



# 146, Gayathri Vasudevan, LabourNet | Sustainable Livelihoods through Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship

January 2, 2017 By Tony Loyd

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LabourNet is a social enterprise that enables sustainable livelihoods by bridging the gap between education, employment and entrepreneurship.



Gayathri Vasudevan of LabourNet

Gayathri Vasudevan worked in crisis situations. She provided humanitarian aid during a riot. She provided aid in the aftermath of an earthquake. But she found the work depressing. "I wanted to do more solutioning," she told me.

After completing her PhD, she worked for the United Nations, International Labor Organization for eight years. There, she saw a disconnect between the policies she was helping to draft and the results on the ground. She remarked, "In India, we're very good at helping to draft and the results on the ground. She remarked, "In India, we're very good at white papers. We can write very well. We define everything well. But our execution didn't work."



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A thought occurred to her. "What if we're able to combine private sector acumen and way of doing business, with a policy thought process which the states and the UN have, and ensure the execution of the same on the ground?" This combination of business, policy and execution led her to create LabourNet.

LabourNet is a social enterprise that enables sustainable livelihoods by bridging the gap between education, employment and entrepreneurship. They work primarily in India with informal sector workers. They are the largest social enterprise working in the vocational space in India. The challenge, as Gayathri sees it, is that "There are a lot of people in India who do not complete education." This keeps many stuck in poverty. "Most people get a job, but are underemployed," Gayathri explains.

LabourNet works with families who earn around 15,000 – 20,000 rupees per month. That's around \$250 for a family of five, or less than \$2/person/day. LabourNet works with men, women and youth.

Their work with men primarily involves migrant men who come in from the rural areas to earn money and to send it home. LabourNet makes them productive, by providing skills so that they can earn better.

Their work with women is largely in the urban areas. Because women are often expected to be at home, and therefore do not earn money, many are at risk of a single catastrophic event sending them into poverty. LabourNet provides them with skills so that they have a chance to earn through a business or job.

When it comes to young people, many are completing high school, and then entering college. They aspire to a professional career. Many of these young people do not see many of the jobs available as something that an educated youth would do. LabourNet helps them to learn new skills quickly so that they can earn.

According to Gayathri, there is no tradition of re-skilling in India. LabourNet provides a path for anyone to learn a new skill in a module, without making a multi-year commitment. Gayathri has a message. "It's all right if you dropped out of school. It's all right if you finished school but haven't got a skill. You can come and learn a skill. And you don't have to do it in two years."

## Social Entrepreneurship Quotes from Gayathri Vasudevan

"There are a lot of people in India who do not complete education."

'Most people get a job, but are underemployed.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"Five people in a family with less than \$250/month."

'We are looking for people at the base of the pyramid.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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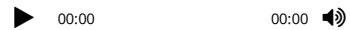
"The men that we work with are mostly migrant men."

"Our focus is to see that they earn better, so you train them to be more productive."



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### Podcast Reviews

**Powerful and inspiring** ★★★★★

December 19, 2016 by **Gallio get out** from United States

Thank you, tony

**Keep it coming!** ★★★★★

November 29, 2016 by **ronsley** from Australia  
Wonderful podcast. This is really informative and inspiring! I find it energizing to listen to individuals with such passion for what they do. Ronsley from @wearepodcast

**Great guests!** ★★★★★

November 28, 2016 by **amranaidoo** from Australia

As someone who is in the social impact sector I love Tony's choice of guests. They are seriously inspiring and the topics are so diverse

'One event in their life and they are in deep poverty.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"They see those jobs as not things educated youth have to do."

'They are practically a lost generation.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"The last five years have been revolutionary in the vocational skills space in India."

'You can learn and earn.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"I attempted to work in crisis situations. It was too depressing."

"I wanted to do more solutioning."

"What India is very good at is policy making."

'Our goals are social.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"We are attempting to make it profitable, but serving the base of the pyramid."

'I had to reinvent the story a few times.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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'I've had to learn how to run a business.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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'My own education journey has been long and tough.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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'It's been a roller coaster ride.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"I hope the model is a model that others will want to replicate."

"For me, LabourNet is a concept that needs to be replicated."

## Tweets by @TonyLoyd



**Tony Loyd** @TonyLoyd

The Messy Middle: Managing the Challenges of Scale-up [buff.ly/2isgSR5](http://buff.ly/2isgSR5)  
#SocEnt

15m

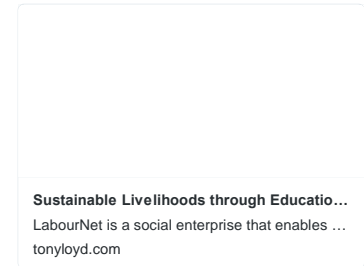


**Tony Loyd** @TonyLoyd

"You can learn and earn." Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

[tonyloyd.com/146](http://tonyloyd.com/146)

#skills #training #India



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'Whatever is your mission, you have to stick by it.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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'I have been told often that I'm quite stubborn.' Gayathri Vasudevan, @labournet

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"Patience, time, persistence, you have to listen, but take the decision at the end."

"I'd like to see more people thinking vocational education, upskilling and reskilling."

"You have to give them the skill to earn. That's the best charity one can do."

## Social Entrepreneurship Resources:

- LabourNet: <http://www.labournet.in>
- LabourNet on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/labournetindia>
- LabourNet on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/labournet>

## The Freedom Journal

Have you set big goals for 2017? I know I have. But have you tried setting goals in the past, only to come up short? Here is a tool to help you accomplish your biggest goal in only 100 days: The Freedom Journal. The Freedom Journal, is a stunning, hardcover Journal that will guide you in the accomplishment of your #1 goal in 100 days. The Freedom Journal is an accountability partner that won't let you fail.

Grab the Freedom Journal Here: <http://tonyloyd.com/journal>.

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