiences and expressed their gratitude for the supportive work environment, which offers flexibility, understanding, and camaraderie.



Since the Trust is in the process of recruiting new members, a more comprehensive workshop would be held once the team is complete. This initial workshop was deemed crucial to engage and strengthen the bonds of the current team, ensuring they are equipped to support new recruits and create an environment of mutual growth. By the end of the day, team members left with renewed commitment and valuable tools for promoting collaboration, communicating effectively, and enhancing their personal and professional skills. The feedback that we got in this workshop has reinforced our approach towards creating a cohesive, mission-driven organisation, with the understanding that an empowered and connected team having a sense of ownership is essential to fulfilling the mission of the organisation. This workshop marks an important milestone in team-building, setting the foundation for further in-depth workshop that will continue to support our team in achieving its full potential.

Conclusion

The one-day workshop on team-building and communication was a vital initiative for The Koshish Trust. It was not merely an event but a strategic intervention aimed at strengthening the organisation from within. By addressing the unique needs of a diverse team and engendering a culture of trust, respect, and open communication, the workshop contributed to building a more cohesive and effective workforce. The outcomes of this session are expected to resonate beyond the immediate participants, influencing the overall organisational dynamics and enhancing The Koshish Trust's capacity to fulfil its mission. Such initiatives underscore the organisation's commitment to not only achieving its external goals but also nurturing its internal ecosystem, recognising that a strong team is the foundation of meaningful social impact.